AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE CASTE ATTITUDES THAT PREVAIL AMONGST HINDUS IN THE DURBAN METROPOLITAN AREA

GOVINDAMMA PILLAY

Submitted in part fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in the Department of Oriental Studies in the Faculty of Arts at the University of Durban-Westville

SUPERVISOR : DR P R PILLAY

JOINT-SUPERVISOR : DR A SOOKLAL

DECEMBER 1991

DEDICATED TO:

To all those oppressed people's in the world and those who
have suffered indignities at the "hands" of the caste system.

To my husband for his untiring support.

CONTENTS

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1   THE SUBJECT OF STUDY : CASTE ATTITUDES THAT
        PREVAIL AMONGST HINDUS IN DURBAN

Caste being the pivot of Indian society has presented a challenge to researchers. Immigration to South Africa had a significant impact for the Hindus in relation to the caste system.By leaving India the immigrants were considered outcastes,since travel abroad was a taboo. Placed under a foreign government and living amongst different cultural, ethnic and linguistic groups made for exciting research. The Indians are a minority group in South Africa, living amidst Whites, Coloureds and African majority. The majority of the Indians reside in the city of Durban. Despite the Group Areas Act, which placed race groups in different areas, there is constant interaction between them. This interaction must have had some impact on the development of harmonious multi-racial relationships. It is therefore essential to investigate such relationships. The researcher has undertaken to ascertain the impact that the caste institution had on the Hindus in determining their attitudes concerning intergroup relations. The

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presence of deeply rooted caste attitudes derived from the socio-religious cultural heritage of the Indians in specific the Hindus.

An adequate understanding of the caste institution would be essential to successfully investigate intergroup relations.This would necessarily include a study of literary sources which would embrace a discussion of the Vedic texts. It is hoped that the findings of this research will widen our understanding of this social institution which has no parallel in the history of the world.

The institution of caste in Indian society is unique, especially when one considers the fact that it has been in existence for well over a thousand years with strong adherence to it. The caste system is deeply rooted in a distortion of the <u>varna</u> system which is one the doctrines of Hinduism. The varna system divides society into four orders viz. <u>Brahmin</u>, <u>Kshatriya</u>, <u>Vaishya</u> and <u>Sudra</u>. The four orders corresponds with four parts of the human body viz. the head, arms,body and feet respectively as postulated by the <u>Purushasukta</u> hymn in the <u>Rig Veda</u>. The varna system depicts the spiritual nature of man. Man's progress in the varna order is dependent on his spiritual development. This spiritual development is

based on the four stages of life (varnasramadharma)
viz. student (brahmacarya, householder) (grhastha),
forest-dweller (varnaprastha) and renunciant
(sanyasi). The fluidity of the varna order was
disturbed to a certain extent when jati came into
effect. The jati system placed an individual in a
specific order by birth. Unlike the varna system it
did not lend itself to fluidity. If an individual was
born into the Sudra varna, for instance, it was not
possible for the individual to become a Brahmin in one
lifetime. Spiritual development for a Sudra in this
lifetime would only improve his status in the next
life. If the fluidity of the varna system was
somewhat disturbed with the advent of the jati order,
it was completely lost when caste began to operate as
an institution. Since the caste institution came into
effect any hope for upward mobility was completely
destroyed.

Caste as an institution has been deeply entrenched in
the Hindu society and this must have had profound
effects upon human relations. Rejection of other
castes and exclusiveness in loyalty to one's own caste
has helped to create a thoroughly fragmented society.
For the lower caste it meant deprivation of all
opportunities that the higher castes blessed with.
Caste has stagnated society through lack of use of the
intellectual capacity of the lower castes. It has

capacity of the lower castes. It has actually created a society which was monopolized by the Brahmin caste.

The Indians who were recruited to work as Indentured labourers in the Colony of Natal during the second half of the nineteenth century were mainly from South and North Eastern India where the caste system was well established and embedded in society. They brought with them all the ideas, attitudes and prejudices derived from their religious traditions and transplanted them here. Irrespective of the fact they were living amidst an African and Colonial European social environment they managed to successfully practise it for over a century.

Although papers have been presented concerning caste in Natal, to this date no comprehensive research has been undertaken in this field. A survey on the available literature on caste reveals that caste practices is strongest amongst the Gujarati-speaking Hindu and that the impact of secular education has helped to lessen caste prejudices. Whilst the above statement is substantially true, the Researcher will attempt to prove that caste practices are also strong in the other linguistic groups.

1.2   AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The primary aims and objectives of this study is as follows:

i. To examine the evolution of the caste system and the role of caste in Hindu society.

ii. Since this dissertation entails a study of caste attitudes that prevail amongst Hindus in the Durban Metropolitan Area attempts are made to determine the impact and role of the caste system in Durban.

iii. To investigate the reasons for the resilience of the caste system despite the forces of westernization and secularization.

iv. The study also aims to investigate whether there has been changes today in the practice of the caste system from that of the earlier period and if so to indicate reasons for such change.

v. Finally to contribute academically to a wider understanding of a minority group in South Africa.

1.3   METHODOLOGY

The Researcher has used the phenomenological method in

researching the field of study. Phenomenology seeks to understand the phenomenon of religion or rather specific phenomenon of religion.

The theoretical context of this dissertation involved an hermeneutical study of the primary scriptures and Hinduism namely: The Rig Veda, Bhagavad Gita, Ramayana, Mahabharata, Brahmanas and Laws of Manu (Manu Smriti).

The Researcher used the empirical method in order to ascertain the attitude of the Hindu community to caste and the prevalence of the practice in the Durban Metropolitan area. Three hundred questionnaires based on random sample method were distributed. To supplement the questionnaires personal interviews based on random sample method was conducted. The return rate of questionnaire sample were quite good. Out of 300 questionnaires distributed 100 were received.

The field work for this study was conducted over a one year period from October 1990 to October 1991. The distribution and collection of questionnaires and also interviews were carried out by the Researcher. The questionnaires were left with the respondents and collected at a later date, this was done to exclude researcher bias. The geographical distribution of the

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respondents were evenly spread throughout the metropolitan area namely: Reservoir Hills, Effingham Heights, Kenville, Clare Estate, Overport, Phoenix, Durban Central and Chatsworth.

Questionnaires were distributed amongst the four linguistic groups namely: Tamil, Gujarati, Hindi and Telugu. The questionnaires were distributed according to percentages seeing that the Tamil and Hindi-speaking group form the majority and the Gujarati and Telugu-speaking group form the minority group.

To analyze findings of the research the Data Base computer program was used. Items on the questionnaire that required commitment was processed manually by the Researcher.

The interviews conducted by the researcher supplemented the questionnaire very well. It gave that added piece of information that was required for the analysis.

1.4   **PROBLEMS OF STUDY**

There were a few problems concerning interviews:
1.   Reluctance on the part of the interviewee to

answer most of the questions.

2. Even though some individuals agreed to being interviewed, they did not portray their true feelings. This at times made analysis of their attitudes difficult.

3. On numerous occasions interviewees have contradicted themselves. For instance if the interviewee indicated that he/she believed in caste marriages, he/she would later assert that they had no belief in caste marriages.

Concerning interviews there were also the good side.

1. It has helped to gain a deeper insight into certain questions on the questionnaire.

2. More indepth questions could be asked.

3. It was easier for the researcher to observe contradiction and try to rectify it by probing deeper.

Concerning the questionnaire a large number of respondents abstained from answering certain questions. It would seem that the respondents found it easier to answer yes or no rather than giving an

explanation to their answers. Some of the respondents seemed to have confused caste and religion. This was found mainly amongst the age group 20+.

Although the return rate of the questionnaires were good, many abstained from answering certain questions on the questionnaire which makes it difficult for analysis. The fact that respondents did not answer shows that they were afraid to make any sort of commitment. The sense of embarrassment the caste system creates could be another reason for respondents abstaining from answering. Had all the respondents answered instead of abstaining the results could have been quite different.

Contradictions on the part of the Gujarati speaking Respondents made it difficult for analysis. They seemed to have put on a facade of non-belief in the caste system, although on occasions they stated otherwise. One of the reasons for this as already stated could be embarassment.

Finally the information gathered by the Researcher through interviews and questionnaires were then enhanced by primary and secondary sources.

CHAPTER 2

CONCEPTS OR VARNA, JATI

AND CASTE

2.   INTRODUCTION

The concepts <u>Varna</u>, <u>Jati</u> and Caste has always been
subject to continued dispute and controversy.   A
number of theories have been postulated by scholars of
Indology.   It is my intention to examine these
theories in order to place the above mentioned
concepts in its proper context.

2.1   VARNA SYSTEM

The <u>Nirukta</u>[1] 11:3:2 states that the word <u>varna</u> is
derived from the root "<u>vri</u>" "to choose, to appoint."[2]
It therefore means "one to be chosen, worthy of
choice, or that to which one is appointed or elected
with due regard to his attributes and works."   The
person who is entitled to the position of a <u>Brahmin</u> is
the one who knows the Vedas, worships god and is
endowed with such noble qualities as learning. A
<u>Kshatriya,</u> is the one who is illustrious and devoted
to the protection of the people in virtue of his

ability to destroy the enemy, and eagerness for battle. The two arms of the Kshatriya are to minister to the happiness of all and the possession of that excellence which springs from the good qualities; or the arms of a Kshatriya are his strength and powers.[3]

Apte[4] agrees with the Nirukta when he states that varna comes from the root "vri" meaning, "to choose, select, select as a boon, to choose for oneself."

Both Williams and Suryakanta defined varna as

> "colour = race, species, kind, sort, character, nature, quality, class of men, tribe, order, caste."[5] "Colour of the Aryans and non-Aryans later becoming synonymous with caste."[6]

Both these definitions of varna translated as colour is superficial since colour has a deeper significance. This significance of colour is echoed in the Bhagavad Gita, IV:13, which states:

> "The fourfold order was created by me according to the divisions of quality and work. Though I am its creator, know me to be incapable of action or change."[7]

2.2   GUNAS

At this point it is pertinent to examine the guna concept. This is best explained in the Samkhya philosophy of Hinduism. According to philosophy the

evolution of the world of matter and life is from _Prakrti_. According to _Samkhya_ the word _Prakrti_ is a Sanskrit word composed of the prefix, _pra_, "before or first", and the root _kr_, "to make or produce". The word _prakrti_ means the original substances, which consists of three classes of neutral entities called _gunas_: _Sattva_, representing truth and virtue, _Rajas_, present in all that is active, fiery or aggressive, and _Tamas_, the principle of darkness, dullness and inactivity. These are postulated to account for the diversified objects of experience.

The _gunas_ are continually associating with one another for the fullest expression of their inner potentialities. They form themselves into groups, and not only are the inner constituents of each of the groups working in union with one another for the manifestation of the groups as wholes, for the manifestation of more and more developed forms. Causation is thus viewed as the actualization of the potentials. The order of the cosmic operations is deduced from the inherent inner order and relations of the neutral reals. Relations are conceived as the function of these reals with which they are metaphysically identical _prakrti_ as regarded as the hypothetical state of the pure potential conditions of these reals. It is supposed that these pure potential state break up as the stuff of cosmic mind. This

partly individuates itself as individual minds, and partly develops itself into space, from that into potential matter, and later on into actual gross matter as atoms. "The individual minds evolve out of themselves and various sensory and conative functions and the synthetic and analytic functions called _manas_. They also reveal themselves in the psychical planes or personalities called _manas_.

The entire creation is the interplay of the three _gunas_. When the primal equilibrium of _Sattva_, _Rajas_ and _Tamas_ is disturbed, they begin to interact and creation begins. All three must be present in every aspect of creation because, with creation, the process of evolution begins and this needs two forces opposed to each other and one that is complementary to both. _Sattva_ and _Rajas_ are opposed to each other, while _Rajas_ is the force complementary to both. _Tamas_ destroys the created state; _Sattva_ creates a new state while the first is being destroyed. In this way, through the simultaneous processes of creation and destruction the process of evolution continues. The force of _Rajas_ plays a necessary but neutral part in creation and destruction; it maintains a bond between _Sattva_ and _Tamas_. Thus all three _gunas_ are necessary for any state of manifested life.[8]

he three gunas which work their way out in society were treated as being equivalent to four different types of human beings. Those in whom the Sattvic quality dominates are called Brahmins. Those in whom the Sattvic-Rajasic quality dominates, are called Kshatriya. Those in whom the Rajasic-Tamasic quality dominates are called Vaishyas. Those in whom only the Tamasic quality dominates are Sudras.

Swami Chidbhavananda maintains that varna literally means colour. White, red and black are the respective colours of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. It may be mentioned here that the entire universe is an imprint of trigunas or tricolour. With the variations of the three gunas in man his colour undergoes change. The four classes of men are respectively; white, lotus-red, yellow and black in colour. But this does not refer to the colour of skin. If it did all white races would be Brahmins, Red Indians of America kshatriyas, Mongolians Vaishyas and persons like Rama and Krishna Sudras. Facts in nature do not warrant this position. The worth of man is in his mind and not in the body. Mind has its colour according to gunas. As man evolves, guna and mind which are interrelated get refined. The colour or class of man goes up accordingly. From Sudrahood to Brahminhood man evolves mentally, passing through Vaishyahood and Kshatriyahood. The enlightened alone can see into the

colour of the mind and know who is who among them.[9]

The worldly man's classification of himself into the four varnas based on birth and parentage is merely a convention hardly ever tallying with his attainments. But the Vedanta philosophical position is that among four brothers all four varnas may be evident. The real classification is based on the degree of ethical and spiritual perfection. Things sentient and insentient are all constituted of the three gunas. They lend themselves therefore to the natural division into the four varnas mentioned by the Lord. The plan of nature is that beings low in varna evolve into those high.

Hutton maintains that varna seems to be originally the four classes into which Riq Vedic society was divided Rangozin disagrees with Hutton's view. He puts forward the following theory. He maintains that only three varnas are enjoined to study the Vedas and no mention of this duty is made among those of the fourth. The first three classes are the Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas who were considered twice-born (dvija). From this distinction the Sudras were excluded. The twice-born were so-called since: When a boy of the three higher varnas attained a certain age, considered as years of discretion, he was initiated, that is admitted under the solemn

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ceremonies into the religious community, after which he was placed under a guru, invariably a Brahmin for instruction in the Vedas. The initiation was regarded as the youth's second birth, his birth into the spiritual life, wherefore the three higher classes took pride in the appellation of twice-born.[10]

Scott in his book: Social Ethics in Modern Hinduism, very aptly describes the varna system. He maintains that

> "varna is a pattern of our being and a law of individual development which each person should follow for himself."[11]

This view is echoed in the Bhagavad Gita 18:41 when the Lord states:

> "The duties of Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas, as also of Sudras, scorcher of foes, are distributed according to the gunas born of their own nature."[12]

Svabhava (nature) is another name attributed to Prakrti or Maya Sakti inherent in Iswara. This cosmic reality is constituted of the three gunas. Variation of Karma is based on the variation of the gunas. Karma in turn leaves its samskaras or impressions on the mind as the samskaras get refined they go to modify the nature of the individual. That karma and nature are inseparable is a fact ever to the borne in mind. So it is possible to know the varna of an

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individual from his nature and <u>karma</u>. Of the two, the nature is subtle and hard to be observed. A man of intuition alone can see into it, just as we all cognize the contents of the glass case. <u>Karma</u>, on the other hand, is gross. It is possible for us to get at the <u>varna</u> of a man from the <u>karma</u> to which he is given. The way in which a man makes use of his life is a sure indicator of the <u>varna</u> of that man.[13]

Gandhi held that <u>varna</u> means predetermination of the choice of man's profession. <u>Varna</u> is not a thing superimposed on Hindus, but by men who were trustees of their welfare discovered the law for them. <u>Varna</u> has nothing to do with caste. It is "monster of caste" that masquerade in the guise of <u>varna</u>. There are four varnas, though it is not a rigid division inherent in <u>varna</u> itself.[14]

Hutton maintains that at the time of the <u>Rig Vedic</u> invasion the four <u>varnas</u> must be held to represent a fourfold division into classes. <u>Brahmins</u> who acted as priests, <u>Kshatriyas</u> who were rulers, nobles and fighters, <u>Vaishyas</u> the people generally, ordinary householders, and <u>Sudras</u>, the servile classes drawn from the people of the country. The last term does not even occur in the early parts of the collection of the <u>Vedas</u>. Hutton further states that certain colours are associated with the four <u>varnas</u> - white with the

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Brahman, red with the Kshatriya, yellow with the Vaishya and black with the Sudra; Varna means colour.[15] Hutton uses the term varna to mean colour in the physical sense. But as already explained colour in the spiritual context gives proper meaning and understanding to the term varna. In the context colour can be explained in accordance with the three gunas – Sattva, Rajas and Tamas – the qualities that exists in people. It is these qualities that determines a person's varna.

Many "orthodox" Hindus believe that the original varnas are still in existence today and that they represent the manifest of transmigration of souls and of divine justice. In support of this view both scholars and theologians cite two sources: firstly an early hymn in the Rig Veda 10:90 which states:

> "The Brahmin was his (Purusha)
> mouth; the Kshatriya was made
> his arms; the being (called) the
> Vaishya, he was his thighs; the
> Sudra sprang from his feet."[16]

and secondly, the much later Manava Dharmasastras (Laws of Manu), in which the law-giver cites the Purushasukta as the source and justification for the social system of his own time. Manu 1.31 states that:

> "But for the sake of the
> prosperity of the worlds, he
> caused the Brahmin, the
> Kshatriya, the Vaishya and the
> Sudra to proceed from his mouth,
> his arms, his thighs and his

feet."[17]

According to Smith, most of the misunderstanding on the subject of caste system has arisen from the persistent mistranslation of Manu's term _varna_ as caste, where as it should be rendered as class or order or by some equivalent term. The compiler of the institutes of Manu was aware of the distinction between _varna_ and caste. While he mentions approximately fifty castes, he refers to only four _varnas_.[18]

Mees espouses the theory that a man's _varna_ is his natural and right position in society; it was the early Hindu ideal. He believed that

> "_Varna_ is the Hindu ideal and theoretical picture of class based upon _Dharma_, (the righteous life). We have not rendered _varna_ as class because _varna_ presents the theory and ideal of class and the word class at once suggests historical and actual classes. We have translated _varna_ as natural class."[19]

Mees further states that, the _varnas_ are a population gradient of social usefulness.

> "The four _varnas_ represent degrees of sociality from the most highly social to the extreme non-social. In a healthy and harmonious society the population classes correspond to _varnas_."[20]

Cox maintains that Mees conceives of his _varna_ hierarchy as a gradient of socio-physiological groups.

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He compares this "natural hierarchy" to the organs of the human body, functioning with varying degrees of excellence. The early authorities, however, thought that although the mouth was superior to the foot, each was in its own way, equally efficient. But this theory of "natural class" is even more foreign to anything we know to have ever existed in India. it is in reality a variation of the Platonic-aristotelian philosophy of superiority of "inner nature" at birth and desirability of fashioning a society that will permit the finest natures to gravitate to their natural positions.[21] "Everyman", states Mees,

> "belongs to a certain varna with his character, social behaviour, and function....and as he unfolds and grows he may himself raise his status to a higher varna."[22]

Upadhyay asserts that

> "the establishment of the varna duties brings the society back from chaos, contributing to better economic prospects, especially boosting agriculture, which signify the return of Kreta age."[23]

The kreta age is the first yuga of four periods viz: kreta, treta, dwarpara and kali.During the kreta yuga period it has been recorded that dharma prevailed predominantly.

The Kali age signifies the disappearance of 'Srauta

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and Smarta dharma, drought adversely affects trade and commerce. The paucity of food grains makes the people subsist on roots, fruits, flesh and fish. The indiscriminative non-vegetarianism reduces the people to one social order. But, in the course of time this subsistence too is exhausted. The chaos of the age is overcome in Satyayuga whose start is marked by the re-establishment of varna-system and the promulgation of the Srauta and Smarta duties by the sages. They are put to action which leads to the ascendancy of dharma and the production of varieties of food grains in abundance. Thus the social philosophy of the elite seems to be that the proper operation of varna dharma creates the satyayuga conditions of economic prosperity.[24] In fact when Manu VIII:418 writes:

> "(The King) should carefully compel Vaishyas and Sudras to perform the work (prescribed) for them; for if these two (varnas) swerved from their duties, they would throw this (whole) world into confusion",[25]

he must have been estimating the danger of such a social situation to the varna-based economy. Both these classes being the very backbone of the economic life of society, they were to be made to perform their time-honoured duties by using the coercive power of the state.

Barnes and Becker without any specific implications

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for modern situations may yet be misleading in the conclusions on the Varna order. They state:

> "that, it is significant that the four varnas providing the main scaffolding of Indian caste structure mean the four colours. The varnas shade off from light to dark, with the priestly Brahmins, purest blooded and most jealously endogamous descendants of the Aryan invaders of about 3000 BC and therefore, at the highest and lightest part of the framework."[26]

It would be remarkable if the thousands of castes in India really shaded off into a distinguishable gradation of tints from dark to light, and if each tint faithfully reproduced itself, protecting its "purity" all the while by endogamy from incursions of darkness.

The varna system would have been an ideal one provided it was continued without interference. As it is always true an ideal does not always remain intact. This is evident from the varna order as it becomes distorted. Man in his thirst for power will corrupt an ideal society to suit his own ends.

The one varna to benefit from the superior position is the Brahmins. Through selfishness they managed to raise themselves as will be noted in Chapter 3 to a superior position in society. Thus the fluidity of the varna order became restricted since it restricted the lower caste from improving their social status.

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With the introduction of the Jati system one is placed into a certain group by birth. The struggle for power between the <u>Brahmins</u> and <u>Kshatriyas</u> intensified. In this intense struggle for power the <u>Vaishyas</u> and <u>Sudras</u> were ignored. This distortion of the <u>varna</u> evolved into the Jati system which rigidly placed man into a specific order by birth.

2.3   JATI

The researcher is inclined to agree with Sooklal[27] when he states that, "Both <u>varna</u> and <u>jati</u> are translated as caste in the English language but are actually poles apart. Both denote differences in human nature but whereas <u>varna</u> is spiritual, <u>jati</u> is social.... When we speak of the varna system of Hindu culture, we do not mean <u>jati</u>, or caste system of the medieval period, based upon birth. Hence we note that the term caste refers to <u>jati</u> and not <u>varna</u>.The word <u>jati</u> is derived from the root <u>jan</u>, which literally means birth. The importance of the word <u>jati</u>, is that it emphasizes the birth of a man as the determining factor of his caste. As birth really determined the caste of a person, the word <u>jati</u> was usually used to denote caste.[28]

The distinctive characteristic of <u>jati</u> is the special and exclusive occupation claimed by or attributed to

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it. Throughout South Asia there are such jatis as "Barber", "Potter" and "Leather worker", whose very names indicate the primary occupation supposedly followed, now or in the past. Some writers have therefore theorized, with little evidence and diminishing scholarly support, that the present jatis of South Asia derive from hypothetical ancient occupational associations that in time became hereditary and endogamous marriage groups.[29]

The tendency for jatis to be ranked hierarchically has drawn the attention of sociologists and anthropologists during this century. Research has focused on such areas as the following: criteria for ranking, regional differences in ranking, ranking and social distance, local conflicts over rank order and the significance of hierarchy in Indian thought and society. For many Hindus, the jatis to which they belong are simply subdivisions of the classical varnas. Thus all Brahmans, although they are members of a wide variety of distinct and endogamous jatis, claim ultimate membership in the wide Brahmin varna supposedly of classical origin. Other jatis are assigned or assign themselves, to the Kshatriya, Vaishya and Sudra varnas. In addition there is a large number of jatis considered to be outside or even below, the entire caste system.[30]

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A jati can also be defined in the following manner:

> "A jati is an endogamous hereditary social group that has a name and a combination of attributes. All members of a jati are expected to act according to their jati attributes, and each member shares his jati status in the social hierarchy of the village locality of India."[31]

The term jati group refers to the members of a jati who live in the same village. An Indian village typically holds several jati groups from two to more than thirty, each with its traditional rights and duties, its privileges and restraints; it's special contribution in services and manufactures to the total functioning of the community. The people of each group in the village maintain marriage and kinship ties with their compeers in other villages. Every person is thus a member of his village and his jati.

Within a man's jati are those with whom he may have close and unquestioned relations. He may deal with others daily, however, his closest links, those of marriage and kinship, are only with his jati members. His life and aspirations are intertwined with those of his jati. So a person's jati affects the nature of his relations with many other people. His family commands his most intense loyalty and efforts. His village encompasses much of his life, but his jati

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provides him with his circle of kin; it is usually a source of social support, and contributes much of his identity in villages affairs.[32]

Mandelbaum puts forward the theory that _jati_ refers to the people of each endogamous group that follow certain characteristic patterns of behaviour and have certain assigned attributes - among them a specialized occupation - according to which the group is ranked. Every member of the endogamous group share in the rank position of the group and this effects his relations with members of other groups. The term _jati_ is used here for this endogamous group. The word is common to a member of the languages of northern India, being derived from the Sanskrit root meaning, "to be born". This word carries the connection of one's social birthright as well as one's inherited group.[33]

Lamb is of the opinion that, from Sanskrit, Indians have two different words for the two distinct kinds of groupings: _Varna_ refers to the original fourfold division, _jati_ to todays more numerous groups. The word _jati_ used to be translated as subcaste. But since _jati_ is the effective social unit, the group within which all marriages normally take place, many sociologists translate it as caste.[34]

Lamb goes on further to state that the _jati_ system

arose out of the organisation of society in hereditary
monopolistic guilds. A sufficient explanation is the
almost continuous arrival over the centuries of new
tribes. These were probably incorporated into Hindu
society as new castes or were divided into groups,
each of which became a new caste or subcaste assigned
a place in the theoretical four original orders. He
further argued that _jatis_ are essentially extended
kinship groups. In any event, even _jatis_ assigned to
the same _varna_ may differ from one another so
radically in their customs that it is hard to believe
that they could have ever been part of the same
endogamous group.[35]

Reuck and Knight are of the belief that, in India
endogamy is a basic principle. This as the
consequence that all members of

> "my subcaste (_jati_) are my
> kinsmen and, vice-versa, all my
> kinsmen are members of my
> subcaste. The subcaste groups
> thus formed are clearly defined.
> Each individual is born into a
> particular named group which is
> the same as that of both his
> parents. He or she remains a
> member of that group throughout
> life."[36]

They go on further to state that, the endogamous
segments, jatis, are committed to internal structural
solidarity as well as to organic coordination with the
large multi-caste social system. This coordination is

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brought about through functional specialization of endogamous groups, as also through hierarchical relationship among the jatis.[37]

The social and cultural systems of caste thus segment the total society in a region into many jati groups committed to a particular britti's (caste vocation) and styles of life, arranged in a social hierarchy defined in terms of the cultural value of the purity and impurity of these occupations and styles of life.[38]

Much confusion has arisen out of the indiscriminate use of the word caste to denote varna and jati. Varna is not the same as jati, the former representing the fourfold division of society and the latter representing the smaller groups existing in society. Manu distinctly says that there are only four varnas, Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Sudra, while he speaks of about fifty jatis, such as Ambastha, Chandala, Dravida, Yavana, etc. But even Manu in X:31 when he states:

> "But men excluded (by the Aryans, vahya), who approach females of higher rank, beget races (varna) still more worthy to be excluded, low men (hina) still lower races, even fifteen (in number)",[39]

has confused jati and varna. The confusion is due to

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the fact that the <u>Brahmana</u> can be called both <u>varna</u> and <u>jati</u>, and so <u>Sudra</u> is also called a <u>jati</u>, though there are many <u>jatis</u> which are comprehended under the name <u>Sudra</u>, and a group cannot be found today which is simply known by the name <u>Sudra</u>.

2.4   <u>CASTE</u>

A definition given by Kroeber on caste, is rightly regarded as classical. In his article on caste, he enumerates the characteristics of caste (endogamy, heredity, relative rank) and goes on to say:

> "Castes are a special form of social classes, which in tendency at least are present in every society. Caste differ from social classes, however, in that they have emerged into social consciousness to the point that custom and law attempt their rigid and permanent separation from one another. Social classes are the generic soil from which caste systems at various times and places independently grown up."[40]

Mayer puts forward the theory that, the customary way of life determines the social prestige of a caste and its position in the caste hierarchy. Each caste has its particular rank in the social order which it strives to maintain or improve. Its position in the rank hierarchy is defined by the expressed or assumed opinions and attitudes of the <u>Brahmins</u> who rank at the

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top and set the standards of respectability. Other

castes are graded downwards according to their social

distance from the Brahmins. The caste system as a

whole thus represents a successful imposition, largely

by means of religious rituals, of the overlordship of

the Brahmins on all other social classes. It is

essentially a religious order hinging upon the

indispensability of the services of a hereditary,

exclusive priesthood. Economically, the system

involves the exploitation of a large number of

depressed and untouchable castes who form a submerged

fifth of the total population, living in abject

poverty. Although its precise form has changed from

time to time, the caste system has endured for over

three thousand years.[41]

Senart defines caste as:

> "....a corporate group, exclusive
> and in theory at least,
> rigorously hereditary. It
> possesses a certain traditional
> and independent organisation, a
> chief and a council, and as
> occasion demands it meets in
> assemblies endowed with more or
> less full authority. Often
> united in the celebrations of
> certain festivals, it is further
> bound together by a common
> profession and by the practice of
> common customs which bear more
> especially upon marriage, food
> and various cases of impurity.
> Finally, it is armed, in order to
> assure its authority, with a
> jurisdiction of fairly wide
> extent, capable . by the
> implication of certain penalties,
> especially of banishment, either
> absolute or revocable, of
> enforcing the power of the

community."[42]

Caste may be defined as a collection of families or group of families bearing a common name; claiming common descent from a mythical ancestor, human or divine; professing to follow the same hereditary calling; and regarded by those who are competent to give an opinion as forming a single homogeneous community.   The name generally denotes or is associated with a specific occupation.   A caste is almost invariably endogamous in a sense that a member of a large circle denoted by the common name may not marry outside of that circle, there are usually a number of smaller circles each of which is also endogamous.[43]

The definition by Senart does not seem to distinguish between caste and the caste system; indeed it appears to confuse the concepts.   Otherwise it is much like Risley's, definition in that both seek to circumscribe the operating unit of the caste system.   The following three definitions recognize more or less the broader social context of castes:

> "Repulsion, hierarchy, and hereditary specialization: caste includes these three elements. It is necessary to consider all three if one is to have a complete definition of the caste system. We say that a society is characterized by such a system if it is divided into a large number of hereditarily specialized

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> groups, hierarchically superposed
> and mutually opposed; if it does
> not tolerate the principle of
> rising in status, of group
> mixture, of changing occupation;
> if it is opposed altogether to
> the mixture of blood, to
> advancement in social status, and
> to a change of vocation."[44]

A caste may be defined as an endogamous and hereditary subdivision of an ethnic unit occupying a position of superior or inferior rank of social esteem in comparison with other such subdivisions.[45]

A society subjected to a caste system consists of a number of subdivisions or castes which are exclusively endogamous, which show a strong tendency to be socially exclusive, which perpetuate themselves hereditarily, which are hierarchically superposed on a basis of standard supposedly cultural, and which by the working of these four tendencies within the social field of their own delimitations may split up into more and more castes indefinitely.[46]

According to Gokhale, caste is a corporate group, exclusive and in theory at least, rigorously hereditary. It possesses a certain traditional and independent organization, a chief and a council, and whenever occasion demands it meets in assemblies endowed with more or less full authority.[47]

Some scholars maintains that the words caste and subcaste are not absolute but comparative in signification. The larger group will be called a caste and the smaller group a subcaste. These divisions and subdivisions are introduced on different principles. In this way two hundred million Hindus are divided and subdivided that there are castes that cannot marry outside fifteen families.[48] Hutton disagrees with this view, as there are a number of castes, for instance, particularly in Southern India, which have been recruited from the mixed offsprings of other castes which are members of the caste itself, as well as from those who, having a similar origin, are already members of the caste. Such castes are the ambalavasi caste of malabar, the shaqirdpesha of Orissa, and the Karan caste of Orissa. It is noticeable that the first of the above mentioned four castes is one of temple servants, while the latter three are all occupational. Generally speaking, however, the definition is valid, though there are still parts in India where caste is fluid enough to make it possible for persons to acquire a caste into which they were not born. Further, while all castes and many subcastes are strictly endogamous, many subcastes are not, but intermarry with other subcastes within the same caste.[49]

"Caste", says Panikkar,

> "is a comprehensive system of
> life, a religion rather than a
> changing social order, and the
> rigidity with which its rules are
> enforced would put to shame even
> the Great Inquisition."[50]

Samuel maintains that the word caste is derived from the Portuguese and Spanish word "casta", which means race. It has been used by Europeans since the middle ages to denote the different classes into which Hindus are divided.[51]

Caste can be defined as the way a people perceive their social structure. It is important because it influences their behaviour. The caste system of even a small religion is extraordinarily complex and it does not fit into the varna frame except at one or two points. For instance, the local caste group claiming to be Kshatriya may be a tribal or near tribal group or a low caste which acquired political power as recently as a hundred years ago. The local trading class again might be similar in its culture to one in the Sudra category and far from removed from the Sanskritized Vaishya of the varna system. Finally, castes included in the Sudra category might not only be servants, but landowners wielding much power over everyone including local Brahmins.[52]

Prasad defines caste as

> "a system of hereditary castes
> such as prevails in modern India,
> a system by which a man's social

position or his profession and circle in which he can marry, are to be determined by his birth in a particular caste, irrespective of his character, qualifications or inclinations. It should be distinguished from <u>varna</u>, the division of all men into four classes or varnas which prevailed in ancient India and was originally based on merit and not on birth."[53]

According to Dutt, it may be stated that the most apparent features of the present day caste system are that the members of different castes cannot have matrimonial connections with any but persons of their own caste; that there are restrictions, though not so rigid as in the matter of marriage, about a member of one caste eating and drinking with that of a different caste; that in many cases there are fixed occupation for different castes; that there is some hierarchical gradation among the castes, the most recognised position being that of the <u>Brahmins</u> at the top; that birth alone decides a man's connection with his caste for life, unless expelled for violation of his caste rules, and that transition from one caste to another, high or low is not possible. The prestige of the <u>Brahmin</u> caste is the cornerstone of the whole organisation.[54]

The simplest definition of caste is Wint's:

"A caste is a group of families whose members can marry with each other and can eat in each other's company without believing themselves polluted."[55]

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To this one must add that each of these groups has its place in a hierarchy. It is above, or below, or equal to, every one of the others; and in theory everyone knows where each group comes.

These groups bear no relation to the original four. There are today hundreds of castes; and even these hundreds are not the totality. The fundamental unit is indeed not the caste but the subcaste, which is the normal unit, for instance, for marriage, and which, as Mayer points out,

> "while clearly part of a larger unit, has enough properties in common to be a caste-like unit."[56]

According to Masson-Oursel, a caste is a group of persons traditionally given up to the same occupations, drawing their origins from the same human or divine ancestor, and bound in one body by determined rights, duties and opinions inherited from their tradition. This group is called a jati, because a man belongs to it from birth, it has this feature in common with the family, but it is stricter, for the family normally takes individuals who are not related by blood, adopted children and wives.[57]

The caste society may be described as the segmentation of society in a rigid fashion, the various segments being based on descent and permitting no mobility or

intermarriage, a differentiation which goes hand in hand with social inequality, that is with an unequal claim to esteem and status; we mean also an inequality which is not only de facto but de jure, it is as it should be, so that the lower castes are despised, not only unhappily underprivileged, they bear a stigma apart from being unfortunate. Conversely the higher castes are not merely entitled to the possession of coveted privileges by are also in some way exalted and endowed with a higher dignity.[58]

If we consider the current usage of the word, caste seems first of all to arouse the idea of hereditary specialization. The son of a blacksmith will be a blacksmith just as a son of a warrior will be a warrior. In the assigning of tasks no account is taken of expressed desires nor of manifest aptitudes but only of filiation. Race and occupation are bound together. None other than the son can continue to work of the father and the son cannot choose any other occupation than that of his father. Profession may become the obligatory monopolies of families, to perform them is not merely a right but a duty imposed by birth upon the children. Such a spirit must reign in a society before we can say that society is subject to the rule of caste.[59]

It may be claimed that while caste is a social unit in

a quasi-organic system of society and throughout India is consistent enough to be immediately identifiable, the nature of the unit is variable enough to make a concise definition difficult. A caste system is one whereby a society is divided into a number of self-contained and completely segregated units (castes); the mutual relations between which are ritually determined in a graded scale.[60]

The Cambridge History of India defines caste as

> "an endogamous group or collection of such groups bearing a common name and having the same traditional occupation, who are so linked together by these and other ties such as the tradition of a common origin and the possession of the same tutelary deity, and the same social status, ceremonial observances and family priests that they regard themselves and are regarded by others, as forming a single homogeneous community."[61]

Reuck and Knight maintain that "a caste system is comprised of groups which implies that each rank in the hierarchy is shared by socially distinct aggregates of people. These people recognize that they comprise of discreet, bounded, ranked entities. The size and degree of corporateness of such groups varies widely. The members usually share a group name; they always interact with one another in characteristic ways; there are always symbols of

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group membership ranging from skin colour to cultural features such as language, occupation, dress, place of residence and the like. Only members of the group are one's peers. Where group affiliations are relevant, individual attributes are irrelevant.[62]

Caste not only governs how one lives one's life. It also fixes the place in society in which one lives it. Every caste and subcaste has its ranking. This ranking is fixed neither by wealth nor education nor the ownership of land, but by the taking of water. One takes water from one's equal or from one's superiors; one does not take water from one's inferiors unless it is in a brass pot. Water in a clay pot is the main test. Food is divided into two categories, pakka khana and kachchha khana. Pakka khana includes such food and dishes made with clarified butter from flour and sugar, mostly sweetmeats, kachchha khana is cooked in water and or salt, mostly the staple diet. One takes pakka khana from a wider range of inferiors than kachchha khana, roughly from the same people from whom one takes water in a clay pot. Where the upper castes draw their lines helps to establish the precedence of the lower castes between themselves.[63]

According to Zinkin, caste is a way of life which divides society into small groups, each of which lives

in a rather different way from the rest. Because of these differences, because the groups are so tiny, and because the most important relations of life above all, marriage, take place within them, the groups have great power over their members, and thus great power of survival. To break caste is to cut oneself off from one's group, which means from one's family, from one's friends, and from all those who live exactly as one does oneself, and one cuts oneself off without any hope of being adopted by another group - one is ostracised by everybody in one's own group and will not even be accepted by a lower group. Thus the ostracised Brahman cannot become a warrior or even an untouchable since one has to be born within one's caste, only if he finds others from his own caste who have also been ostracised can he once more belong to a group because in a sect a new subcaste has been created.[64]

In the long turmoil that was Indian history, caste held together the fabric of society, the integrity of the village was built around the framework of caste; the survival of Hinduism under Muslim and Christian onslaughts might well have been impossible without the devotion of peasant and scholar alike to caste-customs and caste-ritual. Caste may not have revelation behind it, but it does have something even more powerful, a network of observances covering every

action of daily life, from the direction in which one passes water to the length of the twig with which one cleans one's teeth. A society so governed was a society with an infinity of resistance to outside attacks.[65]

This division of the Hindu society on the basis of caste did not augur well for the country as a whole. Such a division which fabricated Indian society into small compartments without loyalty to a common nationality makes them susceptible to attack. Hence allowing themselves to be conquered and ruled by foreigners, for example, the Muslims and the British. Much blame has to be placed "at the door" of the Brahmins for this corruption that existed and still exists in the Hindu society. The varna order which was an ideal system was overridden by the Brahmins and transformed into the caste system to suit their own selfish needs.

ENDNOTES

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5. M Williams: <u>A Sanskrit-English Dictionary</u>, p 924.

6. Suryakanta: <u>A Practical Vedic Dictionary</u>, p 579.

7. <u>Bhagavad Gita</u> V:13.

8. Maharishi Yogi Mahesh: <u>The Bhagavad Gita</u>, p 269.

9. Swami Chidbhavananda: <u>The Bhagavad Gita</u>, p 283.

10. Z A Rangozin: <u>Vedic India</u>, p 279.

11. R W Scott: <u>Social Ethics in Modern Hinduism</u>, p 167.

12. <u>Bhagavad Gita</u> 18:41.

13. Swami Chidbhavananda: <u>The Bhagavad Gita</u>, p 907.

14. M K Gandhi: <u>Hindu Dharma</u>, pp 325-26.

15. J H Hutton: <u>Caste in India</u>, pp 65-66.

16. <u>Rig Veda</u> 10:90.

17. <u>Manu</u> 1:31.

18. V D Mahajan: <u>Ancient India</u>, p 120.

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20. <u>Ibid</u>, pp 143-45.

21. O C Cox: <u>Caste, Class and Race</u>, p 100.

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36. A de Reuck and J Knight: Caste and Peace, p 9.

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49. G H Hutton: Caste in India, p 48.

50. K M Panikkar: Caste and Democracy, p 9.

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52. M N Srinivas: Caste in Modern India, pp 7-8.

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60. G H Hutton: Caste in India, p 50.

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CHAPTER 3

EVOLUTION OF THE CASTE

SYSTEM AND ITS

IMPLICATIONS ON THE

HINDU SOCIETY

3.1.1   BACKGROUND

Around 2000 B.C. the original Indo-European speaking, semi-nomadic barbarians, who most probably lived in the region between the Caspian and Black seas, were for some reasons driven from their homeland. "Whatever the reasons for dispersal the ancestors of the Italian, Greek, Germanic, English, Celtic, and Iranian speaking peoples were forced to flee from Southern Russia to survive. These tribes moved in every direction splitting up into smaller units. The Hittites were the first Indo-Europeans to settle in a new homeland. Other tribes pushed on, some to the west Anatolia and some to the east across Persia.

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About 1500 B.C. the Aryans advanced further east, across the perilous Hindu Kush mountains, into India."[1]

The Aryans were tall and fair distinguished themselves from the short, dark and flat nosed people of the Indus Valley. The arche type of these invaders was their war god Indra; like him the Aryan invader was strong, bearded, of a mighty apetite and a great drinker of the divine liquid soma. For war or racing he was mounted in a two-horsed, two wheeled chariot, armed with a bow and a spear and with a charioteer crouching besides him".[2] "The exclusive military use of the beast left its mark upon society; there rose a new social upper class, the equestrian order of those entitled to possess and use horses. The words cavalier and chivalry are bequeathed to us by the horse age."[3]

It would be pertinent to note that commentators and scholars are not clear on the use of the term Aryan and Dravidian. They have used these terms interchangeably to denote both race and/or language. Westermarck states,"India was inhabited by dark people (Dravidians) before the Aryans took possession of it. The domineering spirit of the conquerors, found vent in the sharp distinction which they drew between themselves and the conquered population, the Sudras."[4] The constant reference in literature of the Dasyus

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were evidently the unsubdued foreign tribes who did not speak Sanskrit and had not been influenced by Aryan culture. The Dasyu should not be thought of as constituting a caste. The term Dasyu seem to have been used by the Aryans in the same sense that the Greeks use the term barbarian to mean all those people whose culture different from their own.[5] Amongst the Dravidians those who did not amalgamate with the Aryans were considered Dasyus.

Thus the Aryans who had conquered the Dravidians had gradually amalgamated rather rapidly with them, and they finally settled down as one people to evolve the caste system in India.

3.1.2 **DIVINE ORIGINS**

The Rig Veda 10:90:11:12 states that:

> "The Brahmin was his mouth, his two arms were made the Rajanya (warrior), his two thighs the Vaishyas (trader and agriculturalist), from his feet the Sudra (servile class) was born."[6]

In the Rig Veda four varnas are frequently mentioned. The first two varnas represent broadly the two professions of poet-priest and warrior-chief. The third division is one which supports people through agriculture and is therefore included in the

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production of food, and the fourth division strives through labour to alleviate unhappiness and suffering of people.

The above verse compares society with the human body. It could be interpreted in the following manner: man is a complete human being only when he has all his component organs. The different organs of his body with each performing its specific function, nourishes it and keeps it active. In the same way the four main divisions of society is compared with the human body and their functions are defined.[7]

This theory is echoed by Prasad[8] when he states that the verse in the Rig Veda does not in any way countenance the caste system but describes the institution by means of an analogy between mankind and the human body. He goes on further to state that, the Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Sudra, occupy the same places as the head, arms, middle and feet respectively as they appear in the human body. The Brahmin who possess wisdom and directs other men is the head of society. The Kshatriyas, those who possess strength and protect mankind, is aptly termed the arms of society. The Vaishyas, those who go from place to place and pursue different arts and industries is the main body of society. The Sudras, who undertake all the menial tasks is the feet of society. Hence the

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verse does not teach a system of hereditary castes but the principle of division of labour without which no civilized society can exist.

An even more logical explanation of the origin of _varna_ is the concept _guna_. According to Hindu Philosophy divine energy manifests itself in different degrees according to the preponderance in each person of one of the three _gunas_, or fundamental qualities which make up the _prakrti_ or nature of an individual. These _gunas_ are: _sattva_, _rajas_ and _tamas_. _Sattva_ or light fully reveals _Brahmin_ or the divine element within. _Rajas_ or passion, which partially veils _Brahmin_ within, and promotes activity. _Tamas_ or darkness, which obscures _Brahmin_ within, and promotes stability. In everything that springs forth from nature there are three _gunas_ striving for mastery. The temperament of an individual is determined according to the predominance in him of one or the other of these gunas. If _sattva_ is not allowed to be overcome by passion or darkness, one secures the blessing of serenity; from this springs concentration, which in turn leads to subjugation of the organs of sense, and finally to fitness for beholding the Self. It follows, therefore, that, for his own liberation as well as for social efficiency an individual should be allowed to develop along his own lines best suited to his natural endowments and that

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he on his part perform duties assigned to him in accordance with the predominant quality in his nature.[9] Here the theory of varna is used to explain the emergence of the caste system. This is a very logical explanation of a system which was originally very flexible and which only later became solidified into a hard and immobile institution.

The seers of the early Vedic period emphasized the theory of varna rather than caste. Delve as much one may into the literature of the period one only discovers classes and not castes. Garratt claims that the elements which go to form castes were, however, there, so that gradually a gulf was created between one order and another. For a long time, however, the conception of social stratification and untouchability was repugnant to the people, who sought unity in variety and variety in unity.[10] It therefore seems that each submitted cheerfully to the special function and duty assigned to them.

From all the arguments presented concerning Rig Veda 10:90:11:12, one can conclude that although society was divided into four classes, there was no rigid caste structure. There is nothing to show that, none, but a son of Brahman could belong to that class. It is pertinent to quote in this connection from the Rig Veda IX:112:3:

> "I am a poet, my father is a
> physician, my mother grinds corn
> on the stone. Being engaged in
> different occupations, we seek
> wealth and happiness, as the cow
> seeks food in different pastures.
> May thy bounties flow for our
> happiness, O God."[11]

Further in the entire range of the <u>Vedas</u> there is not
one single passage to show that the community was
broken up into our hereditary castes.

3.1.3   **RACIAL THEORY**

It is generally recognized that Risley (a pure blood
theorist) has been the most insistent advocate of the
racial theory of caste. He did considerable
anthropometrical research among the Hindus, using his
racial hypothesis as his guide. However, the
reliability of his data and validity of his
conclusions are questionable. Risley puts his theory
in the form of a law of race contact.

His theory is as follows: White men will take women
from the "coloured" group but will not give their own
women. When the whites have hired enough white women,
they will "close their ranks" and form a superior
caste. The mixed blood will then close their ranks,
forming additional castes with degrees of superiority
based upon lightness of colour.[12]   Although Risley
wrote extensively on hypergamous marriage (the system

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under which women from a group of lower status are married to men in a higher group) in India, he never saw hypergamy as a social phenomenon distinguishing caste and race relations. In India high caste males may marry low caste women, and this does not result in consolidation of castes. It is declared in the Laws of Manu that:

> "For the first marriage of twice-born men, wives of equal castes are recommended; but for those who through desire proceed to marry again the following females, chosen according to the direct order of the castes are most approved. A Sudra woman alone could be the wife of a Sudra, she and one of his own caste, the wives of a Vaishya, those two and one of his own caste, the wives of a Kshatriya, those three and one of his own caste, the wives of a Brahmin."[13]

Thus the higher the caste, the greater the opportunity for "mixture of blood". Yet hypergamy has not resulted in a lessening of caste consciousness.

> "If caste was based on distinction of race, says Russel, 'then apparently the practice of hypergamy would be objectionable, because it would destroy the different racial classes."[14]

Risley conducted extensive anthropometrical research, reviewing the aim of ethnology, states quite broadly:

> "The modern science of ethnology endeavours to define and classify the various physical types, with

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reference to their distinctive
characteristics, in the hope that
when sufficient data have been
accumulated, it may be possible,
in some measure, to account for
the types themselves, to
determine the elements of which
they are composed, and thus to
establish their connexion with
one or other of the great
families of mankind."[15]

With this statement in mind Risley developed

experimental techniques to explain the origin of

caste. The following statement sums up his view:

"....it is scarcely a paradox to
lay down as a law of caste
organization in Eastern India
that a man's social status varies
in universe ratio to the width of
his nose."[16]

The Researcher has already mentioned that Risley's

findings are questionable. At this stage it is

important to examine his conclusions so that the

potentialities of the method may be discussed. It has

led him to believe that caste originated in Aryo-

Dravidian racial antagonism.

The following question may be asked, what does

anthropometry seek to discover about the origin of

caste? It is determined that physical measurements

correlate with caste position, would this fact show

that caste had its inception in racial antipathy?

Caste might have had other beginnings. In India the

number of castes runs into thousands. Is it possible

that even, say, twenty castes should have selected

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common nose widths and maintained them intact over the years. Although this is highly absurd, such must be the implications of those physical measurements. For, if the caste did not purposely select the physical trait which has been protected by caste isolation, it must be assumed that the castes jealously guarded their blood for probably thousands of years without actually recognizing the physical trait which distinguished them. If race were a factor, simple visibility should have answered the purpose. We may mention finally, that all attempts to rank castes in India according to physical criteria have been fruitless and that Risley has not been able to state his hypothesis clearly.

Sagar, writing more recently on the origin of caste, presents a variation of Risley's theory. According to him the ancient society came to be divided into four parts - the Aryans, Anaryas, aboriginals and nomadic tribes. There were only two main classes Aryas and Anaryas. There were no sharp distinction between their mutual relationships. The feelings of social superiority were present in the minds of the Aryans, because they had their own philosophy and religion. Being rulers, they had inclinations towards exploitation. Where there are the rulers and the ruled the masters and slaves, class distinctions are naturally to be found. From an "external viewpoint

the two classes were quite different in complexion. One was dark and the other fair.[17] It should be noted here that it was still too early a period for the Aryans to discriminate on the basis of race. At this stage the Aryans could not have known the world position of "white people". This is evident in Manu X:45 when he states that:

> "All those tribes in this world, which are excluded from the community of those born from the mouth, the arms, the thighs and feet of Brahma are called Dasyus."[18]

Like most primitive peoples their world was limited to the known environment. Although pure blood theorists have discovered the origin of caste in Aryan racial antipathy, as we know the caste system today, it is not admittedly based upon Aryo-Dravidian Racial antagonism. It is a social system of an entirely different nature. Those who accept the racial theory of caste always assume that there were at first two castes the Aryans and the Dravidians, conquerors and conquered, black and white. Pure blood theorists, however, never succeeded in making a commencing transition from such a pattern of race relationship to the caste system which we know in India.

Many pure blood theorists seek authority from the following passage in the Mahabharata 188:693:

> "The Lord....also formed...men, Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Sudras as well as other

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> classes of beings. The colour of
> <u>Brahmin</u> was white, <u>Kshatriyas</u>
> red, <u>Vaishyas</u> yellow and <u>Sudras</u>
> black."[19]

<u>Bharadvaja</u> questions <u>Bhrigu</u>, "If the <u>varna</u> of the four
classes is distinguished by their colour then a
confusion of all the <u>varnas</u> is observable." <u>Bhrigu</u>
replied, "There is no difference of <u>varnas</u>. This
world having first being created by <u>Brahma</u>, entirely
<u>Brahmanic</u>, became separated into <u>varnas</u> in consequence
of works. Those <u>Brahmins</u> who were fond of sensual
pleasure, fiery irascible, prone to violence, who had
forsaken their duty, and were red-limbed, fell into
the condition of <u>Kshatriyas</u>. Those <u>Brahmins</u> who
derived their likelihood from kine, who were yellow,
who subsisted by agriculture, and who neglected to
practice their duties, entered into the state of
<u>Vaishyas</u>. Those <u>Brahmins</u> who were addicted to
mischief and falsehood, who were covetous, who lived
by all kinds of works, who were black and fallen from
purity, sank into the condition of <u>Sudras</u>. Being
separated from each other by these works, <u>Brahmins</u>
became divided into different <u>varnas</u>. Duties and
rights have not always been forbidden to any of them.
This quotation reflects the inner qualities of man.
Colour here is used in a spiritual sense to bring out
the good and the evil in man. There is discrimination
on the basis of colour. Thus in one household all
four <u>varnas</u> may be evident. Dutt uses colour in the
physical sense for his arguments on racial antagonism.

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He further quotes the later <u>Dharmasastras</u> in this connection:

> "When marriage with a <u>Sudra</u> women is so much abhorred and blamed, we can easily conceive to the horror and detestation which a <u>Brahmin</u> in his racial pride would feel at the sight of a <u>Brahmin</u> women marrying a <u>Sudra</u>. No words are too strong to condemn such a marriage, and as a deterrent it is enacted that the issue of such a union should occupy the humblest position in society. Thus we see that the development of inter-caste marriage restrictions was principally due to racial difference between white conquerors and the black, and the desire of the former to preserve their purity of blood."[20]

Let us use Dutt's hypotheses as a model to answer some of the questions which come to mind. Dutt's explanation of the origin of caste is based upon the beliefs that the word <u>varna</u> means colour; hence caste must have originated in the <u>Aryan's</u> passion for protecting their light colour from intermixture with the dark colour of the <u>Dravidians</u>. Dutt relies on remote descriptions of caste as white, red, yellow and black. Although the <u>Mahabharata</u> gives an adequate explanation of the <u>varna</u> concept, there is no evidence in the verse to show that <u>varna</u> meant physical colour. But on the other hand, if we take these disconnected references to colour as implying superiority, then red must be superior to white since the <u>Kshatriyas</u> were the ruling caste in India.

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Cox gives a very poignant answer to Dutt's theory.
> "It should be remarked that the criterion of a single word, varna could never be accepted as adequate evidence of racial antagonism among Vedic Indians. Racial antagonism is a peculiar and complicated . form of intergroup relationship and it is this relationship which must be identified. We might just as well conclude that the Indo-Aryans ran locomotives in North-western India because, let us say, the word "steam" is frequently used in the Vedas."[21]

In spite of the assumed "horror" of mixture with the darker race, Brahmin men were privileged to have wives from the first three castes below them, Kshatriyas from the two lower ones, and Vaishyas from the Sudras. Therefore Brahmins may be said to have been the most flagrant mixers of blood in India. If colour were indeed the determining factor, is it possible to say that if a person happened to be light complexioned he automatically became a Brahmin, if black a Sudra, so that one may look upon a man and classify him unquestionably? The historical data does not sustain this possibility.

3.1.4   COLOUR AS A FACTOR

The word varna is the only fact that pure blood theorists have in support of their position. Here we refer to Mahabharata 188:693. The colour connotation in the verse really means attributes. What is

intended to say is that the Brahmins had the attribute of goodness; Kshatriyas the attribute of passion, Vaishyas attribute to passion and darkness and Sudra attribute to darkness. We are not even certain which skin colour, if any, was always preferable among the early Aryo-Dravidians since the white complexion was not always the most popular and most admired one. Shri Krishna the greatest Hindu Incarnation and human hero, was always being called the "dark cloud-faced one" or the "dark blue one", and Rama, the divine hero, usually being represented as dark, or blue or green. These two were the ideal of being all that was most beautiful in man. Literature was not always consistent in the figurative use of colour as applied to human beings. Muir quotes a passage from the Kathaka Brahmana which reverses somewhat the colour scheme of the Mahabharata:

> "Since the Vaishya offers an oblation of white (rice) to the Adityas, he is born as it were white; and as a varuna oblation of black (rice) the Rajanya is as it were dusky."[22]

The case of colour as a dominant factor in the development of caste, then, does not seem to be supported by the use of the word varna in the literature.

Sagar expouses the theory that there were only two classes in the Vedic period and pigmentation played a

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very important role behind this classification. These two classes were the Aryas and Dasas. Riq Veda 11:12:4 states:

> "The Dasas were mostly of black complexion."[23]

Here the author has literally translated the term varna to denote physical colour and bases his conclusions on racial distinctions. As we have already noticed there was no racial distinctions between the groups on the basis of colour. Furthermore, colour in the physical sense did not influence a person's position in the varna order but rather colour in terms of the three gunas played an important role.

The word Sudra occurs in the Vedas, but many scholars are of the opinion that although the term Sudra occurs in the Vedas, there was no established form of caste by birth for a Sudra during the Vedic period. Any man could become a Sudra by virtue of his own karma. A very apt quotation from the Riq Veda 10:38:3 emphasized this point:

> "O worshipful Indra; degraded men, whether Arya or Anarya who desire to fight with us, be defeated and we by your mercy be able to put an end to these enemies in battle."[24]

The above verse could also refer to the internal struggle within man. Here the theory of the three

gunas is appropriate. For example: an _anarya_ may strive towards his personal development and develop qualities that are pure and good which are inherent in the _Sattva-guna_. Because of these qualities he could now rise to the position of _Brahmin_. On the other hand, a _Brahmin_ who acquires bad and impure qualities which are inherent in _Tamas_ may fall to the position of _Sudra_. Thus one's status in the _varna_ order is based on qualities and not colour.

3.1.5   THE OCCUPATIONAL THEORIES OF IBBETSON AND NESFIELD

Both Ibbetson and Nesfield developed the occupational theories of caste, but Nesfield's is the more elaborate. Ibbetson laid great emphasis on the exploitation of their position by the _Brahmin_ caste which he assumes to have degraded all occupations except their own and that of their patrons of the ruling class. He explains caste as arising from a combination of tribal origins, functional guilds and a 'Levitical religion', and has laid the greater stress on the tribe.[25] It is, of course, clear enough that certain tribes are responsible for the formation of certain castes, and no less clear that certain castes are, or have been in the past, restricted to certain occupations, but Ibbetson's explanation of the origin of caste is really only a summary of certain of

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its obvious features.

The most carefully developed cultural theory of caste is that of Nesfield. It has been called the occupational theory. Nesfield insists that no racial theory of caste can stand because, before the system became organized the population had already become inseparably mixed. He believed that different occupations grouped together men from different tribes into guild castes, which then borrowed the principles of endogamy and prohibition of commensality from customs of the old tribes and thereby solidified themselves into isolated units. The ranking of any castes as high or low depends on whether the industry represented by the caste belongs to an advanced or backward stage of culture. Thus the caste following the most primitive occupations like hunting, fishing, basket making, are regarded as the lowest, the metalworkers, agriculturalists and traders, are higher in rank, while the highest caste are those who are priests and teachers. Lastly, Nesfield states that the old fourfold Varna division was never actually in force in India except as a current tradition, the only reality which attaches to it to this day. He rejects the statements and beliefs of the Brahmanical literature concerning the origin of caste. He further states that the priesthood was not at first an exclusive monopoly of Brahmins, sacrifices were

performed and invocations composed by the military chiefs. But when the hymns were collected into liturgies and the sacrifices became more complicated, specialization became a necessity. The importance of sacrifice to the well-being of society gave the priesthood a position of great honour, the tendency was for the priesthood to become hereditary, like royalty.[26]

The theory of occupation was also used by Dahlmann who stated that caste sprang not from the four varnas but from the infinite corporations and of groups of relatives into which these four varnas were divided. According to his theory, there was a steady progress of development from classes to corporations and from corporations to castes. Agriculture was originally the prime factor in the economic life of India, a rural economy developed in the form of trade and industry, and the principle of division of labour became so important that it became regarded as the duty of the ruler to base his economic policy on the division of labour and distinction of occupations. On the basis of old division by classes, corporations gradually arose and guilds of traders and handworkers came into existence. Community of interest among persons following the same craft gave rise to a corporate organisation, and technical skill was passed on from father to son. Families of craftsmen thus

arose bound together by a community of interest which gave rise to a corporate organization and formed a guild. It is this guild which is really the basis of the system.[27] This view fails to account for a great deal in the caste system. The German guild is cited by Dahlmann as a close parallel, but it involved no ban on commensality between one profession and another and no prohibition of intermarriage, nor is it conceivable that a distinction based solely on function could develop into the vivid and lasting prejudices that accompany caste distinctions in India. Dahlmann like Nesfield has only discussed one aspect that is occupation as the sole basis for the emergence of the caste system.

3.1.6   VARNASRAMADHARMA

Tripathi asserts that in the Dharmasastra caste distinctions are the frame of society. Thus Manu in the Dharmasastras outlines the duties of four classes. Manu draws an analogy with the four life stages of man (varnasramadharma).

The theory of varnasramadharma, the law of varna and life stages (asrama) was worked out as a model for the whole Hindu society. The model involves working out of correlations between two ideals: first, that society conforms to four varnas and secondly, that a

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person should pass through four life stages: student (brahmacarya), householder (grhastha), forest-dweller (vanaprastha) and renunciant (sanyasi).

The student learns one of the Vedas; the householder performs domestic and optionally also srauta rituals of the Brahmanas; the forest-dweller follows the teachings of the Aranyakas; and the sanyasi follows the path of the renunciant towards the Upanisadic goals of moksa. Together the varna asrama ideals has tremendous complexities since a person's duties vary according to varna and stage of life, not to mention other factors like sex, family, region and quality of time. Also, whereas a person's development through one life, ideally is regulated by the Asrama ideal, the passage through many reincarnations would involve birth into different varnas, the varna of one's birth being the result of previous karma. In connection with this it is appropriate to quote a verse from the Bhagavad Gita 4:13:

> "I have organized the four varnas
> on the principle of guna
> karma."[28]

Each of these formulations have persisted more on the ideal plane than the real. In the case of the four asramas, most people never went beyond the householder stage which the Sutras and Sastras actually exalt as the most important of the four, since it is the

support of the other three and in more general terms, the mainstay of society. The main tension, however, that persists in orthodox Hinduism is that between the householder and renunciant, the challenge being for anyone to integrate into one lifetime these two ideals.

The Bhagavad Gita also enunciates the principle of varnasramadharma which is said to be based upon the three gunas as discussed earlier. We shall look at the duties assigned in the Bhagavad Gita: 18:42 states:

> "Serenity, self control, austerity, purity, forbearance and uprightness, wisdom, knowledge and faith in religion, these are duties of a Brahmin."[29]

Those who belong to the order of Brahmanhood are expected to possess mental and moral qualities. Power corrupts and blinds insight. Uncontrolled power is fatal to mental poise. So Brahmins eschew direct power and exercise a general control through persuasion and love and save the wielders of power from going astray.

Bhagavad Gita 18:43 states:

> "Heroism, vigour, steadiness, resourcefulness, not fleeing even in a battle, generosity and leadership, these are the duties of a Kshatriya born of his nature."[30]

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In the scale of spiritual evolution, the Kshatriya comes next to the Brahmin. While the Brahmin gives all his attention to the godliness of man, the Kshatriya pays attention to the manliness of man. Only after being an ideal man one becomes a god-man. The literal meaning of the word Kshatriya is he who always protects others from injury. All spiritually evolving souls require to be processed in the Kshatriya mould before they can aspire to the Brahmin mould. The intensity of training may vary but the process cannot be avoided.

Bhagavad Gita 18:44 states:

> "Agriculture, tending cattle and trade are the duties of a Vaishya born of their own nature; work of the character of service is the duty of a Sudra born of his nature."[31]

Life at a physical level is impossible without material resources. The Vaishya is he who creates and distributes the material wealth of the society. The Sudra on the other hand is he who renders physical labour, but incapable of setting up a calling of his own. A Sudra is dependant on others for his livelihood.

Thus, Swami Chidbavananda, very appropriately concludes that, just as there are "lower and higher classes" in a school, the existence of the four varnas

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in a society is but natural. The plan is for the
"lower class" man to evolve into the "higher class".
Any artificial obstruction to this natural scheme is
injurious. A pupil of the higher class had already
passed the lesson of the lower class. This principle
applies to the four varnas of society."

3.1.7   THE VARNA THEORY

The Upanishads does not sanction the caste system but
are entirely opposed to it.   The road to advancement
was yet open to all persons to their qualifications
and birth in an humble family did not stand in one's
way.   The Chandogya Upanishad explains how a certain
Satya Kama Jabala, son of a slave girl, but filled
with noble love and learning approached the sage
Haridrumata Goutama for studying philosophy (Brahma
Vidya).   When the Rishi enquired after his family he
replied thus, states the Chandogya Upanishad IV:4:

> "I do not know, sir, of what
> gotra (family) I am. I asked my
> mother and she answered - 'in my
> youth when I had to move about
> much, as a servant, I conceived
> thee.   I do not know of what
> family thou art. I am Jabala by
> name thou art Satyakama'.   I am
> therefore   Satyakama   Jabala
> sir."

The Rishi was so struck with the frankness and
truthfulness of the boy that he allowed him to become

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one of his pupils because none but a <u>Brahmin</u> thus speak truth, unmingled, plain and pure. He was initiated into the mysteries of <u>Brahma Vidya</u>, and subsequently became himself a <u>Rishi</u> inspite of his humble birth. It is therefore the contention of Prasad that,

> "the distinction of caste was so unknown that even great <u>Rishis</u> and learned <u>Brahmins</u> did not think it beneath their dignity to go to a <u>Kshatriya</u> in order to learn true knowledge."[34]

Thus a <u>Brahmin</u> could become a <u>Sudra</u> and there was no canon of caste by birth. The <u>Sudra</u> could get rid of his own <u>varna</u> and become a <u>Brahmin</u> and vice versa. One's station in life was determined by how hard one tries to uplift oneself to a higher position in society.

Mees conceives the <u>varna</u> hierarchy as a gradient of socio-physiological groups. He compares this "natural hierarchy" to the organs of the human body, functioning with varying degrees of excellence.[35] The early authorities, however, thought that although the mouth was superior to the foot, each was in its own way, equally efficient. So far as social stratification is concerned it is ceremony and ritual, not character which are the determining factors. In connection with this Dubois maintains:

> "A <u>Brahmin</u> would be degraded and

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banished   from his caste for
having eaten food which had been
prepared, or drank water that had
been drawn, by a person of a
lower   caste,   but   were   he
convicted   of   stealing,   or
uttering   vile   calumnies,   of
attempting to take another man's
life, or of betraying his prince
or   country,   none   of   these
offenses   would   prevent   his
appearing without fear or shame
in public, or would hinder his
being   well   received
everywhere."[36]

The Brahmins the author of the varna myth, were never
very   much   interested   in   describing   in   detail
individuals far from themselves in status, hence,
they, like the Kshatriyas, were defined functionally,
while   the   Vaishyas   and   Sudras   were   left   as
functionally heterogenous groupings. All the rest of
humanity, besides these four categories, were classed
as one, the Mlechchhas. In connection with this it is
appropriate to quote Manu X:45 which states:

"All those tribes in the world,
which   are   excluded   from   the
community of those born from the
mouth, arms, thighs and the feet
of   Brahmin,   are   called   Dasyus,
whether they speak the language
of the Meechchbas (barbarians) or
that of the aryans."[37]

The age of the Ramayana was a bitter experience for
the Sudras, claims Sagar. He maintains that this is
clearly illustrated in a passage from the Ramayana:

"The   entire   crime   was   that   of
Sudra Sambuka Rsi who is doing
"tapa" by going to heaven with

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> body. O <u>Rama</u> you cut off by your
> own hands the head of that <u>Rsi</u>
> who has breached the
> <u>varnasramadharma</u>, the social
> rules framed by <u>Manu</u>. The moment
> that criminal dies, the <u>Brahmin's</u>
> child will again come to life."[38]

This verse does not have to necessarily mean the hardening of the <u>varna</u> order. It could also be translated as giving life to <u>Sudra</u> by killing him especially in terms of <u>karma</u>. This means that this <u>Sudra</u> could now be born a <u>Brahmin</u>. But if Sagar claims that the <u>Sudras</u> were not allowed to do penance then the following passage in <u>Ramayana</u> 3:26 is in direct contradiction to the above verse when Rama looked at <u>Shabari</u> whose birth was that of an huntress and he said:

> "you have by your own <u>tapas</u> won a
> place for yourself in the
> heavens: what is more you have
> been able to reach the <u>Brahmi</u>
> state."[39]

It seems as if the movement in the <u>varna</u> order was still fluid since <u>Shabari</u> who was also of humble birth was able to acquire the status of <u>Brahmin</u>. It could also stand to reason that <u>Samhuka Rsi</u> had not undergone proper personal development and not attained the qualities required to be a <u>Brahmin</u>. The path of acquiring the status of <u>Brahmin</u> is very demanding. This is noted in the following questions that <u>Rama</u> asks <u>Shabari</u>:

> "You are rich in <u>tapas</u>. Have you
> shed all the desires of the

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world? Is your <u>tapas</u> increasing
day by day? Have you conquered
anger? Have you learned to live
on meagre fare? How are your
<u>vratas</u> helping you in finding
peace? Has your service to the
great been fruitful? Have you
realized that you are ready to
leave?"[40]

3.1.8   THE EARLY AMALGAMATION OF POPULATION

Nesfield's contention that Indian peoples in contact
became mixed before the caste system developed;   the
importance of this consideration has led the
researcher to another consideration of it.   It should
be clearly understood that it has never been shown
that the Indo-Aryans conceived of themselves as part
of a white race.   "White race" psychology is a modern
phenomenon.   The Aryans thought of themselves as being
culturally different from the <u>Dravidians</u> but not
culturally superior.   Their mixture with the native
population was rapid at first, and when the caste
system came with its retarding effects upon
amalgamation, neither race nor colour was its
principal motivation.   In response to white race
psychology, Linton states: Prior to the sixteenth
century the world was not race conscious and there was
no incentive for it to become so.   The ancient world
was a small world and because of the gradual
transition in physical types which is to be found in
all continuous geographic areas, the physical

differences between the classical and barbarian peoples were not very marked. Even when the existence of such physical differences was recognized, they had no immediate social connotations. Even the crusades failed to make Europe race-conscious. It is only with the discovery of the New World and the sea routes to Asia that race assumed a social significance.[41]

Ketkar was of the opinion that the hypothesis of race for the study of Indian society had a limited influence. He also observed that till the arrival of European scholars on Indian soil, the people of India never meant by the word "Arya" that race of invaders who reduced the original inhabitants to servitude. The word indeed probably had such meaning, but only for a short period antedating the concrete beginnings of civilization in India. All princes whether they belonged to the so-called Aryan race or so-called Dravidian race, were Aryas. Whether a tribe or family was racially Aryan or Dravidian was a question which never troubled the people of India until foreign scholars came in and began to draw the line.[42]

The Aryans warred and made alliances indiscriminately with one another and those Dravidian states surrounding them that still maintained their independence. Indeed, it appears that the designation Kshatriya included all the nobility, whether Aryan or

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Dravidian. Of course the <u>Kshatriyas</u> inter married freely, while <u>Brahmins</u> always had the option of taking <u>Kshatriya</u> women as wives. There is very little direct reference in literature to the process of amalgamation, however, there are no white races in India today. Its early conquerors: <u>Aryans</u>, Greeks, <u>Pathans</u> and <u>Moguls</u>, settled in the country, intermarried, lost their white skins and became Indians.[43] Racial admixture so far as it affected physical appearance, seems never to have been a problem of the Hindus.

3.1.9   VAISHYAS AND SUDRAS

Belief in the fourfold division of caste in India has persisted from the Vedic period to this day, yet it appears never to have existed in fact. The fourfold classification is particularly inaccurate in its descriptions of the <u>Vaishya</u> and <u>Sudra</u> and outcastes. These three never formed castes in the sense that priests and royalty were castes. The <u>Vaishya</u> and <u>Sudra</u> were identified with specific functions and interests; the three former were heterogeneous categories. The fact that <u>Vaishyas</u> and <u>Sudras</u> were classified without internal distinction may indicate the supercilious disregard in which the military and priestly groups held the people in general.[44]

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Garratt further asserts that, the mass of the people retained their ancient name Vis or Vaishya (people) and formed a separate class, the Vaishyas. They were, however, a unit merely in name, a conglomeration of many groups with different functions. Pastoral pursuits and agriculture were their main occupations, but trade and industry also claimed a large number of them. The Vaishyas were advised to learn the values of precious stones and metals and other commodities, to acquire a knowledge of different languages, and to be conversant with the conditions obtaining in different countries and the prospects of business.[45]

MacDonnel and Keith mention more than a hundred different occupations and skills as they appear at random in the Vedic literature. Thus, only by some procrustean device would it be possible to all these in one caste. One hardly needs to labour the point that the "rathagrtsa", or skilled charioteer, must have had a different social position from the malaga or washerman; vany or merchant, from sanskala, or seller or dried fish, or jeweller, from the dasa or fisherman.[46] In the law books the duty of the Sudra is repeatedly emphasized, but this seems to have been an emphasis on what was actually the case. The margin between Sudra and Vaishya classes seems to have been always obscure.

The Brahmins and Kshatriyas have been immemorial
castes, the stabilizers of the system. Within the
Vaishya and Sudra classes, however, there have been
many castes. Some authorities have doubted whether
even the Kshatriyas ever constituted a caste." It
seems, however, that the repeated specific reference
made to Kshatriyas and their natural tendency for
royalty to be endogamous favour the conclusion that
they were at least as much a caste as the Brahmins.
On the other hand, the Vaishya are mentioned
infrequently and Sudras almost not at all.

3.1.10   BRAHMAN-KSHATRIYA STRUGGLE FOR POWER

It is the belief of Hopkins, that priests did not
always constitute the highest caste. Only after a
long and pertinacious social struggle did the Brahmins
succeed in achieving undisputed primacy in the system.
In that protracted dispute, each side chose its
weapons, but the Brahmin's proved to be the more
potent. The Brahmins demonstrated to the Kshatriyas
that they controlled the very will of the gods. There
was no open fighting between these two groups which
settled decisively the place of each in society."

The Brahmins never sought to rule the people by taking
over the powers of the Kshatriyas. They in fact
encouraged the king to administer the law. They also

recognized the necessity of military power since they themselves could not prosper without it. Yet they wanted the ruling class to realize that it held its position at the pleasure of <u>Brahmins</u>; hence, the king must be humbled in the presence of <u>Brahmins</u> even as he would before the gods.

The following verses from <u>Vishnu</u> show what the <u>Brahmins</u> wanted:

> "Let the king in all matters listen to the advice of his astrologers, let him constantly show reverence to the gods and to the <u>Brahmins</u>, let him bestow landed property upon <u>Brahmins</u>."[49]

Thus they wanted to be the supreme arbiters of social policy, to be immune from punishment by the king, and to be assured of economic security. All these things, indeed, the <u>Brahmins</u> achieved but not without a struggle. By the time book ix of <u>Manu</u> was composed, however, the <u>Brahmins</u> were able to say:

> "When <u>Kshatriyas</u> became in any way overbearing towards the <u>Brahmins</u>, the <u>Brahmins</u> themselves shall duly restrain them, for <u>Kshatriyas</u> sprang from the <u>Brahmins</u>."[50]

3.1.11   **BRAHMINS, THE KEEPERS OF KNOWLEDGE**

Almost always the priests of a society tend to become the oracles of the people, and Hindu society is not an

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exception. The Brahmins had the capability of assimilating a great quantity of matter and transmitted knowledge from generation to generation. It is true that the Brahmins had a monopoly on learning. They had to commit to memory all the literature accumulated. Committing to memory all the information virtually took them their entire life. He had to start as a child right through to adulthood. Hence the passing on of the sacred knowledge from father to son, and consequently, a hereditary priesthood became natural. But the priests made best use of this situation and ruled out the possibility of any outsiders entering the field.

The mystique and miraculous hymns and liturgies had to be preserved and handed down from father to son by word of mouth. Their sanctity depended not merely on their words or general sense, but also on every accent rightly placed. There was a need for men who could specialize in the study of the texts, comprehend the symbolic meaning of the ritual, and assist in the perpetuation of this textual tradition.[51]

Members of the priestly families devoted themselves to this task. It required laborious study and detachment from worldly pursuits. This ideal was constantly before the eyes of the Brahmin. Self-control and self-culture enabled him to uphold the purity and

renunciation essential for the manifestation of Brahma, or the divine within him. Brahmanhood was thus a matter of personal qualities and attainments rather than of descent; but as priestly functions gradually became the monopoly of a single class; it closed its door against the intrusion of others.[52]

The literature of the time shows that the Brahmins advanced claim after claim to the sacrosanct privileges of his caste. A striking development was the inordinate extension of pretensions and prerogatives of the sacerdotal class. A few verses from the Brahmanas will be cited to highlight this point. The Aitareya Brahmana VII:7 states:

> "A Brahmin is better than a Kshatriya."[53]

The Taittiriya Brahmana 1:4:4 states:

> "A Brahmin is all gods."[54]

This is echoed by the Satapatha Brahmana XII:4:4:6:
> "The Brahmin descended a Rishi indeed is all deities."[55]

Here again we see the exalted heights of superiority given to the Brahmin.

We also note that the separation between the Brahmins and Kshatriyas, so far as the priestly functions were concerned, was complete. The rule that none but a Brahmin can act as a priest is definitely laid down.

The Aitareya Brahmana VIII:24 states that:

"The gods do not eat food offered
by a king who has no priest."[56]

It seems as if the Kshatriyas not only lost the right
of priestly functions but also of appointing and
dismissing their priests at will. The family of
priests were practically irremovable, which only added
to the vested rights of the Brahmin priests.

Ghurye maintains that according to Manu the Brahmin is
the lord of this whole creation, because he is
produced from the purest part of the Supreme Being,
namely, the mouth. Both the gods and manes have to
receive their offerings from them. They are,
therefore, the most exalted amongst men, so much so
that, by his mere birth as a Brahmin, a person is the
living embodiment of the eternal law. A Brahmin alone
can become one with Brahman (absolute) because only he
of all varnas is entitled to enter the fourth stage of
life, namely, asceticism.[57] This theory is emphasized
by this quotation from Manu 1:93:

"A Brahmin is entitled to
whatever exists in the world. In
fact the whole world is his
property."[58]

In the Smrti and Sruti on one hand the Brahmin was
eulogized to the highest position, that is, equivalent
to God, and on the other hand the Sudra was given the
lowest, undignified place in the social hierarchy.
This is observed in the following passages quoted by

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Manu. Manu IV:165:

> "A twice-born man who has merely
> threatened a Brahmin with the
> intention of (doing him) a
> corporal injury, will wonder
> about for a hundred years in
> Tamisra hell."[59]

Manu: IV:80 states:

> "Let no one give a Sudra advice,
> nor the remnants (of his meal),
> nor food offered to the gods;
> nor let him give the religious
> preaching (to such a man), nor
> impose (upon him) a penance."[60]

Hence we see that the ascendancy of the priestly class was due to the Hindus concern for personal salvation, and his conviction that such salvation could not be secured without the performance of religious rites and recital of Vedas by the Brahmin.

3.1.12   CONCLUSION

It has been the contention of some scholars that the caste system did not arise out of the conflict situation between the Aryans and Dravidians. Nor was it motivated from the lower rung of society, but rather in the rivalry between Brahmins and Kshatriyas for supremacy in the social order. Although we have attempted to show that the caste system is under the paramount influence of the Brahmins, we have no evidence indicating that it was ever dominated by the Aryans. We might reiterate also that the idea of an Aryan and a Dravidian caste standing in opposition to

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each other is entirely without historical support.

Throughout early literature we come across two groups, the <u>Kshatriyas</u> and <u>Brahmins</u>. In considering them, two facts seem to stand out: the one that <u>Brahmins</u> did not monopolize the priestly functions; and the other that although their position was highly esteemed, they were amenable to the will of royalty. One should bear in mind that not only priestcraft but also all other occupations called for some degree of skill which was jealously guarded and transmitted as a heritage from father to son. But occupational exclusiveness became rigid only gradually.

In the <u>Rig Vedic</u> period persons of both military and the artisan classes performed all the <u>Vedic</u> rites. Although there was a priesthood, a hereditary priesthood, the functions of a priest were not completely monopolized. However, over a period of time, the religious literature was augmented and the sacrifice increased in complexity and importance, therefore, of necessity the priesthood became more and more specialized. The state of complexity which the sacrifice had reached is indicated by the following statement by MacDonnel:

> "of the sacrificial priests
> there were several, with definite
> functions and technical names,
> the chief being the <u>Hotr</u> or
> 'invoker', the <u>udgatr</u> or
> 'chanter', the <u>adhvaryr</u> or

officiating 'sacrificer', and the Brahmin or superintending priest; in the period of the Riq Veda, the Hotr was the most important, later the Brahmin became so. The Purohita was probably not any one of these, though he might be employed to perform the functions of one of them."[61]

With this development, Brahmans increased their hold on public opinion. They took complete control of sacrifice and in doing this demonstrated their indispensability in the social order. Cox points out that

"endogamy and ascendancy over the Kshatriyas were all that were necessary to give momentum to the system. Endogamy, like other tendencies, developed gradually. It was the means by which functional groups protected their heritage."[62]

It should be noted that while the struggle for position was in process, the masses of the people - Aryan, Dravidian and their mixed offsprings without distinction looked on and listened. An indication of the involvement of the people is brought out from a verse in the Mahabharata:

"From the dissensions of the Brahmins and Ksatriyas the people incur intolerable suffering."[63]

However, the priest never failed to see the value of cooperation with the military class; and it is evidently in this situation that the pattern of

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antagonistic cooperation amongst castes were nurtured
for the system. The Brahmins and Kshatriyas were
always together for the good or ill. Aitareya
Brahmana VIII, 24:27 states that:

> "The gods do not eat food offered
> by a king who has no purohita.
> Wherefore even when not about to
> sacrifice, the king should put
> forward a Brahmin as his domestic
> priest."[64]

The Brahmins did not seek to gather the Vaishyas, the
supposedly Aryan race people, to themselves. Had
racial sentiment existed, we should have expected
this. But the Vaishyas were left to guard their own
status and in the course of time they fell more and
more in position until they were frequently on a
social parity with the Sudras. However, the Vaishyas
did not permit themselves to be degraded. With the
blessing of the Brahmins, they organized themselves
into the hereditary interests which occupation
provided, and imitated the exclusiveness of the upper
castes.

One should observe that the purpose of the Brahmins
was not to dominate the people by force, but rather to
obligate paternally the society to them for all times.
By monopolizing the teaching of the Vedas they set out
to advertise this function as infinitely more
important than that of any other group of men. The
importance of the Brahmins is noted in the following

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verse by <u>Manu</u> 11:146:150:

> "Of him who gives natural birth
> and him who gives the knowledge
> of the <u>Veda</u>, the giver of the
> <u>Veda</u> is more venerable father....
> That Brahmin who is the giver of
> the birth for the sake of the
> <u>Veda</u> and the teacher of the
> prescribed duties becomes the
> father of an aged man, even
> though he himself be a child."[65]

Therefore, even <u>Kshatriyas</u>, who could not teach the <u>Vedas</u>, must respect <u>Brahmins</u> even as a child holds its parents in reverence. Once this natural ruling class accepted such a pretention, the rest of society followed suit as a matter of course.

Hence this gave the stronger groups of men in society both security and some degree of respect from lower groups, which the former found acceptable in exchange for their right to question the pretensions of <u>Brahmins</u>. Gradually then, the caste system became orderly and stabilized, with priests giving a religious interpretation to all questions of the moment. <u>Brahmins</u> were never centrally organized, and, so, too, the caste system has remained decentralized, for it is built around priests. <u>Brahmins</u> constitute the only indispensable caste in the system.

3.2   IMPLICATIONS FOR HINDU SOCIETY

3.2.1   DIET

The regulations about food were particularly stringent
because it was believed that it materially influenced
the good or the evil not only one's health and vigour,
but also one's nature and character.   Foods were,
accordingly,   classified   under   three   headings,
sattvika, rajasa and tamasa.   The food that is sweet
and agreeable to taste and conducive to longevity,
strength, health and equanimity, comes under the first
category, it brightens up the intellect and spirit.
That which is very pungent, sour, saltish and excites
thirst,   is   classified   as   rajasa;   it   makes   one
restless and fiery.   Food that is stale, insipid,
rotten and odorous, also food that is left over from
another's portion, falls under the category of tamasa;
it makes one dull and indolent.[66]

Restrictions   in   regards   to   eating   are   generally
speaking more severe than those which govern drinking,
but do not depend as in that case on who supplies the
food but rather on who prepares it.   The cooking is
very important and a stranger's shadow, and even the
glance of a man of low caste falling on the cooking
pot   may   necessitate   throwing   away   the   contents.
Members of the same exogamous unit can of course share
each others food.   So, too, as a rule members of
different exogamous groups could intermarry, for a man

must be able to eat food cooked by his own household.[67]

Some castes will not take food from their own daughters once these daughters are married, even to men from their own caste. The ordinary cooked meal has to be prepared with such ceremony and care. Rice boiled in water or chapati, that is, hanrocks, cakes or unleavened flour or meal mixed with water and baked upon a griddle, form the staple food of most castes. If away from the regular household cooking area, each man marks off his own cooking area, makes his own mud oven, and cooks apart from his fellows. He may cook for others of his own caste or subcaste.

Food cooked with water as described is known as kacchcha, and the restriction associated with it are much more severe than those associated with food known as pakka, which is cooked with ghee. Ghee being the product of the cow sanctifies the food cooked with it making it safe against transmitting pollution from one caste to another.

Amongst acts which make men impure are:

> "eating the flesh of forbidden creatures, as of a dog, man, village cocks and pigs, carnivorous animals."[68]

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After man has eaten the forbidden food he must fast
until his entrails are empty. That is generally
obtained after seven days. Or he may during winter
bathe in cold water both morning and evening. Eating
forbidden food can also cause loss of caste.

The status of commensality, of course, is of prime
importance. The rule is that persons of different
castes may not eat together. This is seen in the
following verse by Manu 111:110:112 :

> "A Kshatriya who comes to the
> house of a Brahmin is not called
> a guest.... But if a Kshatriya
> comes to the house in a manner of
> a guest, the householder may feed
> him... after the above mentioned
> Brahmins have eaten. Even a
> Vaishya and a Sudra who have
> approached his house in the
> manner of guests, he may allow to
> eat with his servants, showing
> thereby his compassionate
> disposition."[69]

Today the main factor determining the notion of
untouchability is the eating of flesh of dead animals.
The eating of meat was very popular among all varnas
from the Vedic age up to the Sutra period. One may
find many examples of meat eating in the Vedas. Rig
Veda 10:83:14:15-20 states:

> "the yajnika people, influenced
> by Indrani, kill bullocks and
> cook them. I became fat by
> eating them."[70]

Animal sacrifice was the main source of ending the

desire for meat eating on the part of the <u>Brahmins</u>. The <u>Brahmins</u> and non-<u>Brahmins</u> were all meat eaters but the non-<u>Brahmins</u> could not afford so much expenses. Whenever a non-<u>Brahmin</u> wished to eat meat on some festival occasion he had to sacrifice an animal to the <u>Devas</u>, yet he had to offer the animal to a <u>Brahmin</u> priest; only then he could eat the flesh of his own animal.

<u>Vedic</u> seers were meat eaters. Meat was almost compulsory at <u>Annaprasana</u> (or first feeding with solid) ceremony of a child and from then till death and cremation, sacrificing of animals, sometimes cows were necessary on most ceremonial occasions. In support of this <u>Manu</u> V:32 states:

> "He who eats meat when he honours the gods and manes, commits no sin, whether he has brought it, or himself has killed (the animal) or has received it has a present from others."[71]

By the time of the <u>Sutra</u> laws, however, a revulsion feeling had slowly been taking place against the slaughter of animals and particularly that of cows. The <u>Brahmin</u> philosophy acknowledged the existence of souls and senses in all animals. The aversion from animal food, the theory of transmigration of souls, the economic value of cattle, wealth and sanctity of the cow brought about a reaction imperceptible and feeble in its origin, against the sacrifice of animals

and particularly that of the cow. The cow being the source of essential things, such as milk, clarified butter, cow-dung and sacrifices being all - in all to the Vedic Aryans, some sort of sacredness came to be associated with the cow.[72]

Besides restrictions on food, similar restrictions are observed on smoking. Where a common cigarette pipe is used, it is passed from hand to hand (mouth to mouth) in turn a practice at least intimate as drinking and eating from the same dish. Sometimes there is a difference made between smoking in which the mouth piece is put to the mouth and smoking through the hand or hands folded so as to make a funnel, the thumb end of which is put to the smoker's mouth while the hand only comes in contact with the pipe or cigarette. Generally speaking smoking comes into the same category as taking water or kacchcha food, and the usual expression for suspending a man's privilege is to deny "tobacco-pipe and water", which prevents a man from associating with his caste-fellows.[73]

On the subject of food it should also be mentioned that there are restrictions on the material of which eating and drinking vessels are made - earthenware for instance, is tabooed by all higher castes, the reason usually given being that it cannot be made really clean - as well as on the use of certain animals food.

The only castes that eat beef are untouchables like the Chamars (leather-worker) or some of the scavenging castes like the Dom. The Dom are reputed to eat tiger's flesh, while the monkey is probably eaten only by primitive tribes, most of whom would taboo tiger flesh. Some castes are in theory purely vegetarian, but this seems to depend largely upon sect, Vaishnavas being vegetarians, whereas Shaivas and Saktas eat meat. Even where meat is eaten most respectable castes eschew the domestic fowl and even more the domestic pig, mutton, goat and game ground whether ground or winged is generally eaten freely, the superior Rajput eating the wild pig as many other castes do. As regards to fish, custom varies greatly, more perhaps by locality than by social position. Thus most respectable castes eat fish in Bengal, whereas in the dry and sandy deserts of Rajputana the idea of eating fish causes disgust, and traders coming from there to live in Assam refuse to allow their lorries carrying goods to transport the "disgusting creatures". Some castes distinguish between fish with scales and those without, and some, the Kewat, for instance, who will not eat fowl or pork, will eat crocodile or tortoise. Certain vegetables are also tabooed in some cases Agarwalas will not eat turnips or carrots.[74]

The rules regarding defilement by touch became more

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elaborate and rigid and the Sudras were the worst sufferers, the lowest or casteless castes being incapable of further degradation from their original untouchable status. Thus more and more restrictions were imposed upon the liberty of higher caste men to take food from Sudra hands not only on ceremonial occasions but in daily life. Vasistha VI:27-28 states that:

> "If a Brahmin dies with the food of a Sudra in his stomach, he will become a village pig in his next life or be born in the family of that Sudra. For though a Brahmin whose body is nourished by the essence of a Sudra's food may daily recite the Vedas, though he may offer an agnihotra, or mutter prayers, nevertheless he will not find the path that leads upwards."[75]

3.2.2   MARRIAGE

Marriage among the Aryans was monogamic, but polygamy was not unknown, mainly among the ruling classes. In the Aitareya Brahmana X:III:23 we observe:

> "One man may have more than one wife, but one woman has never more than one husband."[76]

In the domain of domestic life the husband was the master and the wife the mistress, although subservient to the lord of the household. The standard of morality among women was high; they enjoyed an honoured place in society. The Rig Veda mentions

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cultured women who composed hymns and who are described as <u>Rishis</u>. There was no seclusion; the burning of widows on their husbands funeral pyre was unknown. The sacred tie of marriage was regarded as indissoluble by human action. The wife was believed to be part of her husband's body; therefore she could not by repudiation or divorce be released from her husband. Even after death they could not be separated. Remarriage in the case of a widow does not, therefore, appear to have been contemplated, although it is not definitely prohibited in the <u>Riq Veda</u>. On the contrary, it was a general custom for a widow to marry the brother of her deceased husband in order to bear him children.

Marriage in one's own caste was the only sanctified union of man and women. The essence of the caste system, as Westermarck remarks, is endogamy. In the case of Hindu caste and subcaste endogamy was, however, a guiding principle rather than a rigid rule. Marriage among the three higher castes particularly between the <u>Brahmin</u> and <u>Kshatriya</u> were not uncommon. The lawgivers, laid down the law that the offspring by a <u>Kshatriya</u> woman was a <u>Brahmin</u>, and that of a <u>Kshatriya</u> by a <u>Vaishya</u> woman <u>Kshatriya</u>. In the course of time, however, the <u>Vaishyas</u> came closer and closer in contact with the <u>Sudras</u> in various fields of work and marriage connections between them began to

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increase to such an extent that the higher order was in danger of being merged in the submerged class. Hence the lawgivers stressed more and more the desirability of marriage in one's own caste and condemned the union of <u>Brahmin</u> or <u>Kshatriya</u> with a woman from the Vaishya community. The child of a <u>Brahman</u> caste and a <u>Sudra</u> woman was considered as impure as a corpse.[77]

Greene asserts that a ban on intercaste marriage underlies the principle of separate castes, and wedlock is indeed the regulator of Hindu social order. Marriage rules abound for each caste and restrictions are so severe that they take effect even within subcastes. This complex development is heavily dependant in early parentally directed marriages, otherwise independent human action could seriously endanger the whole structure.[78] Dutt states that to be an outcaste means to be deprived of the right to follow the lawful occupations of the twice-born men and to be deprived after death the rewards of meritorious deeds.[79]

Marriage of men in lower castes with women of higher castes was regarded with even greater horror. The lawgivers refused to recognize it, and placed the offspring of such union beyond the pale of the sacred law. The most heinous alliance was that of a <u>Brahmin</u>

woman with a <u>Sudra</u>. When a son was born from such a
pair, he was expelled from the village and compelled
to live with the unclean pariah people outside. One
of these so called casteless castes was the <u>Chandala</u>,
an unclean tribe that lived in forests outside settled
habitations. Hence the offspring of that most hated
union became <u>Chandala</u>, the untouchable and
unapproachable class of the population.

One can observe from this that despite all barriers
intermarriage amongst the different castes must have
been very common and that even the most aristocratic
caste was not free from "contamination". People were
warned on pain of interdiction, not to marry outside
the spheres specified in the law books, but
prohibition or no prohibition, such alliances did take
place, swelling the lists of castes.

3.2.3   **THE PANCHYAT**

Foremost among the self-governing institutions of the
day were the village communities. These were compared
by Megasthenes, who spent a long time at the court of
<u>Chandragupta</u>, to little independent republics. A
village or town had a council of elders chosen from
all castes and representing all the interests
concerned. This council had complete freedom in the

management of internal affairs. It controlled taxation, maintained, with the cooperation of the different castes, order and peace, settled disputes, upheld individual rights, and preserved intact the internal economy of the country.

The caste council is commonly spoken of as a panchyat, literally, that is a body of five men, but in practice it is usually very much larger. It may be a permanent institution with a continuous existence, or may be an intermittent one only called into being when circumstances demand it and dissolved again after its work is done. Similarly, the officials who perform its executive functions as well as sharing its judicial ones, may be appointed ad hoc for the particular purpose in hand, or for a much longer period, or they may be hereditary, or some may be elected while others are hereditary.

It has been frequently observed that the lower the caste in the social scale, the stronger its combination and the more efficient its organization. The high castes rarely have any organization strictly comparable to the lower ones. They may well have a sabha, a loose association which may be India-wide, but a panchyat and officials permanent or impermanent, are rarely to be found.[80]

Cox maintains that probably no single institution of caste system so clearly illustrates the fact that a caste is a corporate unity as the panchyat. Not all castes have a panchyat, but they all have some means of constituting a body capable of exercising its functions. It is upon the panchyat that the business of maintaining order within the caste and settling of intercaste questions devolve.[81]

The jurisdical function of most castes are in the hands of the headman, the panchyat and the caste assembly. The headman calls the panchyat, presides at its deliberations, and pronounces the decision of the group. Panchyat as a rule do not allow persons of other castes to take part in their deliberations, but in case of difficulties they may sometimes refer the matter to some outsider of local dignity or experience, whether he belongs to a Brahmin or to some other castes of good status. In this connection Abbe Dubois gives the following explanation:

> "Every caste has its own laws and regulations, or rather, we may say, its own customs, in accordance with which the severest justice is meted out."[82]

The most common punishment imposed by caste panchyats is that which deprives a casteman the right to receive water or the tobacco pipe from the hands of his fellow-castemen and forbids them likewise to receive

it from him. Prohibition from water automatically prohibits kacchcha food and for practical purposes he is excommunicated from communion with his fellow castemen. He also cannot have the services of Brahmins who conduct ceremonies for his caste, nor of the barbers who shave for it, nor the washermen who wash for and if he dies he must lack the funeral rites which alone ensure a continued existence after death and subsequent reincarnation. An excommunication may be temporary or for an indefinite period depending on the performance of some required expiation for the fault punished, or for life in which case he is compelled to find acceptance in some other castes. Other forms of punishment are the exaction of fines or feasts to the caste or to Brahmins. Fines may be used to buy sweetmeats for the assembled castemen or for putting into the fund which many castes maintain for communal purposes. Penalties imposed upon an individual is meant to humiliate him. For instance if a person is responsible for the death of a cow, he has to often make a pilgrimage with a cow's tail tied around his staff or to beg for his living in the same manner, or accompanied by a cow the tail of which he holds.

The panchyat has jurisdiction over all matters concerning its welfare; it is not at all concerned with questions of a civic nature. It organizes

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boycotts, regulates the occupational activities of its caste members, upholds rules concerning commensality, settles questions of intercaste relationships. Other matters which a panchyat may deal with are finding a suitable mate for a marriageable boy or girl. Widow remarriage, partition of property, the decision of minor quarrels, and, occasionally, the adjudication of thefts.

The panchyat had the power to punish its members. Prior to British rule they had the power to mete out the death penalty to its members. Although the penalty of death may be inflicted by some castes under certain circumstances, this form of punishment is seldom resorted to these days. Whenever it is thought to be indispensable, it is the father or brother who is expected to execute it, in secrecy.[83]

3.2.4   CASTE AS A FRATERNITY

The end of all sciences, according to Hindu philosophy, is the realizing of the unity of everything that exists. The scheme of social polity, based on caste, recognized such unity; at the same time it took into account the diversity of temperaments and the complexity of the needs and processes of human life. The strong point in favour of such system, states Garratt was that,

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> "while it took cognizance of the
> differences and inequalities
> between man and man, it did not
> regard them as immutable or
> irreducible."[84]

Caste made a distinction between the four basic functions for upholding human society, and assigned them, respectively, four distinct groups best qualified to perform such functions. It sought to integrate differences of disposition and character.

It is not only birth - that is to say, direct blood relationship - which earns caste membership for the individual. The caste member is a person consciously participating in an in-group with common expectations of reciprocal service. The destiny of the individual is bound up with that of the caste. Indeed, it is emphasized particularly among the upper caste that birth alone is insufficient for full caste membership. The child must be initiated. Hence, among the upper castes initiation is more significant for caste membership than birth.

A caste may be conceived as a brotherhood in which the individual is able to realize a satisfactory way of life. Although caste adds greatly to general contentment, it only holds true for the higher castes. Everyone is pleased and proud of his caste; no one will part with it on any account. It may well be said that no man in any country has more friends in need

than Indian castemen. All men of the caste, it may be considered, are their brother's keepers. By the very name of his caste an Indian carries with him, as it were, a certificate of character and reputation of a certain value wherever he goes. He needs no introduction wherever there are caste brethren. He can depend upon a hospitable reception. Caste people consider it a binding duty not only to provide for kinsmen and friends, but for all brethren in distress.[85]

Denied caste affiliation, the individual becomes a "rudderless ship", whereas in good standing, he is never left alone to bear the full weight of possible misfortune.

> "A member of a caste even if he was an orphan, is not helpless, for the caste will feed and protect him and train him in his craft till he can earn his livelihood.... It is the caste on which he depends for help at the time of a death in the family. Castemen are really his friends in need."[86]

It is this interdependence, which amounts to almost familial concern for the welfare of one another, that accounts in a large measure for caste stability.

3.2.5   DEGRADATION OF THE SUDRAS

The Sudra had a worse plight in life. He was relegated to the lowest stratum of society. He was described as the servant of another to be expelled at will. The Sudra was unfit for the ceremony of initiation (upanayana), the importance of which may be gauged from the fact that, when invested with the sacred thread, the symbol and badge of the Aryan tribe, the newly initiated is said to be born again. This constituted the main difference between the Sudra and Vaishya; one was dvija (twice-born), and the other was not.

According to Manu, a Sudra cannot wear the sacred thread, therefore cannot offer fire sacrifices, or read the Vedas or even hear the Vedas being read. A twice-born man is forbidden to even read the Vedas to himself in the presence of a Sudra. For a Brahmin to teach the Vedas to a Sudra was a great sin, and to receive money for doing so, was still more unpardonable. With regards to rights of property, Sudras are constantly classed in the law with women. Manu II:223 states:

> "If a woman or a man of low caste
> perform anything (leading to)
> happiness, let him diligently
> practice it, as well as (any
> other permitted act) in which his
> heart finds pleasure."[87]

Gradually the Sudra was pushed more and more into the abyss of degradation. He was held to have been doomed

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to serfdom. He was not allowed to acquire wealth, lest he should thereby cause pain to the <u>Brahmin</u>. He was believed to be physically unclean, prone to defile objects by his touch, that a householder was warned not to sip water brought by him for purification. Members of superior castes were not to travel in his company. So morally depraved he was taken to be that, while the twice-born castes were exhorted to shun spirituous liquor, he was left severely alone. Ghurye maintains that:

> "Even when ways and means of allowing <u>Sudras</u> access to the gods by prayer and sacrifice subsequently devised, a distinction was drawn between the <u>Sat-Sudra</u>, who merited emancipation by the observance of his caste duties and good conduct, and the <u>asat-Sudra</u>, who was past all hope of redemption. Only the good ones were allowed the privilege of Brahmanic rites and sacraments, but even in their case the recital of the mantras, or <u>Vedic</u> formulae, was forbidden."[88]

3.2.6   BRAHMIN SUPERIORITY

The most remarkable feature in the mechanism of Hindu society is the high position occupied in it by the <u>Brahmins</u>. They not only claim almost divine honours as their birthright, but, generally speaking, the other classes including the great <u>Kshatriya</u> princes and the rich <u>Vaishya</u> merchants readily submit to their pretensions as a matter of course. A <u>Brahmin</u> never bows his head to make a pranam (the kind of salutation that is due to a superior) to one who is not a

Brahmin. When saluted by a man of any other class, he only pronounces a benediction saying: "Victory unto you". In some cases when the party saluting is a prince or a man of exalted position in society, the Brahmin in pronouncing his benediction, stretches out the palm of his right hand, in a horizontal direction, to indicated that he has been propitiated. When the Brahmin to be saluted has a very high position, spiritual or temporal and the man saluting desires to honour him, he falls prostrate at the feet of the object of his reverence, and after touching them with his hand, applies his fingers to his lips and his forehead. The Brahmins have risen up the social ladder and hence forever solidified their superior position in society.[89]

All three castes, Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas were eligible to performance of sacrifice, that is, to say they were yajniya, but the Brahmin alone had the exclusive privilege to partake of the holy leavings or sacred oblations of the sacrifice. He alone was 'Hutada' whereas the others were "ahutada". Though there was reciprocity and division of duty between the Kshatriya and Brahmins, the latter was superior to the former in social status. The killing of a Brahmin was regarded as one of the vilest crimes. The law strictly prohibited murder or manhandling of Brahmins. The Satapatha Brahmana, 3:9:4:17 makes this

categorical statement:

> "Whoever kills a human <u>Brahmin</u> is
> deemed guilty."[90]

Even a king could not oppress a <u>Brahmin</u> at his will as
he was afraid of moral retribution or divine wrath.
This is noted in <u>Satapatha Brahmana</u> 13:1:5:4:

> "When the king chooses he may
> oppress <u>Brahmins</u>, but he will
> fare the worse or become poorer
> for doing so."[91]

Yet again the <u>Satapatha Brahmana</u> lends to the
superiority of the <u>Brahmins</u>. <u>Satapatha Brahmana</u>
4:3:44 states:

> "There are two kinds of gods.
> One kind comprises of celestial
> or divine deities whereas the
> learned <u>Brahmins</u> versed in the
> sacred law are human gods or gods
> amongst men. Hence sacrifice is
> divided into two parts (in
> relation to divine deities and
> human gods). Oblations offered
> in sacrifice are homage or gift
> offered to divine deities whereas
> human gods or <u>Brahmins</u> are
> propitiated with <u>Daksina</u> or
> sacrificial fee."[92]

The superiority of one caste over the other does not
necessarily mean domination of one caste by the other.
Once established it becomes a situation of mutual
expectation and willing, almost happy, yielding of
definite privileges and deference. The relationship
is spontaneous. The <u>Brahmins</u> do not struggle to
maintain their position, they are superior. On this
point Cox observes:

> "The Brahmin's superiority is
> inherent in himself, and it
> remains intact no matter what his
> condition in life may be. Rich
> or poor, unfortunate or
> prosperous, he always goes on the
> principle engraved on him that he
> is the most noble, most
> excellent, and most perfect of
> all created beings, that all the
> rest of mankind are infinitely
> beneath him and that there is
> nothing in the world so sublime
> or so admirable as his customs
> and practices."[93]

3.2.7   OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Hutton points out that one restriction on Hindus must
be mentioned, as it used to apply with much greater
force to the higher than lower castes, and that is the
prohibition against going overseas. The causes of
prohibition can only be guessed at, but it has
possibly arisen from the feeling that the act of
crossing the sea and living in a strange land makes
the observance of caste rules so difficult that they
are certain to be broken and therefore the mere act of
travel has itself become taboo. However, it may be,
it involves amongst strict Hindus the purification
ceremony which involves drinking the panchgavya - that
is, the five products of the cow - milk, clarified
butter, urine and dung all mixed together, than which
no remedy is more efficacious for purifying the body
from defilement.[94]

Another question to which much importance is attached in some parts of India is the right of a given caste to clothe themselves with certain garments, wear certain ornaments and use certain articles of show or luxury in public. Different materials are prescribed for the sacred thread for different varna that of Brahmin is nowadays cotton, of Kshatriya hemp, the material used for bowstring, and of Vaishya wool. In Southern India the wearing of clothes above the waist was formerly a privilege of the twice-born castes, while the Sudra castes themselves until quite recently insisted that it was forbidden to the exterior or untouchable castes. The prohibition extended to the use of gold or even silver ornaments, of umbrellas or even of shoes. Further north cases have occurred of low castes, for instance being beaten up for dressing like Rajputs, or for wearing gold ornaments in a similar way. This restriction on the use of gold seems to be of very ancient and widespread observance. Failure to observe the prohibition has frequently resulted in violence. Similar prohibitions are found against the use of the low castes of horses as mounts for bridegrooms in marriage processions, a common cause of violence or boycotts or palanquins, the use of which at marriages has often led to disturbances in Madras when used by low castes there and has had the same result in Bengal when used by Namasudras.[95]

3.2.8   CONCLUSION

Many scholars claim that when the Brahmins of the ancient times first imposed restrictions on the acceptance of food and intermarriage, they were not unconscious of the first three orders.   These restrictions reveal their instinct for self preservation.   Since then the four orders have multiplied a thousand times and every group has been obsessed with the idea of maintaining its own prestige and solidarity.   As a result, caste consciousness in its most obnoxious form is the order of the day.

The varna order which was an ideal society to live in had completely disappeared.   With the varna order society could have functioned harmoniously since each caste had a specific function to perform.   It had also appeared to seem that each caste was completely happy with its plight in life.   This was so because of the social mobility that the varna order lent itself to. But through the ages the Brahmins rose to exalted heights and claimed a superior position for themselves in society.   Not even the Kshatriyas could rise to their position.   With their rise in position came the hardening of the caste system.

Intercaste marriages became inflexible.   Ignoring marriage rules could result in loss of caste.   This

had serious implications for the individual concerned since he could also condemn his children by the way of excommunication from his caste. In most cases the offsprings of a marriage condemned by the panchyat became Chandalas. The system has to a large degree developed into a hard and harsh institution.

The panchyat, the heart of the caste system, pronounced the correct behaviour of their castes. They were allowed to mete out the severest punishment which included the death penalty. Excommunication from the panchyat meant total isolation from fellow caste members.

The caste system is often described by European scholars as an iron chain which has fettered each class to the profession of their ancestors and has rendered any improvement on their part impossible. This view may to some extent, be regarded as correct in so far as the lower castes are concerned. But with regard to the higher castes, caste is a golden chain which they have willingly placed around their necks, and which has fixed them to only that which is noble and praiseworthy.

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CHAPTER 4

THE HINDU COMMUNITY AND THE

CASTE SYSTEM IN SOUTH AFRICA

4.1   LABOUR PROBLEM IN SOUTH AFRICA

Natal (christmas land), was so named by Vasco da Gama
at the end of the fifteenth century.   But it was not
until 300 years later that the Europeans settlers
lived in the country.   Before the middle of the
nineteenth century there were two groups of white
settlers in Natal - the Boers and the British.   Among
these two groups it was the Boers who first settled in
Natal and called it Republic of Natalia, with its
capital at Pietermaritzburg, which was founded to
commemorate   the   Battle   of   Blood   River.
Pietermaritzburg was named after two Boer leaders
Gerrit Maritz who died in 1838 and Piet Retief who was
murdered by Dingaan the Zulu chief in the same year.
On the other hand the British had an unofficial
settlement on the coast at Port Natal.   Although the
British government was urged to annex Natal, it did
nothing.   It was only when the Boer " Native" policy
in Natal threatened to disrupt British administration

along the eastern frontier of the Cape Colony that the
government in London considered annexing Natal as a
dependency of the Cape in 1843. The Boers trekked
from Natal into the Orange Free State and Transvaal.
They apart from a few Boers, the majority could not be
persuaded to stay in Natal.

The most important factor in Natal was the large
number of Blacks. The tribes were still fragmented
and disorganised as a result of the wars of Shaka
(Zulu chief) and victories of the Boers. The Zulus
numbered approximately 200 000 in 1880.

The Black population in Natal, probably outnumbered
the whites by ten or more to one in the decade 1840-
50.[1] Although the Zulus who inhabited Natal as well
as Zululand made good domestic servants, provided they
can return to their kraals for long and frequent
holidays, they did not in the middle of the nineteenth
century make good workers in any industrial process.
They were a pastoral people, practising also a small
amount of agriculture, and the latter was mostly left
to the women. It was mostly hunting, hut-building
and fighting that the men were accustomed to. They
were not accustomed to a steady sort of job.

The arrival of the whites changed this form of
existence to a certain extent. Young men left their

tribal areas to seek work. Despite this move, their real centre of interest were the kraal and tribal areas and if anything important were to happen in the tribal areas they did not think twice to leave without notice to their white employers.

The continuance of the tribal system in tribal reserves strengthened the independence of the Zulu. The reserves were adequate in the mid nineteenth century. Their land and grazing grounds gave them a sufficient livelihood; there was no urgent need for them to work for the white man. But when they did leave their families in the reserves to come to work for the white man's area, it was as a temporary adventure. This, however, did not provide an adequate labour force for the Natal farmers.

In these circumstances, it was clear that the plight of the European planter was a serious one. There were many reports sent to the governor concerning the labour problem. Bishop Colenso of Natal reported to the governor that wherever the Blacks have been in service for four or five months, however, pressing maybe their master's circumstances or, however, earnest his plea for them to remain at their post, they went off to their tribal area and resumed their "native" life for six weeks or two months. The farmer is perhaps deserted at the most critical time and if

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the settler is engaged in trade, no sooner does the "native" become expert at it, then his time is up and he is gone.[2] It was then that the Natal planters began to despair at recruiting labour locally, that some of them turned to the idea of importing labour. The planters attempted every possible means of securing an adequate supply of labour. It soon became apparent that the only practical source of labour for the sugar plantation was a supply of indian labourers. Under continued pressure from the planters, the government of Natal was ultimately compelled to open negotiations and the governments of Britain and Indian consented to the plan.

4.2 CONDITION UNDER WHICH IMMIGRATION FROM INDIAN WAS PERMITTED

Palmer maintains that "the coming of the Indians to Natal was no spontaneous uncontrolled movement of adventurous individuals seeking a better livelihood than their home country gave them. It was part of an elaborate system organized and controlled by the governments of Great Britain and India. The Indian government was of course, entirely conducted by the British at this time, it was, however, a separate government with a delegated yet very considerable authority".[3]

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The abolition of slavery in the British empire in 1834 resulted in an organized system of indentured Indian immigration. The freed slave in many areas refused to work, and in Mauritius in particular, the planters were desperate for labour. Being accustomed to recruiting and supplying labourers to Ceylon, Indian recruiters stepped in and contracted to bring Indian immigrants to work on the Mauritian sugar Plantations.[4]

This system of indentured labour was attacked in the House of Commons in 1837. A Commission of enquiry was set up, of which three members were totally against the system but the fourth member Sir J P Grant wrote a memorandum advocating indentured labour under certain conditions. The memorandum specified that, immigration should be restricted to certain parts, at each of which a Protector of Emigrants should be appointed who should be responsible that no coercion was employed, and that all regulations concerning space, food, water, ventilation and medicine on the voyage had been attended to. He also stressed that security for return passages and that the government should refuse permission to ship emigrants to any colony where the law applicable to such emigrants is not in all respects such as in suitable to men of that class.

In 1842 the report was presented to parliament, the Commission of Inquiry was defeated 113 to 24 and Grant's proposal's were endorsed instead. India resumed her emigration to Mauritius and later on extended it to other colonies, but not without certain important criteria being met. For instance the recruiters had to be licensed. Emigration took place through a small number of ports only, chief of which were Calcutta and Madras. A special official was to be stationed at these ports called the protector of Emigrants. His duty was to make sure that the emigrant was departing of his own free will and that he had some idea of the contract into which he was entering. Ships had to be licensed for each voyage and had to be carefully supervised in relation to health conditions.

The Indian Government tried as far as possible to take care of the immigrants in the country of their destination. The colony receiving immigrants had to enter into a separate agreement with the government of India: Wages and rations of immigrants were specified and they were to receive medical treatment in illness; their terms of indenture service were laid down; the receiving country had to appoint a protector of Immigrants whose office it was to see that the terms of the agreement were carried out and to remedy any legitimate grievances of the immigrants. It will be

noted later how Natal completely misunderstood this obligation. Immigrants were to be guaranteed a return passage if they desired it, and if they wished to remain in the new country, they were to come under the same law as the other inhabitants and not subject to any special or restrictive legislation by reason of their foreign origin. But this agreement between India and the receiving colony varied from place to place.

More provisions were made in Great Britain where a special body was set up to control emigration. This body was known as the Colonial Land and emigration Commission. This Commission insisted that a certain proportion of women should be included in each emigrant party. There should also be individuals of the upper classes - doctors, clergymen and teachers. At the outset land should be sold to the emigrants and not granted free, this will compel them to work as wage earners for a while. This, however, only applied to white emigrants and not to indentured Indian immigration as they were bound to word for a period, namely five years.

4.3   ARRIVAL OF THE INDIANS IN NATAL

4.3.1   BACKGROUND

As has been already mentioned, Natal was annexed by
Britain in 1843, when her only good harbour (Port
Natal) on the coastline was threatened.   Trade in
Natal in the early nineteenth century was made up
mostly of products such as hides and ivory and since
the land was fertile experiments in cultivation had
begun.   Although maize could be grown especially in
the midland area export could not take place until
railways were available.   Planters also experimented
with coffee and arrowroot neither of which was
successful.   Cotton proved to be a minor boom during
the American civil war;   but the end result was that
sugar grown along Natal's coastal belt proved to be
the main crop.   The land was fertile - skilled
managers were available, banks began to operate in
Natal and capital could be secured.   By 1863
Hattersley in his book: The British settlement in
Natal states, Natal possessed five banks, the oldest
of which was the Natal Bank, founded in 1854.   In 1914
the Natal Bank was amalgamated with the National Bank
of South Africa.[5] Although capital was secured labour
created a major milestone in sugar plantation.

The planter needed some form of cheap non-European
labour, and here arises the question: Why not utilize

"Native" labour? In 1850 the White population was approximately 5 000 White the Blacks numbered between 90 000 and 100 000.[6] A large black population labour supply should not have been a problem. Colonial secretaries enquired why Natal needed to import labour.

The answer lies in the following reasons: Firstly, the "Natives" were still at a stage of subsistence economy. On their own land they only raised what they required for themselves. As already mentioned all the hard work of the kraal was done by the women, while the men looked after the cattle, fought and hunted, built huts and other duties held to be male. The type of agriculture conducted by the "Natives" was entirely by hoe cultivation in the land and woods. They were unaccustomed to steady work and had no idea of what was meant by contract labour. They gave preference to important happenings in the tribe at home, ceremonial occasions demanding their presence such as marriage or a special feast. At a time like this they felt nothing at deserting their master and gave no indication as to when they would return. This situation forced the planters to apply for some compulsion to work; as a result the hut tax was introduced in 1849 which had to be paid in cash and it was hoped that this would force the "Natives' out to work. The planters also demanded that the magistrates

should assist in the work of providing "Native" labour recruits, but this proposal was blocked by Shepstone. This factor has to be considered since it formed the second factor which made it impossible to employ "Native" labour.

At this point it is important to note why Shepstone formed a stumbling block in the planters plan for labour. Shepstone was the son of a missionary. He was brought up at his father's mission in the Cape Colony and learnt to speak the "Native" languages fluently. Through his association with the "natives" at the mission and unconverted visitors, he came to appreciate the fact that the Blacks of South Africa were far from being simple savages. Their social system was well suited to the conditions in which they lived, which included an elaborate customary law. Shepstone through his experiences with the natives came to admire and sympathize with them. Because of his experience he was appointed "Native" interpreter to the officers sent to occupy Natal, and after annexation in 1845 he was asked to remain as Diplomatic Agent to the "Native" Tribes. At this time the missionaries had a great influence at the Colonial office and Shepstone views, as a missionary's son, his views always carried great weight.

Palmer maintains that Shepstone's policy was to collect together the "Native' peoples, settle them on delimited reserves, and as far as possible, place at the head of each tribe in each reserve the chief who held that position by "Native" law.[7]

"Natives" in Natal during this period were in a state of great confusion. Many were fugitives as a result of Shaka's wars and the coming of the Voortrekkers. Despite the circumstances Shepstone worked hard at gathering them without bloodshed or disturbance into the appointed reserves with the help of a very small force of policemen.

Another of Shepstone's aim was to attach a particular mission to each reserve and the missionaries received considerable grants of land which were under their own control. Shepstone wished to provide liberal education for the reserve "Natives" and proposed that something like mechanics institutes should be introduced, but the British government refused to sanction the expenditure. Shepstone had to fall back on the control of reserves under his own general supervision. The "Natives" lived under their own customary laws in the reserves. There was much controversy concerning customary law especially in Pietermaritzburg. Dr Henry Cloete felt that there should be only one system of law in each country and

that the proper policy was to bring the "Natives" under European law. Shepstone stated that European law was unsuited to the "Native" population. He believed that they would not be able to understand or practise the system of private property and it would break up the strong family discipline of the natives on which their whole society depended. Brookes observes that feeling ran so high in Pietermaritzburg that for a time it was impossible to invite Mrs Shepstone and Mrs Cloete to the same tea party.[8] Shepstone with the backing of the Colonial office in London got his way. With His victory the "Natives" were established in their reserves and left to manage their affairs under their own law, except where it conflicted with the obvious dictates of humanity.

Bearing in mind the above circumstances in which Shepstone placed the planters one can understand the seriousness of the planters plight. They had the land, capital and markets waiting for the sugar and cotton, but they did not have a sufficient supply of labour. Apart from the fact that "native" labour was unreliable and unsuitable, Shepstone constantly blocked any proposals for compulsory labour on the Native population. This situation forced the planters to explore every possible means of securing an adequate supply of labour.

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Various attempts were made to recruit "Native" labour from beyond the borders of Natal. Ama Tonga workers were brought in from northern Mozambique and border agents were appointed to see to their safe arrival within Natal and to check the number arriving and departing.[9] Basutho labourers were allowed to engage in farm labour along the coast in the 1870's when the Black labour supply was at its lowest, the Royal Navy was encouraged to land men who had been rescued from slave shows in the vicinity of Zanzibar. Some of these men became indentured to farmers for a certain period of time.[10]

These schemes to supply the planters with labour did not work. Since labour supply presented such a problem to the planters they began to consider importing labour from overseas. In desperation the planters turned to India for the supply of indentured labourers. Due to continuous pressure from the planters, the Natal government was forced to open negotiations and the governments of Britain and India reluctantly consented to the plan..

Suggestions were made concerning the issue of Indian immigration. The first was a letter signed "J.R.S" which appeared in the Natal Mercury on 25 April 1855. It gives a history of Indian immigration to Mauritius and insists unless the proposals are very carefully

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drawn up with the knowledge of the Home governments'
views on Indian and Chinese labour, they were almost
certain to be rejected. It was therefore suggested
that the Natal scheme should take cognizance of the
following three points: the contract must be for
three years only; there must be no serious risk of it
not being renewed; since labourers can get the
equivalent of 20s. per month in Mauritius this should
be also paid in Natal.

Natal was given representative government in 1856. In
1856 a questionnaire was sent to planters to indicate
the number of Indians required and wages offered. In
1857 a number of planters indicated their willingness
to employ Indian immigrants for three or five years at
a wage not exceeding 10s. per month. In 1857 a Bill
providing for Indian Immigration was passed, but was
disallowed by the Secretary of State for the Colonies
on the grounds that the contract period was much too
long. Also there was a restriction on the places from
which immigrants might be introduced and no restraint
on possible abuses, save that a stipendiary
magistrate, when the contract was to be confirmed
before him, might amend any contract manifestly unjust
and inequitable. The Secretary of State for Colonies
enclosed an ordinance of Mauritius and suggested that
the legislative Council of Natal might have another
act on it to replace the one disallowed. The

important principles of this ordinance were that all immigrant vessels were to be licensed for a single voyage only and the licence was to specify the port of embarkation and the conditions under which the transport of immigrants was to take place, and the master to give a hand for the due performance of these conditions. On arrival of the colony of immigration a government officer was to take charge of the immigrants, and was to be at liberty to cancel their engagements if they appeared unequitable, and especially if they secured to the immigrants the current wages of the colony. The terms of contract should not be more than three years. A report on the organization and periodical reports on the treatment of immigrants should be furnished by the Lieutenant - Governor to the Secretary of State for the Colonies.[11]

This despatch and enclosed Mauritian ordinance were the foundation of the final Natal Coolie Law, Law 14 of 1859. The law read as follows. The colony was to be responsible for the transport of Indians, and employers were to pay three-fifths of the passage money of each Indian and such proportion of females, as according to regulations, should be required to accompany them. The lieutenant governor was to appoint an Immigrant agent who was to keep a register of Immigrants, to assign them to employers for a period not exceeding three years. Husband and wife,

parent and child were to be always allotted together and in their other relationships the wishes of the immigrants to be respected as far as possible.[12]

The Indian labourer could re-indenture after two years but after these five years of service he was free. The employer had to provide medical care and attention and had to retain the services of a medical practitioner to this end. In the event of ill-treatment to the indentured labourers the Lieutenant-Governor must have the indentured labourers re-assigned. Estates were to be inspected twice yearly by a resident magistrate or other persons authorized by the Governor.

Although this act was approved by the Home Government, difficulties had arisen with the Government of India. The letters sent to the Cape in answer to Sir George Grey's enquiries were forwarded to the new Lieutenant-Governor. Natal had apparently asked for immigrants from Bombay. According to the government of India there was abundant demand for labour near Bombay at rates higher than that offered in Natal. Immigration to Natal from Calcutta posed yet another problem "the superior advantages held out to immigrants by the Mauritius and West Indian Colonies; the difficulties experienced in meeting the wants of those colonies and adequate demand for labour which exists in Bengal and

Madras presidencies would combine to prevent any immigration taking place to Natal on the terms specified.

In response to the above letter Lieutenant Governor Scott had forwarded to the Home Government a copy of the report of the select Committee of the legislative Council asking for Indian labour. The letter outlined the critical need for labour on the sugar cane plantations. After a careful perusal of the letter, the Governor advised that the Indian Government be moved to grant their sanction to a limited number of Indians being introduced. He maintained that the planters were prepared to pay 10s. per month plus rations. They were also prepared to meet the cost of their passage to Natal. He was also aware of the fact that the Indian government was not happy at the thought of sending Indian immigrants to Natal, but the fact that planters in Natal regarded this privilege as of importance advocated compliance as an experiment. Transport could be arranged through a mercantile firm subject to such conditions as the Indian Government might lay down for the protection of the interest of the Indians. If this was permitted the Natal Government would ensure the proper treatment of Indians and due discharge on the part of planters, of conditions of agreements during the time of their service in the Colony of Natal.

When this letter was' referred to the land and Emigrations Commission, they stated that until the necessary ordinance is passed and approved immigration will not be allowed by the Indian government to commence.   After much consideration the Indian government wrote to the East India Company stating that although higher wages were now offered certain other provisions must be made.   They include the importation of women and the possible contigency that the cost of emigration might exceed £7 per head. Thereupon the Government of India concluded that after careful consideration they had come to the conclusion that if the Colony agrees to the rules which are considered sufficient in regard to other colonies it would be unjust to the Colony and to the Indian labourers to refuse immigration to the Colony.   It is apparent that the Indian government only reluctantly consented to sanction the immigration of Indian labourers to Natal.   Of course the whole burden of responsibility lay on the shoulders of Natal itself.

4.3.2   REASONS FOR INDIAN MIGRATION

Indians did not emigrate to South Africa to escape any political or religious persecution neither did they come organized in bands with the intention of creating a particular type of society, any new Utopia.   The indentured came as individuals, occasionally with

kinsmen and friends but frequently with complete strangers. They were driven to leave India by a variety of incentives, poverty, ambition, domestic tensions, restlessness of spirit, the urge to escape an epidemic or other misfortune especially after the Revolt of 1857. Some hoped to return after acquiring a certain amount of wealth. Indentured Hindus from caste conscious families knew that the work that they were indentured for and the life that they will lead because of indenture, were prohibited by their caste status and breaking through the prohibition they would become outcastes amongst their own kin.

The main reasons for Indians leaving India according to Pandey et al, lies in the economic sphere. A dissatisfaction with British agricultural policies seemed to have prevailed in India. Peasants could not afford land revenues. This in turn forced them to take loans from moneylenders whose interest charges were exorbitant. Indirectly this system provided a prosperous business for the emerging class of money lenders. They further stated that the system of collection of land revenue destroyed the old class of intermediaries like the landlords and village councils. These bodies have held together the rural societies since ancient times. Co-operation was replaced by competition. The collective life of the village gave way to individualism.[13]

Furthermore, the revenue system was introduced by the British in India in the nineteenth century on the basis of proprietary ownership. Property rights and the sanctity of contracts meant the creation of rent receiving interests which were responsible for changes in ownership. In the last forty years of the nineteenth century British India except Madras saw the land pass from agricultural classes to non-agricultural moneylenders. Bhatia maintains that, "the credit needs of the farmers provided the moneylending classes with an opportunity to enrich themselves by acquiring hold on agricultural lands and crops and they made full use of it".[14]

The two main types of land tenure at the time were Zamindari and ryotwari systems. By 1900 53% of British India's land revenue was organized under the zamindari system. It prevailed throughout Northern and Central India. The ryotwari system, in which the tax was imposed upon actual occupants of the holdings, prevailed in 47% of British India in areas like Bombay, Assam, Madras and Burma.[15]

The Zamindari revenue system made land a transferable commodity, prized by money-lenders for speculation. Since land revenue was the single, major source of funds for the government throughout the nineteenth century - in the 1890's it was 25% of the total

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revenues and receipts – the zamindari system created enormous pressure on the small farmers already operating on borrowed capital.[16]

The extent of dislocation caused by the revenue system maintains Charlesworth was limited. He quotes a study on Benares in which 67% of the land was retained by traditionally dominant agricultural castes like Rajputs, Brahmins, and Bhuinars. Yet in Bengal, one third of the titles changed hands in only 22 years.[17]

Under the ryotwari revenue system, no middleman existed. But the government's intention was to collect more revenue from the peasants than under the zamindari system. Many peasants lived below subsistence level. Their five-acre holdings on the average were uneconomic, and their rents excessive. This was the case in the Bombay and Madras presidencies. The 1880 Famine Commission reported that one third of the landholding classes were in debt without the prospect of ever recovering. The agricultural labourers, suffered the most since employment was seasonal. "As a result, a greater part of the ryots in the recruiting areas were, to a certain extent, indebted either to the moneylenders or landlords to meet their rent and other cesses or for seed to meet the vicissitudes of nature".[18]

Bearing in mind the vulnerability of the peasants one can observe how the occurrence of famines in the nineteenth century took on an added significance. Between the 1858 and 1908, the years of direct British rule famines occurred in 20 out of the 49 years. The Great Famine of 1876-78, devastated large parts of India and millions of people died. British efforts to cut down the deaths and to bring quick relief were successful.[19] But here Bhatia stresses that the landless classes were the most seriously affected, among whom were agricultural labourers, weavers and tenant cultivators. To pay India's public debt the policy of exporting surplus food crops was followed. Hence when extra food crops were required during famines they were not available. Moreover, the British encouraged the growth of commercial crops in place of food crops. This policy benefitted a few urban based traders and rural capitalists, but it made the masses more vulnerable to food shortages during famines, scarcities, droughts and so on. Although Indian economy improved between 1880 and 1895, and foreign trade expanded, the lower classes benefitted little from these trends.

Economic motive alone seldom explains why people would want to immigrate. Generally other experiences motivate people to leave. Traditionally, the Indian joint family is a close knit family giving each member

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economic and social security. But this ideal had already broken down in parts of the country, and in particular instances immigrants were orphans, with no relatives who could afford to support them.

People also left because they had no parent or adequate parent substitutes. There were men and women who were unhappy enough to run away from those who were in control of their lives. Within the structure of a joint family there is potential tension between different relations and immigration was one way out if the particular situation appeared unbearable.

One cannot forget the spirit of adventure and independence. This has in the past discouraged conservative Indians, but there is evidence that a number of youths were prepared to break from the family in desire to see the world and do what they wanted. They usually left without informing their parents, knowing that consent would be with held.

Looking at indentured women, many were young widows, unwilling to remain in singleness and subjection to their in-laws. Others were girls escaping from unhappy marriage and a few were women with illegitimate children or women deserted by their husbands. It was clearly impossible for indentured women to return to India unless they had come together

MAP ONE : BRITISH INDIA 1900
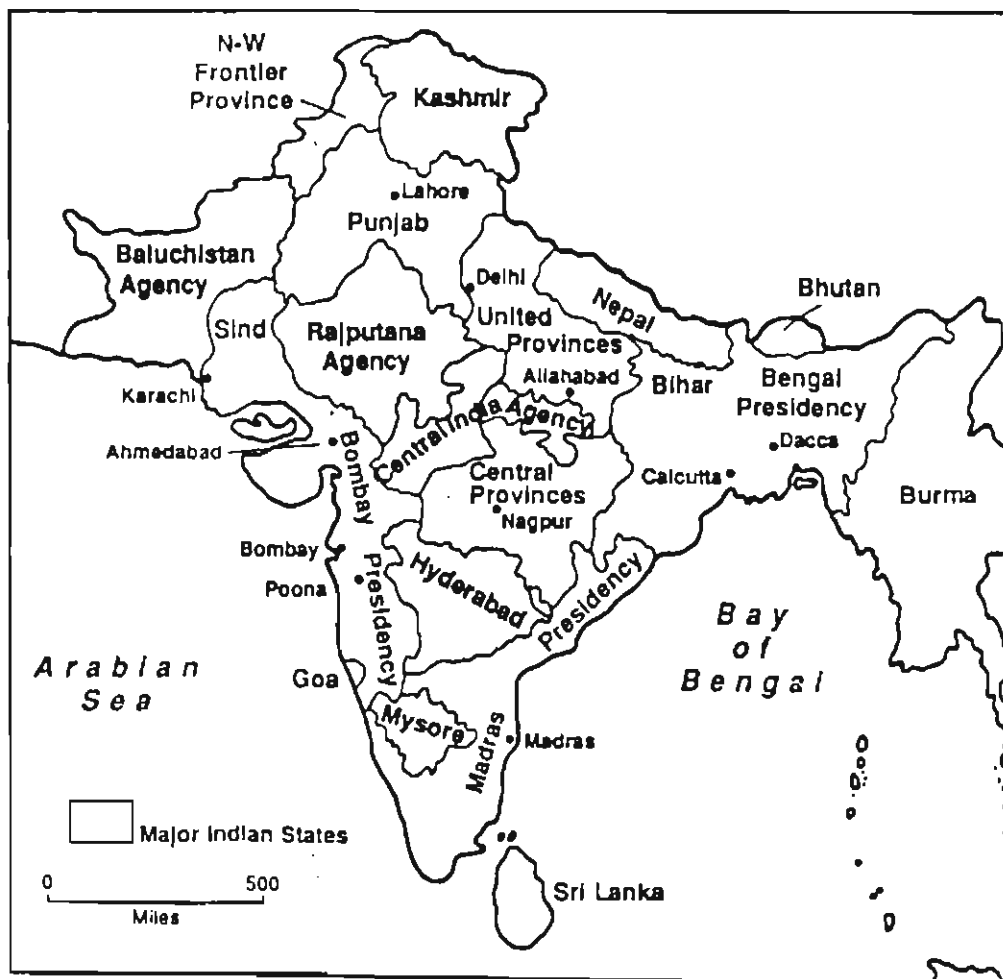
S. Bhana : Indentured Immigrants To Natal, 1860 - 1902, 1991

with their husbands.

On the question of Passenger indians, they realized the economic potentialities of a young and developing country, and families either sent out one of their members to open a branch of anand establish businesses, individuals came to accumulate wealth. If they were successful they brought out additional relatives. The passenger women accompanied their husbands to settle in South Africa, their wives had no option but to follow.

4.3.3   REGIONS THE INDENTURED INDIANS CAME FROM

Two-thirds of Natal's indentured labourers came from the Madras Presidency. On the west it is bound by the Indian Ocean and on the east by the Bay of Bengal, and its Northern boundary runs from Hyderabad on the west to the Central Provinces and Orissa on the east touching the Southern most boundary of the Bombay Presidency. Madras Presidency was predominated by Hindus. The regions that some of the indentured Indians came from were Andra Pradesh, Arcot, and Chingleput. The Tamil speaking people made up the majority of the population. The castes that were prevalent were the: Palli, Pariah and Vellalla. There was also a large number of Telugu speaking people who dominated the Madras Presidency. The

MAP 2 : UNITED PROVINCES OF AGRA & OUDH

MAP 3 : BIHAR IN BENGAL PRESIDENCY

S. Bhana : Indentured Immigrants To Natal, 1806-1902, 1991

leading Telugu castes were <u>Kapu</u>, <u>Mala</u>, <u>Balija</u> and <u>Kamma</u>. In this region the Chettis were the chief agricultural caste.

In the Madras Presidency, the percentages of Pariah castes was very high. The dominant castes were <u>Kapu</u> or Reddi, <u>Balija</u>, <u>Chakkiliyan</u> and <u>Odde</u>. Among the Muslims, there was the same caste like structure as in other districts.

For convenience the Calcutta passengers would be divided into two regions: the United Provinces and Bihar. The four leading districts of the United Provinces were Aginighur, Basti, Gazipur and Gonda. Caste pattern was different from that of the Madras. Presidency. <u>Chamars</u> (a caste of leather workers) were the most numerous followed by the <u>Dhirs</u>, <u>Brahmins</u> and Rajputs <u>Bhars</u> (labourers), <u>Koiree</u> and <u>Bhuniars</u> (agriculturalists), <u>Lunias</u> (saltpetre workers) and <u>Baniyas</u> were also numerous.

The prominent district in the Bihar region from which the immigrants came from were: Sahabad, Patna, Gaya, Saran, Muzaffarpir, Monghyr and Hizaribagh. Sixty seven percent of the population of these districts were Hindus. In all the districts, the Ahirs or <u>Goalas</u> were the most numerous. These two castes of cowherds were followed in numerical importance by

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other castes common to the whole region. They were: Brahmins, Rajputs, Koirees, Chamars, Dosadhs, Babhans, Kahars, Kurmis, Kandus and Telis.

In all the region discussed, the people on the lower rungs of the caste hierarchy were numerous. The Chamars in the United Province, the Ahirs or Goala in Bihar and the pariahs and Vellalars in the Madras Presidency were the most numerous.

4.3.4 RECRUITMENT OF LABOUR IN INDIA

Recruitment of indentured labourers took place in towns and a number of small villages. Recruitment of labourers were undertaken by professional recruiters, who were in the employment of the emigrant agents in Madras and Calcutta. Most of the labourers came from the Madras presidency, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. There were individual immigrants as well who came from as far afield as Bombay, Goa, Nepal, Burma and the borders of Kashmir. The different areas of recruitment is in fact an indication of the difference in languages and castes amongst the immigrants. Thus, recruitment for Natal was done mainly in the north-eastern and southern parts of India.

Recruiting of labourers was in the hands of government - appointed agents, who received a fee of

about £ 3 and later £ 6 for each individual recruit. With the incentive of money foremost in their minds, recruiters told villagers of the wealth that could be accumulated by going abroad. They made the prospect of accumulating wealth easier than it actually was. Hence, the prospect of emigrating promised a better future bearing in mind the number of famines India had experienced.

4.3.5 THE JOURNEY AND ARRIVAL OF INDIANS IN SOUTH AFRICA

The Truro was the first ship transporting indentured Indians from the Madras Presidency to Durban. Their date of arrival was the 6 November 1860. Aboard the Truro were 340 men, women and children. Of this number 87 were Christians, 94 malabar, 27 Muslims and 132 Gentoos. Note must be made here that on board the Truro and other early ships, that information supplied under caste was unreliable since neither Christian nor Muslim are caste names.[20]

A second batch of indentured labourers embarked on their journey aboard the SS Belvedere. Passengers on board this ship came from Calcutta and numbered at 351. The Indentured Indians, Rajputs and many from the artisan castes. The ships following consisted of a number of different castes ranging from Brahmins to

the Pariahs.   The caste names will be discussed in another section of this chapter.[21]

In the meantime Natal responded to the conditions laid down by the government of India and the Land and Emigration Commission by appointing an Immigration Agent at a salary of £ 200 a year. The agent was to make arrangements for the reception and assignment to employers of the indentured labourers.

The Truro arrived in Durban on 16 November 1860 and SS Belvedere on 26 November. "The Indian immigrants were distributed along the coastal belt, roughly from Umzinto in the South to Verulam in the North. Tatham (first immigration agent) in his initial report to the Colonial Secretary dated 23 November 1860 stated that of the total 199 male and female adults, 96 were not allotted to specific areas a few days later. Tatham had managed to alot another 15 people, leaving 60 in the barracks. These included one interpreter, seven police, two insane people, three sick people and one dumb person. He expected to place some of these later. In fact he did manage to place most of them with owners or managers of estates between Verulam and Umzinto".[22]

Nineteen ships arrived between November 1860 and July 1866 with 6445 indentured immigrants. This time they

were allocated to planters growing one or more crops and were situated along the coast from Victoria county in the North to lower Umzimkulu in the South.[23]

4.3.6 PROBLEMS FACED BY THE IMMIGRANTS

The initial problem experienced by the indentured labourers was the lack of communication. Although Tatham did his work fairly well, he could not speak any of the Indian languages, and this made it difficult for him to understand the needs of the immigrants. Tatham resigned his post in 1864 and was succeeded by H C Shepstone. Shepstone did little if not nothing to help the immigrants. He also complained that the Indians regarded him responsible for their welfare.

Shepstone's lack of responsibility is highlighted by the following facts. It has been indicated by Palmer that, South Africa had then, as it has now, a profound contempt for anyone with a coloured skin and the use of a whip in maintaining labour discipline was traditional. Several instances of flogging of indentured Indians occurred though it was against the regulations under which the Indians had been allowed to come to South Africa. It was, however the duty of the Agent to check these development. But

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unfortunately for the immigrants his slackness and the fact that there was no precise definition of his responsibilities, prevented him from doing so.[24]

In 1872 Shepstone admitted to the Commission of enquiry that was set up that he had hardly ever visited the estates except for the purpose in assigning indentured labour. He only regarded himself as an Agent supplying planters with labour, not as the protector of immigrants as had been intended by the government of 1859, required a magistrate or any other person specially appointed by the government to visit and inspect the place.[25]

Government notices 34 and 116 of 1866 indicates further complaints of immigrants. According to these notices there were complaints of ill-treatment; improper stoppage of pay, and unsatisfactory rations. A notice had to be published by the Lieutenant-Governor precisely defining the latter. There were planters who refused to supply rations to women and children as they did not work. The government was forced to take steps to rectify the situation. Planters believed that the Indian husbands should support their families on their weekly wages of 2s.6d At this point it is important to note that the agreement between indentured Indians in service in Natal were not in written contracts. But it was a

grave omission states Thompson that the Indian Government did not insist that a comprehensive legal contract should be entered into between the colonial agent and each immigrant. This Thompson believed was a valuable definition for the protection of the weak against the strong.[26]

Other complaints lodged by the indentured Indians were that the rations agreed upon were not supplied. For example, fish was often not supplied and the reason given was that it was not available. When they asked for the money to compensate for the lack of fish, the planters refused. On the other hand some planters instead of the full ration of rice gave the labourers half rice and half mealie meal. The objection to this was that rations should not be changed unless agreed upon by the indentured labourers. There was also complaints concerning illness. If an indentured labourer was sick, a shilling a day would be deducted from his wages of 10s per month. This meant that a month's illness resulted in the loss of three months wages.

In the meantime the Natal government wanted to renew immigration in 1872. The Indian Government refused until the matter of ill-treatment was thoroughly investigated. Under pressure a special commission was appointed under Price-Lloyd and Gallaway.

The Coolie Commission Report of 1872 stated that there was no general systematic bad treatment but here certainly isolated instances of deliberate ill-usage. On many estates there were no medical care. The interpreters were so bad that the magistrates were mistrusted. There were a few cases of illegal flogging and withholding of wages. In the light of this report Law-12 of 1872 came into effect, which among other things provided for the appointment of a Protector of Indian Immigrants with much wider powers than that held by the agents. After careful negotiations on the part of Captain Macleod with the Indian Government immigration was resumed in 1874.[27]

It is very important to also note that there were three distinct groups of Indian immigrants residing in Natal. They are indentured Indians who were under contract; "free" Indians who had completed their period of indentureship and who elected to remain in Natal rather than return to India; and "passenger" Indians who came to South Africa at their own cost, and enjoyed the same citizenship as the Whites until this was changed.

The Indian government demanded and received assurances, that the indentured Indians would receive fair and equal treatment when their indentureship expired. Sadly, this pledge was not honoured by

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Natal. Indians were only acceptable in Natal so long as they were labourers. The Natal Whites feared their monopoly in trade and agriculture. They also felt threatened by the number of Indians free and passenger Indians who had become traders and farmers. Thus the economic success of the Indians "was perhaps the sharpest thorn in the flesh of the European.[28]

The anti-Indian movement in Natal gained such momentum that the government of Natal was forced to appoint a commission, which was known as the Wragg commission, to investigate the various complaints. The conclusion that Commission arrived at was that the white complaints against the Indians was not justified and that there definitely existed anti-Indianism in Natal.

Amidst such tension in Natal, it was granted responsible government in 1893. There followed a series of enactments which deprived Indians of many rights. These rights included the franchise in Natal; restriction on entry of free Indians to the country; the £ 3 tax (Poll tax) which was designed to compel free Indians in Natal to return to India. At this stage it is important to bear in mind that some of the free Indians and passenger Indians had emigrated to Transvaal. It was at this time Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi arrived in Natal to fight a legal case.

4.3.7 GANDHI - THE SOUTH AFRICAN EXPERIENCE

Gandhi became involved in the politics of Natal merchants in mid 1894. By that time their political priorities had already been firmly established and a tentative start made on political organization. Gandhi was drawn into merchant politics when there was an urgent need for a full time organizer, preferably fluent in Gujarati and English and with a legal training. Gandhi met the requirements from the point of view of linguistic and legal qualifications, and of ideological compatibility.[29]

Gandhi was hired to assist in a £ 4000 law suit against a Transvaal merchant. According to Gandhi's autobiography the offer of a first-class return fare to South Africa and a fee of a £ 105 for a job that would take no more than a year to complete came as a relief to him. Gandhi had tried unsuccessfully to establish a legal practice; first in Bombay and then in Rajkot. Whilst working in Natal and Transvaal he was known to be timid, inexperienced and shy of speaking in public. But being deeply shocked by the indignities which the Indian elite suffered at the hands of the Whites that he overcame all these handicaps in order to voice his objections to the insults.[30]

The innovations in elite politics after Gandhi had become involved in May 1894 were for most part tactical only. Three major strategic decisions were made, however: to establish the Natal Indian Congress, to start the newspaper Indian Opinion and to found a communal settlement at Phoenix near Durban.

The Natal Indian Congress was founded on 22 August 1894. The initiative to establish Congress came from Gandhi and it catered for needs of the merchant class. Maximum emphasis was placed on protecting the privileged economic position of the Gujarati trading communities. Socially and politically the Gujaratis were conservative. When they protested against White discrimination against them, they protested as a class rather than a race. The merchants also placed emphasis on the distance between themselves and the Indian underclasses. They believed that their economic interests were threatened, "in terms of their being identified as a part of a certain group which was placed low in the racial hierarchy, and for whose majority restrictive legislation already existed".[31] Thus to protect their interests the merchants frequently claimed to be separate from and superior to the Indian underclasses.

Although in theory membership on Congress was open to any person, in practice the annual dues of 3 placed

clear limitations on the socio-economic strata from which the party could draw. As a result, the membership was dominated by the merchants. Congress for the first decade was for the most part financed, organized, led and actively supported by a small number of merchants who made up the Natal Indian elite.

The Indian Opinion began its publication in June 1903, although the decision to start an Indian newspaper was made as early as 1896. Like the Congress the Indian Opinion served primarily as a spokesmen for Indian merchants in Natal and Transvaal. The newspapers' important function was to keep the elite informed of Indian political activity in Natal and the Transvaal.

With the creation of the Phoenix settlement Gandhi considered it to be a solution to the Indian Opinion's financial problems. He had decided to move the paper to a farm where the workers could support themselves on two acre plots of land and draw only a nominal salary for their work. The Phoenix settlement became significant to Gandhi personally, both as the model for a second settlement in the Transvaal, and as a staging point for the final phase of his passive resistance campaign in 1913.[32]

The political activity between 1894 and 1897 revolved around the campaign against the Franchise Amendment Bill. The first major step against the Bill was a petition signed by some 9 000 people which was submitted to the Colonial Secretary in July 1894. Although Congress's ideology lent itself to the land itself to the notion of equality for all Indians, the main aim of the campaign was to gain acceptance specifically for the merchants in terms of their being "desirable citizens". Despite the petition the Disenfranchisement Bill was passed.

The Natal government did not stop at disenfranchisement. This was followed by Act No 1 of 1897, which prohibited free immigration except on certain conditions to Natal. This was done under the protest of preserving the whole social policy against the introduction of immigrants from India. The Natal government took another advantage of the weakness of the Indian Government by passing Act No 18 of 1897. This act amended the law relating to licences to wholesale and retail dealers, and placed unfettered discretion as to the issue or refusal of licences in the hands of the local authorities. The act was general in its application, but aimed at restricting the Asiatic trade.[33]

On the outbreak of the Anglo-Boer war in 1899, Gandhi argued that the Indians who claimed full citizenship in Natal were in duty bound to defend it. He managed to raise an ambulance corps of 1100 volunteers, out of whom 300 were free Indians and the rest indentured labourers.[34] Gandhi endeavoured to instill in them a spirit of service to those whom they regarded as their oppressors.

British victory in the Boer war provided little relief to the Indians in South Africa. The new regime was to blossom into a partnership, but only between the Boers and Britons. Gandhi failed to make any impression upon the South African Europeans. In 1906 the Transvaal government published an ordinance for the registration of its Indian population. At a protest meeting in September 1906 under Gandhi's leadership, had taken a pledge to defy the ordinance 1 when it became law.

Thus was born the Satyagraha or passive resistance. The Satyagraha was successfully used against the Transvaal government in opposition to the Asiatic Law Amendment Act, Act 2 of 1907 calling for the registration of all Indians. Again in 1913 Gandhi resorted to passive resistance demanding the abrogation of the £ 3 tax and other discriminatory laws. The resistance ended in the Smuts-Gandhi

agreement, an exchange of letters in which Gandhi promised to suspend the passive resistance campaign. In return the Indian Relief Act was introduced. According to this act the £ 3 tax was abolished. Marriages according to Indian rights were recognized. Wives and children of Indians domiciled in the Union of South Africa were to be admitted. However restriction of free movement from province to province and preventing Indians from settling in the Orange Free State still persisted. This brought an end to the Gandhian era in South Africa.

4.3.8   CONCLUSION

The indentured Indians had come to South Africa at the request of the Natal government and many of them settled in the country permanently. On completion of their indentured service they were given an option of a free return passage to India or a piece of land for free. Many of them settled on the land and became prosperous farmers.

Indians came to South Africa for different reasons. Famines in India was one great motivation to immigrate. Many left for personal reasons.

Indians experienced many problems in South Africa. They had to suffer ill treatment at the hands of their

masters and also poor wages. Lack of interpreters made it very difficult for indentured Indians to express their feelings to the magistrates. The result of this meant that they always came up second best and their masters went scot free.

Passenger Indians also experienced problems after settlement. The European traders were envious of their prosperity and did not look kindly to the type of competition they were up against. The European traders felt so threatened by the Indian traders that they ensured laws to be enacted to curb their progress. This was just the beginning of a number of laws to be passed in the future depriving Indians of certain rights and privileges.

Thus with the Indians settling in South Africa we have descendants of second, third, fourth and fifth generation born South Africans. They form a society very different from that of their forebears in India, a society in which caste operates to a limited extent and in which new elite structures are developing based on Western criteria.

4.4   CASTE DIVISIONS AMONGST THE EARLY HINDU IMMIGRANTS

The ship lists of both the Truro and the SS Belvedere dispels the misconception that no high caste Hindus came to Natal. The Truro brought 101 Hindus, 78 Malabars, 61 Christians, 1 Rajput and 1 Marathee. Aboard the Belvedere were 69 gardeners, 61 Brahmins, 25 Kshatriyas, 18 dairymen, 16 pig-rearers, 14 fruit growers, 14 potters, 11 salt-dealers, 11 porters, 9 clerks, 8 herdsmen, 7 boatmen, 6 leather workers, 5 policemen, 5 messengers, 5 laundrymen, 4 oil-pressers, 4 iron-mongers, 3 undertakers, 2 barbers, 2 hunters, 2 jewellers, a confectioner, a weaver, and a dealer in enamelware.[35]

Tables 4.1 and 4.2 of Indians shipped out of Calcutta and Madras. Table 4.1 indicates that the immigrants from Madras were drawn from castes above or at the top of the Sudra level. Many of the Sudras listed here claimed Vaishya or Kshatriya status, though they were not accorded this status by census officials. This is true, Thurston states, for instance, of the Nayakers 1871, petitioned the government of Madras to be returned as Kshatriyas in the census. In 1900, Pallis in the Godaveri district again claimed Kshatriya status. The titles Nayaker and Pillay denote authority, bravery and superiority.[36] There was a

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heavy flow of indentured labourers from three
districts in Madras: North and South Arcot and
Chingelput.

Passengers from the Madras Presidency had an
overwhelming agricultural background. In Madras
country, the Vellalars and some of the Vaduqas claim
to be Kayasthas (ie the writer caste) although they
are generally described as agricultural castes. The
Vellalars are divided into two classes that is
Moodleys and Pillays. The Moodleys came chiefly from
Arcot and Salem. The Pillays are found chiefly in the
extreme south. Neither the Moodleys nor the Pillays
take the sacred thread.

Vaduqas from Madras are in fact Sudras of Andhra
Pradesh who have migrated to the Madras. There are
many well educated men both among the Vellalars and
Vaduqas.

Besides these there are many other castes whose
principal occupation is agriculture. Of these the
most important are the following Kavari, Kappilian,
Vanniah, Oddar, Upparava, Pallan, Padeyatchi,
Nathambadayan and Urali.

Table 4.1 indicates that an average of 1,7 percent of
people from the Kavari caste came to South Africa

during the periods 1860-1907. Originally the <u>Kavaris</u> engaged solely in agriculture. The position they held was that of landowners. The actual cultivation of the land was undertaken by the lower castes. Although most people belonging to this caste still engage in agriculture, several of them follow other vocations like, sailors, small traders and pedlars. It is important to note that the <u>Kavari</u> caste had two branches that is the <u>Balijis</u> and <u>Tottiyars</u>. Table 4.1 shows that an average of 3,3 percent of people belonging to the <u>Baliji</u> caste came to South Africa during the period 1860-1902. The <u>Balijis</u> were chiefly petty traders and hawkers.

A percentage of 1,1 and 14,3 as indicated on Table 4.1 are for the <u>Padiachy</u> and <u>Vanniah</u> respectively. Some Vanniah caste also use the title <u>Padiachi</u>. There was in fact quite a large percentage on <u>Vannias</u> who came to South Africa. In fact they stand second to the <u>Pariah</u> caste. According to Bhattacharya the British occupation of the <u>Vannia</u> were slaves both to the <u>Vellalar</u> and <u>Brahmin</u> cultivators, or else they worked the lands of the higher castes, on a system of sharing half the net product with the proprietors. Others are simply labourers, and many of them by taking advances from their employers became practically serfs of the soil and unable to extricate themselves from the bondage of the landlord. They

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abound largely in the Tamil District of Tirchnapoli
and Tanjore.[37]

According to Table 4.1 a small percentage of 0,3 of
Chetty's came to South Africa in the period under
review. The Chettis were the chief trading castes of
the Madras Presidency. They are considered to be the
same as the Baniyas of Northern India. The Chetti's
claim to be of the Vaishya caste. The Chetti's are a
caste of bankers, brokers, shopkeepers and
moneylenders in Southern India. They correspond to
the Baniya. Baniya is a term applied to the various
trading castes, particularly those of Rajputana and
western India.[38]

The Kapu are listed separately from Reddy in Table 1,
but yet again as in previous cases, they belong to one
caste group. The Telegu caste group, states, Hutton
which uses the familiar Reddy, is probably the most
numerous single caste in South India. It numbers two
to three million, mostly cultivators, farmers and
landowners. Socially they take a place next to the
Brahmans in many district, and claims an origin from
North India and kinship with the Ranthor clans of the
Rajputs.[39]

Table 4.1 indicate a number of Telegu castes. The
Balijia, Kapu, Reddy and Vellalan are well represented

in Table 4.1. If one assumes that caste also reflected the occupational background, there is some diversity in the work categories represented: Chuckler and Madiqa were leather workers, Gollas were milkmen or shepherds, Dhobis were washermen and Malas could have been framers, fishermen or boatmen.

Table 4.1 shown that 14,6 percent of people belonging to the Pariah caste came to South Africa between 1860-1902. Bhattacharya states that the Pariah was one of the lowest and unclean castes of India. They perform menial tasks such as sweeping streets etc.[40] In Table 4.2 the Chamars and Ahirs among the Calcutta passengers had their equivalences in Madras's Madiqa and Golla.

TABLE 4.1

DISTRIBUTION OF CASTES/RELIGIONS AMONGST MADRAS PASSENGERS, 1860 - 1902

PERCENTAGES

CASTE/RELIGION	1860-66	1874-77	1877-78	1879-82	1883-85	1886-89	1890-91	1892-93	1894-95	1896	1897	1898	1899-1900	1901	1902	TOTAL AVE.
Unknown	6,5	-	38,6	4,1	5,1	0,4	4,6	2,7	7,2	0,4	7,9	13,0	24,2	12,2	23,3	10,7
Agamudi	-	-	-	3,0	2,7	2,5	1,4	1,9	2,1	1,4	0,7	1,8	0,9	2,4	1,9	1,6
Balji	-	-	7,3	5,6	3,1	3,9	1,9	2,7	3,4	5,6	2,4	2,6	1,4	3,0	3,5	3,3
Boya	-	-	-	3,2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0,3	0,3
Kavari	0,5	-	0,4	1,0	0,5	1,8	3,4	3,1	1,8	1,8	1,6	1,9	3,3	1,3	1,3	1,7
Chetty	-	-	0,3	0,8	0,9	0,7	0,7	-	0,5	0,7	-	-	-	0,2	-	0,3
Christian	5,5	-	0,8	2,3	1,6	0,7	1,1	0,7	0,3	1,1	-	0,3	2,1	0,3	1,5	1,3
Chuckler	-	-	-	1,2	0,7	0,3	0,8	0,9	1,5	1,6	1,8	0,6	0,8	0,4	0,7	0,8
Dholi	-	-	0,6	1,6	0,5	1,6	1,8	1,2	1,0	1,6	0,7	0,7	0,9	0,9	1,7	1,1
Ediya	-	-	-	1,0	1,0	2,1	1,3	2,2	3,1	3,5	2,1	2,5	2,4	3,3	3,1	2,0
Gentoo	9,5	-	-	-	0,7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,4

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Golla	–	–	–	1,6	0,4	1,1	0,6	0,5	1,0	1,4	4,0	–	1,5	0,9	1,5	1,0
Gounden	–	–	–	–	0,4	0,5	0,4	0,5	1,4	1,9	0,8	–	1,3	1,0	0,7	
Kalla	–	–	–	0,7	2,1	1,9	0,5	0,5	0,9	0,9	–	–	–	–	–	0,5
Kama	–	–	–	0,6	0,7	1,2	0,6	1,9	1,2	1,0	1,6	–	1,0	1,3	1,9	0,9
Kapu	–	–	–	0,6	1,0	3,8	0,9	0,7	3,6	3,9	10,8	–	4,9	2,1	3,3	2,5
Madiya	–	–	–	0,4	0,7	0,9	1,9	–	–	0,7	5,5	1,4	4,2	1,3	2,3	1,4
Mala	–	–	–	0,6	0,8	4,4	2,3	0,7	1,3	1,1	9,8	2,8	4,3	1,8	2,8	2,3
Malabar	48,3	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	3,5
Moodley	–	–	0,8		0,3	–	0,3	1,7	1,0	–	0,3	0,3	0,2	1,1	1,1	1,6
Muslim	12,0	–	4,4	4,7	4,2	1,3	1,5	2,2	2,0	1,6	1,3	1,7	0,8	1,0	3,5	3,0
Naicker	–	–	–	–	0,5	0,3	1,0	0,8	0,7	–	0,5	0,8	0,8	0,7	0,7	0,5
Odda	–	–	3,5	3,0	0,3	3,1	5,4	5,3	9,7	8,3	3,4	3,3	1,7	4,9	3,9	3,8
Padiachy	–	–	–	0,6	3,5	3,1	1,0	0,7	0,3	3,5	1,1	0,8	0,6	0,5	0,3	1,1
Palla	–	–	–	0,3	4,6	2,9	0,9	0,8	0,7	0,9	–	2,4	0,5	–	0,4	1,0
Pancharam	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	2,7	1,7	–	–	0,2	0,3	0,2	0,3
Pariah	2,0	–	19,3	13,7	13,1	14,7	18,4	24,0	14,6	15,6	10,9	13,8	13,5	20,1	11,6	14,6
Reddy	–	–	1,6	1,1	0,6	2,2	1,8	1,5	1,8	2,6	1,9	1,5	1,8	2,7	2,7	1,7
Shepherd	0,3	–	3,8	0,9	0,4	0,5	–	0,4	0,3	–	–	–	0,5	–	0,4	0,

Uppara	–	–	0,7	5,0	–	–	0,4	3,6	1,8	–	0,8	4,5	–	0,7	–	1,3
Vanniah	–	–	6,8	–	8,4	12,5	17,3	25,9	20,0	21,5	11,5	19,7	15,4	27,0	14,2	14,3
Vellalan	0,3	–	2,0	–	9,5	10,1	6,9	4,3	5,2	8,3	4,7	3,9	2,7	2,6	2,7	4,4
TOTAL NO.	5456		4753	3945	3515	4782	4482	4527	3529	1977	3130	4079	6199	5169	4119	59662

(Source : Bhana, S : <u>Indentured Indian Immigrants to Natal 1860-1902 : A Study based on ship Lists, 1991)</u>

TABLE 4.2

READING CASTES/RELIGIONS AMONG CALCUTTA PASSENGERS, 1860-1902.

PERCENTAGES

CASTES/ RELIGIONS	TOTAL AVE	1860-66	1874-77	1877-78	1879-83	1883-85	1886-88	1890-91	1892-93	1894-95	1896	1897	1898	1899-1900	1901	1902
Unknown	7,0	0,1	4,4	1,5	2,3	1,5	0,1	0,6	1,0	14,9	0,3	4,2	20,1	26,2	18,1	35,0
Ahir	12,2	3,9	7,7	9,6	6,5	6,4	7,9	15,7	15,3	11,4	14,8	22,0	19,9	15,5	15,0	10,7
Bagdee	0,2	2,3	1,1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Bania	0,2	1,0	1,0	–	0,6	0,8	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Bhooyear	0,2	–	0,7	–	1,5	1,4	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Bhur	1,6	1,0	1,4	4,2	0,5	1,4	1,0	2,5	3,4	2,2	2,7	1,0	–	–	2,2	0,9
Brahmin	1,2	4,9	4,0	1,3	1,9	3,7	2,1	–	–	0,4	0,4	–	–	–	–	–
Chamar	15,8	9,5	12,6	–	25,5	8,5	8,5	19,0	23,1	23,9	17,5	20,0	22,4	16,7	9,2	11,4
Chutree	2,8	2,5	5,8	3,5	8,6	2,6	3,9	4,4	3,0	2,2	3,0	–	–	–	2,0	1,0
Dhobi	0,4	1,0	0,6	1,2	–	0,9	–	0,6	–	0,7	1,1	–	–	–	–	–

Dosadh	1,5	2,9	2,9	3,0	2,5	2,7	4,0	1,3	1,5	0,9	-	0,8	-	-	-	1,1
Gararee	1,8	-	1,2	0,8	1,4	1,0	2,3	2,5	1,9	2,1	2,5	2,3	3,0	2,4	2,2	1,6
Gowala	1,4	3,2	1,9	1,2	0,9	2,4	-	1,8	1,9	0,9	1,0	3,5	1,0	-	-	1,1
Gat	0,7	-	0,2	-	3,4	0,4	-	-	0,7	0,4	-	0,3	-	1,7	2,0	1,1
Kachhi	0,4	-	0,4	-	1,4	0,7	-	-	0,9	0,6	-	0,9	1,3	0,7	-	-
Kabar	4,0	2,9	3,3	2,4	3,7	2,6	7,0	4,4	4,0	3,1	3,6	6,4	3,7	3,6	5,4	3,4
Kandoo	0,2	1,0	0,6	-	-	0,4	-	-	0,9	0,4	-	-	-	-	-	-
Kawote	0,7	-	1,2	0,6	-	0,4	1,4	0,7	-	1,1	1,4	1,7	2,0	-	-	0,5
Koiree	5,6	2,6	5,3	-	4,8	5,0	7,9	8,1	7,3	8,3	10,5	4,4	3,2	6,1	5,8	4,6
Kumhar	0,4	1,3	0,9	-	0,4	1,5	-	-	0,7	0,5	0,7	0,5	-	-	-	-
Kumbi	0,9	-	0,3	-	-	0,7	1,9	0,9	1,2	0,6	2,0	1,8	0,9	1,0	1,1	0,5
Koormee	5,9	5,6	5,1	3,6	4,5	3,1	5,0	5,2	5,3	4,3	5,4	10,7	11,7	8,6	5,5	4,2
Lodhe	1,8	-	1,2	2,1	2,3	0,8	1,3	2,4	1,6	2,3	2,1	3,1	3,2	3,1	1,6	0,7
Lohar	0,6	1,0	0,5	-	0,6	0,4	-	0,4	1,5	0,6	1,6	1,4	-	-	-	1,2
Mala	0,6	-	0,7	-	-	4,1	-	1,0	-	1,0	-	1,1	-	-	-	0,6
Moosohw	0,3	-	2,8	0,8	-	0,9	-	-	0,6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Muslim	5,5	12,7	12,9	7,0	18,8	12,2	2,6	2,1	1,9	1,7	1,0					
Muroo	0,6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0,9	0,5		1,5	1,3	2,2	1,2	2,0

Noonia	1,4	4,5	3,1	3,1	1,3	1,7	1,3	0,6	2,2	-	0,8	0,8	-	-	1,3	0,5
Pariah	0,1	-	-	-	-	1,7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Parse	1,7	-	1,6	3,4	0,6	1,4	2,8	2,2	1,9	2,7	2,7	1,1	1,3	2,4	-	1,3
Rajput	2,7	4,0	1,4	-	3,8	1,8	3,1	0,6	2,5	3,2	2,9	0,5	-	4,2	4,8	7,4
Tellee	0,4	-	0,8	0,6	0,4	0,7	2,4	-	-	0,6	-	-	-	-	-	-
Thakoor	3,4	-	0,2	-	1,5	4,9	7,0	4,9	4,3	5,6	6,2	0,2	-	1,7	9,9	4,6
Total	35720	990	8206	1723	3077	3179	699	3020	1620	2786	1785	2922	1201	1570	816	2126

(Source : Bhana, S : <u>Indentured Indian Immigrants to Natal 1860-1902 : A study based on Ship Lists, 1991)</u>

Their occupation placed them among the poorer classes and are therefore individuals who suffered most. Chamars and Ahirs were the most numerous castes in the United Province and Bihar. As in the Madras group there were agricultural labourers among individuals leaving Calcutta. Baqdee, Bhur, Noonias and Bhooyear were workers in rural areas. Among the Calcutta passengers the non-agricultural element was more substantial than among the Madras passengers. Table 4.2 indicates these castes as Dosadh (village watchmen); Kahar (personal servants), Kumbars (potters); Lohar (blacksmith); Moosohur (rodent catcher); Pasee (teddy makers) and Teli (oil pressers). The Calcutta group had a higher percentage of upper castes.[41]

Table 4.2 indicates that 15,8 percent of the people from Calcutta were Chamars. Chamarkar means maker of leather. It is important to note that the Chamar caste in Northern India, they had a variety of occupations. Primarily they are skinners, tanners, shoemakers, and musical instrument makers. In Northern India, the Chamars serve as agricultural labourers and workers. The Chamar is considered a very unclean caste. Their touch forces a "good" Hindu to bathe with all his clothes on.

Conditions in South Africa did not allow solid entrenching of caste. For instance there was a high ratio of men to women and the absence of caste elders made it difficult to uphold all aspects of the caste system. Although endogamy was retained as an ideal, with absence of women of the right caste and the scarcity of women of any caste made strict adherence to it difficult to practice. Apart for a few exceptions, stated Kuper, the indentured came mainly as isolated individuals from scattered villages, and if they could not marry into their own castes, the alternatives were celibacy, return to India. The majority remarried in the country and chose to marry across the caste line.

4.5 THE INFLUENCE OF CASTE ON EARLY HINDU SOCIETY

It was difficult for the indentured Indians who came to South Africa to recreate a social system which had been built through the ages on the Indian continent. Caste being a closed social system could not be transported to South Africa. In the complicated structure of South Africa caste can only operate indirectly, yet its existence in the Indian community cannot be ignored.

It is pertinent to observe that from the time of

embarkation the traditional caste relationships of the indentured Indians were affected. Conditions under which they travelled to South Africa made it impossible for them to maintain social distance; and ritual 'pollution', especially of the higher castes, was inevitable. Members of all castes were sometimes crammed together in the same boat.

An article in the Graphic, points out that despite these conditions the immigrants did not allow themselves to transgress their caste laws easily. They refused for instance to eat food provided on board the ship because the ships cooks were 'Mussulman's'. They subsisted on dry food throughout their journey.[42]

On the question of marriage, Meer states that, the heaviest restrictions came into operation in arranging marriages. Castes and original village of emigration from India are considerations which may add to the choice of marriage partners. A good example of this are the Gujaratis. For example the Gujarati are divided into <u>Kathiawadis</u> (from <u>Kathiawad</u>) and Surats (from Surat) and though there is no considerable social contact between the two they do as a rule intermarry.

This persistence of caste amongst the Gujaratis

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actually flow from their passenger status and their greater economic freedom. They did not come on ships with the indentured Indians - they could afford to bring their families with them, or to them, and they retained contact with their caste through business and/or marriage. The Gujarati Hindus, though described by other Indians as traders, are very conscious of caste division within the broad Vaishya group.

Let it not be mistaken that only the Gujaratis were caste conscious, because caste did exist amongst the other language groups in South Africa. In connection with this I would like to quote a complaints to the Protector which reflect the difficulty of individuals experienced in adjusting to the new realities. Source 1.1/1/166,1136/09 states that there were two Indians of Pariah caste appointed as constables. It was alleged that they harassed Hindus in many ways. Further complaints were that the Hindus were required to salute these constables. They maintained that this would not be tolerated in India. They also bitterly complained about the fact that the constables sometimes searched their homes, and emphasized that if a pariah touches their things or make an arrest they became polluted. They maintained that as nine-tenths of the people in that division were above the Pariah caste, these two constables should be dismissed.[43]

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As had been already mentioned caste being a unique social system could not fully be transported to South Africa. Thus the situation that the Indians found themselves in, in South Africa necessitated the practice of a different form of caste. A good example of this is to be found in the Protectors Report. According to Source 11/1/41001/1878 a request was made to the Protector to transfer Chottesysingh who was in the employ of the Durban Corporation. Being of a Brahmin caste his services were required by the temple.[44]

The actual changes in caste in South Africa can be clearly seen in a compliant that a Brahmin lodges to the Protector. Source 12507/07/11/1/155 states that, "I am a Brahmin of Sannath Sect and have been in the colony for about one year and four months. I have never worked in India. Being a Brahmin I used to go around with any brasspot to any disciples home and they would give me flour and I would bless them and place some sacred sandalwood paste on their foreheads. They also gave me ghee, dhall, curry condiments and also money. When I was recruited the recruits told me that I would be a Brahmin in Natal and cook for him and if I did not like it in Natal, he would send me back to India. I cannot work and wish to be sent back".[46]

There are many instances were caste failed to operate effectively as it did in India. Living in a country which had to accommodate different race groups, the Hindus were not given exclusivity. For example elaborate dietary rules had almost fallen away. Many, though not all Brahmins dine at the houses of members of various castes as long as they are provided with vegetarian dishes. It is normal for Brahmins to receive "siddha" - reward in uncooked food for services provided. But this is not strictly related to the caste structure. Traditional utensils designed to maintain caste purity was replaced by Western crockery contain customs associated in India with the Brahmin caste - more especially their food habits and social manners - tend in South Africa to become symbols of a particular outlook irrespective of caste. The participation in communal ceremonies is voluntary, it is not regulated by caste as it was formerly done.

In the conditions prevailing in South Africa it was very difficult to maintain caste occupations. Caste occupations was retained only in a few specialized trades such as goldsmiths or pot making and trade in the passenger group. In South Africa there were restricted appointments for the practice of Indians of some of the caste crafts: Oilmen, land surveyors popcorn makers, Shepherds, sought other avenues of employment. Occupational openings in South Africa

operate irrespective of caste and occupational interdependence of caste, has virtually disappeared.

Attacking the very foundation of the caste system is the schooling system in which Indians are admitted to Indian schools on a non-caste basis. The only qualifying factors are race and in some schools, the ability to pay in entrance fees. The future of the Indians once educated did not depend on caste but on opportunity and ability. Even the vernacular schools open to all members of a particular language group, and caste does not enter into it, let alone determine, the system and syllabus of education.

From the time of embarkation the traditional caste relationships of the indentured Indians were affected. Conditions under which they travelled to South Africa made it impossible for them to maintain their social distance, and ritual pollution, especially the higher castes, was inevitable.

As many as 70 different castes were sometimes crammed together in the same boat. The number of passengers were calculated on the basis of at least twelve superficial feet and 72 cubic feet per adult with half that amount for a child under ten years.

The indentured labourers on arrival were housed in

barracks 10 x 12, with no special accommodation for the unmarried, no privacy for the married and no consideration for caste. The local basis of caste - the traditional division of villages according to caste was irrelevant. At this stage the Researcher would like to point out that despite the fact that the indentured labourers were forced to live under these conditions, caste practices were still very strong.

As already mentioned in the earlier chapter the panchyat played a very important role in the caste system. Living under a western government its purpose and function became defined. Authority and control are vested in leaders selected for various non-caste qualities. Though in some cases trustees of a school or a temple or members of a Ratepayer's Association have been referred to as the panchyat, they include men of different sects and castes.

Caste for Indians leaving India had serious implications. By leaving India many were going against their very strict social code. For instance, men of all castes knew that by going across the seas they would lose their caste. But conditions in India which has already been discussed necessitated this move. Also the recruiters exaggeration made up the minds of many Hindus.

against their very strict social code. For instance, men of all castes knew that by going across the seas they would lose their caste. But conditions in India which has already been discussed necessitated this move. Also the recruiters exaggeration made up the minds of many Hindus.

Although caste existed in South Africa during the early Indian settlement, it had its own special brand. Being a closed social system it was difficult to transport all its features to South Africa. The caste institution is so unique in India that it can only effectively operate in its country of origin. Caste as practised in South Africa has been adapted to the South African situation.

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6. M Palmer: History of Indians in Natal, p. 9.

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8. E H Brookes: The History of native Policy in South Africa, p. 49.

9. File 11/1/1, NAD

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11. Despatch No. 76 of 1857 quoted by M Palmer. History of Indians in Natal, p. 16.

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42. Graphic, 30 September, 1980.

43. Report of the Protector of Indian Immigration : Source 11/1/41001/1878.

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12507/07/11/1/155.

CHAPTER 5

CASTE AND CONTEMPORARY
SOUTH AFRICAN HINDUS

5.1 **CASTE PRACTICES AS IT EXISTS AT PRESENT
AMONGST THE DIFFERENT LINGUISTIC GROUPS**

It would at this juncture be useful to be reminded of
the main characteristics of caste. They are namely:
hierarchical ordering; commensality restrictions and
dietary rules; defilement rules; religious sanctions
and disabilities; the panchyat, occupational
specialization, the use of caste names and endogamy.

Amongst the contemporary South African Hindu
population the caste system is not maintained with
traditional elaboration of detail. Being in contact
with different cultural values always affects
societies unequally, particularly societies already
highly differentiated. Also the extent to which caste
survives varies with the different interest groups
(economic, religious and political) in the total South
African context.

Research[1] conducted in Caneville (in the Natal North
Coast) concerning the hierarchical order of caste
indicates that it has vanished. The majority of the

Hindus have no clear idea of the meaning of the four varnas. Caste hierarchy only survived mostly as a vague dichotomy between the "high" and "low" which coincides with the traditional distinction between the twice-born (divya) and once-born. All descendants of Sudras were said to be of "low" caste, while the Vaishya, kshatriya and Brahmin varnas are called "high" caste. Apart from the fact that this complex hierarchy has been a simple dichotomy, this high-low distinction mostly existed amongst the older people and to some extent the Gujarati speaking people. This may be the case in Caneville but questionnaires distributed in the greater Durban area proved otherwise.

In the Durban Metropolitan area Hindus still make a distinction between high and low caste on the basis of surname and occupation. Amongst a significant percentage of Gujarati-speaking people there is a belief that the main determinant of caste is occupation. They believe that it is not difficult to determine one's caste once there's knowledge of their occupation. Very few hesitantly maintained that it may be possible to determine caste by one's surname. From the questionnaires distributed 44% of the Gujarati-speaking people believed that caste was determined by occupation.[2]

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Many among the Hindi-speaking people stated that they were brought up to believe that people with a certain surname had a specific position on the social ladder. There were 28% amongst the Hindu-speaking people who believed that caste was determined by one's surname. There seems to be a general consensus that people with the same surnames tend to follow the same religious practices for example <u>Brahmins</u> are common amongst the <u>Maharaj</u> families.

Amongst the <u>Telugu</u>-speaking Hindus 77% believed that occupation determines one's caste. Their reasoning were that the <u>Brahmins</u> were of the highest caste and always kept themselves aloof and on " top". Because of this so called status they considered themselves to be superior to others.[3]

Amongst the <u>Tamil</u>-speaking Hindus a small percentage (6%) believed that occupation determines caste. It was asserted that the origin of the caste system was heavily based on occupation. For example, people who did less skilled jobs were classified as lower castes. There also seems to be this common belief amongst the <u>Tamil</u>-speaking peole that wealth improves one's caste status as compared to poverty. On the question of surname some are of the opinion that people with surnames Munsamy and Govindsamy are regarded as "lower" castes because they do not have a family name,

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for example, Naidoo, Pillay and so on. There is a strong belief that one's surname indicates the social group he or she belongs to. Surnames play an especially important role when it comes to the choice of a marriage partner. Many believed that by a surname it was easy to determine whether or not the person belonged to a "pariah" caste.[4]

The researcher cannot discount the fact that amongst the four linguistic groups there was a large number of people who did not believe that caste was determined by occupation.

Occupation no longer has any significant correlation to caste. Caste names like Lohar (blacksmith) and oil presser (vannya) which specifies occupation have become meaningless, and are often changed. Generally speaking members of the same caste follow a variety of occupation. Only a small number of Hindus belonging to the Brahmin caste continue the traditional occupation as priests and scholars. Others pursue occupations such as tailors, furniture dealers and estate agents. An example of this are Singh's who belong to the Kshatriya Caste. Caste occupation amongst this group is not evident since the occupation of the respondents were doctors, lawyers, butchers (dealing in mutton only), market gardeners and hawkers.

There is a definite erosion of caste when it comes to the question of commensality restrictions. One may occasionally encounter a case where an old conservative Hindu have refused to admit Sudras to their homes or share food and drink with "low" caste persons.

Elaborate dietary rules has almost fallen away entirely and the distinction between pakha and kachcha food. Also strict vegetarianism is to some extent practised by the four linguistic groups. Today a significant number of Gujarati-speaking people consume flesh. Traditional caste distinctions between food cooked with ghee and food cooked with water is non-existent.

Certain commensality restrictions can be observed in the religious practices of the Hindus. For example amongst the Tamil-speaking community there is still the practice of using new dishes during the Puratasi fasting. During this time of fasting only vegetables are consumed.

Furthermore, many families have a number of brass drinking vessels from which liquid can be poured into the mouth without the vessel touching the lips but these are now regarded as ornaments and china cups and glasses are in common use. Bars and restaurants

introduce further contact and "pollution". At present there are only a small percentage of people who will eat in the houses of people whom they consider "caste" equals.

Certain customs associated with the <u>Brahmin</u> caste in India - especially their food habits and social manners - tend in South Africa to be left to individual outlook, irrespective of caste. Although the priests in Durban are generally vegetarians, but members of their own families, living under the same roof are sometimes non-vegetarians only abstaining from eating the cow which they consider sacred.

The <u>panchyat</u> has now completely disappeared. Up until the 1930's, there was a Hindi-speaking <u>panchyat</u> consisting of five twice-born members, who were also economically and educationally prominent persons. The <u>panchyat</u> dealt with questions arising from sexual misdemeanours, family quarrels, marriage and financial disputes. The penalties involved either social ostracism or fines in the form of gifts to the temples. When <u>panchyats</u> were threatened in the 1930's by people who had been disciplined by the <u>panchyat</u>, to take loyal action against the <u>panchyat</u> in the South African courts, the institution came to an end. The South African courts would undoubtedly not have recognized the authority of the <u>panchyat</u> and without

legal support the caste council would have become powerless. A small trace of the panchyat is evident when a few Hindus get together annually to decide upon the holding of certain prayers.

Further research carried out in Caneville indicates that caste marriages is still observed very closely. According to the research undertaken, in only 25 cases out of 318 is the rule broken. Of these 25 exogamous marriages, 21 are among the Hindi, 3 among the Telugu and one among the Tamil. In 19 out of the 25 cases of caste exogamy, the women married lower castes. This of course is contrary to the traditional rule of hypergamy (anuloma) which allowed the women to marry higher castes in certain cases, but strongly condemned cases where the women married lower castes (pratiloma). From the research conducted in Caneville an important trend concerning exogamous marriages emerged. Where a woman marries "down" contrary to traditional rule, the husband tends to be of higher occupational status, than when a woman marries "up". The Tamil and Telugu speaking people tend to show a great amount of caste exogamy than the Hindi and Gujarati speaking peoples.[5]

Of the four linguistic groups the Gujarati are reputed to observe caste endogamy most strictly. The persistence of caste amongst the Gujarati Hindus flows

from their passenger status and greater economic freedom. The Gujarati-speaking people also described as Banyas (traders), are very conscious of caste divisions within this broad Vaishya group. Being traders the Gujarati-speaking people were quite wealthy. Their wealth enabled them to hold onto their caste prejudices. This proved to be a little difficult for the other linguistic groups since they had to work hard to survive in the South African society. This placed them in situations which made it difficult to cling onto certain caste practices. The Immigration Amendment Act 2 prohibiting the entry of Indians from India was a great blow to this community. Prior to this they insisted on bringing partners for their children from India if none were suitable enough in South Africa.

Despite the existing conditions against them the Gujarati rose above the situation and proved that the caste system can survive under the urbanised immigrant group. It can survive under the following conditions: namely, if caste members can maintain a ritual exclusiveness from the time they leave India; hold a privileged position in economic organisation; retain ties with protected caste nucleus in India; and isolate their women from intimate cross-caste contact.

The persistence of caste endogamy among the Telugu

speaking people is explained by the fact that a sufficient number of people from the same caste and from the same districts of the Andra country migrated at much the same time. After their indenture service they managed to set up small "colonies" together. A good example of the Telugu speaking people living in the same district in Puntans Hill.

At present there is still to a certain extent the ranking of higher and lower castes when it comes to marriage negotiations. Some conservative Hindus distinguish between"high" and"low" caste in a single caste category. In connection with this let us look at the following examples: high Chetty and low Chetty and high Pillay and low Pillay. As per intervier: "The "vannia" Chetty belong to the high caste. They belong to the trading classes. The "wadda" Chetty belong to the low caste. They make the grinding stones and do other menial work in India. The high Pillays are the Vellalars. They are agriculturalists. The low Pillays spell their surnames as "Pullays". These people do not have a surname, they just assumed the surname "Pullay". They engaged in menial work in India. When these people came to South Africa most of them still continued their caste occupations." [6]

Questionnaires reflect that 88% Gujarati, 94% Tamil, 96% Hindi and 100% Telugu speaking respondents do not

practice caste in their religious lives. There is only a small percentage of 11.1% Gujarati, 4% Hindi and 2% Tamil speaking respondents who practice caste in their religious lives. The main reason given by them is that not every caste perform the same prayers.[7]

A very interesting interview with a priest from India now residing in Durban gave the following comments concerning Brahmins: "Brahmins are vegetarians. If they marry out of their caste they will find difficulties. In South Africa many Brahmins are non-vegetarians and this is not acceptable in India. If a Brahmin eats meat in India he would be rejected by his caste members."[8] There is a definite erosion of caste in the field of religion in Durban. A number of Hindu reform movements such as the Arya Samaj, Ramakrishna Centre, Saiva Siddhanta and Divine Life Society have totally rejected the caste institution. All people irrespective of caste, race or religion are welcome to become devotees of these organisations.

Amongst the South African Hindus, purification rules are still carried out, in a number of Hindu rituals connected with death, birth and menstruation, but these practices are not related to caste. Defilement brought about by contact with low caste persons no longer exists. Out of necessity the Hindus are in

contact with all sections of the Indian community as a whole and other race groups.

The religious disabilities connected with caste are practically non-existent, except for the fact that priests in the <u>Hindi</u> speaking group are in most cases <u>Brahmins</u>. Because of a lack of Brahmins in the Southern Hindu groups (<u>Tamil</u> and <u>Teluqu</u>) their priests are non-<u>Brahmins</u>. The initiation rites for the twice-born have survived only in a modified and simplified form, and are no longer connected with caste. The tying of the sacred initiation thread for the twice-born performed in a much abbreviated form at the time of marriage and is extended to the <u>Sudras</u> as well as the twice-born.

Many of the younger generation considers the caste endogamy to be of little importance, while many of the older people, particularly the less educated, still adhere to it. Although the trend is definitely away from marriages arranged by the parents and towards "love matches", parental approval is still sought in most cases, and necessary in the case of the girl. Caste, however, are only two of the several criteria which determine the suitability of a match. Religion, language and race are more important than caste and western education, occupation and wealth play an increasing role in marital choice.

5.2 CASTE INFLUENCE ON THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL LIFE OF THE HINDUS

5.2.1 BACKGROUND

The Researcher finds it pertinent to state that due to the dwindling of the caste system in the socio-economic and political life of the Hindu in the Durban Metropolitan Area, it is important to note that elitism has taken its place. "An elite can be defined as a group of people of recognized pre-eminence in any particular field of social action and therefore considered worthy of emulation." [9]

Whereas in the caste system one's position in society depended almost entirely on birth, in the present South African context an individuals achievement is the main criterion. Social classes are now forming in the Durban Metropolitan area within the Indian community.

From the very outset indentured Indians came to South Africa stripped of traditional leadership. All negotiations concerning their immigration to South Africa was conducted between the Natal and Indian Governments which completely ignored the panchyat and/or the feudal prince. Thus the South Africans had to develop new political organisations in accordance with their new status.

The first political elite arose from the trader class. The indentured Indian because of the occupation persued by him fitted into the pattern ascribed to non-Europeans. The Passenger Indians (merchants) on the other hand because of the nature of their occupation challenged "white" privileges and were the first to be affected by anti-Indian legislation. It was this unfair legislations that brought Gandhi to South Africa in 1893 to fight cases for his Gujarati clients.

At the end of the Gandhian era, the problems of the Indians did not cease. The future presented them with new and challenging problems which they would have to overcome by themselves.

As per interview: "In South Africa it is very difficult for caste to operate successfully. Living under a "white" government in South Africa it would be difficult for caste to effectively operate in the political sector."[10]

A new and serious problem facing the Indian traders in 1919 was the Asiatic Land and Trading Amendment Act. This act was promulgated to satisfy the whites who were afraid of the threat the Indian traders posed. This act meant that no trading licences were to be

issued to Indians. It also made it impossible for Indians to circumvent the law prohibiting them from owning fixed property in the Transvaal either by forming a limited company or having a white nominee. It should be observed that at this early stage anti-Indian legislation was embedding itself in discriminatory legislation. Initially there was much difficulty in bringing Indians to Natal but ironically now the problem was, how to get rid of them.

The Natal Indian Congress (NIC) protested against this act. The result of this protest was the appointment of an Asiatic Inquiry Commission by the Government to investigate the Asiatic problem. Sir John H Lange was the chairman of this commission. After its investigations the commission recommended the segregation of Indians which came to be described as the Class Areas Bill. This policy of segregating Indians in special areas to be allocated to them in each town, and confining the rural Indians to a coastal area extending thirty miles inland was proposed.[11]

When the Smuts government fell the Bill was forgotten until it was reviewed by D F Malan, the Minister of Interior in Hertzog's government, as the Areas Reservation and Immigration and Registration Bill. This Bill was in direct conflict with the Lange

Commission. The Lange Commission recommended voluntary segregation and repatriation but Malan's Bill asked for compulsory segregation and the reduction of the Indian community to a minimum. Malan believed that the Indians were an alien element in the population and the only way to overcome this problem was a reduction in the Indian population.[12] This Bill was oppressive and made the Indins politically aware. In reaction to the unfair legislations we have the rise of political elites.

The Colonial Born and Settlers' Indian Association was formed in 1933, under the leadership of a Christian lawyer and a Hindu of indentured parentage of the Kshatriya caste. The differences in membership between the Association and Congress can be seen here. Members of the Association represented an emerging middle class of ex-indentured descent, predominantly Hindu in religion; the majority of the Congress members were of passenger origin.[13]

Internal dissension was destroying the political effectiveness of the Indians as a group. It became very clear to the Indians that if they were going to make any impression upon the South African government they would have to stand up as a united body. It was with this thought in mind that the Natal Indian Congress and Colonial Born Settlers' Association

agreed to amalgamate and form the Natal Indian Association. The Muslim merchant leaders of Congress remained aloof and continued with, and in fact virtually became, Congress.[14]

It should be indicated that the developments in South Africa did not go unnoticed by the government of India. The Indian government called for a Round Table Conference. The Union government agreed to the visit of an Indian delegation to investigate the problem. The delegation was led by G F Paddison. The agreement reached at this conference came to be called the Cape Town Agreement. The Cape Town Agreement provided for a scheme of an assisted emigration or repatriation of Indians; entry of wives and minor children; to uplift the Indian community; and an appointment of an agent for the government of India in South Africa.

The Cape Town Agreement can be viewed as a compromise. Apart from assisted voluntary emigration the government of India agreed to further the scheme by undertaking to aid the returned immigrant in India. On the other hand the South African government undertook to uplift the Indians who wished to remain in South Africa, hopefully a small minority, to the level of Western standards of living. The government of India interpreted the agreement as a means of gaining just treatment for the Indians who elected to

remain in South Africa. On the other hand the Union Government perceived it as a drastic reduction of the Indian population. This incompatibility of the two attitudes only highlighted the fact that the Cape Town Agreement failed to solve the problems of Indo-white relations.

It is also important to note that something good had also come out of this agreement. The agreement provided for Educational advancement of the Indian community. An educational committee was set up which was to be assisted by experts from India to report on Indian education. In Natal, however, the Provincial Council was tardy in setting up this committee. This did not deter Sir Srinivas Sastri (the first agent - General of the Government of India in South Africa), in securing contributions amounting to £28000 for the Indians for the establishment of a Teacher's Training College and a Secondary School. It was not without difficulty that the Durban City Council provided land for this purpose. The first teacher's training college providing education up to matriculation level was established. This institution came to be called Sastri College. At this point a Second Round Table Conference was convened. By now it had become abundantly clear that the repatriation scheme was a total failure.[15]

Arkin et al, maintains that, from 1940 onwards the antipathy of whites against the Indian community began to manifest itself more virulently in Natal and the Transvaal. Politicians and others who wished to make an impression on public opinion needed only to engage in a diatribe against the "Indian menage", and to pose as a defender of the white people against the Indians. White voters were gullible enough to accept the tirade against Indians as supportive of white rights.[16]

On April 7, 1943 the government introduced the Trading and Occupation of Land Restriction Bill which was called the "Pegging Act". This act was designed to peg the situation of Indian penetration in Durban. Smuts was restrained by India up until 1943 from introducing legislation restricting the rights of Indians to property in Durban. But with the imminent elections, Smuts had to satisfy the whims of his electorate and give in to local prejudice. The "Pegging Act" was protested by the Indian community but in vain. But at least for a short while, there appeared to be a degree of unity among the Indians. The Pegging Act certainly represented a decisive step towards entrenching segregation.[17]

The Natal Indian Association merged again into the Natal Indian Congress. Caste is never mentioned as a qualification for political power but a good

reputation and family background undoubtedly carry weight, as they do in the choice of official representatives of most South African Indian organistaions.

Since 1961 the Indians have been affiliated to a number of different organisations. Examples of such organisations are: the Natal Indian Congress, African National Congress, National People's Party, Solidarity, United Democratic Front and Azapo. This intermixture of the different race groups makes any adherence to the caste system in the political arena impossible.

The impact of the Pegging Act resulted in Indian political reaction being changed from collaboration to an aggressive and militant spirit. The moderate leadership of the NIC was replaced by the radical element in the Indian community. The brilliant and able Dr Y M Dadoo had become undisputed Indian leader in the Transvaal, while Dr G M (Monty) Naicker led the Indians in Natal.[18]

The Asiatic Land Tenure and Indian Representation Act became law in 1946. This act was divided into two sections acquisition and occupation of fixed property; and representation of Indians. Provisions of land tenure applied to Indians both in Natal and Transvaal.

Restrictions were placed on the acquisition of land in "controlled" areas but it could not be effected in uncontrolled areas. Transaction of fixed property between Asiatics and non-Asiatics was prohibited, except under permit form the Minister of Interior. The Indians were shocked by these provisions and they protested against it from the outset. This act was also called the "Ghetto Act", which was the forerunner of the Group Areas Act of 1950.

The Asiatic Act forced the Indian population to take unified action on a national basis rather than along sectarian lines. The Asiatic Act which provided for compulsory segregation of Indians throughout Natal was considered repugnant. Furthermore, Indian resistance to this act served as an example for similar action among Blacks and Coloureds and set the stage for closer unity among the non-whites in the country.

In reaction to the Ghetto Act passive resistance councils were set up in the Transvaal, Cape Province and Natal. Although the Cape was not affected by the act, the Indians in the Cape wished to identify with the struggle of the Indians in South Africa.

On 13 June 1946 the Indians demonstrated their intense humiliation to which they were subjected in the land of their birth. There was a mass meeting which held

about 15000 people at the "Red Square" in Durban.
After the meeting volunteers under the leadership of
Dr Naicker and M D Naidoo marched to the intersection
of Umbilo Road and Gale Street and pitched tents on a
vacant piece of municipal land.   The campaign was
modelled on Gandhi's philosophy of Satyagraha.

The aim of the passive resistance was to get
international attention on the disabilities of Indians
in South Africa by getting arrested in violation of
the Ghetto Act.   However, they were arrested for
trespassing and for contravening the Riotous
Assemblies Act.   Although the passive resistance
failed it helped to bring the prejudices against non-
whites in South Africa under the sharp scrutiny of the
international community.

With the advent of the Nationalist Party in 1948 under
D F Malan, he made it abundantly clear that he will
not tolerate interference in the domestic affairs of
South Africa. He also emphasized that the governments
internal policy of "Apartheid" was to be resolutely
followed.   In connection with this he repealed chapter
11 of the Asiatic Act dealing with the franchise of
Indians.   His actions made it obvious that world
opinion meant nothing to the Nationalist government.[19]

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The pernicious Group Areas Act 41 of 1950 was promulgated to the dismay of the Indian community and other non-white groups in the country. This act was condemned by all the Indian political organisations. Memoranda and petitions - the only weapons in the hands of the Indians were submitted to the government and United Nations Organisation (a peace-keeping organisation). There was no doubt that the "Indian community was unanimous in its sentiments with regard to the viciousness of the law."[20]

The Group Areas Act was an elaboration of the Asiatic Land Tenure Act in effecting the segregation of the Indian people in South Africa. It was directed towards strangling Indian trading rights and the establishment of industries, their livelihood, their place and their security. This act brought the Indians and Africans closer together. In 1952 they promulgated a Defiance campaign against the discriminatory legislation introduced by the Nationalist government. This was the first time that, "Indians joined hands with the Africans in a national political movement."[21]

It is important to remember that from the 1950's onwards the racial problems of South Africa involved the Indians, Coloureds and Africans. There were just two broad divisions, namely, whites and non-whites.

It seems that the Indians even after ninety years in the country were considered aliens in South Africa. It was still the hope of the government that one day the majority of them would be repatriated to India. It is significant that in 1961 Verwoerd declared the withdrawal of South Africa from the British commonwealth of nations, thereby establishing the Republic of South Africa. At the same time the Indian community of South Africa was granted the status of permanent citizens of South Africa.

5.2.2   SOCIAL CONDITIONS

The breakdown of caste within the Hindu population reflects the complexity of the process of its adaptation. The majority within the Hindu community find the social cost of a caste system too high and the rewards too low, and have developed other values in keeping with their contemporary milieu. Today in Durban there is an erosion of caste in the social field. In this field elitism has to a great extent taken over caste. This does not mean that we can discount that select few that still practice caste in their social life.

Traditional Indian family life has been characterized by close kinship bonds. The traditional family unit has been that of an extended or joint family system.

This system finds expression in many of the epics such as the Ramayana and the Mahabharata.

Oosthuizen and Hofmeyr[22] state that, with changes in the social climate, however, women appear to be resisting the passive role assigned to them traditionally. It is also difficult for the younger generation to reconcile the values inherent in the traditional Indian way of life and family relations with a westernised outlook.

It saddened many conservative Hindus to see the younger generation moving away from folkways of the "kutum" (i.e. the extended or multiple family). Many females have expressed their objections on the continuation of the joint family system on the basis that the values and attitudes of the traditionally oriented mothers-in-law and the more western oriented daughter-in-law. The problem lies in the fact that the daughter-in-law is no longer a child when she marries but rather a young woman who is self-confident and has more knowledge and experience than daughters-in-law of earlier times. It is not easy for the mother-in-law to bend her will and mould her to traditional family customs as easily as she formerly did. "The educated wife is influenced by western conceptions of democracy, equality and companionship

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in marriage. They feel that they should feel free to share their husbands endeavours unhibited by family ties."[23]

Living under "white" rule western culture has influenced the majority of the Hindus to a great extent. They imitated some of their customs and behaviour pattern in this sphere. For example on the question of marriage, love was more important than one's parents decision. In connection with caste marriages something very interesting arose from an interview with a priest from India. He maintained that: "I don't think at the moment in South Africa there is any caste system that exists. How can there be caste when Moodleys are marrying Pillays etc. In India Moodleys marry Moodleys only. this is what caste is all about."[24] Thus it would seem that it is difficult for caste endogamy to survive with strength. Exogamous marriages are rife amongst the Tamil-speaking community in Durban.

Today the role of a wife is less subservient to her husband and the traditional separation of sexes has also disappeared, resulting in members of a family interacting more readily as an intimate unit.

Being exposed to western recreational activities - such as western cinemas, western dancing and so on.

Western cinema has had a great impact on undermining one of the basic aspects of traditional society, that is, family and marriage. Western cinema has emphasized romantic love and freedom of the younger generation. This influence has been remarkable in transforming certain beliefs in the Hindu society. The advent of television also meant further western influence.

The impact that these western activities had on Hindu society can be seen in the number of non-caste marriages in Durban today. Although caste marriages are still important to some Hindus, to the majority of them it is secondary. Western influence can be further observed by the following comments made by the priests of the Umgeni Road Temple. "Nowadays it is difficult for people to say that they believe in the caste system. We marry Hindus who are of a different linguistic group and Hindus are also married to Africans, Coloureds and Whites by us in this temple. We cannot refust to marry them because it is not our place to tell them who they should or should not marry."[25]

Apart from Western activities there are other important criteria involved in the choice of marriage partners, such as financial and educational considerations.

TABLE 5.1

Do you believe that financial and educational considerations are more important than caste?

	GUJARATI	HINDI	TAMIL	TELUGU
YES	55,6%	44,0%	60,0%	66,7%
NO	44,4%	36,0%	32,0%	22,2%
ABSTAINED	-	20,0%	8,0%	11,1%
TOTAL	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

A number of Respondents agreed that education and finance is more important than caste when it comes to marriage.

Table 5.1 indicates as many as 55,65 of Gujarati, 44% Hindi, 60% Tamil and 66,7% Telugu speaking Respondents who believed that financial and educational considerations are more important than caste. The reasons given are as follows:

1. "Money is more important where marriage responsibilities are concerned".

2. "It would be of no use to marry someone of your own caste if he cannot support you".

3. "I believe that education and finance would help a marriage and not caste because in this day and age it is slowly being done away with".

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4. "In this modern world education helps to better one's lifestyle, caste only brings about further division".

5. "These two factors contribute to a happy and successful married life".

6. "The caste system does not equip you to live in a competitive world but education does".

7. "Lower caste person who is financially and educationally well equipped makes a good marriage partner".

8. "Today we have to look at our future".[26]

The percentage of Respondents who did not believe that finance and education were more important are 44,4% Gujarati, 36% Hindi, 32% Tamil, 22,2% Telugu speaking. Explanations given by Respondents did not relate to caste. Their explanations are as follows:

1. "Qualities are more important than caste, education or finance".

2.

   marries out of love, friendship and trust and these factors contribute towards security". "Love is also a more important factor. One

3. "Marriage is a lifelong commitment, you live your caste as a result. Caste therefore overrules these factors".

4. "If you really believe in your caste then it would not be important".[27]

It would seem that in contemporary society many consider love to be very important in a marriage. Although caste plays a minor role it is still very much a factor. the influence that caste still has can be gathered from the following interview:
"Many of my relatives practice caste secretly. If I had to tell them that I had a girl of a lower caste whom I wished to marry they would look down upon me".[28] It is sometimes difficult for people to express their true feelings concerning caste. Sensitivity could be one of the reasons for the lack of expression. People would sometimes have to be placed in a particular situation were a decision has to be made for example matters concerning marriage to a lower caste.

Western education has also hindered traditional values and customs. The Indian elite is a newly emerging group and is illustrated by the wide difference in educational standards between scholars and their

parents. There are now many women who have aspired to achieve a Doctor's degree. Even after marriage many are still career minded.

To be recognised as an intellectual elite for both women and men, it required more than a secondary education and western clothing. They were required to acquire tertiary education and post-graduate degrees. Several educated women are now active workers in public affairs. Despite their education they try to a certain extent to observe most of the conventions of their groups, "unwilling to have their enlightenment misinterpreted as disrespect of their own people and slavish imitation of western ways."[29]

For the Hindus traditional education was tied to religion which was primarily by knowledge of the sacred books. Today in Durban the most influential and esteemed of the intellectuals are men and women who have attained a high degree of western education.

The Indian intellectuals in South Africa have adopted many values and symbols of white South Africans. They hold parties to which they invite friends from all sections of the Indian community, Europeans and occasionally intellectual African elites. Men and women eat together from western utensils and it is

common for women to take part in the general conversation. English is generally the language spoken at home. But sometimes in the presence of the older generation the vernacular language is spoken. This free intermixture of people only serves to highlight the point that it is very difficult to observe caste pollution in an ever changing society.[30]

Education had resulted in Indian brides of today being independent. This is particularly true of girls who have attended college and/or university or have held jobs outside their homes before marriage. Many educated women in South Africa prefer to marry men who live away from their parental home or who would be prepared to separate from their family households. This they felt would enable them to escape the control of their mother-in-law and thus provide them with the opportunity of maintaining their homes in a way they considered fit and proper. Husbands have also reconciled themselves to the idea of their wives are working in order that they may jointly raise their standard of living.[31]

The role of the mother has definitely changed in the Hindu household. Traditionally it was the male who was the head of the family. Furthermore all important decisions were made by him and he had control over all the members of the family. Now, however, the

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responsibility of the family falls jointly on the mother and father.

It is pertinent to note that marriage is not considered as permanent as the earlier generation had believed. This is indicated by the rising divorce rates amongst South African Hindus. Marriage is no longer considered a sacred one but rather a personal contract. Couples no longer feel obligated by religion to stay together. Not even caste is a consideration when it comes to divorce. Many couples feel that if living together is intolerable then divorce is the best answer.

There is a decided shift which has taken place allowing for freer contact between the sexes. It is very important to observe that the employment of women have made them less dependent on their husbands. Many of them are no longer compelled to be just housewives. This independence have led to a more equal relationship between husband and wife. It is now not uncommon in Indian homes for the husband to help with domestic chores.

In most cases before marriage couples prefer seeing more of their prospective partners during their engagement period. In traditional practice the engagement period was short and served as a

preparation time for the wedding. Couples could make sure their relationship before marriage and when they did meet it was under strict supervision of relatives. Modern parents often allow them to go out together on their own. This shows that caste marriages have ceased to exist to a great extent.

The following table emphasizes this point.

TABLE 5.2

Is caste the most important factor in marriage?

	GUJARATI	HINDI	TAMIL	TELUGU
YES	100,0%	8,0%	8,0%	–
NO		92,0%	88,0%	100,0%
ABSTAINED	–	–	4,0%	–
TOTAL	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

It is pertinent to note that 100,0% of the Gujaratis as shown in Table 5.2 believed caste to be an important factor in marriage. An apt explanation in this regard is from a Respondent who maintains that although many marriages within the Indian community takes place within a given caste, this is not an important factor provided there are certain common factors shared by people, for example, religion and a way of life. The 8% Tamil speaking Respondents who believed that caste was important in marriage, believed that it played an important role in the

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choice of one's marriage partner.[32]

As per interview a Mrs Singh a Secondary school teacher, residing in Overport belonging to the Hindi speaking community stated that her family would never accept marriage to someone of a lower caste. She further maintained that belonging to the Kshatriya caste they were only allowed to marry Kshatriyas and Brahmins. Thus when choosing a partner for marriage they will have to make certain that their partner is of the "correct caste".[33]

Of the 8% Respondents that believed in caste being the most important factor in marriage, the view forwarded is that when one marries into the same caste, the survival of the caste is assured for generations.[34] On the other hand the majority of the Respondents did not believed that caste played a major role in the choice of marriage partners. It would therefore seem that in the South African context although a small but significant percentage of people strictly adhere to caste marriages, it is slowly eroding. It would be appropriate to state that love plays a much more important role in the choice of a marriage partner rather than caste.

It is important to point out at this stage that arranged marriages did not totally disappear. There

are still many parents who arrange suitable partners for their sons and daughters. Sometimes caste plays an important role in their decisions, though this factor is decreasing in importance. To give an example amongst the Tamil-speaking community there are still those who prefer their children marrying Moodleys only. Socio-economic and educational factors are more influential in determining choice.

Unlike India, South Africa has afforded Hindus the opportunity of improving their social status. Many desire to attain a higher socio-economic status both for themselves and for their children. This end could be achieved through a western school system, industrialisation, culture and urbanisation.

5.2.3   ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF THE INDIANS

Natal looked favourably towards the Indians in the earlier period (1860s). This attitude changed once Indians began to compete with whites in the supply of agricultural produce and especially in trading. It was the arrival of the passenger Indians from the early 1870's onwards, and their success in trading, which really changed the image of Indians from in-dentured labourers to potential competitors."[35]

It is not difficult to see that South African history

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illustrates the economic basis of race discrimination;
from the earliest days of white settlement at the
Cape, manual labour was despised and was left for the
slaves and other Black workers. Thus, economic
competition provided the whites with a ready platform,
wherever the Indians have settled in South Africa. In
connection with this it is pertinent to quote Hertzog
as saying: "The prejudice (against Indians) is in the
first place one of economic grounds and in the second
place it is unfortunately added to by a prejudice
which....is....the prejudice of Colour."[36] On the
other hand Dr Malan in 1932 made it clear that the
whites objected primarily to the presence of Indian
traders.

In 1956 the Industrial Conciliation Act was passed,
this gave statutory protection for white industrial
workers, as the fear grew in the government that the
white worker is being forced out of industry. Many
artisan jobs with much lower rates of pay resulted in
non-white groups increasing their proportional share
of the work force.[37] Arkin[38] maintains that white
concern was aggravated by the decision to segregate
the trade unions by race. This was embodied in the
revised Industrial conciliation act of 1956.

Living under a "white" government made the strong
following of caste occupations difficult. Now there

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is much more important considerations like the accumulation of wealth to compete in the South African Society. In order to acquire the desired wealth people from both the Passenger and Indentured Indian origin saw it important to move into occupations that were better paid.

On being question whether their occupation was caste related many questionnaire respondents indicated the following:

TABLE 5.3

	GUJARATI	HINDI	TAMIL	TELUGU
YES	–	–	–	–
NO	100,0%	96,0%	96,0%	100,0%
ABSTAINED	–	4,0%	4,0%	–
TOTAL	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

The majority of the Respondents indicated that their occupation were not caste related.
There are a number of reasons for this. The most important reason is economic opportunity. Many of the younger generation through education are seeking occupations with better opportunities. They are moving into professions which also gives them a better social status. In this connection the "lower" castes have used their economic success as a springboard to

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social status. They now had the advantage of wealth to overcome the indignities of the caste institution. On the other hand had the "lower" castes remained in their caste occupation they would not have had any economic or social status in South Africa. Generally speaking one's social status to a large extent is determined by one's profession. Caste occupations are fast eroding in South Africa. If it does survive, it is mostly amongst the older generation in certain job situations.

Many of the Respondents viewed caste occupations as irrelevant. It is the belief of some Respondents that people should be classified according to ability and skill to excel in a particular field and not caste. One Respondent very appropriately answered that "skills can be learned. If occupations were caste related there would be no place for university and technical colleges. As already noted younger generation are more interested in climbing up the social ladder quicker than being saddled with caste occupation. Caste occupations does not in most cases lends itself to wealth and prosperity

TABLE 5.4

Percentage Distribution of Indian Workers by Industry Division, Natal, 1936-1970

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Industry Division	1936	1951	1960	1970
Agriculture	37.8	20.3	12.0	4.8
Mining	1.4	0.8	0.6	0.4
Manufacturing	19.1	31.4	37.7	41.9
Construction	2.0	3.4	2.4	6.8
Commerce	16.1	18.1	18.1	24.0
Transport	3.1	3.6	4.7	5.1
Services	20.4	22.4	24.2	15.3
Other	-	-	0.3	1.5
TOTAL	**47000**	**63000**	**79000**	**134000**

(Sources: J R Burrows: The Population and Labour Resources of Natal; 1960 and 1970 Population Census.)

TABLE 5.5

Percentage Distribution of Economically Active Indians by Occupation Group, Natal, 1951-1970

Occupational	1951	1960	1970

Professional	3.0	4.2	5.4
Administrative	5.1	1.7	0.8
Clerical	3.4	6.0	13.7
Sales	8.4	10.6	11.6
Farm	17.1	9.7	4.5
Mine	0.4	–	–
Transport	4.5	6.6	46.2
Manual	34.6	33.5	46.2
Service	10.8	11.7	10.2
Other	12.7	15.9	7.6
TOTAL	**75000**	**102000**	**146000**

(Sources: J R Burrows: The Population and Labour Resources of Natal;   1960-1970 Population Census)

Table 5.4 indicates a decline in the agricultural sector and a growing importance of manufacturing since 1936 and there is a definite increase in the importance of commerce since 1960.[39] The growth of employment in commerce marks certain qualitative changes as illustrated in Table 5.5.   The administration, clerical and sales categories in Table 5.5 broadly corresponds to the commerce sector in Table 5.4 Table 5.5 shows a definite decline among administrative workers and a marked increase among clerical workers. This decline can be attributed to the fact many traders were displaced under the Group Areas Act; many of these traders have not been able

to re-establish themselves. Many vacancies in the clerical field have been made available to the Indians.[40]

As the "whites" move up the occupational ladder; the jobs they leave are filled by non-whites (particularly Indians). With the white participation in World War II, non-whites made a breakthrough in the manufacturing industry. In the Durban area for example, Indian employment expanded by 37 percent between 1939-40 and 1944-45.

Job opportunities for the Indians have widened in almost every field and the range of courses offered in the field of advanced technical education has expanded rapidly during the last ten years. Indians have diversified activities in the professional and technical field. They were employed in the various tiers of government and has rapidly expanded since the creation of the Department of indian Affairs in 1961. In the field of commerce the scope for employment has widened considerably and this has also been true in the transport sector.

It is important to note that the Indian traders have developed largely through the African as well as the Indian market. Many of the traders have stocked their shops according to the needs and desires of the

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Africans and they also assist them with credit. Many traders acquired fluency in the African language and the African sometimes respond to the oriental convention of bargaining.

Over the period of time there has been significant improvement in the economic position of the Indian community in South Africa. Whites could not fill the shortages in the higher grade occupations. To maintain economic growth the government permitted employers to upgrade Coloured, Black and Indian work roles.

A dynamic aspect of Indian economy has been the emergence from ex-indentured of a small core of wealthy elite in business and in professions. Whereas until about thirty years ago all the wealthiest business men were Gujarati-speaking Hindus of the passenger class, today there is a large percentage of Tamil, Hindi and Teluqu speaking Hindus from the indentured class. Thus caste occupations does not play an important role in Durban today.

In fields such as secondary industry, Indians have not seriously challenged white domination. This led to the removal of job reservation, increased possibilities for integrated trade unions and greater opportunities to obtain apprenticeships and other

industrial training. Industrial parks are often removed from group areas restrictions. In these areas upward mobility has become possible. With this flexible nature of upward mobility caste holds no place in the business sector. In their struggle for survival in the changing South African climate the Hindus cannot afford to discriminate against each other on the basis of caste.

5.2.4   POLITICAL SITUATION OF INDIANS

Indian political organisations which included the Hindus, emerged first from the problems encountered at the turn of this century when the labourers had finished their indentures and faced the prospects of returning to India or remaining in Natal. The problems started when these indentured Indians saw the opportunity in Natal's economic future and resisted the attempt the government to oust them from South Africa.

The Indians as a minority group in South Africa posed no threat to the South African state, which could have ruled more efficiently and with less expense in other ways than by granting them their own parliament and a cumbersome bureaucracy of "own affairs". "The Indian token inclusion as a group "without a homeland" made the grand apartheid philosophy more consistent. Its

effectiveness lies in the blurring of the label racist even though it entrenched racial categorisations by constitutionalising racial segmentation."[41]

There are many political Indian organisations which protested against the unjust legislations passed by the South african government. They also gained much inspiration from Gandhi's leadership in South Africa. Amongst these organisations were the South African Indian Congresses (NIC and TIC) whose ideological position has alternated from its moderate origins to its most activist position.

Currently, the extra parliamentary group, the Natal and Transvaal Indian Congresses are affiliated with the African National Congress. This affiliation is not without some opposition within the Indian community especially among the older generation. The National People's Party and the Solidarity Party, represent the major parties in the House of Delegates and the tri-chamber parliament, which has limited support from the Indian community.

The non-political organisations such as housing, civic, teachers, sports, students and religious groups also take a stand on certain political issues. They also debated the issue of participation in the 1984 elections. The major bone of contention was whether

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to join the governmental structure and oppose from within-along the format of the Progressive Federal Party (white dominated) or to identify with the exclusion from power of the Blacks by boycotting non-egalitarian government institutions. The former group tries to balance its criticisms and work with the government to overcome its problems whilst the latter group, led by the Congress believes that cooperation in a government that excludes the majority of the population that is the Blacks is immoral and counterproductive.

The most radical of the Indian political organisations is occupied by the NIC which follows a simple democratic one man one vote constitutional format. The NIC have levelled criticism against the government and periodically undertook demonstrations and the organising of boycotts such as that during the elections of 1984. Most of the non-voters were of the belief that the 1983 constitution perpetuated the injustices of the apartheid system and consciously excluded the Blacks from decision-making process.

Political activity of the Indian community must be judged at two levels. The first deals with participation in the government within the confines of established rules and authority. The other arena for political activity concerns the interaction among the

members of the Indian community itself outside the parliament.

The poor results of the 1984 elections was attributable to that many Indians did not want to place their fate in the hands of the House of Delegates. The NIC and TIC made the voters aware of the disadvantages of working within the government. They also emphasized the fact that participation with the white dominated government was not going to bear fruit. They also pointed out that if the government was pushed from the outside the chances of changes were greater.

In connection with the election boycotts were instigated by the NIC and TIC and this resulted in the closure of the University of Durban-Westville. Together with the congresses students distributed pamphlets making the Indian community aware of the irregularities with the Tri-chamber Parliament. They were considered the government's "scapegoats".

Arkin maintains that the TIC's and NIC's unqualified one man one vote stance is an important factor to consider in another major political problem confronting the Indian community. This concerns the relations with the Blacks. The problem lies in the fact that both the Indian and Black communities are

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split into various factions which causes a situation of having to choose between opposing factions. The NIC and TIC find ready allies in the UDF and the ANC.

In October 1988 a South African delegation of Indian members met the ANC in Lusaka, Zambia for the exchange of views on the future constitutional direction. But the participatory rights amongst the Indians, especially those who support the tri-chamber system, offers no clear direction regarding specific Black groups, preferring to address the general issue of apartheid.

This duration of loyalty creates a special problem owing to the fact that the Black community was deeply divided. The other Black organisations (ANC, Azapo, Asaso, UDF) have received strong opposition from Inkatha which was led by the Chief Minister of Kwazulu, Dr Buthelezi. Buthelezi's prominence has emerged especially with his evident leadership of the Natal-KwaZulu Indaba, "a attempt to establish a joint governmental and administrative structure over the entire region."[42] The NIC's attitude towards the Indaba was hostile and has boycotted the talks a significant role was played though by NPP and Solidarity who participated in the discussions.

The 1980's saw the South African Indians fighting for

their future. They sought solidarity in Black groups, many also being members of these organisations. The 1980s saw a number of mass demonstrations and boycotts. Scholars and students were made aware of the political injustices that faced the non-whites in South Africa. These boycotts did not go unnoticed. With the strength of students and scholars, trade unions and workers also demonstrated against injustices in the country's government. These demonstrations and boycotts brought people of different race groups closer together and made them work in close harmony with each other. Non-white political organisation gained more power. The release of Nelson Mandela, Deputy President of the ANC was a major breakthrough in the political arena. The government is now very aware of the fact that the non-whites in South Africa cannot be taken for granted.

All the preceding Indian political events in South Africa context proves that caste has no place in the political arena. In this field there is a definite erosion of caste and to a certain extent this has been substituted by elitism.

On the question of whether apartheid strengthened caste the following statistics were obtained from questionnaires distributed. 11.1% Gujarati, 32% Hindi, 26% Tamil and 22.2% Telugu speaking respondents

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indicated that they believed that caste in South Africa was strengthened by apartheid. Reasons given are as follows:

1. "In most cases it promotes segregation in one's own society."

2. "By grouping the Indian community the system has entrenched segregation this has helped to promote the caste system."

3. "In both cases people are divided into different groups."

There were on the other hand 88.9% of Gujarati, 60% Hindi, 60% Tamil and 77.8% Telugu speaking respondents who did not believe that apartheid helped to strengthen the caste system. The reasons given by the respondents are as follows"

1. "People stand united when it comes to political issues such as apartheid."

2. "Apartheid has in no way influenced the caste system. It was brought here from India."[43] It would seem from the above statistics that despite the apartheid policy caste found it difficult to entrench itself in the political sector.

With the scrapping of the group areas act, 100%

Gujarati, 88% Hindi, 72% Tamil and 77.8% Telugu speaking respondents stated that they would be prepared to live in the same area as other race groups. There is a small percentage, however, of 12% Hindi, 24% Tamil and 22.2% Telugu speaking respondents were not prepared to live in the same area as other race groups.[44]

ENDNOTES

1. Rambiritch and van den Berghe, : Caste in a Hindu Society, p 3.

2. Information obtained from Questionnaire: Do you determine a person's caste by their surname.

3. Ibid.

4. Information obtained from Questionnaire: Do you determine a person's caste by their surname.

5. Ibid.

6. Interview: Mrs D Pillay, pensioner, 81 years old, 2 October 1991.

7. Information obtained from Questionnaire: Does caste affect your religious life in any way?.

8. Interview: Brahmin from Umgeni Road Temple, 22 October 1991.

9. H Kuper: Indian People in Natal, p 44.

10. Interview: Brahmin from Umgeni Road Temple, 22 October 1991.

11. A J Arkin et al: The Indian South Africans, p 16.

12. Ibid, p 17.

13. H Kuper: Indian People in South Africa, p 47.

14. Ibid, p 47.

15. B Pachai: The South African Indian Question, p 48.

16. A J Arkin et al: The Indian South Africans, p 10.

17. B Pachai: South African Indians, pp 46-47.

18. H Kuper: Indian People in Natal.

19. A Arkin et al: The Indian South Africans, p 16.

20. S Bhana and B Pachai: A Documentary History of Indian South Africans, p 213.

21. Ibid, p 221.

22. G C Oosthuizen and J H Hofmeyr: A Socio-Religious Survey of Chatsworth, p 19.

23. A J Arkin etal: The Indian South Africans, p 10.

24. Interview: Brahmin from Umgeni Road Temple, 22 October 1991.

25. Interview: Priests of the Umgeni Road Temple, 22 October 1991.

26. Information obtained from Questionnaire: Is financial and educational considerations more important than caste?.

27. Ibid.

28. Interview: Mr A Moodley, Carpenter, residing in Silverglen, 15 August 1991.

29. H Kuper: Indian People in Natal, p 70.

30. A J Arkin et al: The Indian South Africans, p 75.

31. K A Moodley: South African Indians : The wavering minority of change in contemporary South Africa, p 253.

32. Information obtained from Questionnaire : Is caste the most important factor in marriage?.

33.

33.

34. Information obtained from Questionnaire: Caste the most important factor in the marriage system?.

35. B Pachai: The South African Indian Question, p 118.

36. B Pachai: The South African Indians, p 234.

37. A J Arkin et al: The Indian South Africans, p 65.

38. Ibid, p 97.

39. A J Arkin et al: The Indian South Africans, p 185.

40. Ibid, p 185.

41. Ibid.

42. Information obtained from Questionnaire: Would you be prepared to live in the same area as other race groups?

43. Information obtained from questionnaire : <u>Does Apartheid help to strengthen the caste system</u>?

44. Ibid.

CHAPTER 6

CASTE ATTITUDES

6.1   <u>**AN ANALYSIS OF THE CASTE ATTITUDES AND THEIR**</u>
<u>**EFFECTS ON INTERGROUP RELATIONS IN THE**</u>
<u>**DURBAN METROPOLITAN AREA**</u>

This chapter focuses on the caste attitudes of the
Hindus and their effects on intergroup relations.
Researcher attempts to prove or conversely disprove
the theory that there is an erosion of caste in the
Durban Metropolitan area. Further, the researcher
would like to emphasize that questionnaires were
distributed and interviews were conducted amongst the
North Indian Hindus, who comprised of the Gujarati and
Hindi speaking Hindus and "South Indian Hindus", who
are the Tamil and Telugu speaking group.

Caste as an institution has been controversial for
centuries. It has undoubtedly had a tremendous impact
upon the South African Hindus despite their move away
from their, "motherland", India. The uniqueness of
caste in the South African context is that the Hindus
only practised certain aspects of caste as the
Researcher will demonstrate later in the chapter.

It is pertinent at this point to remind the reader that the statistical information which follows pertains only to the present. Any individuals views concerning any aspect of society are prone to changes in time and circumstances. Through questionnaires and interviews the Researcher has reflected the individuals attitudes concerning caste in the Durban Metropolitan area.

The data yielded here must, however, be seen as a basis which will be a useful basis for further research.

6.2   **GENERAL INFORMATION**

Respondents were drawn from the Durban Metropolitan areas. These areas included Chatsworth, Phoenix, Effingham Heights, Reservoir Hills, Overport, Durban Central, Clare Estate and Kenville, these being the major Indian residential areas in Durban.

TABLE 6.1

AGE GROUP OF RESPONDENTS

AGE	GUJARATI	HINDI	TAMIL	TELUGU
-20	11,2%	28,0%	14,0%	11,1%
21-30	11,1%	36,0%	44,0%	11,1%
31-40	44,4%	24,0%	22,0%	55,6%
41-50	33,3%	12,0%	6,0%	11,1%
51-60	--	--	6,0%	--
60 +	--	--	6,0%	--
ABSTAINED	--	--	2,0%	--
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%

The age group of respondents varies from -20 to 60+ as indicated in Table 6.1. The highest percentage i.e. 55,6% is drawn from the 31-40 age group while 44,0% is drawn from the 21-30 age group while 44,0% belong to the 21-30 years age group. 6% of the respondents were 60 years and over. The primary reason for distributing more questionnaires to the age group 21-30 and 31-40 is to assess changing attitudes amongst the younger generation of Hindus. To the researcher the views of the younger generation was much more valuable to assess changing attitudes since the views of the older generation is in most cases "common knowledge", that is through oral tradition. From

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interviews conducted it became very clear that it was difficult for the older generation to move away from the caste system.[1]

The questionnaire reflects that 75% of males responded to the questionnaire as opposed to 25% females. This indicates to a certain extent despite the progress women have made in the Hindu community, the males still dominate as head of the household.[2] Of the hundred Respondents 53,4% were married, 35,1% single, 6% divorced, 2% widowed and 3,5% abstained from answering. Questionnaires were almost evenly distributed to married as well as single members so as to assess a cross section of views concerning caste attitudes.[3]

TABLE 6.2

OCCUPATION OF RESPONDENTS

OCCUPATION	GUJA.	HINDI	TAMIL	TELUGU
EMPLOYED (SPECIFY)	55,6%	28,0%	46,0%	66,7%
HOUSEHOLD DUTIES	--	4,0%	8,0%	11,1%
SCHOLAR/STUDENT	11,1%	32,0%	22,0%	11,1%
UNEMPLOYED	--	4,0%	6,0%	--
PENSIONER	--	--	4,0%	--
SELF EMPLOYED	33,3%	--	2,0%	--
OTHER (SPECIFY)	--	24,0%	6,0%	11,1%
ABSTAINED	--	8,0%	6,0%	--
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 6.2 shows that the occupation of the respondents varied. The above table indicates that the Respondents came from different economic groups. This is important to the Researcher since it helps to ascertain whether a higher social status helps to strengthen caste attitudes or not. Or on the other hand belong those who belong to the lower economic rung makes one more sensitive to issues relating to caste. The occupation of the Respondents were as follows:- doctors, teachers, students, businessmen, artisans, pensioners and housewives.[4]

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TABLE 6.3 - CASTE GROUP OF RESPONDENTS

CASTE	GUJA.	HINDI	TAMIL	TELUGU
BRAHMIN	--	8,0%	6,0%	--
KSHATRIYA	22,2%	4,0%	--	--
VAISHYA	--	--	6,0%	--
SUDRA	--	--	--	--
OTHER (SPECIFY)	44,4%	8,0%	4,0%	--
NO COMMENT	11,2%	28,0%	32,0%	44,4%
DON'T KNOW	22,2%	48,0%	44,0%	56,6%
ABSTAINED	--	4,0%	8,0%	--
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 6.3 indicates the different caste groups the Respondents belonged to. The highest percentage belonging to the Brahmin caste were found amongst the Hindi speaking people. 22,2% of the Respondents from Gujarati speaking people belonged to the Kshatriya caste as opposed to a low 4% amongst the Hindi speaking people. A high percentage of 44,4% amongst the Telugu 32% Tamil, 28% Hindi and 11,2% Gujarati speaking people did not comment on their caste status. It is very noticeable amongst the Tamil and Telugu Respondents that 44% and 56,6% had no idea as to what caste they belonged to.[5] The main reason for this is

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lack of interest especially among the younger generation.

Amongst the Gujarati speaking Respondents 44,4% chose other as their caste group. One caste group that stands out is Darjee. This caste group can be traced to some parts of the Punjab, N.W. Provinces, Rajputana and Deccan. They usually live by working as tailors. The Researcher also found that amongst the 4% of Tamil speaking people who indicated other, confused caste with religion. They indicated caste group as Hindu and Vishnavite. The Respondents have confused Hinduism which is a religion and Vaishnavism which is a religious sect with caste groups. The reason for this could be the lack of knowledge from literary sources. This negligence could also be attributable to the lack of vernacular education. It is also significant that 11,2% Gujarati, 28% Hindi, 32% Tamil and 44,4% Telegu speaking Respondents did not comment on their caste group. This is indicative of the fact that a number of Respondents refused to identify themselves with the caste institution.[6] This could be due to the fact that they did not want to identify themselves as a lower caste.

TABLE 6.4 - RELIGIOUS AFFILIATIONS

RELIGION	GUJA.	HINDI	TAMIL	TELUGU
SAIVITE	--	--	16,0%	--
VAISHNAVITE	--	--	8,0%	11,1%
SAKTA	--	--	--	11,1%
SANATHA DHARMA	22,2%	12,0%	--	--
VEDANTA	--	20,0%	2,0%	--
OTHER (SPECIFY)	--	4,0%	10,0%	--
DON'T KNOW	55,5%	60,0%	44,0%	77,8%
ABSTAIN	22,2%	4,0%	20,0%	--
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%

According to Table 6.4, 16% of the Tamil Community belonged to the Saivite Sect. 11,1% Telugu and 8% Tamil speaking Respondents belonged to the Vaishnavite sect. Amongst the Hindi and Gujarati speaking Hindus 12% and 22,2% respectively were adherents of the Sanathana Dharma. 20% Hindi and 2% Tamil speaking Respondents belonged to the Vedanta sect. A very large number of Respondents did not know their specific religious affiliation. The percentage that did not know is as follows: Gujarati 55,6%, Hindi 60%, Tamil 44% and Telugu 77,8%.[7] The reason can be the lack of religious instruction.

It is significant that amongst the Tamil speaking community only a small percentage of the people follow the Savite, Vaishnavite and Sakta sects. The reason for this is that most of them follow all three sects and it is difficult for them to isolate their affiliation to any one group. The three deities composing the Hindu Triad, as is well known, are Brahma, Vishnu and Siva. Brahma is the creator of the universe, Vishnu is the preserver and Siva is its redeemer.

TABLE 6.5

Do you know the meaning of the term Caste

	GUJARATI	HINDI	TAMIL	TELEGU
YES	88,9%	64,0%	64,0%	44,4%
NO	11,1%	32,0%	30,0%	44,4%
ABSTAINED	–	4,0%	6,0%	11,2%
TOTAL	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

The highest percentage that knew the meaning of the term caste came from the Gujarati speaking people viz 88,9%, as opposed to 64% Hindi, 64%Tamil and 44,4% Telugu. From the Respondents 11,1% Gujarati, 32% Hindi, 32% Tamil and 44,4% Telugu speaking Respondents did not know the meaning of the term caste.[8]

There is general agreement amongst the Respondents and interviewees that caste meant classification of people according to their type of occupation. It is also generally accepted that caste refers to the different social classes where one caste (eg. Brahmins) has more privileges than the lower caste.

TABLE 6.6

Do you know the meaning of the term varna?

	GUJARATI	HINDI	TAMIL	TELUGU
YES	-	4,0%	12,0%	11,1%
NO	100,0%	96,0%	84,0%	88,9%
ABSTAINED	-	-	4,0%	-
TOTAL	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

It is pertinent to note that according to Table 6.6 there is a higher percentage that did not know the meaning of the term varna. The percentages is as follows 100% Gujarati, 96% Hindi, 84% Tamil and 88,9% Telugu speaking Respondents. Of the Respondents that did know the meaning of the term varna they were 4% Hindi speaking, 12% Tamil speaking and 11,1% Telugu speaking. It important to point out that the Respondents who did know the meaning of the term varna was by no means confused. Varna has been described as mainly the four castes comprising of the Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Sudras. From this we have the emergence of subcastes which has been attributed to ambition. Some of the Respondents also mentioned the colour concept of varna quoting the Bhagavad Gita as an example.[9]

The high percentage of Respondents who did not know the meaning of the term varna could be attributed to

the fact that there is a paucity of written material on the concept of _varna_. The material that is available is confusing to the reader who is looking for a simple explanation of the term. Respondents were very familiar with the term caste since this has been passed down from generation to generation. This information was gained more through oral tradition rather than from academic literature. It is significant to note that the lack of vernacular education can also lead to paucity of information.

TABLE 6.7

Do you know the meaning of the term Jati?

	GUJARATI	HINDI	TAMIL	TELUGU
YES	55,6%	20,0%	20,0%	22,2%
NO	4 4,4%	76,0%	76,0%	77,8%
ABSTAINED	-	4,0%	4,0%	-
TOTAL	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

Table 6.7 shows that 55,6% Gujarati, 20% Hindi, 20% Tamil and 22,2% Telugu speaking Respondents knew the meaning of the term _Jati_. There is a large number of Respondents who did not know the meaning of the term _jati_. The highest percentage came from the Telugu speaking people at 77,8% and 76% for both the Hindi and Tamil speaking people. 40% of the Respondents from both the Hindi and Tamil speaking group abstained

from answering.[10]

In forwarding an explanation of <u>jati</u>, many of the Respondents have interpreted <u>jati</u> as meaning caste. <u>Jati</u> as already explained in Chapter two means "by birth". Some of the Respondents were confused and stated that <u>jati</u> referred to a religious group. Some even maintained that it was the nationality of a person. It could be maintained that this lack of knowledge is due to lack of reading on the subject.

TABLE 6.8

Do you know the meaning of the term

Varnasramadharma?

	GUJARATI	HINDI	TAMIL	TELUGU
YES	11,1%	4,0%	2,0%	-
NO	88,9%	96,0%	94,0%	100,0%
ABSTAINED	-	-	4,0%	-
TOTAL	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

As reflected in Table 6.8, 88,9% Gujarati, 94% Tamil, 96% Hindi and 100% Telugu speaking Respondents did not know the meaning of the term <u>varnasramadharma</u>. This high percentage of Respondents that did not know the meaning of the term <u>varnasramadharma</u> is due to the lack of religious instruction at home. Despite the religious organisation with special reference to the

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Hindu youth there is a lack of interest in reading and understanding of the Hindu tradition.

Only a small percentage of Respondents were familiar with the meaning of the term varnasramadharma. These included 11,1% Gujarati, 4% Hindi and 2% Tamil speaking people. The Respondents that did know the meaning of the term varnasramadharma took it to mean charity and a certain set of rules and morals.

TABLE 6.9

Do you know the meaning of the terms

endogamy and exogamy?

ENDOGAMY	GUJARATI	HINDI	TAMIL	TELUGU
YES	22,2%	28,0%	18,0%	11,1%
NO	66,7%	68,0%	76,0%	88,9%
ABSTAINED	11,1%	4,0%	6,0%	-
TOTAL	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
EXOGAMY				
YES	22,2%	28,0%	18,0%	11,1%
NO	66,7%	72,0%	72,0%	88,9%
ABSTAINED	1,1%	-	10,0%	-
TOTAL	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

According to Table 6.9, 66,7% Gujarati, 68% Hindi, 76% Tamil and 88,9% Telugu speaking Respondents did not know the meaning of the term endogamy. There is also

a high percentage of Respondents who did not know the meaning of the term exogamy. An example taken from Table 6.9 shows 88,9% did not know the meaning of the term exogamy.[11] Endogamy is the restriction imposed upon marriage out of one's social group. It limits marriage with members of its own group. Endogamy amongst caste in India is a basic trait. Exogamy on the other hand is marriage outside one's social group. Table 6.10 reveals that a small number of Respondents did know the meaning of the term exogamy. Example 22,2% of Gujarati, 28% Hindi, 18% Tamil and 11% Telugu speaking people.[12] There is general consensus amongst those Respondents that answered yes in Table 6.10 that endogamy meant marriage within ones own social group and exogamy out of one's social group.

TABLE 6.10

Do you believe occupation determines caste?

	GUJARATI	HINDI	TAMIL	TELUGU
Yes	44,4%	20,0%	6,0%	–
NO	55,6%	68,0%	64,0%	77,8%
N/A	–	12,0%	26,0%	22,2%
ABSTAINED	–	–	4,0%	–
TOTAL	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

Table 6.10 reflects a high percentage of 44,4%
Gujarati speaking Respondents who believed that
occupation determined caste as opposed to the 20%
Hindi and 6% Tamil. Views of the Respondents were
that people belonging to a specific caste did specific
jobs. People who engaged in less skilled jobs fell
into the lower castes. There is a large percentage of
55,6% Gujarati, 68% Hindi, 64% Tamil and 77,8% Telugu
speaking Respondents that did not believe that
occupation determined caste in South Africa.[13]
Although many Gujarati speaking Respondents believed
yhat occupation determined caste many of the younger
generation are moving into fields which are affording
them better economic opportunities. To a certain
extent in South Africa wealth plays a much more
important role than caste. Today wealth is given much
more consideration than caste.

TABLE 6.11

Do you believe that caste is the creation of God?

	GUJARATI	HINDI	TAMIL	TELUGU
YES	–	4,0%	–	–
NO	100,0%	68,0%	78,0%	77,8%
UNCERTAIN	–	28,0%	20,0%	22,2%
ABSTAINED	–	–	2,0%	–
TOTAL	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

It is significant to note that the only Respondents who believed that God created caste came from the Hindi speaking group which comprised of 4%.[14] Their rationale was that caste created a certain division of labour in society allowing for the efficient management in society, it could therefore be the creation of God. The Bhagavad Gita is quoted in reference to this theory. The majority of the Respondents, 100% Gujarati, 68% Hindi, 78% Tamil and 77,8% Telugu did not believe that caste was the creation of God.[19] To many of the Respondents caste was the creation of man, in specific the Brahmins. Factors such as environment circumstances and selfishness leads to the caste system. It is interesting to note that many of the Respondents considered all of society to be "God's children" and as such it would be difficult for God to have children who are superior and those who are inferior. 28%

Hindi, 20% Tamil and 22,2% Telugu speaking Respondents were uncertain as to whether caste was the creation of God or not. One reason for this could be that caste and religion at times becomes so interlinked that it becomes difficult to separate caste from religion.

For instance it is very easy for a Reader to literally translate references made to <u>Varna</u> in the <u>Bhagavad Gita</u>, <u>Ramayana</u> and <u>Mahabharata</u>. This also follows to a certain extent that amongst the Hindu community there is a definite lack of religious instruction. Hence the uncertainty of caste and its implications. Lack of religious instruction could be attributed to the lack of interest on the part of the individual.

TABLE 6.12

Did the Brahmin Caste help to solidify

the caste system?

	GUJARATI	HINDI	TAMIL	TELUGU
YES	55,6%	36,0%	38,0%	33,3%
NO	22,2%	52,0%	42,0%	44,4%
ABSTAINED	22,2%	12,0%	20,0%	22,3%
TOTAL	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

Table 6.12 reflects the feelings of Respondents concerning whether or not the Brahmins helped to solidify the caste system. The percentages in favour

ranges from 55,6% Gujarati, 36% Hindi, 38% Tamil and 33,3% Telugu speaking Respondents.[20] The Respondents voiced strong views concerning the influence the Brahmins had in solidifying the caste system. The Brahmins in the same way wanted to safeguard their own superior position. Many Respondents considered the Brahmins to be dictators. Brahmins considered themselves to be superior and set standards for others to follow. They made it impossible for people belonging to other caste to become Brahmins.

It would seem that among the Hindi community in South Africa many have suffered because of the caste institution. The harsh comments concerning the Brahmins brings out the hatred that many Hindus feel towards caste division.

TABLE 6.13

Do you believe in the caste system?

	GUJARATI	HINDI	TAMIL	TELUGU
YES	–	16,0%	2,0%	–
NO	100,0%	84,0%	98,0%	100,0%
ABSTAINED	–	–	–	–
TOTAL	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

According to Table 6.13, 2% Tamil and 16% Hindi speaking Respondents still believed in the caste system. These Respondents believed that the caste

system gave them a sense of direction. They also believed that the caste system being the creation of God should be upheld.[21]

The attitude of Respondents as indicated in Table 6.15 shows that there is an erosion of caste in Durban. The cause of this could be the free intermixture with the different race groups, attending a western orientated school and economic prosperity. Many low castes amongst the South African Hindus have prospered and accumulated wealth and to them caste has no significance. To them their wealth gives them the social status they require. To those low caste Hindus who lack wealth, they try as far as possible to totally obliterate the caste system from their minds.

TABLE 6.14

How often do you practice the caste system?

	GUJARATI	HINDI	TAMIL	TELUGU
N/A	11,1%	28,0%	40,0%	44,4%
DAILY	-	4,0%	2,0%	-
SOCIAL LIFE	-	-	-	-
IN RELIGIOUS MATTERS	-	4,0%	-	-
OTHER	11,1%	-	-	-
ABSTAINED	77,8%	64,0%	58,0%	55,6%
TOTAL	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

Table 6.14 shows that only 4% Hindi and 2% Tamil speaking Respondents practiced caste in their daily life. There are also only 4% of the Hindi speaking people who practiced caste in their religious life. The majority of the Respondents 77,8% Gujarati, 64% Hindi, 58% Tamil and 55,6% Telugu speaking Respondents abstained from committing themselves to answering.[22] Despite the small percentage of Respondents who practiced caste in their daily life and religious life, it is pertinent to note that caste is very much alive amongst these groups.

TABLE 6.15

Would you consider marrying outside

your own Linguistic group?

	GUJARATI	HINDI	TAMIL	TELUGU
YES	44,4%	64,0%	64,0%	55,6%
NO	55,6%	36,0%	36,0%	44,4%
ABSTAINED	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

The lowest percentage of Respondents prepared to marry outside their Linguistic group were among the Gujaratis as indicated in table 6.15. 64% Hindi and Tamil speaking Respondents were prepared to marry out of their linguistic groups. The arguments put forward by these Respondents were that love is more important in a marriage than caste or language. Strong views also presented itself from Respondents who would not marry outside their linguistic group. As reflected in Table 6.15 their percentages varied from 55,6% Gujarati, 36% Hindi, 36% Tamil and 44,4% Telugu. The main argument of these Respondents was that the language difference would make it difficult to adjust.[23] People are adamant up to the present concerning choice of marriage partners. As per interview "I would not allow any of my children to marry anyone of a different linguistic group. If they did I would not allow them to live with me. It is

difficult to get on with someone of a different linguistic group".[24]

In the South African context the Hindus are becoming aware of the question of race. Soon it would be difficult to think in terms of linguistic groups in the new South Africa. The younger generation are very aware of the racial divisions in South Africa and realize that they can no longer practice exclusiveness to their own group. Now the emphasis is on unity amongst the Indians which comprises of the Hindus, Muslims and Christians.

TABLE 6.16

Would you marry someone of a lower caste?

	GUJARATI	HINDI	TAMIL	TELUGU
YES	88,9%	64,0%	74,0%	88,9%
NO	-	24,0%	18,0%	11,1%
ABSTAINED	11,1%	12,0%	8,0%	-
TOTAL	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

A significant percentage of 24% Hindi, 18% Tamil and 11,1% Telugu speaking Hindus would not marry someone of a lower caste.

Some of the reasons given by the Respondents are as follows:

1. "It is against my belief and my way of life. The prayers are different as well".

2. "I belong to the Kshatriya caste and we can only marry kshatriyas or Maharaj's".

3. "There is more harmony if you marry someone from your own caste".[25]

Caste endogamy is still quite strong as one can observe from Table 6.16. This also indicates that caste is not "dead" in Durban. There is also a large percentage of Respondents 88.9% Gujarati, 64% Hindi, 74% Tamil and 88.9% Telugu speaking, that would marry people belonging to lower castes.[26] This shows the move away from caste rigidity. Economic considerations could be largely responsible for this move. Many would rather move up the social ladder in terms of wealth rather than caste.

TABLE 6.17

Do you consider love to be more importan

than caste when it comes to marriage?

	GUJARATI	HINDI	TAMIL	TELUGU
YES	55,6%	76,0%	72,0%	88,9%
NO	11,1%	8,0%	8,0%	-
N/A	33,3%	8,0%	16,0%	-
ABSTAINED	-	8,0%	4,0%	11,1%
TOTAL	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

It is evident from Table 6.17 that 55,6% Gujarati, 76% Hindi, 72% Tamil and 88,9% Telugu speaking Respondents agreed that love is more important than caste. It is significant to note that there is a small percentage of 11,1% Gujarati, 8% Hindi, 8% Tamil speaking Respondents that believed caste is more important than love [27].

As per interview "If you marry someone of your own caste there is a lot of harmony. Harmony in the sense that they do the same things as we do for example our prayers and fasting month. Some of the lower caste people (Chamars) they, actually sacrifice the pig. Hence they find it difficult to mix freely with people of other castes."[28] Although there is an erosion of the caste system in Durban, caste endogamy is still very much alive. Time and again it springs up and

makes its presence felt. It is noticeable that 33,3%
Gujarati, 80% Hindi and 16% Tamil answered N/A.[29]
This could be because they did not want to commit
themselves by responding. Sometimes we find that
people are actually embarrassed of portraying their
true feelings. A very small percentage of 8% Hindi,
4% Tamil and 11,1% Telugu speaking Respondents
abstained from answering.[30]

TABLE 6.18

Would you disinherit any member of you
family who has married out of your caste

	GUJARATI	HINDI	TAMIL	TELUGU
YES	–	4,0%	2,0%	–
NO	100,0%	88,0%	96,0%	100,0%
ABSTAINED	–	8,0%	2,0%	–
TOTAL	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

A small percentage of 4,0% Hindi and 2,0% Tamil
speaking Respondents indicated that they would
disinherit a member of their family if they married
out of their caste[31]. As per interview "Knowingly I
will not accept my children to marry someone of a
lower caste. I will not allow them to live with
me".[32]

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As reflected in Table 6.18, 100% Gujarati, 88% Hindi,
96% Tamil and 100% Telugu speaking Respondents
indicated that they would not disinherit any member of
their family for marrying out of their caste. There
was a general agrement that the couples' happiness was
more important than caste. "Why should one disinherit
or ostracise a person for marrying out of the caste
when we consider ourselves as belonging to the human
race". One explanation that stands out is that,
"Caste is not a crime and people belonging to the
lower caste are not criminals".[33]

Caste being a sensitive issue has brought out a strong
response from many of the Respondents. Many of the
Respondents also belonged to the "lower" castes. This
could also be the result of Respondents abstaining
from answering any questions.

TABLE 6.19

What is your educational qualifications

	GUJARATI	HINDI	TAMIL	TELUGU
NONE	-	-	-	-
STD 5	-	-	-	-
STD 6-8	11,2%	8,0%	12,0%	-
STD 9-10	22,2%	16,0%	32,0%	33,3%
TECHNIKONS	22,2%	4,0%	8,0%	-
UNIVERSITY	44,4%	60,0%	40,0%	55,6%
VERNACULAR	-	-	-	11,1%
ABSTAINED	-	12,0%	8,0%	-
TOTAL	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

The educational status of Respondents as indicated in Table 6.19 shows 44,4% Gujarati, 60% Hindi, 40% Tamil and 55,6% Telugu speaking Respondents were in possession of a university education. Respondents in possession of a vernacular education are as follows 11,1% Telugu speaking. A total of 22.2% Gujarati, 4% Hindi, 8% Tamil were in possession of a secondary education.[34]

From Table 6.19 one can see a definite move away from vernacular education. Reasons for this could be because of the western orientated education that the community is exposed to. This is also due to the fact that there is a lack of emphasis on vernacular

education at home. However the introduction of vernacular courses at schools, provides the younger generation with an opportunity to study the vernacular languages. Here again strong encouragement need to come from the parents.

TABLE 6.20

Do you think it is important to be educated in our own language (eg. Gujarati)?

	GUJARATI	HINDI	TAMIL	TELUGU
YES	88.9%	80.0%	76.0%	66.7%
NO	11.1%	20.0%	24.0%	33.3%
ABSTAINED	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%

88,9% Gujarati, 80% Hindi, 76% Tamil and 66,7% Telugu speaking Respondents felt that it was important to be educated in their own language. The reasons given for this were as follows:

1. "It is important for one to understand one's own language".

2. "It is important for communication, religious security and fulfilment and also gives us a sense of not being totally westernized".

3. "It is important to have cultural links in a plural society".

4. "Some culture and heritage should be maintained so that we do not lose our identity totally".[35]

11,1% Gujarati, 20% Hindi, 24% Tamil and 33,3% Telugu speaking Respondents who did not believe that vernacular education was important.[36]

TABLE 6.21

Would you prefer sending your childre

to a school that has members of your own caste

	GUJARATI	HINDI	TAMIL	TELUGU
YES	22,2%	16,0%	12,0%	22,2%
NO	77,8%	68,0%	82,0%	77,8%
ABSTAINED	-	16,0%	6,0%	-
TOTAL	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

It is significant to note that 22,2% Gujarati, 16% Hindi, 12% Tamil and 22,2% Telugu speaking Respondents who still prefer to send their children to a school that has members of their own caste. As Table 6.21 shows the majority of the Respondents 77,8% Gujarati, 68% Hindi, 82% Tamil and 77,8% Telugu did not find it necessary to send their children to school with members of their own caste. 16% Hindi and 6% Tamil speaking Respondents refrained from answering.[37]

It is important to take note of the number of Respondents that answered positively. It only proves that as much as people try to hide their true feelings concerning caste, it has to surface sooner or later. In addition to marriage we have in the field of education people who would still prefer to have caste exclusivity.

TABLE 6.22

Do you believe that Western education

helps to undermine caste.

	GUJARATI	HINDI	TAMIL	TELUGU
YES	77,8%	72,0%	58,0%	66,7%
NO	22,2%	20,0%	34,0%	22,2%
ABSTAINED	-	8,0%	8,0%	11,1%
TOTAL	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

As shown in Table 6.22 there were many Respondents 77,8% Gujarati, 72% Hindi, 58% Tamil and 66.7% Telugu speaking individuals who strongly believed that western education has helped to undermine the caste system. The reasons given for this are:

1. "Because our parents have settled away from their motherland and have adopted western standards of living".

2. "Progressive trends in society, not necessarily western education, would eventually lead to the fatal doing away of the caste system".

3. "It has made one believe that all are born equal and one can better oneself irrespective of caste".[38]

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Further 22,2% Gujarati, 20% Hindi, 34% Tamil and 22,2% Telugu speaking Respondents did not believe that western education helped to undermine the caste system. Table 6.22 also indicates that 8% Hindi, 8% Tamil and 11,1% Telugu speaking Respondents abstained from answering.[39]

Western education has to a certain extent helped to undermine the caste system, but it has not completely eradicated the caste system. There is still that select few that adhere to certain aspects of the caste system.

TABLE 6.23

Are you a Vegetarian?

	GUJARATI	HINDI	TAMIL	TELUGU
YES	22,2%	20,0%	4,0%	–
NO	77,8%	76,0%	96,0%	100,0%
ABSTAINED	4,0%	–	–	–
TOTAL	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

According to Table 6.23 only a small percentage of Respondents were vegetarians. For example 22,2% Gujarati, 20% Hindi and 4% Tamil speaking Respondents. 77,8% Gujarati, 76% Hindi, 96% Tamil and 100% Telugu speaking Respondents were non-vegetarians.[40]

The majority of the Respondents were non-vegetarians. There is a small minority that abstain from eating meat. The reason for this is mainly religious.

Only 8% of the Hindi speaking indicated that they were vegetarians because of caste.[41] The rest of the Respondents did not associate caste with the fact that they were vegetarians.

TABLE 6.24

Are there other members of your

family who are vegetarians?

	GUJARTI	HINDI	TAMIL	TELUGU
YES	77.8%	28.0%	10.0%	22.2%
NO	22.2%	72.0%	90.0%	77.8%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%

77,8% Gujarati, 28% Hindi, 10% Tamil and 22.2% Telugu indicated that there were members of their family who were vegetarians. Amongst those who answered "No" were 22,2% Gujarati, 72% Hindi, 90% Tamil and 77,8% Telugu speaking Respondents. There was also 4% Hindi and 11,1% Telugu speaking Respondents who abstained from answering.[42]

The above indicates a definite move away from vegetarianism. Vegetarianism was observed to a

greater extent by the older generation. The younger generation are mostly vegetarians on certain days of the week.

For example the Tamil speaking Hindus are generally vegetarians on Mondays and Fridays and the Hindi speaking Hindus are vegetarians on Tuesdays. This form of abstinence from non-vegetarian product is observed in respect for certain deities, example, Muruga, Hanuman, Sakti, Siva and other deities.

TABLE 6.25

Do you eat flesh?

	GUJARATI	HINDI	TAMIL	TELUGU
YES	77.8%	68.0%	78.0%	88.9%
NO	22.2%	32.0%	22.0%	11.1%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%

A high percentage of 77,8% Gujarati speaking Respondents consume meat as opposed to the 22,2% who are vegetarians. This show that not only the Gujarati speaking people are vegetarians. This is significant in the sense that the caste institution as far as diet was concerned was governed by vegetarianism. There is also a 68% Hindi, 78% Tamil and 88,9% Telugu speaking Respondents who are meat eaters.[43] This shift in one's diet preference only go to prove that the

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majority of the Respondents are slowly moving away from their caste practices as far as diet is concerned.

TABLE 6.26

Do you eat pork?

	GUJARATI	HINDI	TAMIL	TELUGU
YES	–	32,0%	30,0%	22,2%
NO	100,0%	64,0%	70,0%	77,8%
ABSTAINED	–	4,0%	–	–
TOTAL	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

Table 6.26 reflects a high percentage of Gujarati speaking Respondents who did not consume pork. There were also 64% Hindi, 70% Tamil and 77,8% Telugu speaking Respondents who did not eat pork. This is opposed to the 32% Hindi, 30% Tamil and 7,2% Telugu speaking Respondents that did eat pork.[44]

TABLE 6.27

Do you eat beef?

	GUJARATI	HINDI	TAMIL	TELUGU
YES	11,1%	16,0%	42,0%	44,4%
NO	88,9%	80,0%	56,0%	55,6%
ABSTAINED	–	4,0%	2,0%	–
TOTAL	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

Table 6.27 indicates a definite increase in the number of Hindus eating beef as compared to pork. As opposed to 0% Gujarati Respondents in Table 6.26 eating pork, 11,1% eat beef. There is also an increase among the Tamil and Telugu speaking Respondents whose percentages are 42% and 44,4% respectively. There is a noticeable drop among the Hindi speaking Respondents from 32% to 16%. One reason postulated is that although the cow is revered it is a clean animal as opposed to the pig which is "unclean".[45]

TABLE 6.28

Do you consider pork and beef unclean food?

	GUJARATI	HIHDI	TAMIL	TELUGU
YES	11.1%	32.0%	24.0%	11.1%
NO	88.9%	68.0%	66.0%	88.9%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%

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There is a significant percentage of Respondents who considered pork and beef "unclean" food. For example 11,1% Gujarati, 32% Hindi, 24% Tamil and 11,1% Telugu speaking Respondents. This is opposed to 88,9% Gujarati, 64% Hindi, 68% Tamil and 88,9% Telugu speaking Respondents who did not believe pork and beef to be "unclean" food. Reasons given for pork and beef to be "unclean" food are:

1.   "For religious reasons".

2.   "Because we pray to the cow and it gives us milk".

3.   "Meat eating was forbidden to me from childhood".

4.   "I was brought up in a family that did not include pork and beef in our diet".

5.   "According to the scriptures it is considered unclean food".

6.   "Pork contains a certain bacteria that can only be destroyed a very high temperature".[46]

One interviewee was very vehement in her answer concerning pork and beef. She maintained that "I will not associate with people who eat pork or beef. I would "look down" upon them. People who eat pork are

considered to be low caste".[47]

Up to the present day the issue of pork and beef is a controversial one in most Hindu homes. Although some individuals consume pork and beef it is generally not practices in the house and in most cases without their parents knowledge. It has always been a stigma in the Hindu community that the consumption of pork and beef would lower one's caste status. This is not so prevalent today in the Hindu community in Durban as can be observed in Tables 6.27 and 6.28 . It would be false not to take note that although there is a small percentage of Hindus consuming pork and beef their caste status still remains the same. Society no longer practises caste rejection of its members. It has learned to accept certain facets of western influences. An interview held with Mrs D Pillay, age 81 years, residing in Clairwood stated the following concerning pork: "In our home we could not mention the word pork. If we did we would be reprimanded by our parents. My parents believed that if some ate pork, they belonged to a low caste. I also believe strongly in this view".[48]

TABLE 6.29

Does any other member of your famil

eat pork or beef?

	GUJARATI	HINDI	TAMIL	TELUGU
YES	22,2%	40,0%	50,0%	44,4%
NO	77,8%	56,0%	50,0%	55,6%
ABSTAINED	–	4,0%	–	–
TOTAL	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

As Table 6.29 reflects 22,2% Gujarati, 40% Hindi, 50% Tamil and 44,4% Telugu speaking Respondents have members of their family who eat pork and beef. On the other hand 77,8% Gujarati, 56% Hindi, 50% Tamil and 55,6% Telugu speaking Respondents who indicated that none of their family members ate pork or beef.[49] The free intermixing with different races has also to a certain extent contributed to the eating of pork or beef amongst Hindus.

TABLE 6.30

Do you object to any of your family

members eating pork or beef?

	GUJARATI	HINDI	TAMIL	TELUGU
YES	22.3%	12.0%	10.0%	11.1%
NO	77.7%	56.0%	50.0%	55.6%
ABSTAINED	-	32.0%	40.0%	33.3%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%

On the question of objecting to family members eating pork or beef 22,3% Gujarati, 12,0% Hindi, 10% Tamil and 11,1% Telugu speaking Respondents indicated that they would object if their family members ate pork or beef.[50]   Their objections were on the grounds of religion.

There is also a large percentage of Respondents who had not objections to their family members eating pork or beef.   77.7% Gujarati, 56,% Hindi, 50% Tamil and 55,6% Telugu speaking Respondents had no objections.[51] This indicates a definite move away from the taboo placed on the consumption of pork or beef.   It would seem that Hindus could now consume pork or beef without being labelled low caste.   Here there seems to be a definite erosion of caste attitudes.   Although certain strains of the caste system concerning diet are still prevalent amongst a significant number of

Hindus there is a definite shift towards more westernized outlook concerning diet. In most cases a person that eats pork or beef is viewed in the same manner as any other person. They are not considered a low caste.

TABLE 6.31

Is cleanliness more important to you than caste when dining at someone's house

	GUJARATI	HINDI	TAMIL	TELUGU
YES	88,9%	76,0%	78,0%	88,9%
NO	11,1%	16,0%	12,0%	11,1%
ABSTAINED	–	8,0%	10,0%	–
TOTAL	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

Cleanliness to 88,9% Gujarati, 76% Hindi, 78% Tamil and 88,9% Telugu speaking Respondents was more important than caste when dining at someone's home. The reasons given were that:

1.   "Cleanliness was important for health reasons".

2.   "Cleanliness is next to godliness".[52]

   These two views basically sums up the general feelings of the Respondents concerning dining at another's home.

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Some of the Respondents who did not believe that cleanliness was more important than caste when dining at another's home. This group comprised of 11,1% Gujarati, 16% Hindi, 12% Tamil and 11,1% Telugu speaking Respondents.[53] These Respondents failed to give adequate explanations for their answer. The reason for this could be confusion on the part of the Respondent. It could also be due to lack of interest.

TABLE 6.32

When entertaining someone of a "lower caste do you use separate crockery and utensils?

	GUJARATI	HINDI	TAMIL	TELUGU
YES	–	–	2,0%	11,1%
NO	88,9%	84,0%	86,0%	88,9%
ABSTAINED	11,1%	16,0%	12,0%	–
TOTAL	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

Table 6.32 indicates that 2,0% Tamil and 11,1% Telugu speaking Respondents would use separate crockery and utensils when entertaining someone of a "lower" caste. The majority 88,9% Gujarati, 84% Hindi, 86% Tamil and 88,9% Telugu speaking Respondents, however, would not use separate utensils.[54]

TABLE 6.33

Would you object to people belonging to different castes attending the same temple as you do?

	GUJARATI	HINDI	TAMIL	TELUGU
YES	−	4,0%	6,0%	−
NO	88,9%	84,0%	68,0%	88,9%
N/A	11,1%	12,0%	24,0%	11,1%
ABSTAINED	−	−	2,0%	−
TOTAL	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

As reflected in Table 6.33, 88,9% Gujarati, 84% Hindi, 68% Tamil and 88,% Telugu speaking Respondents indicated that they did not object to individuals of different caste groups attending the same temple as they did. Their reasons were as follows:

1. "God has not created the caste system and humanity should not be segregated in serving God".

2. "As long as they belong to the same religion and follow an acceptable form of conduct and other procedures".

3. "Do not believe that people should be classified into different castes or race groups for that matter. We are all equal in the eyes of God".[55]

A very small percentage of 4% Hindi and 6% Tamil who objected to people belonging to a different caste attending the same temple.[56]

TABLE 6.34

Do you believe that caste is religious institution?

	GUJARATI	HINDI	TAMIL	TELUGU
YES	-	24.0%	8.0%	-
NO	100%	76.0%	92.0%	100%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%

100% Gujarati, 76% Hindi, 92% Tamil and 100% Telugu's did not believe that caste was a religious institution. In contrast to this 24% Hindi and 2% Tamil speaking Respondents believed that it was a religious institution. The verse from the Bhagavad Gita was cited in this instance.[57] It sometimes is difficult for individuals to understand verses from the Bhagavad Gita and place it in its proper context. The reason for this is due to a large extent to the lack of religious instruction. Through religious instruction it would be easier to probe deeper into the various interpretation of the verses in the Bhagavad Gita rather than viewing it literally.

TABLE 6.35

Do you accept the view that people of a

lower caste should not become priests

	GUJARATI	HINDI	TAMIL	TELUGU
YES	-	12,0%	2,0%	-
NO	100,0%	88,0%	88,0%	100,0%
ABSTAINED	-	-	10,0%	-
TOTAL	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

Table 6.35 indicates that 100% Gujarati, 88% Hindi, 88% Tamil and 100% Telugu speaking Respondents had not objections to a lower caste person becoming a priest. There was only 12% Hindi and 2% Tamil speaking Respondents who had objections to people belonging to "lower castes" becoming priests. The reasons given by the majority of the Respondents concerning their attitudes to lower caste priests are as follows:

1. "Any person who is sincere learned and enthusiastic can become priests".

2. "As long as they belong to the same religion and follow an acceptable form of conduct and other procedures".

3. "If they can teach of meaning of God better than the high caste why not".

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4.   "Priests have a calling not determined by God".[58]

The above reasons point to a definite shift in the traditional belief that persons belonging to the Brahmin caste only could become priests. Today if people are "trained" priestcraft they could practice irrespective of caste. The impact of caste in this respect is definitely eroding. Many religious organisations view God as universal and free of any form of prejudice.

TABLE 6.36

Would you respect a priest of a lower caste?

	GUJARATI	HINDI	TAMIL	TELUGU
YES	88.9%	76.0%	72.0%	88.9%
NO	-	20.0%	18.0%	11.1%
ABSTAINED	11.1%	4.0%	10.0%	-
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%

There was an overwhelming majority of Respondents viz 88,9% Gujarati, 76% Hindi, 72% Tamil and 88,9% Telugu speaking Respondents who maintained that they would respect priests of a lower caste. Amongst these who opposed were 20% Hindi, 18% Tamil and 11,1% Telugu speaking Respondents. 4% Hindi, 11,1% Gujarati and 10% Tamil speaking Respondents who abstained from answering.[59] From the statistics given above it would

seem that although many of the Respondents who stated in Table 6.36 that people of a lower castes can become priests, it did not necessarily mean that they would have to respect them. There is also significant number of Respondents that abstained from answering. One of the reasons for this could be that they did not feel comfortable voicing their true feelings.

TABLE 6.37

Are you happy celebrating the numerous religious festivals with members of different castes

	GUJARATI	HINDI	TAMIL	TELUGU
YES	100,0%	88,0%	78,0%	77,8%
NO	–	12,0%	14,0%	22,2%
ABSTAINED	–	–	8,0%	–
TOTAL	100,0%	100,0%	100,0	100,0%

According to Table 6.37, 100% Gujarati, 88% Hindi, 78% Tamil and 77,8% Telugu speaking Respondents indicated that they did not mind celebrating religious festivals with members of different castes. It is also pertinent to observe that 12% Hindi, 14% Tamil and 22,2% Telugu speaking Respondents did not wish to celebrate religious festivals with members of different castes.[60]

At present there seems to be greater harmony amongst the Hindus during religious festivals due to constraints of South African circumstances.

TABLE 6.38

Do you feel uncomfortable worshipping in the presence of people belonging to different castes?

	GUJARATI	HINDI	TAMIL	TELUGU
yes	–	8,0%	2,0%	–
No	100,0%	88,0%	92,0%	100,0%
Abstained	–	4,0%	6,0%	–
TOTAL	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

Table 6.38 reflects that 100% Gujarati, 88% Hindi, 92% Tamil and 100% Telugu speaking Respondents were quite content worshipping in the presence of people belonging to different castes. Only a small percentage of 8% Hindi and 2% Tamil speaking Respondents objected to worshipping in the presence of people belonging to different castes.[61]

It would seem that over a period, of time the Hindus have learned to live with the fact that God is universal and that He does not discriminate as to who worships Him. It is important to remember that we are all His children. With the erosion of caste taking

place as indicated in Table 6.38, there is till the select few who cling to certain facets of the caste system.

TABLE 6.39

Do you believe that the caste system is responsible for converting to Christianity or Islam?

	GUJARATI	HINDI	TAMIL	TELUGU
YES	44,4%	8,0%	26,0%	33,3%
NO	55,6%	80,0%	64,0%	66,7%
ABSTAINED	-	12,0%	10,0%	-
TOTAL	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

Table 6.39 shows 44,4% Gujarati, 8% Hindi, 26% Tamil and 33,3% Telugu speaking Respondents believed that caste was responsible for people converting to Christianity and Islam. The reasons given are:

1.   "They (lower caste) convert to avoid being criticized by people belonging to a higher caste".

2.   "They feel that they will be able to receive more out of life in another religion".

3.   "Probably the dissatisfaction with caste and its social divisions makes individuals think that their lot will improved in other faiths".

4. "People feel discouraged when they are looked down upon by higher castes".

5. "In the early days when caste was entrenched in our society and opportunities for lower castes were limited".

6. "Because people from their own religion did not want to accept or give them equal opportunity".

7. "The low caste converted to gain higher status in the community".[62]

As reflected in Table 6.39, 55,6% Gujarati, 80% Hindi, 64% Tamil and 66,7% Telugu speaking Respondents did not consider caste to be responsible for conversion to Christianity and Islam.[63]

Some very valid explanations has been given by Respondents concerning caste and conversion. It was easier for people who have suffered indignities at the hands of the caste system to convert to another.

TABLE 6.40

Is your occupation the same as your fathers/mothers?

	GUJARATI	HINDI	TAMIL	TELUGU
YES	22,2%	4,0%	12,0%	-
NO	77,8%	92,0%	84,0%	88,9%
ABSTAINED	-	4,0%	4,0%	11,1%
TOTAL	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

Table 6,40 shows a small percentage of Respondents that still followed their fathers/mothers occupation. The percentages ranged from 22,2% Gujarati, 4% Hindi, 12% Tamil speaking Respondents. There is also a large percentage of 77,8% Gujarati, 92% Hindi, 84% Tamil and 88,9% Telugu speaking Respondents who did not follow in their father's occupation.[64]

It is significant to note that there is a definite shift away from caste occupations. Occupation in the South African society today has been necessitated by economic demands and not caste.

Rank the following in order of Superiority

	GUJARATI	HINDI	TAMIL	TELUGU
TEACHER	22,2%	12,0%	6,0%	11,1%
DOCTOR	11,1%	4,0%	12,0%	22,2%
LAWYER	-	4,0%	4,0%	-
BUSINESSMAN	-	-	2,0%	22,3%
ARTISAN	-	-	2,0%	-
LECTURER	-	-	4,0%	-
PRIEST	11,1%	24,0%	8,0%	-
OTHER	-	8,0%	2,0%	-
ABSTAINED	55,6%	48,0%	60,0%	44,4%
TOTAL	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

It is significant that the majority of 55,6% Gujarati, 48% Hindi, 60% Tamil and 44,4% Telugu speaking Respondents abstained from ranking the above in order of superiority.[65]   Occupation does not necessarily indicate the superiority or inferiority of an individual. Many Respondents maintained that of greater importance is a person's qualities and not occupation.

One reason for the abstention of the majority of the Respondent could be to prevent labelling professions as superior and inferior.   It would have been difficult for the Respondents to rank the above in

order of superiority since all of them play an equally
important role in Society.

TABLE 6.42

Would you be prepared to marry someone of a

different religion within the Indian Community

	GUJARATI	HINDI	TAMIL	TELUGU
YES	33,3%	64,0%	60,0%	77,8%
NO	66,7%	32,0%	34,0%	22,2%
ABSTAINED	–	4,0%	6,0%	–
TOTAL	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

Table 6.42 reflects that 33,3% Gujarati, 64% Hindi,
60% Tamil and 77,8% Telugu speaking Respondents are
prepared to marry someone of a different religion
within the Indian Community. 66,7% Gujarati, 32%
Hindi, 34% Tamil and 22,2% Telugu speaking Respondents
maintained that they would not marry someone of a
different religion within the Indian Community.[66]

It is interesting to note that there is a definite
shift in views concerning marriage. The age old taboo
against marrying someone of a lower caste let alone
another religion seems to be fast dwindling. A very
significant reason for this could be the changing
political climate in South Africa. With the unbanning
of the African National Congress (ANC) much tension

has been created in relationship with the other Black political organisations, in particular, the Inkatha Freedom Party. Even more problems have been created with extremist parties like the AWB and CP amongst the "White" Community. Therefore the plight of the Hindus and the Indian Community as a whole is an uncertain one. Being a minority race group in South Africa they may have come to realize that they would have to place their differences aside and stand together as a united community. They cannot afford to create further divisions amongst themselves.

TABLE 6.43

Would you marry someone of a different race group?

	GUJARATI	HINDI	TAMIL	TELUGU
YES	22.2%	44.0%	46.0%	55.6%
NO	77.8%	56.0%	48.0%	33.3%
ABSTAINED	-	-	6.0%	11.1%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%

In response to the question a marriage of someone of a different race group, 22,2% Gujarati, 44% Hindi, 46% Tamil and 55,6% Telugu speaking Respondents indicated they would be prepared to marry someone of a different race group. Those opposed to marriage to different race groups were 77,8% Gujarati, 56% Hindi, 48% Tamil and 33,3% Telugu speaking Respondents. 6% Tamil and

11,1% Telugu speaking Respondents abstained from answering.[67] It seems that a significant percentage of Hindus are now more receptive to the idea of inter race marriages. On the question of inter race marriage let us not ignore the fact that it is not accepted with "open arms". As per interview: "If my children disobey me and marry someone of a different race I will not allow them to live with me. I will still be friends with them".[68]

TABLE 6.44

Would you allow your children to attend

a multi-racial school?

	GUJARATI	HINDI	TAMIL	TELUGU
YES	100,0%	84,0%	84,0%	88,9%
NO	–	12,0%	14,0%	11,1%
ABSTAINED	–	4,0%	2,0%	–
TOTAL	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

According to Table 6.44, 100% Gujarati, 54% Hindi, 84% Tamil and 88,9% Telugu speaking Respondents are agreeable to multi-racial schools. Those opposed to the idea are 12% Hindi, 14% Tamil and 11,1% Telugu speaking Respondents. 6% of the Respondents refrained from answering.[69]

The overwhelming majority in favour of multi-racial schools is a sure indication that the caste system is eroding in the Durban Metropolitan area. The willingness of free intermixture with the different race groups is in itself against the caste rules. The idea of "Pollution" is no longer relevant.

CONCLUSION

Some Respondents viewed the caste system as being relevant at the time of its inception. However it is

now impractical. At this point it would be important to look at some of the general views concerning caste forwarded by the Respondents.

1.   "It limits progress".

2.   "Caste is very primitive".

3.   "Caste is important to me".

4.   "It is biased'.

5.   "A wretched, inhuman, ungodly system which should be abolished".

6.   "A poor reflection of the Hindu society and should be done away with".

7.   "Does not unify people of the same race group".

8.   "In the same light as apartheid because it is so discriminatory".

9.   "A very orthodox outdated system which divides rather than unites people".

10.   "Those people who take the caste system seriously are guilty of social segregation".[70]

These views of the Respondents indicates a sense of bitterness amongst the lower castes Hindus concerning caste attitudes. Many could have suffered indignities at the "hands" of the caste system. On the others hand there were other who viewed the caste system positively. This points to the fact that although caste is eroding it is not "dead" as yet in Durban.

Concerning the future of caste many Respondents indicated that it is eroding very fast. "Caste is on its way out due to the liberal thinking of young men and women". In connection with the future of caste, a unique response was given by one Respondent: "It seems to be increasing and could be hard to stop". Another very appropriate answer to the future of caste is: "Caste will drift away but people will still worship God in their separate ways".[71]

It is clear to most Respondents that although caste is eroding it is going to be very difficult to get rid of it. Caste prejudices in its entirety are difficult to get rid of since its so ingrained in the psyche of many.

TABLE 6.45

Do you believe that in South Africa the people are more class conscious than caste conscious?

	GUJARATI	HINDI	TAMIL	TELUGU
YES	77,8%	76,0%	68,0%	88,9%
NO	22,2%	16,0%	16,0%	11,1%
ABSTAINED	-	8,0%	16,0%	-
TOTAL	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

Table 6.45 reflects that 77,8% Gujarati, 76% Hindi, 68% Tamil and 88,9% Telugu speaking Respondents believed that in South Africa Hindus are more class conscious than caste conscious. Opposed to this view are 22,2% Gujarati, 16% Hindi, 16% Tamil and 11,1% Telugu speaking Respondents. 24% of the Respondents abstained from answering.[72]

With the erosion of caste in Durban people are becoming more class conscious. Economic prosperity has enabled many to move up the social status hence class is more a factor of social differentiation than caste.

In response to the question concerning the most caste conscious group in South African the following answers were given:

1.   "Older generation of Hindus".

2.   "Naicker and Moodley".

3.   Gujaratis".

4.   "Hindi".

5.   "Maharaj's".[73]

From the answers given one cannot pinpoint any particular group that is more caste conscious. Caste has played an important role amongst all four linguistic groups.   It has affected the four linguistic groups in different ways and still exists amongst them to a certain extent.

Many Respondents have indicated that the cast should be abolished.   It has also been emphasized that instead of caste more emphasis should be placed on religion . At present in the Durban Metropolitan Area, it seems that the Hindu community are practicing the remnants of a caste system rather than the caste system itself.   The caste institution which has its origins in deep rooted prejudices is eroding in Durban and only certain aspects of the caste system is practiced, amongst a small percentage of Hindus.   For instance, caste endogamy as practiced by the four

linguistic groups are not always in the strictest sense. On the question of marriage, provided a person is of a reputable caste he or she is accepted. Thus exogamous marriages are more prevalent in Durban than endogamous marriages. None of the Respondents insisted that for example a Pillay has to marry a Pillay. The Researcher would like to point out that although a significant percentage of Respondents preferred caste marriages, they would be content to marry someone of a higher caste or one equivalent to their own. This provides an eye opener to future Researchers to consider whether a caste system is practiced in Durban or caste prejudices and whether this gave rise to a class system. Because of the paucity of information concerning these issues it is difficult for the Researcher to discuss it.

END NOTES

1. Information obtained from Questionnaire: <u>Age Group</u>?.

2. Information obtained from Questionnaire: <u>Sex</u>?.

3. Information obtained from Questionnaire: <u>Marital Status</u>.

4. Information obtained from Questionnaire: <u>Occupation</u>?.

5. Information obtained from Questionnaire: <u>Which Caste do you belong to</u>?.

6. Ibid.

7. Information obtained from Questionnaire: <u>Religious Affiliations</u>?.

8. Information obtained from Questionnaire: <u>Do you know the meaning of the Term Caste?</u>.

9. Information obtained from Questionnaire: <u>Do you know the meaning of the Term Varna</u>?.

10. Information obtained from Questionnaire : <u>Do you know the meaning of the term Jati</u>?.

11. Information obtained from Questionnaire: <u>Do you know the meaning of the term endogamy</u>?.

12. Information obtained from Questionnaire: <u>Do you know the meaning of the term exogamy</u>?.

13. Information obtained from Questionnaire: <u>Does occupation determine caste</u>?.

14. Information obtained from Question: <u>Is Caste the Creation of God</u>?.

19. Ibid.

20. Information obtained from Questionnaire: <u>Did the Brahmin caste help to solidify the Caste system</u>?.

21. Information obtained from Questionnaire: <u>Do you believe in the Caste system</u>?.

22. Information obtained from Questionnaire: <u>How often do you practice the caste system</u>?.

23. Information obtained from Questionnaire: <u>Would you consider marriage outside your linguistic group?</u>.

24. Interview: Mrs Moodley, present leader of the Thamizh Isai Khazhgham, 15 August 1991.

25. Information obtained from Questionnaire: <u>Would you marry a lower caste</u>?.

26. Ibid.

27. Information obtained from Questionnaire: <u>Is love more important than caste</u>?.

28. Interview: Mrs S Singh, teacher, residing in Overport, 30 September 1991.

29. Information obtained from Questionnaire: <u>Is love more important than caste</u>?.

30. Ibid.

31. Information obtained from Questionnaire: <u>Would you disinherit any member of your family who has married out of your caste</u>?.

32. Interview: Mrs Moodley, 18 August 1991.

33. Information obtained from Questionnaire: <u>Would you disinherit any member of your family who has married out of your caste</u>?.

34. Information obtained from Questionnaire: What is your educational qualification?

35. Information obtained from Questionnaire: <u>Is it important to be educated in your own language</u>?.

36. Ibid.

37. Information obtained from Questionnaire: <u>Would you prefer your children to attend a school with members of your own caste</u>?.

38. Information obtained from Questionnaire: <u>Has Western education helped to undermine Caste</u>?.

39. Ibid.

40. Information obtained from Questionnaire: <u>Are you Vegetarian</u>?.

41. Ibid.

42. Information obtained from Questionnaire: <u>Are there members of your family who are vegetarian</u>?.

43. Information obtained from Questionnaire: <u>Do you eat flesh</u>?.

44. Information obtained from Questionnaire: <u>Do you eat pork</u>?.

45. Information obtained from Questionnaire: <u>Do you eat beef</u>?.

46. Information obtained from Questionnaire: <u>Do you consider pork and beef unclean food</u>?.

47. Interview: Mrs Moodley, 15 August 1991.

48. Interview: Mrs D Pillay, 22 October 1991.

49. Information obtained from Questionnaire: <u>Does any member of your family eat pork or beef</u>?.

50. Information obtained from Questionnaire: <u>Do you object to your family members eating pork or beef</u>?.

51. Information obtained from Questionnaire: <u>Do you object</u>?.

52. Ibid.

53. Information obtained from Questionnaire: <u>Is cleanliness more important than caste when dining at someone's house</u>?.

54. Ibid.

55. Information obtained from Questionnaire: <u>Would you object to people of different castes attending the same temple as you do</u>?.

56. Ibid.

57. Information obtained from Questionnaire: <u>Is caste a religious institution</u>?.

58. Information obtained from Questionnaire: <u>Do you accept the view that lower caste people should not become priests</u>?.

59. Information obtained from Questionnaire: <u>Would you respect priests belonging to a lower caste</u>?.

60. Information obtained from Questionnaire: <u>Are you content celebrating religious festivals with members of different castes</u>?.

61. Information obtained from Questionnaire: <u>Are you uncomfortable worshipping with members of different castes</u>?.

62. Information obtained from Questionnaire: <u>Is caste Responsible for conversion to Christianity for Islam</u>.

63. Ibid.

64. Information obtained from Questionnaire: <u>Is you occupation the same as your fathers</u>?.

65. Information obtained from Questionnaire: <u>Rank the following in order of superiority</u>.

66. Information obtained from Questionnaire: <u>Are you prepared to marry someone of a different religion</u>?.

67. Information obtained from Questionnaire: <u>Would you marry someone of another race group</u>?.

68. Interview: Mrs Moodley, 15 August 1991.

69. Information obtained from Questionnaire: <u>Would you allow your children to attend a multi-racial school</u>?.

70. Information obtained from Questionnaire: <u>How do you view the caste system</u>?.

71. Information obtained from Questionnaire: <u>What is the future of caste in South Africa</u>?.

72. Information obtained from Questionnaire: <u>Are the people in South Africa more class conscious or caste conscious</u>?.

73. Information obtained from Questionnaire: <u>Who in your opinion are the most caste conscious group</u>?.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

At its inception the varna system presented to the Hindus an ideal that was appealing to them. The varna system was so fluid that it allowed for free vertical mobility in the social ladder. It gave dignity to all four varnas, viz. Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Sudra.

The varna system found expression in the three gunas, viz. Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. The three gunas which were the inherent qualities of man allowed for his spiritual development or stagnation. The varna system allowed the Hindu to mould his own future in society. His position in society depended on his perseverance in overcoming the darkness within himself.

On the path of spiritual development the Hindu passes through the four stages of life (varnasramadharma). The four asramas (stages) are: student (bramacarya), householder (grhastha), forest-dweller (vanaprastha) and renuncient (samnyasa). At the end of this rigorous (sanyasi). At the end of the rigorous the light shines upon the Hindu who has now attained Sattvic (pure) qualities. The Hindu with Sattvic qualities stored at the top of the social ladder.

This opposed to those who possessed <u>Tamasic</u> qualities (impure) they remained at the bottom of the social rung. The Researcher finds it pertinent to point out at this stage that in one household all four <u>varnas</u> may be evident. For instance, if the father is a <u>Brahmin</u> it does not stop the son from being a <u>Sudra</u> since each of them are at a different stage of spiritual development.

It is sad to observe that any ideal is subject to exploitation. This can be seen in the selfish nature of the <u>Brahmins</u>. It is their ardent ambition for power that distorted the entire frame of the <u>varna</u> system. This distortion has made it difficult for the <u>varna</u> system to effectively operate. Thus we have the <u>jati</u> system. Many Indologists are in agreement that <u>jati</u> in English is translated to mean caste. Caste has totally destroyed the <u>varna</u> system. Whereas only four <u>varnas</u> are evident there are numerous castes and sub-castes.

The institution of caste has governed every aspect of the life of the Hindu. The caste system has held the Hindus tightly within "its grip" for over a thousand years. This rendered vertical movement of the Hindus almost impossible. To the higher caste Hindus the caste system bestowed upon them only that which was noble and praiseworthy. They reaped the fruits of

society and only gave the remnants to the lower castes.

The caste institution is a water tight compartment which keeps the different castes in position by refusing them any improvement in their status. For instance, caste based on occupation made it impossible for a "streetsweeper" to become a Brahmin by birth, the plight of his children was determined even before birth.

With the emergence of the sacerdotal caste harsh restrictions being placed upon the religious, dietary, social, political and economic life of the Hindus. The Brahmins rose in prominence during the age of the Brahmanas.

The Brahmins jealousy guarded their knowledge and refused admittance of any other castes to their order. Even the Kshatriyas who were the rulers were refused acceptance. The performance of religious rites became the sole monopoly of the Brahmins. This privilege was not even afforded to the Kshatriyas. It was unthinkable of Sudras to perform religious rites. In the field of religion the life of a Sudra was not an easy one.

Dietary rules were strictly observed. For the Brahmin, in particular, vegetarianism became the order of the day. The careful preparation of food made it difficult for caste members to eat away from their homes. Generally people belonging to a higher caste would not accept food from people belonging to a lower caste.

Caste endogamy was observed in its strictest sense. Marriage outside one's own caste was generally not accepted. Brahmins had to marry Brahmins only. If they married out of their caste their social status would definitely be lowered. If the Brahmins married someone of a lower caste they would be ostracised from their caste. Marriages were usually organised to suit one's own caste.

The institution of caste has inflicted intolerable suffering upon the lower echelons of society. To the higher echelons of society it has bequeathed everything that was rich and beautiful.

One of the factors which prompted the Indentured Indians to immigrate to Natal, was to escape the indignities of the caste system. Caste prejudices die hard and many of the high caste Hindus amongst the immigrants instituted the caste system in their new environment. The Hindus practised the caste system

only in a limited sense. It is not possible to transport the caste system onto a foreign soil and expect it to operate effectively. The mere fact of crossing the seas meant going against ones caste rules.

Caste "pollution" has been rendered useless. Travelling meant "pollution". It was not possible for higher castes to avoid lower caste people. On their arrival further pollution can be observed. People were placed in the same area irrespective of caste. If living in close quarters with the lower castes made the observance of "pollution" difficult, then living under a white government made it impossible.

The population in Natal was made up of the Indians, Whites, Coloureds and large number of Africans. Out of necessity the Hindus had to contend with being in constant contact with the different race groups. The higher caste Hindus no longer held a privileged position in society as a whole. The superior position held by them was only within the Hindu community.

Caste marriages were followed in some strength. In the early years of settlement there was a definite ostracizing of family members who married out of the caste. Amongst the Gujarati-speaking community in the early years they were quite strict when it came to the

question of caste marriages. Because of their economic position they could turn to India for help, if no suitable suitors were available here.

It is mostly amongst the Gujarati-speaking community that caste occupations were strictly adhered to in the earlier days of settlement. The Gujaratis came to South Africa as traders and many remained traders for many years.

Today in the South African context, it is difficult to follow caste occupations. Competition in the economic field between the different race groups is very strong. This phenomenon makes it very difficult to practice caste occupations. Caste occupations have become secondary and the accumulation of wealth has become a primary concern to the Hindus living in Durban.

Parents have realized that to move up the social ladder, it was important that their children got the necessary education. Education has turned out professionals in different fields, example, doctors, lawyers, teachers, engineers, etc. Parents have also realized that caste occupations held no place in the South African society. The most important interests of parents is to educate their children in economically viable professions. Caste occupation

does not always afford them the lifestyle they wished to pursue.

Whilst the statement that caste practices are strongest amongst the Gujarati community is substantially true, it is important to note that it is also fairly strong amongst the other linguistic groups. Respondents and Interviewees have indicated that caste still affects the four linguistic groups in some way or the other. Objections concerning inter-caste marriages is even observed amongst the younger generation. One interviewee had actually maintained that he would only marry a Govender girl.

At present although caste practices are still very strong amongst the Hindus there is a definite erosion taking place. Caste, in the instance of marriage, in most cases is being replaced by love. Marriage partners are generally of one's own choice rather than arranged partners. Parental consent in most cases is not taken heed of. Although parents are sometimes against the marriages of their children to lower castes they do not ostracise them. After some objections they finally came to grips with the fact that their children have married someone of a lower caste. Thus at present the majority of the Hindus have not disinherited their children for marrying out of their caste.

With the current changes taking place in South Africa, the Hindu is aware of the fact that inter-caste marriage is minor in comparison to interrace marriages. The number of interrace marriages is fast increasing. Today the idea is an Indian should rather marry an Indian, irrespective of caste instead of someone of a different race. To the Hindus interrace marriage would have cultural and religious implications.

Caste practices concerning diet is definitely diminishing. Although there is still that select few whose diet is influenced by caste, indicating that the majority have drifted away from this practice. Today people are vegetarians amongst the different linguistic groups not because of the dictates of caste but rather for religious reasons and in most cases in Durban many eat meat but they are selective about the type of meat they consume.

Despite the erosion of caste concerning diet, there are still certain aspects of diet that the Hindus still rigidly hold on to. The consumption of pork or beef still seems to be taboo amongst many. Although pork or beef is not eaten on religious grounds, there is still a significant number that abstain for caste reasons. It seems to be an age old myth that if one consumed pork or beef they belonged to lower castes.

This theory presently falls away since many higher caste Hindus consume pork and beef. To these Hindus the type of food consumed by them is a matter of taste and neither caste nor religion influences their judgement.

There is still, however, a significant few who scorn at those who consume pork and beef. Some individuals to this day dislike associating with individuals who eat pork and beef. This is prevalent mostly amongst the older generation. Even the question of abstaining from eating in the home of a lower caste Hindu is found prevalent amongst the older generation. The younger generation today find it difficult to distinguish amongst high and low castes. To some extent their knowledge of the classification of castes are limited. In most cases they rely on the knowledge of their parents.

At present in the Durban Metropolitan areas cleanliness plays a much more important role than caste. It is the general view that by eating in restaurants and hotels one is going against one's caste rules. People of different races let alone those belonging to different castes eat from the same utensils. However, there are still a small minority who don't eat outside their homes except at homes of members belonging to their own caste. In this

category the people are absolutely adamant about lower castes even eating at their homes. Although caste is eroding in this respect it will take some time before it is completely removed.

In the religious field caste has eroded. In Durban the various religious movements such as the Divine Life Society, the Hare Krishna Movement and Rama Krishna Centre, whose religious activity based on devotional songs and meditation welcomes all Hindus to join in their activities. Caste has failed to effectively operate here since religious leaders do not belong to any particular caste group, nor do these neo-Hindu movements give evidence to caste. On the contrary they maintain that caste has no place in Hindu Society.

Priests are no longer required to be of a <u>Brahmin</u> caste. A man or woman who is knowledgeable in the Hindu religious scriptures and has studied Sanskrit and the Hindu languages qualifies to perform a ritual. Provided a priest belonging to a lower caste carries out his duty effectively he is given due respect.

All Hindus are welcome to worship at any temple or public place of worship irrespective of caste. Although ethnic groups may organize rituals predominantly celebrated by them no group is excluded

from its celebrations. The worshipping of God should be universal and no one should be graded in this respect. God has created every one equal and because of this the majority of Hindus in Durban feel that it is not their place to object.

At present in Durban wealth neutralizes social barriers. many low caste Hindus have used wealth as a springboard to higher social status. The emergence of the intellectual elites gave people that belonged to lower castes the status that they deserved.

In the earlier years, the unfairness of the caste system resulted in conversion to Christianity and Islam. Today Hindus convert for different reasons. Amongst the reasons for conversion, one stands out, that is economics. Due to their poor economic status Hindus who converted felt that their plight in life would be improved.

Presently in Durban if caste is practised it is only done in the social context. Living under a white government and amongst different race groups it is difficult to practice caste in the broader sense, that is, in the political and economic field. Even in the social field with the current changes taking place there is going to be a definite erosion. With the scrapping of the group areas act there is going to be

a greater intermixture of races. Constant interaction with the different race groups result in closer relationships.

In an ever changing social world it would be difficult to observe caste rules. In the field of politics the Hindus have realized that they would have to stand together to make any significant impression upon the White government. They have realized that division makes any action on their part to better their lives impossible. With the rise of political elites, there is a definite move away from the caste system in the political arena.

Caste as an institution has inflicted numerous indignities upon the low caste Hindus. It is an institution that is so ingrained in the psyche of the Hindu that it would be difficult for a Hindu to state that he/she is completely free of caste prejudices.

With the erosion of the caste system it has given birth to a class structure in Durban. It is hoped that future research would be undertaken in this field. It would be interesting to observe how a rigid caste system had evolved into a class system.

SUMMARY

The following is a brief summary of the study:
Chapter One entails a discussion of the subject of
study namely: An investigation into the caste
attitudes that prevail amongst Hindus in the Durban
Metropolitan Area, also the aims of the study. The
Researcher also discusses the methodological framework
employed in this study.

Chapter Two focuses on the concepts of varna, jati and
caste. This chapter aims at giving a clearer
understanding into these three concepts.

Chapter Three examines the evolution of the caste
system. In this chapter the various theories
responsible for the emergence of the caste system is
explored. Literary sources are used to substantiate
these theories. Implications of caste on the Hindu
society is also discussed in this chapter.

Chapter Four entails a study of the Hindu community
and caste in South Africa. It investigates a historic
arrival of Indians, caste divisions amongst the early
Hindu Immigrants and its influence on early Hindu
society.

Chapter Five entails a discussion of caste and contemporary South African hindus. It focuses on caste practices as it exists at present amongst the different Hindu linguistic groups and its influence on the socio-economic and political life of the Hindus. This chapter seeks to explain that there is a definite erosion of caste in the Durban Metropolitan Area.

Chapter Six provides an analysis of caste attitudes and their effects on intergroup relations in the Durban Metropolitan Area. In this chapter the views of respondents and interviewees are portrayed.

Chapter Seven reflects the conclusions arrived at from this study.

QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE CASTE ATTITUDES

AMONGST THE HINDUS IN THE DURBAN

METROPOLITAN AREA.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Please cooperate as complete anonymity is assured.

2. Tick wherever applicable.

3. The questionnaire will be collected on completion.

This research is being undertaken by Mrs G Pillay as a part-fulfilment of a Masters Degree.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION

A. GENERAL INFORMATION.

1. AGE GROUP

-20	21-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	60+
1	2	3	4	5	6

2. SEX

MALE	FEMALE
1	2

3. MARITAL STATUS

SINGLE	MARRIED	DIVORCED	WIDOWED
1	2	3	4

4. SURNAME

5. Indicate occupation below.

EMPLOYED (Specify type of job)	
HOUSEHOLD DUTIES	
SCHOLAR/STUDENT	
UNEMPLOYED	
PENSIONER	
SELF EMPLOYED	
OTHER (Specify)	

6. LANGUAGE GROUP

TAMIL	HINDI	TELUGU	GUJARATI
1	2	3	4

7. To which of the following caste do you belong?

Brahman	
Kshatriya	
Vaishya	
Sudra	
Other (Specify)	
No comment	
I don't know	

8. Which school of Hinduism do you subscribe to?

Saivite	Vaishna vite	Sakta	Sanatha Dharma	Vedanta	Other Specify	Don't know

B. TERMINOLOGY

1. Do you know the meaning of the term caste?

YES	NO
1	2

2. If yes, please explain.

_____

_____

_____

3. Do you know the meaning of the term "Varna"?

YES	NO
1	2

4. IF yes, please explain.

_____

_____

_____

5. Do you know the meaning of the term "Jati"?

YES	NO
1	2

6. If yes, please explain your answer.

_____

_____

_____

7. Do you know the meaning of the term "Varnashrama Dharma"?

YES	NO
1	2

8. If yes, please explain.

_____

_____

_____

9. Do you know the meaning of the term "Endogamy"?

YES	NO
1	2

10.If yes, please explain.

_____

_____

_____

11.Do you know the meaning of the term "Exogamy"?

YES	NO
1	2

12.If yes, please explain.

_____

_____

HISTORICAL EVOLUTION

1. Do you believe that occupation determines the caste?

YES 1	NO 2	N / A 3

2. If yes, please explain your answer.

_____

_____

_____

3. Do you believe that the caste system is the most important factor of the marriage system?

YES 1	NO 2

4. Justify your answer.

_____

_____

_____

5. Do you believe that the caste system was the creation of God?

YES 1	NO 2	UNCERTAIN 3

6. Please explain your answer.

_____

7. Do you believe that it was the influence of the Brahman caste which helped to solidfy the caste system?

YES	NO
1	2

8. Please explain your answer.

_____

_____

_____

D. SOCIAL

1. Do you believe in the caste system?

YES	NO
1	2

2. If yes, why?

_____

_____

_____

3. If "yes"for question 1 how often do you practice the caste system.

N/A	DAILY	IN SOCIAL LIFE	IN RELIGIOUS MATTERS	OTHER (SPECIFY)
1	2	3	4	5

4. Do you determine a person's caste by their surname?

YES	NO
1	2

5.Please explain your answer.

_____

_____

_____

6.Does the caste system influence your attitude towards the following?

	YES	NO
1. MARRIAGE		
2. DIET		
3. SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR		
4. RELIGION		
5. OTHER (SPECIFY)		

7. <u>MARRIAGE</u>

1. **Would you consider marrying outside your own linguistic group, (eg Tamil, Telugu, Gujarati, Hindi)?**

YES	NO
1	2

2. Please justify your answer.

_____

_____

_____

3. Within your own linguistic group would you consider marrying someone belonging to a different caste?

YES	NO
1	2

4. Please explain why?

_____

_____

_____

5. Would you marry someone belonging to a "lower" caste?

YES	NO
1	2

6. Please explain?

_____

_____

_____

7. Would you consider love to be more important than caste when it comes to marriage?

YES	NO	N/A
1	2	3

8. Do you believe that financial and educational considerations are more important than caste when it comes to marriage?

YES	NO
1	2

9. Please explain your answer.

_____

_____

_____

10. Would disinherit any member of your family who has married out of your caste?

YES	NO
1	2

11. Please explain your answer.

_____

_____

_____

8. **EDUCATION**

1. What is your educational qualifications?

NONE	STD 5	STD 6-10	STD 9-10	TECH.	UNIV.	VERNACU-
1	2	3	4	5	6	LAR. 7

2. Do you think it is important for you to be educated in your own language (eg.Tamil,Gujarati)?

YES	NO
1	2

3. If yes why?

_____

_____

4. Would you prefer sending your children to a school that has members of your own caste?

YES	NO
1	2

5. Do you believe that a western education has helped to undermine the caste system?

YES	NO
1	2

6. Please explain your answer?

_____

_____

_____

9. DIET

1. Are you a vegetarian?

YES	NO
1	2

2. If yes, is it because of your caste?

YES	NO	N/A
1	2	3

3. Are there other members of your family who are vegetarians?

YES	NO
1	2

4. Do you eat flesh?

YES	NO
1	2

5. Do you eat pork?

YES	NO
1	2

6. Do you eat beef?

YES	NO
1	2

7. Do you consider pork or beef "unclean" food?

YES	NO
1	2

8. Please explain your answer?

_____

_____

_____

9. If you do eat pork or beef is it because of your religious reasons?

YES	NO	N/A
1	2	3

10. If yes, please explain?

_____

_____

11. Does any other member of your family eat pork or beef?

YES	NO
1	2

.

12. If yes, do you object?

YES	NO
1	2

13. Explain your answer.

_____

_____

_____

14. How do you view a person who eats pork or beef?

_____

_____

_____

15. Would you accept food from a person of a "Lower Caste"?

YES	NO
1	2

16. State your reason.

_____

_____

_____

17. Is cleanliness more important to you than caste when dining in someone else's house?

YES	NO
2	1

18. Please explain your answer.

_____

_____

_____

19. When entertaining people of "Lower" caste do you use separate crockery and utensils?

YES	NO
1	2

20. If yes, please explain.

_____

_____

_____

E. RELIGION

1. Would you object to people belonging to different castes attending the same temple as you do?

YES	NO	N/A
1	2	3

2. If no, why?

_____

_____

_____

3. Do you believe that caste is a religious institution?

YES	NO
1	2

4. If yes, please explain?

_____

_____

_____

5. Do you accept the view that "Low" caste people should not become priests?

YES	NO
1	2

6. Please explain your answer.

_____

_____

_____

7. Would you respect a priest belonging to a "Lower" caste?

YES	NO
1	2

8. Are you happy celebrating the numerous religious festivals with members of different casts?

YES	NO
1	2

9. Do you feel comfortable worshipping in the presence of people belonging to a different casts.

YES	NO
1	2

10. Do you believe that the caste system is responsiable for people converting to Christianity or Islam?

YES	NO
1	2

11. Please explain your answer.

_____

_____

_____

12. Does the caste system affect your religious life in any way?

YES	NO
1	2

13. If yes , please explain.

_____

_____

_____

F.   ECONOMIC

1.   **What was your family's occupation in India?**

_____

_____

_____

2. What is/was your paternal grandfather's occupation?

_____

3. What is your father's occupation?

_____

4. Is your occupation the same as your father's?

YES	NO
1	2

5. Do you believe that occupation should determine caste?

YES	NO
1	2

6. Is your occupation caste related?

YES	NO
1	2

7. What is your personal view on caste occupation?

_____

_____

_____

8. Do you think that caste (in ecocomic aspects) have any relevance in South Africa?

YES	NO
1	2

9. Justify your answer.

_____

_____

_____

.10 Rank the following in order of superiority (in your own estimation)

TEACHER 1	DOCTOR 2	LAWYER 3	BUSINESSMEN 4

ARTISAN 5	LECTURER 6	PRIEST 7	OTHER 8

11. Do you respect all people for whatever occupation they may follow.

YES 1	NO 2

12. Please explain your answer.

_____

_____

_____

G. **POLITICS**

1. Would you be prepared to marry someone of a different religion within the Indian community?

YES 1	NO 2

2. Would you marry someone of a different race group?

YES	NO
1	2

3. Would you allow your children to attend a multi-racial school?

YES	NO
1	2

4. Do you believe that apartheid helps strengthen the

system.

YES	NO
1	2

5. If yes, state how.

_____

_____

_____

6. Would you be prepared to live in the same area as other caste groups?

YES	NO
1	2

7. Would you bring home people of any other race groups?

YES	NO
1	2

8. Would you allow your children to bring home people of any other race groups?

YES	NO
1	2

9. If yes, would you allow them to stay over?

YES	NO
1	2

10. Do you believe that the current changes taking place in South Africa are going to help further weaken the caste system?

H.   CONCLUSION

1.   How do you view the caste system?

_____

_____

_____

2.   In your opinion what is the future of the caste system in South Africa?

_____

_____

_____

3.   Do you believe that in South Africa the people are more class conscious than caste conscious?

YES	NO
1	2

4. What are your views on the current changes taking place in India cocerning the caste system?

_____

_____

_____

5. Who in your opinion are the most caste conscious group in South Africa?

_____

6. Please explain your answer?

_____

_____

_____

7. Did the caste system affect you in any way?

YES	NO
1	2

8. If yes, how?

_____

_____

_____

9. What is your overall view of the caste system?

_____

_____

_____

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