

Caste in Contemporary India

Type of Course: Core/ Optional **SC08**

Semester: IV &VI

Course Coordinator: Dr.Bidhan Chandra Dash (bidhan@aud.ac.in)

Although, concerted efforts to understand the caste system spans more than two hundred years, caste still remains an elusive social category. Not surprisingly, caste has been one of the central themes of Indian Sociology and Social Anthropology from its inception, yet academic perspectives on caste have proved inadequate in capturing the complexity of the system. The attempt of this course is to explain these complexities in understanding the caste system and its contemporary forms of manifestations. The course will begin with documenting contemporary forms of manifestation of caste, and link them to the sociological and historical perspectives that provide explanations to the 'modernity of caste'. The course will move beyond the disciplinary boundaries and introduce the students to the various forms of resistance movements to the caste-based inequalities and the way these movements have perceived the origin, emergence and dynamics of the caste system.

Assessment Situations

- There will be **FOUR** assessment situations each having 25% weightage. The assessments will consist of a home assignment, a book review, a test and a Group presentation.

Modules

- **M-I:Nature, Characteristics and Features of the Caste System (January 7, 8, 14)**

Ghurye, G.S. 1969. Caste and Race in India, Bombay: Popular Prakashan.

Srinivas, M.N. 2009. The Oxford India Srinivas, New Delhi: OUP

Srinivas, M.N., 1984. 'Some reflections on the nature of caste hierarchy', *Contributions to Indian Sociology* (NS), 18:2, pp. 151-167.

- **M-II: Observing, Experiencing Caste: Hierarchy and Difference Questions(January 15, 21)**

Deshpande, S. 2004, Contemporary India: A Sociological View, New Delhi, Penguin

Gupta, D. Interrogating Caste: Understanding Hierarchy and Difference in Indian Society, New Delhi: Penguin.

Srinivas, M.N.1996. "Introduction", in M.N. Srinivas, ed. Caste: Its Twentieth Century Avatar, New Delhi: Viking, Penguin Publishers.

- **M-III: Caste in Contemporary Indian Society: Some Observations, (January 22, 28)**

Srinivas, M.N. 1962. *Caste in Modern India and Other Essays*, London: Asia Publishing House.

Srinivas, M.N.1996. "Introduction", in M.N. Srinivas, ed. Caste: Its Twentieth Century Avatar, New Delhi: Viking, Penguin Publishers.

Srinivas, M.N. 2003, An Obituary on Caste as a System, Economic and Political Weekly, Vol - XXXVIII No. 05, February 01.

Kothari R. 1994. Rise of Dalits and the Renewed Debate on Caste, Economic and Political Weekly, Vol: XXIX, No: 26, June 25

- **First assignment will be provided here and the last date of submission of this assignment will be 3rd of February**

- **M-IV: Debate Over Origins (January 29, February 4)**

Srinivas, M.N. 2009. The Oxford India Srinivas, New Delhi: OUP

Quigley, D. 1993. *The Interpretation of Caste*, Oxford: Clarendon.

Dirks, Nicholas B. 2002. *Castes of Mind: Colonialism and the Making of Modern India*, Delhi: Permanent Black.

Ganguly, D. 2005. Caste, Colonialism and Counter Modernity, New York: Routledge.

- **M-V: Caste and the Question of Religion (February 5, 11)**

Srinivas, M.N. 2009. The Oxford India Srinivas, New Delhi: OUP

Srinivas, M.N. ed. 1996. Caste: Its Twentieth Century Avatar, New Delhi Penguin.

- **M-VI: Caste, Colonialism and Modern India (February 12, 18, 19)**

Bayly, S. 1999. *Caste, Society and Politics in India from the Eighteenth Century to the Modern Age*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Cohn, Bernard S. 1987. 'The census, social structure and objectification in South Asia', in his *An Anthropologist among the Historians and Other Essays*, Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Dirks, Nicholas B. 2002. *Castes of Mind: Colonialism and the Making of Modern India*, Delhi: Permanent Black

Padmanabh, S, 2011, Census in Colonial India and the Birth of Caste, Economic and Political Weekly, Vol: XLVI, No:33.

- **Second assignment will be provided here and the last date of submission will be 24th of February**
- **M-VII: Caste, Sociology and Social Anthropology in India (February 25, 26, March 4)**

Srinivas, M.N. 2009. *The Oxford India Srinivas*, New Delhi: OUP

Marriott, McKim, 1968. 'Caste ranking and food transactions, a matrix analysis', in Milton Singer and Bernard S. Cohn, eds., *Structure and Change in Indian Society*, Chicago: Aldine.

Quigley, D.1994. 'Is a theory of caste still possible?', in Mary Searle-Chatterjee and Ursula Sharma, eds., *Contextualising Caste: Post-Dumontian Approaches*, Oxford: Blackwell.

Quigley, D. 1988. 'Is caste a pure figment, the invention of Orientalists for their own glorification?', *Cambridge Anthropology*, 13: 1, pp. 20-36

Reddy, D.S. 2005. The Ethnicity of Caste, *Anthropological Quarterly*, Vol:78, No. 3.

- **M-VIII: Caste, Class and Power Debate (March 4, 5)**

Berremen, Gerald D. 1965. 'The study of caste ranking in India', *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology*:21, pp. 115-129.

Beteille, A., 1985. *Caste, Class, and Power: Changing Patterns of Stratification in a Tanjore Village*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Srinivas, M.N. 2009. *The Oxford India Srinivas*, New Delhi: OUP

- **M-IX: Caste Politics and Politics of Caste (March 11, 12)**

Sheth, D.L., 'The future of caste in India: a dialogue', *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, N.S., 25 (2): 1991, pp. 331-341.

Robb, Peter, ed., *The Concept of Race in South Asia*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1995.

- **Third assignment will be given here and the due date of submission will be 10th of March)**
- **M-X Understanding Caste: The Dalit Perspective (March 18, 19)**

Ambedkar, B.R. 1999. *The Annihilation of Caste*, New Delhi, Critical Quest .

Ilaiah, K. 1996. *Why I am not a Hindu: A Sudra Critique to Hindutva Philosophy, Culture and Political Economy*, Hyderabad, Samya.

Phule, J. 2004. *Slavery*, New Delhi, Critical Quest.

Omvedt, G. 2011. *Understanding Caste: From Ambedkar to Buddha*, Hyderabad: Orient Blackswan

Rao, A. 2009. *The Caste Question: Dalits and the Politics of Modern India*, Los Angeles: University of California Press.

- **M-XI: The Thesis on Modernity of Caste (March 25, 26)**

Coitti, M. 2010. *Retro-Modern India: Forging the Lower Caste Self*, New Delhi: Routledge.

Dirks, Nicholas B. 2002. *Castes of Mind: Colonialism and the Making of Modern India*, Delhi: Permanent Black

Ganguly, D. 2005. *Caste, Colonialism and Counter Modernity*, New York: Routledge.

- **M-XII: Towards a New Understanding of Caste and its Contemporary Manifestations (April 1, 2)**
- **Fourth assignment will be given here and the due date of submission will be 7th of April.**

Searle-Chatterjee, M., and Ursula Sharma, (eds.), *Contextualising Caste: Post-Dumontian Approaches*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1994.

Deshpande, A. 2011. *Grammar of Caste: Economic Discrimination in Contemporary India*, New Delhi: OUP

Thorat, S.K. 2009, *Dalits in Modern India: Search for a Common Destiny*, New Delhi: Sage

Representative Readings

Ambedkar, 1916. Caste in India: Their Mechanism, Genesis and Development, paper presented at an Anthropology Seminar Columbia University, on 9th May, available at http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00ambedkar/txt_ambekar_castes.html

Deshpande, S.2004, *Contemporary India: a sociological view*, Viking, New Delhi

Dirks, N. 1992, *Caste of Mind, Representations No. 37, Special Issue: Imperial Fantasies and Postcolonial Histories*, pp. 56-78

Padmanabh, S, 2011, Census in Colonial India and the Birth of Caste, *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol: XLVI, No:33.

Srinivas, M.N. 2009, *Varna and Caste*, in Oxford M.N. Srinivas, New Delhi, OUP

Srinivas M.N. 2000, *Caste: its twentieth Century Avatar*, Penguin, New Delhi