

Executive Summary of 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."

This objective of this study was to produce a status report on the evidence that is already available to answer the following questions:

- 1) What is the contemporary status of Dalit Muslims and Dalit Christians in terms of their material well being and social status?
- 2) How does their situation compare with that of: a) the non-Dalit segments of their own communities (i.e., Muslims and Christians); and b) the Dalit segments of other communities?
- 3) Do the disabilities suffered by these groups justify state intervention within the spirit of the Constitution as interpreted by the judiciary, and in keeping with evolving national norms?

Two main kinds of data were gathered to answer the first two questions, ethnographic and statistical. The statistical material presented in this Report consists of original analyses from the latest available NSSO data based on specially produced tabulations. Thus, Chapter 3 constitutes the distinctive contribution of this Report to the literature on the subject, and its findings are summarised below:

Chapter 3 looked at four main areas of comparison: a) proportions of population in poverty (BPL) and affluence (approximately top 5% of distribution); average consumption levels as expressed through percentiles of MPCE; broad occupational categories; and levels of education, specially the two ends of the spectrum represented by illiteracy and graduate or higher degrees. The two groups with whom DMs and DCs were compared were: a) Dalit castes of other communities, i.e., Hindus, Sikhs and Buddhists; and b) non-Dalit castes among Muslims and Christians respectively. The main findings of Chapter 3 may be summarised as follows: