Some of the important Factors Responsible for Change in Caste System in India are as follows:

Caste system under the impact of certain powerful factors is undergoing rapid transformation in modern India. The factors responsible for such a change in the system are as follows:

1. Modern education:
Modern liberal education introduced into the country by the British has played a crucial role in undermining the importance of caste in Indian social life.

Modern education is based on such democratic values like equality, liberty and fraternity. It is also grounded on such scientific values like reason and observation. Hence it is quite natural that with the spread of modern education, the people's belief in the divine origin of caste, Karma and Karmaphala has received a severe setback.

As modern education is usually imparted in co-educational institutions, it encourages inter-caste marriage and inter-caste mixing. Moreover, it acts as a powerful force towards the removal of untouchability.

2. Industrialization:
The process of industrialization has affected caste structure to a remarkable extent. Industrial growth has provided new sources of livelihood to people and made occupational mobility possible. Factories, mills and offices are agog with activities.

In the midst of all this, the people belonging to various castes consider it mediaevalistic to go into the question of one's caste. In a factory a Brahmin works side by side with a Shudra. He cannot avoid his touch or shadow.

3. Urbanization:
Industrialization has given rise to the process of urbanization. New townships have emerged. The ruralites migrate to these towns in order to avail better employment opportunities.

With the coming up of big hotels, restaurants, theatres, clubs and educational institutions it is not at all possible to observe communal inhibitions and taboos against food-sharing. Kingsley Davis rightly observes that the anonymity, congestion, mobility, secularism and changeability of the city make the operation of the caste virtually impossible.

4. Modern means of transport and communication:
Modern means of transport and communication are instrumental in increasing spatial mobility of the people and thereby put an end to the caste system. Means of transport like train, bus, tram, airplane etc. cannot provide for distinctions between castes, and a leveling effect has been brought into the society.

It is absurd for any transport authority to reserve berths for Brahmins to the exclusion of the Shudras. During travel, too, one must of necessity take his meals without questioning the propriety of doing so in the company of low-caste persons.

5. Increase in the importance of wealth:

Under the caste system, ascription was taken as the basis of social prestige. But today, wealth has replaced ascription as the basis of social prestige. Occupations are now no longer caste-based. People while choosing their occupations attach greater importance to income rather than anything else.

It is because of this reason a high-born may be ill-placed in society while a man of low caste with ample wealth at his disposal has a room at the top. With this change of emphasis, the Indian caste system is in the process of being replaced by the system of social classification as prevails in western countries.

6. The new legal system:

The new legal system, introduced by the British Government, has given a severe blow to the caste system in India. Equality before law irrespective of castes has been firmly instituted. Consequently, the age old discrimination against the lower castes has been removed.

Further, with the establishment of law courts, the traditional castes Panchayats have lost their power and effectiveness to punish the deviants. Not only that a number of Acts like the Untouchability Offences Act of 1955 and the Hindu Marriage Act of 1955 have abnegated the evil effects of the caste system.

7. Sanskritization:

Srinivas defines sanskritization as "the process by which a low Hindu caste or tribal or any other group changes its customs, rituals, ideology and way of life in the direction of a high and frequently 'twice-born' caste". The members of the lower castes leave their own traditional ideals and behaviour patterns and accept the ideals and standards of higher castes.

The caste system being a closed one, sanskritization does not entail structural change. It entails positional change. Hence through sanskritization the lower caste people move up slightly in the scale of "Jatis' within a particular varna.

8. Westernization:

The term 'Westernization' was coined by Srinivas to signify the changes in the Indian society during the British rule. By promoting education, egalitarianism, rationalism, humanism and above all a critical outlook towards various social issues and problems, westernization has gone a long way in undermining the influence of the caste system.

It has given severe blow to practices like child marriage, purity and pollution, commensality, untouchability etc. The effects of westernization are prominently visible in the form of inter-caste marriages, intercommunity marriages, inter-religious marriages, occupational changes etc. In this way westernization has brought about profound changes in the Indian society.

9. Secularization:

The role of secularization in weakening the caste system is great. By legitimizing secular ideologies and formal legal doctrines and promoting rationality, scientific attitude and

differentiation, secularization has affected certain characteristics of the caste system especially the concept of purity and pollution, commensality, fixity of occupation etc.

10. Socialistic ideas:
Caste system is based on the ideas of high birth and low birth. On the other hand, socialists say, "the differences between human beings have been created by society; hence the society only can remove them." As a result of such socialist thought, caste system is breaking.

11. New social movements:
Some social movements have also attacked the caste system. The Brahmo Samaj movement led by Raja Ram Mohan Roy rejected the barriers of caste divisions and stood for universalisation and brotherhood of man. The Prarthana Sabha movement supported by Justice Ranade brought about certain social reforms like inter-caste marriage, interdining and remarriage of widows, etc.

The Arya Samaj movement founded by Swami Dayananda Saraswati and Ramakrishna Mission movement raised voice against the hereditary caste system based on birth and stood for its abolition. In this way all these social movements succeeded, in no small measure, in affecting some of the structural features of the caste system.

12. Rise of new social classes:
Industrialization has given rise to the emergence of new social classes. These social classes are replacing the traditional castes. Trade Unions, Merchants' Associations and Political Parties are replacing the old caste loyalties. An increase in class consciousness leads to a decrease in caste consciousness.

13. Influence of Indian Constitution:
Indian Constitution bestows some fundamental rights on the citizens irrespective of caste, creed, colour or sex. It offers equal opportunities to all. The Constitution, which declares all citizens as equal, directly attacks the Hindu social order based on inherited inequality. No wonder that caste system is withering away.

In short, such factors have vitally affected the caste system. But it is highly improbable that the system will altogether be eliminated from the Indian social scene. It may assume new forms and perform new functions in the changed conditions of modern society.