

ambiguity) that DMs are not the worst off group, being slightly better represented among the 'self-employed in agriculture' (taken as a rough proxy for access to land) category than other groups. In urban India, however, DMs are back in the bottom slot, with the highest proportion in 'casual labour' and the lowest proportion in the 'regular wage' category. In rural India, DCs are between Buddhists and Sikhs (who have a slightly better profile) and Muslims and Hindus (who have a worse profile). In urban India, DCs have the highest proportion in the 'regular wage category' among all Dalits, but Dalit Sikhs are almost equal to them.

- With respect to comparisons of educational levels, DMs are the worst off in rural India in terms of illiteracy, but are closely matched by Hindu Dalits in both rural and urban India. DCs are slightly better off in rural, and significantly better off in urban India. At the other end of the educational spectrum, there are no major differences across Dalits in rural India (except Buddhists, who seem to have comparatively high proportions with graduate or higher degrees). DCs are significantly better off than other Dalits except for Buddhists, who are much better off and by far the best among Dalits in this respect. However, in both rural and urban India, and at both ends of the educational spectrum, all Dalits except Muslims do much worse than their non-Dalit co-religionists, specially the upper castes. As with the economic data, intra-Muslim differences are the least – in fact, the inter-caste differentials in education appear to be even less than those in terms of consumption levels.

On the whole, it can be said that inter-Dalit economic differences across religion are not very significant for most criteria and for most of the population. DMs are the worst off while the top quarter of the DCs may be slightly better off than all others except Dalit Sikhs, who are even better off than them. Urban Muslims exhibit worrying levels of economic vulnerability across caste groups. Occupational differences are generally not significant, and where significant, show DMs to be worst off in urban India. Educational differences are slight, and work across contexts only for DCs. However, intra-community caste differentials are very high for all except the Muslims, so that Dalits in general are much worse off educationally than non-Dalits.

The **ethnographic materials** reviewed included studies by academics as well as surveys and reports produced or sponsored by advocacy groups and NGOs. The data cover four decades from the 1950s to the present, and use