

statutory benefits to SC converted to Christianity and Islam. There is no second opinion about providing assistance to all poor people belonging to any community Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Poverty alleviation programmes of the Government covers all the poorer section of the society. Economic assistance and educational benefits are also required to be given to all poor families including that of Dalit Christians.

#### **Educational and other achievements of the Christians**

No enumeration has been made to assess the number of SC converted to Christianity. The census provides information on the total population of the Christians which is estimated to be 1,95,00,000 constituting 2.30% of the total population of the country during 1991. Their population steadily increased from 1.21% during 1911 to 2.59% during 1971 and had declined during the two subsequent decades, i.e., 1981 (2.36%) and 1991 (2.30%).

Available information on education and employment of Christians throws light on their level of development in the society. Accordingly to 1983 report of the High Power Panel on Minorities, SC & ST and other Weaker Sections, the enrolment of Christians at the Elementary (3.76%) and Secondary level (12.2%) was higher than their corresponding population percentage and their drop out ratio of 55% was less than the general drop out of 65%. Unlike the SC and ST, the Christians have been adequately represented in services. Accounting for 2.30% of the total population of the country the representation of Christians is 2.74% in I.A.S., 2.69% in I.P.S., 2.67% in Banking services and 3.83% in Public Sector Undertakings. Their actual representation in services in 13 sample States is 3.85%, which is also more than their population percentage. Although no information is available to assess the share of SC Christians in general, it is imperative that the SC/ST converts to Christianity have availed better educational and other opportunities compared to the Hindu SC and thus have equipped themselves better in securing employment even without the reservation benefits.

#### **Impact on Scheduled Castes**

While extending reservation to Dalith Christians as per the announcement of United Front Government care has to be taken that existing benefits of SC/STs are not encroached or eroded. Presently the quota of reservation for SC is 15% and for ST it is 7.5% and 27% reservation is provided for OBC. Even though the population of SC and ST have increased to 16.48% and 8.08%, respectively, in 1991 census the quota of reservation for them has not been enhanced as the total reservation for SC, ST and OBC would exceed 50%. The SC and ST are already hard hit as the total reservation provided for them is inadequate and less than their