

360 Degree Analysis of Justice, Social, Economic and Political status of Dalit Christians in Thanjavur District in 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 Thanjavur 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 7168 respondents, in this study would used family census method. The researcher was selected six Taluks in Thanjavur District and each six Taluks, six 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, Economical and Political statues of Dalit Christains in Thanjavur 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 Scheduled Caste Converted to Christianity (SCCC) population constitutes about 70

per cent among the total Christian community.

Statement of the problems:

- The Christian missionaries provide 22 percent of the health facility in India. First Christian hospital was opened in India in the year 1530 in Tirunelveli of Tamil Nadu. Now, Catholic Christians run 764 hospitals, 2,575 dispensaries, 107 mental health asylums and 04 medical colleges. Protestant Christians run around 350 medical institutions. Even though this, Christian children are still uneducated and suffering from malnutrition in Tamil Nadu.
- First regular school was opened in the year 1540 in Goa by the missionaries. Then another school was opened in Mumbai (1540), Cochin (1549), Punyakil in Tamilnadu (1567), Madurai (1565). Today, 48, 000, 00 students get education in missionary schools. Dalit Christian children do not have equal opportunities for education in Christian institution. Firstly the Dalit

Children are denied during the admission – secondly the fee structure is very high and therefore the high standards were set by Christian institution.

- Purposively the employment opportunities are denied as there are provisions for to this community.
- There are 85% of Dalit Christians to continue to live in the same segregated place, such as Cheri or Colony, Slums even two generation after becoming Christians.
- 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.
- And only 2 per cent of clergy from Dalit Christians in India but 80 per cent population from Dalit Christian community.

Research Methodology

Objectives of the study

- *To identify the Justice, Social, Economical and Political status of Dalit Christians in Thanjavur 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 from primary sources constituted of the respondent of 24 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 7168 respondents, in this study would use family census method. The researcher selected six Taluk in Thanjavur District and each six Taluk six 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, Economical and Political status of Dalit Christians in Thanjavur 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	2011	28.06
		21 to 40	3245	45.27
		Above 60	1912	26.67
2.	Residence	Rural	4412	61.54
		Urban	1239	17.29
		Semi - Urban	1517	21.17
3.	Type of family	Joint	902	12.58
		Nuclear	6266	87.42
4.	Marital status	Married	3031	42.29
		Unmarried	4137	57.71
5.	Annual Income in Rs:	Below 4000	1697	23.67
		4000 - 6000	257	3.58
		Above 6000	95	1.32
		Others	5119	71.43
		Total sample	7168	100

Analysis and Interpretation

Figure: 1 Personal detail of the respondents

From the above table, it is clearly found that 28.06 percent of the respondents belonged to the age group of below 20 years. 45.27 percent belonged

to the age group of 30 - 40 years, and were 26.67 percent belonged to the age group of above 60 years.

The respondents were enquired about their Residence 61.54 per cent of the respondents are from rural area, 17.29 per cent are from urban area, and 21.17 Per cent are from Sub – urban area.

The respondents were enquired about their family type, 87.42 per cent respondents are reported that, they are from nuclear family, 12.58 per cent are from joint family.

The respondents were asked about marital status 42.29 per cent of the

respondents are married, 57.71 per cent are unmarried.

The respondents were asked about their monthly income of their family 23.67 per cent are earning money below Rs.4000, 3.58 per cent are earning Rs.4000 – 6000, 1.32 per cent are earning money above Rs.6000 and 71.43 percent 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	314	4.38
		Degree studying	295	4.11
		Degree	285	3.97
		Others	6274	87.54
2	Employment status	Daily cooly	1897	26.46
		Christian Institutional Teacher	1	0.01
		Govt. Staff	29	0.40
		Govt. Teacher	5	0.06
		Private	117	1.63
		Unemployment	133	1.86

		others	4986	69.58
3	Religious Father and Sister	Religious Father	1	0.01
		Religious Sister	2	0.02
		Lay People	7166	99.97
4	Willing for to start new Political for Dalit Christians	Willing	6266	88.49
		Unwillingness	367	5.13
		None of the said	457	6.38
		Total sample	7168	100.00

From the above table, it's clearly found educational status 4.38 per cent of the respondents were Higher Secondary studied (+2), 4.11 per cent are studying Degree and Technical Education, 3.97 per cent were completed Degree and Technical Education, and 71.43 per cent were qualified (0 – 10th standard)

The respondent were asked about employment status 26.46 per cent of the respondents are Daily cooly, 0.01 per cent Teacher are working on Christian Institution, 0.40 per cent are working on Government employee, 0.06 per cent teacher working on Government school, 1.63 per cent working on private institution, 1.86 per cent unemployment, 69.58 per cent dependents on family members (Children, Home Maker, Old age)

The respondents were enquired about Religious Father and Religious Sister 0.01 per cent of the respondents are Religious Father, 0.02 per cent is Religious Sister and 99.97 per cent are lay people

The respondent were asked about willing for to start new political party for Dalit Christians 88.49 per cent of the respondents are willing, 5.13 per cent are unwillingness and 6.38 per cent are none of the said

Findings

- ❖ 4.38 per cent of the respondents were Higher Secondary studied (+2)
- ❖ 4.11 per cent are studying Degree and Technical Education
- ❖ 3.97 per cent were completed Degree and Technical Education



- ❖ 87.54 per cent were qualified (0 – 10th standard)
 - ❖ 26.46 per cent of the respondents are Daily cooly
 - ❖ 0.01 per cent Teacher are working on Christian Institution
 - ❖ 0.40 per cent are working on Government employee
 - ❖ 0.06 per cent teacher working on Government school
 - ❖ 1.63 per cent working on private institution
 - ❖ 69.58 per cent dependents on family members (Children, Home Maker, Old age)
 - ❖ 0.01 per cent of the respondents are Religious Father
 - ❖ 0.02 per cent is Religious Sister
 - ❖ 99.97 per cent are lay people
 - ❖ 88.49 per cent of the respondents are willing
2. The Christian minority educational Institution should to give 50 percentages of seats for Dalit Christians 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 serve many schools and Hospitals under their control. Through this institution create an awareness among the people for reduce caste violence.
 7. International Organizations like World Human Rights Forum, UNO, etc. should come forward to fight for the rights of the Indian Dalits Christians. The Indian Churches should get the support of International organizations.
 8. The Social reforms of the Churches do not bring any successful results

Recommendation

1. The Government should provide scholarship and other educational support for Dalit Christians as well as Dalit Hindu students.



in Dalit's Christians upliftment. Hence, the Churches should more careful in future while announcing social reform measures.

9. 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.
10. 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.
11. Church run institution should provide employment opportunity for their empowerment
12. 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.
13. There is no difference in the society as such whether a Dalit is a Christian or Hindu. Dalits convert

themselves into Christianity it does not guarantee them safety. India is republican country, Dalits (Christians) lose certain facilities when they convert themselves. The Indian Protection of Civil Rights does not protect the converted Christians. As a result, Dalit Christians have more vulnerable compared to other Dalits who remain Hindu.

14. 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.
15. 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
16. 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.

17. Take effective steps to appoint Dalit members in the administration of the Church and related organisations according to the proportion of Dalit population.
18. Work at having reservation policy for the Dalits/Tribals in the diocesan/religious institutions.
19. Make efforts to recruit candidates of Dalit origin for priesthood and religious life in keeping with their numerical strength.
20. Central and state Government should provide employment opportunities and other rights as well as Dalit Hindu.
21. Diocesan and congregations should encourage Dalit youth for Religious spiritual service and guide become a good clergy.
22. More than people like to start new political party. It is very useful for convenience your need on central Government and state Government.
23. Practice of discrimination in any form in the place of worship, burial ground and in the community should be abolished with time bound action by appointing a monitoring team which identifies places and forms of discrimination practiced in the substations and main stations of parishes, religious institutions and eradicates this sinful practice with the cooperation of all sections of people, and the religious communities.

Conclusion

“Dalit” is the name given to people who were (and still are in some parts) considered “Untouchables” according to the Indian caste system. Baba Sahib Dr. Ambedkar and Mahatma Gandhi made statements that Dalit remains a Dalit which ever religion he embraces. And the Mandal commission report of affirms “there is no doubt that social and educational backwardness among non Hindu



communities is more or less of the same order as among Hindu communities. Thus, both from within and without, caste amongst non – Hindu communities receive continuous sustenance and stimulus” A Dalit is a Dalit, whether Christian or not, they are basically toilers, landless peasants and rural wage labours. Pope Francis said “Unfair economic structures that create huge inequalities”. The Jesuit evidence show, the church has clearly failed to give to the educational facilities for Dalit Christian. Dalit Christians are socially, economically and religiously differentiated by others. Dalit Christians demanding reservation not to get into IITs or to get jobs in Government offices. Their need reservation for protection from the atrocities. They have converted to Christianity to get out of bonded labour. However they are still treated as untouchables by the upper castes in own villages. Non Dalit attacks Dalit people for as small a reason as drinking water from a public well, Dalit cannot get protection from the police, for they refuse to even file a First Information Report. Therefore central and state Government provide equal rights opportunities as well as Hindu Dalit. Mr Masih said, “The denial of reservation status

to the Dalit Christians is a discrimination and human rights violation.” Christian institution should give the preference an Educational facilities and Employment opportunities for Dalit Christians development.

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