Characteristics of caste system – G S Ghurye

- Segmental Division of Society
- Hiearchy
- Restriction on feeding and social sphere- the principle of purity and pollution- separation and distance of castes
- Civil and religious disabilities
- Restrictions on the choice of occupation
- Restrictions on marriage

Contribution of M N Srinivas

From a functional perspective, society is regarded as a **system**

Let us Explain

Functional approach to the study of society views society in terms of it constituent parts and their relationship with each other in order to maintain the society as a whole.

Functionalism begins with the observation that behaviour in society is structured_____Relationships between the members of society are organized in terms of rules or norms and hence patterned and recurrent.

each part of social structure has a specific function to perform towards maintenance of the society.

M.N. SRINIVAS
Life Sketch of M. N. Srinivas

Mysore Narasimhachar Srinivas (1916–1999) was a world-renowned Indian sociologist.

He is mostly known for his work on caste and caste system, social stratification and Sanskritization in southern India. He is also famous for his ideas on the concept of "Dominant Caste".

Methodological approach of Srinivas

interested to study them from direct observation and his field experiences.

Study on the Coorgs.

Srinivas studied mostly about the caste and religion to highlight the structural-functional aspects and the dynamics of caste system.

Major contribution includes:

A. Social Change
B. Religion and Society
C. Dominant Caste
D. Sanskritization

Social Change

change in the social structure. The term social change refers to any significant alteration in behavior patterns and cultural values.

This type of change may have a lasting effect on a society's culture that has undergone transformation.

Sanskritization

Srinivas coined the term Sanskritization to reflect the social mobility present in Indian Society.

"Sanskritization is a process by which a "low" Hindu caste, or tribal or other group, changes its customs, ritual, ideology, and way of life in the direction of a high, and frequently, a "twice" born caste.

In his study of Mysore Village, Srinivas finds that at some time or the other, every caste tries to change its rank in the hierarchy by giving up its attributes and trying to adopt those of castes above them

Dominant Caste

Used the term in his essay Social System of a Mysore Village, which was written after his study of village Rampura.

dominant caste is a caste which "wields economic or political power and occupies a fairly high position in the hierarchy."

These castes are accorded high status and position in all the fields of social life.

 The people of other lower castes look at them as their 'reference group' and try to imitate their behavior, ritual pattern, custom and ideology.

The members of a dominant caste have an upper hand in all the affairs of the locality many special opportunities as
well as privileges.

six major characteristics of Dominant caste.

i) **Land Ownership**:

ii) **Numerical Strength:**

iii) **High place in local hierarchy:**

iv) **Education**

v) **Job in administration and urban sources of income:**

vi) **Political involvement**

Religion and Society

Srinivas' work Religion and Society among the Coorgs of South India (1952) led him to formulate the concept of Brahminization to represent the process of the imitation of life-ways and ritual practices of Brahmins by the lower-caste Hindus.

The concept was used as an explanatory device to interpret changes observed in the ritual practices and life-ways of the lower castes through intensive and careful field study.

In Religion and Society, Srinivas was concerned with the spread of Hinduism.

He talked about "Sanskritic Hinduism' and its values.

Related to this was the notion of 'sanskritization'.

Critical Appraisal

i. Although Srinivas has talked about the economic and technological development, he has not focused of the lower segment of society.

ii. His ideas on Sanskritization and Dominant caste has made him closer to Hindutva ideology of cultural nationalism.

iii. The two processes of social change, Sanskritization and Westernization are regarded as "limited processes in modern India and it is not possible to understand one without reference to the other."