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Difference between Varna and Jati:

Varna

1. Literally 'Varna' means colour and originates from the world 'Vri' meaning the choice of one's occupation. Hence Varna is concerned with one's colour or occupation.

2. Varna's are only four in number i.e. Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Sudra.

3. It is an all-India phenomenon.

4. The hierarchical pattern of Varna shows the concept of purity and pollution as the basis of division of society and placements of groups into higher and lower classes i.e. Varna-class correlation is mostly positive.

5. As regards the mobility pattern Varna's are relatively flexible, compared with the castes. With the acquisition of talents and virtues, an individual may improve upon his previous status and vice-versa.

6. Varna may be described as an abstract classification of people of a mythical origin. The religious explanation of the Varna system is derived from the Purushashukta and the Rig-Vedic hymn which describes the creation of priests (Brahmins) warriors (Kshatriyas) traders (Vaisyas) and menials (Sudras) from the mouth, arms, thighs and feet of the Creator respectively.

7. Varna system is free from socio-economic and political disabilities as well as restrictions.

Caste:

1. Caste or 'Jati' originates from the root word 'Jana' which implies taking birth. Thus, caste is concerned with birth.

2. Castes are very large in number. Castes also have many subdivisions known as sub-castes.

3. There are regional variations mostly based on linguistic differences.

4. Caste-class correlation is not always positive, There may be variations in the placement due to economic, political arid educational status of various groups.

5. Caste system is based on rigid principles and mobility in the ladder is checked. It is based on a closed type of stratification.

6. Caste, by contrast, is a concrete grouping based on ritualistic and occupational criteria.

7. The caste system imposes many restrictions on the members.