B2 The Indian Caste System

Choose the best option for each blank.

The Indian caste system **(1)** _____ society into groups of people with different functions and status.

Originally, the highest caste, the Brahmins, were the intellectual and spiritual guides, priests and philosophers. Second were the Kshatriyas, the caste of warriors and rulers. Then came the Vaishyas, **(2)**_____with trading and commerce, and the lowest caste were the Shudras, who were labourers and craftsmen.

People of these four castes had to **(3)**_____ any contact with the "untouchables", people who ranked below all others and did the dirtywork. While the higher castes managed to **(4)** _____ their position in Hindu society the lower ones were not given any power **(5)** _____ Those who **(6)**_____ caste rules were punished severely.

During their **(7)**_____, the British tried to give more rights to the lower castes and abolish traditional practices, but in practice they did not succeed. Since 1949 the Constitution of India has **(8)**_____all its citizens equal rights, but changes have been slow.

India's **(9)**_____ development of the past decades has done a great deal to weaken the caste system. With huge, overpopulated cities, caste laws can **(10)** _____be observed. Indians can improve their social status through professional and financial success. In rural areas, however, the caste system remains an influential **(11)** _____ in society.

The majority of the former untouchables, who now call themselves Dalits (the oppressed),are still **(12)**_____, but as their numbers are strong (18-20% of the population), democracy has provided them with more rights and better jobs.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

1	distributes	divides	contains	shares
2	joined	united	linked	associated
3	avoid	protect	defend	promote
4	support	power up	brace	strengthen
5	at all	above all	at least	in fact
6	submitted	distracted	disobeyed	obeyed
7	rule	law	power	reign
8	offered	permitted	allowed	granted
9	economy	economics	economic	economical
10	not longer	no longer	any longer	much longer
11	factor	key	cause	reason
12	dispossessed	denied	fortunate	underprivileged

LIVEWORKSHEETS