

THEORIZING CASTE AS A PSYCHE: EMERGING CHALLENGES AND POSSIBILITIES

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ABSTRACT

The principal aim of the paper is to highlight an important gap in the psychological understanding of caste owing to a lack of Indian theorization and attempts to suggest ways to bridge the said gap. Hence, firstly, the paper explores the academic theorization across disciplines, on the issue of caste in the Hindu communities. It attempts to summarize both, the theoretical understanding and empirical data showing the impact of caste on various markers of human experiences in the nation, thereby providing a glimpse of the pervasiveness of the social system. Thereafter it seeks to understand insights from the discipline of social psychology which attempt to unpack the components and explanations of discriminatory behaviour. Herein it attempts to see if caste could be understood and explained through the lens of social psychology and enlists myriad stumbling blocks which could prevent a succinct explanation given the existing mainstream approach within psychology as a discipline. Finally, it attempts to nudge readers towards a possible solution emerging from the promise of Critical Qualitative research methods in psychology.

KEY WORDS: *Caste, Qualitative Psychology, Critical theory, Discrimination, Prejudice, Stereotypes*

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