

## AN ANALYSIS ON SOCIAL, ECONOMICAL AND POLITICAL STATUS OF DALIT CHRISTIANS IN THIRUVARUR DISTRICT – TAMIL NADU

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### ABSTRACT

*This paper reviews the empirical study on Excluded people (Dalit Christians) in Indian Society. Dalit Christian is more painful and humiliating to compare than other communities because of the Caste of the society. Dalits who converted to Christianity did not escape the caste system which has a strongly fixed presence in Indian society. The problem of Dalit has elicited considerable interest in the minds of researchers in recent times. In this study main objectives is to identify the Justice, Social, Economical and Political status of Dalit Christians in Thiruvavarur District and to suggest a suitable action plan for their sustainable development. Tools for Data Collation In the present study data were both 'primary' as well as 'secondary' sources. The dates were collected primary sources constituted of the respondent of all age groups and the sample size was study has been drawn by using census method. Total sample selected for the study are 10804 respondents, in this study would used family census method. The researcher was selected five Taluks in Thiruvavarur District and each five Taluks, ten areas have selected based village, urban, semi – urban in this method were selected areas. Design of the Study here, descriptive design will be used to describe the data. The collected data were analysed with the help of descriptive and simple percentage. The collected data were analyzed to get a better understanding of the Justice, Social, and Economical and Political statuses of Dalit Christians in Thiruvavarur district.*

**Key words:** *Christians, people, Society, Dalit, conversion. Discrimination*

### INTRODUCTION

India is a unique country with its distinct cultural, linguistic, ethnic and religious diversity. About 80 per cent of the population follows Hinduism (in many forms and ways) and 12 per cent of the population embraced Islam. Christianity is the second largest minority community encompassing 2.5 per cent population in India. Other Religions such as Sikhism, Jainism, Buddhism, Judaism, Zoroastrianism, Tribal Religions and others cover another 5.5 per cent of the population.

Christianity came to India around 52 A.D, but was confined to the southern tip of India. Colonial Christianity, e.g., the Portuguese, the British and others entered India from the 16th century onwards. The Catholic Portuguese left behind a marine Christianity along the coastal lines of the Peninsular India consisting of people cutting across caste lines. A large number of mass conversions to Christianity took place from among the lower caste to upper caste. The British period also witnessed various denominations of Protestants working in many parts of India. Currently Christianity in India belongs to three social bases: (a) the upper caste of Kerala, Mangalore, Goa; (b) the Scheduled Caste in many parts of India; and (c) Tribals. Though initially the Protestant Missionaries rooted for high-caste conversions, there were few to come by, and eventually, they accepted lower caste people into their fold. The Roman Catholics, by and large, went for mass conversions or group conversions.

In general, it could be said that the Missionaries were the only rival intellectuals in the 18th and 19th century India for the traditional Brahminical order. However, in their conversion drive, they showed preference for high-caste converts with the idea of caste accepted Christianity. But on the other hand, the Scheduled Castes came in large numbers. The reason for this rush was the ill treatment they received at the hands of the upper caste people who were either landlords or the priestly class. Scheduled Caste people were mostly landless, and lived as serfs. Constantly lived with debts and their livelihood have been entirely controlled and at the mercy of Mirasdars, Zamindars and other Caste Hindus. Basically the upper caste people denied the freedom of the Scheduled Caste. This situation led the Scheduled Castes to have taken the decision of converting to Christianity. These lower castes sought protection from all forms of social evils. Christianity promised them off equality with dignity. At present in India, the Dalit Christians population constitutes about 70 per cent among the total Christian community.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEMS

- Untouchability practices still exist in the church and the positive changes have not taken place.
- There is no monitoring committee of the laity to monitor the admissions and the employment is taking place as said in the ten points program. The habitat of the Dalits still looks miserable and the church of the Dalits.
- Equality is a dream. There is a long way to move further.
- Educated become alienated from their community and there is least instance of the educated coming back to the hamlet and work for the development.
- Dalit Christians bargaining power is weak due to lack of various capitals.
- The Dalits Christians are not appointed in the powerful positions in the hierarchy of the church.
- The Dalit youth are discouraged from becoming clergy or religious.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### Objectives of the study

- To identify the Justice, Social, Economical and Political status of Dalit Christians in Thiruvarur District.
- To suggest a suitable action plan for their sustainable development.

### Tools for Data Collation

In the present study data were both 'primary' as well as 'secondary' sources. The data were collected primary sources constituted of the respondent of 6 months and above and were by Participatory scientific observation, Interview schedule, and Secondary sources include census reports, articles, newspaper reports, journals and books.

### Sample Size

The study has been drawn by using census method. Total sample selected for the study are 10804 respondents, in this study would used family census method. The researcher selected five Taluks in Thiruvarur District and each five Taluks ten areas have selected based on village, urban, semi – urban, in this method selected area total respondents data have collected.

### Design of the Study

Here, descriptive design will be used to describe the data. Descriptive research design is a scientific method which involves observing and describing the behaviour of a subject without influencing it in any way.

### Collection of Data

The collected data were analysed with the help of descriptive and simple percentage. Census method of tools used to collect data. The collected data were analyzed to get a better understanding of the Justice, Social, and Economical and Political statuses of Dalit Christians in Thiruvarur district.

#### Table 1- Personal Details

**Table: 1 Personal detail of the respondents**

S. No	Characteristics	Particulars	Total No of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Age	0 to 20	2958	27.37
		21 to 40	5638	52.18

		Above 40	2208	20.45
2.	<b>Residence</b>	Rural	6947	64.31
		Urban	1654	15.30
		Semi - Urban	2203	20.39
		Joint	2293	21.22
3.	<b>Type of family</b>	Nuclear	8511	78.78
		Married	6846	63.36
4.	<b>Marital status</b>	Unmarried	3958	36.64
		Below 4000	2313	21.40
5.	<b>Annual Income in Rs:</b>	4000 - 6000	57	0.52
		Above 6000	76	0.70
		Others	8358	77.38
		Total sample	10804	100

## ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

### Figure: 1 Personal detail of the respondents

From the above table, it is clearly found that 27.37 per cent of the respondents belonged to the age group of below 20 years. 52.18 per cent belonged to the age group of 30 - 40 years, and were 20.45 per cent belonged to the age group of above 60 years.

The respondents were enquired about their Residence 64.31 per cent of the respondents are from rural area, 15.30 per cent are from urban area, and 20.39 Per cent are from Sub – urban area.

The respondents were enquired about their family type, 78.78 per cent respondents are reported that, they are from nuclear family, 21.22 per cent are from joint family.

The respondents were asked about marital status 63.36 per cent of the respondents are married, 36.64 per cent are unmarried.

The respondents were asked about their monthly income of their family 21.40 per cent are earning money below Rs.4000, 0.52 per cent are earning Rs.4000 – 6000, 0.70 per cent are earning money above Rs.6000 and 77.38 per cent of the respondents are not earning but depend on family earning members.

**Table – 2 Education and economic status of Dalit Christians**

S.No	Particulars	Characteristics	Total No of Respondents	Percentage
1	Educational Level	+2	378	3.49
		Degree studying	252	2.33
		Degree	176	1.62
		Others	9998	92.56
2	Employment status	Daily cooly	2330	21.56
		Christian Institutional Teacher	5	0.04
		Govt. Staff	31	0.28
		Govt. Teacher	4	0.03
		Private	76	0.70
		Unemployment	49	0.45
		others	8309	76.94
3	Religious Father and Sister	Religious Father (Priest)	0	0
		Religious Sister (Nuns)	9	0.08
		Lay People	10795	99.92
4	Willing for to start new Political for Dalit Christians	Willing	9489	87.84
		Unwillingness	358	3.31
		None of the said	957	8.85
		Total sample	10804	100.00

From the above table, it's clearly found educational status 3.49 per cent of the respondents were Higher Secondary studied (+2), 2.33 per cent are studying Degree and Technical Education, 1.62 per cent were completed Degree and Technical Education, and 92.56 per cent were qualified (0 – 10<sup>th</sup> standard)

The respondent were asked about employment status 21.56 per cent of the respondents are Daily cooly, 0.04 per cent Teacher are working on Christian Institution, 0.28 per cent are working on Government employee, 0.03 per cent teacher working on Government school, 0.70 per cent working on private institution, 0.45 per cent unemployment, 76.94 per cent dependents on family members (Children, Home Maker, Old age)

The respondents were enquired about Religious Father and Religious Sister 0 per cent of the respondents are Religious Father, 0.08 per cent is Religious Sister and 99.92 per cent are lay people

The respondent were asked about willing for to start new political party for Dalit Christians 87.84 per cent of the respondents are willing, 3.31 per cent are unwillingness and 8.85 per cent are none of the said

## FINDINGS

- ❖ 3.49 per cent of the respondents were Higher Secondary studied (+2)
- ❖ 2.33 per cent are studying Degree and Technical Education
- ❖ 1.62 per cent were completed Degree and Technical Education
- ❖ 92.56 per cent were qualified ( 0 – 10<sup>th</sup> standard)
- ❖ 21.56 per cent of the respondents are Daily cooly
- ❖ 0.04 per cent Teacher are working on Christian Institution
- ❖ 0.28 per cent are working on Government employee
- ❖ 0.03 per cent teacher working on Government school
- ❖ 0.70 per cent working on private institution
- ❖ 76.94 per cent dependents on family members ( Children, Home Maker, Old age)
- ❖ 0 per cent of the respondents are Religious Father
- ❖ 0.08 per cent is Religious Sister
- ❖ 99.92 per cent are lay people
- ❖ 87.84 per cent of the respondents are willing

## RECOMMENDATION

1. The Christian minority educational Institution should to give 50 percentages of seats for Dalit Christians students.
2. The Government should provide scholarship and other educational support for Dalit Christians as well as Dalit Hindu students.
3. Dalit and Non – Dalit Christians must understand the meaning of Christianity and should follow their life.
4. Caste system was prevent humanity among the society, therefore should eradicate caste system.
5. Caste Christians should join with Dalits Christians for their development
6. The Indian Churches have been served many schools and Hospitals under their control. Through this institution create an awareness among the people for reduce caste violence.
7. The Social reforms of the Churches do not bring any successful results in Dalit's Christians upliftment. Hence, the Churches should more careful in future while announcing social reform measures.
8. Foreign funds - Churches and Action Groups in India get lots of money from Missions abroad. These are received for Dalit and Dalit Christians cause. But, usually such kinds

of funds are not used purposefully. Therefore proper spend funds for Dalit and Dalit Christians development.

9. The efforts to Indianise the Churches should be stopped with immediate effect as it allows a kind of Indians culture to take roots in the Churches.
10. Church run institution should provide employment opportunity for their empowerment
11. Indian Church should ban all forms of divisions and separations or exclusion viz. in the church, in the funeral paths and in the Church festivals, etc.
12. The Christian minority educational Institution must to give free cost education for economically most backward Dalit Christian students. Because more than student dropout their education due to economic situation.
13. To encourage higher education, particularly technical and professional education among Dalit Christians, the Diocesan and Religious Congregations should jointly create a scholarship Fund as an encouragement deserving students
14. The Christian minority educational Institution and social worker should to give more awareness for Dalit Christian for an Importance of the education. Weekly once and summer period will conduct special lecture on English communication skills and Personality development course etc as well as religious education for their development.
15. Take effective steps to appoint Dalit members in the administration of the Church and related organisations according to the proportion of Dalit population.
16. Work at having reservation policy for the Dalits/Tribals in the diocesan/religious institutions.
17. Make efforts to recruit candidates of Dalit origin for priesthood and religious life in keeping with their numerical strength.
18. Central and state Government should provide employment opportunities and other rights as well as Dalit Hindu.
19. Diocesan and congregations should encourage Dalit youth for Religious spiritual service and guide become a good clergy.
20. More than people like to start new political party. It is very useful for convenience your need on central Government and state Government.

## CONCLUSION

The Dalit change the religions but not change the status. The statement of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and Mahatma Gandhi said Dalit remains a Dalit which ever religion he embraces in India. The Indian government appointed various commissions for to find out the reality of Dalit Christians. According to Government commission: The backward class commissions like Kaka Kalekar Commission (1951), Kumar pillai Commission (1965), Elayaperumal Commission (1969), Sattanathan Commission (1970), Chidambaram Commission (1975), Mandal Commission (1982), and Mandal Case Judgment (1992) found the socio – economical,

educational, employment, and political disabilities of Dalit Christians in the society and Church. Dr. Jose Kananaikil conducted National sample survey of Indian Social Institute (1986) identified Dalit Christians suffer more socio – economical, educational, employment, and political disabilities than the Hindu Dalits. Therefore the church and Indian government should considered their needs and in this way to provide quality of life.

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