

(refer para 3, page 58 of Annexure VII)

Brief by National Commission for Minorities on a study by Prof. Satish Deshpande, Department of Sociology, University of Delhi, namely, "Dalits in the Muslim and Christian communities...A status Report on Current Social Scientific Knowledge."

Reservations for Dalit Muslims & Dalit Christians: NCM Study

An independent research study commissioned by the National Commission for Minorities finds that there is a strong case for offering Dalit Muslims and Dalit Christians the same constitutional safeguards already available to Hindu, Sikh and Buddhist Dalits. The study was conducted by Professor Satish Deshpande of the Sociology Department, Delhi School of Economics, and University of Delhi over an eight month period.

2. After a comprehensive survey of the available social scientific literature on the status of Muslim and Christian Dalits, the study concludes that they continue to be subjected to discriminatory and exclusively practices, including untouchability, even though such prejudice receives no doctrinal support in either Islam or Christianity. Although, the forms and intensity of the social humiliation they suffer differ from those faced by their counterparts in other religions, yet they are victim of exclusionary treatment, untouchability and deep rooted backwardness as suffered by their counterparts in Hindu, Sikh and Buddhist religions.

3. The study breaks new ground in analyzing the latest available statistical data from the National Sample Survey Organisation's 61st Round Survey of 2004-05. The data shows that Muslim Dalits are generally the worst off among all Dalits by most economic and educational criteria. Christian Dalits, too, lag far behind non-Dalit and specially upper caste Christians.

4. Despite their small population and hence relatively low representation in the sample survey, the data unambiguously establish the backwardness of Muslim and Christian Dalits by the common criteria of human development. In fact, the statistical analysis demonstrates that religious affiliation makes no difference for the poorest 75% of all Dalits, with only the top 25% showing some differentiation.