Society & Social Justice · GS - I

“Caste system is assuming new identities and associational forms. Hence, caste system cannot be eradicated in India.” Comment.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
2018	GS - I	Society & Social Justice

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

Caste adaptation; identity politics; caste associations; electoral mobilisation; social mobility; affirmative action; constitutional equality; changing social relations

Model Answer

Introduction

Caste in India has adapted to modern political, economic and social institutions. Although its traditional forms have weakened in several contexts, caste identities continue to influence social relations and public life.

Emergence of New Identities and Associational Forms

1. **Political mobilisation:** Caste groups organise to influence elections, representation and public policy.
2. **Caste associations:** Organisations pursue educational opportunities, employment benefits and community welfare.
3. **Economic networks:** Caste-based connections may influence marriage, business relationships and access to resources.
4. **Social mobility:** Education, urbanisation and occupational diversification have changed traditional caste hierarchies without eliminating caste identity.
5. **Digital mobilisation:** Social media enables caste groups to organise, express grievances and assert collective identities.

Can Caste Be Eradicated?

The persistence of caste identity does not make caste-based discrimination inevitable. Constitutional safeguards, education, inter-caste interaction, urbanisation and social reform can weaken hereditary hierarchy and exclusion.

However, legal prohibition alone cannot eliminate entrenched prejudice, endogamy and unequal access to opportunities.

Conclusion

Caste may persist as a social or cultural identity, but its hierarchical and discriminatory character can be progressively dismantled. The goal should be a society where identity does not determine dignity, opportunity or access to justice.

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