

(refer para 5, page 9 of the Note)

Communication from the National Commission for Minorities

1 The National Commission for Minorities (NCM) had in April, 2007, commissioned a study by Prof. Satish Deshpande and Geetika Bapna of the Department of Sociology, University of Delhi, on SC converts to Islam and Christianity. The study report, titled, "Dalits in the Muslim and Christian Communities- A Status Report on Current Social Scientific Knowledge", was submitted on 17.01.2008. The Chairman, NCM, forwarded it to the then Minister for Social Justice & Empowerment, with his letter dated 05.05.2008, mentioning that it would be useful in formulating the policy of the Government in bringing these sections of the society under the ambit of reservation quota earmarked for SCs.

2 The above Report explained that it uses the term "Dalit Christians(DCs) and "Dalit Muslims(DMs)" as follows:-

"This report is concerned with the 'Dalits', or the so-called ex-'untouchable' caste groups, among Indian Muslims and Christians. It is necessary to clarify at the outset that 'Dalit' is a **self chosen** and largely accepted, **but not unanimously approved**, term used to refer to the ex-untouchable caste-communities in India. It will be used throughout this report **as a convenient shorthand** term to refer to those Muslims and Christians who occupy **—or claim to occupy, or are believed to occupy—** a position in society comparable to that of the officially designated SCs belonging to the Hindus, Sikh or Buddhist religious communities." (Emphasis added)

3 The study is based on two types of data viz. statistical and ethnographic. Statistically, the study is based on an analysis of unit level data generated by the 61st Round of NSSO (2004-05). Ethnographic materials reviewed included studies