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Dalit Christians in India: Discrimination, Development Deficit and the Question for Group-Specific Policies

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Foreword

The Indian Institute of Dalit Studies (IIDS) was established in 2003 as a not-for-profit autonomous institution with the goal to undertake research; provide knowledge support to civil society organisations and policy inputs to the government; function as a resource centre for academicians, researchers and activists; and build up literature and database on the most complex and challenging issues which confront the Indian society as well as societies in different countries. The special focus of the Institute is on the development concerns of various excluded and discriminated groups in Indian society who experience social exclusion on account of their identity and origin in terms of caste, ethnicity, gender, religion, colour, disabilities, and regional or group identities. The Working Paper Series disseminates both empirical and theoretical findings of ongoing research on issues which pertain to forms and nature of social exclusion and discrimination, and inclusive policies for the marginalised social groups in Indian society and in other countries.

This Working Paper '**Dalit Christians in India: Discrimination, Development Deficit and the Question for Group-Specific Policies**' provides evidence from literature that caste has been a defining marker of social and economic relationship in Christianity. Even after conversion, the characteristics of caste such as endogamy, residential segregation, restricted social interaction, hierarchies, caste-based occupations and graded ritual purity and pollution continued in one way or the other among the converted Christians. The paper further examines the current socio-economic status of Dalit Christians as compared to other socio-religious groups from different literature. The paucity of scientific data on the exact level of deprivation of Dalit Christians, however, remains a major challenge to understand the picture at a disaggregated level.

Various committees appointed by the Government of India also highlighted the level of deprivation of Dalit Christians in India. Based on the available official data and micro-level studies, the paper concludes that Dalit Christians like other Dalit groups also suffer from a development deficit which further calls for group-specific policy interventions for their upward mobility. This paper also highlights that there exists strong evidence that Dalit Christians face continuous deprivation in various spheres and, hence the group's demand for Scheduled Castes status is justified. This will provide the group benefit from reservations in education and employment, and protections available under the Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955 and the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Christianity in India, like other religions, does not belong to monolithic category. It has further subdivisions not only on the basis of congregational differences, but also on caste lines. Caste-like characteristics such as hereditary, membership confirmed by birth, endogamy, social and occupational segregations, economic differentiation, etc., are also common among the Christians, especially in those places where conversion cuts across all castes. Several studies have noted that in most of the cases it was the Dalits who converted to Christianity. The primary motivation of conversion to Christianity could be to overcome the discriminatory caste system and to seek upward social and economic mobility. It is indeed a complex question that how far the Dalits who converted to Christianity could get rid of caste-based discrimination and make qualitative improvements in their life. In reality, as several studies and reports have highlighted, caste prejudices against Dalit Christians remained more or less similar both inside and outside Christianity in most parts of the country, especially where the traditional social and occupational relations did not change significantly over time.¹ Furthermore, Dalit Christian is not recognised as a valid social category in India. Hence, they are not covered under any compensatory measures such as reservations and special legal safeguards which are otherwise extended to Dalits who belong to Hindu, Sikh and Buddhist communities, though caste-based prejudices are strong in Christianity and Dalit Christians too face similar forms of discrimination and exclusion as other Dalits.

Though there is enough evidence in social science literature on the identity issues and discrimination faced by Dalit Christians, there remains several other questions to be addressed alongside while examining the claim for group-specific policy interventions for

Dalit Christians. The most important one possibly is the caste-religion interface of non-Hindu Dalits. This is significant in the context that religion is the primary criterion to officially define Scheduled Castes in India as per the Constitutional Order of 1950. As per the official definition “no person who professes a religion different from the Hindu, Sikh and Buddhist religions shall be deemed to be a member of Scheduled Castes.” It completely ignores the reproduction of caste relations and its discriminatory attributes in Christianity and leaves several crucial questions unaddressed such as: Whether caste or religion is the primary identity of the converted? How have the identities of the converted been perceived both inside and outside their religion? What is the self identity of the converted Dalits? Whether caste practices are being perpetuated and reproduced in Christianity the way it happens in Hindu religion? If yes, what are the present forms and nature of discrimination that Dalit Christians face and whether caste prejudices limit them from access to services, amenities and other economic opportunities? Whether discrimination and exclusion is mirrored in their development performance? If Dalit Christians have group-specific development deficit, how does it vary from other socio-religious groups? Finally, whether there is a justification for group-specific policies for Dalit Christians on the basis of their development profile?

This paper attempts to address some of the above mentioned questions using the available literature and official data. The study is largely based on the historical and current social science literature on caste among the Christians in India. Apart from that, the study relies on official data on select development indicators such as demographic profile, educational status, occupational pattern and poverty situation of the Christians who identify themselves as Dalits.

This paper is organised into five sections. The

second section surveys the available literature, mostly ethnographic ones, and brings out the persistence of caste among the converted Christians. It specifically looks at how Christianity integrated with Indian society and how its assimilation with local culture reproduced caste relations within Christianity and how all these effected the society at large. The third section identifies the prevailing spheres, forms and patterns of caste discrimination against Dalit Christians by caste Christians and Hindus. It also attempts to see whether such discrimination limit Dalit Christians from access to services such as education, employment, health, drinking water, etc. This section also offers a brief discussion on the atrocities on Christians in general and Dalit Christians in particular. The fourth section, using available official data, looks at the demographic and development profile of Dalit Christians both in comparison with other Dalits and other social groups within Christianity. It specifically examines education, occupational patterns, poverty and characteristics of poor Dalit Christian households. The fifth section takes into account all the aspects together and concludes that there exists a need for group-specific policies for Dalit Christians in India.

II. CASTE AMONG THE CHRISTIANS: EVIDENCES FROM SOCIAL SCIENCE LITERATURE

In India the inequalities and hierarchies within Christianity and Islam have been well discussed in social sciences, especially in anthropology, sociology and other development literature. There are different views on whether subdivisions among these religious groups could be equated to caste. Several scholars have attempted to study caste or caste-like subdivisions among these religious groups from a standpoint that both the religions have considerable number of converts from the Hindu fold, especially from the lower strata of its caste hierarchy, along with others. If one extends this line of argument of 'Hindu background' (with its inherent hierarchies) of these religions further to explain the existing inequalities prevailing among the low caste Christians and Muslims, traces of caste or similar hierarchies could

still be established. Broadly speaking, it is in fact a tricky task to trace the entire social origin of a religion, especially Christianity and Islam, which have historically evolved into its present social composition and is also a blend of a 'foreign' or non-indigenous religion with local cultures and traditions in India. Islam existed in India through Arab migration to the Malabar coast; trade relations with Turkey, Arabia and Afghanistan; and further through conversion of the inhabitants of the then existed territory. Similarly, the social origin of Christianity can be traced from the pre-colonial period to the mass conversion movements in the twentieth century.

However, the question of social origin of a religion and its caste or caste-like hierarchies could become relevant even today when it is placed in the wider canvas of citizenship and human development. It is also important then to probe further, whether such hierarchies lead to social and occupational segregation, economic differentiation, discrimination and widening of disparities. If caste is a reality in Christianity then how has it been historically perpetuated and reflected? Whether the defining characteristics of caste such as endogamy, notions of purity and pollution, and occupational division are attributable to Indian Christianity? How have the identities of the converted Dalits been perceived both inside and outside their religion? Finally, what is the self identity of the converted Dalits? This section attempts to address these questions with a special focus on Christianity through survey of relevant social science literature.

II.a Social Origin of Christianity in India: Assimilation of Local Traditions

Christianity, which is the subject of discussion here, is classified broadly into three distinct groups by scholars. They are: '(a) The Anglo Indians, a distinct product of miscegenation and colonialism (b) Those who became Christians through mass conversion movements (mostly people from the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes (OBC) that took place during the colonial period (c) Pre-colonial Christians who claim to be

converts from the upper castes' (Oommen, 2010: 22). Apart from that, the social origin of the majority of the Christians has marked differences across India. For instance, in northern India where proselytisation is relatively recent, the Christians are mostly of 'lower caste' origin including the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Deliege, 1998). In southern India where conversions occurred even before the colonisation and British rule, the Christians comprise all castes which also include a small number of upper castes (Ibid).

The underlying logic of mass conversion of lower castes was that it would enable them to come out of the discriminatory caste system. Most of the conversion that took place among Dalits was to Christianity, Islam and Sikhism in the beginning and later to Buddhism by the middle of the twentieth century. As per the estimates given by Webster, by the early twentieth century approximately one million Dalits had converted to Christianity (Webster, 1992: 33). Mass conversion took place mostly among Dalit groups which include *Chuhras* of Punjab, *Chamars* of North India (Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh), *Vankars* of Gujarat, *Mahars* of central and western India, especially Maharashtra, *Paraiyars* of South India and *Pulayas* of Kerala. It was noted that the Christian population grew from 3912 in 1881 to 3,95,629 in 1931 in the Punjab region as a result of *Chuhra* conversions (Webster, 1977). Another mass movement of conversion to Christianity was by *Mazhabi Sikhs*, *Bhangis* and *Chamars* in Uttar Pradesh. Eventually, by 1931 there were about 1,73,077 Christians in Uttar Pradesh who had converted from these groups (Turner, 1931). In the western region, about 15,000 *Vankars* in Gujarat converted to Christianity between 1889 and 1905 and a large number of *Mangs* and *Mahars* in Maharashtra also embraced Christianity by the beginning of the twentieth century (Webster, 1992; op cit). The southern part of India, especially Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, witnessed more vigorous mass conversion of Dalits to Christianity. For instance, a majority of the *Malas* and *Madigas* in Andhra Pradesh converted to Christianity. Similarly,

a large number of *Paraiyars* in Tamil Nadu, *Paraiyars* and *Pulayas* in Kerala, and *Tigalas* in Karnataka converted to Christianity.

As mentioned elsewhere, the Dalit movement of mass conversion was largely grounded on their conviction that "Christianity is a true religion; a desire for protection from oppressors and, if possible, material aid; the desire for education for their children; and the knowledge that those who have become Christians had improved" (South Indian Missionary Conference, 1908: 44). Forrester (1979) noted that religious conversion of Dalits in general and to Christianity in particular was due to both the closure of their avenues of upward mobility and the response of these religions, especially Christianity to the need of Dalits for acceptance and recognition by the higher castes. Several scholars have pointed out that though not pronounced; there was an upward mobility for some groups of converts in terms of education and employment after conversion (Ferguson, 1905; Stewart, 1896). However, questions such as the 'new identity' of the converted Dalits within and outside Christianity and whether caste mattered after conversion in their social, cultural and political life remained.

To begin to answer these questions, it is essential to look at how the converts themselves perceived their new identity. In several cases, as many scholars discussed, converts often carried a dual identity. Tanika Sarkar (2002) by quoting Percival Spear (1958) noted that there is often an accumulation of identities among converts which include "a series of deposits of cultural traces, rather than an exclusive gesture that rejects and abandons one identity for another" (Sarkar, 2002: 123). Moreover, they kept on engaging with their local environments and networks in the same manner and remained part of the very social and power structures after conversion as in many cases conversion only changed their religious identity. There is a general agreement that the caste component in Christianity remained even after conversion either as a 'residual leftover' due to the predominance of the Hindu environment, as Dumont (1980) views it or as a day-to-day practice

and affair as scholars like Fuller and Bayly argue; even though Christianity does not sanction caste or any practices on caste line in principle. As Bayly (1989) observed, in South India, there was an assimilation of Christianity into the native South Indian religious system. Similarly, Fuller (1992) noted that the Hindu religious traditions continue in Christianity in India, especially in Catholicism due to the interplay between local Christians and the clergy even after 300 years since conversion. Persistence of such local traditions, mostly the Hindu traditions, among the Christians point to the fact that conversions had not significantly changed the existed structures; conversely it tended to integrate Christianity with the Indian society. As a result, the caste practices and religious ceremonies continued among the converts. For instance David Moss (1994) notes:

“. . . both Christian cult shrines and early missionary churches became incorporated into local systems of political patronage and religious gifting. Through systems of festival honours, they served the same purpose as local Hindu temples in extending and legitimating the authority of local rulers and village headmen, and in integrating the highly diffuse domains of political control which characterized the pre-colonial state in southern Tamil Nadu.” (Moss, 1994: 304)

II.b Christianisation of Caste: Interactions of Church with Local Social Systems

The ways in which various Christian denominations and congregations integrated with the Indian society, and local cultures and traditions to a greater extent appear to be accountable for the continuation of caste system among the Christians. The classic example of Church authorities' tolerant attitude towards caste practices was the letter of Pope Gregory XV in 1923. As Prakash Louis (2007) cited, “the letter allowed the request of the missionaries to adjust to certain caste practices, considering the ‘difficulties’ faced by the upper caste converts.” In many cases, most of the congregations accepted the existing social systems and did not attempt much to introduce radical changes in the social network of the congregations (Bugge,

1998). For instance, the Danish Halle-Mission in Tranquebar did not attempt to change the caste rules or the divisions based on caste distinctions since they found the caste system a social phenomenon and not a religious one based on Hinduism (Ibid: 89). There are evidences that the Portuguese Missions, in order to protect the caste sentiments of the upper caste converted Syrian Christians, followed a different rite (Latin) for *Paravas* and *Mukkuvas* who are considered lower castes in Kerala (Webster, 1992). Similarly, the Madurai Mission of Roberto de Nobili in the seventeenth century allowed distinction between priests who ministered the upper castes and lower castes (Ibid: 35). Discriminations were also visible in the roles of church functions. For example, Robinson (2010, b) highlighted that during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the low caste converts were not given any significant positions of power and authority including priesthood in the church. Dalit Christians were denied priesthood in Kerala until 1968 and as Ninan Koshy (1968) cited there were no Dalit priests in Mar Thoma or Jacobite churches in Kerala till 1968. Similarly, Dalit Christians were marginalised in the positions of priests and nuns in Tamil Nadu though they constituted a majority among the Christian population (Louis, 2007, op cit). While some missionary groups, especially the Protestants, decided to denounce such caste practices and eliminate caste from churches in the nineteenth century, it did not happen due to the strong resistance from the upper caste converts, especially in South India. It is interesting to note that, on the other hand, even the missionaries got divided over whether the best strategy was to take a hard line stand on prohibition of caste or a more pacifying approach since caste feeling was very strong in South India (Oddie, 1969; Forrester, 1979, op cit). The British missionaries also accepted the caste system initially in churches though they resisted it later. The ‘policy of adaptation’ by the Catholic Missions, for instance, in a way sanctioned caste distinction in society. Evidences show that the Catholic Missions chose to work within the caste system. The practices held by the Catholic Mission, especially the Jesuits in South

India, clearly show the reinforcement of segregation among the converted Christians.

“The XVIIth-century Jesuit mission led by the famous Roberto de Nobili in Madurai centered on different Church buildings for high-caste and low-caste Christians, and the untouchables in any case being kept outside the Church. The untouchables were considered by the native population too unclean to be accepted inside the Church—and this was accepted by the mission. Similarly, the Church officials educated and employed in the missionary Churches belonged to various castes, corresponding to the congregations for which they had to work. A low-caste official was never put in charge of a high-caste community, neither in the beginning in the XVIIth century, nor later in the XIXth century.” (Bugge, 1998: 89–90)

The integration of Christianity with the Hindu traditions and the Indian society also resulted in the continuation of its caste hierarchies and thereby practices. As a result, as several scholars observed, the lower caste Christians remained ‘untouchables’ in society. Robinson (2010, b, op cit) noted that it was mostly the converts who resisted ‘egalitarian relations’ within the Christian groups in order to maintain their status distinctions. It is interesting to note that in South India, where conversion cuts across all castes, the church eventually got divided along caste lines (Deliege, 1998, op cit). The defining characteristics of caste such as endogamy or marriage within the caste group, residential segregation, restricted social interaction, hierarchies, caste-based occupation and above all notions of graded ritual purity or pollution were reproduced among the convert Christians. Deliege (1998) notes how the caste relations have been reproduced among the *Paraiyar* Christians of Tamil Nadu.

“... the Paraiyars consider themselves Christians and even though a good many of them marry without benefit of clergy, they do marry amongst themselves. The Indian Catholics, including the Paraiyars, do not view themselves as alien, and it appears that by becoming Christian they have

adopted a separate caste identity rather than a totally different religious faith. The Paraiyars have thus become endogamous by becoming Catholic but, otherwise, they have kept their traditional caste identity and have remained very close to the Hindu Paraiyars. In Valghira Manickam, for instance, Hindu and Catholic Paraiyars emphasize this proximity; friendship and sexual affairs are common between members of the two communities. Children play together and houses are more or less mixed in the same streets. The Hindu Paraiyars are much closer to the Catholic Paraiyars than to the Hindu Pallars. It could therefore be said that, in this case, caste matters more than religion.” (Deliege, 1998: 32)

II.c Identity Questions and Status Conflicts among Converted Christians

The reproduction of caste relations also mirrored in social relations among the converted Christians in one form or the other. As several scholars pointed out, marriage was the important occasion, when caste practices were most visible as those who belong to different caste among Christians do not inter-marry (Mullens, 1854; Luke and Carman, 1968; Hardgrave, 1969). For instance, Christian *Reddys* in Andhra Pradesh and Christian *Nadars* in Tamil Nadu prefer to marry Hindus of their own caste than Dalit Christians (Robinson, 2010, a). Similarly, Syrian Christians in Kerala do not marry Dalit Christians. Even intermarriage between *Bamons* and *Sudras* in Goa is quite uncommon (Ibid: 14).

Continuation of caste-based occupational patterns among Dalit Christians is another important evidence to ascertain caste among the Indian Christians. Dogar (2000) for instance, highlighted that occupational patterns (including manual scavenging) prevalent among Dalit Christians in north-west India are quite similar to that of Dalit Hindus. Similarly, in most parts of the country, like their Hindu counterparts, Dalit Christians continued as agricultural workers, daily wage labourers and small cultivators. Most interestingly, as existed between caste Hindus and Dalit Hindus, there existed a

'patron-client relationship' between caste Christians and Dalit Christians in several parts of India. Wiebe and Peter (1977) discussed the continuation of master-client relationship between peasant group and Dalits among Christians in rural Tamil Nadu. Dalits used to work in the fields of caste Christians and take care of their animals. Caste-based occupations of Dalit Christians also had not changed in many instances after conversion. Kaufmann (1981) noted that *Paravas* of Tamil Nadu, who were fishermen by occupation, remained fishermen after conversion. Similarly, majority of *Pulaya* Christians in Kerala remained agricultural workers and coolies, what they were before, after conversion (Alexander, 1977). Arguably, the continuation of caste-based occupational patterns even after conversion, in a way, reproduced caste relations in Christianity.

Another important marker was the notions of 'impurity' in rituals and eating habits among converted Christians. Japhet (1986) noted that social segregation on the ground of impurity was predominant in the intermingling of Dalits and upper caste Christians in Karnataka. It included use of separate wells, denial of the service of people like barbers to Dalit Christians, and separate eating and drinking utensils in hotels and teashops (Ibid: 61). Similarly, Caplan (1980) highlighted the prevalence of such things among Tamil Protestant communities. While Christian doctrine does not prohibit any dietary practice as such, the majority of the Protestant Tamil Christians who consider themselves as non Scheduled Castes do not eat beef or pork as these foods are categorised as dirty and polluting by the Hindu society (Ibid: 230).

Participation in church functions was also a major factor which evidenced caste relations in Indian Christianity as in many cases the converts were able to reconstruct their socio-cultural systems around churches as Robinson (2004) argues. For instance, Dalits were given inferior roles in mass, funerals and festivals among Catholics in Tamil Nadu (Wiebe and Peter, 1977, op cit). Some studies brought out the practices of untouchability against Dalit Christians by caste Christians similar to that of caste Hindus

against Dalit Hindus. Raj (1992) gives an account of such practices against Dalit Christians in Tamil Nadu in church and related social life in 1980s. It had everything separate for Dalit Christians such as chapel, seating arrangements within the chapel (Dalits had to sit on the floor), queues to receive holy mass, cemeteries as well as hearses to carry dead bodies. Moreover, it restricted Dalits to become altar boys, avoid processions of Palm Sunday and Corpus Christy in the locality of Dalit Christians, exclusion of Dalits from participation in washing feet ceremony during Maundy Thursdays and separate celebration of the feast of village patron saint. Robinson (2004) in a study conducted among a church community in Goa noted that upper caste converts were given privileges and honours in the church-related rituals. Such honours and privileges in rituals given to upper caste members of the church also defined or demarcated social relationships and political authority with visible hierarchies. She further noted how caste-based social relationships are reproduced in church life through their roles and privileges in rituals in the church in Goa:

"The two Catholic associations are the major and the minor confraternities. The major confraternity in Santosgaon is Confraria de Santissimo e Nossa Senhora de Socorro. Only high caste Gauncars may be members of this confraternity. The confraternity enjoys the privilege of organizing the harvest feast celebrations and those centred around Good Friday. The confraternity has red capes, which distinguishes its members, which they wear at the feast organized and hosted by them. Members of the confraternity are registered automatically at birth and all the Gauncars of the village belong to it. They organize and participate in it feasts." (Robinson, 2004: 354)

Among the south Indian states, differential treatments on caste lines among Christians were the most prominent in Kerala. Ninan Koshy (1968) noted that Dalit Christians were given separate places for worship in the dioceses of church of South India, Roman Catholic and Mar Thoma which continued

till 1970s. Similarly, Alexander (1977, op cit) pointed out the differential treatments given to lower caste Christians including access to community resources, access to worship along with caste Christians and involvement in other important church activities in Kerala. He also noted that the Syrian Christians practised untouchability against the 'lower caste Christians' by not giving them food inside their house and keeping the mouth closed with hand while speaking to Syrian Christians (Ibid: 54). In brief, as Lobo (2001) observed, the Scheduled Castes Christians developed a dual identity with the sustenance of caste practices among the converts.

Prakash Louis (2007) narrates instances of discrimination against lower caste converted Christians by upper caste Christians citing historical data. He highlighted that Cathedrals in South India built between 1893 and 1941 had practised customary caste bar. In many places Dalit Christians had their own churches and in common churches they had either separate seating arrangements or attended the mass from outside (Louis, 2007: 18). It is interesting to note that such discriminations continued in order to appease the caste Christians and that it happened with the consent of church authorities. He cited more evidences of such practices in churches in Tamil Nadu:

“The Vellalars of Vadakkankulam refused to take communion, that is, symbolic and sacred body of Christ, within sight of Nadars after the priest had knocked down the wall, which had kept the two groups from seeing each other in the church. If in the Hindu system, the shadow of an untouchable falls on the caste Hindu he is polluted. In Christianity, if two castes see each other even in the holiest of holies, it results in pollution.” (Louis, 2007: 18)

II.d Identity of Dalit Christians Outside Church

Whether the caste identity of converted Dalit Christians had changed outside the church after conversion? The answer perhaps is 'no' since as discussed elsewhere they always carried the dual identity such as Dalit first and a converted Dalit

Christian later. It is interesting to note that in certain cases, even if converted Dalits do not wish to identify them as 'Dalits', their identity is often reflected in their socio-cultural life as they are viewed as Dalits by others, irrespective of their change of faith. For instance, Ambrose Pinto (2010) highlighted the identity issues of Dalit Catholic Christians in a study conducted in Bengaluru. He pointed out that even though Dalit Catholics do not wish to identify themselves as Dalits, their identity mattered when they mingled with other castes. Suresh Pathare (2010) noted that “being a Christian in rural Maharashtra means to be a former Mahar” and the distinction between these two identities are skeletal and interchanging. The caste identity in the official records of *Mahar* converts in Maharashtra, for instance, also reinforces the 'identity crisis' among them as in many cases, the caste certificates indicate Christian *Mahars* caste as either Indian Christians, *Mahar* Christians and Hindu Christians. He further highlighted the trends related to the caste identity among the converted Christians in Maharashtra from historical accounts:

“Firstly, some of the converts, mostly the Protestant Christians, prefer to discard the caste identity while registering their children's caste in official records. They are least bothered about the reservation facilities. Secondly, there are Christians who have their caste certificates as 'Christians' but for official records of their children especially while admitting children in school they prefer to register their caste as Hindu Mahars. Thirdly, many of them like to be called Christians but for all the official records they retain their caste identity intact . . . Fourthly, there are people who often declare their religious identity according to the situation.” (Pathare, 2010: 117)

Recent studies on Dalit Christians in Gujarat showed that the identity of Dalits who converted to Christianity has not changed much till now and they suffer from caste-based discrimination by upper castes on one hand and alienation from other non-converted Dalits on the other (Patil, 2010). It is also

important to note that Gujarat is a state where the traditional village power structure and its caste relations are still prevalent. As several scholars have observed, a majority of Dalit Christians is deprived of productive resources such as land, and hence depends on higher castes for livelihood (Ibid: 132). Therefore, the caste practices, though its forms might have changed over the years, still perpetuate in the villages. As R R Patil noted “different forms of discrimination do take place against them at workplace such as non-payment of minimum wages, use of separate glasses/cups, harassments, casteist remarks and atrocities in case of protest against higher castes” (Ibid). Mahida (2010) also shared the same view that conversion to Christianity by Dalits in Gujarat has not brought about any qualitative improvements in their socio-economic status as they have to stay in the caste system and its occupational divisions. Most importantly, some studies, for instance, Fernando et al. (2004) pointed out incidences of practices of untouchability such as ‘refusal to drink water from the same glass’ against Christians converted from *Vankar* caste by caste Hindus.

Similar to what happened with caste prejudices in general, nature and forms of discrimination against Dalit Christians by non-Dalits has also changed over the years. Nevertheless, studies show that in the initial years of conversion, discrimination against Dalit converts outside Christianity was more severe. John C B Webster quoted:

“The village washermen were told not to work for (the Madiga Converts); the potter was told not to sell pots for them; their cattle were driven from the common grazing grounds; the Sudras combined in a refusal to give them the usual work of sewing sandals and harness; at harvest time they were not allowed to help and lost their portion of grain” (Webster, 1992: 65, c.f. Clough, 1914: 171)

Many times the nature of discrimination in society against Dalit converts went beyond mere economic boycotts. It took severe forms like physical abuse, set Dalit churches on fire and get converts

arrested on false charges (Webster, 1992, op cit). The severe forms and nature of discrimination against Dalit Christians, however, changed over a period of time mostly due to interventions of churches through their initiatives of material support and the effect of Dalit assertion movements in general. Part of this change can also be attributed to the impact of education, even though Dalits were not the major benefactors of educational programmes of missionaries. Some of them, especially the younger generation got opportunity to learn by the involvement of the *teacher catechists* in the villages of converted Dalits who along with religious education also taught primary school curriculum (Webster, 1992, op cit). As a result, those who were educated could move out of the village economy and its caste relations to urban areas where they got employment. For instance, John C B Webster cited Elders’ (1963) occupational statistics of Dalit Christians in Moradabad, Uttar Pradesh in 1963, which showed that out of the total Dalit Christians, 27.8 per cent were skilled workers; 18.1 per cent had white collar jobs; 15.2 per cent were teachers, preachers and religious workers and another 2.9 per cent were managers or executives (Webster, 1992: 183). It should also be mentioned that this, however, was not true for all Dalit Christians in the country. Other important reasons pointed out by scholars were the concerted efforts of churches for inclusiveness and the collective actions of Dalit Christians for recognition. However, it should also be noted that more severe issue that Dalit Christians faced in post independent India outside the church perhaps is atrocities rather than discrimination which is due to anti-conversion movements. It also took violent forms in several parts of the country, which will be discussed at length in the next section.

III. DISCRIMINATION AND ATROCITIES: CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES OF DALIT CHRISTIANS

As discussed in the previous section, Christianity in the process of integration with Indian society also sustained the hierarchical structures of Hinduism and

the caste identity of Dalit converts remained the same despite efforts of church for inclusiveness from some quarters. Therefore, Dalit Christians, like other Dalits, continue to confront their identity in various spheres of life and suffer discrimination and atrocities. Several studies have pointed out that caste-based discrimination is still a reality in Indian society; it prevails in all spheres of life such as education, health, employment, housing, trade and business, labour market, etc., (Chakravarty, 2003; George, 2004; Hasan and Mehta, 2006; Shah et al, 2006; Acharya, 2007; Nambissan, 2009; Thorat and Newman, 2007; Jodhka, 2010) and Dalit Christians too face them along with their counterparts in other religions. This section specifically examines the present nature and forms of discrimination which Dalit Christians face and whether caste prejudices limit them from access to services, amenities and other economic opportunities. It also discusses the atrocities on Dalit Christians which were rampant in post independent India.

III.a Caste-Based Discrimination against Dalit Christians: Nature, Forms and Patterns

There are ample evidences in social science literature that Dalit Christians are still discriminated on caste lines by upper caste Christians and rest of the society which include caste Hindus, church institutions and in some circumstances Dalit Hindus (Jose, 1990; Moss, 1994; Louis, 2007; Kujur, 2009; Patil and Dabhi, 2010; Pathare, 2010; Pinto, 2010). Scholars have observed that Dalit Christians suffer from same forms of discrimination, atrocities, socio-economic backwardness and deprivations like that of other Dalits. Some studies also pointed out that the forms of discrimination against Dalit Christians range from untouchability practices to denial of equal rights in spheres like buying and selling in markets, employment and access to services such as health, drinking water and sanitation. For instance, Jose (1990) highlighted the instances of untouchability faced by Dalit Christians through an empirical study conducted in rural Tamil Nadu. The study showed that the predominant forms of discrimination faced

by them also include classical forms of untouchability like prohibition in using common drinking water resources at places like schools. The study also drew attention on the deprivation of Dalit converted Christians in terms of facilities available. It showed that for most of the indicators such as access to drinking water, pucca houses and education Dalit Christians were worse off than even non-converted Dalits. David Moss (1994) also noted the continuing caste-based discrimination against Dalit Christians in Tamil Nadu. The study highlighted that prohibitions such as access to high caste streets, common drinking water sources, village temples and teashops on Dalit Christians along with other Dalits still prevail. More evidences on the discriminatory practice against Dalit Christians in South Indian states are available from Felix Wilfred's (1995) work. He highlighted that even if there have been conscious efforts by various churches for inclusion, discrimination practised on the basis of caste still prevail in churches. The predominant form of its manifestation is the reinforcement of their identities by referring them to as 'new Christians'. This has visibly demarcated the caste Christians and Dalit Christians in their church and related social life. Similar to the practises prevalent in the initial years of conversion, there are still separate churches for worship, segregation in burial grounds and exclusion from decision making in the parishes (Ibid). Walter Fernandes (1996) also gives an account of similar forms of discrimination against Dalit Christians by other Christians in Tamil Nadu. He noted that the forms of discrimination include division within the church buildings, separate entrances for high caste and Dalit Christians, etc. (Ibid). T K Oommen (2010) highlighted the following forms of discrimination which Dalit Christians face from their counterparts, the Syrian Christians:

“In spite of the belief that all Christians are united through their savior, viz, Jesus Christ, there is no equality shown in the participation of Holy Communion, the most crucial ritual which binds them. Earlier a practice of offering the Holy Communion to Christians of clean caste/upper

class first and only then to those of Scheduled Castes background, who are usually, lower class, was prevalent. While the discrimination in seating arrangement is gradually disappearing in Christian congregations, intermarriages are extremely rare even today. Generally speaking, the caste-class conjunction prevails among Indian Christians as in the wider Indian society.” (Oommen, 2010: 30)

R R Patil (2010) attributes the lower socio-economic status of Dalit Christians in Gujarat to discrimination and isolation from access to income earning assets like land. Most of the Dalits including Christians in rural Gujarat are still very much inside the village agriculture economy and its caste structures. In most of the cases, Dalits do not have cultivable land or any other income earning assets. Therefore, they are heavily dependent on upper castes for livelihood. The data presented from two villages of Borsad taluka from Anand district in the study show that there is no qualitative improvements in the living conditions of converted *Vankars* (Dalits) and in fact there is no marked difference in the socio-economic conditions of *Vankar* Christians and *Vankar* Hindus (Ibid: 130). The predominant spheres of discrimination against Dalit Christians in Gujarat include socio-cultural space by caste Hindus; cultural alienation from Dalit Hindus and church and related social life by caste Christians. The different forms of discrimination from caste Hindus include differential payments for the same work for Dalits and non-Dalits, non-payment of minimum wages, giving water and tea in separate glasses and cups, harassments, casteist remarks and subsequent atrocities if Dalits protest (Ibid: 132). The different forms of discrimination from church include suppression of independent Dalit leaderships and limited participation of Dalit Christians in non-religious spheres such as education and employment (Ibid: 134).

Ambrose Pinto (2010) highlighted the appalling living conditions of Dalit Christians in Karnataka. His study showed that even though most of the Dalit Christians depend on agriculture in rural areas they do not have land. The upper castes *Vokkaligas* and

Lingayats own much of the fertile land and Dalit Christians mostly work as labourers in their land. This in a way binds them to the traditional caste and power relations. Similarly, the study showed that as much as 60 per cent Dalit Christian households in the study area did not have electricity and 23 per cent lived in huts (Ibid: 169). The study also detailed various spheres and forms of discrimination. The different spheres of discrimination include public functions where intermingling of communities often takes place, public places like hotels and teashops, and marriage ceremonies. The common forms of discrimination that the study revealed are restriction in intermingling, residential segregation and cultural alienation.

Prakash Louis (2007) while referring to persisting backwardness of Dalit Christians in the fields like education and employment discusses the various forms of discrimination faced by Dalit Christians in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Tamil Nadu by caste Christians, caste Hindus, church and non-converted Dalits, which limit their upward mobility. He cited that Dalit Christians in these states continued their caste-based occupations such as agricultural workers, casual workers, manual scavengers and night soil labourers (Ibid: 22). The different forms of discrimination by caste Christians that he identified in the study are separate cemeteries, separate seating arrangements at churches, marriage restrictions, joint dining and exchange of food, prohibitions of Dalits to become priests and nuns and the mention of caste names while referring to Dalit Christians. Similarly, Dalit Christians face discrimination from caste Hindus due to the former's dependence on work and livelihood on latter. In most of the cases, it turns out to be complete subjugation as any form of resistance can have serious implications on their livelihood and even life. Gomati Bodhra (2010) highlighted the various spheres and forms of discrimination against Dalit Christians by caste Hindus in Jharkhand. Like in the case of rural Gujarat and Karnataka, most of the converted Dalits are still tied up with their caste and traditional occupation as agricultural workers in the lands owned by upper castes. This reinforces the local power relations which in a way propagates the

existing caste practices. As a result, Dalit Christians often become subject to discrimination, slavery, bondage, atrocities and economic exploitation (Ibid: 266). These reflect in the forms of non-payment of wages, bonded labour, non-payment of minimum wages and persecution (Ibid).

III.b Caste-Based Atrocities on Dalit Christians

There were several incidences of atrocities and violence on Dalit Christians such as physical abuse, burning of churches and getting them arrested on false charges (Webster, 1992) in the beginning of mass movement of conversion. The incidences of atrocity, however, increased in the recent years mostly due to the re-emergence of Hindu nationalism and the anti-conversion movements. For instance, it has become a major apprehension and state like Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan brought out anti-conversion legislations (Robinson, 2010). While atrocities related to conversion are common to all Christians, Dalit Christians face caste atrocities as well. This section, to begin with, look at the atrocities faced by Christians due to conversion in general and caste-based atrocities faced by Dalit Christians in particular.

An overview of the recent incidences of atrocities on Christians reveals that atrocities and violence are mostly perpetuated by anti-conversion groups of radical rights who advocate Hindu nationalism. Data on incidences of atrocities on Christians in selected states show that maximum cases of atrocities were reported from Gujarat which included murder, physical attack, damage of personal and church properties, false police charges and harassments, disruption of worship and ceremonies, and even persecution of dead bodies. Forms of atrocities on Christians in Bihar and Maharashtra (which followed Gujarat in atrocities in terms of number) included murder, massacre, rape, persecution and humiliation at public places, attack on places of worship, damage to properties and physical attack. Similar forms of atrocities and violence were reported from Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh,

Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.

It should also be noted that conversion is not the only ground of atrocities on Dalit Christians. It is also often situated in the caste-religion interface and in many instances anti-Christian movements are anti-Dalit movements as well. Reports and studies show that Dalit Christians face caste atrocities like other Dalits. The recent incident at Kadhamal, Odisha showed that one of the underlying factors that triggered the violence was the ethnic conflict between Hindu *Kandhas*, who are Scheduled Tribes (ST) and *Panas* who are Dalit Christians on one hand; and the active roles of Hindu extremists groups including Vanavasi Kalyan Ashram, Bajarang Dal, etc., on the other.² Caste-based atrocities by upper caste Hindus on Dalit Christians are also common in many parts of India. For instance, Louis (2007, op cit) cites an incident of caste atrocity on Dalit Christians in a village in Andhra Pradesh.

“In 1993, in a non-descript village, Chundurur of Andhra Pradesh, 12 Dalit Christians were massacred by the Reddys allegedly because a Dalit Christian youth sat with his feet up in the local cinema hall and accidentally touched an upper caste youth sitting in the seat in front of him. This massacre took place just because the ‘offender’ was a Dalit Christian and not a Kamma Christian or Reddy Christian.” (Louis 2007: 17–18)

The divide between Dalit and non-Dalit Christians on the caste lines and resultant conflicts also lead to atrocities on Dalit Christians. The major ground of conflict between these two groups is the caste divide in churches. It takes the forms of violence and atrocities when Dalit Christians tend to challenge the discriminatory practice by upper caste Christians. The disturbed relationship between caste Christians had adverse social and economic repercussions for Dalit Christians as they are dependent on caste Christians in many fronts. Worst of it is the social and economic boycott by caste Christians and caste Hindus by not allowing them to work on their land which is their principle source of livelihood.

III.c Inadequate Legal Safeguards against Discrimination and Atrocities

Although Dalit Christians face similar forms of discrimination and atrocities as other Dalits, the legal safeguards against untouchability, discrimination and atrocities are not extended to them since they do not come in the official category of Scheduled Castes (SC).³ Dalit Christians are either considered 'Christians/Indian Christians' or OBCs in most part of India. The existing legal protections against discrimination and atrocities for SCs under Untouchability (Offences) Act, 1955; the Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1976; the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 and the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act Rules, 1995 are not applied to Dalit Christians. These Acts provide protection against various forms of violence, atrocities and discriminations such as depriving facilities; denial of rights; eviction; economic exploitation including wrongful occupation of land and other properties; personal attack and exploitation including insulting, intimidating harassment and dishonouring and heinous criminal activities including rape, molestation, murder and massacre of SCs and STs. Interestingly, various reports show that discrimination, violence and atrocities being committed on Dalit Christians are mostly on caste lines and its nature and forms are same as that of the offences and atrocities enlisted in the above Acts (see sections III.a and III.b). However, Dalit Christians cannot seek protection from the state against these under any of these Acts.

IV. DEMOGRAPHIC AND DEVELOPMENT PROFILE OF DALIT CHRISTIANS

It merges from the previous discussions that Dalit Christians like other Dalits suffer from various forms of discrimination and exclusion. It is well established that discrimination and social exclusion lead to widening of income inequalities, degree of poverty and deprivation through denial of equal opportunities and access to resources and services (Thorat, 2003; Thorat and Louis, 2003; Sundaram and Tendulkar,

2003; Himanshu and Sen, 2004). Therefore, when it comes to questions of citizenship and development, discrimination appears to have manifold ramifications related to exclusion from economic entitlements, basic services and opportunities on one hand and humiliation, subordination, exploitation and denial of rights on the other. Social exclusion of Dalit Christians in this particular context raises further concerns on their development trajectory. First of all, it is important to examine whether discrimination and exclusion are reflected on their development performance such as education, material condition, poverty, etc. If Dalit Christians have group-specific development deficit, how does it vary from other socio-religious groups? Whether there is a need for group-specific policies for Dalit Christians on the basis of their development profile? This section attempts to address these questions drawing from available data on certain indicators of development.

The data on demography and development indicators for Dalit Christians are taken from the National Sample Survey (NSS) and other published reports. It should also be noted that Dalit Christian is a self reported category in NSS surveys. The sample size of Dalit Christian households in the survey is also a matter of attention here. It includes 155 Dalit Christian households in rural India and 123 in urban India. Since the sample size is small, further disaggregation across states is not attempted. Data extracted from NSS rounds include household by social groups by religion, level of poverty by social groups by religion and some of the characteristics of poor Dalit households with regard to household type and occupation, landholding, education and industry of occupation. Indicators on educational status of Dalit Christians are adopted from the report *Dalits in the Muslim and Christian Communities: A Status Report on Current Social Scientific Knowledge* by Satish Deshpande and Geetika Bapna, submitted to the National Commission for Minorities.

IV.a Demographic Profile

According to the Census of India, 2001 the Christians constituted about 2.34 per cent of the total

Table 1: Distribution of religious groups in social groups, 2004–05

Religions	Rural					Urban				
	ST	SC	OBC	OTH	ALL	ST	SC	OBC	OTH	ALL
Hindu	88.69	93.33	88.38	69.33	84.59	80.47	90.55	82.78	74.85	80.21
Muslim	0.53	0.3	9.26	24.56	10.31	1.94	0.72	13.98	18.43	13.66
Christian	7.22	1.04	1.24	2.91	2.28	14.14	1.81	2.36	2.52	2.72
Sikh	0.14	3.04	1.04	2.7	1.8	0.05	1.47	0.81	2.29	1.58
Jain	0	0	0.02	0.36	0.1	1.13	0	0	1.62	0.79
Buddhist	0.55	2.22	0	0.07	0.55	0.62	5.34	0	0.04	0.85
Zoroastrian	0.02	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.01	0.18	0.09
Others	2.82	0.03	0.01	0.02	0.32	1.62	0.09	0.02	0.03	0.09
All	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: NSS, 61st Round, 2004–05

population of which 2.86 per cent lived in urban areas and 2.14 per cent lived in rural areas. Within minorities, the number of Christians is more than Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains and others and notably less than Muslims. Like other religious minorities, Christian population is slightly more in urban areas than in rural areas. The states which have high proportion of Christians are Nagaland (90 per cent), Mizoram (87 per cent), Meghalaya (70.3 per cent), Manipur (34 per cent), Kerala (19 per cent) and Goa (26.7 per cent). In terms of absolute numbers, Kerala has the highest number of Christians (6,057,427), followed by Tamil Nadu (3,785,060), Nagaland (1,790,349) and Meghalaya (1,628,986).

There is no systematic data collected on the exact number of Dalit Christians in India. Organisations of Dalit Christians claim that there are 15 to 16 million Dalit Christians in India which constitute around 65 to 66 per cent of the total Christians as of 2001. NSS, however, gives some trend in the distribution of social groups in Christianity and other religions. Table 1 shows the distribution of religious groups in social groups including SC, ST, OBC and others. Out of the total SC population in rural India, 93.33 per cent are Hindus, 3.04 per cent are Sikhs, 2.22 per cent are Buddhists and 1.24 per cent are Christians. Among the STs, 88.69 per cent are Hindus and 7.22 per cent

are Christians while among the OBCs 88.38 per cent are Hindus and 9.26 per cent are Muslims. In urban India, among the SCs, Hindus constitute about 90 per cent followed by Christians (1.81 per cent) and Sikhs (1.47 per cent). The share of SCs among the minority groups was the highest among the Sikhs in rural India and the Christians in urban India.

Table 2 presents data on proportion of various social groups within religious groups. It shows that among all religions, the share of SC is more among Buddhists (30.23 per cent) and Sikhs (27.35 per cent) as compared to Hindus (20.25 per cent), Christians (2.15 per cent) and Muslims (0.56 per cent) in rural India. The same pattern of distribution is seen in urban India as well where among all religious groups, the highest share of SC is among Buddhists (97.01 per cent), followed by Sikhs (15.17 per cent) and Christians (10.51 per cent). Among minority religions, the share of OBCs is predominantly more as compared to SC and ST for Muslims both in rural and urban India; ST in rural and OBC in urban India for Christians; SC in rural India and OBC in urban India for Sikhs and ST in rural and SC in urban India for Buddhists excluding the 'others'. Among Buddhists and Christians in rural areas, the share of 'other' (upper castes) is notably less than that of all other social groups.

Table 2: Social groups break-up by religious groups, 2004–05

Religions	Rural					Urban				
	ST	SC	OBC	OTH	Total	ST	SC	OBC	OTH	Total
Hindu	11.22	20.25	43.43	25.1	100	3.01	18.2	36.36	42.43	100
Muslim	1.46	0.56	35.58	62.4	100	0.33	0.63	38.39	60.65	100
Christian	79.7	2.15	6.59	11.57	100	17.49	10.51	31.76	40.25	100
Sikh	1	27.35	22.95	48.7	100	0.11	15.17	18.56	66.16	100
Jain	1.19	-	8.93	89.88	100	5.8	-	0.39	93.82	100
Buddhist	55.54	30.23	3.06	11.17	100	1.66	97.01	0.29	1.04	100
Zoroastrian	53.33	-	46.67	-	100	0.25	-	9.94	89.81	100
Others	93.11	0.41	4.64	1.84	100	55.5	15.35	9.68	19.47	100

Source: NSS, 61st Round, 2004–05

IV.b Development Profile

There is very little information available on the development profile of Dalit Christians due to paucity of official data. NSS is the only data source which gives some indications on the development profile of social groups across religion. Deshpande and Bapna (2008) attempted to disaggregate data on Dalit Christians and Dalit Muslims from NSS 61st Round

for indicators such as education, consumption expenditure, occupational pattern and poverty. Their study showed that intergroup differentials are high among Christians as compared to Muslims, Sikhs and Buddhists and the level of deprivation is notably pronounced among Dalit Christians as compared to other Christians, especially with regard to rural poverty (Ibid). Though not exhaustive, there are

Table 3: Educational profile of Dalits by religions aged six and above, 2004–05

Religions	Levels of Education					
	Illiterate	Up to Primary	Up to Secondary	Higher Secondary	Diploma / Graduate +	Total
Rural						
Hindu	48.53	33.31	14.8	1.97	1.38	100
Muslim	48.08	32.85	15.39	2.14	1.53	100
Christian	38.42	30.67	23.1	6.29	1.52	100
Sikh	43.88	34.96	17.33	2.88	0.95	100
Buddhist	33.13	30.99	26.81	4.44	4.63	100
All Dalits	47.9	33.29	15.26	2.1	1.45	100
Urban						
Hindu	30.88	34.29	25.37	4.61	4.85	100
Muslim	31.79	36.95	25.14	1.88	4.24	100
Christian	15.69	33.47	30.95	8.45	11.45	100
Sikh	28.06	33.89	27.13	6.62	4.3	100
Buddhist	17.32	30.05	31.15	8.33	13.15	100
All Dalits	29.78	34.05	25.83	4.91	5.43	100

Source: Deshpande and Bapna (2008: 58)

some micro-level studies which examined the development profile of Dalit Christians at various parts of the country. For instance, studies conducted in Gujarat (Patil, 2010; Mahida, 2010), Karnataka (Pinto, 2010) and Jharkhand (Ekka et al., 2010) showed that most of the Dalit Christians in rural areas did not have any upward mobility. Most of them are illiterate and remain in their traditional caste-based occupations like agricultural labourer and coolie, and most of them live in highly impoverished conditions. The following section examines some of the indicators such as education, poverty and characteristics of poor Dalit Christian households as compared to their counterparts in other religions and across other social groups within Christianity.

IV.b.i Education

According to the Census of India (2001) data, the Muslims had worse literacy rate (48.05 per cent) followed by Sikhs (60.56 per cent) and Buddhists (62.56 per cent) among minority groups. The literacy rate of Christians, as a whole, was around 70 per cent which was better than all other religious groups, except the Jains. However, data on level of education among Dalits across religions show notable intergroup differentials (tables 3 and 4). Table 3 shows that as

much as 50 per cent Dalits in rural India and 30 per cent in urban India were illiterates. A comparison of the level of education of Dalits within their religion shows that the share of Dalits who are not literates was the highest among Hindus and Muslims both in rural and urban India. While the share of illiterate Dalit Christians in urban India was relatively less (15.69 per cent), it was around 39 per cent in rural India, which was more than Dalit Buddhists. The share of Dalits who were diploma holders and graduate was relatively less in all social groups. In rural India, while 4.6 per cent Dalit Buddhists completed diploma/graduation, it was nearly one per cent among Dalit Sikhs, 1.5 per cent among both Dalit Muslims and Dalit Christians and 1.38 per cent among Dalit Hindus. In urban India, share of those who completed diploma/graduation, though less as a whole, was higher among Dalit Buddhists (13.15 per cent) and Dalit Christians (11.45 per cent) as compared to other Dalits. Within Christianity, the data show that the percentage of illiterates is the highest among SC Christians than OBC and upper caste Christians (Table 4). While 38.42 per cent SC Christians were illiterates, the share of illiterates among upper caste Christians was 12.88 per cent in rural India. Urban India also showed a similar trend.

Table 4: Educational profile of Christians by caste groups aged 6 and above, 2004–05

Caste groups	Levels of Education					Total
	Illiterate	Up to Primary	Up to Secondary	Higher Secondary	Diploma / Graduate +	
Rural						
SC	38.42	30.67	23.1	6.29	1.52	100
OBC	21.19	36.52	31.54	4.26	6.5	100
Upper Caste	12.88	30.45	39.26	6.26	11.14	100
ALL	24.39	36.44	29.16	4.31	5.69	100
Urban						
SC	15.69	33.47	30.95	8.45	11.45	100
OBC	8.72	30.44	35.59	9.36	15.89	100
Upper Caste	6.49	23.3	36.84	10.34	23.03	100
ALL	8.34	27.74	35.76	10.12	18.03	100

Source: Deshpande and Bajra (2008: 59–60)

Table 5: Household types by religions, 2004–05

Religious groups	Rural					Urban			
	SENA	AL	OL	SEA	OTH	SE	RW / SE	CL	OTH
Hindu	15	25.67	10.17	40.93	8.23	40.12	42.64	11.48	5.75
Muslim	29.23	19.37	10.86	29.69	10.85	56.94	24.31	13.14	5.62
Christian	12.19	19.16	16.77	38.49	13.39	27.2	49.41	13.63	9.76
Sikh	15.7	22.05	13.92	37.51	10.81	57.62	31.33	4.94	6.11
Jain	43.66	17.61	5.79	26.92	6.02	77.9	17.35	0.39	4.37
Buddhist	7.13	56.51	8.54	19.02	8.8	18.57	51.99	24.9	4.54
Zoroastrian	NA	NA	35.42	64.58	NA	26.07	40.36	0.83	32.73
Others	9.09	19.78	8.22	56.55	6.35	55.67	35.64	2.79	5.9
All	16.54	24.89	10.44	39.46	8.68	42.99	39.47	11.71	5.82

Source: NSS, 61st Round, 2004–05

Further, their share is also less in the categories of ‘up to secondary’ and ‘diploma holders/graduate’ than other social groups among Christians. It clearly shows that Dalit Christians are backward in education as compared to other Christians.

IV.b.ii Household occupational patterns

Household occupational patterns of religious groups show that in line with the trend shown for other religious groups, most of the Christian households are engaged in agriculture related occupation either as self employed or as agricultural workers in rural India. Their share in ‘self employed in non-agriculture’ category was notably less than other minority groups which include Muslims, Sikhs and Buddhists. On the other hand, the share of Christians was relatively more in the category of self employed in agriculture compared to other major minority groups. This also points to the fact that they have

relatively more access to fertile land for cultivation. Christians in urban India also showed better position and their proportionate share in the category of regular and salaried employees was more than Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs. However, it was also together with a contrasting trend that their proportionate share in the households of casual labourers, the most vulnerable group, was more than all other religious groups.

The explanation of the relatively higher share of Christians in the most vulnerable household categories such as casual labourers in urban India and agricultural labourers in rural India comes out clearly while we disaggregate Dalits among Christians. Data show that the share of Dalit Christian households working as casual labourers in urban areas and agricultural labourers in rural areas was higher than that of other Christians (Table 6). The share of Dalit Christians in the category of self employed in

Table 6: Household types of Christians by social groups, 2004–05

Social groups	Rural					Urban			
	SENA	AL	OL	SEA	OTH	SE	RW / SE	CL	OTH
Dalit	17.1	34.7	16.5	7.4	24.3	13.9	51.9	24.9	9.3
OBC	20.7	18.9	24.6	17.4	18.4	29.6	41	16.5	12.9
Upper Caste	17.4	16.3	15.6	32.5	18.2	29.2	50.8	5.9	14.1
All	14.9	18.6	14.8	35.1	16.5	26.6	47.2	11.1	15.1

Source: Deshpande and Bajna (2008: 53)

agriculture was also less than other Christians in rural India. However, it should be noted that the share of regular/wage salaried households of Dalit Christians in urban India was almost equal to that of upper caste Christians which was possibly due to the impact of education and early migration of Dalit Christians to urban India as discussed elsewhere in the study. In short, most of the Dalit Christians continue their caste-based occupations in rural India as agricultural and other labourers.

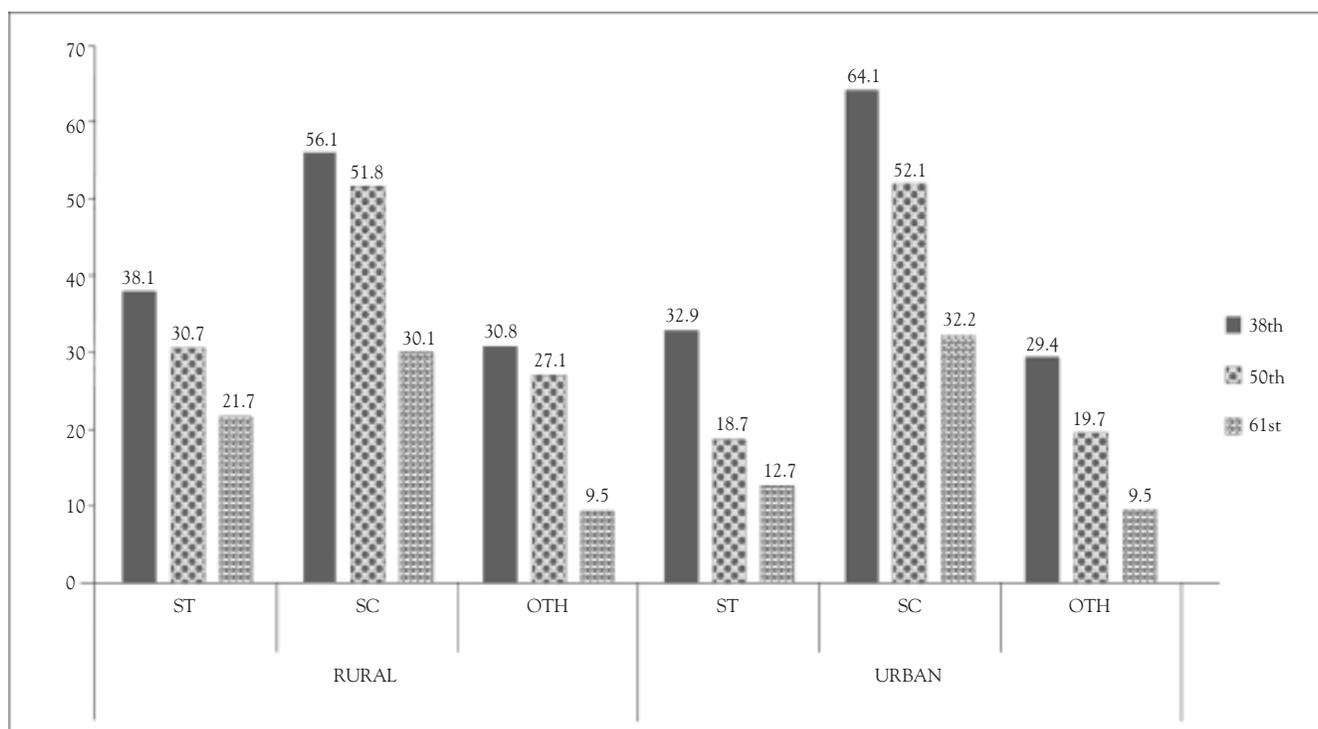
IV.b.iii Poverty situation

Table 7 provides the latest social and religious groupwise poverty figures based on consumption expenditure data collected by NSS. It shows that the rate of poverty is higher among Dalits as compared to other social groups both in 1993 and 2004. Although poverty among Dalits, as a whole, declined between 1993 and 2004, the data show considerable intergroup and inter-religious variations in poverty reduction. While poverty reduction for Dalits between 1993 and 2004 was around 11 percentage points, it was around 14 per cent for other groups in

rural areas. Urban India also showed almost similar pattern of decline. When we disaggregate poverty estimates across religious and social groups for rural areas, the poverty level is found to be substantially higher among Hindu *Adivasis* (46 per cent) in 2004 followed by Dalit Buddhists (39 per cent), Dalit Muslims (35 per cent), Dalit Hindus (32.48 per cent) and Dalit Christians (23.61 per cent). The situation is more or less similar in urban India and the highest incidence of poverty was found among OBC Muslims (37.97 per cent), followed by Dalit Hindus (43.13 per cent), Dalit Muslims (31.13 per cent), Dalit Buddhists (25.88 per cent) and Dalit Christians (24.4 per cent).

Chart 1 shows the change in poverty situation of social groups within Christianity over two decades. As it is evident from the chart, Dalit Christians have been the poorest group among Christians in 1983, 1994 and 2004–05 both in rural and urban India. Data show that there is a marked difference in the poverty situation between Dalit Christians and other Christians. While the poor Dalit Christian households was 56.1 per cent in 1983, 51.8 per cent

Chart 1: Poverty situation of Christians by social groups: Changes across 1983, 1994 and 2004–05



Source: Estimated at IIDS, from NSS 38th, 50th and 61st rounds

Table 7: Estimated poverty by social groups by religions

Religions	Rural					Urban				
	ST	SC	OBC*	OTH	All	ST	SC	OBC	OTH	All
NSS 50th Round (1993–94)										
Hindu	48.85	43.70	-	27.10	33.66	37.97	44.32	-	22.26	26.18
Muslim	51.61	30.30	-	36.13	36.22	36.61	48.99	-	42.34	42.37
Christian	27.47	45.22	-	23.50	26.49	15.16	48.40	-	15.38	17.88
Sikh	0	11.80	-	2.03	5.11	0	36.48	-	6.80	11.07
Buddhist	9.86	54.94	-	36.50	51.39	29.50	36.52	-	29.19	36.05
All	46.76	43.18	-	27.79	33.34	34.89	43.76	-	24.84	27.80
NSS 61st Round (2004–05)										
Hindu	46.05	32.48	22.85	10.30	25.14	33.96	34.13	22.43	8.13	18.60
Muslim	23.56	34.95	27.05	23.03	24.63	21.48	33.97	37.97	31.13	33.58
Christian	20.61	23.61	11.14	6.72	14.19	11.98	24.40	11.47	6.45	10.70
Sikh	19.83	6.05	537	.22	3.84	0	22.64	6.93	1.50	5.48
Buddhist	6.81	38.95	13.87	2.08	34.11	.84	25.88	24.55	15.37	25.07
All	43.39	31.73	22.91	13.01	24.50	29.81	33.32	24.22	12.06	20.13

*OBC was not a category in the NSS 50th Round

Source: NSS, 50th and 61st rounds, consumption expenditure, estimated

in 1994 and 30.1 per cent in 2004–05 in rural India; the corresponding figures for ‘other’ Christians were 30.8 per cent, 18.73 per cent and 12.72 per cent for 1983, 1994 and 2004–05 respectively. Also, the percentage of poor households among Dalit Christians is higher in urban than rural India.

The following section attempts to understand some of the characteristics of the poor Dalit households in general and Dalit Christian households in particular. It should be noted that since the sample size of Dalit Christians is very small in the NSS survey, the data presented here gives only some indications but not the exact pictures. Table 8 gives information on the household types of poor across social groups in various religions in rural and urban India. As it is evident from the table, the incidence of poverty was the highest in households of agricultural labourers in rural India and in the households of casual workers in urban India across all religious groups. Among all socio-religious groups in rural India, the incidence of poverty was found to be the highest in households of agricultural labourers who belonged to Dalit and tribal

Muslims followed by tribal Hindus, Dalit Hindus and OBC Muslims. In urban India, the incidence of poverty was the highest in households of casual workers of tribal Hindus followed by Dalit Hindus, Muslims, Dalit Christians and Dalit Buddhists.

Among the Christians, the incidence of poverty was the highest among Dalit Christians as compared to other Christians in most of the categories, except agricultural labourer households where the incidence of poverty was more among ST and OBC Christians. Interestingly, contrary to the general trend, incidence of poverty was more among households of self-employed in agriculture, other labourers and self-employed in non-agriculture of Dalit Christians in rural areas. Casual labour and self-employed households of Dalit Christians showed higher incidence of poverty in urban India as compared to other Christian groups.

As discussed elsewhere, the percentage of Dalits who have completed higher/technical education was less as compared to other groups which possibly is one of the explanations of their

persisting impoverished conditions. Tables 3 and 4 also showed that the chances of Dalit Christians pursuing education beyond higher secondary level are relatively small. The educational level of poor Dalit households in various religious groups is shown in tables 9 and 10 (see Annexure). The data show that the interrelationship of high level of poverty and low level of education is true for tribal and Dalit groups across all religions in rural India (Table 9). Among all social groups, the share of poor in the category of 'illiterate' was the highest for ST followed by Dalits. Across religious groups, the

poverty-illiteracy interface was notably pronounced among ST Hindus, Dalit Buddhists, Dalit Hindus, Dalit Muslims and Dalit Christians. Among the Christians, the Dalits constituted the group with the highest share of poor in the category of illiterate, reinforcing their educational deprivation and its interconnectedness with poverty.

Urban India also showed the same trend of poverty-education interface. STs across all social groups had the highest share in the category of poor and illiterate followed by Dalits (Table 10). Across religious groups, along with ST Hindus, Dalit Hindus,

Table 8: Poverty incidence by socio-religious groups and household types, 2004–05

Religions	Rural				Urban				
	Social Groups	SENA	AL	OL	SEA	SE	RW/SE	CL	OTH
Hindu	ST	39.03	61.92	46.24	46.39	49.84	15.93	71.15	17.16
	SC	33.91	49.07	35.08	27.41	47.36	24.35	65.67	28.07
	OBC	21.73	43.7	29.3	21.31	30.99	16.87	54.57	18.6
	OTH	9.53	31.21	14.81	11	11.72	7.33	37	7.6
Muslim	ST	1.84	62.88	-	26.67	25.76	0.35	83.75	9.59
	SC	45.65	62.34	-	46.38	46.51	46.31	39.86	63.13
	OBC	30.42	49.72	28.86	26.78	46.88	32.99	57.67	40.2
	OTH	26.39	42.56	32.18	19.77	37.41	33.34	62.05	25.9
Christian	ST	12.42	35.1	32.9	23	17.37	5.98	40.3	7.7
	SC	40.54	26.31	42.63	52	28.68	10.86	64.7	6.35
	OBC	5.02	32.23	9.27	10.83	11.7	5.17	39.88	12
	OTH	-	21.67	5.49	3.32	8.74	3.57	20.06	5.24
Sikh	ST	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	SC	3.31	11.66	7.53	-	18.28	16.53	50.98	1.08
	OBC	3.89	13.09	15.29	-	6.2	7.1	7.25	9.95
	OTH	-	17.69	0.26	-	1.07	2.85	22.11	0.1
Buddhist	ST	5.4	2.26	27.24	8.65	0.94	0.3	-	0.79
	SC	28.14	57.66	50.05	20.95	36.91	11.97	55.1	20.97
	OBC	57.7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	OTH	-	-	27.07	2.96	56.14	90.1	-	-
All	ST	36.33	60.81	45.29	42.98	42.03	13.57	69.7	14.96
	SC	32.87	47.84	33.76	27.27	46.01	23.28	64.59	27.26
	OBC	23.02	43.7	28.45	21.42	34.37	17.84	54.59	22.2
	OTH	15.51	35.27	19.71	11.98	17.57	11	48.44	10.51

Source: Estimated from NSS 61st Round

Dalit Christians, Dalit and OBC Muslims also had significant share in the poor and illiterate category. Among the Christians in urban India Dalits remained the group with the highest share in the poor and illiterate category.

The incidence of poverty among the socio-religious groups across industry of occupation which included agriculture, hunting and forestry, manufacturing, wholesale/retail/repair, transport/communication and construction in 2004–05 is presented in tables 11 and 12 (see Annexure). In rural India, among the socio-religious groups across all occupational categories, the incidence of poverty was the highest for Dalit Christians in construction sector followed by ST Hindus and Dalit Muslims in agriculture, and hunting and forestry; and ST Hindus in manufacturing (Table 11). Agriculture, hunting and forestry were the sectors where the incidence of poverty was high for all socio-religious groups. Among them, the highest was marked for Hindu STs followed by Dalit Muslims, Dalit Sikhs and Dalit Hindus. Construction and manufacturing were other major sectors where the incidence of poverty was higher for most of the social groups in rural India. Among the Christians, group which showed higher incidence across various occupational categories was Dalit Christians. Their share was more in sectors which included construction, wholesale/retail/repair, agriculture, and hunting and forestry in rural India. Incidence of poverty was comparatively less in other groups among the Christians in all categories. In urban India, across all social groups, the incidence of poverty was higher for Dalits in all occupational categories followed by ST (Table 12). Across socio-religious groups, ST Hindus and Dalit Hindus were the groups who had higher representation of poor in all categories, followed by Dalit Muslims, OBC Muslims, Dalit Buddhists and Dalit Christians. Across all occupational categories and socio-religious groups, the highest incidence of poverty was among Dalit Muslims in wholesale/retail/repair and transport/storage sectors. Public services, defence and social services were the sectors where the incidence of poverty was relatively less for all socio-religious groups.

Among the Christians in urban India, the highest incidence of poverty was among Dalit Christians in manufacturing sector. Other occupational groups, where the incidence of poverty was higher as compared to other Christians were wholesale/retail/repair and transport/storage sectors. It should also be noted that incidence of poverty among Dalit Christians was more than Dalit Sikhs in urban India.

V. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Available social science literature clearly shows that caste has been a defining marker of social and economic relationship in Christianity. Even after conversion, the characteristics of caste such as endogamy, residential segregation, restricted social interaction, hierarchies, caste-based occupations and graded ritual purity or pollution continued in one way or the other among the converted Christians. Continuation of caste-based occupational patterns among Dalit Christians is another important evidence to ascertain caste among the Christians in India. Arguably, the continuation of caste-based occupational patterns even after conversion reproduces caste relations within Christianity. Studies also show that there are widespread practices of purity and impurity in eating habits and even traces of untouchability among the Christians in India which evidence the strong presence of caste prejudices in Christianity. Persistence of local traditions, largely the Hindu traditions, among the Christians also points to the fact that conversions have not significantly changed the existing social structures. As a result, the caste practices even in the religious ceremonies continue among the converts. More importantly, the identity of converted Dalits remains more or less the same in the society at large.

There are sufficient evidences in the social science literature that Dalit Christians are still discriminated on caste lines by upper caste Christians and rest of the society including caste Hindus, church institutions and in some circumstances Dalit Hindus. In most of the cases, it turns out to be complete subjugations as any form of resistance can have serious implications on their livelihood and even life.

Furthermore, the converted Dalits are still tied up with their caste and traditional occupations as agricultural workers in lands owned by upper castes in rural areas. This reinforces the local power relations which in a way propagates the existing caste practices. As a result, Dalit Christians often become subject to discrimination, slavery, bondage, atrocities and economic exploitation. Reports show that the incidences of atrocities on Christians in general and Dalit Christians in particular have increased in recent years mostly due to the re-emergence of Hindu nationalism and anti-conversion movements. It is also often situated in the caste-religion interface and in many instances anti-Christian movements are anti-Dalit movements as well. What is important to note is that although Dalit Christians face similar forms of discrimination and atrocities as other Dalits, the legal safeguards against untouchability, discrimination and atrocities are not extended to them since they do not come in the official category of Scheduled Castes.

Available official data and micro-level studies show that the socio-economic conditions of Dalit Christians are more or less equal to that of other Dalits. One of the important inferences is that the gap between Dalit Christians and other Christians are very high. Strikingly, this intergroup disparity among Christians is higher than that of Sikhs, Muslims and Buddhists. The data also show that there is not much notable social and economic upward mobility for Dalit Christians except in some pockets in urban areas. Apart from the slightly better picture in urban India, the educational level of Dalit Christians is almost equal to that of all Dalits and there are stark intergroup disparities within Christianity. It points to the fact that the celebrated educational attainment among Christians is limited

only to a certain section of the Christians and most of the Dalit Christians in rural India lag behind. Though Christians as a group are relatively better off with regard to their household occupation than other minority groups, their proportionate share among casual labourers and agricultural labourers which constitute the most vulnerable groups in urban and rural India respectively is high. The incidence of poverty among Dalit Christians, though better than their Muslim and Buddhist counterparts, is more or less equal to that of Dalits in general. Similarly, like other Dalits the interface between low levels of education, casual and agricultural labourers, and informal employment; and high incidence of poverty are also true for Dalit Christians. In short, based on the available data, it can be ascertained that Dalit Christians like other Dalit groups also suffer from a development deficit which further calls for group-specific policy interventions for their upward mobility. The paucity of scientific data on the exact level of deprivation of Dalit Christians, however, remains a major challenge to understand the picture at a disaggregated level.

Various committees appointed by the Government of India have commented favourably on the need to amend the Constitution Order, 1950 to include Dalit Christians and Dalit Muslims in the official category of Scheduled Castes so that they could benefit from reservations in education and employment and protections available under Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955 and the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989. The human development indicators of Dalit Christians such as discrimination against them on social, economic, political and cultural spheres and above all the increasing atrocities on them justify the need to have group-specific policies.

FOOTNOTES

1. For a discussion see, Jose 1990; Moss 1994; Louis 2007; Kujur 2009; Patil and Dabhi 2010; Pathare 2010; Pinto 2010
2. For more discussion please see, Kanungo (2008)
3. Third para of Article 341, the Constitution Order 1950 directs that “no person who professes a religion different from the Hindu religion shall be deemed to be a member of Scheduled Castes.”

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ANNEXURE

Table 9: Poverty incidence by socio-religious groups and level of education in rural areas, 2004–05

Religions	Social Groups	Illiterate	Literate without Formal Schooling	Literate but Below Primary	Primary	Middle	Secondary and Above	Graduate and Above
Hindu	ST	56.91	47.09	35.02	20.11	18.53	7.65	6.47
	SC	43.94	34.94	27.17	19.48	16.32	7.16	13.55
	OBC	32.77	26.18	17.76	12.86	9.64	2.93	5.35
	OTH	18.17	13.68	10.04	6.55	4.41	1.42	3.12
Muslim	ST	36.30	9.86	2.15	0.95	-	-	-
	SC	43.76	38.37	12.34	26.38	-	-	-
	OBC	39.93	29.31	16.11	10.32	8.53	-	9.13
	OTH	33.31	26.45	15.55	9.97	5.88	1.90	1.37
Christian	ST	31.85	18.92	15.64	11.12	19.48	-	1.13
	SC	41.42	24.31	26.43	10.95	2.61	-	-
	OBC	18.17	20.02	7.95	5.67	6.03	3.38	4.17
	OTH	14.79	7.64	3.34	4.20	2.52	1.90	-
Sikh	ST	8.48	-	-	-	-	-	-
	SC	9.58	7.64	2.99	1.19	-	-	-
	OBC	10.14	8.48	1.41	0.93	0.30	-	-
	OTH	0.33	0.45	0.81	-	-	-	-
Buddhist	ST	17.80	16.40	1.66	0.88	0.28	4.10	-
	SC	50.73	50.52	44.56	23.74	23.74	-	10.77
	OBC	30.85	14.25	12.45	-	-	-	-
	OTH	7.38	4.64	1.11	-	-	-	-
All	ST	55.20	43.45	31.78	18.04	17.68	6.14	5.84
	SC	42.96	34.28	27.28	18.70	15.71	6.48	12.88
	OBC	33.34	26.23	17.29	12.27	9.33	2.72	5.47
	OTH	22.93	16.91	10.53	6.47	4.23	1.48	2.77

Source: Estimated at IIDS, from NSS 61st Round

Table 10: Poverty incidence by socio-religious groups in urban areas by level of education, 2004–05

Religions	Social Groups	Illiterate	Literate without Formal Schooling	Literate but Below Primary	Primary	Middle	Secondary and Above	Graduate and Above
Hindu	ST	59.13	38.98	27.37	11.45	9.26	1.47	3.47
	SC	55.12	43.83	29.91	22.06	17.18	8.47	6.72
	OBC	42.80	32.22	24.98	16.29	11.67	5.33	6.44
	OTH	22.61	15.52	10.92	6.33	4.89	1.59	1.80
Muslim	ST	34.22	27.49	21.06	12.77	47.42	16.40	24.67
	SC	45.54	55.92	42.62	40.16	-	-	-
	OBC	57.43	46.46	32.68	23.76	20.05	8.11	11.23
	OTH	53.53	43.36	29.34	18.87	13.31	10.59	6.80
Christian	ST	36.97	17.79	6.90	5.96	1.66	9.84	1.02
	SC	50.44	29.84	31.75	22.29	4.49	20.98	3.53
	OBC	16.36	24.98	15.14	8.21	3.66	1.09	0.87
	OTH	19.20	12.26	8.08	3.76	1.86	0.21	0.44
Sikh	ST	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	SC	37.05	22.64	18.82	8.41	1.36	-	-
	OBC	9.20	8.75	7.27	8.10	0.24	-	-
	OTH	2.73	2.62	1.98	0.89	1.23	-	0.41
Buddhist	ST	1.43	0.44	0.19	1.64	-	-	-
	SC	38.50	32.04	34.16	12.74	-	-	9.25
	OBC	29.95	57.18	53.11	-	-	-	43.99
	OTH	87.25	38.38	89.51	10.31	-	-	-
All	ST	56.83	35.26	22.99	10.34	8.90	3.27	2.95
	SC	53.96	42.75	30.27	21.21	16.06	7.41	6.74
	OBC	46.08	34.66	25.72	16.80	12.00	5.01	6.39
	OTH	34.04	22.87	14.59	7.83	5.59	2.02	2.01

Source: Estimated at IIDS, from NSS 61st Round

Table 11: Incidence of poverty across socio-religious groups across industries in rural areas, 2004–05

Religions	Social Groups	Agriculture, Hunting and Forestry	Manufacturing	Wholesale / Retail and Repair	Transport, Storage and Communication	Construction
Hindu	ST	53.95	52.75	28.05	33.49	42.43
	ST	41.38	35.51	33.45	28.37	35.50
	OBC	28.69	22.64	19.37	14.28	32.71
	OTH	14.72	6.98	7.66	11.21	18.05
Muslim	ST	34.27	9.51	-	-	-
	SC	53.61	24.91	5.94	-	24.86
	OBC	36.03	29.69	28.78	26.20	34.73
	OTH	28.37	28.37	21.46	33.29	33.03
Christian	ST	25.03	24.57	10.69	-	15.74
	SC	29.86	2.32	36.78	22.90	68.35
	OBC	24.41	1.75	5.32	-	10.60
	OTH	10.15	1.41	-	3.96	5.10
Sikh	ST	54.97	-	-	-	-
	SC	10.64	15.25	2.83	-	7.63
	OBC	8.10	0.12	7.46	-	15.45
	OTH	0.40	1.74	-	-	-
Buddhist	ST	5.96	14.66	-	-	-
	SC	50.56	42.94	46.14	13.15	44.95
	OBC	-	-	-	73.16	-
	OTH	2.95	-	-	-	27.07
All	ST	50.99	51.89	25.42	29.79	41.84
	SC	40.79	34.62	32.09	25.74	34.74
	OBC	28.95	23.18	21.16	16.61	32.06
	OTH	17.24	14.30	12.11	18.24	-

Source: Estimated at IIDS, from NSS 61st Round

Table 12: Incidence of poverty for socio-religious groups across industries in urban areas, 2004–05

Religions	Social Groups	Agriculture, Hunting and Forestry	Manufacturing	Wholesale/ Retail and Repair	Transport, Storage and Communication	Public Ad, Defence and Social Service
Hindu	ST	77.19	27.76	39.09	43.30	9.73
	SC	66.15	36.10	46.03	47.05	22.02
	OBC	46.06	26.41	29.13	28.49	8.22
	OTH	24.95	8.92	12.57	12.34	3.71
Muslim	ST	74.40	58.50	36.17	2.63	
	SC		9.48	80.48	63.19	11.65
	OBC	46.98	46.43	44.84	40.76	10.61
	OTH	49.99	37.26	39.16	37.28	32.01
Christian	ST	33.01	22.53	6.68	11.76	1.72
	SC	5.20	37.14	28.78	29.27	13.19
	OBC	25.21	16.58	13.39	10.46	2.00
	OTH	6.35	12.32	7.77	4.91	0.07
Sikh	ST	-	-	-	-	-
	SC	30.31	9.54	41.01	17.90	33.51
	OBC	14.32	1.64	24.64	1.52	
	OTH	0.62	1.20	0.93	4.08	0.80
Buddhist	ST	19.01	-	8.46		0.56
	SC	17.60	30.95	9.21	30.43	20.69
	OBC	-	-	-	-	-
	OTH	-	-	100.00	16.44	-
All	ST	67.69	28.19	33.91	39.35	6.56
	SC	63.13	35.22	44.46	44.62	21.95
	OBC	45.63	30.09	32.77	30.28	8.10
	OTH	27.45	16.35	18.15	18.99	6.99

Source: Estimated at IIDS, from NSS 61st Round

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