

Difference Between Caste and Class

Difference between Caste and Class is explained here in detail.

A caste is a form of social stratification determined by one single factor i.e. ritualistic legitimation of authority.

Class of a person is based on multiple factors like economic status, education, power, achievements etc.

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The major differences between Caste and Class are:

Caste	Class
Castes are perceived as hereditary groups with a fixed ritual status according to Max Weber's phraseology	A person's Class is based on social status, wealth and power acquired, level of education and other achievements.
A person belonging to certain caste has to follow certain traditions, rituals and customs	A person belonging to a certain class is not bound by customs, rituals or traditions.
According to Anthropologist Louis Dumont and Social Anthropologist Edmund Leach, caste is unique to the Indian sub-continent	Classes are usually found in highly industrialized countries located in Europe, North America.
The caste system does not promote democracy, since it severely limits equal opportunity to rise from an individual's station	Class system does not necessarily act as a hindrance to democracy, since classification is based on education, social status, and the work one does.
Occupational mobility is one of the biggest banes of the Caste system. A person has to continue in the line of work of his ancestors irrespective of his interest, education and skills.	Social class does not act as a hindrance to occupational mobility. A person belonging to any class can change his occupations based on his skills, education and interests.
The caste system has religious connotations.	The class system is not based on any religion.
The Social Gap between people belonging to different castes is very wide which is not healthy for the overall progress of a nation	The Social gap between people belonging to different classes is narrower when compared to the gap that is prevalent among people belonging to different Castes.
Caste System is static	The class system is dynamic

There is no scope for vertical social mobility since the division is solely determined by birth.	There is ample scope for vertical social mobility for people belonging to different classes since it is dependent on one's abilities, nature of work, education, acquisition of wealth, status etc.
Caste system works as a political force.	Class system does not act as a political force.
Cumulative Inequality is a distinctive feature of the caste system	Dispersed Inequality is a distinctive feature of the class system

Frequently Asked Questions about Class and Caste

What are the similarities and differences between social class and caste?

Both involve social stratification and social status, and people are born into both classes and castes. Both systems include wide ranges of material prosperity, influence, and status with the higher classes and castes receiving many benefits and the lower classes and castes struggling with poverty and oppression

What is a class system?

A class system is based on both social factors and individual achievement. A class consists of a set of people who share similar status with regard to factors like wealth, income, education, and occupation. Unlike caste systems, class systems are open. In a class system, occupation is not fixed at birth.

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