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Different caste system in india

The Indian caste system is a hierarchical social system that Hindu Indians are born into. India adopted the caste system over 3,000 years ago. The system consists of four main categories including Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and the Shudras. Meanwhile, each group possesses hundreds of castes and subcastes. The Brahmins are at the top of the caste system and consist of intellectuals and teachers. The warrior and ruler class, the Kshatriyas, are next in the hierarchy. Below the Kshatriyas are the Vaishyas who are traders. Lastly, the Shudras are at the bottom of the caste system. These people do unfavorable jobs. However, a group exists outside the caste system that is below the rank of Shudras. These people are known as Dalits or the untouchables. Here is some information about Dalit poverty in India. The Dalits While the government officially banned the caste system in India in 1950, its remnants still remain socially. To this day, the caste in which one is born determines their social status, job and marriage under unofficial social guidelines that Hindu Indians follow. Dalits still experience segregation from other castes in many aspects of society including education, healthcare and worship. Dalits are severely disadvantaged when it comes to education. In fact, only 10-20% of Dalits can read or write and only 2-3% of Dalit women are literate. With over 50% of the general Indian population being illiterate, the education disparity between Dalits and other castes is apparent. Dalit children especially struggle with inequality when it comes to their education. Segregated from the rest of the classroom, other students often bully or ridicule Dalit students because of their caste. Female Dalit students must also perform certain tasks around the school that other students do not have to do like cleaning the bathroom for instance. Poverty disproportionately affects the Dalits, or untouchables, in comparison to the other castes even though India has disbanded the caste system. About half of the Dalit caste are living in poverty and 60% of Dalit children are chronically malnourished. Most of the Dalit caste work in low-paying jobs that other castes do not look highly upon. Since their jobs do not receive respect, employers underpay the Dalits for the work they do, thus causing the high poverty rate. Violence, Poverty and COVID-19 Hate crime and violence against Dalit women is very high in contrast to violence towards women of other castes. A woman suffers rape in India every 20 minutes and a large majority of these cases are against Dalit women. In India, people often see Dalit women as inferior and weak in comparison to women of other castes. As a result, men of other castes who see Dalit women as inferior specifically target these women for these violent crimes. Recently, the women of the Dalit community have been the victims of a surge of rape and murder in India. Authorities make little to no arrests regarding crimes against the Dalit people and the government has not addressed or made any attempts to help end this crisis of violence. The untouchables are struggling with poverty and inequality, especially in the wake of COVID-19. The untouchables must perform certain jobs that put them at an increased risk of contracting COVID-19. Also, the untouchables have very little access to protective equipment while performing these high-risk jobs. The Dalits live on the outskirts of villages where they have limited access to healthcare resources, making the untouchables more likely to have complications or die from COVID-19. The Dalit Foundation Many NGOs are attempting to help the discrimination and poverty-stricken Dalit caste including the Dalit Foundation. Established in 2003, the Dalit Foundation's main objective is to secure equality for the Dalit caste. The Dalit Foundation provides education, scholarships and empowerment to members of the Dalit caste. This foundation, among many others, strives to help end this discrimination against Dalits until the Indian government can provide equal rights for their Dalit community. The enforcement and security of equal rights of all Indian citizens are crucial to helping the Dalits end their oppression and poverty. The Indian government has yet to enforce equal rights for the Dalits so they continue to experience violence and segregation. Once the Indian government protects the Dalit people, gives them equal rights and ends segregation, Dalit poverty should reduce and the Dalit people should be able to receive equal pay, work in jobs they desire, marry outside their caste and get a quality education. - Hannah Drzewiecki Photo: Flickr India's caste system is among the world's oldest forms of surviving social stratification. The BBC explains its complexities.The system which divides Hindus into rigid hierarchical groups based on their karma (work) and dharma (the Hindi word for religion, but here it means duty) is generally accepted to be more than 3,000 years old.Manusmriti, widely regarded to be the most important and authoritative book on Hindu law and dating back to at least 1,000 years before Christ was born, "acknowledges and justifies the caste system as the basis of order and regularity of society".The caste system divides Hindus into four main categories - Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and the Shudras. Many believe that the groups originated from Brahma, the Hindu God of creation. At the top of the hierarchy were the Brahmins who were mainly teachers and intellectuals and are believed to have come from Brahma's head. Then came the Kshatriyas, or the warriors and rulers, supposedly from his arms. The third slot went to the Vaishyas, or the traders, who were created from his thighs. At the bottom of the heap were the Shudras, who came from Brahma's feet and did all the menial jobs. The main castes were further divided into about 3,000 castes and 25,000 sub-castes, each based on their specific occupation.Outside of this Hindu caste system were the achhoots - the Dalits or the untouchables.For centuries, caste has dictated almost every aspect of Hindu religious and social life, with each group occupying a specific place in this complex hierarchy.Rural communities have long been arranged on the basis of castes - the upper and lower castes almost always lived in segregated colonies, the water wells were not shared, Brahmins would not accept food or drink from the Shudras, and one could marry only within one's caste.image captionIndia's caste system is among the world's oldest forms of social stratification surviving to this dayThe system bestowed many privileges on the upper castes while sanctioning repression of the lower castes by privileged groups.Often criticised for being unjust and regressive, it remained virtually unchanged for centuries, trapping people into fixed social orders from which it was impossible to escape. Despite the obstacles, however, some Dalits and other low-caste Indians, such as BR Ambedkar who authored the Indian constitution, and KR Narayanan who became the nation's first Dalit president, have risen to hold prestigious positions in the country. Historians, though, say that until the 18th Century, the formal distinctions of caste were of limited importance to Indians, social identities were much more flexible and people could move easily from one caste to another. New research shows that hard boundaries were set by British colonial rulers who made caste India's defining social feature when they used censuses to simplify the system, primarily to create a single society with a common law that could be easily governed.Independent India's constitution banned discrimination on the basis of caste, and, in an attempt to correct historical injustices and provide a level playing field to the traditionally disadvantaged, the authorities announced quotas in government jobs and educational institutions for scheduled castes and tribes, the lowest in the caste hierarchy, in 1950.image captionBR Ambedkar, a Dalit, authored India's constitutionIn 1989, quotas were extended to include a grouping called the OBCs (Other Backward Classes) which fall between the traditional upper castes and the lowest.In recent decades, with the spread of secular education and growing urbanisation, the influence of caste has somewhat declined, especially in cities where different castes live side-by-side and inter-caste marriages are becoming more common.In certain southern states and in the northern state of Bihar, many people began using just one name after social reform movements. Despite the changes though, caste identities remain strong, and last names are almost always indications of what caste a person belongs to. In recent years, there have been demands from several communities to be recognised as OBCs - in 2016 there were violent protests by the Jat community in Haryana and the Patel community led huge protests in Gujarat in 2015 demanding access to caste quotas. image captionAt least 18 people have been killed in violent protests by the Jat community in HaryanaBoth are prosperous and politically dominant communities, but they support their demand for caste quotas by saying large numbers in their communities are poor and suffering.Some say the caste system would have disappeared by now if the fires were not regularly fanned by politicians.At elections, many caste groups still vote as a block and are wooed by politicians looking for electoral gains. As a result, what was originally meant to be a temporary affirmative action plan to improve the lot of the unprivileged groups has now become a vote-grabbing exercise for many politicians. The brutal gang-rape and death of a woman from India's Dalit community, formerly known as the untouchables, has again put a spotlight on the country's rigid system of Hindu hierarchy.The attack on the 19-year-old in the most populous Uttar Pradesh state has sparked protests and led to criticism of both the state's leader Yogi Adityanath and prime minister Narendra Modi, both of the ruling Hindu nationalist party.One women's group said that under Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party, Uttar Pradesh had become "the rape state of India". The comments from the All India Democratic Women's Association come as government statistics rank Uttar Pradesh as the most unsafe state for women in the country.But the attack has also led to an outcry from groups representing the Dalit community. Hundreds of protesters from the Bhim Army party, which advocates for the minority group's rights, descended on the hospital where the young woman died on Tuesday.What is caste in India?The history of the caste system is still hotly debated, but scholars generally agree that it dates back at least 3,000 years and was used to divide Hindus into hierarchical groups.While its rigidity may have shifted over the centuries, the system has long been used to entrench the privilege of members of the so-called upper castes while condemning those of lower castes to specific, less desirable roles or occupations.Historians say the system persisted unchanged for centuries until it was actually reinforced by British colonial rulers as a way of simplifying censuses of the Indian population and making it easier to govern.The constitution of independent India banned caste-based discrimination in 1950, and successive governments have implemented policies to encourage greater social mobility for lower castes. But all across India, particularly outside the big cities, the system persists to varying degrees.What are the different castes?Most definitions of the modern-day caste system describe it as dividing Hindus into four main umbrella categories, with upper-caste Brahmins at the top.In descending order, the other categories are Kshatriyas (warriors and rulers), Vaishyas (farmers and merchants) and Shudras (labourers). These definitions are derived from Hindu scriptures, in particular the Manusmriti.Within those categories there are thought to be around 3,000 castes and 25,000 sub-castes, often ascribed to a single occupation. In rural India, people of the same caste are often identifiable by a shared surname.In his 2019 book The Truth About Us, Sanjoy Chakravorty argues that this structure of caste was largely forged by British colonial rulers in the 18th and 19th centuries as a way of simplifying it for censuses of the Indian population, which were then used to make the country easier to govern.He suggests that before then, caste was much less important across India than other forms of social division.Who are Dalits?Dalits are a minority numbering some 200 million who historically existed as outcasts from the Hindu hierarchical system, tending to do menial labour. They were formerly known as Achhoots or Untouchables. They represent a repressed community in many ways and still face prejudice and other obstacles to social mobility, though some Dalit leaders have risen to occupy the highest offices in the land.How prevalent is the caste system in India today?The caste system is less obvious today in urban India, where different sections of society live in close proximity and inter-caste marriage is more common.But in rural India, people of the same caste often still live together in clearly defined communities and news stories of neighbourly conflict can often be understood as clashes between members of different castes.The caste system is talked about most openly when it comes to elections - voting blocs are often talked about in the context of their caste, with a general expectation that members of the same caste will all, more or less, vote the same way.Efforts are being made to confront the uncomfortable truth about this social structure, with the Ayushmann Khurrana-starring 2019 movie Article 15 seen as the first Bollywood blockbuster to tackle the issue of caste-based atrocities head-on.And in southern India, it is commonplace to find people identifying themselves by only a single name in a rejection of the caste associations that so often come with surnames. © doring kindersley Read Arundhati Roy's cover story on the Caste system India's caste system is a social structure that divides different groups into ranked categories. Members of "higher" castes have a greater social status than individuals of a "lower" caste. Indian law prohibits discrimination by caste, although caste identities remain of great significance at the local level, especially in relation to marriage. A survey in 2005 found that only 11 per cent of women had married a man of different caste. The system appears to have had ancient roots. Sanskrit texts from the second millennium BC refer to a practice of dividing individuals into social groups called "varnas"—the term's precise meaning is unclear, but it seems not only to suggest classification, but also colour. The Varnas, which are associated with early Hinduism, are the first recorded manifestation of India's caste system. Four principal classes emerged, in descending order of prestige: the Brahmins, the Kshatriyas, the Vaishyas and the Shudras. Myth holds that these groups were created from the mouth, arms, thighs and feet of an ancient character called Purusha. Over time, the caste structure became more complex, coalescing into a system known as "Chatuvarnya," which in turn was reinforced by the authorities of the British Raj. The categories set down by colonial administrators persist today. There are now more than 3,000 castes in India, and an even greater number of sub-castes. Here are six of the most significant: Brahmins The highest of all the castes, and traditionally priests or teachers, Brahmins make up a small part of the Indian population. The British colonial authorities gave Brahmins influential clerical jobs. They now dominate the key positions in science, business and government. Kshatriyas Meaning "protector[s] of the gentle people," Kshatriyas were traditionally the military class. They are now predominantly a land-owning caste and are diminished in power. Vaishyas A caste that is influential in trade, the Vaishyas were traditionally cattle-herders, agriculturalists, artisans and merchants. They are now associated with the middle-class and social advancement and make up around one fifth of India's population. Shudras The lowest of the four ancient social classes, or Varnas, the Shudras were considered so low as to be prohibited from the study of the "Vedas," the earliest texts of sacred Indian literature. Shudras are now con-sidered to be a "scheduled caste" by the Indian Government, meaning that they are historically disadvantaged. The government's 2011 census showed that over 200m Indians belong to a scheduled caste. Adivasi The term is used to refer to a collection of ethnic and tribal groups regarded as India's aboriginal people. More than 95 per cent of Adivasis live in rural areas. Sixty-eight per cent do not reach high school. More than half of all Adivasi are dependent on forest produce, especially the tendu leaf, used in the production of Indian cigarettes, for their livelihoods. Dalits The word "Dalit," derived from Sanskrit, means "ground," "suppressed" or "crushed." Considered the lowliest people of all the castes, Dalits are typically associated with occupations regarded as ritually impure, such as those involving waste or carcasses. They are a people traditionally regarded as "untouchable."

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