

Origin of Caste System

The meaning of the word VARNA means colour. There are differences among social thinkers about the origin of castes, though three theories about castes' origins are quite famous.

Racial Theory

Occupational Theory of Caste System

The Political Theory of Caste System.

1. Racial Theory

It is supported by Herbert Risley and G.S.Ghurye.

In his book, *The Peoples of India*, Risley stated that castes' origin is linked to Racialism. According to him,

Aryans came from Middle Asia & were divided into 3 Varnas (Brahman, Kshatriya and Vaishya).

They defeated natives with their better warfare capabilities and merged them into the Varna system giving them Shudra status. The new system was called Chaturvarna.

Additionally, they invented endogamy rules to maintain their racial purity.

Ghurye also supported Risley and accepted that the caste system in India is a product of Aryans that originated in Ganga Yamuna Doab and then spread to other parts.

2. Occupational Theory

Nesfield is the proponent of this theory.

He believed that occupation is the basis of the origin of caste.

According to him, occupation and only occupation is the basis of the origin of the caste system. All castes are products of division of labour which by time became hereditary. Additionally, they started to marry within the occupational group to support vocational efficiency, which consolidated the caste system.

Critics of this theory believe that occupational groups are present in various societies, then why caste system didn't originate there.

3. Political Theory

Abbé Dubois is a supporter of this theory.

He believed that the caste system was the product of the Brahmanical mind. According to him, to maintain their supremacy for an extended period, they invented the caste system.

But critics don't support this theory. According to critics, Brahmins were neither the leader of the army nor the class that dealt in wealth, so how did they establish this system.