CASTES IN INDIA: THEIR MECHANISM, GENESIS, AND DEVELOPMENT BY DR. B.R. AMBEDKAR

Dhananjay Shrikant Shinde
Jindal Global Law School'19

DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.24327/ijrsr.2020.1107.5485

ARTICLE INFO

Article History:
Received 13th April, 2020
Received in revised form 11th May, 2020
Accepted 8th June, 2020
Published online 28th July, 2020

Key Words:
Endogamy, Matrimony, Caste system, Caste.

INTRODUCTION

“Caste is a form of social stratification characterized by endogamy, hereditary transmission of a style of life which often includes an occupation, ritual status in a hierarchy, and customary social interaction and exclusion based on cultural notions of purity and pollution”4. To find the origin of the caste, we have to take a look at the Indian society, which is further divided into the Brahmins (the scholars), the Kshatriyas (the warriors), the Vaishyas (the skilled workers) and the Shudras (the unskilled workers). The birth of the caste system took place with the help of endogamy and matrimony. Endogamy is defined as “the fact or custom of having marriage only between members of the same group,”2 and matrimony is described as “the state of being married”5. In endogamy, the people from one caste are stopped from interacting with the people from other castes, which made caste unbreakable. Endogamy acts as the only feature of the caste as it prevents the people from being homogenous by adopting other people’s culture. Earlier, the people of India followed the practice of exogamy, which means “the fact or custom of marrying someone from outside of your group”4. As it was the standard custom of marriage, there were no castes in India. Everyone was living with integrity as there was no separation and discrimination among each other. But soon, the practice of exogamy was replaced by the practice of endogamy. Inter caste marriages were not allowed; as a result, interaction with the people from outside of the caste stopped. As a result of which in India once where there was no caste, now castes started to take shape. This proves the point that caste never existed in the first place, but by the practice of certain groups, it became a part of the society. Therefore, we can say the “origin of the caste is the origin of the mechanism, structure, and framework of endogamy”5. Before the caste system was prominent different classes of people existed. These classes were based on interests, skills, economy, social position of the people. People were able to change their class as they progress, but as some group of the class started to enclose itself, it created caste. The enclosed class became a rigid caste. According to Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, the brahmin class was the first class to enclose itself. The Brahmins enclosed their class and stopped interacting with the people from other classes; this transformed them into a caste. The brahmin class followed endogamy by distancing

---

4 Cambridge Dictionary.
themselves from other classes and by practicing customs such as sati, widowhood, and child marriage. By following these customs, they practiced endogamy and brought the caste system into existence. Since the brahmans constituted the upper class, the other classes also started imitating them and started enclosing themselves and not letting others enter their class. The other classes also enclosed themselves in a set frame, making class system permanent and next to impossible to break it. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar proves this theory by pointing out that the customs which were practiced by the brahmans for endogamy were imitated by the other classes. The only difference was the classes that were close to the brahmin class followed all the customs strictly where the classes which were distant from the brahmin class followed one of the customs rather than all of them. Therefore, the caste system in India is the outcome of imitation.

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar states in his paper that it is not a simple task to preserve and keep practicing the endogamy as the particular caste had to make sure that no member of their caste marries someone else from the outside of the caste, it also had to maintain the similar ratio of men and women who are at the age of getting married or else the members of the would have to get married to someone from the outside of their caste. The more significant issue was to keep widow or the surplus women and widower or the surplus man from getting remarried within and inside the caste. To stop this from happening, he gives the possibilities by which a caste can solve the issue of surplus women and surplus men. In the case of surplus women to get rid of them, there are two ways – by burning them alive with their dead husband, which is not practical or imposing widowhood, which leaves no chance of getting remarried and snatching bridegroom from other brides. This solves two major issues, i.e., it stops the surplus women from marrying someone else from the other caste and marrying someone within the caste, which would hamper the opportunity of other brides within the caste. In the case of surplus men, it is not practical to burn him with his dead wife because he is man, and men have higher status than women or by imposing celibacy. The problem with imposing celibacy was that he would not be able to maintain an equal number of members in the group. So, the best thing would be remarrying him with the girl who has not yet reached the age of marriage. By doing this, it solves two problems which are the man doesn’t marry someone else from outside of the caste nor snatches the opportunity from men of marrying a girl who has attained the age of marriage. Therefore, we can say that these measures preserve and promote endogamy and “without these customs and endogamy caste is fake”.6

To conclude, we can say that endogamy and matrimony are the origins of the caste system in India.

Reference


**How to cite this article:** Shameemrani K. 2020, Efficacy of Aedes Aegypti and Culex Quinquefasciatus Against Padina Gymnosporata And Caulerpa Racemosa. *Int J Recent Sci Res.* 11(07), pp. 39368-39369. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.24327/ijrsr.2020.1107.5485

*6Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, 1916. CASTES IN INDIA: THEIR MECHANISM, GENESIS AND DEVELOPMENT, pg. 8.*