Name of the student: Vinod.CV

Name of the Supervisor: Dr. Narender Kumar

Name of the Co-Supervisor: Dr. Sabiha Hussain

Dr.K.R.Narayanan Centre for Dalit and Minorities Studies, Jamia Millia Islamia University,New Delhi

SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL CONDITIONS OF DALIT CHRISTIANS:

A CASE STUDY OF TRICHY AND CHENGALPATTU IN TAMILNADU.

RESULTS

Socio-demographic characteristics: Quantitative study reveals that the majority of the Dalit Christians are illiterates and males are more educated than the females. This result shows the gender gaps in higher education which becomes evident from secondary education onwards. The study also shows a clear indication that the Dalit Christians are moving away from traditional occupation that determined their social position as outcastes.

Dalit social identity: The results also revealed that the stigma experience due to the lower caste Christian identity is critical challenge they face on everyday life. Dalit Christians were treated with less respect than other people due to their lower caste identity and experienced a substantial amount of generalized perceived stigma that is closely associated to perceived inferior identity.

Dalit self assertion: Dalit agitation and movements against caste based discrimination are active among Dalit Christians in rural Churches.

Socio-demographic correlates of social life: The results indicate that the social participation and engagement are highly restricted which may also likely to result in decreased integration with mainstream social life. Income was found to be a significant variable that influence individuals' perception of consequences. The results show that occupational status has a significant influence on social identity of Dalit Christians that influence their life both within and outside of the Churches. Major findings reveal that the Dalit leaders and community members alike view changes in the caste systems in their respective areas, though the changes are slow and gradual. The study reveals that the Dalit Christians have a very strong historical sense of '*Dalitness*' and their relationships with Non-Dalit upper castes in the context of economic backwardness and subordination. It seems that the Christian Dalits experience the mental conflicts in their religious life because; the egalitarian Christian teachings and actual discrimination they face on account of their lower caste social identity. The community identify that the Church and related issues are central to the inter-community conflicts and they consider separate Church as the only solution.

Dalit Christians at large have began to self awaken for their due rights and freedom from the discrimination that practice within the Churches in rural Tamilnadu therefore as a reactionary step to diffuse the Dalit Christian unity to assert their due rights against caste based discriminations, the upper caste groups impose economic and livelihood restrictions on the Dalit Christians.

. The researcher has developed a conceptual model of social exclusion. The model postulates that lower caste social identity is attached with social stigma at individual and societal levels. This subsequently leads to perceived and actual experience of discrimination which often takes place in the contexts of out-groups' social interaction in social institutions (e.g., schools, churches and society). This is likely to result in a range of psychosocial behaviours from the stigmatized individuals and groups such as avoidance, restriction in out-group social interactions and exchange. These responses may either be self imposed by the stigmatized individuals and groups, or society imposed such as by the church and by upper caste groups, or by both individuals and groups. This seems to produce a wide range of social, psychological and economic disabilities on individuals and in-groups. Thus, the social identity induced experience of stigmatization and discrimination have resulted in the larger social exclusion of Dalit communities in Tamilnadu. This exclusion occurs in the contexts of all social institutions such as schools, religious institutions including Churches, government institutions, civil supplies corporation and local political institution such as village Panchayat etc. The discrimination based on inferior social identity as a social order is found to be induced, maintained and reinforced in all intercommunity social transactions and communications. This deprive and marginalize the Dalits from participating in socio-economic, religious and political institutions in the rural life. Accepting the inferior social identity "as a natural order of things" severely disable Dalits to self assert for their due rights and privileges in their life.

Key words: Dalit Christians, Roman Catholic Church, Church of South India. Evangelicals, Social Exclusion, Discrimination, Social Isolation.