

These safeguards provided include reservation of seats in educational institutions, House of the people (Article 330), State Assemblies (Article 332) and reservation in posts and services. According to Article 16(4) the States are to make provision for reservation in posts or appointment in favour of any backward class of citizens which is not adequately represented in the services under the State and Article 335 lays down that " The claims of the members of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes shall be taken into consideration, consistently, with the maintenance of efficiency of administration in the making of appointments to services and posts".

Scheduled Caste Sikhs and Neo-Buddhists

The practice of untouchability and numerous forms of social disabilities is peculiar to the caste-ridden Hindu society. Being victims of such age-old practices SC

lag far behind the non-SC/ST population in socio-economic and educational achievements. The Constitutional safeguards were provided for this segment of the society and various welfare measures adopted to improve their socio-economic conditions. The protective measures also aimed at wiping out the stigma of untouchability suffered by the SC and elevate their social status in the society. Sikhism and Buddhism are shoots of Hinduism and the SC embraced Buddhism voluntarily in 1956 at the call of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. The benefits of reservation were thus extended to SC Sikhs and Buddhists.

The conversion to Christianity has been taking place since centuries and even in many cases it is not possible to determine the caste/community of a convert prior to his conversion to Christianity. Christianity does not recognize caste system and untouchability and the SC converts do not suffer from this stigma. Even if there is discrimination of SC Christians among the Christianity, the problem cannot be that acute and steps be taken by the Christian missionaries to overcome it.

Demand for reservation benefits to Dalit Christians.

There have been demands for extending the benefits of reservation and other safeguards provided for Hindu, Sikh and Buddhist SC's to the SC's converted to Christianity. The High power panel on Minorities, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and other weaker sections recommended in their 1983 Report for amendment of the Presidential Order, 1950 to include all SC converts and the National Commission for Minorities have also recommended for extending