

**CHRISTIAN DALITS AND SECULAR DEMOCRACY:  
A STUDY OF UNITED ANDHRA PRADESH**

**A Thesis Submitted to the University of Hyderabad in partial fulfilment of the  
award of**

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY  
IN  
POLITICAL SCIENCE**

**BY  
S SWAROOP SIRAPANGI**



**DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE**

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

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HYDERABAD – 500046

TELANGANA STATE, INDIA

DECEMBER 2021



## **CERTIFICATE**

**CHRISTIAN DALITS AND SECULAR DEMOCRACY: A STUDY OF UNITED ANDHRA PRADESH** – A thesis submitted during 2021 to the University of Hyderabad in partial fulfilment of the award of a Ph.D. degree in the Department of Political Science.

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The thesis has not been submitted previously in part or in full to this or any other University or institution to award any degree or diploma.

**Signature of the Supervisor**

**Head**

**Department Political Science**

**Dean**

**School of Social Sciences**



## DECLARATION

I, **S SWAROOP SIRAPANGI**, hereby declare that the thesis titled 'CHRISTIAN DALITS AND SECULAR DEMOCRACY: A STUDY OF UNITED ANDHRA PRADESH' submitted by me under the guidance and supervision of Prof **Arun Kumar Patnaik** is a bonafide research work. I also declare that it has not been submitted previously in part or in full to this University or any other University or institution to award any degree or diploma.

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## **CERTIFICATE**

This is to certify that the thesis entitled '**Christian Dalits and Secular Democracy: A Study of United Andhra Pradesh**' submitted by Mr **S Swaroop Sirapangi** bearing enrollment No: 10SPPH05 is a bonafide work carried out by him under **Prof Arun Kumar Patnaik**'s supervision and guidance.

The thesis is free from plagiarism and has not been submitted previously in part or full to this or any other University or institution to award any degree or diploma.

However, parts of this thesis have been published in the following articles or/and presented orally in the Conferences:

### **A. Articles Published in Journals**

- a) Sirapangi, S. S. (2021). Power Thrust of Kapu Caste: The Political Journey of Two Leaders in Andhra Pradesh. *Bhavaveena*, 18(3) p.155-161.
- b) Sirapangi, S. S. (2021). Pawan Kalyan's Political Journey: An Incoherent and Uncertain Path. *Bhavaveena*, 18 (4), p.142-149.

- c) Sirapangi, S. S (2021). Dalit Movement in the Telugu Region: A Critique From Christian Dalit Perspective. *Bhavaveena*, 18(7), p.150-158

## **B. Book Review Publications**

- a) Sirapangi, S. S. (2017). A Critique of 'Hind Swaraj' and 'Hindutva'. *Journal of Politics & Governance*, 51-54.
- b) Sirapangi, S. S. (2017). Annotated Critical Deliberation on 'Annihilation of Caste'. *The Criterion: An International Journal in English*, 1266-1268.
- c) Sirapangi, S. S. (2018). Dynamics of Indian Affirmative Action Policy. *The Criterion: An International Journal in English*, 319-324.
- d) Sirapangi, S. S. (2019). Faith, Adorable Admiration and Catholic Women's Seminary & Convent Life. *Indian Review of World Literature in English*, Vol. 15, No. II, pp. 1-4.
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## **C. Paper Presentations in the Conferences**

- a) Presented a paper titled 'Dalit Christians: An Examination from Liberal Secular Democratic Perspective' on the sidelines of International Conference on 'Global Seminar on Exploring the Cultural and Literary Nationalism of the Fourth World: Aboriginals/Natives/Dalits', organised by the Department of English, Acharya Nagarjuna University, from December 14-16, 2012.
- b) Presented a paper titled 'Caste, Religion and Discrimination: The Case of Dalit Christians', on the sidelines of National Seminar on 'Development of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes: Opportunities, Achievements and Challenges', at the National Institute of Rural Development (NIRD), Hyderabad, from January 9-11, 2013. Organised by Prof Chakravarthy, Head, Centre for Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (CPME).
- c) Presented a Paper on 'Politics of Religious Intolerance: The Case of Christians in Telangana', in collaboration with Mr Syam Kumar, Ph.D. Scholar, Department of Anthropology, University of Hyderabad, on the sidelines of National Seminar on 'Communal Violence, Persecutions and Social Exclusion of Muslims and Christians in India', organised by Centre for the Study of Social Exclusion and Inclusive Policy (CSEIP), Maulana Azad National Urdu University (MANUU), Hyderabad, from March 20-21, 2014. Funded by ICSSR, New Delhi.
- d) Presented a paper on 'Overshadow of Political Deliberations Over Public Policy: The Distinct Case of Andhra Pradesh Politics Since 2014', on the sidelines of the Centre for Advanced Studies (CAS) – II, Department of

- Political Science, Osmania University, organised National Seminar on 'State Division, New Governments And Policy Regimes', from March 22 - 23, 2017.
- e) Presented a paper on 'Political Strategies and Deliberations over Muslim Backward Classes Inclusion: The Distinctive Case in Andhra Pradesh & Telangana', on the sidelines of the National Seminar on 'Politics of Inclusion: Empowering Minorities in India', from September 5-6, 2017. Organised and hosted by the Department of Political Science, University of Hyderabad.
- f) Presented a paper on 'Christian Dalits and Reservation Demand: A Critical Relook into Telugu Region's Dalit Movement and Discourse' on the sidelines of National Seminar on 'Reservation, Representation and Social Justice', from 22 to 23 March 2019. Organised by the Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences, Osmania University.

Further, as part of the coursework requirement, the student has completed and awarded the certificate in the following courses during his M.Phil. programme. As a result, he has been exempted from the same courses re-pursuit during his Ph.D. tenure. The details of the courses passed by the student are as follows:

<b>Course Code</b>	<b>Course Title</b>	<b>Credits</b>	<b>Pass/Fail</b>
SP600	Research Methodology – I	4	Pass
SP601	Research Methodology – II	4	Pass
SP603	Individual Course	4	Pass
SP604	Advanced Theories in Indian Political Process	4	Pass

Date: 20 December 2021

Signature of the Supervisor

Station: Hyderabad

Head,

Dean,

Department of Political Science

School of Social Sciences

# **DEDICATED TO**

## **The University of Hyderabad**

*(I admire most the University of Hyderabad for providing quality professional higher educational space in the Indian higher education domain.)*

## **The Department of Political Science**

### **University of Hyderabad**

*(I owe much to the Department of Political Science, University of Hyderabad, for taking me into its fold for M.A., M.Phil., & Ph.D. programmes.)*

&

## **The University Grants Commission**

*(At last but not least, I honestly extend my gratitude to the University Grants Commission for extending financial assistance in various forms for the pursuit of higher education in India.)*



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# **Preface**

The present search started in August 2010 after registration for Ph.D. In the political geography sense, the thesis focused on the Christian Dalits of Andhra Pradesh (AP). Historically, AP was understood and well recognised in three distinct geographical zones, i.e., coastal Andhra, Rayalaseema and Telangana. However, due to intensified political developments, separate Telangana State (TS) was formed in 2014 by bifurcating the existing 'united AP'.

The word 'united AP' in the thesis primarily refers to the geopolitical entity from 1956-2014, i.e., until the formation of separate TS. However, unless and otherwise specifically mentioned, united AP may also refer to the Telangana region, even after separate TS formation. After forming separate TS, the word 'residual AP' is legally coined to refer to the remaining part of AP. The residual AP consists of coastal Andhra and Rayalaseema regions, i.e., excluding the Telangana region. Residual AP is a word best coined and popularised by the AP Reorganisation Act, 2014.

Throughout the thesis, the word 'State' in a political sense is used with the capital letter 'S'. This refers to any nation-State like the Indian State or provincial Indian States like AP and TS. Based on the context, the readers have to understand the same with cognitive diligence. The Indian national Government is commonly referred as 'Central Government' in popular parlance. However, in the thesis, 'Union Government' or 'Government of India' is used. Thus, the popular version of 'Central Government' is avoided.

The readers also encounter a unique version of words, like; 'Telugu States' and 'Telugu region'. The Telugu States, as referred to in the thesis, is about both AP and TS. After the formation of separate TS in 2014, the usage of the Telugu States has increased in the popular mood. Additionally, wherever encountered, the word 'Telugu region' also refers to one Telugu State or two Telugu States or additional Telugu region beyond the two politico-geographical Telugu States. However, the word Telugu region is primarily coined to refer either to one Telugu State or both Telugu States. Telugu people are also

widely spread over in neighbouring States, like Karnataka, Maharashtra, Odisha, and Tamil Nadu.

## II

The readers will encounter unique words like; Dalits, ex-untouchables, Scheduled Castes (SC), Christian Dalits, Hindu Dalits, Sikhs Dalits, Buddhists Dalits, SC Buddhist, SC Sikhs, SC Christians, etc. Words like Christian Dalits, Sikh Dalits, Buddhist Dalits, SC Buddhist, SC Hindu and SC Sikh are socially and legally correct. However, the word 'SC Christian' is not legally correct, and also socially not popular and not well recognised. If encountered anywhere in the thesis, the word 'SC Christian' mean all those Christian Dalits, who legally seek SC status, but practice Christianity in the private realm, adherently. Same time, it should also be noted that constitutionally and legally, the 'SC Christian' should be recognised as a correct term, subject to modification of the 1950 Presidential Order.

Historically experienced social untouchability is the prime recognised criteria to recognise *Panchamas*, ex-untouchables, or Dalits under the SC category. During the British India regime, the *Panchamas* or (ex)-untouchables were referred to with different legal designations at various points of time, like 'Depressed Castes', etc. The Constitution of India preferred and coined the term SC. Thus, SC is a constitutional and legal criterion to recognise the ex-untouchables. At the same time, the Constitution of India, under Article 17, banned the practice of untouchability in any form. As a result, the words 'ex-untouchables' or SC is used.

The word 'Dalit' is a popular version of assertion. It indicates 'broken people'. In modern India, the ex-untouchables or SC are popularly recognised with the word Dalit. The word Dalit started to gain widespread currency from the decade 1970s. In the thesis, wherever the word Dalit is coined, it might mean legally recognised SC or legally not recognised SC also (i.e., though legally not recognised as SC, but falls under historical ex-untouchable category). Thus it does not mean that all the ex-Untouchable sections are recognised under the SC category. However, in this thesis, the word 'Dalit' refers only to the constitutionally and legally recognised SC section.

The Government of India discouraging the word ‘Dalit’ coinage and commanded to use the standard constitutional and legal term SC in official communication. However, there is a certain level of opposition and dissent against this order issued by the Government of India. The Government of India orders strictly pertains to only official communication, but not social communication. Thus, usage of the word Dalit in the thesis should be primarily understood from a social perspective, in addition to, if required, concerning the constitutional and legal dimensions.

Across the thesis, the ‘1950 Scheduled Castes Order’ is also mentioned as ‘1950 Constitutional Order’ and ‘1950 Presidential Order’. Thus, '1950 Order' in any of these formats should be understood as identical in synonymous mode, without any confusion.

### **III**

The original Constitution of India recognised SC without any religious connotation. However, on 10 August 1950, Presidential Order was released, recognising Dalits based on religious criteria. The prime focus of the thesis touches on this issue and denounces religious backed SC recognition as against the spirit of the original constitution and other legal ethos and international conventions. Moreover, proceeds to argue and prove the same. From the 1950 Constitutional Order background realm, the words – ‘Christian Dalits’ and ‘SC Christians’ terms should be understood as a negation to the issued 1950 Constitutional Order, especially the latter category.

The Presidential Order of 1950 first recognised SC only based on Hindu religious practice. Or, all those Dalits/ex-untouchables that practice the Hindu religion were only recognised under the SC category. However, all those Dalits who practice other religions like Sikhism, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, etc. were denied the same recognition. This is against the ethos of the originally adopted Constitution of India. However, the 1950 Constitutional Order was amended subsequently in 1956 and 1990; and Sikh and Buddhist Dalit converts were also recognised under the SC fold, in addition to existing SC Hindus. However, majorly, the Christian Dalits and Muslim Dalits are denied recognition under the SC fold. The thesis argues that the 1950 Presidential order should be totally withdrawn instead of further attempts to amend it to include Christian Dalits

or/and Muslim Dalits. Thus, the thesis highlights that the original Constitutional legality and morality should be restored, adopted and adhered to. Even, various committees, commission reports and judicial observations also opined in the same manner. Justice Ranganath Misra Commission report is a latest instance in this respect.

As per the Constitution of India's spirit, legally, SC is recognised based on historically practised untouchability against *Panchamas* by the remaining society. *Panchamas* refers to the fifth Varna, other than Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vysya and Shudra. Though the practice of untouchability is banned, in reality, it is practised in varied forms. Recognising SC based on faced discriminatory untouchability is one of the most popular legal criteria or the sole criteria for recognition of the SC, in addition to their 'social and educational backwardness. In fact, the 'social and educational backwardness of the SC is regarded as an inherent quality.

Since the Presidential Order of 1950 recognises Dalits based on religious background, the Christian Dalits, mainly in South India, started to seek SC status legally, though they adherently profess Christianity in personal and family life. As a result, in the thesis, the SC Christians refers to those, who legally sought on record SC status, but in personal and family life who adherently profess Christianity! Additionally, at some level, the word 'Christian Dalits' also indicates, unless and otherwise specifically mentioned, both officially converted Christian Dalits and those who legally seek SC status but continues to follow adherently Christianity in the personal and family realm. Moreover, the official Dalit converts in the Telugu region are recognised under the BC-C category.

In the most popular version, 'Christian Dalits' is understood to all those who legally declared their conversion to Christianity as per government records. They are not recognised under the SC fold due to the 1950 Constitutional Order and subsequent amendments in 1956 and 1990, which only recognises Dalit converts to Buddhism, Hinduism and Sikhism. The Christian Dalits are placed under the Backward Classes (BC) category at the provincial States level. In AP, Christian Dalits are recognised under BC sub-category 'C' and are extended a mere one percent reservation. At the national level also, the Christian Dalits are recognised and are placed under the OBC category.

However, they deserve recognition under the SC category at both the national and States level.

As part of the present research, Christian Dalits refer to both BC and SC Christians, unless and otherwise specially mentioned. The research treats SC Christians also as 'Christian Dalits' due to their adherent faith. A significant section of Christian Dalits claims SC status, as they fear losing their substantive State affirmative action policies if they officially proclaim their adherent Christian background. Thus, Christian Dalits should be understood in both legal and immorally illegal categories. The Indian State should recognise the Dalits as a religious neutral category and extend SC status.

Though the Christian Dalits seek SC certificates, in reality, they cannot be fully declared as seeking fake SC certificates because they can be considered as seeking immoral SC certificates because the State itself has made and pushed them to seek SC certificates immorally. It is the responsibility of the State to rectify this gross unconstitutional mistake and pave proper dignified religious freedom to the Christian Dalits to seek SC Certificates. Moreover, unless and otherwise, the Christian Dalits obtain Baptism from the Church pastor and then on record if they seek SC certificate, then they can be considered as illegally seeking SC status. Even then, it is the responsibility of the State to ensure that Dalit (Christians) obtain SC certificates, by repealing the 1950 Constitutional Order.

Most specific, though limited literature is available; it refers to Christian Dalits as all those who are legally under BC. On the other hand, most of the broader Dalit literature in AP / Telugu States / South India is inclined explicitly towards the SC category. SC category primarily refers to (illegally and immorally under) SC section, though a significant chunk of the Dalits is into Christian fold. Thus, there is a profound religious blindfold in available primary research in not properly recognising Dalits based on their specific religious category, i.e. in this case, from a Christian Dalit background. The present research attempts to curb such a blind gap to an extent.

Even the Dalits also failed to politicise their religious background for repeal of the 1950 Presidential Order. They are comfortable in seeking SC caste certificates for legal

purposes but adherently follows Christianity in the private and family realm. However, the Dalit movement in AP has been busy and comfortable in waging movements to protect reservation, sub-categorisation of reservation, and fight against discriminatory atrocities. No united Dalit movement is seen for repeal of the 1950 Presidential Order. This is the biggest drawback of the Dalit movement in the Telugu region.

The (officially converted) Christian Dalit devotees' movement is seen as a limited and non-active movement. However, primarily their movement is coordinated and led by the (Catholic and a few Protestant congregations) Church. Their exclusive movement is for the Christian Dalit devotees', who are placed under BC category. They are highly microscopic and minimal in leading their movement for their recognition under SC fold by amending or repealing the 1950 Presidential Order. The researcher also exposes the lack of collaborative engagement between Christian Dalits seeking SC Certificates and those already into the formal Christian Dalit category, i.e. under the BC sect. This is the biggest drawback in the Dalit movement in AP and at another level.

In fact, most Dalit literature considers Dalits as a religious neutral category, or specific religious background is not highlighted. In another sense, the discrimination faced by the Dalits is directly considered for Dalit issues study and analysis without specific reference to their religious identity. This can be considered as a trend in itself. However, academic research should always be specific. Thus, if the religious background of the Dalits is taken into consideration every time, then that would be better (and it should be taken into consideration). Specific studies from the religious fold of Dalits are not widely prevalent, especially when atrocities against them took place. For instance, at Chundururu village, when Dalit Mala's were massacred by the Kamma landlords, the case was fought under atrocity committed against SC category. However, in reality, most of the victims were adherent followers of Christianity. The same also gets revealed when analysed most of the Chundururu victims that they hailed from Christian Dalit backgrounds. Most of the studies on the Chundururu incident failed to highlight this inherent religious dimension. The AP society also started to perceive Dalits under the Christian fold, though Dalits were legally claiming SC status. The religious background of the Dalits in AP and South India is not much politicised so far.

However, specific literature is available from a ‘Christian Dalit’ background in South India. Such research is specifically inclined towards officially converted ‘formal Christian Dalits’, i.e. BC, but not much inclined towards the SC Christians. There is significantly less literature on the intersection of formal Christian Dalit and SC Christian category. The present research attempts to curb such literature void, to an extent.

#### **IV**

The empirical field research was conducted in an urban coastal AP location during 2012-2013, covering six to seven months in two phases. The urban field location is pseudo named as ‘the City-Q’. The exact location of the urban zone is hidden for reasons of sensitivity. This sensitivity aroused due to SC hidden identity. As the Christian Dalits are legally seeking SC status and practising Christianity adherently in the personal realm, are not interested in revealing their identity. Christian Dalit devotees were also uncomfortable and fearsome about the researcher's engagement on the engaged sensitive research aspect. Some of them expressed fear that if their identity gets revealed to the Hindutva forces, the research data could be misused to target them in intense communal tensions. As a result, the researcher also considered their sensitivity and expressed fear and accordingly coined pseudo names to refer to the original characters. Coupled with this reason and other pragmatic factors, the location of the research and identities of all the persons interviewed and interactions held with various people by the researcher are hidden, and throughout the thesis, pseudo names are coined for narration and analysis. However, it should be minded that the factual background of the location and real characters description was periodically shared with the Research Supervisor and other doctoral committee members whenever they met periodically to oversee the progress of the thesis.

The sensitivity to this research arose because of a particular study of two Protestant Churches, their priests and devotees. The Christians of these two Churches were apprehensive of the involved sensitivity of their dual identity though they adherently follow Christianity and lead Churches; in reality, most devotees of these two Churches seek SC status for legal benefits. As a result, if the exact details of the Churches, devotees and other details get revealed to the broader public, like to the Hindutva forces,



they were apprehensive that they could be attacked to rake religious violence against them and increase unrest in the wider society. Thus, as a result, the pseudo-identity of location and involved characters is imposed across the thesis.

At another level, though the prime focal point of this research was concentrated at the City-Q, in reality, the researcher had conducted a few field visits across the district in which City-Q was located. Same time, the researcher had also paid a personal visit to the Vikarabad town in the Telangana region in 2014, when the Hindu Vahini fundamentalist group brutally murdered a Protestant pastor. However, Vikarabad should not be considered as a focal point of empirical research. Same time, at the united AP capital, Hyderabad, the researcher had attended a few meetings related to the Christian Dalits and interacted with a few individuals. However, in reality, Hyderabad should also be not considered as a focal empirical field study site. The focal field site concentration of this research was the City-Q only.

## V

The expressions combined with the words 'Dalit Christians' and 'Christian Dalits' are well used by academicians. There is nothing much to confuse with these expressions either in this thesis or in the wider available literature outside the thesis domain.

The abbreviated reference to UPA – I and UPA - II refers to the United Progressive Alliance governance regimes headed by Manmohan Singh as Prime Minister during 2004-2009 and 2009-2014, respectively. The INC was the major player in the UPA coalition governance regime.

In the thesis, the readers come across 'Dalit' and 'Dalit-Bahujan' words. The first Dalit identity indicates autonomous Dalit identity and assertion. And the next, 'Dalit-Bahujan', indicates Dalit autonomous identity and engaged political assertive nature in association and collaboration with the wider Bahujan sections. Thus, a clear distinction should be understood between Dalit and Bahujan sections. Dalits are clearly distinguished from the rest of the Bahujan section for their autonomous recognition as a distinctive section.

Across the thesis, Christian denomination, 'Protestant' sect with the alphabet capital 'P' letter is highlight.

The Christian Dalits wish to receive SC Certificate, and for them, religion is not a prime concern. Their prime concern is only SC identity, but not religions like Hinduism. They seek SC certificate only for the sake of legality. Moreover, there is also a trend continuing in slow mode, that some Dalits in the Telugu region are seeking SC Buddhism certificates by claiming Ambedkar lineage. However, most of them were not into strict Buddhism discourse. For legality and Ambedkarite spirit, they are seeking SC Buddhism certificates. But then, SC Buddhism seeking category is very microscopic. Above all, the SC Buddhism certificates seeking section is not the concern of the present research domain in any form.

\*\*\*\*\*

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The present doctoral research is a culmination of more than a decade's long process. The work started in August 2010 after registration for Ph.D. *As an academic mentor, Prof Arun Kumar Patnaik* was instrumental in channelising my enthusiasm and efforts towards this work. I share more than a decade long association with *Prof Arun*. I was Prof Arun's student during my M.A. and M.Phil. also. Every scholar associated with *Prof Arun* invariably enjoys complete academic freedom. I was also fortunate enough to enjoy the same since my M.Phil. days. Such unrestrained academic freedom helped to read a lot from various dimensions and draw cognitive connections. There are a few qualities, which I have admired and learned from *Prof Arun*. The first and foremost quality was: how to engage with scholars while guiding them! The second was his strong commitment to 'dialogue'. Thus, I express my immense gratitude to **Prof Arun** for bearing me since 2008, the year I associated with him for the M. Phil. programme.

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I have been interested in 'caste, religion and politics' concerning India. Going close on such heel, I got an opportunity to associate with **Prof David Mosse**, [School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London] led an international research project on '*Caste Out of Development: Civil Society Activism and Transnational Advocacy on Dalit Rights and Development*'. Further, Dr Suresh Kumar Digumarthi and Dr Sambaiah Gundimeda were instrumental in letting this opportunity knock through Prof David. As part of Prof David's project, I conducted fieldwork on 'Andhra Pradesh Christian Dalits'. The work on 'Andhra Pradesh Christian Dalits' and M.Phil. work on 'Indian Muslims'

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## II

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### III

During the academic year 2017-2018, the UoH administration headed by Vice-Chancellor ***Prof Appa Rao Podile*** created a big hurdle concerning Ph.D. De-Registration process. This hurdle almost continued throughout the academic year 2017-18. During this phase, a few like: the then UoH Students' Union President, Sreerag; General Secretary, Arif; Prof Phanindra Goyari (School of Economics, UoH); Dr Abijith Joshi (Department of Philosophy, UoH); and other University student organisations like; Ambedkar Students' Association (ASA), Bahujan Students' Front (BSF), Dalit Students' Union (DSU), Students' Federation of India (SFI), etc. stood beside all the scholars who faced this problem, in addition to my supervisor ***Prof Arun***. I thank every one of them for their committed support.

During the academic year 2018-2019, I was associated with the newly established Central University of Andhra Pradesh (CUAP) as Guest Faculty in Political Science. At CUAP, a few became well-wishers and wished me to obtain the doctorate at the earliest. They include primarily but are not limited to: *Prof S Hanuman Kennedy, Dr Sangeeta Rao, Dr Nunna Bhushanam, Dr Rachakond Krishna Mohan*, etc. I earnestly thank all of them for their concerned best wishes. I also immensely thank Prof Manjari Katju, Former Head, Department of Political Science, for her wishing good luck.

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***S Swaroop Sirapangi.***

# Abbreviations

AELC	Andhra Evangelical Lutheran Church
AIADMK	Anna Dravida Munnetram Kazhagam
AICU	All India Catholic Union
AIMIM	All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen
AP	Andhra Pradesh
BC	Backward Classes
BJP	Bharatiya Janata Party
BSP	Bahujan Samaj Party
CAA	Citizenship Amendment Act
CBCI	Catholic Bishop's Conference of India
CM	Chief Minister
CPI	Communist Party of India
CPIM	Communist Party of India Marxist
CSCO	Christians of Scheduled Caste Origin
CSI	Church of South India
CSI	Church of South India
DP	Dalit Panthers
ECIL	Electronics Corporation of India
FTII	Film and Television Institute of India
GO	Gazette Orders
GoI	Government of India
GPI	Global Peace Initiative
HP	Himachal Pradesh
IAS	Indian Administrative Service

ICSP	Indian Christian Secular Party
IIT	Indian Institute of Technology
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INC	Indian National Congress
IPBP	India Praja Bandu Party
ISKCON	International Society for Krishna Consciousness
JAC	Joint Action Committee
JNU	Jawaharlal Nehru University
JP	Janta Party
JS	Jana Sena
MBBS	Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery
MLA	Member of Legislative Assembly
MP	Member of Parliament
MRPS	Madiga Reservation Poratha Samithi
NCCI	National Council for Churches in India
NDA	National Democratic Alliance
NRI	Non Resident Indian
NTR	Nandamuri Taraka Rama Rao
OBC	Other Backward Classes
OC	Open Category
PM	Prime Minister
PPF	Protestant Pastor's Fellowship
PRP	Praja Rajyam Party
PSP	Praja Shanti Party
RCM	Roman Catholic Mission
RKP	Rashtreeya Kraisthava Parishad
RPI	Republican Party of India



*Abbreviations*

RSS	Rashtriya Swyam Sevak
SC	Scheduled Caste
SCS	Special Category Status
SJ	Society for Jesus
ST	Scheduled Tribes
SU	Satavahana University
TBC	Telugu Baptist Church
TDP	Telugu Desam Party
TN	Tamil Nadu
TS	Telangana State
TTD	Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam
UP	Uttar Pradesh
UPA	United Progressive Alliance
USA	United States of America
VHP	Vishwa Hindu Parishad
WB	World Bank
WCC	World Council of Churches
YSR	YS Rajashekara Reddy
YSRCP	Yuvajana Sramika Rythu Congress Party

## Chapter: I

# INTRODUCTION

### Abstract:

*The chapter provides historical background into the caste dynamics and how fifth Varna in the form of 'ex-untouchables' came into existence. It also touches on a few aspects of the Dalit movement in the Telugu region, i.e. concerning united Andhra Pradesh. Then, the chapter proceeds to draw focus over Christianity in India and conversion dynamics. The nature of caste and Christianity engagement in renewed fashion is drawn focus over. The next part interrogates how Christian Dalits conversion from Hinduism was not received well by the Indian political section during the modern Indian democratic age, though India declares and adopts constitutionally 'liberal secular democracy'. In the end, the research objectives and subsequent chapters of thesis are elucidated. Methodologically, the relevance of the chapter can be visualised from the 'interrogative approach' to arrive at and construct a practical research problem.*

## I

The word 'caste' was coined by the Portuguese, who visited India for trade and commerce in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The word 'caste' had its origin from the Spanish word *Casta*, which roughly meant: breed, lineage and race. The word caste was based on the notions of ritual purity, pollution and social status. It depended on a broad four-fold *Varna* order, i.e., based on *Brahmin*, *Vysya*, *Kshatriya* and *Sudra*. However, each *Varna* got internally segregated into different castes, innumerably. Caste rank was the primary cause for discriminatory marginalisation and segregation within each *Varna* and against other *Varnas*. (Chand, 2009)

The precise root cause for the evolution and strengthening of the caste system is not yet understandably established. However, there are a few interesting creative, logical perspectives were proposed and developed by various scholars into its genesis, strengthened discourse and operative dynamics. The operative dynamics of caste are illustratively mentioned, captured and analysed in various ancient texts, like; Manusmriti, Vedas, etc. social customary law codes of ancient times. (Dumont, 2013) A few scholars have expressed varied discerning perspectives.

*Varna*, due to the prevalence of broad caste notions, further divided into different categories. For instance, *Brahmin* is a *Varna*. However, in reality, within *Brahmin Varna*, many heterogeneous caste variants exist across the Indian sub-continent. Regional variations and continued notions of superiority and inferiority are further seen within each *Varna* and caste. As a result, though they feel widely equal on a broader scale, they possess internal segregation. The *Brahmins* main thrust focused on spiritual leadership and tendering advice to the King in administration.

In the same manner, *Vysya* is a *Varna* recognised based on the trading community's prominence. As usual, as mentioned above concerning the Brahmin's segregation, *Vysya's* were also segregated in innumerable ways. Though various castes under *the Vysya* category have a shared notion of collective togetherness based on *Varna*, in reality, they are divided on further caste distinctions internally. The internal caste segregation makes it difficult to escape ritualistic social status, which was acquired by

birth. Thus, caste is acquired by birth, and one has to lead life till death without any escape.

Similarly, *Kshatriya and Sudra* Varnas were also innumerable segregated. *Kshatriya* Varna was the basis for establishing kingdoms and rule as per the advice of the 'cabinet'<sup>1</sup>, under *Brahmins* guidance. The first duty of the *Kshatriya* sect was to protect and promote *Sanatana Dharma* by ensuring adherence to the strict caste system. The prime responsibility of Kshatriyas was to prevent Varna's inter-mix and protection of caste order by imposing severe punishments for violations as per the dictates of *the Brahmin* ministry. Over time, the words 'Varna and caste' have become synonymous, though, in reality, there is a strict distinction between the two terms.

The *Sudhra* Varna was the last working-class sect, and within this Varna, many castes are prevalent. This Varna should serve the above three, i.e. *Brahmin, Vysya and Kshatriya Varnas*. (Ambedkar, 2007) Overall, across all the Varnas and castes, heterogeneity across the Indian subcontinent is visible based on various parameters, like region, sub-regional, cultural, linguistic, dialectical, etc. domains.

## II

The *Brahmin* ministry dictated the Kings based on ancient text commandments, which were sacrosanct guiding sources for law and governance. Brahmins were the primary composers of ancient texts, as other sections were denied literary knowledge and practice. Thus, the ancient customary social law was codified chiefly by the Brahmins. Again, there is mostly more than one variant of ancient texts. As a result, the authenticity of the ancient texts and which mode of available version should be followed become a source of contestation.

The Hindus have significantly less reading habit of their believed ancient texts. Mostly, Hindu ancient texts are available in the Sanskrit version. Even if they were translated into Indian vernacular languages, they are still in Sanskritised oriented vernacular version. This indicates that even the Indian vernacular languages literary composition style is entirely different from ordinary people's lay language usage. The lay people's language is not used in the available Hindu ancient texts. As a result, in Indian society, all those who

proclaim to know the Sanskrit language preaches in lay peoples language the old Hindu version of the believed sacred texts. However, other popular religious texts like the Holy Bible, The Quran, etc. are primarily available in ordinary people's understandable language.

At times, a few Sanskrit (Hindu) text scholars attempted to allay apprehensions and fears that certain widely believed notions of inequality are not mentioned in the ancient Hindu texts, though people possessed such beliefs. The Sanskrit language's Hindu priests were also widely divided over many issues of contentious nature of believed sacred Hindu texts on a wide range of matters of pertinent contemporary relevance. This establishes a vast gulf between the quality and composition of the ancient Hindu texts and ordinary people's held contrary beliefs.

### III

The western constructed perspectives about caste gained currency with the views synthesised by the experts like the Orientalists, colonial administrators, anthropologists, Christian missionaries' notes, etc. sources. This indicates that Indian notions about caste, which were prevalent until then, started to have other extended perspectives constructed. The sections outside the Indian sub-continent articulated divergent ideas about caste after witnessing and experiencing multiple encounters with Indians as part of modernity engagement. (Dumont, 2013) (Khare, 2014)

Caste as an independent social institution is prevalent in the South Asian nation-States, like in; Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Even after conversion to religions like Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, etc., caste invariably followed South Asians. Thus, though developed as a peculiar social institution, caste became a stumbling block after conversion to other religions and migration to other nation-States. (Raj K. A., 2008)

### IV

Interestingly, *Ati-Sudra* or (ex)untouchable is an out-caste. Initially, only four Varnas were recognised in various ancient texts. The basis of Hinduism, Hindu spirituality,

notions about ritual purity and pollution, caste supremacy, etc., dynamics were inscribed in various Hindu texts like Vedas. Part ten of the *Purusha Sukta* Veda contained a detailed reference to the origin, basis and criteria for the operation of caste notions. However, some of the Hindu spiritual texts are treated as based on mythological references and construction. However, people's beliefs over varied versions of Hindu spiritual texts are manifold. (Ambedkar, 2013)

The existence of the fifth Varna, i.e., *Ati-Sudhra*, became a puzzle to many scholars, including to Ambedkar, as there was no direct reference to this Varna in ancient texts. As a result, Ambedkar pondered over to unpack this riddle. At last, he concluded that all those who converted to Buddhism or got married by deviating from the recognised four *Varnas* lifestyle must have become the fifth *Varna*. Thus the fifth *Varna* order came into existence. The *Ati-Sudra* sect is synonymous with the ex-untouchable section.

Ambedkar, who is regarded as a champion of the Dalit liberation movement in modern India, had put forward his version of understanding the genesis of caste order. He passionately decoded various historical texts and attempted to deal with the possible genesis of untouchability and the caste system's origin. At last, he ended up proposing a few possible reasons for the birth of the caste system. According to him, 'caste is not just a division of labour; it is also a potential source for the division of labourers'. Thus, caste becomes a stumbling block when attempts are masterminded to forge unity steps for solidarity and emancipation. (Ambedkar, 2007 )

According to article 17, the Constitution of India prohibited the practice of 'untouchability' in any form. Having prohibited its coinage, the Constitution of India devised a legal terminology in the form of Scheduled Castes (SC) to recognise and refer to the ex-untouchable category. The Government of India (GoI) drew SC list, and the President of India authorised the final accent under article 341 (1). While preparing the SC list, untouchability practice was taken into prime consideration, in addition to other parameters like 'social and educational backwardness'. The popular synonym for SC recognition in mainstream society is 'Dalits'. While SC is a constitutional and legal construct, 'Dalit' is a popular social construct. (National News, 2018)

Mahatma Jyothirao Phule worked immensely for the uplift of marginalised sections like SC. (Omvedt, 2004). The word 'Dalit' gained significance due to his work for SC betterment. The word 'Dalit' literally meant 'broken people'. Though Ambedkar did not popularise the concept of Dalit, his philosophy remained central to the term. The word Dalit encompasses all marginalised or broken people. However, popularly only SC or ex-untouchables are recognised under the domain Dalit. The word Dalit gained popularity during the 1970s, with Dalit Panthers (DP) assertion for rights, identity and self-respect. The word Dalit remained an accessible version of articulation and assertion though DP's ideological radical movement lost significance and ground. (Kota, 2019)

## V

The word 'Dalit' was discouraged by the GoI and ordered to coin in official discourse only the term SC. (Swati Mathur, 2018) Though the word Dalit gained increasing popularity and acceptance in society, there were contrary perspectives too. For instance, in States like Andhra Pradesh (AP), though the word Dalit is widely popular and gained full acceptance, in reality, sub-caste consciousness is also high, based on Madiga, Mala, etc. among the SC. (Jayaraju, 2007) A few sections utilised the word Dalit in various positive and negative ways. Based on Dalit assertion, certain privileges were cornered by a sub-caste within SC. For instance, Malas in AP were successful on the plank of Dalit and Ambedkarite identity. At the same time, in AP, Madiga's were relatively unsuccessful on Dalit character.

At another level, by asserting sub-caste identity, another set of privileges were gained. The SC, which could not contend based on SC or Dalit or sub-caste identity, may also lose substantially. A caste section among Dalits may secure or lose substantially when they assert on sub-caste identity. Sometimes sub-caste identity may become a boon, and on some other occasions, such identity and assertion may become a curse. In any form, caste is a central feature for social and legal forms of exclusion and inclusion and social privileges and discrimination. Under such prevalent pragmatic circumstances, the notion of 'annihilation of caste' became a distant reality.

At times, even a specific concern of any sub-caste among Dalits was portrayed as a collective concern. To further explain this, even if any particular Dalit community perceived any specific threat or danger, they started to portray their opposition or concern under more substantial injustice meted out to the entire Dalit section. For instance, while Malas in AP opposed sub-categorisation of 15% earmarked reservation to corner substantive benefit exclusively, Madiga's voice and demand opposing the same got submerged. Thus, while Mala's were happy under the brand label of Dalit identity, Madiga's perceived such status as a curse. As a result, Madiga's preferred their prime identity recognition on caste identity; and Mala's were comfortable on assertion under Dalit and Ambedkarite identities. (Mutaiah, 2007)

As a result of the heterogeneous Dalit composition, every caste among SC is not loud enough to be audible and visible. Only the voices and perceptions of dominant Dalits were distinctly visible and audible to the larger society and political class. A dominant section need not be numerically predominant. For instance, when observing the dominant ruling castes in India, no caste is numerically predominant in any single geographic, political unit usually. As a result, of late, regional dynamics across India, based on sub caste consciousness among Dalits, were also underway.

A few prominent States where sub caste consciousness among Dalits rose to a peak includes, but are not limited to: AP, Bihar, Haryana, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Punjab, Tamil Nadu (TN), Telangana State (TS), Uttar Pradesh (UP), etc. Based on prevalent sub-caste consciousness among Dalits, a few States have even initiated specific policy programmes to ameliorate their condition. In a few other States, demands, movements, political pressures and political parties' promises were underway for the design of specific policy programmes initiation targeted at the sub-caste level, even among Dalits.

A few Dalit sections were also asserting specific sub-caste identity according to their necessity. This indicates, when-ever the label of Dalit identity was required, the same was articulated. Moreover, when solidarity, assertion and further benefits on a sub-caste basis were needed, the same was worn on one's sleeve as prime identity. Further, whenever a more prominent identity label was required, the same was asserted under the 'Dalit-Bahujan' identity caption. For instance, though Madiga and Mala sections were



segregated in AP, they sometimes united under the more prominent Dalit identity slogan to highlight atrocities against them. Even UP Dalits were pioneers in championing Dalit-Bahujan politics. In particular, *Chamars*, a dominant section among UP Dalits, were at the forefront in leading Dalit-Bahujan politics under Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP).

All this indicates that various marginalised communities were known for using multiple conveniently coined identity terms intended to suit the required level of identity assertion. At some other level, coinage and operation of these many ideological, social and legal identities also portray the profound heterogeneous nature of Indian society and marginalised sections composition. The heterogeneity nature also makes marginalised sections, at some level, unable to get fully united for political assertion and capture State power. Recognition of general heterogeneous nature among Dalits and addressing their inherent marginalisation without opposing the same only brings-in unity. Any opposition to recognising the same leads to disunity.

A few 'Dalit-Bahujan' intellectuals coined a famous ideological slogan. According to such scholars, there was robust shared identity solidarity among different sections of SC, Scheduled Tribes (ST), Other Backward Classes (OBC) <sup>2</sup> Since interests of the marginalised section were neglected by majority society and the State was under clutches of upper castes social, political and cultural dominance; a more significant 'Dalit-Bahujan' ideological assertion for social, cultural and political redemption was coined and asserted. (Ilaiyah, 2015)

The 'Dalit-Bahujan' identity was not entirely successful on pragmatic electoral alliances and coalition governments' composition. The political process and the levels of political churning were dynamically under-going drastic variations. (Gudavarthy, 2019) The ideological inclination of Dalit-Bahujan identity politics was refuted as an incoherent understanding of the socio-cultural and political history of the marginalised sections vis-a-vis upper castes. (Nagaraj, 2014)

Jaffrelot C. (2011) observed regional historical, cultural and social factors in understanding; why marginalised sections in some geographic locations were politically successful and why their political unity and churning was not underway in some other

regions? Towards this end, it was observed that in the South Indian States, a State-sponsored reformative action plan for marginalised sections was underway for a sustained duration. Such a position was not prevalent in some other regional locations like North India. As a result, BSP was successful on the plank of high-level assertion due to sustained experience of marginalisation in North Indian UP. The marginalised sections in South India were relatively not much oppressed compared to the North Indian scenario. As a result, parties like BSP failed to emerge in the South.

## VI

Historically, SC was not regarded as part of the Hindu social fold. For that matter, Hindu identity, as a geographical sphere, was not coined by Indians. The people who lived beyond the river *Sindhu* referred to the people living after *Sindhu* as *Sindhus*. The people from beyond the river *Sindhu* are included from the Central Asian zone. Later on, *Sindhu* identity got transformed into a 'Hindu' identity. For Indians, their actual identity lay in their social status. (Ghanshyam Shah, 2006) Moreover, social identity revolved around caste identity. (Sarukkai, 2019)

The prime reason for the non-recognition of Dalits under the Hindu category was due to their out-caste nature. However, the dominant Hindu caste society wished to retain SC as a section attached to the Hindu fold. This was a dual nature on the part of caste Hindu society in India. Ambedkar and Gandhi differences too lay in this domain. All this indicated caste Hindus wish to dominate SC in a feudal manner, without giving them the freedom to choose their religion. Denial of Dalit rights was not exclusively confined to religious rights; it is manifold in various forms.

On the whole, Hindu caste society and spiritual notions thrived based on caste and class notions of conventional superiority and inferiority elements. Caste was seen as encompassing class elements. (Gupta, 2013)

It was only after the Europeans and most notably when the British succeeded in establishing a strong political hold in India; the social, cultural and political construction around the word 'Hindu' gained significance. Moreover, the upper castes were at the forefront in fostering the Hindu identity against the perceived threat of British

dominance. Thus, historically, there was no strict coherent monolithic religious construct among Indians. (Thapar, 2010) Even now, if observed, Hinduism is not a tight monolithic construct. A few Hindutva sections wished to forge a monolithic Hindu religious identity construct. However, the historicity of the heterogeneous incoherent (Brahmanic) Hindu spiritual fold was a big obstacle in forging such a coherent identity. When the heterogeneous historical nature of the Hindu fold was highlighted by the left and liberal sections, the Hindutva section became intolerant to accept.

According to Hindu values and notions, there was no option to jump from one's born caste into another. The Hindu caste society and values were rigid. Even if foreign nationals from the non-caste background were willing to convert to Hinduism, they could not acquire caste identity to become a member of Hinduism. This makes Hindu caste society and identity against proselyte. The dominant upper-caste Hindu spiritual order was dependent on the principles of '*Sanatana Dharma*'.

The prime motto of '*Sanatana Dharma*' was to curb intermix of caste identities, prohibiting inter-caste marriages, etc., social customs and traditions. Protection of Varna's purity and pollution, as prescribed by the *Sanatana Dharma*, was the prime duty of any King under the guidance of Brahmin cabinets' mandated advice. (Ambedkar, 2010) Though this was the rigid nature of caste Hindu societal identity, in reality, a few upper castes wishes to visualize Hinduism like monolithic. A few upper caste sections started efforts to project Hinduism as a proselyte oriented religion. Towards this direction, a few Hindu congregations like the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) became noteworthy. (Haddon, 2014)

## VII

According to some analytical arguments, the caste system had its genesis from the Aryan invasion of the Indus civilisation. As a result, caste practices and notions were widely prevalent in the North Indian region than in the other areas like South and North-East Indian regions. A cursory observation of caste names and caste categories prevalent across multiple sub-regions provides acceptance to such a view.

There have had been various attempts to curb and escape the caste system, in the form of religious conversion to Buddhism, Jainism, etc. Religions birth as Buddhism and Jainism were early protests against prevalent caste-ridden Brahmins fostered *Sanatana Dharma*. These religions had their origin and decline in the Indian sub-continent. However, caste too followed in these two religions.

While upper castes presence was more prevalent in Jainism, Buddhism over the years has had different waves. While historically, Buddhism consisted of all castes presence, in modern days, SC converts to Buddhism under Ambedkar's direction from Maharashtra were more. Moreover, Mahar caste people's presence among SC was more in the fold of Buddhism in Maharashtra.

There were observations that *the Bhakti* movement marked presence to check the influence of non-Vedic religions like Buddhism and Jainism, which challenged Brahmanic hegemony. *Bhakti* movement aimed at making Hindu religion caste free and accessible to everyone. However, the reformation agenda of the *Bhakti* movement failed to curb caste clutches. (Omvedt, 2011) On a comparative basis, Indians conversion to Jainism and Buddhism; Indians conversion to foreign religions like Christianity and Islam became more widespread and successful. Geographically, primarily Muslims are much spread across North India. In South India, North East India etc., zones, Christian conversion is more visible. Caste also followed among Indians when they converted to other religions. (Ahmed, 1978) Christianity and Islam became more successful in India on a comparative basis than religions like Buddhism and Jainism. Again, though Muslims urbanised more, poverty hugged them much.

Indians converted to Islam and Buddhism overwhelmingly from various castes. In these religions also caste-based social segregation is visible and operative in varied forms. The imaginary historical notion of Hindutva's *Akhand Bharat*<sup>3</sup> comprised territory beyond the present-day territorial political map of India. The lost *Akhand Bharat* territory now includes most other religions like Buddhism and Islam in nation-States like Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, Pakistan, etc. Thus non-proselyte nature of Hinduism was one of the prime reasons for its decline over the years.

## VIII

A few argue, like those inclined towards the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) ideological orientation, that religious conversion to foreign religions like Christianity and Islam should be considered an anti-national step. However, in reality, any spiritual philosophy cannot have geographical boundaries. No religious faith in the world prospered by limiting geographic boundaries. The same also applies in the Indian caste-based Hindu scenario.

The continued Hindu followers' notions about ritual purity and pollution against others were based on caste elements. Even marginalised sections too, have had notions about ritualistic purity and pollution against others. At the same time, historic assertions like Adi-Hindu movements among the ex-untouchables were also well recorded, denoting the dominant migrant habitation of upper castes in India. (Gooptu, 2006) A few scholars perceived religion as a potential source of bondage and liberation. (Zelliot, 2005) (Massey, 2009) In this respect, they had seen Hindu religious social order as a bondage to the Dalits since they were heavily discriminated in its fold. Similarly, the Dalits conversion to other religions like; Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, etc. was perceived as a source of liberation since ritualistic pollution notions could be escaped on a comparative basis.

In reality, though Dalits escaped a degree of variation in ritualistic pollution notions upon conversion from the Hindu religious order, their social and economic life failed to improve drastically upon conversion to other religions. Even if there was any favourable modification in Christian Dalits life, such changes were attributed to various other factors, like lengthy family conversion background, family's migration nature, etc. (Ponniah, 2014)

During the 17<sup>th</sup> century, a Roman Catholic Mission (RCM) priest in South India, Robert De Nobili, a Society of Jesus (SJ) congregation's priest, had put forward enormous efforts to convert upper castes into Christianity. To gain sympathy and acceptance among upper castes, he even went on to imitate their cultural traditions like dressing patterns, consumption of vegetarian food, etc. Some sections of Christianity found his style

objectionable and reported to Rome headed by Pope for spiritual disciplinary action and ecumenical direction. After receiving strict instructions from the Vatican not to continue such practices, Robert De Nobili withdrew and modified his evangelical conversion discourse style. As part of this discourse, he was banned for 13 long years from baptising people in India. However, posthumously RCM recognised Robert De Nobili as a Saint. Since then, no other Christian priest in India, either from an RCM background or Protestant, never visibly practised such upper-caste appeasement techniques for religious conversion. (Louis, 2007) Anyhow, all the castes in the Indian sub-continent carried different notions of caste elements upon their conversion to Christianity. The legal sanctity of the Church was not present in carried caste practices. Overall, the inability of Christianity in eliminating caste practices among devotees has had been visible.

In the initial years of European Christian Missionaries efforts in evangelical conversion in India, they failed to understand the deep-rooted repercussions of caste upon conversion and ex-communication from caste. After observing caste repercussion dynamics, the Europeans went on slowly in religious conversion discourse; since their efforts resulted in further segregation from caste.

As a result of initial conversions, which happened without eliminating prevalent social evils, like the practice of untouchability, caste, etc. notions, Indian Christianity continued with such evils. This indicates conversion happened without proper vision on how to eliminate existing evils like untouchability and caste. As a result, Christianity failed to attain full-fledged egalitarian status. This was a big challenge to Christianity in India. (Dube, 2010)

Christianity in India has its service orientation, which primarily established health and educational institutions. Along with health and educational institutions, missionaries focused on spiritual activity. Since no section of society approached and nursed downtrodden masses distress, when Christian missionaries approached with service blend, oppressed people got attracted and converted in due course of time.

Though Christianity existed in India through Jesus Christ's disciple Saint Thomas, overwhelming Indians conversion was never significant. However, the conversion rate

increased when Protestant denominations entered India with service blends during the modern ages. According to this dimension, RCM conversion attempts failed, and Protestant attempts succeeded on extensive mode. As per some estimates, Protestant Christianity is widespread than Catholic spirituality in India. Moreover, within the Protestant denomination, on some count, the Pentecostal congregation and its elements propagation are on a significant ascendance. (Lukose, 2009)

Though Christianity envisages and seeks to dwell on the social equality of its devotees, in the Indian context, Christian missionaries failed to provide proper social and cultural emancipation and induct devotees into their religious fold. The efforts to eradicate historically (social) antagonistic unequal practices are primarily unsuccessful and unable to produce a high-level impact. (Henn, 2014) Failure to address and overcome this challenge is an inability of the missionaries and devotees alike. At some level, the prevalent ancient historic ethnic identities across the world became an obstacle to various egalitarian religions like Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, etc. (Kujur, 2010)

The monolithic religions failed to prevent antagonistically continued historic socio-cultural past and unequal social imaginary world views among converted devotees. This is one of the biggest challenges to various religious beliefs globally, including caste dynamics and untouchable practices in Indian Christianity. For instance, Muslim devotees face a severe crisis, due to their unforgettable historical past, in a few nation-States, like Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Syria, etc.

Similarly, Christian's social status is not the same in non-European nation-States, like those in Africa, Asia, etc., continents. Christianity widely became popular in the Western world. The converts to Christianity in the non-European part were happy to have conversion and lead another renewed life with some escaping features from their previous social, cultural and spiritual life. Religious conversion is a liberal and civil right well accepted by the modern world's political order. However, the problem lay in the social apparatus.

While the nation-State is based on accepted constitutional and legal norms, in reality, pragmatic governance continues on prevalent social conditions at a given point of time.

As a result of prevailing ill-liberal social aspirations, even the constitutional and legal based nation-States succumb to widespread social pressures. Then the constitutional and statutory structure gets debunked. The triumph of Hitler in Germany, Mussolini in Italy and the Hindutva section's political ascendance in India is seen and understood in this domain only.

Why is the Hindu religion so dear to most sections, though it is based on unequal social status and ritual pollution notions? This is a big puzzle to understand and interpret. As per a few arguments and perspectives, Indians cannot lose their caste notion in their entire life. At the same time, they possess thoughts of privileges and subordination. As a result, they perceive and lead the life in the directions of servitude and privileges. While feeling superior or inferior, at the same time notion of viewing some other as inferior and superior also exists. The notion of continuing at some better caste position and the hidden practice of maintaining *Sanskritisation's*<sup>4</sup> superior notion vis-a-vis others is the root cause for the continuation of the caste-based Hindu social order.

A caste community perceives other caste communities as subordinate or/and superior. A kind of social solace is constructed and wishes to maintain the same status-co by viewing different caste sections as subordinate and inferior. As part of this experienced view and led socially constructed life, most castes wish to acquire higher status by claiming a higher rank in the caste hierarchy. For instance, the agrarian-based developed Sudhra communities, such as Kamma, Kapu, Reddy, Velma, etc., in the Telugu region, wish to claim higher status and are no more interested in recognising themselves as Sudhra. Even within the Backward Classes (BC), developed BC and most backward sects are well known. For instance, in AP; Goud, Yadav, etc., castes are recognised as advanced within BC. The developed dominant BC were at the forefront in committing atrocities against the marginalised sections like the SC, ST and other most (backward) BC. (Nagaraju, 2013)

The same perceived thoughts of caste superiority and subordination were even carried forward to other religions upon conversion. Indian Islam consists of many sects, taking lineage from historical caste identities. The same is the case with Indian Buddhism and Christianity. As a result, even after conversion to other religions like; Buddhism, the



Dalits face heinous atrocities against them. (Teltumbde, 2008) Dalits are recognised as Dalits only even after conversion to other faiths. Thus, discrimination against Dalits is a continuous phenomenon in the wider society, and they are not seen as free by recognising their conversion to non-Hindu religions. The Hindu caste society exclusively opposes Dalits religious conversion freedom. This opposition also primarily emanated from the State opposition to their conversion in the form of the 1950 Constitutional Order.

## IX

Society has a widespread (mis)conception that monetary funds from Christian nations are dumped in India to target mass conversions to Christianity, from Hinduism and to turn India into a Christian nation. There is no concrete official evidence to prove this perception. Since authentic evidence is lacking to confirm this perception, it is believed that this widely believed propaganda perception is part of malicious propaganda unleashed by certain sections to spread hatred against Christianity. Moreover, even if any huge monetary fund's allocations are targeted internationally for religious conversion into Christianity, then such process goes on legally, subject to various nations' central bank guidelines and scrutiny, including in India.

The World Council of Churches (WCC) from around 1990 onwards decided to contribute to social issues like anti-caste work, etc. Moreover, it was somehow believed that the Dalits were able to present at the 'World Conference against Racism' in Durban, South Africa, in 2001 with the help of such funding. Further, the funds allotted by the WCC were to be utilised for 'secular' activities only. This indicates that the WCC funds should not be used for religious conversion activities. As a result, the Indian Church cannot devote received foreign remittances for religious conversion activities. While this is the reality, as per established sources - misconceptions and unleashed propaganda about mass religious conversions by Christian missionaries through targeted international funding is widespread.

Belief in this kind of misconception and hate propaganda results in developing particular hatred towards a few sections, like Christians as a whole and Christian Dalits in part. In a

few States like the Telugu region's AP and TS, Christianity is seen as synonymous with the Madiga and Mala communities. Under such circumstances, hatred towards Christianity is turned into hatred against Dalits. Thus, when understood from the current problem, Dalits face manifold hostility, first as Dalits and again as Christians.

The Christian forces have been denying that they are allocating enormous funds for religious conversion projects in India. According to some estimates and records, the Hindutva forces are also receiving substantive foreign funding from upper caste Non-Resident Indians (NRI) sources. By highlighting on this counter dimension, as per legal discourse and records, the allegations and propaganda that Indian Christianity receives a vast amount of foreign remittance is flayed, to an extent. Alleged mass religious conversion publicity is attributed to the Hindutva sections regular master plan propaganda against the religious minorities like Christians and Muslims; primarily, this allegation is made against Christians.

Many Indian sections develop a severe ideological perception; due to the high range of unleashed propaganda, that religious conversion is a sin, and that too, in particular, conversion to foreign religions like Christianity and Islam is objectionable. However, advocates and believers of this perception and ideological subscribers forget and conveniently ignore that religion is a way of life. Choosing one religious experience to adopt and adhere to is an internal personal affair based on liberal principles. Any strict compulsion and propagation that religious conversion to foreign religions like Christianity and Islam is anti-Hindu and anti-national is illogical and amounts to religious fanaticism. Being Hindu is projected as being national by the Hindutva elements.

There is widespread propagation and a kind of perception developed in India that the Christian missionary institutions like education and health care were instrumental in religious conversion projects in a shadow conspiracy way. Moreover, all these institutions target weaker sections of the Indian society for religious conversion. This perception and argument are increasingly refuted by a few Dalit intellectuals who started to argue and project that the upper caste sections only benefitted from the Christian institutions over the years but not the weaker sections on a comparative basis. As a

sequence to this argument, a few intellectuals are projecting and revealing details of prominent Christian educational institutions in India, which provided education to upper caste sections over the years. The topmost businessmen and women, politicians, etc. sections got better educational service from the Christian educational institutions. However, the Hindutva elements started to accuse that the Christian educational institutions are pioneering religious projects to convert Hindus into the Christian fold in India. In continuation to this sequence, it is also rhetorically pointed that, even if the Christian educational institutions cater to the needs of the weaker sections in the society, then why, as per various statistical reports the historically vulnerable sections are still backward?

As a result of Christian educational and health care institutions establishment in India, as per the claims of the Christian institutional leaders' arguments, the human development index in India improved in various quarters. Moreover, primarily, the upper caste sections benefited from the Christian Missionaries secular modernity project in India. The Christian Missionaries were into the secular service-oriented project; since they did not show discrimination in the extension of their institutions' services. Alternatively, in another way, the Christian minority people were not in available demand to utilise Christian Missionaries services to the fullest extent. Thus, the counter-claim and argument from the Christian missionaries are that they are not into forced religious conversion in India; instead, their mission is to serve humanity with love and compassion. While serving humanity in a service-oriented mode, they believe that they can achieve 'serving God'. In other words, for Christian missionaries, 'serving humanity is equal to serving God', i.e. especially for some of the prominent RCM institutions proclamation.

## X

In the Telugu region, a famous Tollywood actress turned politician, Jayasudha, got converted to Christianity. As per her professional commitments and engagement, she had a long association with the then Madras city, later renamed 'Chennai'. She was a born Hindu by birth. However, she was educated at a Christian missionary school in Chennai. When she grew up, she showed an inclination to get convert to Christianity. As

a result, she approached the famous Saint Thomas of Basilica's Catholic priest at Chennai and expressed her strong desire to convert.

In Jayasudha's most popular online interviews, the Saint Thomas of Basilica priest then counselled her that she could not become a Christian immediately. Having observed so, the priest made her clear that she has to undergo some quiet time for a sustained duration; then, conversion can happen if everything is procedurally well. During suggested sustained quiet time meditation, she has to identify and reassure how strongly she wishes to become a Christian, as per Biblical direction's revelation to her soul. Jayasudha's testimony, in this case, refutes the allegations and propaganda that conversions are taking place for allurements. (ABN Telugu, 2019)

However, a few upper caste Hindu echelons of the society projects that only lower sections conversion into Christianity is problematic. Moreover, they perceive weaker sections religious conversion into Christianity results in the decline of Hindu religion. Furthermore, the upper castes allege that conversions into Christianity from lower sections are taken due to monetary allurements. This is a kind of slur insult articulated against the lower castes converted Christians mostly, but not against the upper caste converts to Christianity. This is a kind of hypocritical stand shown against the lower and upper castes converts into Christianity in varied forms.

Similarly, the then TN Chief Minister (CM), Jayalalitha, a Brahmin by birth too had her education at a Christian missionary school. She was also a famous film star in TN and South India, like actress Jayasudha. During her second innings in life, Jayalalitha was successful in the political fray as General Secretary of the All India *Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam* (AIADMK). However, she never converted to Christianity. In the early part of 2000, when she was the TN CM, her government passed an anti-religious conversion act. Though no severe cases were filed and no one was prosecuted under this law, her government repealed the act when her party miserably lost in a subsequent election. (Mosse, 2012)

In North India, a few States were noteworthy for their legislation banning religious conversion. The anti-religious conversion acts even have stringent provisions if found

guilty to punish. The religious conversion prohibition acts are a severe infringement on the personal civil liberty of the individuals. However, there are no unanimous legal provisions across various State legislations in banning religious conversion. Moreover, at times, some States were known for legislation and repeal of these acts too. Though a widespread popular perception is developed that the Indian National Congress (INC) is a secular party that pampers religious minorities, in reality, in a few States under the INC rule only, a few anti-religious conversion acts were legislated/and repealed.

Some of India's popular anti-religious conversion acts, which exists and/or existed in a few States, includes; Arunachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh (HP), Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, TN, etc. However, the titles used for these acts were different. At the same time, unless and otherwise, the in-depth content of these legislations are understood; one cannot understand the proposed punitive measures.

It is also expected that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which is heading the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) coalition government under Narendra Modi at the national level, may also legislate anti-religious conversion act applicable to the entire nation. There are various interpretations whether single legislation for the whole nation is sufficient or based on the GoI's legislation other laws need to be legislated by the constituent States? If any legislation is passed at the national level, then only a national level picture may emerge with clarity. Given the ideological position of the RSS to turn India into a Hindu theocratic State and its intolerant stand against religious minorities, the occasional revealing news reports gain significance for belief and suspicion in this respect. (2019)

According to the Hindutva's project; religious conversion ban, cow protection, repeal of reservation provisions, the abolition of Constitution's unique article 370, anti *triple talaq* law legislation, abolishing secular credentials of Indian State (and declaring theocratic Hindu nation), etc. are some of the most controversial political agendas. Moreover, the Hindutva brigade under the realm of BJP, RSS, Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), etc. projected and propagated that extension and continuation of these provisions under the Constitution of India is an anti-national activity committed under the leadership of INC's first Prime Minister (PM), Jawaharlal Nehru.<sup>5</sup>

## XI

The efforts to extend affirmative action policies, especially under government jobs, were envisaged in India during various British India and Princely States regimes. The Brahmin community dominated overall government employees either in British India or in the Princely States. As a result, the administration, both in British India and the Princely States, faced various difficulties for lack of heterogeneous employees' composition. The British reservation policy was seen as an attempt to divide and rule India; when the reservation was extended to Muslims. This move, later on, resulted in widening the gulf between Hindus and Muslims, which ultimately resulted in the bifurcation of United India into Pakistan and residual India. (Telukder, 1998)

In the then Madras Presidency, reservation secured a unique role. The princely States like; Kolhapur, Mysore, etc. were inclined towards design and extension of non-Brahmin reservations. (Deshpande A., 2013 ) A widespread non-Brahman movement and Adi-Hindu identity movements spread across various territories of then British India. While the non-Brahman movement gave a forward impetus to the Sudhra communities, the Adi-Hindu movement was led by (ex)-untouchable Dalit sections, asserting they were the original inhabitants of Indian territory.

The caste system itself has been seen as based on 'social reservation'; since times immemorial. According to *Varna* and caste position, the social privileges and subordination notions existed. The existed 'social privileges and exclusions' are seen and understood as 'coercive societal preferential reservation'. Socially excluded subordination of the marginalised sections is recognised as an unequal social reservation.

The modern British India administration and the Princely States designed a legal reservation policy to break the caste-based social privilege-oriented reservation. Since the upper castes have benefitted from the social status-oriented reservation kind of position, a new reservation policy was envisaged to pave a level playing field for the benefit of various marginalised sections. While traditional societal reservation was based on historical texts and a continued social way of life, the current legal reservation policy

emanated from principles of egalitarianism and distributive justice norms. (Galanter, 1984)

There exist different levels of reservation discourses in India. For instance, during the initial years of British administration, which had civil service examinations, even the upper caste Indians could not compete with the Europeans. The modern education policy of the British was alien even to the upper caste Indians. As a result, the upper caste Indians, in due course of time, demanded and secured some concessions to compete and achieve civil service jobs in India. Thus, though the high caste Indians today critiques the Indian reservation policy as against merit, in reality, they were beneficiaries of this policy at some point in time during the past British India regime.

Reservation in India is envisaged and provided at various levels: political, educational, and employment realms. Among these three categories, the political set of reservation was envisaged for a decade, when the original Constitution of India was promulgated on 26 January 1950. However, the Indian political class has been extending the political reservation for every decade since then. Every decade's regularly extended reservation pertains to only State Legislatures and Lok Sabha constituencies. Thus, the reservation extension is for political representation only. How long this political reservation continues is yet to be seen in the contemporary Indian political discourse. There are no specific reservations to the Rajya Sabha and State Legislative Council segments for the SC and ST.

As per India's general political trends observation, the class and caste blocks are strengthening in the political realm. Economically affluent and dominant castes can dominate the Indian political scene. (Kumar S. P., 2014) As a result, a few lower caste sections are increasingly demanding reservation even in the political realm. The Indian political class, as of now, extended political reservation at even the local self-governance level to various categories like SC, ST and BC. Already the SC and ST reservation at the local self-governance level is prevalent.

In addition to the SC and ST categories, the BC category was also extended the political reservation ambit, as per the 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendment Acts at the local

self-governance level. Thus, though the political reservation was envisaged as a temporary measure for a decade, it has been getting further strengthened at various levels in due course of time. In a few States, like in the residual AP, reservation is adopted even in nomination positions at different levels for SC, ST and BC categories.

As per the original Constitution of India's spirit, while political reservation was a temporary measure, reservation under education and employment were envisaged on an almost permanent basis. The Indian State has the right to re-look at the composition of reservation under education and employment categories and modify if required over time. However, most ordinary people in Indian society cannot understand the Indian Constitution's envisioned mandated vision and are under the false impression that all the three categories of reservations were envisioned for a decade.

## XII

### **Statement of Problem: The Presidential Order of 1950**

The original Constitution of India, which was adopted on 26 November 1949, and became operational on 26 January 1950 – never recognised SC based on religious category. However, the process and method of identification and notifying the SC was left out to the President of India. On 10 August 1950, the GoI under the PM-ship of Jawaharlal Nehru had passed a Presidential Order of 1950. This Presidential Order defined SC as only those who were within the purview of the Hindu religious fold. It vehemently denied SC status to non-Hindu ex-untouchables. As a result, the SC converts to other religions were denied State-sponsored entitlements like reservation and protection under SC/ST Atrocities Act.

There were voices of dissent and opposition expressed against this provision by a few quarters, like first by the Dalit Sikhs. As a result, the 1950 Constitutional Order was amended in 1956 and in addition to existing Hindu SC, SC Sikhs were also extended state-sponsored entitlements. It should be noted that the Sikh Dalits were extended reservation under the SC fold, even when Ambedkar was alive. In 1990, the 1950 Presidential Order was modified again, and Buddhist Dalits were extended SC status. As a result, three Dalit religious followers are recognised under the SC category, i.e. from



Buddhism, Hinduism, and Sikhism. However, the extension of SC status to other devout followers like those in the fold of Christianity and Islam is vehemently opposed and denied.

The extension of SC status, at present, to other religious categories is justified by arguing that all those who adopted Indic religions are granted the SC status and denied the same condition for all those who chose Abrahamic religions, like Christianity and Islam. This selective discriminatory stance goes against the ethos of the original Constitution of India and various international conventions covering religious freedom. (Bosco, 2010) Denial of religious freedom is a serious civil rights crime. Further, civil and religious rights denial is firmly included under the human rights category. Moreover, in India, Dalit rights are argued as human rights. Thus, the selective religious discriminatory step adopted by the Indian political class since 1950 is a severe violation of human rights. Nevertheless, the Indian political class is unwilling to rectify this gross violation.

The Dalit converts to non-Indic religions like Christianity and Islam, if discriminated, humiliated and tortured, cannot register a case under the SC/ST Prevention of Atrocities Act. The act is covered to only those Dalits who got converted to Indic religions like Buddhism, Hinduism, and Sikhism. This is a most significant discriminatory stance adopted and maintained by the Indian State, irrespective of any political section which headed the national government, like the BJP or INC or through their extended coalition alliance partners.

There have had been continuous efforts by various sections of the Christian Dalits to get included under the SC fold. However, their efforts never got materialised so far. As a result, Christian Dalits, who got disappointed for failing to figure under the SC fold, started to legally claim SC Hindu status, though they have been practising Christianity adherently. Thus, the State itself forced the Christian Dalits to opt for dubious SC Hindu status without recognising them under the SC fold.

If Dalits legally claim Christianity, then they are placed under the BC category. Due to heterogeneity, AP clustered BC into; A, B, C, D and E sub-categories. For instance, in AP, if Dalits formally declare their conversion to Christianity, they are placed under BC-

C, which fetches a mere one percent of reservation within the available 27% BC reservation. Nevertheless, at the national level, the OBC reservation is not clustered like in AP. The Dalit converts to Christianity at the national level also can utilise designated and prevalent reservations under the OBC category. Thus, the Christian Dalit converts are placed not under the SC fold, but OBC and BC fold, at national and State levels, respectively.

For instance, a few people who have been inclined towards Hindutva ideology have been under the impression that reservation is an exclusive domain devised and implemented for the benefit of Hindus. Moreover, they feel that there is no caste prevalence in other religions like Christianity and Islam, and hence reservation is not required for them. According to their perception, if Christian Dalits are utilising reservation, they are traitors of the nation and resort to illegal activity. However, they cannot understand and know the dynamics that, as per the original Indian Constitutional spirit, various judicial pronouncements, and various international conventional norms, religious discrimination should not be shown and practised. Denial of reservation based on religion amounts to a breach of secular ethos, civil rights violation, and failure to adhere to international conventions.

A few Christian Dalits opted legally BC-C status in AP, but they failed to improve their economic and social position. All those Christian Dalits, who adopted legally BC-C status, without much generational social and economic advancement, are primarily understood as too idealistic and religious. (Wilson, 1982)

There are quite a few reasons why most of SC failed to prefer legal Christian status, even while they adherently profess the same faith. They are in the following manner;

- a) There is almost no reservation if opted formally Christianity.
- b) Even if a mere one percent reservation is available under the BC-C category in AP, that is very insignificant to compete and secure employment.
- c) There have been already some Christian Dalit affluent sections who claimed official Christian status long ago, and they were able to corner the one percent reservation under BC-C in AP. As a result, it becomes difficult to compete under

this mere one percent reservation. This indicates that there is a generational gap among various sections of the Dalit and Christian Dalits. As a result, the less privileged Christian Dalits perceive the affluent Christian Dalit section to compete almost in the open category. Thus a class status is visible and pointed out.

- d) Furthermore, when the recruitment notifications were released, the BC-C category got a mere insignificant number of posts, or almost no posts notified.
- e) Above all, as per the original Constitutional spirit, they must secure the reservation under the SC category (and the other SC counterparts in religions like; Hinduism, Buddhism and Sikhism receive the same). However, then, why they should seek the same under BC? Thus, they have a particular antipathy against the State's exclusive discriminatory attitude against them. As a result, they represent the passive resistance by seeking Hindu SC status, though they adherently practice Christianity.

Once the Christian Dalits obtain BC status, then it is not possible to re-acquire SC status. At a certain point, a few efforts were initiated to re-convert all those who left Hinduism under the *Suddhi or Ghar Vapasi* scheme. However, such attempts failed to gain any currency. According to scholars on Indian history and Hinduism, there is no concept of re-conversion into Hinduism. Hinduism and Hindu religion are based on the caste system, and caste is acquired by birth. As a result, the Hindu religion is not proselyte, unlike other religions like Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, Jainism, etc. This nature of Hinduism makes the Hindu religion automatically stagnant and withering.

Hinduism and Hindu religion's prevalent nature complicates its position and pops a fundamental doubt whether it can be called a religion or not in true spirit! There was no strict construction of the Hindu religion around one hundred years ago. The notion of Hindu (national) belief was constructed by the upper caste (Brahmin) sections after perceiving the other religions like Christianity and Islam, which were highly successful on the Indian soil for a few years as monolithic ones. (Frykenberg, 2009)

At some level, every caste as a unit is considered and recognised as a religion. Every caste possessed specific unique cultural and spiritual activity. However, every caste's

religious, cultural and historicity was lost due to Brahmanic spiritual imperialism expansion. As a result, a clear cut division can be observed between Brahmin and non-Brahmin gods. Over the years, Brahmin gods started to gain currency at the cost of lost cultural historicity of non-Brahman sections. (Ilaiyah, 2009)

A section of Dalit intellectual class started to believe, argue and propagate that the Brahmins learnt well the original inhabitants' social, cultural and spiritual practices in India. Later on, Brahmins subjugated the lower sections by re-modifying the original inhabitant's cultural, social and religious practices. When the Brahmins spread across the Indian sub-continent, they started to observe the original inhabitants' cultural, social and spiritual traditions and later on made the original inhabitant's notions as to their own in renewed fashion and enslaved the original inhabitants. The literary exposure and drafting skills became a prime boon to the Brahmins in this activity. The lower sections were deprived of constructive formal literacy.

Moreover, caste, as an institution, was promoted and strengthened by the Brahmin forces. Thus without the formal notion of religion, religion existed among the masses in caste cultural practice. (Raj M. C., 2001)

### XIII

The opponents of the Christian Dalit reservation argue that Christianity does not recognise and follow elements of caste. Such opponents argued, propagated and believed that Christianity was based on the equality of everyone. Further, this opponent section failed to understand Indian Christianity's reality, which inherited elements of caste. At some level, the opponent section also argues that when caste is prevalent in other non-Hindu religions, why get converted? Further, their doubt was - why not Dalits stay within the same Hindu religious fold when caste-based discrimination persists even in non-Hindu religions? As a result of such argued notions, the pro-religious conversion Dalit sections recognise the Hindu religion as based on inequality.

Further, Dalits argue that Hinduism treats them unequally. Moreover, the argument to extend reservation exclusively to the Hindu Dalits is negated by the Christian Dalits, albeit unsuccessfully. Christian Dalits failed to achieve legal status to their conversion

under SC fold, judicially or/and politically. At another level, the Indian judiciary fails to settle this most pertinent issue for once and finally.

Inequality of various sorts, either based on caste or other factors like social and educational backwardness, etc. is not an exclusive domain for recognising anyone's religious backward criteria. If an exclusive Hindu religious criterion to extend reservation is considered, then that practice is against the elements of the modern secular nation-State. The Indian Constitution, State and judiciary never accepted such a position. In India, reservation for religious categories is prevalent, like to the Buddhists, Christians and Muslims under various categories, especially under OBC and BC categories. Such a criterion is based on treating all religious categories of citizens as equal, and no religious discrimination is shown. In reality, the opponent section to Christian Dalit reservation ignores this reality and argues for complete denial of SC reservation to the Christian Dalits.

The fundamental human right, civil rights and liberty rights of human beings are to choose, practice and profess any religion of one's choice. All modern nation-States are dependent on this basic principle. Even theocratic States accepted this principle to a most favourable extent, subject to specific procedural fulfilment criteria. Based on the human rights, secular, liberal and civil rights perspective, religious discrimination of any sort should not be shown by modern nation-States.

As a result of the caste elements presence carried forward by the Hindu converts into Christianity, even inter-caste marriages are mostly not happening within the same Christian religion in India. This indicates that the same Christian God worshipped by the devotees was divided according to caste practices and notions. This culture is against the basic tenants of the Christian religion. (Rao B. V., 2009)

#### XIV

Christians of Scheduled Caste Origin (CSCO) was the first accepted terminology the agitated leadership and activist section used and popularised to secure SC status upon their denial through the 1950 Presidential Order. Later on, with the change in terminology and popularisation of the word 'Dalit', the term 'Christian Dalits/Dalit

Christians' gained currency. The term 'Christian Dalits/ Dalit Christians' got increased acceptance from the leadership and activist sections involved in this movement. This acceptance gained currency during the decades 1970-1980. Since the end of 1980, the All India Catholic Union (AICU) popularised the word 'Dalit Christian'. As a sequence to this discourse, the 1990 decade was also declared as a decade of 'Christian Dalits'.

For the first time in 1969, the Catholic Bishops Conference of India (CBCI) recognised the presence of caste in Indian Christianity and resolved to address the issue at various levels. Towards this direction, it also decided to secure a reservation to the Christian Dalits under the SC fold. This resolution by the Indian Catholic leadership, at some level, portrays a lack of unity among various Dalit sections across India to get united, irrespective of their historical, cultural, social, linguistic and religious cleavages.

The Neo-Buddhists, who consist of a significant section in Maharashtra, were able to turn politics in their favour and successfully get the 1950 Constitutional Order amended in their favour. In the same manner, in the North Indian dominant polity, the Dalit Sikh section successfully got the 1950 Presidential order modified and included them under the realm of SC reservation. This indicates that the Dalit sections or/and Dalit movement all together as one block could not press and get the 1950 Presidential Order repealed and make it religious neutral.

Christianity and Christian Dalits are widely spread in South India. Most of the Christian Dalits in South India claim legally SC status, though they are practising Christianity adherently in their private sphere. If the State entitlements like reservation are extended to the Dalit converts to Christianity, then there could be a stark increase in India's official census of the Christian population. Similarly, even if the Dalit Muslim community is also recognised under the SC category, then census data under the SC category undergoes drastic modification and variation.

## XV

There are varied interpretations in how many forms Christian Dalits have been discriminated against. While some perceived that Christian Dalits had been discriminated twice, from the domain of State and Church, some others visualised their discriminative

stances in trice fold – i.e., State, society, and Church. (Louis, 2007) There are certain observable discriminative parallel stances between Hindu Dalits and Christian Dalits. From birth to death, they face specific standard patterns of discriminative marginalisation in society. For instance, both the Hindu and Christian Dalits face discriminative behaviour even after their death and burial times. As a result, separate burial grounds are observable for upper-caste Christians and Christian Dalits.

There are separate Churches for Christian Dalits, as they were not treated similarly by the other converted caste Christian sections from higher realms of caste. In the same way, even Hindu Dalits were not received well in temples. In the countryside, where temples are located in the caste Hindu section's locality, Dalits are visibly barred from associating with the Temples. For the mainstream society, Dalits are received and majorly perceived as Dalits only, even after their conversion to any other religion like Christianity. Thus, caste is the only sole criteria for recognition of Dalits, but not religion. However, the Indian State, in the first instance, after the formation of independent democratic India, started to discriminate against Dalits based on religion through the issue of the 1950 Presidential Order. As a result, it can be observed that the seed to discriminate Dalits based on their disassociation from the Hindu fold started to take place in renewed fashion.

The Hindutva sections propagated on a large scale on how Dalits should not have religious freedom if Dalits were in the fold of the Christian category. Majorly, by propagating Christian Dalits as a potential threat to the Indian (Hindu) identity, for sustained decades-long times, mass hysteria was well demonstrated into the minds of the Hindu majority people that Christian Missionaries are plotting to annihilate Hinduism in India. In this sequence, in regions like South India, where Christian Dalits are in a significant proportion, it was well propagated that Christian Dalits are falling prey to the false religious propaganda side, which is a significant threat to the Indian nation's unity. However, the Dalits or Christian Dalits failed to counter this sustained propaganda from the Hindutva sections. As Christian Dalits lacked potential presence and mark in the mainstream portals of the society, their failure was silent. Same time, when observed the rise of the Dalit movement in AP from the 1980s, it can be observed that Dalit activists

and leaders failed to propagate well how Christian Dalits cannot be treated and considered a significant threat to national unity and stability. They were comfortable fighting atrocities committed against them and waging movements and counter-movements in favour and against sub-categorisation of reservation. However, in reality, Dalit sections never bothered about sustained hatred spread against their religious favouritism under the Christian fold. At another level, the heterogeneous nature of the Dalit movement across India can be observed in varied forms and domains. As a result, Dalit leaders and activists failed to have a united constructive agenda to set forth, concentrate and achieve, especially in making the SC list religious neutral.

There remains a void in the Dalit movement. While the Christian Dalit reservation movement is by and large majorly led and coordinated by the Church, like the RCM, on the other side, other Dalit sections lead the mainstream Dalit movement under the non-religious category. This is a significant drawback, visibly in the Dalit movement in India and at the AP level too. For instance, a significant Christian Dalit movement started visibly when Buddhist Dalits were extended reservation by amending the 1950 Presidential Order. This movement was, by and large, coordinated and led by the Christian clergymen like from the RCM and a few other Protestant Christian sections. However, in due course of time, the Christian Dalits movement disappeared, as the PV Narasimharao led INC government failed to modify the 1950 Presidential Order to extend reservation to the Christian Dalits. (Wyatt, 1998) Even after the lapse of that phase, the mainstream visible Dalit movement failed to receive well and engage with the question and requirement of Christian Dalits reservation under SC fold. Thus, a big void is observable within the visible mainstream Dalit politics and movement.

At another level, the Indian Church literature and scholarship also received well the produced literature on (Christian) 'Dalit theology'. Dalit theology has its inspiration and sequent construction developed from the domain of 'liberation theology' of the African Christians. Thus, certain Christian marginalised sections across the globe like those from African and Indian descent started to recognise their continued inherited historical discriminative stance in the society and Church and started to reconstruct Christian faith in the light of Christian 'liberation philosophy'. However, as of now, Dalit theology or



liberation theology majorly remains an academic domain of scholarship articulation. Nevertheless, practical, concrete and tangible achievements were not well reported. Towards this end, the significant prime agendas of Indian Christianity at a broad level well recognised the relevance of observing 'liberation Sunday' annually since 2007. (Church, 2020)

Prominent mark and observation of annual 'Black Sunday' on every year's August second Sunday and liberation Sunday in every year's November second Sunday are observable in the Indian context. However, these two symbolic gestures are continuing among particular well-established Churches and mainstream Christian congregations. Christians marking of these two events annually on a mass scale is not observable so far. At another level, the Indian Church, especially, the CBCI is noted for legally fighting the battle for securing the 1950 Constitutional Order amendment or repeal. Towards this end, from 2004 onwards, a legal case has been coordinated at the Supreme Court of India level to secure and ensure the religious neutral category nature of the SC list. However, the GoI and judiciary cannot concretely achieve the same by getting the 1950 Constitutional Order repealed or amended in favour of the Christian Dalits.

Visibly, at another level, the mainstream civil society also not received well the Christian Dalits denial of reservation and religious freedom. In fact, mainstream civil society has less presence of the Dalit and Christian Dalit leaders and activists. This is also a significant limitation on the Indian civil society composition, and an action plan works out. At another level, civil society's composition should be seen and understood from multiple quarters. As a result, Dalit civil society range of articulation should also be seen and understood as a separate autonomous entity. However, civil society platforms collective engagement to achieve a specific common agenda usually happens now and then. When seen and understood from this domain, the mainstream civil society failed to recognise and articulate the interests of the Christian Dalits.

Thus, the Indian State, Indian judiciary, Indian mainstream civil society, and visible mainstream Dalit movement also failed to majorly engage with the Christian Dalits marginalisation due to denial of reservation under SC fold and grant of proper religious freedom, to profess and practise the religion of their choice like Christianity. This speaks

and underlies a lot about the nature of the Indian State, Indian judiciary, mainstream Indian civil society and visible mainstream Dalit politics and movement. For all of them, the Christian Dalit issues were not in the priority category. As a result, the 'secularisation process' on the broader society and development of rooting 'secular credentials' from the Indian State is also at deep stake and threat.

Since Indian State constitutionally set egalitarian, progressive principles like secular credentials and secularisation process enhancement as its noble objectives to be strived and achieved for – the failure to continue reminds the Indian State's inability and intentional sidetrack. As a result, sections like the Christian Dalits are in a great disadvantageous position. Historically inherited Dalits discriminative marginalisation continues in renewed fashion even after India achieved liberal democracy. Dalits and Dalit leaders like Ambedkar had a huge expectation on the set-forth constitutional liberal democracy for their section's liberation and progress. However, when observed the instance of the Christian Dalits position, the contrary position establishes - where the Indian liberal democracy failed to achieve and liberate the Christian Dalit section. This is a severe infringement on the rights of the Dalits, even during the liberal democratic age.

## XVI

The Indian Church, when seen from the realm of adoption of (Christian) 'Dalit theology' and role in a legal fight to secure SC reservation for Christian Dalits, indicates the dual role set forth to be achieved. While the former is an internal reformation path, the later adopted legal path can be visualised from the external engagement dimension with the Indian State and judiciary. Thus, the Church has both, ideally, 'intra and inter' reformation targets. While one is aimed at internal reformation through Dalit theology adoption and practice, the other is engaged in making the Indian State recognise its secular constitutional credentials through judicial intervention. However, the Indian Church failed to make the Indian State realise constitutionally set-forth secular credentials be achieved and adhered to. Moreover, the liberal secular democracy's inherent principle also lies in establishing and achieving the secular notions in true spirit. However, though constitutionally India declared and adopted secular democracy, in reality, secular democracy proved to be in shallow clutches when visualised from the

domain of Christian Dalits religious freedom denial realm and opposition to grant SC status.

The Indian State, through its (Hindu) upper-caste dominated governing class, is visualising, adopting and interpreting liberal (secular) democracy in limited intentional (denial) mode, suiting the governing Hindu majority section's requirements and tendencies. This is a significant threat to the national sustenance, unity continuation and fraternity development. Selective religious freedom extension and denial to the Dalits establishes the Indian governing section has historically inherited discriminative marginalised caste based feudal credentials continuation in renewed fashion, even during constitutionally guaranteed liberal secular democratic age. As a result, the Indian State appears to be secular theoretically, as per the (original) Constitutional reading. (Smith, 1963) However, in reality, the subsequent selective application and denial mode of secular credentials concerning the Christian Dalits proves that (original) constitutionally guaranteed and established liberal secular democracy is in a severe impeachment process, in a selective discriminative application mode. At another level, this establishes how the Indian major political and governing classes failed to imbibe, understand and adopt the Indian Constitution's visualised liberal secular notions in pragmatic action.

Due to this nature of the Indian political sections and ruling classes, the major political parties nature of social (caste) categories accommodation also receives a setback when visualised from the excluded domain of the Christian Dalit section. Prolonged decades of political and religious exclusion are a severe infringement on the lives of the Christian Dalits. Christian Dalits religious freedom denial, exclusion and marginalisation also further marginalised them in other domains, depriving them of full-fledged honourable citizenship, dignified life, essential human honour and rights and honourable civil conduct in the mainstream society. Then, under such prevailing conditions, Christian Dalits are reduced to 'second-grade citizens' in their own political nation, India. This reduced second-grade citizenship conduct is a continuation to Dalit (Christians) historically denied honourable existence and conduct. Their historically marginalised Dalit subject nature is continued in renewed 'second-grade citizenship' operation style due to the denial of their fundamental religious freedom to adopt and adhere.

The scripturally sanctified '*Sanatana Dharma*', based on which the Kshatriya kingdoms establishment and administration continued – operating in renewed fashion, by denying Dalits their fundamental human right to adopt and adhere to their religion's utmost belief and faith. The concept of '*Sanatana Dharma*' is based on superior upper castes (believed ritualistic) protection, without getting polluted by getting (inter-mixed) married to the lower castes. In other words, the undeclared modern *Santana Dharma* aims to maintain the 'status quo' in favour of the upper castes. On the other side, the process also aimed to exclude both the upper and lower castes inter-mix, which results in Varna pollution. Varna pollution results in presenting mostly degraded status to the involved caste subjects. Again, the presentation of degraded status superiorly tilted in favour of upper castes. In other words, even if any upper-caste male had a marriage with lower caste women, then the men are not degraded in caste status. At another range, special privileges in a various manner tilted in favour of Brahmins, among all the Varna sections. Thus, Gender was also one of the essential superior criteria in deciding the pollution status of the inter-mixed sections and individuals.

When re-visualised the denial and exclusion of Christian Dalits (religious and affirmative action policy preference) freedom from the historic '*Sanatana Dharma*' domain; it re-establishes how the upper castes captured Indian State apparatus attempts to continue *Santana Dharma's* sanctified spirit status-quo against Dalits (Christians), albeit in renewed fashion in the modern liberal democratic age. By making the Dalits continue basically in the Hindu domain or under other Indic-religious categories like Buddhism and Sikhism, the upper castes feel that the Dalits should not get liberated from the dominant caste clutches of Hinduism primarily. However, even after conversion to religions like Christianity and Islam, Dalits are treated and humiliated as 'Dalits' only. They were not extended any renewed privileges, and they could not climb higher ladders above the upper castes level in social status mostly.

## XVII

Though varied academic research and various judicial verdicts observed the prevalence of caste elements and continued humiliating life even after conversion to religions like Christianity by the Dalits – the Indian State apparatus, politically and judicially, has

failed to recognise the same declared SC category as religiously neutral. Prolonged (intentional) denial and exclusion appear to be master-planned among the portals of major Indian political and judicial classes – when observed involved decades together procrastination nature against Christian Dalits rights recognition. Decades together involved procrastination is equal to – justice delayed is justice denied. Thus, the Christian Dalit section is at the denial and exclusion mode of their honourable existence even during the constitutionally guaranteed liberal secular democratic age.

As a result of their honourable existence denial, the Christian Dalits have been mostly choosing to seek Hindu Dalit (Hindu SC) status for benefits of reservation utilisation – though they adherently practice Christianity in their private family realm. The Christian Dalits, mainly in South India, were introduced as SC Hindus when the census was enumerated for every decade. Thus, during every official government statistical collection purpose or otherwise, the Christian Dalits consciously introduces themselves as Hindu SC. Though Christian Dalits no more like heart-fully, Hindu SC status and position, they are forced by the (Hindu) upper castes dominated polity and ruling Indian State apparatus to introduce in such manner, in an undeclared (intentional) manner. In this sequence, even the Indian judiciary is also at fault side since it has been failing to pronounce, positively, how Christian Dalits have been unduly denied Christian Dalit reservation under the religious neutral category of SC fold, as per the original Constitution's spirit or otherwise also.

## XVIII

Though Ambedkar declared in 1935 that he would not die as a Hindu, in October 1956, merely less than two months before his death, he formally chose to convert into the Buddhist fold. This indicates that a religious conversion is not an easy task; as religion is inherited for generations together from forefathers' lineage. Unless and otherwise, substantial psychological convincing factors convince, usually human beings may not convert to other religions. Even if any religious conversion occurred just for the sake of monetary benefits, it will not last long and may end up in dubious pretension. Such possible dubious pretension is not well reported in the Indian scenario, in the case of various sections which converted to religions like Christianity. However, Hindutva

propaganda is high that the religious conversion to Christianity occurs due to a high level of monetary benefits exchange.

When Ambedkar gave a call for en-mass conversion to Buddhism in October 1956, some sections of people expressed doubts about losing reservation as per the 1950 Presidential Order. However, Ambedkar allayed their fears and assured them that he would strive to secure the same rights and religious conversion should not become an obstacle for reservation extension to the historical untouchability experienced sections. He asserted that human beings primarily prefer human dignity and not benefits. Thus, according to his thought, Dalits prefer human dignity in religious conversation but not the Hindu religious order for the sake of retaining mere reservations. (Parke, 2007) It should be carefully noted that the Dalit Sikhs were extended SC status when Ambedkar was live. Thus, during Ambedkar's lifetime itself Hindu and Sikh Dalits were extended SC status by the GoI.

However, due to prolonged ill-health, Ambedkar passed away on 06 December 1956 without fulfilling and addressing the issue and cause of his above-assured promise. Ultimately, the Buddhist Dalits secured the SC status in 1990, after a prolonged wait. The majority of the Indian Buddhist community is present in only one single State, i.e., Maharashtra, and that too, again, most of them hail from the Mahar Dalit section. In particular, even among the Maharashtra Dalits, the Mahar community is much inclined towards Buddhism. Mahar's embraced Ambedkar and Ambedkarism in Maharashtra since Ambedkar hailed from the same Mahar community, and they admired his activism.

Most sections that oppose Dalits conversion to other religions like Christianity portray that foreign missionary agents lured Dalits to kill the Hindu religion in India and in the world. This is an insult to human dignity and undermines the human rationality to choose one's religious faith. (Heredia, 2007) Dalits are projected and treated as incapable of choosing their religion by the caste Hindus, especially Hindutva sections. Moreover, for them, Dalits are most suitable to stay only in the Hindu fold. However, the contrary perspective from the Dalits who opt to choose other religions are manifold; like their wish to escape ritualistic pollution in the Hindu religious order, hope and aspiration for better spiritual, cultural and living standards in other religions, etc.

Under these prevailing circumstances, the study set forth the following objectives for an intensive empirical probe.

### **Objectives of the Study**

- To know about the position of the Christian Dalits.
- To know about Christian Dalits activism to quash the 1950 Constitutional Order, judicially and politically.
- To know about the mainstream Dalit movement's engagement with the Christian Dalits position.
- To examine the secular credentials of the Indian society and polity.

### **The focus and methodology of the study**

The study focuses on the condition of SC Christians in AP from a comparative perspective. It critically evaluates in a secular dimension by taking recourse in an urban ethnographic 'in-depth interviews synthesis' into the major theme of the engaged empirical probe. Two Christian Protestant denomination Churches were selected for intensive study. Accordingly, in-depth interviews were conducted with priests, congregational heads, devotees and other sections of the society. The prayer services of these Churches under study were keenly observed. A few interactions were also conducted to ascertain Hindutva section perceptions and opposition to Christian Dalit reservation extension under SC ambit.

A segregation approach was followed to ascertain the views of the Christian Dalits (BC-C) and (Hindu) SC Dalits on a comparative basis. Why are Christian Dalits under BC or BC-C fold, and why did SC Dalits without formal conversion adhere to Christianity? At last, a synthesis was engaged concerning the AP Dalit movement; how the AP Dalit movement is blind to the Christian Dalit reservation aspect. Same time, at another level, focused analysis from a secular perspective was engaged to establish how Hindutva elements opposition to Christian Dalits reservation under the SC fold is unconstitutional and illegal.

## **Chapters Scope**

The first chapter provided a construction as to how the marginalisation of Dalits in religious discourse is manifold. Further, went on to construct the Christian Dalits reservation problem in a statement mode by highlighting the 1950 Presidential Order discriminative stance against them. The contemporary Dalit movement position in the Telugu region and its critique from the Christian Dalit reservation perspective is offered. Further, the chapter set forth a few objectives to be explored. Finally, the Christian Dalit reservation issue is entangled with Indian secularism and critiqued Indian secularism's inability to resolve the Christian Dalit reservation issue. Methodologically, the relevance of the chapter can be visualised from 'interrogative approach' as it aimed to construct a systematic background to the research question, objectives and design focus.

The second chapter provides an exhaustive literature review into the posed research problem and set forth the research objectives dimension. The exhaustive review of the literature is clustered into five categorical segments, as: Dalits and caste; caste and Christianity; democracy and secular Politics; hindutva; and finally, reservation. Towards this end, the varied dimensions involved in these five clusters of themes, inherent limitations and challenges are analysed and focused. Methodologically, the relevant content analysis is followed here.

The Chapter three provides an analytical glimpse over the controversy surrounding the denial of the reservation to the Christian Dalits through the 1950 Constitutional Order. Constitutional, legal and political aspects were covered under this chapter's domain. Methodologically the chapter's relevance lay in the 'critical analysis' style over the Christian Dalit reservation issue.

Chapter four focuses on the contemporary Dalit movement, Hindutva engagement styles, and mainstream political section entangled nature with the Dalit issues and politicians across the Telugu region. It concludes by observing that the Dalit movement in the Telugu region is silent towards the Christian Dalit reservation aspect, though most of the Dalits are Christian Dalits by faith. While highlighting so, the chapter also exposed how the mainstream political parties, including the BJP, perceived the Dalit movement under



the Hindu Dalits category by not highlighting the Christian Dalit background. However, the shadow Hindutva forefront organisations are at the forefront in racking alleged religious conversion activities by the Christian organisations and questioning how Dalit should lose reservation upon conversion. Finally, this whole issue is seen as an inability of the Indian secular discourse to deal effectively. Methodologically, the significant contribution of the chapter can be observed under the ‘contemporary political analysis’ domain across the Telugu region.

The fifth chapter provided a glimpse of the field study location. It focuses on the field study location’s concentration. The prime field study location of the research is grounded at a coastal Andhra urban locality, which is pseudo named as ‘the City-Q’. The chapter provides an analytical glimpse into the description of the district and the City-Q concerning Christianity, Christians and Christian elements observation across the City-Q. The political symbolism of the Dalits, Christian Dalits and their involvement and association in the mainstream political discourse is observed. The Dalit and Dalit-Bahujan sections notions and involvement in the anti-Telangana movement are also highlighted. However, it is observed that most of the Dalit and Dalit Bahujan section's organisations could be recognised as individualistic and mere letter-head platforms. Towards the end, the researcher also provides details concerning Hindutva’s passive nature at the City-Q. Methodologically, the relevance of the chapter can be visualised from the 'urban ethnography' style. The chapter observes and establishes, at a certain level, how there is no demand and movement for the Christian Dalit reservation at the City-Q. However, the Dalit activists' and leaders, though they majorly have Christian (Dalit) identity, in reality, continue their activities on sole Dalit identity, but not on Christian identity. Thus, they were primarily conscious of their historically inherited marginalised caste identity, but not much about Christian identity. Engagement and politicisation of their issues continue under the domain of Dalit, but not Christian Dalit.

Chapter six draws focus on two Christian Dalits dominated Churches and their engagement with the themes related to caste, Dalits and Christian Dalits reservation issue, etc. Intensive in-depth interviews with Christian Dalit devotees and others are included. Two broad Christian Protestant Congregations, pseudo-named as

Congregation-A and Congregation-B, are selected for intensive study. Both Congregation-A and Congregation-B are dominated by the Christian Mala and Madiga sections, respectively. Within Congregation-A and Congregation-B, two specific Churches located at the City-Q are selected for intensive field study concentration. These two Churches are pseudo named as Grace and Hope Churches, respectively. The study proves how there is no Christian Dalit movement in these two Congregations-A & B. At another level, the study observes that the Christian Dalits feel like Dalits. Thus, caste is their prime identity than religion. In the chapter, case study approach is significant relevance lay in 'in-depth interviews' synthesis into the central theme of the chapter and thesis, i.e., concerning the Christian Dalits.

The last chapter, seven, is a conclusion. The chapter elucidated the summary of the thesis and observed significant concluding aspects touched across the thesis constructively interwoven argument.

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### End Notes:

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1. Kings Cabinet is a rough English translation of *Mantri-mandal*, i.e., *the advisory council of the King's court*.
2. First, before India's attainment of independence Backward Classes (BC's) were identified. Even after Indian independence BC's were first identified at the States level. Later-on OBC's were identified at the national level. Thus, at level, they were called as BC's and at the national level; they are called as OBC's. However, there may or may-not exist an inter-section between the State BC list and national OBC list.
3. Akhand Bharat is a still existing notion among sections of people, like those among the RSS, VHP, etc., which cherish the then prevalent Hinduism among larger territories of India. Akhand Bharat or larger India, for them was lost due to the expansionist agenda of the Islam and other forces.
4. Sanskritisation in this respect should be understood as coined and used by MN Srinivas (2013) work on 'Social Change in Modern India' as how certain castes practices the notions of upper caste status and how lower castes wishes to attain the status of upper castes.
5. The BJP led NDA government under PM Narendra Modi had implemented a few of these controversial agendas successfully, like repeal of article 370, legislating banning of triple talaq usage for instant divorce practice, etc.

Chapter: II

**DALITS, CHRISTIANITY  
AND DEMOCRACY:  
A CONCEPTUAL REVIEW**

Abstract:

*The chapter draws five categorical clusters concerning the 'review of the literature'. These five clusters include - Dalits and Caste; Dalits and Christianity; Democracy and Secular Politics in India; Hindutva and finally, Reservations. The significance of the study can be recognised from the domain of 'content analyses'. At another level, the chapter provides a vivid glimpse into varied dimensions, inherent challenges and inherent limitations concerning all the five clusters of literature review.*

## I

The researcher visualises the literature concerning the theme of 'Christian Dalits and Secular Democracy in AP' and the research objectives to be explored under five segments. These categorical segments are:

- I. Dalits and Caste
- II. Dalits, Christianity
- III. Democracy and Secular Politics in India
- IV. Hindutva and
- V. Reservations

However, the above five clusters of the literature review are not sequentially presented by the researcher in this chapter. The readers have to grasp these five segments as per the presented narration style below.

Caste is the central theme of focus in Indian religions even after conversion to any religion, be it Indic or non-Indic. Caste is a continuing phenomenon among South Asians after conversion. Caste continuity is not just limited to Indians. It is a continuing sequence among most South Asians even after their migration to non-caste existing nation-States like in Europe and American continents.

## II

### **Dalits and Marginalisation**

While dealing with the origins of caste, various scholars have expressed varied dissenting views (Dumont, 2013). As a result, the origin of the caste remains an eluding secret. However, some scholars like Sharma (1997) feel that castes must have evolved, and each caste's origin must have some genesis point in history. Mostly, for Sudhra castes origin, this view is expressed. However, caste as a discriminatory marginalisation and privileged unit is textually well constructed, revealed and established, based on ancient texts like Vedas, Manusmriti, etc. On the other side, Ambedkar (2013) observes that concrete literature related to the origin of panchama varna or the out-caste section is not available.

However, he attempts to unpack how the out-caste section might have emerged. Towards this end, he proposes that the erstwhile Buddhist converts must have become out-castes.

Ilaiah (2005) touches on the pre-Buddhist society's nature, which was rotten under Brahmanic influence and excessive irrational caste practices. Then Ilaiah highlights under what kind of circumstances Buddha rose to prominence with his critical revolutionary thinking pattern, which can be visualised as anti-Brahmanism in nature. Towards this side, Ilaiah highlights Buddha and Buddhism's transformative egalitarian social reformation ideas, which are drastic in building a new social and political culture. Further, Ilaiah (2008) observes that Buddhism grew as an alternative religion to Vedic Hinduism and threw alternative ideas and institutions in the process. Further, Ilaiah attempts to bring together the scattered sources on political ideas of Buddha and Buddhism concerning some of the Western political thinkers.

Joshi (2007) touches on various contemporary theories about the origin of Buddhism. He also establishes the influence of Buddhism on Upanishads. Later, the author incorporates details concerning how Brahmanic ideas contradicted Buddhist notions. Finally, he grounds on the prehistory of *Sramanism* of pre-Upanishad and Vedic times, before the Aryan invasion. The contemporary Brahmanic Hinduism, according to him, has elements of *Sramanism*, Buddhism, Yoga and *Samkhya*. Thus, Brahmanic Hinduism inherited significant *Sramanism*, Buddhism, etc., traditions. The work can be observed from anti-Brahmanism's lenses and the marginalised sections' original inhabitant claims. In this sequence, the marginalised sections claim that they are pushed back socially and culturally by the Brahmanic forces. This kind of imaginary historicity is prevailing among the marginalised sections in the Indian sub-continent against Brahmanic hegemony.

Rao (2003) focuses on the historical origins of the Jogini system, the status of Jogini's in contemporary society, and how to visualise their continuity and change in the modern discourse. Jogini is a kind of heinous ritualistic tradition in which young girls are dedicated to the temples on behalf of the whole village as a symbolic representation of the temple deity. The prime duty of Jogini is to satisfy the village men sexually. For this tradition, only lower caste women are exclusively promoted. These women are primarily



part and parcel of Hindu ritualistic tradition. This traditional practice is not reported after conversion to other religions like Buddhism, Christianity and Islam.

Ambedkar (2007) presents a self-perspective on the need for religious conversion of untouchables from Hinduism to another religion and points out that the untouchable's condition is miserable in every religion. He observes that individual development should also be the prime goal of any religion, apart from social welfare. On all grounds, he declares the Hindu religion as inhuman and not appealing to his reason. Hence, he prefers religious conversion of the untouchables. Further, Ambedkar (2010) visualises the philosophy of religion. He questions whether Hinduism is a good or bad religion from this domain. From this side, his opinion argues that Hinduism's philosophy is bad, and Hinduism seeks to perpetuate inequality. Thus, preference for conversion can be visualised.

As a result of continued discriminatory caste practices, Zelliott (2005) presents why Ambedkar preferred to convert from Hinduism. Ambedkar observes that reforming the Hindu religion is an impossible task, as it is based on discriminatory caste marginalisation. Further for Ambedkar, Zelliott stresses that attempts to reform Hinduism is a kind of '...sweetening poison...'. Zelliott concentrates on Ambedkar's speeches on conversion issues as an intellectual and social activist. At last, Zelliott draws attention to why Ambedkar opted for Buddhism as the best option to convert. Though Ambedkar felt reforming Hinduism was impossible and preferred Dalits to convert to egalitarian religions like Buddhism, in reality, after Ambedkar's demise, one can observe how caste continues as a stumbling block even among Dalit Buddhists and how they are discriminated.

In this sequence, Teltumbde (2008) establishes how caste continues even after conversion to Buddhism among Maharashtra Dalits. Moreover, how The rest of the mainstream society discriminates against Dalit Buddhists is the highlight focus of Teltumbde. Towards this end, Teltumbde intensively covers a case study from Maharashtra's Khairlanji massacre of September 2006 incident, which is related to a brutal massacre of a Dalit Buddhist family. Thus, even after conversion to Indic religions like Buddhism, Dalits fail to have better livelihood, dignity and honour. Further,

Vicziany (2007) explores the untouchables as a social and political category. The ritual subordination from varied forms is primarily recognised as the problem for their degraded situation. As a result, even the State ameliorate measures fail to uplift them fully. Thus Vicziany stresses.

Thorat (2004) and Bob (2008) deal with atrocities against Dalits and treat the violation of Dalits dignity and honour as a breach of human rights. Thus, these scholars treat Dalits' rights as human rights at some level. Specifically, Thorat attempts to capture the philosophical underpinnings of the discriminative philosophy of Hinduism. Based on this, discriminative marginalisation continues against the Dalits in mainstream society. Thorat links violation of human rights against Dalits in India with the United Nations declaration of human rights. Bob (2008) looks forward to the internationalisation of Dalits discrimination and atrocities committed against them. Bob's focus is on international non-governmental organisations that work to eliminate human dignity against Dalits in this sequence. Towards this end, he observes how the State acts in a repressive mode to curtail voices of the international non-governmental organisations that try to commit loud atrocities against the Dalits in India.

Ghanshyam Shah (2006), along with other five renowned scholars, presents contemporary discriminatory atrocious caste practices against Dalits in rural India. To this end, innumerable instances of prevailing discrimination against Dalits are well presented. The unique contribution of the work lies in presenting detailed versions of innumerable discriminative caste continuation. Thus, a rare codification of discriminative practices in rural India is focused. Same time, at another end, the work also drew attention to Dalits assertion for rights-based equality is also touched on.

Jodhka (2013) touches on varied shades of caste-like, as tradition, power, humiliation, contesting spaces and as it exists in the contemporary society. The work provides a glimpse at lived reality of caste in everyday society. The continuity of caste in a dynamic manner by adapting to current circumstances is well pointed and observed.

### III

#### **Dalits, Historical Imaginary and Segregation**

Gooptu (2006) explores and constructs Adi-Hindu ideology against the background of new social and political developments that affected untouchables from 1920 onwards. Soon after their rift with the Arya Samaj in the early 1920s, the untouchable leaders began to propagate the concept of Adi-Hindu's original race and bhakti as their separate pre-Aryan religion. The work can be observed how the ex-untouchables can assert their original inhabitant nature in the Indian sub-continent and oppose the upper castes Brahmanic Hindu spiritual traditions and claims.

Jambudweepa Mulavasula Charitra: The work focuses on the original history of '*the Jambudweepa* people'. The work presents the format of how artists orally present Jambudweepa history in plays. The whole work is presented in the Telugu language. The usual play by the artists continues in poetry form. This booklet presents a prose version of translation for better understanding. The work claims that the *Jambudweepa* people are the original inhabitants of *Jambudweepa* land, i.e., India, and introduces how the Brahmanic forces cheated them. Madiga's in the Telugu region are well associated with Jambudweepa history and claims their lineage through Jambudweepa history.

Muthyam's (2006) work is the first attempt to explore and document the '*Chindu Bhagavatham*', which portrays and displays the mythological carry forward of *Chindu Bhagavatham* for generations together. *Chindu Bhagavatham* is mostly in oral tradition. The work documented the first kind of information about *Bhagavatham* from a famous player Chindula Yellamma. Chindu Bhagavatham is seen as a narration of Madiga's history and culture. Historically, Chindus are considered as a sub-caste of the Madiga's. *Chindu Bhagavatham* is also considered an alternative form of a protested oral tradition that continued to display against Brahmanism from Madiga's side.

Chiruthoti (2018) presents the historical and mythological accounts of a few Dalit castes in the Telugu region to analyse their historicity and 'unity force' examination. The work is rare to examine whether there are unity elements among various sub-sects of the Dalits castes in the Telugu region. From 1905 onwards, the historicity of the Dalit movement

and 'unity elements', if any, are analysed. Interestingly, it is found that historically, there are no unity elements among various sub-sects of Dalits in the Telugu region. Moreover, they are highly heterogeneous. The work gains significance from the Madiga-Mala conflict and the argument to have 'unity as one section'. The researcher also observed that from 1905 onwards, almost each caste leader operated and grew independently on the plank of his caste organisation in the Telugu region.

Nagaraj (2014) critiques Ilaiah's (2000) work vehemently as a romanticisation of Dalit-Bahujan's identity construction. Towards this end, Nagaraj considered Ilaiah's Dalit-Bahujan identity construction as an incoherent understanding of Indian history and culture. As a result, Nagaraj stood for the re-affirmation of lost cultural heritage by the marginalised sections. Thus, Nagaraj visualises certain positive elements in the lost cultural history of the marginalised sections and suggests them to construct their new identity accordingly from historical past genealogy. In this sequence, Nagaraj suggests to re-own marginalised sections banished worlds of gods and goddesses. However, Nagaraj fails to construct the lost cultural heritage of the marginalised sections on his own.

#### IV

### **Caste and Christianity**

Dalit converts to non-Indic religions are not covered under the atrocities prevention act. As a result, even if Dalits of Christian and Muslim origin face discrimination and atrocities, they cannot file a case under the SC and ST atrocities prevention act provisions. The caste atrocities prevention act applies to Dalit converts to Indic religious groups like Buddhism, Hinduism and Sikhism. As a result, atrocities against non-Indic religions are not treated as serious crimes. Thus, a potential research gap exists due to this discriminatory legal lacuna. As a result, most of the literature available on Dalit atrocities pertains to Dalit converts to Indic religions but not non-Indic religions. However, society treats Dalits as Dalits only and perpetuates discrimination and atrocities against them. This viewpoint is succinctly observed by various scholars like Louis (2007).

Castes and their historically practised spiritual notions are highly heterogeneous across the Indian sub-continent. However, the Brahmanic influence on various castes spiritual practices is highly observable. As a result, hybrid forms of spiritual caste practices triumphed. Even Dalits spiritual heterogeneous practices are no exception in this sequence. (Manohar, 2009 & 2010) While tribals chose to isolate and lead a life in alienation from the mainstream society, the rest of the caste society, though lived together, developed and practised various spiritual notions. However, the modern Hindutva attempts to forge a coherent identity to the heterogeneous caste spiritual identities. (Thapar, 2004).

Various castes have been trying to have better spiritual notions. In this sequence, they have been known for engaging with varied spiritualistic ideal notions across South Asian history. Some prominent religious ideas and practices are recognised as protests against the dominant Brahmanic spiritual attitude and hegemony. As a result, in Indian history, the birth of religions like Jainism, Sikhism, Buddhism, etc., have been well known. The Indian masses have attempted to en-mass convert to various religions to escape ritualistic degrading pollution. In this sequence, one can observe mass conversions to non-Indic religions like Christianity and Islam. (Clarke, 2011)

Among various caste converts to Christianity, Dalit converts are unique and visible. Mostly, Dalits converted to Christianity in South India and North East India regions. In the North-East India region, tribal converts to Christianity are visible. Various castes converted to different Christian denominations. Though Christianity has been well present in the Indian sub-continent over centuries, it was only during modern times, especially during the British India regime, that conversions to Christianity in the colonial Andhra region saw mass conversions. (Varikoti-Jetty, 2019)

Various Christian protestant denominations worked in various regions, particularly among various caste sections. As a result, various castes and Protestant denominations are recognised as synonymous. In this sequence, RCM failed to succeed much. Where RCM failed, the Protestant denominations succeeded. In other words, while the RCM was mostly successful in attracting the upper castes into its fold, on the other hand, the Protestant denominations succeeded in establishing a base among the lower sections of

the society, like Dalits. For instance, in this sequence, one can observe the exclusive concentration of Madigas in the TBC and Malas in the AELC. Such kind of peculiar combinations is visible across the Indian sub-continent. (Rajpramukh, 2008)

The famous Dalit atrocities in the Telugu region like Karamchedu and Tsundur are committed against (Christian) Dalits. The same gets established when observed the names of the victims. However, most academic research and other wider popular literature fail to identify and stress the religious background of the victims specifically. As a result, it is established that the Dalits are seen as Dalits only after conversion, and atrocities against them are continuous. The Dalit movement in the Telugu region is silent to highlight their dominant Christian identity. (Sirapangi, 2021)

Rattaiah (2000) concentrates on Christian devotees' conversion in the Hyderabad location. Towards this end, the researcher points out that most of the conversions occur due to their contact with an individual of a Church in whom they sense ideal and vital embodiments of beliefs. Thus, Rattaiah's empirical study establishes that Hindutva's propaganda that conversions occur due to monetary benefits sounds like a far-fetched reality.

Abraham (2003) presents his Master of Theology degree in this work. The work looks at two Kerala Churches, i.e., Church of God (Full Gospel) and Indian Pentecostal Church. The prime objectives of the work concentrate on the Pentecostal devotees' engagement with caste notions after conversion. In this respect, various quantitative analyses are presented concerning the above two mentioned Church congregations. Overall, the work observes that though caste notions continue even after conversion to Christianity, there is significant liberation from the previous life. Thus, the devotees slowly escape caste clutches after conversion, but not to the fullest extent.

Bama (2000) presents how she felt like becoming a nun in the Catholic Church right from her childhood. As per her wish, she becomes a nun in one of the Catholic denominations and faces discrimination as a Dalit woman and Dalit nun. At last, she abandons the nun status in the Catholic denomination and leads an independent life. However, she declares her steadfast benevolent faith towards Jesus Christ, even after

leaving nun status. Thus, her only problem is with the caste in Catholic Church, but not faith in Christianity. The works gain significance in knowing the dynamics of caste discrimination in the Indian Church and how Christian Dalits fail to adjust accordingly. This work is an autobiography.

Jesme (2009) presents her autobiography as a former nun in the Congregation of Mother of Carmel, a catholic denomination. She has an experience of thirty-three years in the Congregation, but on 31 August 2009, she left the Congregation, having been unable to bear the torture of the Congregation's colleagues in various forms. All her thirty-three years of self-reflections in various forms are reflected in her autobiography. She exposes the existing and growing ills of Catholicism. Though she left the Congregation, she is still a catholic devotee in Jesus, as per her declaration in work. The work establishes inherent contradictory dynamics in Indian Catholicism. However, there is no caste angle in the whole autobiography. However, class dynamics can be observed. Furthermore, in the Indian context, class is embedded in the caste dynamics. Thus, though caste dynamics are not explicitly touched upon, their silent relevance cannot be ignored to the fullest extent.

Chakravarti (2014) presents the whole life sketch of Pandita Ramabai starting from her Hindu family background to conversion to Christianity, and her immense contribution as a Brahmin Christian to Indian Christianity, women empowerment, a sort of difference with Swami Vivekananda on religious and gender equality issue. The work gains significance to observe how she is recognised as a Brahmin Christian even after conversion from Hinduism in the Indian context. Thus, caste recognition and continuation even after conversion gain significance to observe in Indian Christianity.

Webster (1992) focuses on the 19<sup>th</sup> century north Indian Dalit activism and observes that the Indian British government took no interest in the Dalits during this century. However, after 1857, to win the support of the traditional sections, they adopted a laissez-faire attitude and did not interfere in Dalit or caste issues. Moreover, it is observed that the Dalits accepted the hierarchical ordering of the society, but conversion to other religions like Islam and Christianity represented a rejection of the same. The mass movements, discriminatory compensatory steps, etc., are also focused on work.

Webster (2002) examines the religious strategies of Dalits, which they have been using during the modern Dalit movement. The author observes how the intensity of Dalits religious liberation got set back due to the Indian British government's rigid religious categories for communal electorates and other reserved benefits in the fold of SC. Further, the author stresses that Dalits-led agitations are localised in nature and could not accomplish their desired aspiration to the fullest.

Devi (2006) provides comprehensive details from historical to contemporary scenarios over varied dynamics of Christian sects spread across the Telugu region. Her focus is primarily on the coastal Andhra region. Towards this end, her prime focus is on how indigenous caste traditions transform to hybrid Christian customs upon (Dalits) conversion to Christianity. Thus, the research, at some level, attempts to establish that Indian Christian cultural practices are not alien to Indian soil, even after Indian's conversion to non-Indic religions, like Christianity. The study gains significance in the wake of Hindutva's heightened propagation and belief that upon conversion to Christianity, Indian's transform entirely by getting alienated from the regional customs and traditions and thus be treated as foreigners. The study completely negates such propaganda's perspective.

Massay (2009) observes that Hinduism is the primary problem for the Dalits, but later-on other religions too, which came to India and to which Dalits converted, also fails to regain the lost human dignity of Dalits. Foreign religions in India also could not curb the powerful Indian caste system. However, by taking a stand towards Christianity, the author felt that egalitarian religions like Christianity should take a firm stand to enable Dalits to regain their human identity and dignity by changing their marginalised form concerning the Indian predominant cultural aspects, like caste. He suggests Indian Church to have a new faith-based understanding from the Dalit perspective to address the Dalit problems and sustain the Indian Church further.

Rajpramukh (2008) touches on Christianity and Dalits in the Telugu region and Dalit theology dimensions. In this sequence, he made a unique attempt on the Lutheran Church in the Guntur area of coastal Andhra. Further, he identifies 'twice discriminative' grounds of the Christian Dalits by the State concerning non-extension of reservation benefits and



discriminatory stances adopted against Dalits by the mainstream society. At last, he points out that 'Dalit theology' propagator, Nirmal Prabhakar's stand be adopted by the Dalit movement, which focuses on both MK Gandhi mode of reformative agenda and the alternative path of Ambedkar.

Ravela (2003) presents details about the 'Telugu Baptist' Congregation, popularly recognised under the 'American Baptist Telugu Mission' influence. The book covers details concerning the establishment, development, decentralisation, institutionalisation and traditions of the Church congregation comprehensively to utmost clarity. Madigas are usually well associated with the Telugu Baptist Church across the Telugu region.

Kujur (2010) presents various specialised scholars papers on Dalit and tribal religious practices. Regional Christian variations across India concerning Dalit and tribal communities, how margins of Christian faith among Dalits and tribals are found, etc., heterogeneous practices are well captured and presented. Thus, Christianity's plurality and marginality even after conversion are visible among Dalits and tribals, as presented by respective article authors and editor's notes.

Rao (2009) deals with caste factors and religious conversion to Christianity, particularly Dalits of colonial Andhra. Moreover, in the latter part of the thesis, he poises a synthesis with the critical study of *Mala-Palli* and *Antarani Vasantam*, two Telugu novels. These two Telugu novels are recognised prominently under Dalit literature. It is pointed out that the untouchables passed resolutions in their caste panchayat meetings to en-mass convert to Christianity, which surprised even the Christian missionaries. Thus, at some level, one can observe the voluntary conversion to Christianity by the Dalit sections in colonial times.

CBCI (2016) is an all India level platform which has been well recognizing Christian Dalits discriminative strands in the Church, society and State. As a result, the CBCI has been doing certain activism in its capacity to promote, secure and advance interests of the Christian Dalits. Towards this end, periodic policy documents are released by the CBCI mandating its wide network across India to follow the same guidelines and accordingly act by promoting the interests of the Christian Dalits.

Fayiz (2020) notes how the National Council for Churches in India (NCCI) has been in the forefront in organizing annual black Sunday on the second Sunday in August. In addition to this, he also points that since 2004 onwards the NCCI has been fighting a case in the Supreme Court of India to secure SC status to the Christian Dalits, who are denied the same.

## V

### **Dalit Movement in the Telugu Region**

Chowdary (2012) focuses on the origins of philosophical underpinnings of the non-Brahmin movement in the Telugu region. Before India attained independence, the non-Brahmin movement had its unique place in the then Madras Presidency. The work has a lucid preface composed by N Anjaiah. Anjaiah redrew attention on the relevance of understanding the non-Brahmin movement's philosophical underpinnings in the contemporary Telugu society, primarily. Further, Anjaiah observes that the modern Dalit movement phase has discourse construction from the non-Brahmin movement. However, Anjaiah forgets that the Dalits' social imaginary and historicity have other views – like the adi-Hindu notion and perceiving Brahmins as an antagonistic perpetual section. Thus, some sections of Dalits construct their non-Brahmin consciousness to the historical dynamics like the Aryan invasion of the Indian territory.

Lavanam (2016) presents a biography of her father, Joshua Gurram. Joshua Gurram is a noted Telugu literary writer in Telugu. He had a Christian Dalit family background. Moreover, he started his professional career as a school teacher in one of the largest church schools network chains. However, he lost his job as he saw the brunt of the Church authorities for his inclination toward Hindu religious scriptures and composition of literary works having genesis from Hindu scriptures. However, Joshua failed to be an adherent Christian and transformed into a humanist by the end of his life. The work gains significance in two aspects. To observe Christian Dalit subject transformation and understand Joshua as a trend-setter in Dalit literature, as he denounced Brahmanism vehemently and produced high-quality literature.

Balagopal (2011) focuses on Balagopal's published works in various domains. Primarily, his articles and interviews are published by his associates after his death. Though Balagopal was a noted civil rights and human rights activist, he also fails to recognise the Dalits dominant presence in Christianity in the Telugu region. Thus, this indicates that most of the works on Dalits in the Telugu region did not recognise Dalits presence explicitly in Christianity. The writers and society always consider Dalits as a Dalit section in the Telugu region without bothering much about their religious background in Christianity.

Maurya (2010) presents Babu Jagjivan Ram's political life as fascinating. Babu Jagjivan Ram was a noted Indian freedom fighter, famous INC leader, and distinguished politician in democratic India. After Madigas vociferous demand to sub-categorise SC reservation in AP, Babu Jagjivan Ram's icon building also occurred. Babu Jagjivan Ram as an icon is much projected in the Telugu region against Malas appropriation of Ambedkar's legacy. Since Madigas perceive Babu Jagjivan Ram as an icon, the present work gains significance to know about his legacy in Indian democracy and politics.

Srinivasarao (2010) incorporates enriched Madigas history and cultural sources in the South Indian Telugu region. The writer is an academic in Telugu literature. The Madiga's deity Matangi, the Madiga's contribution to the famous Buddhist Amaravathi monument of the second and third century, 11<sup>th</sup>-century *Jambavantudu's* statue, the various sub-castes of Madiga's and their cultural traditions, professional activity, the historical roots of Madigas, etc. themes are interestingly dealt by the author. Rich historical pictorial evidence is also incorporated across the book on relevant pages.

Babu (2014) presents Madigas history. The work has a lucid foreword composed by TV Narayana, a noted Madiga personality in the Telangana region of AP. The Madigas role and presence in various kingdoms are well highlighted and documented. The Amaravathi granary (*poornakumbam*) monument, which the government of AP uses as its emblem, was initially donated by a Madiga person named Vidikudu. Vidikudu was a leather tanner. He donated his *Poornakumbam* rock plaque to the Amaravathi monument. This historical evidence is traced and established in this work. In the author's view, the annihilation of caste is possible when the Mala-Madiga sections unite. The historical

injustice done to *Jambudweepa* upon Aryan's invasion is also much highlighted. Madiga's social imagination revolves around *Jambudweepa* and *Jambavanta*.

Rao (2007) introduces a unique Madiga poet and literary personality. The work is all about Nagappagari Sunder Raju, an extraordinary Telugu literary personality, incredibly specialised in Madiga literature. Nagappagari Sunder Raju rose to particular prominence during the decades of 1990 and 2000 through his unique literary contribution to the Dalit and Madiga literature. Nagappagari Sunder Raju had his origins in the Rayalaseema region, and he specialised in the same region's dialect. Nagappagari Sunder Raju's rise to prominence should be understood concerning Madiga's rise of voice in the society for SC reservation sub-categorisation. In another sense, Nagappagari Sunder Raju's rise to prominence coincided with the Madiga demand for rationalisation of SC reservation.

Satyanarayana (2004) presents Telugu scholars, activists and academicians literary debate on Dalit literature from varied ideological domains. The Dalit literary debates in AP during 1993-1995 are selectively compiled. However, in the introduction, the author clarified that he intended to present the ideological deliberations of the respective writers in his work and did not offer his own renewed criticism and viewpoint. The articles cover one of the significant phases in the Dalit movement and politics in the Telugu region. The early phase of the Dalit movement and political intensity can be observed in this work. However, the work fails to construct and highlight a perspective from a Christian Dalit background.

Ratnam (2008) focuses on the Dalit movement in coastal and Telangana regions prior to independence and the political discourse of the AP in the pre-independence period with particular focus on the conditions of the Dalits, i.e. both Mala and Madiga, the two predominant SC castes in the Telugu region. Later on, he synthesises the democratisation process based on the Dalit movement role. However, in reality, the major political parties, like the INC and TDP, attempted to sustain the base of the Dalits with populist schemes. Thus, the Dalit movement affected the agenda-setting of various political parties, at some level, if not at an absolute level.

## VI

### **Dalits and Reservation**

The Christian Dalits mainly claim SC reservation instead of declaring formal conversion. If the Dalits declare their formal conversion to Christianity, they have to place under the BC category. As a result, formal Dalit converts to Christianity are placed under BC sub-category 'C' in the Telugu region. Moreover, a mere one percent of the reservation is extended. However, Dalit converts to Buddhist, Hindu and Sikh fold are extended SC reservation. The major religious Dalits who are denied reservation include those from Christian and Islam backgrounds. However, Misra (2007) recommended the GoI to repeal the 1950 Constitutional Order and pave the way for Dalits religious freedom. (Mosse, 2012)

Due to the 1950 Constitutional Order impediment, the secular credentials of the Indian political system are vehemently questioned from certain directions. In mainstream Telugu society, Dalit Secularist (2021) is a social media platform. Dalit Secularist as a platform is dedicated to highlighting the common concerns of the Christian Dalits on an almost regular basis.

Parkhe (2007) outlines the Christian Dalits activism for their right to secure SC reservation, even after conversion to Christianity. The book primarily focuses on Christian Dalits activism in Maharashtra in India. The author is a noted media reporter, and he compiles the work on Christian Dalits activism to secure SC reservation in the Maharashtra region. Thus, the movement led by Christian Dalits in the Maharashtra domain can be observed.

Talukder (1998) presents detailed information about how the upper caste Indians first got a reservation from the British Indian government in various forms like in Civil Services, etc., and how they developed. The author further points out sarcastically that the same Aryan upper castes who benefited from reservation for their empowerment from the British started to deny, oppose and question the rationale behind the extension of reservation to the other marginalised sections like the SC and ST.

Bosco (2010) presents different Christian and Muslim scholars contributed papers. The work deals with discrimination towards Dalits in the Christian and Islamic fold. Even religious discrimination of the Indian State, which fails to extend reservation to the Dalits within the SC category and discrimination faced by them in the broader society, is also well covered. The activity of the Indian Church concerning Christian Dalits reservation is also focused on.

Louis (2007) deals with aspects like Dalits conversion and cultural alienation, continued subjugation even after conversion to Christianity, historical roots of caste-based discrimination within the Indian Church, multiple modes of discrimination faced by Christian Dalits, political, legal and constitutional processes which took place to secure a reservation to Christian Dalits within SC fold are covered.

Deshpande (2008) presents an overview of the sociological perspectives of caste among Christian and Muslim Dalits, statistical data on the current status of Dalit Christians and Muslims and denial of reservation in the SC fold. At last, the author concludes that Christian and Muslim Dalits face caste-based discrimination from other religious men. According to statistical sources, Christian and Muslim Dalits are backward and deserve a reservation within the SC category.

Misra (2007) reports that the Dalit background Christians and Muslims be extended reservation within the fold of SC category only, and SC/ST Prevention of Atrocities Act should also be covered to the SC converts to other religions like Christianity. Thus, the report recognises Dalits under the religious neutral category, like how the original position of the Constitution of India recognises them before the issue of the Presidential Order of 1950.

Sambaiah (2000) focuses on sub-categorisation of SC reservation necessity in AP with substantive statistical evidence. Moreover, the work presented a brief history of Madiga's and their demand for rationalisation of SC reservation in AP.

M (2013) focuses on Madiga's demand for sub-categorisation of SC reservation movement in the Telugu region from the social justice demand domain. Further, the researcher presents a vivid interpretation of the whole SC sub-categorisation demand,

movement, State response and political parties' engagement over the years. However, the thesis fails to recognise the Christian background of majority Dalits in AP, including Madiga's and accordingly construct and argue reservation dynamics to gain SC status to the Christian Dalits.

Gundimeda (2006) equated Malas opposition to SC sub-categorisation in AP with Brahmin's opposition to reservations. Same time, the author also observes that Madigas demand for sub-categorisation of SC reservation in AP is in philosophical line with Ambedkarism. Moreover, Ambedkarism is equated with humanism. Since Ambedkar is considered a legendary philosophical leader for the Dalit movement, justifying SC reservation sub-categorisation from the Ambedkar perspective gains significance in the study. However, like M (2013), the author fails to recognise and understand Dalits dominant presence in Christianity and how they are denied SC reservation as per the 1950 Constitutional Order.

Muthaiah (2008) presents a solid background for Madiga's demand for sub-categorisation of SC reservation in AP and how various legal and constitutional steps are initiated to fulfil the demand accordingly. Further, the author also examines the content of excerpts from the Hon'ble retired Justice Usha Mehra Commission report, which re-examined the whole issue in the light of the Supreme Court of India's, struck down of AP government implementation of SC sub-categorised reservation.

Deshpande (2013) codifies and presents rational and positive analyses of the Indian reservation policy. The work's uniqueness lay in using a high level of research outputs to substantiate the author's analysis to support continuing reservation logic and denounce other suggested perspectives like economic backwardness based criteria as illogical.

Gopani (2020) provides an Indian perspective towards various SC sections demands and movements for sub-categorisation of reservations. Towards this end, various State governments and GoI initiatives are highlighted at various times. The work attempts to establish the heterogeneous background of the SC communities and accordingly urges the need to sub-categorise them for better reservation utilisation. Moreover, the work substantively touches on the Telugu region's SC sub-categorisation movement and

governments divided response, especially after AP bifurcation in 2014. At another level, the author expresses that Dalits divided politics been played by the political parties like the INC since MK Gandhi times. However, the work fails to deal specifically concerning the religious dimension of the SC in detail.

Bag (2019) presents a rare dimensional view of Kandhamal violence in Odisha State. The author extensively covers the Kandhamal region and conducts an intensive study. Towards this end, the author notes that the region simmered with conflicts from 1994 onwards on various intensities. However, the years 1994, 2007 and 2008 were watershed in the history of Kandhamal violence. The study focus observes a potential gulf between Kandhas and Panas, the region's respective ST and SC sections. Panas started to claim ST status since they could not gain SC Christian status upon conversion. As a result, the potential gulf got extended between Kandhas and Panas over reservation utilisation and sought false ST certificates by the Pana's. The work, at one level, exhibits how the Dalit movement in India is highly scattered and unable to recognise and address Christian Dalits reservation under the SC category.

Satri Veera Kesalu (2019) critiques India's available shallow religious freedom, though India proclaims as a constitutionally liberal secular democratic nation. Towards this end, the authors point out the lack of religious freedom to the Dalits to convert to the religions of their choice like Christianity, as Dalits conversion to religions like Christianity is vehemently opposed and denied in varied forms. Further, the authors point out how the persecution of Christians is taking place and how they are even denied reservation upon conversion to Christianity, which is a gross original constitution's violation in spirit.

Sirapangi (2021) critiques the contemporary Dalit movement in the Telugu region as it fails to recognise its own dominant Christian (Dalit) background. Moreover, he proceeds to establish that instead of fighting to secure SC status to the numerically significant Christian Dalits, the Telugu region's Dalit movement is shattered, primarily over the fight 'for and against' SC reservation sub-categorisation.



## VII

### **Hindutva**

Bag (2016): along with another co-author, extensively presents the famous Kandhamal violence of 2007-2008 in the Odisha State between Christians and Hindus. In this sequence, even Christian Dalits and caste Hindus reconciliation paths are much highlighted by keeping aside the legal path of the State. The study critiques the secular State, Church and Hindu religion for failing to build a proper dialogue process to resolve the conflict. Even intellectuals blind eye towards dialogue and reconciliation process is observed, though intellectuals stood for reconciliation. Even civil society's perspective for the 'justice before reconciliation' approach is also well critiqued. The study gains significance in knowing the intensity of religious conflict where Christian Dalits are victims and how they could establish reconciliation with the caste Hindus.

Patnaik (2016) echoes the neutral religious position of the Dalits constitutionally. However, he is also cautious in recognising how the 1950 Constitutional Order dubiously denied such a neutral religious position and proceeds to discriminate against Dalits selectively based on their religious background, especially from Christian and Muslim backgrounds. Towards this end, the author stresses and critiques that Dalits need not be selectively discriminated by the Indian State based on those who adopt Indic and Abrahamic religions.

Jaffrelot (2011) makes a comprehensive and elaborate attempt to expose Hindu nationalism's birth and growth within different phases and shades over the past few decades. Moreover, he observes that the Hindutva doctrine results as a reaction to the ambivalent West and Islam. Hindu nationalists attempt to imitate the features of the 'Other', as they perceive themselves with a superiority notion. Same time, Hindu nationalists wish to resist and combat the constructed 'Other' effectively. Finally, Hindu nationalists wish to protect the dominant status in Indian society. Hindu nationalism offers a more conservative ideology, imbibed in Brahmanic values when subaltern sections like the Dalits challenge their domination.

Puniyani (2006) focuses on capturing the facelifts of the Hindutva ideology, practices, preparative features and present position. He observes that the Hindutva is against democratic values like liberty, equality and justice. Furthermore, he distinguishes between the Hindutva base in the pre-Indian independence and post-independence times. Before independence, the core base of the Hindutva came from landlords, Brahmins, Banias, etc. From the 1980s onwards, this base arises from sections like wealthy professionals, petty industrialists, rich peasants, etc.

Sharma (2003) attempts to present a glimpse of the Hindutva ideology's pertinent ideologues perceptions by focusing on prominent proponents, like; Dayananda Saraswati, Sri Aurobindo, Swami Vivekananda and Vinayaka Damodar Savarkar. Having highlighted these personalities, he shows how they differed in various perspectives in understanding Hinduism, Hindutva and Indian society.

Frykenberg (2009) traces the development of the word Hindu and points out that ancient Persians and Greeks first used it. In this respect, he considers the geographical location, unity, social, cultural, and political aspects of the Indian territory, as per the notions of ancient Persian and Greeks. Primarily, the word Hindu in some sense denotes the Indus valley civilisation. Moreover, the Indians were recognised as Hindus by the people living beyond the river Sindu. Furthermore, even the Muslims and British who arrived in India used the same word. British made references as 'Hindu Christians' and 'Hindu Muslims', distinguishing those from other natives of Indian soil. Moreover, the author observes that the consolidation of the word Hindu has been going on for the past hundred years, as majorly forged by the Hindutva forces.

Thapar (2004) traces the genealogy of religious beliefs and antagonistic relations and differences in ancient India, historically, over past centuries, concerning present-day Hinduism.

Thapar (2010) observes that the contemporary attempts of the Sangh Parivar, various *parishads* and *Sammelans* of different Hindu/Hindutva congregations attempt to restructure and present the indigenous religions as monolithic; same as Semitic religions like Christianity and Islam. Further, the author points out that the growth of sects like

*Brahmo Samaj*, *Prarthana Samaj*, the *Arya Samaj*, the Ramakrishna Mission, the Theosophical *Samaj*, the Divine Life Society, the *Swaminarayan* movement, etc. presents more significant currency for Hinduism's growth. On the whole, the writer points out that 'Syndicated Hinduism' rests primarily on the re-interpretation of Brahmanic literature like *Bhagavad Gita* and defends *Dharmasastras* and presents a type of conservatism in the guise of the modern reformed religion.

King (2008) presents an analytical synthesis of Orientalism and the myth of modern Hinduism through reviews of different scholars' interpretations. Further, the writer also points that the elite Indian intelligentsia, which got educated in the West or colonial powers educational institutions, appropriates the colonial romanticism of Orientalist dialogues and promotes the conceptual myth of spiritually advanced ancient religious status to Hinduism. Further, they accord it the status as 'Indian religion'.

Katju (2012): makes a unique contribution to Hindutva nationalism and its upsurge in the Indian political discourse. The author establishes VHP shared ideological affinity with other broad Hindutva organisations. While establishing such an argument, the author also grounds the work with rich empirical outputs on how VHP grew in its strength over the years. The work saw a link between ideological articulation, ground-level activity among masses, and the electoral political success of the Hindutva elements over the years. Thus, the organisation in a non-electoral perspective plays a crucial role in presenting political ascendance to the Hindutva forces in the electoral domain.

Gatade (2011) work is broadly divided into three parts. While the first part deals with saffronisation and the neo-liberal State, the second focuses on the logic of caste in India. Finally, the third concentrates on State and human rights. However, the work did not contain specific references to Dalits religious conversion background rights, like those related to the Christian Dalits.

Froerer (2012) presents a rare and significant ethnographic contribution highlighting Hindutva's march into deep north Indian tribal regions. Rich ethnographic evidence is presented on the conceptions of the Hindutva section's projection in tribal regions while attempting to forge a monolithic construction of Hinduism. The work gains significance

in understanding how tribal people engage with Hindutva sections and how the Hindutva sections can influence tribal notions about religion and the need for religious reformation into Brahmanic Hinduism.

Theertha (2000) presents a rare contribution in visualising how to understand and conceive Hindu imperialism's triumph in historical trajectory. The work is a historical contribution, which was initially published in 1941. Later, the work saw a few other reprints across India.

Pradhan (2014) presents a rare bridge of the research gap in Hindutva right-wing politics based on almost two decades of field engagement. The author is curious about the nature of the Hindu sadhus, yogis, etc., spiritualists overwhelming response to the communal politics during the early part of the decade 1990. From this perspective, the author, later on, conducts extensive field research exploring how and why all those once politically activated Hindu spiritualists become inactive in due course of time. The answer, he found, is that they got splintered among themselves after the demolition of Babri Masjid, and BJP became a dominant political force. Thus, they fail to continue their political enthusiasm in a united form.

Narayan (2009) presents extensive field research exposing how the Hindutva sections in the States of Bihar and UP reinterprets and introduces various local heroes as part of the Hindutva fold among the Dalits. The local Dalit icons are reinterpreted and introduced; as a strategy for mobilisation and rallying behind their political ideology. Interestingly, the author also notes that this strategy of the Hindutva forces paves a certain level of acceptance among the Dalits, who uses these narratives to reconnect with the upper castes. Thus the Hindutva, at a certain level, attempts to forge new dynamics to expand its base, and it is successful in its attempts in a few regions like the north Indian context.

Graham (2008) presents a rare contribution to the origin and development of Jana Sangh, a Hindu nationalist party. JS was dissolved and became part and parcel of the Janata Party (JP) in time. After JP political failure, the previous JS sections re-emerged under present-day BJP. Thus, the work provides insightful evidence into the previous version

of BJP in JS. JS's entire trajectory from ideology, contradictions, short-comes, success and unsuccessful stories are analysed with rich archival evidence.

Ananthamurthy (2016) expresses apprehension on the tremendous rise of Narendra Modi on behalf of the RSS-BJP duo for the Indian Prime Minister position, even before the commencement of the 2014 general election to the Lok Sabha. As a result, he analyses the comparative relevance of MK Gandhi's Hind Swaraj versus the proposed Hindutva ideology of Veer Savarkar in the Indian political discourse. Ultimately, he tilts towards Gandhi's mode of Sarvodaya against Hindutva's neo-liberal globalised market triumph.

Ayyub (2016) engages in an intensive sting operation to unearth the hidden facts behind the Gujarat 2002 en-mass massacre and violence against the Muslims. Towards this end, she successfully establishes how justice eludes. She establishes how the then Gujarat Chief Minister, Narendra Modi and Gujarat Home Minister, Amit Shah, can be implicated in the whole case. Nevertheless, her prime concern and worry are how justice fails to be pronounced. The works gain significance to know how religious minorities in India are prone to intense intimidation and how justice eludes to protect them.

Arun Patnaik (1996): The work gains significance in stressing how Brahminism's fostered Hindutva gains reckon from divergent Hindu groups in varied forms. Thus, the works attempt to establish how plural notions within Hinduism attempts to re-group under Hindutva by re-imagining their historical origins. Thus, the Hindutva survives due to recollection of historical antecedents by different sections collaborating intentionally or unintentionally.

## VIII

### **Indian Democracy and Secular Politics**

Tejani (2011) argues that the idea of secularism, which co-existed in India, got circumscribed with communalism. Historically, the work starts to construct the idea of secularism from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to the finalisation of the Indian constitution in the year 1949. Moreover, accordingly constructs genealogies of co-existed secularism, communalism and operative dynamics. In the Indian context, secularism got much

imbued with the idea of religion. Finally, she argues that Indian secularism has significantly less role in bringing tolerance in society.

Hasan (2004) draws attention through various contributing authors on the social, cultural and political situation of Indian religious minorities in the wake of heightened Hindutva political ascendance. While focusing on the rise of Hindutva, the work also examines the role of self-proclaimed secular parties. Further, the work raises questions about plurality in the Indian scenario and the political power process in minority rights discourse. However, the works fail to have a direct reflection on Christian Dalits.

Rajan (2010) focuses on secularism's historical background, secularism and democracy, sites of secularism in various spheres of day to day representation, secularism and the question of personal law contestation and finally on the controversially contested aspect of religious conversion question.

Thapar (2016) brings together various essays of her interest over the past twenty years on secularism in the Indian context. In this work, she poses a fundamental question of whether secularism as a concept is alien to Indian history. Throughout Indian history - various social, cultural and religious traditions have been experimented with. However, the problem lies in contemporary cultural nationalism's symbolic projection in her view, i.e., the Hindutva version. Thus, misrepresentation of history's discourse by the Hindutva sections is her prime concern, which poses a severe threat to the secular credentials development and strengthening.

Upadhyay (2007) examines the majoritarian secular mode of Indian politics and outlines different ways of Hindu communalism in the process by considering major political parties like the INC and BJP and their varying modes of communal strands in guise. Thus, the work examines the pragmatic mode of secular politics unfolding nature in the democratic Indian political process.

Bilgrami (2014) conceives secularism and religious worldviews as irreconcilable. As a result, he compares secularists and anti-secularists, liberal universalists and multiculturalists together. Thus the author took a middle path. For him, all those who visualise secularism as a universal outreach forget the nature of political reality. Same

time, he also denounces secularism as a colonial outcome and highlights not to forget vernacular versions of secular political traditions.

Jaffrelot (2003) presents a unique contribution to understanding the rise of low castes in the north Indian States by withstanding the dominant upper castes led national parties like the BJP and INC. The author succinctly analyses how the dominant national parties and low castes headed regional parties carved their respective niches to gain electoral hold among the masses. The national parties are regarded as under the clutches of upper castes. Thus, the upper caste headed parties have difficulty in regaining and retaining their electoral space amidst rising low caste parties. Same time, it is not easy for the low caste parties to push aside ultimately the national parties presence in their respective States.

Bhargava (1998) deals with various conceptions of secularism in India and abroad. A comparative dimensional view of Indian and western notions of secularism is equally drawn focus. Questions like tolerance in democracy, liberalism and secularism, minorities and the question of secularism, postmodern and post-structural perspectives, modes of secularism, freedom of choice and freedom of conscience, etc., themes are the contributing authors touched aspects.

Bhargava (2009) compiles various articles contributed by academic experts. The work primarily focuses on moral and political aspects of the Indian constitution in the contemporary scenario. While reviewing the Indian constitution from moral and political influences, the primary benchmark operation revolved around the circumstances under which the constitution was framed. Thus, examining the conflict of interest of the constitution's authors and its operation in the contemporary scenario is one of the prime focal operations of deliberation.

Bhargava (2010) traces the political model of secularism and pointed out that although a few oppose the secular credential of the Indian constitutional polity, they too follow the same credentials for their pragmatic discourse. Thus, the constitutional vision of India has been developing over the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. However, he cautions that potential

opposition views should be carefully scrutinised and deliberated for witnessing better results of promised liberal democracy in India.

Guru (2011) offers a substantive critique against the functioning liberal democracy in India by questioning its dual roles - in providing positive and negative dimensions in inclusion and exclusion dynamics.

### **Summary and Conclusion:**

The chapter provides a 'review of the literature' concerning Christian Dalits and set forth research objectives to explore in the first chapter. Towards this end, the chapter attempts to review the literature regarding: Dalits and Caste, Dalits and Christianity, democracy and secular politics in India, Hindutva and reservations. The exhaustive literature review presents potential converging segments and divergent gulfs concerning the five categorical reviews of literature segments.

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## Chapter: III

# CHRISTIAN DALITS RESERVATION: CONSTITUTIONAL, LEGAL AND POLITICAL DYNAMICS

### Abstract:

*The chapter describes the constitutional, legal and political dynamics of the demand for reservation to Christian Dalits. The subsequent responses to the 1950 Constitutional Order from constitutional, legal and political domains can be observed across the thesis. The political dynamics concerning Scheduled Castes sub-classification issue in the Telugu region and demand over the years got further entangled due to the bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh and the formation of a new State, i.e. Telangana. The chapter points out that politically there is no significant visible mass movement for reservation of Christian Dalits under the SC category, as led by the BC-C section or wider Dalit movement activists and leaders.*

*However, the legal and judicial battle to secure Scheduled Castes reservation for Christian Dalits is led by the Indian Christian Church leadership, from both the Protestant and Catholic denominations, primarily at the national level. Thus, the chapter establishes the passive nature of the Christian Dalits in failing to wage a democratic fight adherently to secure SC reservation. However, they are comfortable fighting for the Scheduled Castes reservation sub-categorisation, primarily by the Madiga and allied castes. However, Mala Christians are also comfortably passive in opposing the Madiga's demand for sub-categorisation of Scheduled Castes (Hindu) reservation, and they also fail to raise their demand to recognise their mass Christian background and extend Scheduled Castes reservation. Thus, almost the whole mass Dalit movement in the Telugu region is passive over the Christian Dalits reservation issue. Methodologically, the relevance of the chapter can be observed from the 'critical praxis' style.*

## I

A private member's bill was introduced in the Parliament of India by the Socialist leader Madhu Limaye in March 1970 to extend SC status to the Dalits of Christian, Muslim and Buddhist background. In November 1977, two Republican Party of India (RPI) Members of Parliament (MP) - NH Kumbhare and RH Gavai undertook fast unto death, demanding extension of SC status to the Dalit converts to other than Hindu and Sikh religions. However, the then PM, Moraji Desai, vehemently denied extending the same status to these Dalit converts. The elected representatives highlighted the need for course re-correction for the gross injustice done to the Dalit converts to other religions like Christianity. (Parkhe, 2007)

In April 1975, a campaign was launched by the CBCI demanding extension of SC status to the Christian Dalits. However, this campaign failed to envisage expected mass support. The socio-political movement organisation skills are not effective on the part of the CBCI to envisage, organise and lead mass movements. However, the efforts of the Christian leaders from the Indian Catholic fold should be appreciated for their vociferous demand, voice and stand in favour of the gross Constitutional and legal violation addressed on a minimal scale. They are even ready to organise, mobilise and educate their devotees towards this blatant denial committed by India's liberal democracy. This dimension establishes when one looks at available literature produced and their activism.

Usually, Christianity in India is understood as maintaining and preaching disenchantment from political activity. Contrary to such a prevalent notion, a few sections of the Indian Catholic priestly community led a committed and limited movement against the 1950 Constitutional Order. Moreover, some continue the same, even today, especially at the legal level. All the caste sections within the Indian Catholic denomination are not visibly associated with this demand and movement. Some of the Indian Protestant sections are also well aware of discriminative dynamics involved in the 1950 Constitutional Order, and accordingly, they are also involved in judicial fights. However, the Indian Protestant section is also unable to mobilise devotees on a mass scale. Further, both Indian Catholic and Protestant sections fail to turn the movement into a mass-based one.

The GoI granted SC status to the Neo-Buddhists when India was about to declare and observe the centenary birth celebrations of Ambedkar. Moreover, a coalition government headed by PM Vishwanath Pratap Singh had initiated steps to extend the same, but not the INC, which curtailed the same privilege. Though Vishwanath Pratap Singh's government was dependent on the support of the centre, left, and right-wing political sections, it amended the 1950 Constitutional Order favouring Dalit Buddhists. (Bhartiya, 2008)

During PM, PV Narasimha Rao's tenure, after the demolition of Babri Masjid and when INC vote bank started to decline among the religious minorities; intention to extend SC status to Dalit converts into Christianity and Islam was highlighted. However, such efforts failed to materialise concretely. In this respect, a bill to extend the SC status was also introduced in the Parliament of India. This indicates the level of political calculations display at its peak in the constitutional and legal violation course correction. (Khalidi, 2005)

Noted Maharashtra's DP movement leader, Namdeo Dhasal, in June 2005 expressed fierce opposition to the extension of SC status to Christian Dalits. This move and the stand were taken by Namdeo Dhasal and others when the Supreme Court of India sought the GoI's stand and position over-extension of SC status to the Christian Dalits. Dhasal doubted that the INC's United Progressive Alliance (UPA) leader Sonia Gandhi might extend SC reservation to the Christian Dalits. As a result, he accused that Italian born Christian Sonia of 'dividing Dalits'. (Parkhe, 2007)

This indicates that even among the recognised SC sections, there are notions to benefit exclusively from the available reservation and oppose the same benefit extension to others within the same Dalit category. In AP, like Dhasal, a few Dalit organisations opposed the sub-categorisation of SC reservation between Madiga, Mala, and other communities. By opposing the sub-categorisation of SC reservation, a few sections pointed out that sub-categorisation leads to the 'division of Dalits'. (Gundimeda, 2000) Moreover, sub-categorisation of SC reservation is termed as against Ambedkarite ideology and vision. Thus, according to certain sections, all those who favour, support and initiate steps to add new communities into the SC section or attempts to sub-



categorise SC reservation are anti-Dalit and anti-Ambedkarite. However, some scholars establish that Ambedkar was inclined towards equal prosperity and development of all Dalit communities. (Gundimeda, 2006)

The Presidential Order of 1950 specifically targeted and excluded the Dalit converts only but not tribal converts. In fact, as per some scholarly writings and notions, Dalit and tribal religious spirituality, culture and historicity are entirely different from the upper castes. (Manohar D. M., 2010) Every caste in India possesses a unique cultural, historical, linguistic, and spiritual entity from this domain. This unique nature of religious traditions got subdued with the territorial expansion and advancement of the Brahmanic Aryan upper caste sections, which resulted in the mixed production and distortion of indigenous people's spiritual practices. (Thapar, 2004)

Tribal people are the ones who opted to live life in isolation from mainstream society as a sign of protest. They got self-alienated and chose isolation from mainstream society. With the increasing passage of time, now the Hindutva sections claim that the tribal's are part and parcel of the Hindu religion. Hindutva sections started to make inroads into the tribal areas and communalise them towards (Brahmin dominated) Hinduism and Hindutva ideology. (Froerer, 2007)

The Hindutva agenda has various platforms to make inroads into multiple sections of people, like among the SC, ST, Brahmin, OBC, etc. For instance, RSS is dominated mainly by the Brahmins in leadership. VHP is dominated by *Vysya*, *Banya*, etc., trading communities presence. Thus, the Hindutva ideology has specifically targeted various compositions of organisations through a few castes. Though RSS denies caste presence in different organisations under its domain, the researchers established that most RSS affiliated organisations are based on caste composition.

The BJP and INC knew that after Dalits conversion from Hinduism to Christianity, their status would not change much. However, they wish to place the Christian Dalits after conversion under the BC instead of extending the SC reservation. Upon conversion to any religion, one's ideology and psychological position changes but not social, economic and cultural factors. The only difference between the Christian Dalits and other Dalits is

based on baptism by the former and not by the latter. (Rauschenbuseh-Clough, 1899) (Devi, 2006)

There are various perspectives from the RSS fold towards reservation policy in India. Various scholars pointed out that the Hindutva brigade is against reservations; since it is based on caste recognition criteria. Though this is the ideological position of the RSS, in the pragmatic electoral march, the Hindutva is inclined towards reservation policy, now and then. The BJP supported governments promoted BC and OBC reservation either at the States level or at the Union level on a few occasions. On the whole, the Hindutva favours economic backwardness based reservations; but not based on the Constitution of India's envisaged 'social and educational backwardness criteria'. (Jaffrelot C., 2011)

When it comes to the particular domain of the Christian Dalits reservation issue, the then RSS chief, Balasaheb Deoras, observed that the matter of reservations is an exclusive domain of the Hindu community. This stand of the RSS is unconstitutional, illegal, unconventional and ill-liberal in a modern secular democracy. Reservation discourse in India has been in a neutral religious position. Alternatively, the 'social and educational backwardness' of any community, be it from any caste or/and religion, is subject to inclusion in the way of reservation extension. This has been, in some sense, standard practice and legal discourse established by the Indian polity from British India and Princely States time onwards. Based on this principle only before India's independence and even after independence, various religious sections were extended reservation. From this domain alone, reservations to Muslims can also be observed under the OBC category either at the national level or at States level in India.

Though various judicial pronouncements and political parties have acknowledged the religious neutral domain of reservations, the RSS and its associated wings do not adhere to the same principle and logic. The demand for an exclusive Hindu inclined reservation policy by the RSS is creating social exclusion in the domain of a modern multicultural secular nation.

## II

There is also a certain sense of class consciousness among Dalits. Some sections of Christian Dalits and even mainstream Hindu Dalits have reached the range of living a comfortable life without minding, sharing and revealing their caste identity to the persons they engage in their day to day life. The Dalits who got advanced, prospered and urbanised started to look down on their counterparts in the less privileged stage, including those from the rural domain. This nature of the advanced sections of Christian Dalits is treated and recognised as Brahmin-nisation or Sanskritisation. (Srinivas M. N., 2013)

Ambedkar idealistically aspired that the educated and better-off among Dalit sections, which benefitted from reservations, may extend a helping hand to their counterparts in a disadvantaged position. However, Ambedkar's ideological aspiration proved to be not strictly adhered to. Those Dalits, who benefit from the reservation policy, are preoccupied with their family-centric up-lift activity. However, the SC and ST employees organisations mushroomed across India, and a well-worked network is established. This grown-up shared solidarity network harnesses a few positive steps for the better advancement of their sections. These sections realised the impossibility of 'caste annihilation' and understood further marginalisation in modern society. (Newman, 2014)

There is a perception that the Christian Dalits wishes to maintain an exclusive community-based identity and lead a life aloof. However, this perception is not entirely correct. There were many attempts by a few Christian Dalits who wished to engage and sail with the mainstream Dalit leadership. For instance, famous Marathi Christian poet Shahu Dadoba Ujagare in 1929 dedicated his poetry entitled '*Nave Anjan*' to Ambedkar. In the same manner, in 1972 editor of Marathi weekly '*Aapna*' had strongly advocated that the Christian Dalits should engage with the mainstream Dalit movement. In the same way, Dalit and Christian Dalit consciousness in the Telugu region is observable among various personalities, like Gurram Jaushav, Bagyareddy Verma, etc., prominent activists, leaders and writers. (Parkhe, 2007)

### III

The GoI constituted Justice Ranganath Mishra Commission. One of the prominent terms and conditions imposed by the GoI included examining whether Christian Dalits should be extended reservation under SC fold or not? The Commission positively responded and recommended extending SC status to the Christian Dalits. While recommending so, the Commission observed that excluding Christian Dalits from the ambit of SC status is a gross constitutional and legal violation. (Misra, 2007)

Though Justice Misra Commission submitted the report to the same INC led UPA-I government under the PM-ship of Manmohan Singh, no decision was initiated. Moreover, the UPA-I<sup>1</sup> The government acted suspiciously by not making public the Commission's report. At last, the UPA-I placed before Parliament of India the Commission's report when it was about to proceed to the next term of Lok Sabha elections in 2009. This kind of deliberate procrastination technique of the GoI, headed by the UPA-I, made the progressive and liberal sections critique that the INC is known for delaying and dragging techniques without having a firm resolution to sort out long-pending political issues. This step and nature of the INC led governments since Jawaharlal Nehru times onwards made the critiques believe and argue that the INC has had been known for sowing seeds and actions of soft Hindutva in a silent diplomatic mode. Without accepting such a critique, the INC critiques other political opponent sections like the BJP, RSS, VHP, etc., as an ideological Hindutva hardcore threat to the secular Indian nation. The INC believes and projects that they have had conceived and constructed the secular Indian nation under the doyen leadership of Mohandas Karamchedu Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru and other leaders vision by taking part in the Indian freedom struggle against the British.

The INC built and continues as a political platform by providing space to different ideologically incoherent sections under its fold. Even a few hardcore Hindutva elements were part of its fold for a considerable duration. The break-away of ideologically incoherent sections led to the INC's increased weakening status over the years. Same time, the breakdown of the INC's umbrella ideological segments led to increased ascendance of the other sections like the BJP. (Mukherji, 2015) (Hasan, 2015) The INC's

inability and incapability to dynamically negotiate and bring consensus in these kinds of respects are highly critiqued. At some other level, the INC also started to fear that the enlarged Hindutva section may further marginalise its political decisions. For instance, it appears that the INC leadership fears that if some bold religious decisions are initiated, like granting of SC status to the Christian Dalits, then backlash and negative propaganda might be undertaken by the Hindutva forces. Under an Italian born Christian, Sonia Gandhi's leadership, the INC might turn Indian society and State into a Christian evangelical nation. However, this perception is incorrect as the INC has denied SC status to the Christian Dalits from 1950 onwards.

A section of critics argues that the INC's centrist political position projects the secular ethos only for the Hindus; but not for other religious minorities. As a result, according to scholars inclined towards this perspective, most Hindus have grown unrest and are critical of the INC's secular stand. As a result of such illogical and pseudo-secular credentials of the INC, the Hindutva forces took an edge in due course of time. (Mudiam, 2014) (Patnaik, 2015) Moreover, the liberal and left sections cannot realise their mistake and rectify them with suitable corrective measures. As a result, the Hindutva section is in the electoral ascendance. Moreover, all those sections, which are disappointed with the centrist and liberal platforms, developed hope on Hindutva's promises and started to align with it on an electoral basis. Anyhow, the entire liberal, left, and right-wing Hindutva sections are not resolving a few pertinent issues like the one related to the Christian Dalits and more.

#### IV

In AP, the modern Dalit movement took a new leash with the Karamchedu movement. A gruesome massacre at Karamchedu village by Kamma landlords against Madigas opened new Dalit politics and literature issues. The Kammas were the prime dominant backbone of the Communist parties in AP until the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) formation. From 1982 onwards, with the establishment of the TDP by Nandamuri Taraka Rama Rao (NTR), the Kammas reconsolidated and captured political power successfully. A few scholars and Dalit intellectuals have interpreted and analysed that the renewed political success of the Kammas under the TDP made Karamchedu Kamma landlords more

arrogant and eventually led to a gruesome massacre against Madigas. (Murali, 1995) At the same time, the ferocious Madiga stand against the Kamma landlords is also understood as a sign of an increasing level of assertion cultivated with their growing educational standards. The Madiga sheltered at a nearby town church when this gruesome massacre occurred. The Green Revolution also presented economic consolidation among the dominant communities like Reddy, Kamma, Kapu, etc., which led to various other discourses like consolidated political aspirations under multiple political platforms.

The Karamchedu atrocity also opened new discussion over class-caste dynamics in India. This debate ultimately resulted in the division of the then prevalent left movement, under which a section of Dalit and Dalit-Bahujan sects were also grouped. A paradigm shift has occurred in AP with this, which ultimately resulted in the decline of the left. With the fall of the left, the political grammar henceforth was used, articulated and tested in the caste-based led socio-political movements. (Satyanarayana, 2004)

The disintegration of the left movement opened space for various independent movements led by identity concerns. The identity discourse has increased consciousness among the masses but failed to unite and challenge the mainstream political sections, like the left, centre and right. The fragmented class, caste and women movements gave further impetus for the neo-liberal market forces to get consolidated. For instance, during this time, the AP government under CM, Nara Chandrababu Naidu's (Naidu) tenure has acquired notoriety for turning AP into a laboratory for neo-liberal economic policies experimentation under the guidance of the World Bank (WB), International Monetary Fund (IMF), etc. monetary agencies. The civil society organisations and various opposition parties in AP critiqued Naidu as the preferred darling of the international neo-liberal regiment.

The anti-caste Dalit movement, which gained currency during the 1980s in AP, disintegrated during the 1990s. The Mala community vehemently objected to the issue of over utilisation of 15% SC reservation, as claimed and objected by the Madiga. Madiga and Mala are two predominant caste sections within the SC. The Madiga produced and

highlighted literature showed how various SC sections are historically, culturally, socially and spiritually heterogeneous.

Interestingly, though significant chunks of the Dalits in AP are Christians, most have been acquiring SC status legally to retain and enhance their social, cultural and economic positions. Even after the movement surrounding the sub-categorisation of 15% SC reservation is highlighted and made an issue by the Madigas and Malas, they never waged and fought a concerted campaign to gain and recognise their Christian Dalit background under the SC category. This is the primary drawback of the Dalit movement in the Telugu region. The Dalit literature and movement scholars in South India, particularly in AP, are blind to this aspect. The significance of the present research lay in bridging such a blind academic gap and critically looking at AP Dalits and their movement under the (Christian) Dalit fold explicitly. Though there is no direct popular Christian Dalit movement, it is submerged under the larger movement waged by Dalits under a more significant religious neutral kind of mainstream Dalit movement.

## V

The 42<sup>nd</sup> Constitutional amendment to the Constitution of India incorporated the word 'secular' into the Preamble. However, the original Constitution of India neither declared India as secular nor theocratic. In the original Preamble to the Constitution of India, the liberty provision guaranteed 'freedom of thought, expression, belief, worship and faith'. Even the amended Preamble carries the same arrangement and spirit. Thus, when seen and understood, the meaning and discourse of these words concerning liberty, religious freedom and secular credentials of the original Constitution of India are implicit. The implicit secular credential is made explicit through the 42<sup>nd</sup> Constitutional Amendment Act.

The Hindutva forces like the BJP, RSS, VHP, etc., have been well known for arguing that India is not a secular nation, and the original Constitution of India has not mentioned the same. However, when observed, the original Constitution of India contained the spirit of the word 'secular' in the Preamble itself, as highlighted in the above manner. The provisions related to liberty and equality in the Preamble carried secular credentials of

the Indian Constitution. Moreover, the Preamble is considered part and parcel of the Constitution of India, though some argued contrarily. However, Dalits are denied religious freedom when seen from the Christian Dalits denial to get recognition under the SC fold. This denial is explicitly enforced through the intervention of the 1950 Constitutional Order. However, the same 1950 Constitutional Order was amended in 1956 and 1990 to extend SC status to the Dalits of Sikh and Buddhist origins.

While extending the SC status to the Sikh and Buddhist Dalits, the Indian State and political class claimed that the Sikh and Buddhist orders are part and parcel of the Indian origin. Hence, SC extension to the non-Indic religions practised sections like Christian Dalits is excluded. However, this is a gross constitutional violation based on liberal principles of secular credentials.

The RSS brigade accuses now and then that the INC led previous GoI regimes under various PM tenures like Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi as responsible for distorting the Hindu credentials of the nation and pampering the religious minorities in multiple folds. Having observed so, the RSS voices pitch that Indira Gandhi's led GoI did a great disservice to the nation by inserting the word 'secular' into the Preamble through the 42<sup>nd</sup> Constitutional amendment.

The Supreme Court of India, in one of its landmark verdicts, *SR Bommai Versus Union of India*, had categorically ruled that even though the word 'secular' was only inserted into the Constitution of India in 1976, the spirit of the original Constitution contained 'secular credentials'. Thus, the Indian judiciary observes that the secular spirit of the Constitution, which was inherently present until 1976, is further explicitly carried forward through the 42<sup>nd</sup> Constitutional amendment act. The implicit content of the original Constitution's secular credential is made explicit with the insertion of the word 'secular' in 1976. Moreover, any government, either at the Union or State level, which fails to adhere to the secular credentials of the Constitution, has no right to continue to govern.

The secular reading and interpretation of the Constitution of India is novel by various scholars. They observed that the Indian Constitution's conception of secularism is



entirely different from the western notion. (Smith, 1963) The word secular has its origin, growth and popularity originated from the western part of the world. The original meaning of the word 'secular' aimed at the 'separation of State from Church'. The western world and society are associated with the concept of the Church. As per various scholars' interpretations, the Indian Constitutional position on secularism is aimed at maintaining equal distance from all religions. Thus, the Constitution of India envisages that the secular credentials of the State should be based on treating all religions with the same respect. The Constitution of India neither adhered to one religion nor recognised any religion as a State patron. It showed a neutral position concerning religion.

The maintained equidistant position of the Indian Constitution from religion gives an upper edge to Indian State to interfere in religious matters, for various aspects of bringing equality among religions. Based on this principle only, the Constitution of India even provided and guaranteed minority rights under the category of fundamental rights, a progressive and unusual step in most of the then prevalent Constitutions in the world.<sup>2</sup> Articles 25-30 of the Constitution of India made concrete provisions for the guaranteed protection and enforcement of minority rights.

In the Constituent Assembly, there was a debate on the concept and wording used over 'secularism'. However, the final version of the Constitution had no mention of secularism. A few members of the Constituent Assembly preferred to start the Preamble by 'expressing faith in God'. However, a few other sections objected and opined that the God reference should be omitted. As a result, the text, 'We the people of India....' is adopted for the composition of Preamble. (Prof K Nageshwar, 2017)

The Constitutional foundation of secularism is not aimed at undermining religion or killing the spirit of faith. Same time, it is also not targeted at using religion for political gains. However, though India is a constitutionally secular state, religion and religious dealings have become a source of political contestation in pragmatic political discourse. (Brass, 2012) (Nigam, 2008) This contestation process has been prevalent concerning the 1950 Presidential Order, which discriminates Dalits based on religious grounds when seen and observed from the present research scope. The Indian Constituent Assembly's envision is not understood and carried forward strictly concerning liberal religious rights

discourse. The majority tendencies are always propagated, pampered and promoted in one way or the other by various political sections. (Puniyani, 2006) Even denial of Dalits religious rights is seen as a way forward process in pampering the majority tendencies.<sup>3</sup>

At various times, the Sangh brigade has also declared its intention to repeal the existing Constitution and frame a new one. (Katju, 2014) As a result, multiple sections, including political parties, minorities, civil society organisations, etc., express fear and concern that with the development and growth of Hindutva ideology and political triumph, India may turn into an ill-liberal democratic nation. However, two critical judicial pronouncements clarify some constitutional stances. One is related to *Kesavananda Bharati Vs Union of India*, in which the Supreme Court of India ruled that the 'basic structure' of the Constitution cannot be amended under any circumstances. The basic structure of the Constitution includes a few provisions like parliamentary democracy, secular credentials, the rule of law, etc. Thus, it is viewed that the Indian judicial system can thwart the Hindutva sections agenda, to some extent, in doing away with the present Constitution.

The Sangh Parivar's ideological positions are rumoured and attributed under hidden 'conspiracy theory'. The most liberal, left, and centrist leaning political outfits blame RSS ideological views on various issues as fascist. Further, according to them, any democratic political patronage to the Sangh's publicly claimed and portrayed ideological visions will ultimately lead fascists to triumph like; Adolf Hilter in Nazi Germany. A kind of fear and caution is expressed in the political discourse by these sections that India might turn into a Mussolini and Hitler way of Italy and Germany in the past century.

The RSS aims to establish a 'Brahmin empire' under Hindu Rashtra by openly not disclosing the same intent in democratic electoral battles. The overwhelming presence of Brahmins in the RSS and not giving space to other castes is regarded in this sense. The RSS is the backbone of all other Hindutva organisations in India and abroad. The left, centrist and liberal sections highlight excerpts from a few portions of RSS ideological forefathers.

Here a puzzle lies in understanding the Indian political discourse and political Hindutva's increasing electoral ascendancy. Why is the anti-RSS section's highlighted 'hidden

conspiracy theory' not believed by the masses, which are associated with the RSS and BJP political march? A few sections of the disappointed OBC, SC, ST, upper castes, etc., which developed a certain sense of alienation and isolation from the liberal, left, and centrist political forces, are associated with the political Hindutva elements. (Jha, 2019) Thus, a certain political vacuum is created and left out by the left, liberal and centrist forces. It was their political inability to resolve a few sections pertinent concerns, like Christian Dalit's reservation under the SC category, out of sheer political (mis)calculation. As a result, the disappointed sections are associated with the Hindutva, hoping that their genuine long pending aspirations might get fulfilled. In the same way, it is also expected that the RSS-BJP duo wishes to co-opt the Madigas in the Telugu region under its fold since the INC-led political stream has been unable to address sub-categorisation demand.

It should also be seen to what extent the Hindutva could resolve such issues and retain the support base of these sections. At another level, it should also be observed how the left, liberal and centrist forces can reform themselves and regain the support base of the lost sections. Finally, a renewed political discourse may unfold if right-wing Hindutva, left, liberal and centrist forces cannot resolve the long disappointed sections aspirations.

### **Will Political Parties Extend SC Status?**

By chance, if the BJP and other associates attack Christian Dalits, who seek SC status, then the political response from major mainstream established parties like the INC, TDP, Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS), and Yuvajana Sramika Rythu Congress Party (YSRCP) (other than the BJP) might differ. However, such differences may or may not yield immediate substantive results since the politicisation of religious minorities turned out to be an all India phenomenon as intensely made-out by the Hindutva sections. Moreover, to alter Christian Dalits recognition under the SC category requires parties and government resolution at the national level.

Usually, there is a vast difference between the established mainstream parties concerning the long pending issues and their resolution. Even if some mainstream political parties

like the INC promise to resolve Christian Dalits issues and extend reservation under the SC category, it is doubtful to which extent the INC will prove its genuine commitment.

In reality, most parties other than the BJP occasionally reveal their intent to declare Christian Dalits under the SC fold. In this respect, political parties and leaders occasional passive activism and support tones are audible. Usually, such support is extended when any section of the Christian Dalits conducts activism and lead a movement. The established political parties like the INC, TDP, etc., never mobilised and rallied the Christian Dalits on their own for extension of SC status, who seek SC status. Most established mainstream political parties perceive Dalits as a kind of SC section without strictly differentiating them on religious connotation. However, upper castes are very conscious of Dalits association with Christianity in such a perception. However, a political party like the BJP and other Hindutva sections has different perceptions. They are very conscious about Dalits religious identity, especially in the Christian fold.

Even after converting Dalits into Christianity, they are still recognised and treated as Dalits by mainstream society. The notion of attacking them on Christian background or any religious identity is not widely prevalent in the Telugu region. However, such a trend is underway with the increasing presence of the Hindutva ideology. Due to the historically inherited social imaginary of casteism, the mainstream non-Dalits see Dalits as Dalits only. However, the religious antagonistic mindset polarisation against (foreign) religions like Christianity and Islam is also underway in the Telugu region. Moreover, it is most visible in the urban middle-class section but not much in the rural areas.

The mainstream society mainly perceives Dalits associated with Christianity as Dalits only. Since Dalits are recognised as inferior subjects, their associated Christianity is also seen as inferior. Superiority is claimed by the mainstream caste Hindu society either consciously or unconsciously by comparing their association with the (self-perceived superior) Hinduism. The continued graded inequality in Hinduism makes caste Hindu society feel superior and inferior. At least, most Hindu caste sections can visualise their superiority by perceiving some other sections as inferior to them. Thus, at last, the most downtrodden cannot able to visualise their superiority against others in the broader mainstream caste Hindu society. (Ambedkar, 2007)

The Christian Dalit population is expected to be substantive in the Telugu region and South India than the strict SC Hindu population. As a result, even if genuine SC Hindus, by chance, initiate any agitation against their fellow Christian Dalits, who seek SC status legally, the counter-movement could be much more intense from the Christian Dalits; since they are expected to be in the majority. However, in reality, the Christian Dalits possible counter agitation might be regional, like related to South India and other zones, on a comparative basis with the all India phenomenon.

## VI

### **SC Sub-Categorisation in the Event of AP Bifurcation**

At some level, separate TS formation issues also put forward doubtful questions about the need and necessity of the SC sub-categorisation. A few opines that in the event of united AP bifurcation, there need not be any necessity for SC reservation sub-categorisation. It is felt that Malas would be more in number in residual AP (after united AP bifurcation). Moreover, in the new TS, Madigas would be in higher proportion.

However, even a couple of SC leaders doubt the possible necessity of SC sub-categorisation in the wake of the anticipated bifurcation of united AP. There are different inherent strategic versions in this episode. For instance, in the residual AP (after bifurcation), the Madigas may not raise voices against the dominant Mala section. As a result, the dominance of the Malas may continue for some relatively sustained duration.

In the same manner, it is also felt that since the Madigas are more in numeric strength in the Telangana region, they would automatically corner substantive opportunities in the possible new TS. Moreover, the Mala community in the TS might become a mute spectator without raising their voice against Madigas cornering substantive opportunities. However, Manda Krishna Madiga objected to this view and attempted to intensify the Madiga Reservation Poratha Samithi (MRPS) movement further. Nevertheless, in reality, such attempts failed to yield proper results. Manda Krishna Madiga used to justify that the MRPS movement has been much older than the TRS movement for separate TS formation.

Furthermore, Manda Krishna Madiga justifies that there has been wider acceptance towards the MRPS demand for SC sub-categorisation at the national level. In his view, such acceptance was not there for the TS formation among the Indian political parties. Manda Krishna Madiga secured various political parties and their support letters favouring the SC reservation sub-categorisation and highlighted the same.

According to Manda Krishna Madiga, there has been wider acknowledgement and support for the MRPS demand for SC sub-categorisation for a long, but such a scenario was not there for separate TS formation. Ultimately, though Manda Krishna Madiga wished to see the first SC reservation sub-categorisation - such a wish failed to get realised, and the Parliament of India formed a separate TS. For TS formation, various political parties extended support outside and inside the Parliament of India and positively voted for united AP bifurcation.

Here, the political discourse should be keenly observed. Political parties play different kinds of politics at various levels. Though various political parties favoured SC reservation sub-categorisation and expressed symbolic support, no political party took a concrete step to achieve the same. On the other side, though various Indian political parties and sections are widely divided on the issue of separate TS formation; yet, they formed the same, successfully. All this is a political game and process. Political parties play this game in a conscious mode.

Similarly, civil society organisations are well aware of the extent to which their demands may or may not be met. At times, they also knew that their raised demands might not be met. Alternatively, they may be playing behind the scene politics not to achieve their own aired demands due to some other strategic selfish political calculations. Thus, dubious sentimental plays are played not just by the political parties but also by civil society organisations. 'Veil of acting' prevails behind the projected political scene against the promised role. 'Veil of acting' is a chosen and practised practical option.

Manda Krishna Madiga justified that the AP SC reservation sub-categorisation is relevant even in AP bifurcation. In other words, in both the new Telugu States (residual AP and TS), the philosophical justification of SC reservation sub-categorisation is re-

justified by Manda Krishna Madiga by claiming that the SC reservation sub-categorisation aims to do justice to the heterogeneous sections of the SC. Thus, Manda Krishna Madiga reclaimed the necessity to have SC reservation sub-categorisation, unlike some other sections dismissal and denial mode to sub-categorise SC reservation as AP was likely to be bifurcated for the formation of separate TS. (M, 2013)

However, in this entire process, the SC sections in the Telugu region have been failing to highlight and argue for their Christian identity recognition. They are comfortable acquiring SC status and adherently practising Christianity in their private realm. Since their private realm is not much challenged so far, they have been comfortable. However, there have been attempts to unduly challenge and violate the private spiritual sphere of the SC and rake religious anxieties in the society, especially by the grassroots Hindutva forces. Such attempts are highlighted and projected over social media, primarily. In the mainstream media now and then, religious anxieties exhibition against the personal Christian faith background of the SC is highlighted, and debates are conducted. Such attempts are now and then projected by the Hindutva mainstream media. However, mainstream media in the Telugu region is not entirely under the clutches of the Hindutva. The mainstream media in the Telugu region is well under the control of major caste communities led by political parties like; TDP, TRS and YSRCP.

## VII

### **Constitutional, Legal and Procedural Challenges**

The sections favouring the recognition of Christian Dalits under the SC fold argue and highlight that caste discrimination is practised based on the biological father's caste background, but not on religious background. Thus, as inherited from biological father's lineage, caste is the basis for society to recognise, practice, and commit discriminatory attitudes and atrocities against the Dalits, be it related even to the Christian Dalits. As a result, the argument and perception that caste disappears upon conversion to other non-Indic religions like Christianity are strongly flayed based on this synthesis. Moreover, Indian Christians live as Indian (caste) citizens but not as foreign Christians. Failure to recognise hybridisation of indigenous practices on account of varied civilisation and

cultural encounters and confluence over the decades and centuries is also a severe sociological and political problem. (Dalit Secularist, 2021)

Though caste discrimination has no prominent visible religious sanctity, it is widely practised. Thus, though religions appear egalitarian, in reality, various discriminatory practices and notions are well recognised and acknowledged in almost every religious practice. For instance, though The Bible preaches equality of all people, certain Christian sections have varied discriminatory practices and attitudes against 'others' like Jews. Thus, even in India, the argued norm that scripturally religions are egalitarian is dismissed because prevalent caste discriminatory practices against the others, like marginalised ones, are highlighted. Moreover, Christian Dalits reservation voice is also justified on the same observed norm and principle; as Christian Dalits face discrimination as a common phenomenon even after conversion from another religious Dalit background.

At another level, there are also varied observations that the Constitution of India has primarily permitted the President of India to recognise the Dalit castes to be included under the SC category but not categorise them under different folds like SC and BC. The placing of formal converts to Christianity under the BC fold is against the Constitutional morality and mandate. Moreover, no judicial verdict has rectified this mistake. However, the President of India's powers is misused to determine and exclude the Dalits based on religious criteria. This action of the President of India is undermining the spirit of the Constitution. Thus, democratic India in 1950 itself has thwarted the enshrined liberal secular constitutional credentials. However, both the Indian political class and judiciary have failed to rectify this gross violation over the years. (Dalit Secularist, 2021)

Moreover, the Presidential Order of 1950 is a kind of Ordinance, and the Parliament of India, in its next confluence meet, should endorse the same. However, the 1950 Presidential Order was not endorsed by the Parliament of India. This is also a severe challenge to the procedural democracy, which operates based on Constitutional morality and mandate. Overall, the 1950 Presidential Order is a severe infringement on Articles 14, 15, 16, 17 and 25 of the Constitution of India. These articles explicitly provided the right to equality; prohibition of discrimination based on caste, race, religion, place of



birth, gender; right to have equal opportunity; freedom to profess and practise the religion of one's choice and conviction. The selective exclusion of Dalit converts to non-Indic religions is also a kind of practice of undeclared untouchability, which the Constitution prohibits as per article 17. (Louis, 2007) (Dalit Secularist, 2021)

The Hindu religion lacks a coherent construction of defining the definition. Various sections of Indian society fail to present an acceptable and well-recognised definition for the Hindu religion. A well acceptable definition for Hindu religion is not offered by Hindu Swamiji's or legal and judicial segments. Such a predicament establishes the heterogeneous nature of the Indian caste-based cultural society. As per certain anthropologically, sociologically, culturally and spiritually understood caste practices across the Indian sub-continent, each caste possesses unique spiritual notions and practices. Under such circumstances, a forceful attempt to construct a coherent Hindu religious identity is a flaw.

The well proclaimed and recognised Hindu religion's definition, 'Hinduism is a way of life', appears to be a romanticisation of Hindu identity, which fails to define Hindu religion concretely. In this well-propagated definition, 'Hinduism as a way of life' poses a serious threat, as which religion and caste practice is not a 'way of life'? Thus, though, in reality, Hinduism has multiple 'ways of life', the defining feature fails to capture the heterogeneity of the sections. Thus, when seen from this realm, even within Hinduism or in caste-based Indian society, the Dalits too invariably possess varied kinds of heterogeneity practices and notions.

Moreover, even after Dalits possess vast heterogeneity, they are forcibly clubbed with other vast heterogeneous wider Hindu (religious) societies, which is a severe violation of their dignity and recognition of diversity. Failure to recognise diverse practices and notions - culturally, socially, spiritually poses a bigger challenge to the democratic setup. However, the marginalised minorities in most democratic setups are denied the same, posing a severe challenge to the liberal democratic process, including in India, when seen in the case of Christian Dalits.

Interestingly, the Dalit converts to Buddhism and Sikhism are considered under the SC category even after their conversion from Hinduism. Moreover, the projection of Buddhism and Sikhism under Hinduism is also a kind of biggest injustice practised by the Indian State, political class and judiciary. In this context, Buddhism was aroused as a kind of protest against the prevalent evil disorders in Hinduism primarily. However, the selective denial of the recognition to SC converts to Christians is not justified by the Indian judiciary and political class. Though caste discrimination is a continued phenomenon after religious conversion by Dalits, on what basis, like commission reports, the same is selectively included and excluded is not justified prominently when seen from the realm of present inclusion and exclusion dynamics through the 1950 Constitutional Order. (Dalit Secularist, 2021)

Though the Constitution of India, as per article 17, untouchability practice in any form is prohibited – how the extension of reservation under SC is justified by the Indian State, political class, and judiciary is a big dilemma. Same time, though the other sections of Dalit convert to religions like Christianity faces discrimination, marginalisation and untouchability, they are denied the same. Instead of penalising the sections which practice marginalisation, discrimination and untouchability against the sections like SC – the Indian State justifies such discrimination and extends reservation (for their discrimination). This is a gross human rights violation. The Indian State, when seen from the realm of present instance, encourages discrimination, marginalisation and untouchability practice against sections of SC – by providing them reservation. This is severe double standard practice by Indian society, political class and judiciary. (Dalit Secularist, 2021)

The most notable instance of caste practice in Indian Christianity is visible when looking at Syrian Christians spiritual and cultural practices in the Kerala domain. Syrian Christians proclaim their conversion to Christianity from the upper-caste Brahmin background. Moreover, Syrian Christians are well known for maintaining discriminatory practices against other Christian converts from backgrounds like Dalit. Thus, there exists a clear cut discriminatory marginalisation practice among the Syrian Christians over the years. Moreover, inter-caste marriages within Indian Christianity are very rare. As a

result, caste practices continuation is a regular phenomenon even after conversion. However, this basic fundamental fact is not recognised by the Indian political class and judiciary, and accordingly, rectification measures are not initiated. While laws prohibit discrimination, reservation paves the opportunity to get discriminated against SC. This is an unbelievable and unacceptable double standard. (Dalit Secularist, 2021)

When the GoI sought the opinion of the constituent State units to convey their opinion on whether to extend SC reservation to the Christian Dalits or not, most Indian States expressed their intention to extend SC reservation to the Christian Dalits, including States like AP. Most of the Indian constituent State units recognised the discriminatory marginalisation faced by the Christian Dalits and, accordingly, expressed willingness to extend SC reservation to Christian Dalits. However, even after receiving such a favourable opinion from most Indian States and various Commission reports, the Indian State is still under intentional dilemma in not positively declaring the same. (Bosco, 2010)

There is also a kind of propaganda that is well penetrated against Christians that Indian Christianity is rich and the Christian (Dalits) are rich. Moreover, such propaganda is also well campaigned against the Christian Dalits that they receive much amount on account of their conversion to Christianity and being in the Christian fold. However, there is no legal and sociological evidence to prove such malicious campaigns. Hence, by mere propaganda perception, Christian Dalits cannot be denied and excluded from the ambit of SC reservation. (Mandal, 2020)

There is no clarity on the part of the GoI on what basis the 1950 Presidential Order was promulgated and on what basis various Commissions were appointed to repeal the same. Same time, even when appointed Commissions noted that the Christian converts of Dalit origin be extended SC reservation, the Indian State does not accept the same. The Indian political class and judiciary cannot justify why they are attempting to deny the extension of SC status to Dalit converts to Christianity. (Louis, 2007)

The *Ghar Wapasi* or reconversion of Dalits into Hinduism is also seen and understood as an appeasement technique to reconvert Dalits into the Hindu fold forcefully. Moreover,

appease attempts to extend reservation under SC fold upon reconversion is also a severe challenge to the constitutionally guaranteed liberal secular credentials of the Indian State. Thus, while the Hindutva forces argue that the Christian forces masterminded forceful conversion attempts to convert Dalits, in reality, the Hindutva forces are also seen from the realm of '*Ghar Wapasi*' attempting to indulge in forceful reconversion. Thus, the *Ghar Wapasi* programme itself is a kind of appeasement technique. The Dalit's subjective nature is reduced to a dumb and numb position in this process, though Dalit has rational, sensible abilities and capabilities.

Overall, the prolonged procrastination technique of the Indian State and judiciary in failing to declare the 1950 Presidential Order as null and void – raises severe doubts on the genuine nature of the Indian judiciary and political class in promoting and protecting the secular credentials of the Indian State.

### **Summary and Conclusion:**

The chapter took forward chapter one's focus in another renewed version and focus. A concrete presentation is made in this chapter on how the Indian political class and judiciary is failing to declare null and void the 1950 Constitutional Order. From the Constitution of India's liberal secular credentials, selective religious discrimination against a few sections like the Christian Dalits is a gross violation of secular credentials of the Indian Constitution. However, the Indian polity and judiciary are unwilling to rectify this gross constitutional violation.

At another level of analysis, the chapter also provided vivid dynamics over the AP SC sub-categorisation issue, which got further entangled due to the bifurcation of united AP as residual AP and TS. Same time, the chapter also highlights that the AP major sections are fighting 'for and against' sub-categorisation of SC reservation, though majorly they practice Christianity on an adherent basis. This is a fundamental flaw and lacuna on the part of mainstream Dalit movement leaders and activists on one side in the Telugu region.

The chapter also attempts to negate Hindutva's version of how the original Constitution of India can also be recognised as 'secular', though the word 'secular' was incorporated

into the Constitution of India's Preamble through an amendment. Thus, even before and after the insertion of the word secular into the Constitution, the Indian judiciary pronounced India as a secular nation. Towards the end, the chapter also draws attention to various procedural and technical aspects involved in the denial dynamics over SC status to the Christian Dalits. Thus, the rhetorical arguments denying SC status to Christian Dalits are negated.

Methodologically, the chapter is claimed as based on a 'critical praxis' style. Critical praxis style is embedded into dynamics over 'constitutional, legal and political' segments. Thus, three areas are effectively covered under the 'critical praxis' domain. In other words, through the 'critical praxis' style, three styles are followed in the chapter – reflection, reflective action and collective reflective action. Through the composed writing style and argumentative synthesis, the same can be visualised. For instance, reflection, reflective action and collective reflective action over the 1950 Constitutional Order can be observed concerning the constitutional, political and legal dynamics through the lenses of the chapter.

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#### End Notes:

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1. UPA – I regime continued from 2004-2009 under the PM-ship of Dr Manmohan Singh. INC was the major leading coalition partner.
2. On 24 October 2014, Prof R Venkat Rao, Vice-Chancellor, National Law School of India University (NLSI-U), Bangalore, delivered a special lecture on '*Ambedkar, Social Justice and the Indian Constitution*', at Dr B R Ambedkar Auditorium, University of Hyderabad. The Centre for Ambedkar Studies, University of Hyderabad, organised the lecture. Prof R Venkat Rao made this point on the sidelines of this talk.
3. However, in reality, the perceived 'way forward' by the mainstream political sections like the INC, BJP, etc., is a regressive step when seen, observed and understood from egalitarian mode.

## Chapter: IV

# CHRISTIAN DALITS, POLITICAL PARTIES AND MASS MEDIA IN THE TELUGU REGION

### Abstract:

*The chapter presents dimensions of Telugu Dalit movement, Hindutva activism and anxieties exhibition with specific reference to the Christian Dalit minorities, and (Christian) Dalits role and prospects in the mainstream political discourse. Towards this side, the chapter is clustered into three broad categories to concentrate on these three broad aspects. The Chapter is arranged on the basis of 'AP political discourse analysis'. It is based on primary data collected by observing the passive nature of the Dalit (Christian) movement, especially concerning the residual AP.*



## **Part-I**

### **Rise of Modern Dalit Movement: Karamchedu and Chunduru Massacres**

There are two watershed incidents in the AP Dalit movement: Karamchedu's massacre of Madigas and Tsundur's massacre of Malas. The first one occurred in 1985 and the latter in 1991. In the first atrocity, the Madigas were massacred by the Kammas, and in the second incident, the Malas were killed by the Reddys. Both happened in the coastal Andhra region. The rise of the Dalit movement is attributed to their rising educational standards in the prosperous coastal AP side. This phase of Dalit movement was prominently led by Kathi Padmarao and Bojja Tharakam under Dalit Mahasabha organization.

Later, in the early part of the 1990 decade, the MRPS and Manda Krishna Madiga leadership raised to peak level. A few accused and observed that the TDP chief Naidu was the central brain behind lifting the MRPS movement. Naidu's regime as AP CM was marked towards experimentation with the neo-liberal economic policies to benefit international monetary agencies like WB and the IMF. It was openly and prominently alleged that Naidu and his TDP was disturbing the social harmony and creating caste tensions. Towards this end, the peak of various caste movements assertion like MRPS is pointed out. In another words, the Manda Krishna Madiga's MRPS movement is seen a second Dalit phase, which rose to prominence during the Naidu's CM regime.

The AP social movement phase during 1990 and early 2000 phase was preoccupied with various identity movements like those based on caste, tribal, women, etc. As a result, it was critiqued that the social movement's focus was diverted from the vicious circle of neo-liberal economic policies. Thus, at some level, it was alleged that the ruling section played a blind game under TDP headed by Naidu as AP CM and by the identity movements headed section. The identity movement headed sections were critiqued for not fighting against the evil effects of neo-liberal economic politics, which further ruins marginalised sections.

During this phase, the Madiga and Mala conflict peaked, and each accused was the prime responsible for the escalation of conflicts. However, they failed to resolve their disputes.

They plunged into deep rhetoric's, which failed to show immediate tunnel end. Their animosity continued to various fields, even to the religious domain. Christianity in AP, too, witnessed this burnt. The Churches were divided into Dalit caste lines. Though Churches have been divided into caste lines, historically and culturally – now another level of the division took place in renewed form due to an increased level of Madiga-Mala animosity.

It should be noted that the Madiga and Mala castes have had been having historical animosity for ages together. The historical, social and cultural animosities between the Madiga and Mala communities took a new direction in the modern democratic age. The two Madiga-Mala sections failed to resolve their disputes amicably. At another level, it was also critiqued that the Madiga-Mala conflict was intentionally utilised to promote a few individuals benefits, prospects and their organisations popularity out-reach.

On another side, it was observed that the questions raised by the AP Dalit movement concerning the SC reservation sub-categorisation is of utmost relevance to the society and raised new questions to the society for its re-address. The philosophical proposal for distributive social justice promoted by MRPS for sub-categorisation of AP SC reservation consisted of the base in proportional representation to various SC sections based on their numeric strength within the available 15% SC reservation. Thus, internal proportional representation for SC in reservations was argued within the domain of constitutionally guaranteed 15% reservation.

### **Ambedkar Versus Babu Jagjeevan Ram: Reconstruction of Dalit Icons**

Both the Madiga and Mala sections started to accuse each other of continuing their movement against the spirit of Ambedkar. Interestingly, both sections acknowledged Ambedkar as their leader and philosopher in the Dalit movement. Anyhow, at some level, the MRPS felt alienated by Mala's appropriation of Ambedkar on a massive scale. As a result, the MRPS under Manda Krishna Madiga and other leaders brought to the limelight another (Dalit) icon, i.e., Babu Jagjeevan Ram.

Babu Jagjeevan Ram was one of the foremost Dalit leaders in North India. He occupied some of the prominent portfolios in the GoI, basically on behalf of the INC headed

governments. He was also a former freedom fighter. He hailed from the Bihar provincial zone in North India. (Maurya, 2010) The intensified mania created in favour of Babu Jagjeevan Ram was enormous in united AP. Even in his own native State, i.e., Bihar, he is not popular, on a comparative basis when observed his popularity in the Telugu region. Across the united AP or Telugu States zone, numerous Ambedkar and Babu Jagjeevan Ram statues were erected. Moreover, the process continues in one way or the other.

The birth and death anniversaries of these Dalit icons, i.e., Ambedkar and Babu Jagjeevan Ram, have been marked on a grand scale in the Telugu zone over the years. A clear caste distinction is visible in these celebrations. In the Dalit colonies either in rural or urban areas, the statues of these two prominent icons speak a lot. A few identify Dalit colonies based on Ambedkar and Babu Jagjeevan Ram statues. This is a significant socio-political trend in the Telugu region, primarily.

For instance, any residential area where the Ambedkar statue is located is usually guessed that area has significant Mala community presence. Similarly, any residential area with a statue of Babu Jagjeevan Ram is usually identified as a zone of the Madigas. This is one kind of criteria to identify Dalit colonies. Other criteria for identification of Dalit colonies included - based on presence of Churches, surnames of individuals, colony names, etc.

Usually, any residential area which consist the Andhra Evangelical Luther Church (AELC) is identified as a zone of the Mala community. Similarly, any residential reach, which has the Telugu Baptist Church (TBC), is seen as a Madiga locality. Anyhow, these two prime identification symbols based on statues and denominational Church affiliations are subject to slight variations due to various other factors. Under exceptional conditions, in a Madiga locality, an AELC Church may be established, and predominantly Madigas might be associated with the same Church. In the same manner, exceptionally, a TBC could be located at Mala's residential area, and the Mala's might be associated with the same Church. Nowadays, independent pastors and Churches are mushrooming than the organised Churches expansion.

## **Dalits, Vote Bank and Atrocities**

Before the advent of the modern Dalit movement in the Karamchedu incident, the Dalits in AP were spread across various ideological identities. (K. Satyanarayana, 2013) In the visible vote bank range, they are prominently associated with the INC due to the INC's welfare measures. Significantly, the former PM, Indira Gandhi's welfare measures benefitted this social category to a greater extent. Indira Gandhi's slogan and welfare measures in '*Garibo Hatao*' made this section beneficial. As a result, this section turned out to be one of the formidable vote banks to the INC.

Even the TDP, launched in 1982 and captured political power in 1983, could not capture the substantive Dalit vote bank. One of the reasons behind the Karamchedu Dalit massacre interpretation and analysis also lay behind this reason. The Kammas success through TDP made them much more arrogant than in previous times. As a result, they could not tolerate the defiance of the Madigas at Karamchedu village. Thus by considering their recent political victory, Kammas at Karamchedu village resorted to en-mass massacre against the Madiga Dalits.

As per some kind of interpretation, the Karamchedu incident made Malas display their leadership qualities. In another sense, though the atrocity was committed against the Madigas by the Kammas, Malas led the movement. The Karamchedu massacre made Malas crop up their activism, assertion and leadership qualities. Katti Padma Rao, Bojja Tarakam, etc. were the prominent Mala leaders and activists who led the Karamchedu movement. Though other communities persons were also associated with this movement, the significant prime leadership rested with the Mala community. Kathi Padama Rao launched the 'Dalit Mahasabha' organisation and became a prominent Dalit (Mala) leader.

It should be considered that during the Karamchedu movement, the Dalits sub-caste consciousness was not at peak level, politically. However, they were conscious of their sub-caste identity socially and culturally. In other words, Madiga sub-caste consciousness was at a sub-conscious level and was not widely politicised. Only in 1990

decade the peak of Dalits sub-caste consciousness politically roused to a high level with the successful launch MRPS for sub-categorisation of SC 15% reservation.

### **TDP and Caste Politics**

The TDP was seen, recognised and blamed as a platform rising, extending patronage and escalating tensions between and among various caste groups. During TDP's governance tenure, two prominent caste atrocities shook the attention of united AP and national politics. These two atrocities were related (to Kammas's atrocities) against Madigas at Karamchedu village and the brutal assassination of Vangaveeti Mohana Ranga Rao at Vijayawada city. These incidents also attracted international attention, especially Vangaveeti Mohana Ranga Rao's assassination and followed mass violence in South India. Vangaveeti Mohana Ranga Rao was an INC Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) and a prominent Kapu leader based at Vijayawada city. While the Karamchedu massacre occurred in 1985, on the other hand, Vangaveeti Mohana Ranga Rao's assassination took place in December 1989.<sup>1</sup>

Vangaveethi Mohana Ranga Rao roused to political peak during the 1970s and 1980s. Some analysts observed that there is a competitive caste culture between and among a few castes. For instance, there is a competitive caste conflict between the Kammas and the Reddys. In the same manner, there is animosity between the Kammas and Kapu castes.

The political success of Kammas through TDP made Kapus reconsider various options to regroup themselves and plan political actions for their lead political success. As part of this process, Vangaveethi Mohana Ranga Rao roused to prominence to organise and lead Kapus politically. It was observed that the Kammas led TDP felt the rising popularity of Vangaveeti Mohana Ranga Rao among the coastal Andhra Kapu sections as a danger bell for its political prospects. As a result, the gruesome assassination of Vangaveethi Mohana Ranga Rao was committed during the tenure of the TDP governance. However, there is no clear evidence to prove that Kammas and TDP were the backbones behind the assassination of Vangaveeti Mohana Ranga Rao.

All this indicates that the decline of INC as a single dominant political player in AP politics and the rise of TDP as an alternative secondary force against the INC made AP politics competitive. Moreover, the TDP was seen by some sections as a prime factor behind the escalation of caste tensions either intentionally or unintentionally.

At another level, though in the initial years of the TDP formation and governance regime, major caste atrocities like Karamchedu massacre and assassination of Vangaveeti Mohana Ranga Rao took place. In later years, there was a change in this dimension. For instance, these two major caste atrocities against the Madigas and the assassination of Kapu leader - Vangaveethi Mohana Ranga Rao occurred during the governing CM tenure of NTR, the TDP founder.

When the TDP leadership reins were taken over by Naidu, caste atrocities and assassination bids were not prominently politicised, on a comparative basis, when seen at the range of Karamchedu massacre and Vangaveeti Mohana Ranga Rao assassination incidents. There was observation and accusation that the TDP under Naidu's leadership preferred to give patronage to inter and intra caste tensions in a background manner for implementation of neo-liberal agenda. Thus, during Naidu's CM tenure from 1995-2004, the AP political atmosphere turned volatile concerning internal conflicts among and between various caste sections and communities.

Rather than waging a democratic battle against neo-liberal economic policies of Naidu's led TDP government, the competitive caste sections plunged into internal caste conflicts and rivalry. However, it should be carefully considered that the questions raised by the identity politics and movements led sections cannot be discarded. Various marginalised sections long pending grievances were rearticulated once again in renewed mode during this time. Moreover, such articulation got wide recognition and acceptance also, at a certain level. The vicious neo-liberal policies implication in Naidu's led TDP government during his second tenure as CM from 1999-2004 made AP social and political atmosphere volatile. As a result, he even faced an assassination bid against his life in October 2003 from the Naxalite section.

## **A Comparison of Naidu and YSR CM Regimes**

There is also another opinion among various sections concerning the tenures of Naidu and YS Rajashekara Reddy (YSR) as CMs. During Naidu's CM tenure, the harsh effects of neo-liberal policies were at their peak. Same time, during the YSR regime as CM, the ill effect was relatively reduced, to an extent, but not an absolute level. YSR's CM tenure from 2004 to 2009 had put an end to the Dalit and Dalit-Bahujan's activism and anxieties peak in a gradual manner. Though YSR's INC government was inclined towards neo-liberal economic policies, in reality, his government turned towards more welfare programmes implementation.

In another sense, the intensity of welfare programmes during Naidu's CM regime was less, contrary to that prevalent during the YSR regime. While Naidu acquired a familiar brand against welfare measures, YSR acquired the opposite brand favouring welfare measures. The welfare programmes and measures implemented by the YSR regime made Dalits and Dalit-Bahujan sections little comfortable without having many extended anxieties towards the continued neo-liberal economic policies implementation. YSR regime also coincided with Manmohan Singh's PM tenure. PM Manmohan Singh's tenure also designed and implemented welfare programmes – despite following neo-liberal economic focus at the national level. (Hasan, 2018)

## **YSR Christian Reddy Background: Hindutva Awake**

In the contemporary political scenario, since YSR's political ascendance onwards, religious polarisation attempts have been underway. YSR was a famous, charismatic Reddy (Christian) politician from the Rayalaseema region. The INC systematically elevated YSR leadership since 1990s second part, especially when Sonia Gandhi was heading the INC at the national level. YSR's prime leadership was projected against the TDP chief and the then AP CM, Naidu. However, in due course of time, the Christian background of YSR, in addition to his prime Reddy affinity, was well highlighted and recognised by mainstream society.

YSR portrayed his dual identity in public for all pragmatic electoral gains by not denouncing other religions like the Hindu. He participated in Hindu festivals and rituals

in full glare amidst media presence, and the same used to get reported prominently. For instance, during the annual Sri Rama Navami celebrations at Badrachalam temple in the Telangana region, he was well noted for his participation in an official capacity as AP CM and offered Lord Ram AP government honours.

Since YSR ascendance as AP CM during 2004-2009, various Hindutva sections started to articulate varied forms of Hindu religious anxieties. As a result, the Hindu religious organisations and *Swamiji's* split was visible in various forms. While one section of the Hindu religious organisations was associated informally with the INC and YSR leadership, another section started to portray and highlight YSR Christian background as a threat to the Hindu religion and perceived (Hindu) nation. The later type of hardcore Hindutva sections indirectly highlighted that the Hindu temples like Tirumala Tirupathi Devasthanam (TTD) were insecure under the INC-led Christian YSR governance regime. Though various Hindu temples and Gods are widespread across AP, TTD and Lord Venkateswara have been much highlighted and romanticised as a specific unifying symbol of Hinduism at some level. Moreover, protection of the same against regimes likes (Christian) YSR was highlighted, albeit on an inherent tone.

As a result, gradually, YSR too initiated a few steps to prove his government and his leadership's necessity as protector of Hindu religion and temples. In this sequence, he even released Gazette Orders (GO), which further protected the TTD against alleged religious minorities' presence on the TTD premises. During YSR CM tenure, through an executive order the TTD banned non-Hindus entry into the TTD premises. This step was considered a success by a few Hindutva sections and by the then government sources too. This ban has been successfully continuing since then. This ban was primarily placed by arguing that Christians were trying to converts Hindus into Christianity by preaching Christian gospel on the hill top.

However, if understood clearly, such kind of actions in banning other religious persons from entering the TTD amounts to alienation of God. Any God and religion cannot be promoted as an exclusive domain of a few sections of society. For any God and religion, free access should be paved. When seen and understood from this spiritual open secular notion, the GO's banning of other religious people into the TTD premises is



objectionable. Instead of banning other religious people's entry into the TTD, specific targeted measures should have been initiated to deal with any objectionable presence of the religious minorities on the TTD premises. For instance, specific stringent measures can be framed to deal with those who propagate religious conversion on the temple premises.

### **TTD's *Dalit Govindam* Programme: A Failure**

Around the same time, when YSR was AP CM, the TTD stood on sharp criticism for not opening up its space and spiritual heart for the Dalits. As a result, an exclusive programme to take Lord Venkateswara to the dwells of Dalits was promoted. Moreover, this programme was titled '*Dalit Govindam*', i.e., taking Lord Govind to the Dalit dwells. However, on specific, pragmatic analysis, observations and criticisms received, it was reported that Lord Venkateswara's idol procession was not stopped adequately in the Dalit dwells. Thus, the *Dalit Govindam* programme was conducted as a mere policy norm, hurriedly, as per some critics' observation. As a result, it was massively critiqued that the primary objective of the *Dalit Govindam* programme got defeated. In due course of time, the same programme was discontinued.

The *Dalit Govindam* programme was conceived to eliminate TTD Brahmin priests and wider Hindu society's spiritual alienation against the Dalits. Though some sections in the society argue that not allowing Dalits into Hindu religious temples was not in practice, this objectionable culture prevents Dalits from entering Hindu temples. Even media also well highlighted how Dalits are not provided access into Temples. Noted AP Communist Party of India Marxist (CPIM) leader BV Raghavulu undertook a long march by bicycle in the then united AP region and proved how Dalits were prevented from entering Hindu temples and facing other heinous humiliating experiences in everyday life in the countryside, primarily. BV Raghavulu primarily toured in the Telangana region of united AP.

### **Dalits and Political Parties**

After facing immense political commotion upon YSR's sudden and tragic death, the INC at the AP level turned its caste-based political calculations completely. The AP cabinet,

which was sworn in under Rosaiah's CM-ship, had continued all the cabinet ministers under YSR's tenure, except one woman Minister from the Telangana region. Later on, when the regime's change was undergone to Kiran Kumar Reddy as AP CM in 2011, he gave more preference to the Reddy community in his Council of Ministry and reduced representation to other marginalised sections like the SC and ST.

Kiran Kumar Reddy, as CM, showed gestures as if he was initiating steps to retain his political base in favour of the marginalised sections like the SC by symbolically projecting further reduced subsidies in favour of these categories. The existing subsidies in the 'Indiramma housing scheme' were further reduced for the SC, and he initiated further steps to offer through public distribution system rice at one rupee per kilogram. Even then, Kiran Kumar Reddy's INC failed to regain the lost support to YS Jagan Mohan Reddy (Jagan) and launched a new political outfit, YSRCP.

Though at some level, Kiran Kumar Reddy's Council of Ministry lacked more representation to the SC than YSR's regime, the national INC leadership ensured that a Madiga MLA got elevated to the level of Deputy CM from the Telangana region. As a result, senior INC leader and MLA from Medak district, Damodar Rajanarasimha, was elevated as Deputy CM. Damodar Rajanarasimha was the second Madiga community Deputy CM in AP in about 20 years duration by that time.

When the SC reservation sub-categorisation movement gained its peak during the first half of the 1990 decade, then Koneru Ranga Rao from Krishna district was elevated as Deputy CM by the then INC led AP Government, by Kotla Vijaya Bhaskara Reddy as AP CM. However, the 2011-2014 particular elevation of Damodara Rajanarasimha from the Telangana region to the Deputy CM position was seen from the Telangana movement realm. Since the Madiga's were much concentrated in the Telangana region and the Telangana movement was at its peak, the symbolic elevation of a Madiga MLA to Deputy CM position was projected. However, this symbolism ultimately failed as INC failed to capture political power in the TS after the 2014 elections. In fact, Damodara Rajanarasimha himself lost the 2014 and 2018 elections to the TS Legislative Assembly.

For the first time during UPA-I and UPA-II regimes, KH Muniyappa, an SC Madiga person, was inducted into the Union Council of Ministry under Manmohan Singh. However, this minister had his political backup from the Karnataka region. The elevation of a Madiga person at the national level was seen as an outcome of Madiga-Mala intensified conflict at some level. (Elections, 2004) (Politics, 2009)

The symbolic identification of the Madiga-Mala type of Dalit castes across the Telugu region started to be identified based on caste professions. For instance, all those associated with the leather profession and menial leather shoes and chapel making and sticking at roadsides are considered Madiga's. On the other side, all those within the SC category with no strict caste profession were mainly considered Mala. Based on the distinction of caste-based professional engagement and lack of strict caste-based profession, regrouping and identification of Madiga-Mala identities across various non-Telugu regions started to gain prominence. For instance, Arundatiyar, Chamar, Mahar, Mang, etc., are some well-identified categories in this respect.

In the same direction, identity construction and movement build-up across the South Indian States took place over the years. The MRPS led movement had broad ramifications in the other South Indian States too. As a result, efforts have been put forward to replicate the MRPS style's success in the other South Indian States like Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu. Thus, within SC, another level of a political movement based on further reservation sub-categorisation has been underway, though unsuccessful. Only symbolic co-option of politics is observed from different sections like the present narrated and highlighted incidents.

For the first time, at the end of the UPA-II regime, a Madiga Lok Sabha MP, Sarve Satyanarayana's name, was inducted into the Union Council of Ministry led by Manmohan Singh as PM. Though Sarve Satyanarayana was inducted into the Manmohan Singh led Council of Ministry, he credited INC President Sonia Gandhi. Though Madiga is a significant community in AP and South India, this community was able to get symbolic representation in the Union Council of Ministry after 60 years of India's independence. This shows a lot of caste dynamics inherent in the Indian polity.

Due to the intensified Telangana movement and its recognised and acknowledged presence of significant Madigas in the region, the politics started to provide some prominent symbolic positions directly, like AP Deputy CM position and a Union Council of Ministry portfolio to an MP from the Telangana Madiga community.

While in the Telangana region, the Madiga community was symbolically co-opted by the INC; in the coastal Andhra region, the Mala community was extended the same patronage by the INC led UPA-II. The INC led UPA-II consisted of two Mala community's Union Council of Ministers from the coastal Andhra zone. While one hailed from Lok Sabha, another had membership in the Rajya Sabha. On gender-wise also, there is significant equality – while the Minister from Lok Sabha was a woman, the minister from the Rajya Sabha was a male.

Thus, a kind of politics started to unfold, symbolically projected, that within SC - Malas were more in the coastal Andhra and Rayalaseema zone, and Madigas had a dominant presence in the Telangana region. These Mala community-based Union Council of Ministers were - Panabaka Lakshmi and Jesudas Seelam (JD Seelam), respectively, from Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha. While Panabaka Lakshmi continued as Union Council of Minister for a sustained prolonged duration, JD Seelam was inducted into the Union Council of Ministry at the last leg tenure of the UPA-II.

Interestingly, JD Seelam used to highlight that the Christian Dalits were with the INC. This was a significant political discourse. Usually, caste identity was highlighted and undergone based on Dalit and SC, predominantly in the dominant political discourse. Never identity politics has highlighted based on Christian Dalit background. For the first time, a Rajya Sabha MP highlighted politics based on Christian Dalits background from the INC.

Moreover, he used to give statements that the Christian Dalits were consolidated only under the INC, and the INC took all the required measures to protect and promote the Christian Dalits. By giving such statements publicly, JD Seelam used to symbolically argue that the Christian Dalits support rested only with the INC but not with Jagan's led YSRCP. This statement and discourse indicated that the INC leadership started to

recognise the Christian background of the predominant Dalits in the coastal AP for the first time. Furthermore, it was expected that the Christian Dalit section got inclined towards the YSRCP led by Jagan. Otherwise, traditionally, significant sections of the Dalits in AP were a solid support base to the INC over the years. It was also expected on some low level that the Christian Dalits felt happy to know the Christian background of YSR and his family over the years. As a result, as per some expectations, the Christian Dalits started to have much more transferred faith in YSR and Jagan's political lineage.

The INC started to lose its vote base and share from the AP SC, that too, in particular in the coastal Andhra and Rayalaseema region, where the tilt had gone towards the YSRCP. It was highly reported and suspected that the SC in the coastal Andhra and Rayalaseema region tilted their political favouritism towards the YSRCP after observing its prime leader Jagan, his slain father YSR, and other family and extended family members' Christian backgrounds. At the same time, there was also another observation that the marginalised sections like SC started to show their political favouritism after observing and witnessing the pro-welfare measures initiated by YSR's regime. Moreover, the religious angle, in this case, happens to be a coincidence. Both these arguments have their own merits. Especially the last argument of becoming prime vote bank to the YSRCP after developing hope on the pro-welfare policies is much more pragmatic.

All these changing political dynamics should be seen from the INC's reluctance to extend Christian Dalit status to SC and its denial mode to sub-categorise AP SC reservation. However, the INC started to show its willingness to extend particular political patronage to the Madiga and Mala sections by providing them specific space like Union cabinet positions and Deputy CM positions. This nature of the INC should be understood and critiqued from its unwillingness to resolve most Dalits pertinent issues like repeal of the 1950 Constitutional Order and restore the SC section's religious neutral position and its inability to resolve the long-pending issue of AP SC reservation sub-categorisation. For instance, the Justice Ranganath Misra Commission recommended restoring the neutral religious position for the SC. However, the INC was reluctant to act accordingly. Same way, the Supreme Court of India, in its 2004 verdict, had observed that only the Parliament of India has the power to sub-categorise SC concerning pronounced verdict

related to SC sub-categorisation. Though the INC in principle accepted to resolve these issues, especially the sub-categorisation of SC reservation policy, in reality, it failed to act appropriately. However, the INC projected to show symbolic elevation of certain leaders under Union Council of Ministry and another elevation as Deputy CM. For Dalits, the priority lay in restoring the religious neutral category of the SC section and sub-categorisation of AP SC reservation, but not co-option and elevation of certain Dalit politicians at the top positions. The INC failed to realise this dimension.

### **Political Association of Dalits**

A few Dalit and Dalit-Bahujan activists and leaders created a broad support base for forming separate TS. These Dalit activists were primarily based at the AP capital city Hyderabad. In the previous decades, a few Dalit activists and leaders established their base at Hyderabad, and they were able to maintain a sort of good network and base. A few of them include, but not limited to; Manda Krishna Madiga, Kati Padma Rao, Bojja Tarakam, Mallepalli Laxmaiah, Kaki Madhav Rao, Jupudi Prabhakar, Krupakar Madiga, etc. Such civil society leaders and activists had an excellent network with mainstream politicians either openly or in an undisclosed manner, depending upon unfolding situations and the gravity of the involved political necessity.

Moreover, these leaders were well noted in the civil society circles and mainstream media too. Thus, these leaders have various personalities who act according to the aroused situations either independently or in collaboration with others. At times, these leaders also engaged with various political parties and political leaders for various reasons. Furthermore, such engagements were justified as shaping the Dalit movement's discourse on a calculated strategic path. However, such engagements failed to yield open desired results and substantially change the political discourse favouring the Dalit and Dalit-Bahujan categories.

Some Hyderabad-based Dalit and Dalit-Bahujan leaders expressed that bifurcation of united AP into residual AP and TS would bring 'social justice'. These people justified separate TS formation demand on the 'social justice' principle. For them, the demand of the Telangana people for separate TS formation was justifiable on all vital parameters;

since Telangana people were looted by the upper caste coastal Andhra industrialists and business people. According to them, the Telangana people were pushed back due to various reasons like historical, social, economic, linguistic, etc., factors. They vehemently denounced the formation of the greater Telugu State, i.e., AP, in 1956 by discarding the concerns of antagonistic sections, especially from the Telangana region.

Counter to this view, there was also another category of opinion expressed at this time that bifurcation of united AP and formation of separate TS would result in increased caste arrogance and lead to broader caste-based atrocities against the vulnerable sections like the Dalits, in the Telangana region. Further, it was observed that if separate TS is formed, then the Telangana region would be ruled over by the upper castes like the Reddy and Velama communities; but social justice cannot be achieved by the Dalit and Dalit-Bahujan sections.

The dominant Dalit sections, i.e., Madiga and Mala, had some other calculations from the possible bifurcation of united AP. For instance, it was felt that the Malas in coastal AP and Rayalaseema region would be advantageous because, in this zone, more Malas are concentrated than the Madigas. Moreover, in the same direction, it was felt that the Madiga community would be in an advantageous position once separate TS is formed; since the Madiga community has a substantial presence in the Telangana region.

It was also expected that Madigas would capture political power in the possible formation of a separate TS. Giving many aspirations to such hope, the TRS chief KCR had announced that he would elevate a Dalit as TS CM in the event of the formation of the TS. Moreover, KCR went to the level of announcing that he would not become the TS CM, as the founder of the TRS, if TRS were able to secure a majority in the elections. TRS was seen as a pioneering political entity in masterminding the Telangana cause and movement in particular renewed fashion from 2001 onwards.

Ultimately, after forming separate TS, KCR failed to elevate any Dalit as the CM of the new State. Instead, KCR himself occupied the TS CM's chair. Though there was huge criticism against this step and action, KCR and other TRS leaders and cadre did not bother. Moreover, KCR's ascendance as CM was justified massively through media and

other avenues of propagation. During the Telangana movement, the Madiga Reservation Poratha Samithi (MRPS) prominent leader Manda Krishna Madiga stood against the TRS and KCR. As a result, there were occasional, well recognised political and ideological confrontations between TRS led KCR and MRPS led Manda Krishna Madiga, though the latter is not a full-fledged political party.

As a compensatory measure for denying CM position to Dalits, CM KCR elevated a Madiga MLA in his Council of Ministry as Deputy CM. However, the same Deputy CM was withdrawn from KCR's Council of Ministry on corruption allegations unceremoniously, though the same were not investigated and proved. (Rahul, 2015) Again another Deputy CM was inducted into the Council of Ministry led by KCR. This time, the Madiga community's sub-caste person was inducted as Deputy CM. (Reddy, 2015) This step of KCR was criticised as playing politics with Madiga sub-castes. Moreover, in a low intensity, KCR was further accused that a Madiga sub-caste person was projected against the dominant Madiga community within SC.

The possible political strategy behind this step of KCR could be to encourage and extend patronage to the lowest powerful caste within the allied sub-caste of Madiga. According to a perception; the lower the caste hierarchy, the lesser would be the level of possible assertion nature. Based on this strategy, to have a free hand to the upper caste-based dominance of Velamas, KCR chose a Madiga sub-caste person as Deputy CM.

### **The emergence of YSRCP and Drastic Turn of AP Political Developments**

The fame and patronage of YSRCP's prime leader Jagan after his father YSR's death lay behind YSR's welfare measures grand success. The Dalit and Dalit-Bahujan sections got benefitted massively through YSR's welfare measures. They became a prime backbone to the YSRCP by leaving behind their decades-long traditional extended political patronage and affiliation to the INC and other political entities like TDP. There was a significant Dalit and Dalit-Bahujan vote bank shift from INC to the YSRCP and later on from TDP to the YSRCP. (Venkatesu, 2019)



### **Demand for TS Formation: Dalit and Dalit-Bahujan's Division**

The identity politics like those based on Dalit or/and Dalit-Bahujan after the 2004 elections faced another set of political churn. For instance, during the Telangana movement, unleashed by the TRS, these ideological platforms raised a new set of questions, like whether a social justice-based TS formation would be possible or not? Or, in their doubt, will the new separate TS have upper-caste domination in the form of Velama's under TRS and Reddy's under INC?

The Dalit and Dalit-Bahujan activists and leaders, at last, preferred to have a separate TS formation and extended wholehearted support. In fact, these sections were active in extending their active support to the TRS led movement by joining Joint Action Committee (JAC) at various levels.<sup>2</sup> However, there also existed a kind of demarcation between JACs and TRS. The TRS and JAC acted in their respective autonomous and complementary forms as and when required. Only a few organisations like MRPS faced intense problems during this phase, though MRPS extended at last support for this movement.

On the coastal Andhra side, the identity based civil society organisations influence, popularity, base and support strength is less, on a comparative base with the Telangana region side. In the coastal Andhra and Rayalaseema region, a few prevalent organisations actively participated in the movement against forming a separate TS or the bifurcation of existing united AP. These sections, along with other mainstream civil society organisations, groups, and other political party organisations, led and participated in the movement against separate TS formation.

## **Part-II**

### **Rise of Swami Paripoornananda as a Hindutva Icon**

The Hindutva forces efforts to politicise Hindu religion, Hindu population and consolidate vote bank have started to appear in a *Swamiji* in the Telugu region. Swami Paripoornananda, a self-proclaimed Hindu religion's protector, started to address religious minorities in AP, especially by showing Christians and Christianity as a threat.

(Bharat Today, 2017a). He promoted a television channel also for the propagation of Hindu religion and Hindutva ideology, by name; Bharat Today TV. (Bharat Today, 2017b) The telecasted programmes of Bharat Today TV continue in the Telugu language. The politicisation of religion and religious matters is one of the main focuses of this television channel, especially against religious minorities like Christians and Muslims, as per a certain level of prominent observation. The other prominent observable objectives of the channel include providing Hindu spiritual (ecumenical) direction to the devotees.<sup>3</sup>

Swami Paripoornananda started to face Muslims in the Telangana region and the All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) in various forms, especially the latter. AIMIM is a limited regional political party, primarily known for its spread across the Hyderabad region. Around the Hyderabad area, the AIMIM and BJP were electorally successful, as they could rack religious anxieties among both the Hindu-Muslim sections. The high Hindu-Muslim population and urban location nature became a prime contested reason for this electoral polarisation.

Usually, the BJP witnessed electoral success among the upper caste urban voters and that too, where the religious minority population is significant. In later stages, the BJP was able to penetrate the rural areas and among the OBC. Behind BJP's electoral success at Hyderabad, OBC/BC polarisation and support base shift played a crucial role.

In the coastal AP or the Telugu region, Swami Paripoornananda's prime focus was against Christianity and Christians. However, specifically, in the Telangana region, he started his votary against the Muslims first. In November 2012, Swami Paripoornananda started to take on directly against the AIMIM and Muslims at Hyderabad old city, concerning the controversy over historic Charminar and adjacent Bhagya Lakshmi temple canopy cover-up issue. The Hyderabad police arrested swami Paripoornananda and a few more BJP leaders.

Swami Paripoornananda was inclined to the view that Muslims and AIMIM were subjecting Hindu religion and Hindu religious structures like the Bhagya Lakshmi temple structure adjacent to Charminar to humiliation and forcing Hindus to lead a life as second-grade citizens. His prime contestation was that the Hindus should have primacy

in India since Indian land belongs to them, and the religious minorities like the Christians and Muslims should lead a subservient life by respecting the Hindus. His ideological version is in tune with the Hindutva's constructed perspective. (Ghose, 2018) Moreover, he sought high respect for Hindu *Swamjis* like him from the Indian State. By seeking esteem to Hindu *Swamijis*, he failed to understand that in a modern liberal democracy like India, even *Swamijis* cannot seek extra privileges and rights.

Swami Paripoornananda was echoing the views of the mainstream Hindutva forces like the RSS and the BJP that the religious minorities in India, like Christians and Muslims, should respect the Hindus first. He was well critiqued for articulating his mind that the Christian religion in India cannot function properly, as Christianity's origin and headquarter lies in Italy. By pointing out Italy, he was emotionally, symbolically and politically projected the INC chief Sonia Gandhi's Christian background indirectly as a threat to the (Hindu) Indian nation.

In another sense, Swami Paripoornananda's view was that only Hindus should remain on the holy Indian land, and other religious minorities cannot operate fully. From this notion, others like Christians questioned; then how and why the Hindu organisations are spreading across the globe and converting foreigners into Hinduism by pointing instances from ISKCON activism abroad! Against this question, there was no proper reply from persons like Swami Paripoornananda. Persons like Swami Paripoornananda's approach that (any) religion belongs to a specific geographical location is against the philosophical background of any religion and the human beings choice and freedom to embrace any religion of one's interest, comfort and conviction. He believed that Hinduism belonged to India; but, Christianity belonged to other nations like Italy. Hence Indians should not embrace Christianity.

Swami Paripoornananda also objected to the role of Mother Theresa in India and alleged that she converted around fifty thousand Indian women to Christianity and shifted them abroad as nuns. Moreover, he observed and alleged that the converted nuns could not return to India after feeling emotional suffocation abroad with Christianity and nun life. Christian organisations and priests in the Telugu region objected to such an observed allegation, as Swami Paripoornananda failed to pinpoint concrete evidence to prove and

substantiate his allegation. Even later, the MRPS prime leader Manda Krishna Madiga objected to Paripoornananda's comments against Mother Theresa.

In the second part of 2017, Swami Paripoornananda attempted to verbally and emotionally attack Kancha Ilaiah over a small booklet composed by the latter. Towards this end, Swami Paripoornananda went to the extent of expressing suspicion against the genuine patriotic and nationalistic credentials of Kancha Ilaiah. In other words, Swami Paripoornananda termed Kancha Ilaiah as an agent of Christian conversion forces, which were plotting to convert Indian Hindus rapidly.

When Kancha Ilaiah re-questioned Swami Paripoornananda to establish Swami Paripoornananda's background in India properly, the response was pathetic and silent. Swami Paripoornananda and his followers objected to such a question of Kancha Ilaiah; since Hindu *Swamji's* cannot establish and proclaim their genealogy and family roots after becoming dedicated *Sanyasis*. For this, people like Kancha Ilaiah pointed out how those who cannot establish their genealogical roots can be held in esteem in India and why they should be held high in India? Moreover, for people like Kancha Ilaiah, the fundamental question is why Swami Paripoornananda fails to establish his family genealogy in India? Further, Kancha Ilaiah observed that if people like Swami Paripoornananda cannot establish their genealogy in India, why can they not be suspected of being anti-nationals like people from neighbouring Pakistan? Thus, mutual branding of anti-national between Swami Paripoornananda and Kancha Ilaiah went on, in some sense. (Sirapangi, 2017a)

On the whole, the high anxieties created by Swami Paripoornananda during 2012-13, especially with the help of electronic media, should be observed in the light of forthcoming elections in 2014. Furthermore, the range of his escalated activism during 2017-18 should also be seen in the light of the scheduled 2018-19 elections for the TS Legislative Assembly and Lok Sabha. During the 2019 residual AP Legislative Assembly elections, he was not a prominent person on television channels. It should be minded carefully that Swami Paripoornananda's presence was not just limited to his own Bharat Today TV channel; other Telugu mainstream electronic channels also provided

him space at times. Moreover, such mainstream media channels also created anxieties among the Hindus and other religious minorities.

Interestingly, Swami Paripoornananda shared and developed the Hindutva ideology and solidarity network. In this respect, he has a good network with the BJP, the RSS, the VHP forces. At some point in time, it was believed, projected and rumoured that he was aspiring to have a more significant political role in BJP on the lines of Yogi Adityanath in UP. Yogi Adityanath is seen and projected as a symbol of hardcore Hindutva within the BJP. Moreover, the duo BJP leadership headed by Narendra Modi and Amit Shah were inclined towards elevation and projection of Yogi Adityanath as another hardcore Hindutva icon in the UP politics since 2017 onwards primarily. Towards this end, it can be observed that even the RSS too been promoting more hardcore Hindutva leaders in recent years. In other words, it appears at some level, the age of promotion of soft Hindutva icons like Atal Bihari Vajpayee is over as prime leaders.

At some other level, even, both Narendra Modi and Amit Shah are also perceived as hardcore Hindutva icons. Most interestingly, it is believed that there is no space for recognition and patronage to soft-core Hindutva icons and leadership in the BJP after the 2014 elections. Swami Paripoornananda even met the then BJP national President Amit Shah, and it was rumoured that he would formally obtain BJP's membership.

However, Swami Paripoornananda was upset after BJP failed to promote him to a certain high level, though he expected and hoped much after meeting the BJP national leaders at New Delhi. Some media commentaries showed that some established leaders in the TS BJP were against Swami Paripoornananda's high-level projection. Overall, instead of growing step by step in the BJP, due to his *Sanyasi* background, Swami Paripoornananda is expected to ascend to the top position directly in the TS BJP. As a result, there was an inevitable undisclosed backlash from other senior leaders in the TS BJP against his ambitions and projection.

It was highly believed that Swami Paripoornananda might be a potent symbol for BJP's electoral campaign and prospects in the TS Legislative Assembly elections during 2018. However, Swami Paripoornananda did not become the face of BJP's electoral prospectus

either in the TS or in residual AP during 2018 and 2019. (Nageshwar, 2018) In 2019 elections to the AP Legislative Assembly and Lok Sabha constituencies were held. As of now, it appears that he has become politically invisible. However, how he may reemerge on the political scene should be observed in the subsequent duration.

On the whole, it can be observed that before the 2014 and 2018-2019 election occasions, Swami Paripoornananda proved his articulation on television channels and became a noted person. However, politically, he and his shared Hindutva ideological sections failed to capture political power by peaking Hindutva sentiments against the religious minorities or due to any other laid-out prime agenda. He continues to be active on sublime mode and maintains shared ideological Hindutva affinity in the Telugu region. Mainly, his range of activism, projection and actions made religious minorities like the Christians and Muslims awake. Same time, a few sections of the Hindutva and Hindus also observed and followed him keenly.

Even before YSR's prominent emergence on the AP political realm and even before persons like Swami Paripoornananda got wide recognition, there was another noted person in the Telugu region named Tripuraneni Hanuman Chowdary. Hanuman Chowdary highlighted Dalits' religious conversion to Christianity as based on allurements and as a national threat. In particular, Tripuraneni Hanuman Chowdary's focus also rested on Christian Dalits dual identity maintenance, i.e., the practice of Christianity and seeking SC (Hindu) certificates. However, in due course of time, between Tripuraneni Hanuman Chowdary and Swami Paripoornananda, the latter became more popular in highlighting and racking religious anxieties, especially against the religious minorities. Moreover, Tripuraneni Hanuman Chowdary grew older, and his activism got limited.

### **TRS Chief KCR Nexus with Chinna Jeeyar Swamy**

Chinna Jeeyar Swami is a noted Hindu religion's congregational head, primarily based on the banks of river Krishna, near Vijayawada city in AP. He is regarded and considered a torch-bearer for taking forward the historical lineage of Sri Ramanujacharya under the Vaishnava tradition within Hinduism. Sri Ramanujacharya was a noted historical

personality who was resolved and determined to protect and promote Hindu *Sanatana Dharma* with certain modifications implementation for co-option of socially underprivileged sections into Hindu fold, like the Dalits. Accordingly, it was believed and well documented that the Hindu Dalit priestly section was able to emerge and continue due to the initiation of the effort at that particular point of time by Sri Ramanujacharya.

Chinna Jeeyar congregation is also well recognised for continuing the same Sri Ramanujacharya in providing Vedic education to Hindu Dalits; to turn them into competently trained temple priests. However, a critical question was always rhetorically posed; that when will a Hindu Dalit head their congregation? Or, in another sense, was there any instance of any Hindu Dalit becoming prominent head of the Chinna Jeeyar or Ramanujacharya congregation? The response to this rhetorical question was almost silent, indicating a negative affirmative to assume.

In due course of time, Chinna Jeeyar Swami was well promoted by the TRS chief KCR. This promotion ultimately resulted in establishing China Jeeyar Swami's excellent congregational base at the Shamshabad region on the sub-urban limits of Hyderabad city and near the Hyderabad green-field international airport; a costly spiritual project. Some commentators observed historical links between Chinna Jeeyar Swamy or/and Ramanujacharya congregation and KCR's Velama community. Hence, upon KCR's successful political venture under TRS and capture of TS Government in 2014, it was observed that KCR turned Chinna Jeeyar Swamy into an informal Government priest. For various TS Government projects initiated by CM KCR, Chinna Jeeyar Swami was prominently invited and projected.

Nexus between Chinna Jeeyar Swami and other Velama caste prominent persons was well established in other forms too. Towards this end, the nexus between even Chinna Jeeyar Swami and prominent Telangana real estate tycoon from the Velama caste, Rameshwar, was pointed out in various forms. Rameshwar's foremost real estate ventures were concentrated in and around Hyderabad city primarily. Thus, all this establishes how some Hindu spiritual congregations consider a few castes as their main promoters. Alternatively, in another sense, how some castes perceived a few Hindu spiritual priests

or congregations as their prime associated spiritual heads were observed. All this establishes continued class and caste perpetuated realities in the Indian society for generations together. At another level, the continued nexus between a few castes and Hindu spiritual priests and congregations are becoming a challenge to the Hindutva forces, like the BJP. Political parties like the BJP could not get full support from prominent established Hindu spiritual priests and congregations when they attempted to increase the vote bank. This kind of nexus between Hindu spiritual priests and a few castes can also be observed. For instance, in the neighbouring Karnataka State, the nexus between Lingayats and a few Hindu spiritual priests and congregations is an established reality. (India, 2021) (Correspondent, 2021)

Thus, the Hindu spiritual priests and congregations are divided between a few castes and political parties, like how Swami Paripoornananda is continuing his prime association with the BJP and other Hindutva outfits, on one side. On another side, how spiritual priests and congregations headed by people like Chinna Jeeyar Swami are continuing their affinity with other communities like Velama and regional parties like the TRS gets established.

Pastor Vijay Kumar accused Chinna Jeeyar Swami; that though Chinna Jeeyar Swami openly advocates inter-religious tolerance, in reality, in a confidential manner, Chinna Jeeyar Swamy was funding a few Hindutva activists and lumped elements on a monthly payment basis to operate against the religious minorities like the Christians. Pastor Vijaya Kumar is based in Hyderabad city, but, in reality, he hailed from the West Godavari district in coastal AP. Pastor Vijaya Kumar is intensely followed and taunted by a few Hindutva sections, and he was once branded as anti-national. Towards this sequence of the anti-national brand, pastor Vijay Kumar was even arrested by the Hyderabad police. (India News, 2017) However, Pastor Vijay Kumar justified his comments in another sense and observed that his comments were misunderstood. Finally, Pastor Vijay Kumar extended an apology to the public and complainant if his observations were misunderstood. (V6 News Telugu, 2017) After this incident, Pastor Vijay Kumar became a prominent Christian person on social media; he became much more emboldened and assertive to take on henceforth against the Hindutva forces,



targeting pastors like him and others. Towards this end, he has formally dedicated and well established social media space on platforms like YouTube.

### **Radha Manohar Das and Allurement of a Christian Woman Destitute**

A self-proclaimed and projected saffron-clad Swamiji, by the name 'Radha Manohar Das', is well known for his incoherent articulation of anxieties against the widespread prevalence of Christianity, primarily in the Telugu region. Towards this direction, he even launched and dedicated a YouTube channel to upload regularly his videos. His YouTube channel resembles as an unprofessional incoherent content platform. (Radha Manohar Das, 2017) He is initially recognised as an ISCON congregation's associated priest. However, in reality, after prolonged observation, his association with ISCON is not observed, acknowledged and established.

Radha Manohar Das gained specific significance for leading life as an independent Hindu preacher. His mode of life operation, at some level, indicates independent Christian preachers operation style. Like independent Christian preachers, he visits Hindu devotees houses directly, even without invitation and preaches to them about Hindu religion and ethics, as a strange priest. After he received wide publicity on social media and became popular on platforms like YouTube, he is no more a stranger.

Radha Manohar Das, an independent Hindu preacher poses a certain kind of criticism against the Hindu religion itself. Since most Hindu spiritual priests are well established and reside in comfortable living spaces, and usually offer an audience only to affluent and wealthy people, ordinary Hindu people failed to have access to them. However, this is not so the case with most religious preachers like Christian pastors. Christian preachers mingle well with the public, are approachable to the devotees and reside as familiar people amidst the ordinary citizens. Hence, Radha Manohar Das chose and started to imitate the style of Christian preachers' life, but not the lifestyle of established Hindu spiritual priests. By imitating ordinary Christian preacher's lifestyle as a Hindu *Sanyasi*, he started to take on verbally against Christians, Christian pastors and Christianity. His verbal conversations are well known for escalating anxieties among both the Hindus and Christians, in varying degrees. However, his prime target is against Christians and

Christianity, but not Muslims. This indicates that the Hindutva forces consider that the Christian population is unofficially more in the Telugu region than the Muslim population. Radha Manohar Das openly says in conversations with others on videos that Christians seek fake SC (Hindu) certificates though they practice Christianity adherently in their private realm. Thus, he started to make a public nuisance of the Christians seeking SC (Hindu) certificates. At a certain level, his action is against infringing the personal faith and liberty of the people with whom he engages. Same time, he was completely unaware of the dynamics of how the 1950 Constitutional Order is unconstitutional and illegal, at a certain level of argument.

Moreover, Radha Manohar Das preaching style also has elements of expression of either direct or indirect targets against Christians, Jesus and Christian preachers. Due to his preaching operation style, some Christian groups got activated online. Moreover, they got well established to counter his moves, ill propagation about Christianity and Jesus Christ and started to preach Christianity in renewed vigour in the light of increased Hindutva anxieties exhibition and promotion against them.

Radha Manohar Das is also well known for recording his informal conversations at various public spaces with various sections of the society, like even with the Christians. Primarily, his videos are recorded by his assistants or associates or any available third party on the scene of conversation. Finally, he uploads the recorded video conversations on his personal YouTube channel. Towards this end, in February 2020, he engaged in conversation with a leprosy-affected destitute woman (beggar) at Rajamahendravaram railway station, a noted urban space in East Godavari district in coastal AP.

Leprosy affected destitute (beggar) was an aged woman Christian believer. Her name is Santoshamma. Radha Manohar Das offered in two instalments 150 rupees to her and attempted her to chant Hindu spiritual slogans, like; Hare Ram, etc. However, Santoshamma, two times, promptly refused to chant such slogans and proclaimed her stead-fast belief and faith in Christianity. Moreover, Radha Manohar Das uploaded the whole recorded incident on his YouTube channel, his conversation with Santoshamma. The established Christian organisations, activists and priests on social media, keenly

observing and taking on the Hindutva elements like Radha Manohar Das, made the whole incident a viral sensation.

Even Santoshamma was felicitated for declaring her stead-fast benevolent faith in favour of Christianity by various Christian pastors, individual Christians and Christian organisations. She was extended huge offerings and donations. However, the offerings were extended to the organisation with which Santoshamma has been associated. The Christian organisation with which Santoshamma has been associated was not functioning fully due to various hindering factors. However, people like Santoshamma were provided with some living space to reside. Santoshamma was not a regular beggar; occasionally, she sought alms whenever she was in need, as declared by her.

The Christian forces regarded Radha Manohar Das conversation with Santoshamma as an incoherent arrogant encounter. (OBCC, 2020) (VKR Live TV, 2020) (Ganta Kruparao, 2021) The way how Santoshamma engaged with Radha Manohar Das and how she rejected to chant Hindu slogans clears, at some level, that Christianity and Christian devotees are not spreading and converting due to the allurements offered; as accused by the Hindutva forces, as prominently observed by Christian sections on a massive scale. Thus, Radha Manohar Das came to know the same through trial and error mode. Radha Manohar Das experienced the same through Santoshamma instance, personally, as he failed to re-convert her, at least symbolically, after offering some nominal amount, at least for temporal and acting purpose.

### **Swamiji's Impact on Politics and Political Parties**

On the whole, Radha Manohar Das should also be understood in contrast with other Hindu religious priests like Swami Paripoornananda and Chinna Jeeyar Swami in the Telugu region. Swami Paripoornananda and Chinna Jeeyar Swami are not accessible to ordinary people and devotees. While Swami Paripoornananda is politically ambitious, Chinna Jeeyar Swamy shares specific components of Hindutva ideology, either directly or indirectly and is well associated with KCR, TRS and Velama community in the Telangana region, as observed by certain prominent sections of the society. Moreover, Swami Paripoornananda and Chinna Jeeyar Swami are known for a corporate style of

Hindu spiritual engagement. However, on the whole, all these three Hindu priests; Swami Paripoornananda, Chinna Jeeyar Swami and Radha Manohar Das - share Hindutva ideology in varied forms and degrees. Though Chinna Jeeyar Swamy's Hindutva component elements were not directly visible, specific Christian forces like pastor Vijay Kumar prominently observed specific Hindutva dynamics in him.

It should be well noted that YSRCP and Jagan developed a close affinity with 'Sarada Peetham' located at Visakhapatnam. The current head of Sarada Peetham is Sri Swaroopananendra Saraswati. Moreover, Sarada Peetham is recognised as a Hindu congregation continuing the traditional genealogy of Sankaracharya. The Telugu land, by and large, is known chiefly for the Sankara tradition. The neighbouring regions like TN have had a profound impact of the Vaishnava sect also. However, in due course of time, the Vaishnava sect also made particular inroads into the Telugu land, albeit low.

### **Inherent Challenges to Hinduism & Hindutva**

The famous TTD in AP belongs to the Vaishnava congregation's denominational supremacy; however, the famous Srisailam temple in the Kurnool district of AP is known for its Sankara denominational tradition. The Hindu denominational politics and conflicts are not at their peak, but they are visualising the increasing presence of religious minorities like Christians as a common threat in AP and India.

When the Hindutva ideology was constructed and propagated by its founders like Damodhar Veer Savarkar, they primarily showed Muslims as the 'potential other' against Hindu national identity on pragmatic grounds. However, Hindutva ideology is against any non-Hindu religious identity, alien to the Indian holy Mother-land. In the South Indian zone and the AP region, the Hindutva forces have realised that the Muslim's portrayal as the potential other against the Hindu national identity will not work to the fullest extent. In the North Indian context, the portrayal of Muslims as a potential threat paid rich electoral dividends. However, in South India, religious demography and dynamics are entirely different. As a result, the effort to portray Christians as a potential threat against the Hindu national identity is masterminded at some level. In reality, the Hindutva ideology is against any other religious and cultural identity other than Hindu.

Thus, the Hindutva ideology is exclusivist in nature. Moreover, exclusivist cultural and religious identity may not be able to survive the sustained duration. That is the prominent reason behind Hinduism losing out to the other religious forces like Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, Jainism, etc. fold over the years in the Indian sub-continent.

### **Dalit Bahujan & Hindutva in TS**

At Karimnagar in TS during 2017-18, a Satavahana University (SU) Sociology faculty member, Sujatha Surepalli, was unduly targeted by the Hindutva forces. On December 25, 2017, on the famous occasion of the commemoration of Ambedkar's burning of Manusmriti in 1927, the marginalised sections like the SC and ST students symbolically continued burning Manusmriti at SU. The Hindutva right-wing student sections marking the birth celebration of BJP's tall personality Atal Bihari Vajpayee confronted this student section on the SU campus. The ill effects of this confrontation were widespread on social media. As a result, a section of mainstream media also highlighted the incident. The mainstream media has cultivated the professional skill and expertise to cover and engage with a few social media highlighted incidents.

Though Sujatha Surepalli was at Hyderabad on that day, as per revelation, it was highlighted by the Hindutva forces on social media that she was the prime mastermind behind the incident and instigated the SU students. As a result of her instigation, it was well rumoured that the Bharat Mata portrait was burnt down. This was a complete distortion of facts and fabrication of the whole incident, as observed by Sujatha Surepalli and her associates, including active marginalised student groups at the SU. Moreover, Sujatha Surepalli and her ideologically associated student sections were branded as anti-nationals; their freedom of expression and identity was quelled through (fabricated false) propaganda.

Media gave wide coverage to the SU incident, and the news became very sensationally viral. After branding some of the student organisations as anti-national at a few educational institutions like the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU); Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Madras; and Film and Television Institute of India (FTII), Pune; the anti-national brand has reached to the SU at Karimnagar location in the TS. This time

marginalised student groups were branded as anti-nationals. The branding of anti-national was not just limited to the religious minorities – even the marginalised sections were extended the same accused tag. The present case indicates the same. Sujatha Surepalli was well known for her inclination towards Dalit and left-leaning civil society organisations dimension. She hailed from SC Madiga allied sub-caste background in the TS.

Usually, after a successful highlight of Hindu majority anxieties, the Hindutva was successful politically. This time also, in the Karimnagar region and the whole TS, the BJP was electorally successful by winning four MP seats to the Lok Sabha in 2019 conducted elections, out of 17 segments in the TS for Lok Sabha. However, to the TS Legislative Assembly elections held in 2018, the BJP was able to win only one MLA seat from the Goshamahal constituency in the Hyderabad area. The duration between the 2018 TS Legislative Assembly and the 2019 Lok Sabha elections was around six months. The electoral success of the BJP in TS is attributed to many factors. One such prominent factor is the decline of the TS INC unit's political performance.

A few individuals like Sujatha Surepalli contested in the 2018 TS Legislative Assembly elections unsuccessfully. The new contestants like Sujatha Surepalli mainly hailed from Dalit, Bahujan and tribal kinds of backgrounds. Sujatha Surepalli contested explicitly on behalf of the BSP. However, most of these kinds of section people failed to get elected. However, their activism was visible and observed on a large scale. These kinds of contestants were very much against the established mainstream political parties and ruling dispensations. They mostly lacked coherence and shrewd political acumen and organised long term concerted political action plans to succeed.

#### **Electoral Politics in AP and TS From 2014**

The BJP, as of now, can establish well and see particular electoral success in the TS, but not in the residual AP. In residual AP, during the 2014 elections, the BJP had an electoral alliance with the TDP and JS and won four MLA and one MP seats. The BJP in residual AP also continued under the Council of Ministry headed by CM Naidu. However, the

BJP alliance with the TDP saw a setback in due course of time when the former failed to grant Special Category Status (SCS) to residual AP.

The TDP-BJP-JS pre-poll alliance during the 2014 elections promised SCS to residual AP. However, due to the BJP headed NDA Government's failure at the national level to grant SCS under the PM-ship of Narendra Modi, the TDP-BJP alliance and coalition engagement received a setback in residual AP and at the national level. The TDP withdrew from the BJP led NDA Government at the national level. Moreover, the BJP withdrew in residual AP from the Council of Ministry led by CM Naidu. Finally, during the 2019 elections to the AP Legislative Assembly and Lok Sabha, the BJP contested on its own and performed very poorly in residual AP. Due to the BJP failure in extending SCS to residual AP the BJP could not consolidate Hindu vote bank in AP.

Further, it should be minded that though the BJP and Hindutva forces in the residual AP were attempting to raise Hindu majority anxieties, they are not entirely successful as of now. After the 2019 residual AP Legislative Assembly elections, the YSRCP under Jagan emerged victoriously and formed the Government. Since 2014 though the BJP had a formal alliance with the TDP, political commentators pointed out an undisclosed nexus between the BJP and YSRCP. The political commentators pointed out various instances in this respect. The BJP-TDP formal strained alliance ended during 2017-2018, but the undisclosed nexus between the BJP-YSRCP continues unabatedly, as per a few news reports and commentaries.

### **Re-visualisation of Residual AP & TS Political Discourses**

Even after the 2014 bifurcation of united AP and the formation of TS, there is specific relevance in seeing residual AP and TS in a familiar political context. The major Telugu media is common to both the Telugu States. Moreover, in residual AP politics, it is expected and understood that its political happenings could have wider repercussions in certain parts of the TS, i.e., TS districts bordering residual AP and the Hyderabad location, which has substantive residual AP migrant population. When seen from this outlook, even after TS formation, observing political developments in both residual AP and TS gains significance.

There are specific personal and political competitive dynamics between a few political parties in residual AP and TS. After TS formation, TDP hoped to grow further strong in the TS. However, such wishes and plans of the TDP ultimately met drastic decline due to intensified personal conflict developed between TDP chief Naidu and TRS chief KCR. These two individuals' personality egos also affected both residual AP and TS political dynamics. For instance, due to KCR's grudge against Naidu, in the 2019 AP Legislative Assembly elections, KCR extended behind-the-scenes support to YSRCP from TS. Same way, the TDP under Naidu masterminded some unsuccessful plans to destabilise the TRS headed TS Government by CM KCR.

For instance, though Kathi Mahesh and Swami Paripoornananda became a rallying point of media highlight from Hyderabad on cyber-space, their effects impacted even in the residual AP side.<sup>4</sup> Primarily, Swami Paripoornananda and Kathi Mahesh had individually established residential bases in residual AP; but they migrated to Hyderabad city. The residual AP TDP invited Kathi Mahesh to join its fold after he became famous. However, Kathi Mahesh chose to associate and extend his support to the YSRCP during the 2019 elections in residual AP.

### **Caste as an Inherent Challenge to the Hindutva**

Interestingly, the television debates on a few occasions concerning themes like caste and religion, particularly about Dalits, Christianity, Hindutva, Hindu religion's reformation attempts, etc., have created anxieties amongst the public in the Telugu region. However, such television shows and debates, as of now, failed to rack potential political polarisation in society. This is a contrasting situation in the South Indian Telugu region compared to the North Indian Hindi heart-belt and other regions. For instance, epic television serials like Mahabharata had significantly impacted the development of anxieties among the Hindus. Eventually, they led to an increase in the BJP vote bank and electoral prospectus during the early part of the decade 1990 and other factors influence. (Shankar, 2019)

Similarly, the sensationally excited *rath yatra* (chariot journey) march undertaken by the BJP tall leader LK Advani to construct Lord Ram temple at Ayodhya also created much



emotional commotion. It ultimately led to increased political ascendance to the BJP electorally. (Pradhan, 2014)

Most mainstream political parties have acquired a firm hold on electronic and print media in the Telugu region. Through such hold, they were controlling, projecting and propagating their political interests. When seen from this dimension, as of now, the attempts of the Hindutva forces to polarise the themes of caste, religion, religious minorities as a potential threat are not successful by creating an outburst in the society. However, their attempts can be considered as underway. To what extent they can succeed or fail is altogether a different issue. The mainstream political parties which established a stronghold in electronic and print media include TDP, TRS and YSRCP in the Telugu region. The BJP and Hindutva sections in the Telugu region lack such vital print media hold on a comparative basis. However, the Hindutva made certain pressure and mark on the social media domain, with considerable viewership. However, social media is entirely different from mainstream media houses support.

Usually, the religious minority areas had attracted Hindutva forces who tried to polarise the Hindus. As a result, later on, such a polarisation resulted in communal tensions too. Moreover, communal tensions, in turn, led to rich electoral dividends to the Hindutva parties like the BJP. (Katju, 2010) When seen from this realm, the South Indian States like AP, Kerala and Tamil Nadu were alluring to the Hindutva section since they failed to capture political hold in these States.

In the South Indian region, the Hindutva forces are victorious in only two States by capturing political power, i.e., Goa and Karnataka. The Karnataka BJP faced stiff decline and challenge when its prime projected leader BS Yadurappa left BJP and launched a new political party. (Politics, 2012) The prime caste support base of BS Yadurappa, i.e., Lingayat, also left the BJP when BS Yadurappa left the BJP. Later, after some sustained duration, the BJP re-invited BS Yadurappa into its fold.

In due course of time, the BJP national leadership was visionary in reuniting and making Karnataka BJP set right and captured power, though in a much-critiqued manner. (Kumar, 2019) This challenge faced by the BJP in Karnataka indicates how delicate is its

leadership and how its political prospectus is rested on a weak foundation of castes accommodation, but not on strict Hindu consolidation. This also indicated that caste plays a significant role in Indian political polarisation and political ascendance, even if political polarisation was majorly planned and conceived on a religious polarisation dimension. Thus, religious polarisation in India has to count on caste polarisation for final political ascendance invariably. The same is established from Karnataka's BJP instance concerning the Lingayat community, and BS Yadurappa played political dynamics.

### **Hindutva in Electoral Politics**

After the bifurcation of united AP and the formation of TS, it was expected and projected that the BJP may capture political power in the TS. It was also analysed and believed that the BJP expressed its willingness to bifurcate the existing united AP with a possible aim to capture political power in future in the TS. The Muslim presence is significant in a few sizable electoral constituencies in the TS. Thus, as per some analyses, a significant religious minority in the form of Muslims may significantly boost BJP political prospects in the TS. (Gudavarthy, 2014)

The historical presence of the Muslim rule in the erstwhile Telangana region under Nizam's domain and significant Muslims in the Telangana region is expected to pave rich dividends to the Hindutva forces like the BJP, RSS, and VHP. Same time, it was also observed that the rooted presence of the AIMIM at Hyderabad and its sustained attempts to spread across vast regions might also present an edge to the Hindutva forces to gain ideological and electoral victory by projecting Muslims as a threat. The automatic spread of either the AIMIM or BJP, primarily in the Telangana region, may also result in an inevitable success to the other political party. Both the BJP and AIMIM are widely known for emotional religious-political plots highlight, which ultimately results in political polarisation and gives certain political ascendance to both of them.

In the TS, Christians were not projected as a potential threat on a significant scale. Attempts are underway to project mostly Muslims as a potential threat. Time has to testify further how politics may unfold in the TS concerning caste, Muslims, Dalits,

Christians, etc. While AIMIM is seen as a Muslim's party in the TS, in the residual AP, unsuccessful attempts were forged to portray YSRCP as a Christian party by the BJP and other Hindutva forces. However, while AIMIM can be regarded as an exclusive Muslim party, YSRCP cannot be regarded as an exclusive Christian or Muslim party. The YSRCP vote bank is much more comprehensive among various sections of society. However, the AIMIM and the YSRCP are dominated by a particular family hold and grip, i.e., upper caste and elite Muslim and Christian family genealogies.

The electoral victory and significant vote bank of the AIMIM and the BJP at Hyderabad and surrounding areas are projected as a culmination and continuation of sustained efforts to polarise Muslim and Hindu votes in favour of their respective parties by projecting the other religious community as a massive threat. Thus, religious polarisation has been underway in united AP, especially at the Hyderabad level. This analysis is made because AIMIM and BJP have had substantive electoral vote bank and electoral victories on a minimal scale in and around the Hyderabad region.

Due to the kind of electoral polarisation between the AIMIM and the BJP, both parties could capture significant vote banks and win legislative seats, like on the floors of the TS Legislative Assembly and the Lok Sabha. Even during the united AP duration, the BJP and the AIMIM were successful electorally at the Hyderabad location. Such victories were also becoming crucial during times of coalition governments formation. For instance, the AIMIM has been continuing in pre-electoral alliances or post-electoral coalitions with various political parties at various points of time, like with the INC and the TRS. At times, the BJP, too, had electoral alliances with other parties like with the TDP during the 1999 and 2014 elections. However, the AIMIM is mainly known for its post-electoral alliance.

The religious polarisation prevalent at Hyderabad and surrounding areas was not prevalent in the other parts of the united AP. Hyderabad became an exceptional political hub for polarization between the AIMIM and the BJP over the years. Even though the Rayalaseema region in AP consisted of a significant Muslim population, political polarisation in favour of Hindutva forces never happened. The Rayalaseema region in this respect is peculiar. Though the Rayalaseema region is very backward, the Naxalite

movement failed to spread by opposing the factional political dynamics. In the same way, the coastal AP consists of a significant Christian presence; yet, the Hindutva forces failed to create major religious anxieties among the Hindus and be successful electorally. The Hindutva forces are trying to create anxieties against the Christians, mostly on the electronic media – but not directly in the mainstream society.

The significant Christian population in residual AP and TS is not officially counted in the census statistical reports. Most of the Christian (Dalits) claims their identity under SC (Hindu) domain. Thus, even if any statistics are available for the Christian population in AP, such statistics cannot be taken as authentic. (Sirapangi, 2021a) Hindutva ideology and political discourse are not at a substantive range in the Telugu region. It is slowly attempting to establish.

In united AP, religion was not mostly politicised; but only caste dynamics were politicised. Thus, by and large, the Christians in united AP, who had a background in marginalised Dalit historicity, has continued to politicise and associate with historically inherited discriminative caste identity in the political realm. Religion for Dalits in the united AP realm was by and large relegated to private and personal life. In this dimension, even the Hindu Dalits and Christian Dalits never tussled openly. On the other side, mainly for Muslims in the united AP, never caste dynamics were prominently politicised; only their religious sentiments and anxieties were politicised, especially vis-a-vis Hindus. The exception lay during the YSR regime when four percent reservation to the Muslims under the BC category at AP level was extended. (Krishnan, 2010)

After the formation of TS in 2014, the BJP's political aspirations have been under-way. Coming close on such heels, the BJP had performed impressively at some level during the 2019 Lok Sabha elections in the TS and captured four seats successfully. The sudden sporadic and drastic political success of the BJP, though on a limited scale, in the TS 2019 elections for Lok Sabha constituencies was attributed to the weakening position of the INC, as INC lacked power, committed leadership and cadre. The TRS frequently destabilises the INC Telangana unit under KCR leadership by gradually co-opting INC MLAs and MPs into the TRS fold. (India News, 2019)

### **Part-III**

#### **Renewed Target of Dalits: Social Media Dynamics**

At times, every Dalit in AP started to be conceived and branded as a Christian by the Hindutva organisations, forces and the wider society. This kind of (mis)conception was established due to Christianity's wide presence among the Dalits. Towards this side, Kathi Mahesh, a noted professional film critic in Tollywood and social commentator, was branded as a Christian Dalit for some time. Alternatively, in another sense, he was mistakenly understood as a Christian Dalit. However, Kathi Mahesh established that he was not a Christian Dalit and proclaimed that he remains a Hindu Dalit. Famous Chilukuru Balaji temple priests even acknowledged his Hindu credentials on electronic media. Chilukuru Balaji temple is found on the Hyderabad sub-urban limits.

However, Kathi Mahesh, though being a Hindu Dalit, habituated to question vehemently from his self-perceived rational outlook, objectionable contents and discriminative stance in the Hindu religion and scriptures. As a result, a tussle arose between the Hindutva sections and Kathi Mahesh. While facing and confronting such tussles with the Hindutva sections, he passed away in July 2021.

As per some observations, the pinpointed particular target of Kathi Mahesh by the Hindutva outfits indicates that only rising Dalits are targeted. In another sense, articulate person like Kathi Mahesh from the Dalit category were exclusively branded as urban Naxals, internet Dalits and anti-nationals. Dalits are categorised into various domains, and one category of well articulate Dalits are branded and recognised as internet Dalits. This is a new trend branding as internet Dalits; previously, Dalits were more or less branded as Naxals. Since Naxal operations got almost eliminated in the Telugu region and socio, economic and political dynamics changed a lot, new brandings like; urban Naxals, internet Dalits, etc. are coined and popularised.

Kathi Mahesh rose to a certain level of prominence on his own by utilising well liberal social media domain to articulate his interests, views and to express professional comments and reviews on Tollywood. (Mahesh Kathi) Kathi Mahesh started his online activism as an individual; however, his Dalit caste background got well established and

constructed in due course of time. He hailed from the Chittor district in the Rayalaseema region of AP and belonged to the Madiga community. He is well educated and professionally acquired a post-graduation degree in Mass Communication from the University of Hyderabad. The Kathi Mahesh case indicates that Dalits, irrespective of religious background, be from Hindu Dalit or Christian Dalit, experience discrimination. Thus, Dalits face discrimination in the Hindu religion or even after conversion to other religions like Christianity. Moreover, Dalits are mostly recognised as Dalits only, irrespective of their religious position. That is the construed prevalent societal position.

At another level, Kathi Mahesh also developed intense differences and faced attacks from noted Tollywood film-star Pawan Kalyan fans. Moreover, as per Kathi Mahesh repeated observation and allegation, actor Pawan Kalyan role, either directly or indirectly, has been there for his fans attack against him on cyber-space and social media, primarily. Moreover, as per Kathi Mahesh constant observation, almost 90% of Pawan Kalyan fans come from the Kapu community. Kapu community is a dominant sect in the Telugu region, after Kamma and Reddy. The tussle between Kathi Mahesh and Pawan Kalyan fans attracted colossal media attention during 2017-18, primarily. (Sirapangi, 2017b)

On the overall conflict developed with Pawan Kalyan fans, which Kathi Mahesh termed a conflict with Pawan Kalyan and Kapus, he prominently observed that the Kapu could not digest his articulate critical questioning freedom since he hailed from the Madiga community. The rise of Kathi Mahesh indicates that he could grow on his own by utilising liberal space provided by modernity, globalisation and social media. However, the repeated attempts to quell his mark and presence after knowing his caste background were profound. Thus, Kathi Mahesh instance proved at a certain level that even liberal democratic space could not fully protect the interests of Dalits. (Guru, 2011)

### **Swami Paripoornananda Versus Mahesh Kathi**

In July 2018, Kathi Mahesh and Swami Paripoornananda were externed from entering the Hyderabad city for six months by the Hyderabad police. Both of them established their professional residences in Hyderabad city. Thus, their income sources and

professional engagements primarily revolved around the Hyderabad location. First, Kathi Mahesh was extern-ed, and later in another two days, Swami Paripoornananda was also extended the same punishment. The specific reason for this action initiated by the Hyderabad police was related to a (derogatory) comment made by Kathi Mahesh on a television show against Lord Ram. Swami Paripoornananda reacted overly to this and created much sensation against Kathi Mahesh comment. As a result, under the Telangana Prevention of Anti Social and Hazardous Activities Act, 1980, Kathi Mahesh was first externed. (Staff, 2018)

There was a sharp criticism for imposing an exclusive extern against Kathi Mahesh. As a result, the discriminatory caste angle was highlighted in this action by prominent persons like Manda Krishna Madiga. (V6 News Telugu, 2018) Manda Krishna Madiga was the founder President of MRPS and continues to remain a charismatic Madiga community leader. As per some critics' observation, though Swami Paripoornananda was detained under house arrest, he was later externed from the Hyderabad city for six months because of the criticism received against the exclusive extern of Kathi Mahesh. (Reporter, 2018) Interestingly, the Hyderabad police, in both instances, dropped these two individuals in residual AP under their escort.

There is also a political angle observable to the action initiated by the Hyderabad police against Kathi Mahesh and Swami Paripoornananda. The TRS led Government under the CM KCR in TS actively considered advanced elections to the TS Legislative Assembly. In August 2018, the TS Legislative Assembly was dissolved, and elections were advanced. As a result, it was observed from this angle that the TS Government under CM KCR's direction posed a double blow against these two individuals by extern(ing) them from the Hyderabad city. Especially extern of Swami Paripoornananda at this crucial juncture had political significance since he was politically active under the BJP and was well associated with other Hindutva organisations.

While Swami Paripoornananda's active politicisation of Hindu religion was seen as a law and order trouble to the TRS headed Government, Kathi Mahesh's role and his consolidated followership on social media were prominently highlighted by the mainstream media, now and then was seen as another cyber-space commotion. When

Kathi Mahesh was banned for six months from entering the Hyderabad city, Manda Krishna Madiga addressed a press conference, critiqued the Telangana police vehemently, and questioned why such extern orders were not applied to persons like Swami Paripoornananda and Raja Singh?

Raja Singh is a noted BJP leader at Hyderabad, primarily known for making derogatory remarks against religious minorities like Muslims. Manda Krishna Madiga observed that both Swami Paripoornananda and Raja Singh qualify better for extern from the Hyderabad city; since they crossed many a time limits of freedom of speech while expressing venom against the religious minorities and other marginalised sections.

It should be noted that Kathi Mahesh was keenly observed and attacked (by both) the Hindutva sections, and professionally, his presence in Tollywood was critiqued, objected to, and attacked even by significant sections of the Kapus observed by Kathi Mahesh himself. Kapus have a stronghold in Tollywood, in addition to Kammas over the years. Interestingly, the Hindutva section is more associated with the BJP, and the BJP was also forging enhanced efforts to co-opt Kapus into its realm in both the Telugu States to grow politically. Towards this direction, in both residual AP and the TS, the Kapu leadership was also promoted by the BJP. In the subsequent duration, the BJP and Pawan Kalyan's Jana Sena (JS) party started an electoral alliance and renewed alliances. Since most Dalits were not central vote banks to the BJP, the divide between the BJP and Dalit sections may get further engulfed in a longer duration.

Even in August 2020, Kathi Mahesh faced arrest by the TS police forces after expressing his opinion against Lord Ram; in a meeting organised on the sidelines of the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), 2019, a protest meeting in February 2020. (Great Andhra, 2020) Thus, late action and arrest were initiated by the Hyderabad police. However, Kathi Mahesh was struck by his comments and observed that blasphemy is not a crime in India, and he did not commit any blasphemy. He repeatedly proclaimed that he was well utilising the freedom of speech guaranteed under the Constitution of India and as per legal permits.



### **New Dalit Icons: Dynamics of Social Media Age**

On a few occasions, a few Dalit persons in the mainstream society were intentionally branded as Christian Dalits, though they profess adherently Hinduism in their private realm. Towards this end, instances like accusations against Mahesh Kathi, RS Praveen Kumar, etc., can be observed. Though these individuals were adherent practitioners of Hinduism in their personal and family life, they were intentionally branded as Christian Dalits and utilising reservation under SC (Hindu) fold. These victims, like Mahesh Kathi and RS Praveen Kumar, under such circumstances, had, at times, a tough time proving their SC (Hindu) credentials from their family lineage and specific caste background. Moreover, the victims expressed a certain sense of resentment about how and why certain sections should target them in the society against their faith activity? Significantly, the Hindutva sponsored sections and individuals are believed and projected to be behind all these activities against certain sections of people from Dalit categories, like Mahesh Kathi and RS Praveen Kumar.

When observing personalised targets against Mahesh Kathi and RS Praveen Kumar, it becomes evident that Dalits in either Hinduism or Christianity face blatant discrimination. The attacks against persons like Mahesh Kathi and RS Praveen Kumar establish a certain kind of mass hysteria atmosphere creation against Christian Dalits, though such attempts have failed to succeed. In order to deal with and contain the range of personal malign carried against them, persons like Mahesh Kathi and RS Praveen Kumar had even taken to mainstream political discourse. For instance, Mahesh Kathi started to associate with the YSRCP, and RS Praveen Kumar started to lead as the foremost leader of the BSP in the TS from 2021 onwards. RS Praveen Kumar professionally belonged to the IPS cadre and acquired distinguished recognition for his yeoman rendered services in various sectors like education in the Telangana region.

At another level, the whole process also poses a severe threat to the secularisation process in society. Instead of developing secularisation notions in society, certain sections have started to destabilise the secular fabric in society, even in modern times. In the caste-ridden society, a constant threat to peace, stability, and tranquility is a threat. Such threat can be understandable during times of pre-modern times. However, even

during modern constitution adoption and the rule of law prevalence times, such a continued threat to the liberal secular democratic space. The Deliberate attempts to destabilise peace and tranquility, by projecting Dalits conversion to Christianity as a fundamental threat to the nation's peace and Hindu society's instability is an objectionable process. Thus, the constitution-based rule of law credentials failed to establish and solidify secular credentials over the years. Though people cultivated modernity and led modern life, they still possessed and carried elements of caste notions, inequality and hatred against certain other caste sections like the Dalits and Christian Dalits forwards.

### **India Praja Bandu Party**

India Praja Bandu Party (IPBP) is a political party. Interestingly, IPBP's major and prime leadership emerges from the Christian section, particularly from the Christian Dalit group, at a certain level. Addanki Ranjith Ophir, one of the prominent Christian evangelists and pastors in the Telangana region, is the prime backbone and mastermind behind IPBP's establishment and activity carryout. Addanki Ranjith Ophir is a Christian Dalit by birth, having family genealogy in the Telangana and Hyderabad city. Legally, he covers under the BC-C category. He was even associated with the Electronics Corporation of India Limited (ECIL) at Hyderabad as an employee during some prime duration of his life. However, he became an evangelist in due course of time and was established as a prominent pastor with a solid theological background. His scholarship based on voracious reading is evident to the listeners of his preachings. He is highly engaged among various Christian evangelist groups, primarily across the Telugu region.

Another parallel quality observable in Addanki Ranjith Ophir is his politically ambitious activities over the years. Some sections of Christians and wider society sometimes confuse him by doubting him as associated with the RSS. One of the prime reasons for developing such apprehension was that one of his activities platforms was *Rashtreeya Kraisthava Parishad* (RKP). Though RKP objectives declare its intention to protect and promote interests of Indian Christians – the style of the words used and especially the word 'Parishad' raised certain doubts about whether it was an affiliate of the RSS. However, in reality, RKP is no way related to the RSS section of organisations. It is

entirely aloof from such identity. However, many people doubt why RKP is termed with words sound in Hindi, RSS style of 'Parishad' terminology and North Indian style. For this, there is no exact answer. Some also suspect that RSS and North Indian styled words were coined to portray themselves as equally Indian Christians and nationalists in true spirit.

In addition to the RKP platform, which works to promote and protect Indian Christians, especially in the Telugu region, Addanki Ranjith Ophir also initiated steps to launch an all India party named IPBP. In this process, IPBP has unsuccessfully contested in the 2019 elections. As part of the IPBP platform, a visible solidarity network was even worked out with the Indian Muslims. Thus, Christians and Muslims coming together for political benefits against the majoritarian Hindu upper-caste dominated polity are devised through IPBP launch. While RKP has a civil society kind of projection, the IPBP has political ambition electorally.

### **A Protestant Pastor's Murder at Vikarabad in Telangana Region**

In January 2014, a Protestant pastor at Vikarabad town in the Telangana region was brutally murdered by a Hindutva fanatic platform, i.e., Hindu Vahini. (Navayan, 2015) (Morning Star News, 2014) An angered AP Christian community organised a massive public meeting by keeping aside their denominational affiliations and decrying the gruesome incident. (Two Circles, 2014) The assassinated pastor was associated with the Bethel Church congregation at Vikarabad town. The Bethel congregation is a well-spread denomination. The researcher paid a purposeful visit to Vikarabad and interacted with the slain pastor's wife and a few other available devotees. The assassinated pastor had rendered his evangelical service on behalf of the Bethel congregation over the years and resided with his family at the Church itself. Though the church not luxurious, it was solidly constructed to continue the Church services. Pathetically, the pastor's children were not settled in life. The children were still continuing their education. When attempted to know the caste background of pastor from his Church devotees, they too were unaware of his caste background.

This incident raised suspicion at some level whether this murder was committed to escalating communal tensions ahead of the scheduled 2014 general elections to the AP Assembly and Lok Sabha constituencies. However, the AP political situation was volatile and polarised towards major issues like AP bifurcation demand. As a result, this incident failed to raise significant communal tensions. However, this incident made the Christian forces unite against Hindutva atrocities by keeping their denominational differences and affiliations. The Christian forces organised a massive meeting to condemn the atrocity.

### **KA Paul's Praja Shanti Party**

KA Paul is a noted Christian philanthropist who claims to be working for the prevalence of world peace and stability and restoring peace in the disturbed regions of the world like the African continent. He is professionally based in the United States of America (USA). He heads Global Peace Initiative (GPI), claiming to maintain peaceful world order. He is well known in dual forms for his spiritual Christian evangelist meetings and his secular charity activities in the Telugu region. He has a lavish philanthropic empire spread even in the coastal Andhra and Telangana region. Most significantly, he is well known for his self-boost as a prominent person striving to maintain world peace in association with prominent world leaders across the globe. He even maintained high-level political contacts in India, including in the Telugu region. In due course of time, Telugu region politicians developed a particular interest in various forms. For instance, KA Paul claimed on many occasions that the late YSR had tried to destabilise his philanthropic activity in the Telugu region in order to promote YSR's son-in-law, Anil Kumar. Anil Kumar is also a Christian evangelist having primary credentials in Brahmin caste lineage. However, he converted to Christianity and even married YSR's daughter YS Sharmila. Some sections propagated a certain level of the competitive edge between KA Paul and Brother Anil Kumar.

As a result of KA Paul's strained relationship with YSR's family, he developed a specific intimate association with TDP's Naidu, a prime political opponent to YSR. Thus, YSR opponents – KA Paul and Naidu united against their common political opponent. The intimate association between KA Paul and Naidu has been recognised on both prominent and non-prominent occasions. In 2008, KA Paul launched his political party, the Praja

Shanti Party (PSP). However, the PSP has been failing to get rooted in the Telugu region. Even KA Paul cannot establish the PSP as a full-fledged party though he occasionally creates a political sensation, especially in the electronic media. The occasional stay of PSP on the behest of KA Paul in electoral politics in the Telugu region is highly propagated as a kind of attempt and step taken on the suspected nexus between KA Paul and Naidu. Thus, a high-level political conspiracy is suspected behind KA Paul and his PSP. The YSRCP sections massively propagated the same.

Most interestingly, KA Paul claims to target the vote bank of Christian Dalits and Kapus. As per caste lineage, KA Paul hails from Kapu caste background from Chittivalasa in the Visakhapatnam district of coastal Andhra. KA Paul also prominently stressed his wife's Madiga Christian background and his Kapu (Christian) identity on a few occasions. Primarily, it was expected that KA Paul's PSP electoral fray might split the Christian Dalit vote bank without getting diverted and consolidated behind YSRCP during the 2019 elections. Thus, the suspected blossom of nexus between KA Paul and Naidu against YSR is even continued against YSR's son Jagan and his YSRCP. However, in reality, KA Paul and his PSP failed to destabilise the electoral prospectus of the YSRCP. However, at some level, it was expected that the PSP's electoral fray caused specific damage to the TDP. (Umanadh, 2019)

### **Pawan Kalyan's Jana Sena**

In addition to KA Paul and Naidu's political and electoral nexus, Naidu is suspected of maintaining another nexus with Pawan Kalyan, a film star in Tollywood. Pawan Kalyan belongs to the Kapu caste from coastal Andhra's West Godavari district region. He acquired popularity as a mass film star. It has been well established and believed that substantive Kapu masses fall behind Pawan Kalyan by visualising him as an icon of their community from a celebrity background. In 2014, just prior to the scheduled elections to the AP Legislative Assembly and Lok Sabha elections, in a hurried manner, Pawan Kalyan launched his party, Jana Sena (JS).

Moreover, JS extended in the 2014 elections unconditional support to the TDP-BJP electoral alliance. Without any organisational base and structure, Pawan Kalyan extended

JS support to the TDP-BJP alliance in the Telugu region. Finally, in the 2014 election, the TDP-BJP electoral alliance was able to grab a substantive vote bank and formed the Government in residual AP. Certain sections believed and suspected that Pawan Kalyan hurriedly launched his JS after due negotiations in a backdoor manner with Naidu. Moreover, it was also highly propagated and believed that Pawan worked among the Kapus to mobilise electoral tilt towards the TDP without shifting such base to the YSRCP. However, in due course of time, Pawan Kalyan failed to establish himself as a regular mainstream politician. (Sirapangi, 2021b) Additionally, Pawan Kalyan's JS failed to prove substantive electoral success during the 2019 elections even after being contested with the CPI, CPIM and BSP. Interestingly, though JS had an electoral alliance with the BSP - Dalit and Christian Dalit vote failed to rally and consolidate behind this alliance.

When Pawan Kalyan's elder brother and Tollywood star Chiranjeevi launched Praja Rajyam Party (PRP) and contested in the 2009 elections, the Dalit vote did not visibly consolidate behind the PRP. (Gundimeda, 2009) (Sirapangi, 2021c) After the PRP failure under Chiranjeevi's leadership, the JS attempt was read by some sections as a second attempt to consolidate Kapu's leadership. However, Kapu lead parties like JS, PRP, and PSP also failed to consolidate Dalit and Christian Dalits vote behind them. However, the Dalit vote bank now and then rallied behind parties like the INC, TDP and YSRCP, majorly in the Telugu region.

### **Christian Burial Grounds Problem Across Telugu Region Urban Areas**

Christian Dalits have been facing a significant problem related to burial grounds. It is the custom of the Christians to bury their beloved ones upon the death. Though the Christian population is at a significant level in the Telugu region, Christian burial grounds are in huge demand due to uncounted Christian Dalits formal proclamation as SC (Hindus). Especially, in the urban areas, across the Telugu region, Christian burials were filled. However, then, the Governments over the years have been failing to allot new burial grounds to the Christians. Though most secular Governments like the INC and TDP ruled over the Telugu region since AP formation in 1956, the Christian burial grounds shortage problem was not addressed.

KKR, as AP CM, upon Christian leaders highlighting this issue, promised to address the issue at the earliest. However, even now, Christian burial grounds shortage in urban areas is of grave concern and significance. Even though the Dalit movement and Dalit leaders are widespread across the Telugu region, they fail to highlight and address this problem. Mainstream Dalit leaders are not bothered about the burial grounds issue. They are comfortable leading the Dalit movement and projecting as leaders of the SC (Hindu) category, though most were adherent followers of Christianity in the private family realm.

On the other side, prominent and independent Christian leadership in the Telugu region was not much visible. Even in the civil society domain, outstanding Christian leadership was never visible to highlight and negotiate their concerns with the governments. Thus, while the Christian population is in significant proportion across the Telugu region, they also do not have independent notable civil society leadership projection. On the other side, though personally follows Christian faith, the visible Dalit leadership is not bothered and concerned about their burial grounds grave concern. Instead, they are comfortable continuing their public image as leaders of the mainstream Dalit movement legally under the SC (Hindu) category. Thus, a kind of comfortable passive stage continues among the Christian and Dalit leaders, who fail to have a specific solidarity network for their problems to address and resolve the same in negotiation with the Governments. This establishes a certain sense of passive comfort zone continuation on their part. Moreover, the Governments are also unresponsive to the needs of the Christian (Dalit) community.

Though burial grounds allocation and maintenance are mainly covered under the local self-governance bodies' domain, they are also failing to address this issue. At another level, the real estate face of the urban areas and huge costs of land prices are also shown as a cause of concern to acquire new burial grounds for the primary benefit of the Christian minority community. At another level, Muslim burial grounds are not much filled up in the urban areas across the Telugu region when compared with Christian burial grounds, especially at a few prime urban locations. Thus, within the two prominent religious minority communities – Christians and Muslims, the former faces a huge burial

ground problem, primarily in the urban areas. At another level, while Muslims maintain their fixed assets through legal institutions like WAQF boards across India, such a system is not there for Christians. In another way, the Muslim burial grounds are acquired and maintained under WAQF board sources also. However, such a system is not prevalent for Christians.

Though it is a fundamental right of every human being to have a dignified death, for Christian Dalits, the governments deny such an opportunity by not allocating them new burial grounds in the Telugu region's urban areas. Thus, this stance establishes that Dalits, be in any region, are succumb to certain standard discriminatory practices at a certain level. In this instance, one recollects and knows how Hindu Dalits also face standard discriminatory practices from birth to death. In a few villages across India, Hindu Dalits face heinous discriminatory objections from the caste Hindus against their death processions and burial places.

### **Conclusion**

The three broad sections in the chapter highlighted three broad themes related to AP Dalit movement dynamics, Hindutva style of engagement and mainstream political parties strategies while engaging with the Dalits and their causes. In a way, the focus of the chapter can be visualised from TDP's establishment and success as a mainstream second dominant political party in AP. Since then, how caste politics, Dalit movement and politics, AP regional dynamics related to the Telangana issue, and how the Dalit and Bahujan sections reacted to the Telangana movement were aspects.

Towards the end, the chapter drew attention to new emerging dynamics concerning Hindutva strategies while dealing and engaging with various religious minority issues like Christian Dalits. The chapter, in a way, establishes the passive nature of the Dalit movement in the Telugu region. Even the Hindutva movement in the residual AP is passive when compared with the TS realm. The social media dynamics concerning both the Hindutva and Dalits sections also got highlighted. Will social dynamics provide space for new Dalit leadership to emerge is yet to be observed in the Telugu region, especially concerning the TS!



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### **End Notes:**

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1. In the Karamchedu massacre, Kammas were accused as the criminal perpetrators against Madiga. On the other hand, in the Vangaveeti Mohana Ranga Rao assassination incident, Kapus claimed Kammas led TDP government as the criminal conspirator. Thus, on a relative basis, in the second incidence, though direct indication of Kammas role is not found legally, Kapus accuses Kammas as the conspirator section.
2. This point was made by Prof Kodanda Ram Reddy while delivering a talk on '*The Remaking of Civil Society in Telangana: The Case of TJAC's*', at C V Raman Auditorium, University of Hyderabad on September 27, 2016. Organised by the Centre for Advanced Studies in Political Science, Department of Political Science, University of Hyderabad.
3. The official YouTube channel of Bharat Today can be found @:  
<https://www.youtube.com/c/BhaaratTodayNew/about>
4. Further details about Kathi Mahesh follows in the subsequent pages.

Chapter: V

# DALITS AND RELIGIOUSITY

## IN CITY Q:

### AN ANALYSIS

Abstract:

*The chapter provides a description of religiosity in City-Q. Religiosity for this chapter's focus includes even political dynamics related to Christianity and Christian Dalits, primarily. The field location for this research is grounded in a coastal Andhra city. Due to the sensitivity involved in the research as expressed by the Churches, the location identifier is named 'City-Q'. All the places, Churches, devotees and other names covered across this chapter and other chapters are expressed in pseudo names. The chapter provides an enriched description of City-Q, the presence of dominant Christian elements and how the researcher engaged carefully with various Christian priests and Churches. The chapter also provides a bird side's view about regional dynamics in the wake of the intensified Telangana movement and how different sections of the marginalised communities in City-Q responded and engaged. At another level, how the (Christian) Dalits participate in civil and political activities can also be visualised through the lenses of the chapter's description. The chapter is organised based on data collected through 'urban ethnography'*

I

**Grounding the Field Location: In City-Q**

Historically, the district under field study has various forms of connectivity with the French, Nizam, and British India. The prime urban locality in the district under research focus is situated in a coastal Andhra district. The urban body under the specific study is named 'City-Q'. The district has both significant water resource areas and dry areas too. The large water resource areas are very prosperous in agricultural output. Due to the development of irrigational facilities, agricultural production increased. Also, the increased connectivity through rail and road increased commercial value to the agricultural products. Thus prosperity for certain parts of the district is ensured based on enhanced agricultural output and extended irrigation facilities.

The increased agricultural production and income generation due to irrigation development and market facilities were also considered while drawing and redrawing the district boundaries. The district is well known for some agricultural products produced in abundance. Moreover, the most popular abundant agriculturally produced products provide a vast market. While drawing and redrawing the district boundaries at various times, revenue collection and administrative convenience factors guided as cardinal principles.

The district has more than ten assembly constituencies and more than one parliamentary constituency, i.e. for Lok Sabha, over fifty mandals, over seven hundred villages and more than ten urban localities of different nature like municipalities, municipal corporations, etc. as part of more than three revenue mandals. The district has a coastline with the Bay of Bengal Ocean.

While the abundant water resource areas are relatively peaceful in terms of law and order parameters, some of the dry regions of the district are prone to some Naxalite activity, and some factional rivalry has had been well reported. There are considerable differences in culture between the dry and wetlands of the district population. In terms of political activity, differences can also be observed between the dry and wetlands of the district. City-Q, to some extent, fell between the wet and dry locations of the district. Thus, City-

Q acts as a connecting bridge between the two varied zones in some sense. Therefore in City-Q, people from both dry and wetlands of the district has invariable connectivity and the necessity to congregate.

The district population has interdependence with the neighbouring districts in various degrees for their convenience in cultural, personal, professional, trade, commerce, and migration necessities. The district has different soils like; red gravelly, black cotton, sandy alluvial and saline swampy. The coastal regions of AP have been regularly prone to different kinds of cyclones. As a result, damages to agricultural fields and roads are regular during the rainy season.

The district claimed to have various historical tourist spots concerning Hinduism and Buddhism. Some of the Buddhist places are projected under the influence of Hinduism. Interestingly, Lord Buddha is projected as part of the Hindu religion, as an avatar of a Hindu God, i.e. Lord Vishnu. The district profile on the website prominently projects historical tourist spots of Buddhist and Hindu faiths. Nevertheless, there is no mention of other religious sects in any form. However, the historicity of some of the Churches in the district had around a hundred years of history. The historic Churches are not recognised as historical tourist spots either by the Christians or the AP government.

As per the Indian historical monuments recognition criteria, any site or structure with a minimum of sixty years of history can be recognised as a potential historical monument, subject to specific other criteria fulfilment. Nevertheless, based on either Indian historical recognition criteria or due to lack of Christian's projection of historical Churches in the district; Christian religious tourism is not mooted. Hence, the AP government projects imbalanced religious tourism, and there is no objection from other religious minority sections, like the Christians and Muslims. The Christians also lack much interest in high-level spiritual tourist voyages in the district, like visiting a few historic Churches in the district or elsewhere.

Indian's internal mobility has been highly constrained, historically and culturally, due to various reasons. The notion of villages in India as autonomous units could be one of the prime factors in this respect. Anyhow, Indians mobility has been on ascendance over the

years due to various factors like; modernity, migration, globalisation, rise in income levels, and the emergence of the new middle class. In neo-liberal India, religious tourism acquired a profound significance. (Nanda, 2009) However, there is still potential scope to develop the internal tourism sector. Even during the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Indians mobility is low compared to some of the advanced nation-States in the world.

City-Q location is significant both in the district and the entire AP. City-Q has particular significance at the national level, too, primarily due to its location as a substantial market head-quarter for some of the district's agricultural products produced in abundance. City-Q's location, modern recognition, set-up and development started from the second half of the nineteenth century. Since then, its growth has been continuing in various forms.

The basic necessity for urban formation is to offer better development of urban infrastructural facilities; City-Q website observed and claimed. City-Q resembled two urban localities; one had an old look with congested spaces, mass population and improper maintenance. On the other side, the other part of City-Q resembled a prosperous outlook and is well planned than the former. Thus City-Q is part of an urban Mandal and urban administrative body too. However, primarily the researcher focused on Dalits and Christian Dalits in City-Q.

Most old city roads are dirty compared with the newly extended city limits. The railway station and bus station areas are also messy, which fell under the old city domain. The vegetable, flower and petty nature business location is also congested. The business is done on the main road in the market area. City-Q administrative building also resembles to be old, located at the main centre. The building might have acquired an old look due to improper maintenance.

Roads are spacious to some extent. However, traffic prevailed. One of the main reasons behind traffic is the lack of civic sense among the commuters. Furthermore, the public mostly preferred to build houses and commercial spaces without leaving proper parking spaces. The town planning guidelines and regulations are not adequately followed. This is usually a regular phenomenon in Indian cities and towns. (Shaw, 2012)



The formal information provided by City-Q over its official website boasted of providing various facilities for the well being of its citizens. The highlighted services on City-Q website include; hospitals, parks, stadiums, playgrounds, different types of schools, burial grounds, different kinds of markets, community halls, guest houses, recognised and un-recognised slum localities maintenance, etc. City-Q is recognised as a spot for various industry and business-related activities.

### **Christianity and Churches in City-Q**

In City-Q, one can observe huge Christian influence in one form or the other, like the presence of Churches, Church properties of a particular congregation on a large scale, selling of Christian literature in various forms, organising Christian public meetings (primarily evangelical), and the distribution of multiple types of pamphlets at various road junctions and wall posters of various evangelical conferences, activities, etc.

The surroundings of City-Q also possessed Christian influence, which can be observed and read in many forms. A nearby small town in the district found flex banners erected on the eve of Christmas. The flex banners prominently highlighted various shades of their identities like caste, religion and political affiliation. For instance, a few Christian Madiga devotees erected banners at their colony, which portrayed their political affiliation, highlighted a few caste leaders, and symbolised photos of Mary-Jesus. This kind of symbolism and activism are also observed for other castes like Christian Malas in their localities.

The financial and social position of the Churches usually depended on the locality in which they are located. Moreover, if poor devotees are associated with the Church, the Church also resembles the poor. Similarly, if wealthy devotees are associated with the Church, the Church also resembles rich and well maintained. Thus, the quality of the Churches depended on the quality of the devotees associated with the Churches. This distinction is almost observed concerning all Christian denominations. This criterion is applicable and observed even concerning established mainstream Churches and independently led Churches by individual pastors.

The established mainstream Christian congregations are visionary enough in establishing Churches with proper infrastructure. However, the monetary collections depend on the financial nature of the devotees associated with the Churches. The established Churches here refer to both from the RCM and Protestant background. A few prominent Protestant mainstream background Churches includes, but are not limited to: the AELC, Church of South India (CSI), TBC, etc.

## II

### **Dalits, Christianity and Political Symbolism**

Many point out the geographical variation in the concentration of Madiga and Mala castes. For instance, ‘Reverend RR’ is one such prominent observer. The district's Madiga-Mala regional population variation dimension is attributed to antagonistic historical factors. According to Reverend RR, the dry areas in the district mainly consist of the Madigas population. On the other side, the wet areas of the district are primarily occupied by the Mala population.

According to Reverend RR, even the Madiga and Mala sections are divided due to various historical factors. This division is not specific to Madiga and Mala; even other communities are affected, observed Reverend RR. Further, Reverend RR said that various historical factors have created regional variations among and between various castes and regions of the Telugu land due to the infamous *Palnadu war*. Specific historical imaginary pervades even among the social imaginary of a few dominant castes like Kamma, Reddy, Velama, etc. Likewise, Advocate SK conveyed the same opinion about the relevance of historical factors on the social imaginary of Telugu people's dominant social communities. Thus, in a way, SK echoed the view of Reverend RR.

City-Q wears a high festive look in various modes during the Christmas season. Massive decorations in multiple models are visible in almost every corner in City-Q. Some slums are decorated entirely on roads, street lanes, and houses with substantial decorative lighting, cut-outs, flex banners, and big stars. In the daily newspapers of the local and district editions, various types of greeting advertisements are published by various

prominent personalities and business entities from different walks of life: from politics and business in favour of Christians and Christmas.

Various business enterprises display flex banners at various Christian institutions on Christmas occasions, especially churches. Moreover, they extend best wishes on Christmas and the upcoming New Year. Mainly, the business enterprises that extend greetings at Churches include prominently commercial cloth merchant showrooms. The mainstream political parties and politicians (other than the BJP), especially those desiring to succeed politically in the electoral fray, prominently extend Christmas greetings in various modes, like through newspaper advertisements, hosting semi Christmas celebrations, attending semi Christmas celebrations hosted by different Christians and prominent Christian organisations. The ambitious politicians host semi-Christmas events and invite prominent Christians. They also erect flex banners at main road junctions.

The gesture of erecting banners in the Christmas season by the mainstream politicians indicates how the mainstream political parties and politicians recognise Christians as a significant vote bank. However, in none of the semi Christmas celebrations hosted by mainstream politicians, the issues like the repeal of the 1950 Presidential Order are highlighted. The semi-Christmas events are more symbolic. The mainstream political parties and politicians associated with the semi Christmas celebrations include parties and politicians from the INC, TDP and YSRCP, but not the BJP as keenly observed by the researcher.

The enthusiastic colony people display stars of various colours and sizes at different street entrances. Mostly the youth is at the forefront in this direction. Displayed stars represent Christmas festive mood all around the corner. This activity is basically and dominantly found in slums. At slums, one of the other notable features is that the entire streets and colonies are lighted up for the festive occasion of Christmas and the upcoming New Year. Various semi-Christmas banners, wall posters, pamphlets are also observed in City-Q.

Brother Anil Kumar, one of the most noted famous evangelists in the Telugu region, was one of the main speakers at one of the biggest 'Community Christmas Celebrations'

organised at an open space of a noted Christian higher educational institution a fine evening. Thus, City-Q certainly showcases a cheerful outlook to the observers. The Christian higher education playground is usually rented to organise events of this nature and other nature in City-Q. During the Christmas season, this educational institution's ground is well noted for organising a few events of this nature by various Christian congregations. Even for other non-religious events also the ground is offered on a rental basis.

A slum colony in City-Q located near a railway track, flyover, and bus station showcased an interesting Christmas celebration mood. The entire slum wore a festive look with many colourful stars placed at the entrance or on top of most houses. The almost entire colony is lighted with small decorative bulbs. Flex banners of various enthusiastic people are found, which extended Christmas and New Year greetings. A few banners with political significance are also found, like on behalf of the INC, TDP and YSRCP.

At a slum location, facing the main road, a big flex banner of the late YSR was erected under a giant Christmas star. The enthusiastic YSRCP cadre did this. The slums in City-Q, where Christmas symbolism is prominently projected, mainly belong to the Madiga and Mala castes within the Dalit category. Apart from the symbolism of Christmas and new-year greetings, the banners consist of various YSRCP leaders and local cadres. The big images on the banners happen to be from upper caste politicians, mainly from the Reddy community. The Reddy community dominates YSRCP prime leadership.

On the other hand, the local YSRCP cadre and activists images are printed in small size. The YSRCP local cadre and youth have primary association and lineage from a Christian Dalit background. All this indicates that politics, caste, religion and region attempts to forge a new discourse in renewed fashion in a certain sense.

The political symbolism found at the slum mentioned above, at some level, indicates that the traditional Dalit vote bank started to shift from the INC and TDP to the newly established party, i.e. YSRCP. Traditionally for a significant duration, the Dalit vote rested with the INC. Since the 1990 decade, it is believed and projected that a considerable proportion of Madigas has shifted their political allegiance to the TDP due

to the initiation of the positive step shown in favour of sub-categorisation of SC reservation benefiting them. (Sarangi, 1999)

As a result, it was believed that the Mala community vote bank firmly rested with the INC. Thus, since the 1990s, the INC and TDP have started to grab the divided vote bank of the Madiga and Mala sections in renewed fashion. Before a sect of Madigas vote bank shifted to the TDP, the SC majority vote bank majorly rested with the INC, even after TDP establishment and TDPs political success in 1983.

It is believed and projected that one of the prime reasons for the Karamchedu massacre against SC Madigas is due to Kammas developed sense of animosity against them. Though Madigas are majorly agricultural labourers under Kammas, in the recently held elections in 1983, Madigas voted en-bloc to the INC. This voting pattern and preference of the Madigas at Karamchedu village also made the Kammas develop a grudge against them. This developed grudge against Madigas is also one of the prime reasons behind the 1985 massacre when a conflict developed due to some other reason.

### **Statue Culture and Political Symbolism**

At one particular location in City-Q, a statue of Ambedkar was inaugurated in 2012. Adjacent to it, another late YSR statue is also located without inauguration. The location of these two statues is at a non-prominent and unusual space in the street. Usually, statues are erected at a major road junction. However, these two statues are erected in a street lane. Lack of civic sense failed to prevail in such acts of enthusiasm, violating legal provisions governing spaces to erect statues.

Nevertheless, the symbolism of statues installation in wrong spaces resembled an emboldened act to project their perceived personalities as guardians of their rights and welfare. Such self-perceived symbolism and justification made them violate even legal norms governing guidelines and principles for the erection of statues. At another level, they failed to engage on a broader note to insist on modifying the guidelines for installing statues as per their perceived suitable locations.

During conducted field study in City-Q, there is a ban on the unofficial installation of prominent people's statues. Upon his father YSRs death, Jagan started to inaugurate YSR statues on an unprecedentedly massive scale. As a result, the then AP government placed a renewed ban on unsolicited and illegal statues installation. As a result, the present YSR statue in the slum location is left out without inauguration.

Many veiled YSR statues in the district are left out without inauguration. The enthusiasm of the people and cadre in erecting unsolicited and illegal statues at improper locations even got a break applied through legal norms imposed by the then INC headed AP government under CM Kiran Kumar Reddy directives. In a longer span, i.e. after the 2014 AP legislative assembly elections, the INC was utterly routed out from residual AP political geography. Moreover, the TDP and YSRCP stood as projected potential political players.

### III

#### **Madiga-Mala Segregation and Conflict**

There is also regional variation within the Madiga and Mala castes composition on a sub-regional basis within the AP political geography. For instance, a significant proportion of Madigas is found in the Telangana region. Malas huge presence is seen in the East Godavari district and other coastal AP districts. There are also variations in Madiga and Mala communities and other SC castes presence in districts.

When analysing how and why Madiga and Mala castes are segregated and discriminated against each other, a few exciting aspects got revealed. When one looks at a few historical recounts related to the Madiga and Mala castes, it becomes clear that historically and culturally, these two dominant AP Dalit sections are diverse in various aspects. However, both suffer untouchability and marginalisation from other castes. Even after facing common untouchable marginalisation in society, a few untouchable castes like the Madiga and Mala have failed to build solidarity and emerge as a potent force against the dominant upper castes.

A kind of communal gulf and internal discriminatory marginalisation difference is visible among all the marginalised sections across India. The AP situation concerning the Madiga and Mala communities is not exclusive. This discriminatory marginalisation has continued and carried forward in other castes upon conversion to Christianity. There are also substantial regional variations in discriminatory caste practices and solidarity networks build-up processes across India between different SC sections. (Gatade, 2011)

A prominent caste out-burst among AP Dalits occurred during the 1990-2000 decades. These two decades in AP politics was entirely dominated concerning the Madiga and Mala castes tussle over sub-categorisation of SC reservation. The Madigas found a problem with the over utilisation of reservation benefits by their co-Dalit section, i.e. Mala. Though Madigas have observed this phenomenon of over utilisation of constitutionally mandated and guaranteed 15% SC reservation by the Malas over the past few decades, during the 1990 decade, the Madigas movement took another leap forward. As a result of Madigas vociferous demand and movement for sub-categorisation of 15% of SC reservation in proportion to all the involved castes within the SC, the Malas started counter movement, primarily under an organisation named 'Mala Mahanadu'.

The Malas started to argue and put forward their demand and version that the sub-categorisation of SC-reservation is against the Ambedkarite spirit and termed Madigas demand for sub-categorisation as equal to 'division of Dalits'. (Rao Y. C., 2009) The Madigas objected to the counter challenging campaign of Malas and termed their movement as anti-Dalit. (Gundimeda, 2006) This indicates that the involved Madiga and Mala sections associated with the SC reservation sub-categorisation issue have termed and branded each other as anti-Dalit and anti-Ambedkarite. Madigas demand for sub-categorisation of AP SC reservation is primarily led by MRPS. (Gundimeda, 2016 )

The widespread SC sub-categorisation reservation movement has had a lasting profound negative and positive impact over many sections. Even the Christian Dalits are intensely affected by this atmosphere. Renewed caste consciousness and divisions emerged and reemerged among Madiga and Mala sections even within their associated Churches. This indicates the presence of caste in Indian Christianity and revolving dynamics. The whole sub-categorisation of the SC reservation movement produced another level of

antagonistic relations between these two Dalit sections of AP, i.e. Madiga and Mala, in addition to the already existing historical antagonistic differences. (Chiruthoti, 2018)

#### IV

#### **Significant Religious Minorities in City-Q**

The concentration of the Muslim population is visible in City-Q, in addition to Christians, in some pockets. Usually, the Muslim population is highly urbanised compared to other minority religious sects in India (Sachar, 2006). On the whole, the religious demography of City-Q in terms of Christians and Muslims is quite visible. However, there are no significant religious disturbances, though various Hindutva elements attempt to establish their presence and consolidate in City-Q. Different Hindutva sections like Shiv Sena, RSS and BJP are present in City-Q.

In fact, during united AP, which existed from 1956 to 2014, prominent attacks against Muslims were carried out in Hyderabad old city during the early 1990 decade. The factional sections within the INC, which headed the then AP government, are blamed and highlighted for such escalated communal tensions, but not the Hindutva forces. Thus, it indicates at some level that the Hindutva forces are not entirely successful in a few South Indian States like AP in racking the presence of religious minorities as an issue and increasing their vote bank, at least as of now.

Other non-Hindutva sections also carried communal tensions in India against the religious minorities at another level. Even non-Hindutva sections like the INC cadre and leadership are also into this human rights and dignity violation against the religious minorities like Muslims and Sikhs. Political parties like the INC are also regarded as a caricature of pseudo representation of soft Hindutva in dubious form. The primary attack against the Sikh community after the assassination of former PM Indira Gandhi is noteworthy in this respect. However, the religious minorities in India, like Christians and Muslims, developed stringent anti-stands against the Hindutva forces like; BJP, RSS, and VHP, but not much against the INC. This is due to the stringent ideological stands for which the Hindutva sections stood and the range of communal tensions they created. (Katju, 2012)



The Hindutva section's communal hatred against religious minorities like Christians and Muslims makes them feel highly insecure in India. As a result, they perceive most regional and national parties like the INC as relatively secular and feel to see them form governments. In this respect, the Gujarat massacre against Muslims in 2002 stands as a vindictive instance, where Muslims in Gujarat are massacred. (Nussbaum, 2008) (Ananthamurthy, 2016) (Sahni, 2007) (Ayyub, 2016)

In City-Q, Muslims presence and symbolism are visible to any passer-by commuter section, especially in the old city areas. The BJP and its allied ideological sections associated with the Sangh Parivar have a presence in various forms like social service organisations, yet they are unsuccessful, politically and socially, on a significant plank. Usually, from a social service background, the Hindutva established well electorally, at a certain level, but not an absolute level. (Thachil, 2015)

### **Segregation of Dalits and Christianity**

The Christians presence in coastal Andhra or/and South India is mainly seen and understood from the Dalit background. Dalits mostly converted to Christianity during British Indian times. However, a careful examination is always required to know behind the social details of Christians, like concerning caste. Based on factors like historical and cultural background, the Christians denominational association with Churches also depended. (Rajapramukh, 2008) Co-option of marginalised sections icons as part of Hinduism and Hindutva is another strategy adopted by the Hindutva in recent years, like in the UP elections of 2017. Finally, as a result of such efforts, the BJP successfully captured and formed the government in 2017.

For instance, for some sustained duration, the upper caste Christians are primarily associated with the RCM. On the other hand, the Malas have a primordial association with the AELC. Similarly, the Madigas have historical unity with the TBC, etc. dynamics are pretty visible. Thus, religions and religious minority groups are not independent in India. They are primarily dependent on factors like those highlighted above, based on caste. (Joseph, 2001) In City-Q, by and large, the Madiga and Mala communities also maintained their dominant primary association with the TBC and AELC congregations,

respectively. Thus, the historical process of association with their respective Church congregations since generations together has continued unabatedly.

## V

### **Catholicism**

First, in City-Q observed an old RCM Church and concentrated on it for a brief while. Coincidentally, this Catholic Church happens to be the oldest Church established in City-Q. The Church's architecture is impressive from the main road and reflected that this Church could be one of the oldest.

Even from inside, the Church's architecture is quite attractive. However, the Church's inside space resembled small, able to accommodate fewer devotees during regular peak prayer services time, i.e. Sundays, Christmas, Easter and New Year occasions. However, the Church is well maintained and preserved. During this time, the Church is undergoing comprehensive rapid renovation work as part of periodic maintenance.

Adjacent to this Church, there are also a few other Catholic societies properties and offered services, like; a hospital, school, school children's hostel, convent of a Catholic sister's congregation, etc. However, this particular Catholic Church and its administration rested with the regional Catholic Diocese Bishop's domain. The Bishop of this Catholic diocese hails from Reddy community background at this particular point in time. Moreover, the Bishop is continuing in that position for some relatively sustained duration.

Interestingly, the RCM diocese has had no Christian Dalit Bishop at this diocese so far. This is a kind of indication that the RCM in this zone is wholly under the clutches of upper caste priests, though RCM has considerable Christian Dalit devotees presence at some level. The co-existence of upper caste devotees and Dalit priests within the RCM is a well-recognised reality, especially in South India. Nevertheless, only upper-caste Catholic priests can visibly ascend to top-most administrative positions. Thus, even after conversion and leading a spiritual communitarian life, caste among Christian priests can perpetuate and operate on its own through reinvented dynamics.

The priest of this old Catholic Church is John. When the researcher met John at his official residence, he suggested choosing and concentrating on a particular Catholic Church located at a nearby slum dwell, as it could be challenging to identify Dalit devotees at this mainstream urban Catholic Church. John interestingly hailed from the Dalit background. Moreover, he felt a little uncomfortable to suggest in pin-pointed manner various Christian Dalit devotees associated with his Church for research engagement.

At another level, John also felt that little above middle-class range devotees are associated with his mainstream urban Catholic Church. As a result, in his view, advanced Catholic devotees may not be interested in revealing their caste identity. Thus, in his view, it may also turn into a challenge to identify the devotees' caste background. There is another strong reason behind John's unfamiliarity with the associated devotees' caste background. The Catholic Priests are usually transferred by their Bishop periodically.

As per John's opinion, a certain sense of disenchantment from caste background in regular urban public life by the mainstream (elite) Catholic devotees may cause a potential delay in the engaged research theme, which revolved around sensitive concerns of caste and religion, i.e. Dalits and Christianity. This indicates that John is also not interested in knowing and engaging with the devotees' caste background visibly. Furthermore, the associated devotees at his Church are also not primarily interested in identifying with their caste background. Thus, caste is, in a certain sense is visibly relegated to private space in modern life, and its direct reference is discouraged. However, modern Indian society even engages on caste lines directly and indirectly. (Prakash, 2016)

### **Engage with Protestant and Catholic Denominations**

A few banners displayed at prominent locations in City-Q highlighted the commercialised educational services offered by a few Catholic institutions. The displayed banners highlight a few mainstream post-graduate courses offered by Catholic institutions. A few City-Q dwellers observed that the displayed banners mainly highlight the commercial professional courses that fetch good income to the Catholic educational

institutions. Thus, this indicates that Catholic educational institutions do not solely offer education on a charity basis. In this process, the spiritual leader of the diocese Bishop is also prominently highlighted as part of Catholic educational institutions advertisements to grab the potential market.

The commercial advertising nature of RCM educational institutions goes against the dominant (myth) notion of the Hindutva forces that the Christian educational institutions are into conversion mode or extend education only for the Christians. When education is offered on a commercial and management quota basis, religious sanctity and prime aim on conversion will not sustain. Only profit matters to the Catholic institutions.

When the search for suitable Churches identification was underway for intensive field study concentration, a few Christian priests from Catholic and Protestant backgrounds suggested focusing on a few Churches located within notable slum dwells. In their opinion, this step would make the researcher's task easy to find Christian Dalits confidently. As per their intention and observation, within a few leading mainstream Churches located other than in slum dwells, it would be difficult to observe, note-down and engage specifically with the Christian Dalits for focused study.

Even within a few mainstream leading Churches located at various prime centres in City-Q, Christian Dalits spiritual association is quite significant. Significant affluent Christian Dalit families are also well associated with the mainstream Churches. This indicates that within urban dwellings and in terms of association and engagement with Churches, a kind of class polarisation pattern is visible even among Christian Dalits, and the same was recognised by a few prominent Christian priests and others.

Interestingly, based on financial class polarisation, there is enormous variation in monetary contributions received by the Churches located in slum dwellings and those found in prime locations in City-Q. This whole observation opens up a certain level of the conclusion that the devotes are conscious enough in associating and engaging with specific spiritual denominations and destinations, primarily based on some aspects like; social status, income status and proximity to their dwelling locations.

### **Catholic Priest Peter's Leadership**

One of the observed Churches included, as per the suggestion of John and others, is an RCM Church with a vast campus and associated school, located near to a dominant Christian Dalits dwell. At that particular point in time, the priest of the Church hailed from the 'Reddy' community. His name is Peter.

The devotees of the Church showed utmost respect to Peter. Peter also commanded Church's associated activities, like supervising associated school's management, looking after entire premises buildings, Church management, lease shops, rent collection, etc., in addition to the leading role of the Church as a spiritual priest. This kind of Peter's spiritual charismatic command is not there at other protestant Churches. Peter resembled a dual personality. He mastered two types of personality traits visibly. One quality reflected his spiritual priest's dimension; another reflected his management orientation. In his day to day activities engagement, these two personality traits are visible.

When it was revealed to Peter about details concerning the focus of present research on caste and religion, i.e. Dalits and Christianity, Peter expressed his profound dislike towards Dalits (Christian Dalits). As per further details he shared, the Christian Dalits, especially in the vicinity of his Catholic Church, became arrogant and created trouble in many respects.

One instance Peter shared against local Christian Dalits includes; when the school children were levied a nominal fee for an extra necessity, the local Christian Dalit youth created a huge problem. Moreover, the local Dalit (Christian) youth instigated the school children and their parents. Ultimately, the news was even reported to the electronic media. However, the electronic media covered the news under the scrolling category without highlighting the same in visual video telecast mode. Such instances of local Christian Dalits made Peter develop animosity against them.

Two aspects can be observed for Peter's negative attitude against local Christian Dalits. One dimension could be; that Peter did not like Christian Dalits assertive individual personality trait. Moreover, there is a great communication and understanding gap between Peter and local Christian Dalit youth at another level. Peter developed a certain

sense of profound low opinion against local Christian Dalits. Peter's developed low opinion might have some long experience other than the experience faced at the vicinity of the present Catholic Church.

Moreover, the local Dalit youth also lacks the dialogue skill to negotiate well with Peter. Local Christian Dalits are more empowered and assertive from the legal realm only. Peter's developed professional hierarchy without mingling well with others like devotees could also be one of the prime reasons for the developed misunderstanding with the local Christian Dalit youth. Interestingly a section of the local Christian Dalit got educated at the same school, where the present RCM Church is also located.

Peter is provided with a separate furnished bungalow behind the Church. Further, Peter actively utilised a school teacher's service to coordinate various activities. Peter's over-dependence on the male school teacher resembled that the school teacher is reduced to a 'personal assistant'. Interestingly, the teacher also appears interested in associating much with Peter and enjoying particular privileges amidst his other colleagues at the Church and school premises. The school visibly has good student strength, though it was run in Telugu medium instruction.

At some level, Peter maintained a specific managerial and professional hierarchy and showed class status by not thoroughly mixing and interacting with the required persons. He utilised the services of the male school teacher on a frequent note. Same time, Peter is also careful enough while putting-up various visible personality traits. Whoever approaches Peter for any issue - related to Church, school or business activity, he cheerfully engages with them. However, most people who approach Peter, even after witnessing his close interaction, continue to behave respectfully. Thus, Peter's visitors do not fully believe and consider his positive visual approach as genuine.

There is an associated school building within the premises of Peter's Catholic Church compound. The school building's roadside space is given to various shops on a rent/lease basis. Furthermore, steps are initiated to further commercialise the space by providing more space for new shops on a rent or lease basis. In this respect, some portion of a compound wall is demolished to pave the way to construct a few more shops.

There is only one entrance to the compound. The single entrance is used for Church, priest's bungalow and school activity. The single entry is spacious to pave comfortable movement for a colossal gathering of the Church devotees, school children, staff and visitors. Most of the Catholic spiritual spaces like the Church provide, invariably, within the premises; Jesus crucifixion or Mother Virgin Mary's image or statue. Alternatively, a combination of both, i.e. the Virgin Mary and Jesus statues, are displayed. Such symbolism is also replicated at Peter's Church in front of the main entrance. Moreover, upon viewing the statues of Jesus and the Virgin Mary, the Catholic devotees spiritually offer symbolic prayers.

The compound premises became lower than the main road, but not the buildings within the premises. The previous Church authorities are visionary enough in laying the foundation to the buildings above the main road level. As a result, Peter encouraged a few devotees during the mainstream Sunday Church services to look after their Church premises. And accordingly, he encouraged a few devotees to contribute generously to gradually increase the ground of the premises.

On a Sunday morning leading prayer service, Peter highlighted a few devotees names who generously contributed to the premises ground level increase to a small extent. A few devotees contributed to upgrading the path-way from the main gate to the two Church entrances and John's bungalow. Without this upgraded small path-way, it became a little difficult to utilise Church premises on a comfortable mode due to rains.

Peter justified his action and calls to the devotees to upgrade the Church premises ground level increase. Moreover, he informed the devotees that the Church management (RCM diocese) had provided them with all required infrastructural facilities, and now it is the responsibility of the devotees to look after their maintenance. Thus he justified his invitation to a few devotees attention towards the Church premises ground level increase through new mud transportation into the premises. Only a few spaces within the premises are increased little high level, i.e. a straight-way leading to the Church and Priest's bungalow. To upgrade the whole Church premises is a hectic task and requires enormous monetary expenses.

Peter expressed some satisfaction over the devotees' response upon his request to upgrade the premises path. However, he expressed his desire to see more devotees participating in the process of ground-level increase. In this direction, he also declared that he might further directly ask a few more devotees by particular names to participate in the noble cause process of Church premises ground level increase. The Church premises and school were established in 1980 decade.

Though the Catholic Church and associate extended services like school are located on a compound, the income generated through offerings from the devotees seemed unsatisfactory. Moreover, the Church also seems not to have much corpus fund. As a result, Peter took the initiative of a few devotees to upgrade the main path. Though a significant section of devotees is associated with the Church, they all resembled the middle class and lower-middle-class background.

After witnessing the troubles during the rainy season, Peter encouraged a few devotees to incline towards the noble cause of upgrading Church premises ground level. If the private premises ground levels are not increased over time, then there is every possibility by the local self-government authorities issuing notices to the owners of the concerned premises to increase the same within a notified duration.

During a regular mainstream Sunday prayer service, Peter instructed the devotees concerning making offerings. According to his message on a Sunday prayer service, he declared that he came to know that a few of his Church devotees are extending more attractive offerings at another famous Catholic Church by assuming that such offerings made at that particular famous Church would benefit them a lot. Peter objected to such behaviour and perception of his devotees and instructed them on a friendly guiding mode to extend offerings properly at their Church for Church's proper growth and prosperity. Moreover, he attempted to educate his devotees in this respect that God will equally bless and prosper them if they extend their offerings at the present Church, instead of extending the same at another famous Church in City-Q.

These incidents indicate how Peter is nurturing the financial position and grooming the Church. Peter hails from a Reddy Christian background. Even after conversion to



Christianity and becoming an RCM priest, his name indicates the 'Reddy' suffix. Peter is visionary enough to initiate a few steps towards the Church premises ground level increase through devotees voluntary contributions. A few devotees are willing to participate in such a noble gesture through Peter's formal and informal ways of dealing with them. Peter showed visionary leadership by not passively limiting his service to the spiritual dimension.

Peter has a unique style while delivering spiritual messages. Every morning the Church invariably conducts a prayer service. This is a regular standard practice at the Catholic Churches. A few countable devotees attend every day's morning Prayer services. Mainly, aged men and women devotees are observed during this prayer service. Holy Communion is offered to the attended devotees. The prayer service gets concluded with the priest's final words to the devotees 'to go and lead the day in harmony with others in the society.

Peter depicts four styles while delivering the prayer service on Sunday mornings. First, he attempted to lead the spiritual service in strict order by referring to the biblical references and text, as per the established order of the RCM. Secondly, Peter followed the directions of his RCM official communiqués and delivered any particular messages accordingly. Towards this end, one Sunday, as per the RCM higher communication circular, he shared a few things about the 'liberation Sunday' significance. Dalit Liberation Sunday is a novel concept designed and popularised by the CBCI and NCCI against the Presidential Order of 1950 and other related issues. NCCI is a platform widely spread among India's Protestant and Orthodox Churches. Thus, the Dalit liberation Sunday concept is adopted and popularised by all the major Christian denominations in India, like RCM, Orthodox and Protestant.

The institutionalised platforms like the CBCI and NCCI resolves to continue the expression of dissent annually against the Presidential Order of 1950, which denied religious freedom to Dalits, like Christian Dalits. Peter read out a message, which he carried with him, explaining the significance of the Dalit liberation Sunday concept. However, he failed to deliver the 'Dalit liberation Sunday' concept and message spontaneously, like regular preaching of the Biblical discourse. Thus, this indicates that

he is not well versed in 'liberation theology' or 'Dalit theology', which got well popularised and received in Christian theological circles and institutions worldwide. (Sathianathan Clark, 2010) Perhaps, Peter's Reddy caste identity appears to have played a specific role in not having exposure to liberation theology and Dalit liberation theology, though liberation theology acquired prominence in the Church's preaching and training discourses worldwide.

The third personality trait of Peter includes; his engaging nature with the devotees on personal tone about his life. Towards this end, Peter even shared his sister's turbulent conjugal relationship with her husband and in-laws, the agony faced by him on a fine Sunday's leading morning Church service. His sister left her husband and in-laws house and started to stay along with her children at Peter's official residence on the Church premises. This step of family or extended family members staying at the spiritually dedicated RCM priest residence is against the ethos and norms of the RCM congregation. However, in this extraordinary case, the present situation prevailed. At another level, it indicates that the RCM norms governing priests private life regulation are not strictly followed and scrutinised by the diocese authorities or intentionally ignored.

Peter's sharing of personal agony about his sister's conjugal life resembled that while he is leading a bachelor life as a priest of RCM, there is no one to share and get consoled for his troubles. Same time, even after devoting himself to the RCM for his entire life, he is not wholly detached from his family affairs and is looking after the family welfare in various modes. This is one of the biggest challenges to the religious orders, which demand total detachment from family genealogy for spiritual congregation development and growth. (Jesme, 2009)

Fourthly, Peter also shared about his extended personal and spiritual activities, like one of his recently paid visits to the USA and what he has done there. The Church devotees, who mostly lack high-level exposure, are very interested in listening to Peter's inside dimensions and his extended high-level engagements. However, it should be noted that Peter first and foremost discharged his primary task as a Priest of RCM by strictly adhering to the established RCM spiritual order, and then only he engaged on other modes of style.

### **Protestant Pastor Krupakar**

A small Protestant Church in the Sahiti colony is recommended by 'Reverend RR' to concentrate on intensive field study. The devotees in the Sahiti colony Church visibly appeared from a poor background. The Church Pastor is Krupakar. Overall, Krupakar is well dressed and emotionally better composed, visibly.

Krupakar is introduced by Reverend RR when the initial search is underway for suitable Churches identification for intensive field study concentration. Reverend RR is considered a Protestant Christian elder and charismatic leader among the local Christian priests. Reverend RR and a few others are active in leading Protestant Pastors' Fellowship (PPF), with a wide range of networks across the district and other zones. Pastor Krupakar, like Reverend RR, is very active in the PPF and maintains a good network.

Krupakar maintained a close association with his devotees in various forms, like during the Christmas season and on regular Sunday leading prayer service. The researcher attended Semi Christmas celebration at this Church upon Krupakar's oral invitation. Most children attended the Semi Christmas celebration. Krupakar invited a guest to deliver a special message on occasion. The guest speaker, a Christian pastor, delivered the message. Moreover, the guest speaker is also part of the PPF network.

As a preferential treatment suiting the occasion, a cake is arranged, and the guest speaker is invited to cut, symbolising the celebration of Jesus Christ's birth. Children sang carols and played a few skits, suiting the occasion. The Church and the surrounding area are well decorated. A big star on behalf of the Church is also erected. Since children are mainly involved, two women are also associated with the event, i.e. the pastor's wife and another active woman devotee. Krupakar's wife is very much involved at every level of Church's activity, both in his absence and even during his presence. A few young male devotees are well associated with the Church for playing musical instruments.

A few local Bible College students are on an internship at this Church under the supervision of Krupakar. Krupakar is trained in Christian theology. As a result, the nearby Bible College administration sends their trainee pastors to his Church for an

internship. This is also a well-maintained network by Krupakar, with the professional Christian theological colleges in the locality on one side and with the PPF on the other side. Various kinds of Christian networks are able to make Krupakar's professional engagement and continuity easy in his day to day activities.

In City-Q, many pamphlets and advertisements are visible, informing various Christian theological institutions training courses for aspiring pastors. A few institutions also highlight that the Biblical courses offered by their institutions are well recognised by professional theological institutions like Kolkata based Serampur University.

Krupakar's wife shared a testimony on a Sunday service. Krupakar's wife is Esther. Esther cried while sharing her testimony to the devotees gathered during a regular Sunday leading prayer service. Her crying indicates that she is faithful to God for letting her have His glory on her and rescuing her during times of difficulties. Interestingly, all those who share their testimony must share the same below the dais. Testimony sharing in Church indicates - what kind of miracle God has done to them or their family! Testimonies sharing culture is seen as a sign of glorifying God and, in turn, to increase renewed faith in Christianity and among other fellow devotees.

Only Krupakar or any other male preacher must ascend the dais to preach. Others are not allowed, mostly. For instance, during the semi-Christmas celebration, both the guest speaker and Krupakar climb the podium, conduct the service and deliver the message. However, when Esther shares her testimony, she stands below the dais by standing in front of the devotees. This is a kind of gender inequality maintained in religious discourse. Women are not allowed in most religions to ascend the central dais of the religious preaching centre.

Moreover, women are also not offered religious training in most religions. Even Christianity is no exception to this culture and practice entirely. However, slowly a few Christian denominations are extending opportunities to women to get trained in Christian theology and preach the same.

Some denominations are also recruiting even women preachers. For instance, a few denominations like the AELC and CSI are at the forefront in this respect. However, TBC

is not accepting women trained preachers. Thus, even in India, gender parity is slowly coming, especially concerning religions like Christianity. Nevertheless, Hindu women are still not taught religious discourse and preaching in mainstream Hindu society and religiosity. Thus, concerning gender parity maintenance in India, Christianity has slowly started to take forward in a certain sense.

The Church at Sahiti colony is located on a tiny piece of land, and there is no scope for further extension. Already the Church is full of poor devotees. Thus, in due course of time, other measures should be initiated by Krupakar to accommodate growing devotees. In addition to this, there is no parking space for vehicles. However, Krupakar succeeded to establish the Church in a relatively good location amidst a silent colony. The income generated in Sahiti colony Church resembled less since most of the devotees hailed from the lower-income background. However, Krupakar is able to gather devotees, establish Church and continue Church service. That is the favourable success plank of Krupakar. Krupakar hails from a Kapu Christian background, and he is emotionally well-composed and better dressed-up.

### **Pentecostal Activism**

The Pentecostal denomination and its activism are very much present in City-Q. Within the Christian protestant denomination, this sect is unique in various forms, starting with wearing the white dress as a kind of peace code dominantly. Mostly poor people are associated with this denomination. This denomination appeared to be on its expanding path worldwide. A rally is undertaken by the denominational spiritual priests and devotees in City-Q, highlighting their congregation's forthcoming scheduled convention on sub-urban limits of City-Q. The rally is all about this denomination's convention gospel meetings to be held within a few days to come on the sub-urban limits of City-Q. There was a massive crowd at the convention meeting venue, and most devotees attended in the white dress, travelling from far away distant places, especially from within the district and surrounding areas. Some devotees also came from far away distances with their families, relatives and friends and carried a few primary requirements to stay for three days.

The organisers, on a large scale, made necessary arrangements. The organisers deployed a tremendous volunteer force and supervising cadre, who also hailed from their devotees. The volunteer force also dressed up in white attire. At the convention entrance, various shopkeepers set up temporary shops, and they mostly sold Christian literature, Christian decorative articles, and food items.

Pentecostal Churches fall more or less under the unorganised Protestant denominational category. Sametime, Pentecostals also establish their Churches. Though they carry forward Pentecostal's tag and brand, they enjoy greater spiritual leadership and discourse autonomy. Strict coherence and connectivity based on the ecumenical spiritual procedure are significantly less in Pentecostal Churches and denominations. Joseph, the Congregation-B's Hope Church pastor in City-Q, shared that in the contemporary Christian world, the elements of the Pentecostal style of preaching and belief notions are not just limited to the Pentecostal denomination. Congregation-B's Hope Church refers to an established mainstream Church in City-Q. The next chapter touches in detail on Congregation-B's Hope Church.

According to Joseph, the broader Christian theological world, like pastors from established Church congregations and devotees, also got into Pentecostal elements practice, consciously or unconsciously. Thus, even the established Christian theological world face a stiff challenge from the Pentecostal denominational mode. In another sense, the Pentecost theological modes penetrated in various forms into the broader Christian theological world, as observed by Joseph. Some of the Christian theological doctrines and modes like Pentecostal got mixed up with various other Christian theological modes, finally Joseph stress. In some sense, Reserved RR observes in the manner of Joseph's confirmation that Christian theological elements got intermix at a certain level with the Pentecostal spiritual features. (Ford, 2000) (Woodhead, 2004) (Kay, 2011) Thus, a kind of consensus can be observed from both Joseph and Reverend RR.

## VI

### **Upcoming ISKCON Temple**

In City-Q, the presence of Hindutva forces is quite visible. However, they are not prominent and lack a solid political presence. To establish some contact with the Hindutva sections, the researcher sought the help of Ram. On a fine Diwali morning, the researcher approached the local ISKCON temple along with Ram. A visible crowd gathered at the ISKCON temple.

Interestingly the young generation mostly attended the temple. The temple's construction was unfinished. However, some portion of the temple got ready for prayer service and associate activities to conduct.

The researcher met ISKCON priest Krishna and sought details about the Hindutva organisation's presence in City-Q. Krishna visibly performs the priestly activity. However, as per visible observation, Krishna has other extended tasks, like maintenance of accounts. Krishna also gradually posed counter questions to ascertain facts behind the visit, purpose and personal details from the researcher and accompanied Ram. In due course, Krishna realised that the researcher lacks much information about ISKCON and is not a stunt Hindu devotee. As a result, Krishna started to share more about Hindu religion, ISKCON founder and ISKCON congregational activities incoherently but failed to share the researcher's sought after details. Finally, Krishna offered the researcher a book about ISKCON founder to buy, worth one hundred rupees. Immediately, the researcher purchased the book and concluded the visit.

Mostly, Krishna talked about his personal aspects like; his family, how he started his association with the ISKCON congregation, ISCON founder, etc. things for about one and a half hours. During this conversation time, there is no devotees visit to the temple. Krishna started the conversation with the researcher after the devotees left the temple. Two aspects are visible when engaged with Krishna. First, Krishna did not trust the researcher when details about potential Hindutva sections presence in City-Q were sought. Nevertheless, Krishna engaged in a more incoherent expressive style and attempted to share views about Hinduism as an evangelical Hindu priest manner. This is

a paradoxical contradiction in him. The Hindu evangelical style of Krishna failed to convince and appeared to be unprofessional.

On the whole, Krishna engaged in an unprofessional way. He failed to show and express the open-minded approach and possessed prejudices against 'the supposed others' who approached him to ascertain a few details. The visit made to realise that all ISKCON locations may not possess open-minded priests, and they may also have prejudices against the 'others in the wider society'. Krishna failed to engage appropriately even after knowing the research design and focus. At another level, most of the ISKCON temple priests seems to have the Brahmin community background. Krishna also resembles to have hailed from a Brahmin community background, as per the family accounts shared by him.

In addition to Krishna, another person is also present at the ISKCON temple. His name is Govardhan. Govardhan sat at the temple entrance and was clad in saffron attire but appeared highly sober. Govardhan fails to perform any significant tasks. However, he ideally sits inside the temple entrance (not at the main entrance front gate).

Furthermore, Govardhan is spotted saying a few casual yet committed words to the visiting youth. He advised the visiting youth 'to pay regular visits' to the ISKCON temple in City-Q. Even without any serious concern and conversation with Govardhan, the visitors politely heard his words and left the venue. However, no devotee and visitor showed any arrogance and disrespect towards Govardhan. All the devotees maintained composed calm and showed polite and humble behaviour on the temple premises.

Govardhan lacks dynamism in life; hence, he fails to grow spiritually by discharging significant tasks, like Krishna. Spiritual organisations like ISKCON possess different kinds of people who have devoted their lives to the organisations over the years. However, some fail to grow in the organisational spiritual, administrative ladder and discharge potential tasks. Even then, the spiritual organisations bear them with concern and commitment as a sign of tolerance towards their concerned commitment to the organisational values and objectives over the years.



At some level, both the ISCON priests, Krishna and Govardhan, in City-Q take utmost care and concern to advance their temple activities and promote their spiritual presence. Since the temple is under the establishment process in City-Q, the priests are nurturing well their activities. The devotees also seem to be interested in associating with the brand new spiritual organisation rather than visiting traditional local temples. Thus, a kind of class consciousness and polarisation is emerging among the Hindu devotees, who seem to be visibly happy to associate with new Hindu spiritual congregations like the ISKCON, by leaving behind traditional temple structures managed and promoted by family priests or family trusts or local trusts or by individual Brahmin priests.

### **Passive Hindutva in City-Q**

In City-Q BJP's Dalit Morcha is also present. Dalit Morcha is the official affiliate wing of the BJP. However, the BJP's Dalit Morcha is not visibly prominent in City-Q and in the district. For that matter, Dalit Morcha is not in much limelight in the Telugu region at any given point in time. On a comparative basis, the SC wings of the mainstream political parties, other than BJP, are more active and into prime focus at a certain level. In fact, for that matter, even BJP's prominence and activism are also on a limited scale in City-Q, though the religious minority population is in significant proportion. To observe much more broadly, the BJP cannot establish itself well in a few zones of South India, like in the Telugu region. Since the Telugu region's political space is also preoccupied with other established political parties, the BJP lacks the potential chance to carve out its dominant image.

Advocate Dasari is a noted BJP's Dalit Morcha leader in City-Q. However, Advocate Dasari is not a mass leader with substantive followers. Moreover, he is not a noted mainstream leader even in the BJP in City-Q. However, his reference was suggested to the researcher by the mainstream active Dalit and Dalit-Bahujan sections in City-Q; when details about prominent SC Hindu leaders contacts were sought. The researcher first tried to meet Advocate Dasari directly at the BJP office in City-Q on a fine afternoon. However, surprisingly, at that time, the BJP office was locked. This indicates that BJP is not having much presence and connected activism in City-Q. As a result, the

researcher directly contacted Advocate Dasari at his residence. Professionally, Advocate Dasari is an advocate in City-Q and primarily practices in the local judicial courts.

When interacting with Advocate Dasari, he echoed the ideological line of argument of the BJP and RSS; but not about the pragmatic Dalit political discourse. The formal introduction of the researcher from academic and university backgrounds seemed to have made him interact as a party ideologue and shared ideological orientation. Moreover, the researcher also approached him by recognising him as a BJP associate from a Hindu SC Madiga background.

Though Advocate Dasari is well associated in the BJP and part of the Dalit Morcha wing, he even maintains social contacts with the broader Dalit organisations, as and when required, if not regularly. In this sequence, he is also well received by the other Dalit and Dalit-Bahujan sections, as and when required. However, Advocate Dasari and other Dalit-Bahujan activists and organisations are not daily engaged, as they have prime ideological and political differences. Since religious animosity is not at its peak in City-Q, they seem to have harmonious social relationships at a certain level.

Most interestingly, Advocate Dasari belongs to SC Madiga Hindu background, but not a Christian Dalit claiming SC status. He never does objectionable activism against any section of the Christian Dalits who claim SC status. Another close associate of Advocate Dasari, Ranga Rao, also shares the same perspective that he has long associated with the BJP and other shared ideological sections. However, Ranga Rao never does any open activism against Christian Dalits, who seek SC certificates.

Ranga Rao also hails from strict Hindu Dalit background. However, particulars about his sub-caste identity are unknown. During the interview time, Ranga Rao was seriously ill and bedridden at his house. And he was on dialysis for a long duration. His family members were looking after him at the house. However, he was generous to interact with the researcher upon the reference of his long-standing close associate Advocate Dasari.

In fact, Ranga Rao shares exciting information that a few years ago, in Hyderabad, Kishan Reddy, one of the noted BJP leaders, has friendly instigated him to do collective joint activism against Christian Dalits, who seek SC status. Kishan Reddy's instigated

collective activism has a connotation of attacking the Christian Dalits, who seek SC status. The attack, in a sense, is meant to expose Christian Dalits, who seek SC certificates, as clearly observed by Ranga Rao. However, Ranga Rao promptly and politely rejected such a proposal of Kishan Reddy and declared his shared affinity towards the other (Christian) Dalit section even if they seek SC status.

Ranga Rao declared his shared brotherhood with the Christian Dalits based on historical and cultural primordial caste affinity. Then the researcher asked Ranga Rao, does he know Kishan Reddy closely, even now, since Kishan Reddy became a tall leader in the BJP. To this question, Ranga Rao replied that Kishan Reddy may not recognise him personally, and he is not in regular contact with the BJP leaders in Hyderabad. This indicates that Ranga Rao maintains just religious and ideological affinity with the BJP and other Hindutva organisations but is not intended to grow strong in the BJP. He is not interested in unduly politicising (Christian) Dalits caste and religious background in the BJP.

The shared instances of Advocate Dasari and Ranga Rao indicate that the BJP and other Hindutva organisations cannot use the Dalit Hindus effectively in their fold to attack Christian Dalits who seek SC status. By chance, if the Dalit Hindus wish to counterattack the Christian Dalits, who seek SC status, then SC Hindu's employment chances might increase. However, Dalit Hindus are not interested in countering their fellow caste people in the Christian fold. As a result, there are no escalated communal tensions on this ground across the Telugu region and South India, so far, visibly.

### **Dalits and Hindutva**

Concerning SC Hindu's association with the BJP and RSS, a few Dalit and Dalit-Bahujan sections suggested a few names to contact. The contacted persons were, by and large, passive associates with the RSS and BJP. When approached, Advocate Dasari, who is associated with the BJP and RSS, he gave a line of argument from his RSS and BJP about Christian Dalits position. However, contrary to the argument presented by Advocate Dasari, the researcher observed how Advocate Dasari has some shared

association with the wider Dalit and Dalit-Bahujan sections, especially during the anti-Telangana movement.

The shared gesture of Advocate Dasari with other Dalit-Bahujan sections and associations based on caste lines clarifies how the dynamics of both caste and religion play a significant role. Though Advocate Dasari is associated with the RSS and BJP, he never permanently abandoned his association with his caste people in another religion, i.e. Christianity. This is a significant dimension, though his prime associate organisations - RSS and BJP are against 'the other', i.e. Christianity, and he has faith in the same dimension. However, Advocate Dasari is pragmatically conscious not to distance from his caste people in the other religion, i.e. Christianity.

The same reciprocity of Christian Dalits engagement with Advocate Dasari is visible on pragmatic and ideological terms. The Christian Dalits on one side and the RSS and BJP affiliated Advocate Dasari on the other side are well associated at times of necessity. During such times, both the sections, i.e. Christian Dalits and the RSS-BJP affiliated Advocate Dasari kept aside their religious differences. This speaks some sort of 'social harmony' while having social obstruction feelings and animosity between Christian and Hindu Dalits. A doubtful question further arises how long this shared solidarity between the Christian Dalits and Hindu Dalits will reduce communal tensions if they escalate in the future. Time has to testify to such hypothetical questions.

## VII

### **Ambedkar Statue and Ambedkar Building**

A few active Dalit and/or Dalit-Bahujan organisations are located in City-Q. A few activists reside in the sub-urban limits and commute daily to City-Q to take part and lead various activities. City-Q also happens to be the district head-quarter and major city in the district. There are a few activists who are well located within the City-Q limits. There is a close relationship between activists located in City-Q and activists based on the sub-urban limits. They collaboratively engage when any socio-political issue confronts their attention. For instance, these groups intensely participated in the anti-Telangana movement after the INC headed UPA-II government started bifurcation of existing

united AP from July 2013 onwards. The INC initiated the process for separate TS formation since then.

The Dalit and Dalit-Bahujan activities continue, if required, from the Ambedkar statue located at one of the prominent locations in City-Q. A famous Ambedkar statue is located in City-Q. The Dalit and Dalit-Bahujan activists compose a formal representation on any issue of their social categories concern and proceed from the Ambedkar statue to the Collector office to represent their issues. Throughout this process, careful attempts are usually taken for public coverage of the event, either through print or electronic media or a combination of both. Depending upon the gravity of the involved concern, media coverage also occurs. The agitation conducted by activists is usually concerned about getting their events publicity in the city or district print media. If their agitation news is exceptionally covered in the main edition of any newspaper, then they are pretty happy.

Only on some rare occasions a small coverage might appear in the State-wide main print edition of a famous newspaper, but not well covered by mainstream newspapers. They keenly observed the coverage of their events in the print media on the next day. They usually follow national, State, and local events carefully and accordingly chart-out programmes to symbolically conduct any agitation.

There is a common meeting point for these activists in City-Q. They usually and casually congregate at the Ambedkar building in City-Q. Ambedkar building and premises belong to the district administration, and there are a few staff members to look after the activities of the building. Ambedkar building is located at one of the prime centres in City-Q. The general public can hire this building for organising any public events of their choice. Many events of general public interest get organised here on behalf of various individuals and organisations.

The events organised and hosted at the Ambedkar building premises gets public attention in various modes. Through multiple avenues, the events scheduled at Ambedkar building premises get public coverage like through pamphlets, banners display, newspapers coverage, etc. The Ambedkar building premises is not well maintained. As a result, only

the middle class or those who cannot afford high range venues for hosting their events choose this venue. A few Christian evangelical events are also hosted on a few occasions at this venue. However, such events are less in size. The Ambedkar building can host to a maximum capacity of around 100-200 peoples congregation at a given time.

There is a close association between the secondary staff associated with the maintenance of the Ambedkar building and the Dalit and Dalit-Bahujan activists who gather at this venue. The secondary staff related to the building maintenance never object to the presence of the Dalit and Dalit-Bahujan activists. At the same time, others sections of the society also never visibly object to these activists.

Anyhow, the secondary level staff is vigilant about their duties since they might attract the attention of the higher officials at any point in time. The staff is vigilant enough based on the urban location and concentration of the higher officials in City-Q. The prime reason behind the frequent informal hangover of the activists at this building could be due to the same level of affinity on social and caste lines shared with the building staff, in addition to possible other reasons, like the location of the building in the centre of City-Q.

### **Dalit-Bahujan's Response to AP Bifurcation**

The Dalit and Dalit-Bahujan sections activism in City-Q has a clear separation from other mainstream civil society organisations and leaders based in Hyderabad, who stood in favour of the formation of separate TS. In another sense, the separate TS formation movement has divided the Dalit and Dalit-Bahujan sections in united AP into regional lines. City-Q's Dalit and Dalit-Bahujan sections are also divided into regional lines and led the movement with other mainstream organisations. Region-specific caste and civil society organisations started to emerge and assert their identity. Even region-wise religious organisations started to form and express their solidarity.

Even a few Christian Dalits are agitated about the united AP bifurcation issue. As a result, a few of them collaborated with the mainstream Dalit and Dalit-Bahujan leaders and participated in the movement. However, most active Church going Christians came from either middle age or aged backgrounds. Their children, wife, or other family

members did not participate in the movement. However, their participation in the movement was very late, and only a symbolic gesture was made; when they got agitated much about the ongoing AP division process. These people at no level tried to influence their other Church members or devotees to participate in the movement. A tight distinction between religion and political activism is maintained on their own. In this sense, they are very much honest, clever and brave enough to distinguish their role and responsibilities in the domain of religion and politics.

Though most of the leaders associated with the Dalit and Dalit-Bahujan identity platforms have some association with Christianity, either at the individual or/and family level, they never behaved too religiously. At the same time, their shared personal and family Christian background also failed to bring about unity and solidarity to rise above their caste distinctions. It was quite the opposite. Even after conversion to the Christian religious fold, they kept their caste identity alive. As a result, they participate and associate with the Dalit and Dalit-Bahujan kinds of activities. (Ashok Kumar, 2010)

### **Dalit-Bahujan Dynamics over Regional Aspects**

Manda Krishna Madiga and his MRPS extended full support to the separate Telangana movement. They declared their ranks and files, even in the coastal Andhra and Rayalaseema regions, would extend the same support in favour of the bifurcation of united AP openly. As part of this declaration process and extended activity, Manda Krishna Madiga even once visited City-Q and attempted to organise a press conference in favour of bifurcation of united AP and paving the way for the creation of separate TS.

Manda Krishna Madiga's attempted to organise the press meet in a sudden guise. A sudden and confidential press meet was called for. Somehow, the press call information got leaked widely to various Dalit and Dalit-Bahujan activists, leaders and organisations. As a result, they attempted to disturb Manda Krishna Madiga's press conference. Somehow, these organisations, activists, and leaders successfully disturbed the press meet. As a result, the police personal tried to obstruct the press-meet to some extent as a precautionary measure under law and order maintenance.

In this process, even the organisations, activists, and leaders against the MRPS and Manda Krishna Madiga attempted to take revenge by participating. A few Mala caste people tried to disturb Manda Krishna Madiga's presence and his scheduled press meeting. Thus, the united AP anti-bifurcation movement has, at some level, united various caste people and divided the same caste people on regional grounds. The region and region-specific claims and possible future hopes made all these people pose as one constituent unit on a regional basis by keeping aside their extended primordial social affinities beyond a specific region.

There are innumerable divisions among Mala and Madiga organisations. In the same way, there are innumerable Dalit and Dalit-Bahujan organisations across AP and even in City-Q. Some of these organisations, leaders and activists developed intense conflict based on personality traits with other mainstream leaders. As a result, they established either their organisations or retained their activist or leadership identity in time.

The innumerable divisions among Dalit and Dalit-Bahujan organisations dimension correspond and resemble the all India phenomenon of political activity continuation based on individual personality traits. Though many of these organisations are based on solid ideological orientations, they have succumbed to personality domination traits. For instance, the MRPS and Mala Mahanadu organisations are dominated by a few individuals like Manda Krishna Madiga, Jupudi Prabhakar, Karem Shivaji, etc.

### **Dalit and Dalit-Bahujan Organisations Activism**

A kind of class category in the activist's composition from Dalit and Dalit-Bahujan background is visible at some level in City-Q. A few activists are well off, and others hailed from impoverished backgrounds. There are different levels of aspiration variations among the activists. While a few activists wished to have their projection as leaders of Dalit identity and champion the same cause, others wanted to lead their banner as leaders of Dalit-Bahujan identity champions. Another significant category of activists wished to portray their organisation and leadership as championing the cause of their specific caste, like Madiga, Mala, etc.



Though a few organisations, leaders and activists pose as championing the broader cause of Dalit or Dalit-Bahujan, in reality, they mostly belonged to a particular caste. Thus, they symbolically carried forward the wider Dalit or Dalit-Bahujan identity. However, in reality, broader representation is lacking in their organisation's cadre, based on the organisation's projection, i.e. on SC/ST/BC, etc., marginalised sections membership. As a result, they can be understood as projecting a token representation of different sections of society.

At another level, a few organisations and their leaders who proclaim as championing the marginalised sections, in reality, are not genuinely broad in their activities. They are agitated by a high level of polarisation on specific caste grounds, like Madiga, Mala, etc. Even after leading and associating with broad Dalit and Dalit-Bahujan organisations, these people are very much associated and identified with their specific caste background activists, leaders and organisations at some other level.

All this indicated that there is no strict association and faith on a particular ideology at some level. Even if they have faith in a particular ideological orientation, they cautiously test the same doctrine on the pragmatic political realm. They play the flexible game by sharing affinity with various identities and sub-identities within the Dalit and Dalit-Bahujan categories. This indicates that they are not confident about their believed ideology at some level. At some other level, they play ideological politics by engaging with various other co-civil society organisations. As a result, they never have any severe objections and disputes on an ideological basis. However, they are, as of now, not ready and willing to engage with extreme ideological elements like the Hindutva forces.

### **Significance of Ambedkar Statue**

There is a Swami Vivekananda statue located at a prominent junction in City-Q. However, unlike other significant politicians statues like Ambedkar, Vivekananda's statue is not hot for political activism. Swami Vivekananda's statue is erected at an inconvenient location in the middle of a road divider. As a result, it became inconvenient to gather at this statue and do any activism, like holding any protest or garlanding the statue. The statue installation committee inaugurated the statue with a Hindu spiritual

person. Usually, statues are inaugurated by politicians or other prominent persons in society. However, contrary to usual practice, Vivekananda's statue was inaugurated by a Hindu spiritual *Swamiji*. This indicates how even Hindu sects are interested in open social and political activism. Though Swami Vivekananda is portrayed symbolically as an icon of Hindu spirituality, in reality, such projection somehow acquired political significance too. (Sharma, 2003) (Sharma, 2014)

There is a grand well laid-out statue of Mother Theresa at a prominent and convenient road junction. The passer-by commuters attention quickly catches towards the statue. However, unlike most other politicians statues, Mother Theresa's statue is also not a hotbed for political activism. In a certain sense, only the Ambedkar statue located at a prime junction in City-Q is the primary hotbed destination for political activism. This speaks a lot about the Indian social movement's symbolism in the contemporary scenario, mainly from the regional background of the coastal AP in City-Q. Mother Theresa's statue is tall, built stably, impressive, and erected on a relatively high elevated platform. The surroundings and locality of the Mother Theresa statue are immaculate. This location of City-Q area is a new extension to the old City-Q and a new residential and commercial zone.

Dalit and Dalit-Bahujan sections lead most social movements, symbolically projecting Ambedkar more as their icon. Ambedkar's statues installation and associated activism have been on the ascendance across India as part of this gesture. Not just one but more than one Ambedkar statue is present in various cities, towns and villages in India. However, occasionally, only one Ambedkar statue located at a prominent city or town location becomes most popular for symbolic gestures record. For instance, though many Ambedkar statues are located in Hyderabad, the statue at Tank Bund acquired special prominence.

Other politicians or prominent personalities statues, even if present, are more or less becoming a mere symbolic gesture for marking either birth or death anniversaries or abandoned, negligently. However, that is not the case concerning Ambedkar's statues. Ambedkar statues became a symbol for continuous social protest and expression of dissent and marking his annual birth and death anniversaries. Even the mainstream

upper-caste politicians could not ignore Ambedkar statues and their relevance in symbolic protest movements. (Nanda, 2006)

The Ambedkar statue in City-Q is placed at the centre of the road on a well-elevated platform. From the Ambedkar statue centre to the district Collector office, some of the weaker sections organisations regularly take out rallies and hand over representations to the government officials on various vital issues of their common and specific concerns. The researcher observed this kind of sustained activism of various weaker sections, who claimed their ideological orientation from Dalit-Bahujan or Dalit and Bahujan domains. However, never any section made a prominent protest and representation submission concerning the Christian Dalits issue. This indicates that the Christian Dalit issue is not a highly contested and debated issue. Moreover, the Christian Dalit society has been highly (comfortable) over the years in practising Christianity in the private realm and seeking SC caste certificates for pragmatic discourse.

There is a broad justified notion prevailing among the Christian Dalits that they are not doing any injustice in obtaining SC certificates while practising Christianity. The Christian Dalit sections believed and justified their actions on the pragmatic discourse that all the Dalits should have been extended reservation like their counterparts in the ST category. However, such a right is unconstitutionally, immorally and illegally curtailed and denied by the (Hindu majority) Indian State. Thus, they visualised the curtailment of the SC reservation as a kind of upper-caste conspiracy, which continued even during the Indian liberal democratic age.

### **Summary & Conclusion**

The chapter provides a broad background primarily to the Christian Dalits concerning the Hindutva sections in the united AP, explicitly referring to City-Q. A glimpse of different Christian denominations and their entangled nature with various aspects, especially concerning caste and Dalits, is highlighted at another level. In another way, a glimpse of how Dalits engage with different kinds of Christian denominations in City-Q is also the focal point. The nature of City-Q's location description, nature of the Christmas season, etc., dynamics is also vividly described.

Moreover, the chapter is not limited to the Christian Dalits in City-Q. For comprehensive background to various components, broader perspectives are extended. For instance, the Hindutva's influence and activism are observed as negligible in City-Q. The chapter also highlights the various shades of the Dalit and Dalit-Bahujan organisations and leaders and their sustained activism in support and opposition to the formation of separate TS. However, there is no sustained Christian Dalit activism in City-Q. Thus both the Hindutva and Christian Dalit sections are under the passive status mode of operation. However, Dalit and Dalit-Bahujan organisations devoid of religious identity are mainly active, though they are individual-centric.

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Chapter: VI

# DALITS AND TWO PROTESTANT CHURCHES: IN CITY-Q

Abstract:

*The Chapter focuses on two Christian Protestant Churches, i.e., Grace Church and Hope Church. While the former Grace Church is part of a larger Congregation-A, latter Hope Church is part of Congregation-B. Mala and Madiga Christians are dominantly associated with both the Congregation-A and Congregation-B, historically across the Telugu region. In the same way, in City-Q also, Mala and Madiga Christians are prominently associated with the Grace and Hope Churches. The Chapter draws over Christian Dalits within the Grace and Hope Churches and their wider Congregations-A and B in City-Q. As part of this sequence, the Chapter is broadly divided into two parts, Part-A and Part-B. While on one side, Part-A focuses on Grace Church, on the other side Part-B draws attention to Hope Church. Methodologically, the Chapter is organized on the basis of data collection from in-depth interviews. At last, the Chapter concludes by observing that most Christian Dalits seek SC certificates, though they practice Christianity adherently. However, they are not engaged in any social and political movement to recognize their Christian identity under the SC fold.*

## **Part-A**

### **Focus on Grace Church of Congregation-A**

Congregation-A is a noted historic Christian spiritual entity in City-Q, and its presence is widespread across the Telugu region. While the word 'congregation' can be understood in a singular sense, the word 'Church' can be understood in singular and plural connotations. The word 'Church' in plural connotation represents its wide presence beyond one geographical entity. In another sense, a Church organisation may have several branches across various locations. In such a case, a more comprehensive word 'congregation' to refer to a particular Church organisation in a plural sense is coined. Both the words 'congregation' and 'Church' in one sense represent and denote a section of people coming together for a common spiritual purpose. While the word 'congregation' is general in connotation, the word 'Church' depicts in a spiritual connotation. For the present research, the words 'Church' and 'congregation' are recognised as 'spiritual congregations'.

Congregation-A represents a Church organisation having its widespread presence across the wider Telugu region in South India. Congregation-A has a huge network of Churches across the Telugu region and other extended regions in India. Theologically, religiously and spiritually, Congregation-A is part of a wider international network of the shared ecumenical platform. However, as most of the Congregation-A associated devotees and staff members observe, there is no direct fund transfer option for spiritual development and growth from India and abroad. Hence, as per their claim and revelation, Congregation-A is a self-sustaining entity in India, functioning based on the own funds generated internally. Thus, though the Congregation-A had a historical lineage of being founded by the foreign Christian Missionaries in India, it got administratively and technically delinked from foreign missionaries as per the law of the land after India attained independence. This establishes that prior to India's independence, there was foreign missionaries financial and other levels of support in various forms in the functioning dynamics of Congregation-A. After India's post-independence era, the role of foreign missionaries in resources transfer for social service promotion was reduced in the

first instance. Later, funding sources stopped due to various other extended factors, like the Indian government's rules and regulations.

The present study is related to one of the Congregation-A's specific Churches in City-Q. This specific Church is named as Grace Church. Congregation-A has many Churches, even in City-Q. However, Grace Church is located at a bit of corner in City-Q. Grace Church, in reality, is established as a Chapel within a hospital during late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Thus, the lineage of the Grace Church is very historic. However, primarily, middle and lower-middle-class people are associated with the Grace Church. There are a few other Churches in City-Q, related to the Congregation-A, which are even located at prime centres and affluent sections of Dalits and other sections of people are associated with such Churches.

Historically, the hospital in the Grace Church has had a considerable reputation for its yeoman rendered service in this region and was started during the 1890 decade, i.e. late 19<sup>th</sup> century. A few people had recounted their cherished nostalgic events associated with this hospital personally or related to their families and extended family members. However, this hospital failed to sustain and retain its reputation by serving the patients well over the years. At present, there is no hospital functioning on this compound. However, a nursing college has been continuing. A few women nursing students and their associated staff are seen prominently during working days.

There was a separate building within the Grace Church premises for conducting weekly Sunday school classes. The Sunday school is a separate prayer service organised for children. On a comparative basis, the Sunday school building is in good shape and condition. However, the Sunday school building has some unfinished works, like outside the building to be completed properly. On the whole, the maintenance of the new Sunday school building is not upto the mark, on a comparative basis with the main historical Church structure. The main Grace Church structure is small in size and appears historical. Nevertheless, no proper major concrete renovation works are undertaken.

The Grace Church's main building is able to accommodate less devotes. From the less accommodation space, it should be understood that the Grace Church is not constructed



as a regular mainstream Church. However, it is constructed as a chapel within the then prevalent hospital premises. Chapel usually accommodates a few devotees only. As a result of the lack of space within the main Grace Church building, the devotees sit outside. The Church procured extra chairs and arranged them outside for devotees to sit. Usually, when more devotees gathered for prayer services, then seating arrangement outside was arranged. The Grace Church has major gatherings only on a few occasions like during regular Sunday leading prayer service, semi Christian celebration time, Christmas Day, New Year day, etc.

The Grace Church is located on big premises where different buildings are seen, like Church, hospital and nursing college, etc. There is also significant vacant space. The compound wears a peaceful look and has trees, bushes and shrubs. The prevalent peaceful atmosphere is obstructed due to the agitation of the Church devotees over lease deal.

The Church priest and a few other devotees shared how historically well-reputed this hospital was in this region. According to them, the hospital was famous in a few districts of the coastal AP zone to some extent. Thus, patients used to visit and get treated well at this hospital for many years. Mostly, the hospital has reputation for its rendered medical service for pregnant women delivery.

According to a nursing college staff member, Jones, a European lady doctor was well associated with the hospital since its inception. Since Indian women and society at large object to get treat for children birth delivery through male doctors, pregnant women used to have pregnancy delivery at houses. As a result, the health condition of the women and children used to get degraded, and the mortality rate used to be very high. In order to put an end to the social custom of getting pregnant women delivered at houses, the European Christians started this hospital.

A famous German lady doctor was associated with this hospital for quite some sustained duration. Moreover, she used to treat women patients in delivery cases. As a result of the European lady doctor's association and rendered yeoman service, this hospital-acquired much reputation. Nevertheless, in due course of time, the hospital lost its glory and

became defunct. One of the previous very senior pastors of the Grace Church, who hailed from the Madiga community, was born at this hospital itself. This pastor name is Devasahayam. Moreover, he became a pastor of the same Church and owned a unique recognition in the Congregation-A's leadership. This establishes how a social, spiritual and economic life system got embedded into the Congregation-A's functional dynamics. The hospital extended services to the patients irrespective of caste and religious identities.

Moreover, according to Jones, one of the prime reasons for the failure of this hospital was a failure to sustain its functioning based on the GoI norms. As per the GoI norms, even the hospitals established and operated under the social welfare category also covers under stringent industrial regulation provisions. As a result, it became difficult for Congregation-A to maintain most of its health services as per the high standards set forth by the GoI Ministerial agencies, as revealed and shared by Victor. 'Victor' is the main pastor of the Grace Church. Grace Church has two pastors, one main pastor and another associate pastor. The associate pastor is Emmanuel.

Grace Church services are conducted by either Victor or Emmanuel, depending upon the situation and convenience. For instance, the main prayer services like Sunday's leading prayer service, semi Christmas celebrations, etc. major events are conducted by both pastors. However, the main pastor has a major leading role and associate pastor supporting role. There is also a kind of work division between the two pastors.

While most of the main prayer services are jointly conducted by both the pastors, the associate pastor heads a few non-prominent prayer services. Non-prominent prayer services include the services for which fewer devotees attended, like weekly women's prayer service, etc. During non-prominent prayer services, the presence of devotees is minimal. However, the Grace Church uses the loud speaker even during the non-prominent prayer services conduct. As a result, the gospel message delivered by the pastor is audible to the surrounded area. From this act, it can be observed that a few surrounded devotees, even without physically present at the Grace Church, if interested, can listen to the message delivered by the pastor. However, the audio volume maintained

by the Grace Church is not too high, at an objectionable level. Furthermore, no one ever complained to the levels of decibels operated by the Grace Church.

For some quite sustained duration, the Congregation-A's Grace Church is under prominent news coverage and analysis in the local news of the day to day nature. The Congregation-A's central governing body is given in lease the Grace Church premises to a private party for a sustained longer duration, excluding a certain portion of the Grace Church area. The Grace Church located premises have a huge unused land and a few buildings. The main buildings on the premises look very historic and old. One of the prominent buildings on the premises has the defunct hospital, which is no more in utility and function.

The Grace Church devotees are agitated over Congregation-A's central leadership decision to lease out significant portion of their premises to a private party, without properly negotiating, by keeping in view located and functioning Grace Church within the premises. Though the hospital got defunct long ago, the Church, which got opened as a Chapel in the hospital premises, developed into a major Church over the years. Grace Church is a parish and coordinates a few sister Churches too. Sister Churches means it heads, guides and administers a few other small Churches under its subordinate jurisdiction. After the Congregation-A's central leadership entered the lease deal, the Grace Church devotees developed a dispute with the lease acquired party over a few issues related to improper demarcation dispute over the leading path to main road utilisation, the fate of nursing college students, etc.

### **Entangled with Democratic Political Activism**

The Grace Church priests, leaders and devotees are annoyed with their central leadership in the Congregation-A over the lease deal, which created a big hurdle. As a result, a conflict developed over the improper demarcation and dispute over leading path-way into the premises. Between the Church community and the lessee, the former is visibly disturbed over entry into the Church premises. The dispute led to an intensified conflict and became a stumbling block to enter the Grace Church. The lessee obstructed making

way and sharing internal leading road into the premises with the Church community. As a result, the devotees are unable to enter the Church.

The whole conflict got a prominent report for a few days and weeks in the local news dailies. The Grace Church devotees led a protest against the lessee's obstruction into the Church premises and undertook agitation in different modes. As part of innovative agitation modes, the devotees even conducted their regular prayer services in front of the main gate. The Grace Church organising committee provided temporary arrangements like tents, chairs, etc. and coordinated the agitation with other devotees and activities.

The agitation also continued in relay hunger strike mode for a few weeks. A few photographs are also released by the Grace Church devotees in the public platforms. A few video recordings of the agitation are also uploaded to the social media networking sites like YouTube. The agitated section maintained a few documents and photographs and shared the same with relevant civil society agencies, government officials and media, to establish their version. The Grace Church committee coordinated and led the agitation.

As a means of continuing their democratic peaceful expression of concern over dispute with the lessee; the devotees, priests, staff and leaders of the Grace Church started to wage a sustained agitation. Their protest agitation was also intimated to various government officials like the police and district collector. At last, though the dispute over leading internal path into the whole premises continued, the lessee provided entry to the Grace Church goes as a temporary gesture.

Finally, though the dispute was not resolved between the Grace Church and the lessee, a kind of temporary solace took place. The temporary solace happened due to the prolonged agitation undertaken by the Grace Church members, organising committee, and other devotees in different modes. The Central executive committee of the Congregation-A took the matter into the task and clarified in their corrigendum to the lease deal agreement that the path leading to the Grace Church should not be obstructed. Thus, the Grace Church's agitated section got a kind of solace and victory against the lease acquired party.

### **Hope Church Critiqued Central Executive Council**

The Grace Church devotees, priests, leaders and staff protested against the lease deal and encountered problem with the lessee. A few interesting things in this whole episode and process unfolded. Though Congregation-A has many properties in various modes across various destinations, a huge misappropriation has been taking place over the years on a large scale. As critiqued by the Grace Church devotees, leaders, priests and staff, the present lease deal is one such continuing misappropriation bid. The agitated Grace Church leaders, devotees, priests and staff had critiqued that the Congregation-A central governing council had entered into a hand-in-glove agreement with various non-Christian persons and started to lease out prime properties on a huge scale. Moreover, they expressed their inability to protect the properties.

### **Alternative Dimensions and Claims: The Central Leadership**

Bishop Bhanu, one of the Congregation-A's central leadership leaders, who is also involved in the Grace Church location site lease deal, has expressed his Congregation's inability over the years to maintain and protect properties due to high maintenance costs. Bishop Bhanu justified his Congregation's decision to lease out a few properties to cover the revenue deficit. However, in reality, either Bishop Bhanu or his other central governing leadership members could not justify, pacify and calm down agitated sections over alleged misappropriation of properties deal, like the one at the Grace Church. The classic case rests with the Grace Church under focus, whose devotees, priests and staff were worried about their Church's property misappropriation.

### **Pastor Victor's Alternative Perspective**

The Grace Church's main priest, Victor, has expressed the desired intention of his congregation leadership, preferring to lease the properties to Christians. However, a lease deal is a commercial and economic activity. As a result, it is difficult to lease out Congregation-A properties idealistically to Christian devotes. If idealistically, Congregation-A properties are leased out to Christians, then the Congregation-A may not secure a best commercial bid, as most of the Christians are not into entrepreneurship.

This indicates that though Victor's intentions are good and ideal, in reality, there are practical problems in inclining to such idealistic notions.

Victor's view is in stark contrast against his Congregation's leadership i.e. Congregation-A's Bishop Bhanu. If Congregation-A's Bishop Bhanu opinion should be taken seriously, then Congregation-A properties cannot be leased out idealistically to Christians. Moreover, Victor and Emmanuel, unlike their other Church devotees and committee members, did not criticise their Church leaders in foul language or accused their congregation leadership as corrupt. However, Victor and Emmanuel visibly stood by the side of the agitated devotees against the Grace Church's property lease deal. In fact, at some level, the clergy themselves were primarily eligible to contest and occupy some of the Congregation's leadership positions. Thus, the Grace Church pastors and the already existing central executive leadership belong to the upper class, though they administer spiritual solace and leadership to their devotees.

### **Blocking of Central Leadership**

When the Grace Church devotees has problem with the lessee, they intensified agitation to other levels. On a fine day, the devotees undertook a significant march to their central executive committee leadership office when a crucial meeting was underway. The gathered devotees at the designated central executive committee members meeting space detained their meeting leaders from outside. The local police arrived at the spot and looked after the continuing agitation in a non-interventionist mode to a possible extent. The police tried to ensure that no untoward incident happened and that the agitation continued in a peaceful and democratic mode. However, some words of exchange took between the police and agitators.

When the agitating section objected to the police presence and asserted that it was Congregation-A's internal matter, the police objected to such remarks and justified their presence on law and order basis. The local police had information about the Grace Church's lease deal problem through local newspapers and other sources. The ferociously agitated Grace Church devotees, leaders and staff verbally abused their Congregation's central governing council members over their corrupt, improper lease deals like the one

involved in the Grace Church. The central governing council members had a tough time pacifying the gathered crowd. The agitated crowd also arranged a few ready-made flex banners and displayed them at the agitation venue.

The displayed flex banners prominently flayed their leadership over the misappropriation of properties. Satirical cartoons of various design modes are portrayed on the flex banners to highlight their allegations of misappropriation of assets. Thus, all this indicated the prevalence of the democratic political aspirations within a spiritual congregation, which resembled mainstream political activity.

Victor and Emmanuel, the respective priests of the agitated Grace Church maintained a balanced position before everybody including Congregation's leadership, devotees, staff and leaders. Victor and Emmanuel got appointed through their central governing administrative mission, and they are subject to serve as per the terms and conditions of the central governing council. The position of the Grace Church pastors is different and challenging. They have to maintain a certain level of decency and decorum amidst their superior central governing council members and act as spiritual leaders before the devotees.

Though the priests are appointed as spiritual leaders, they were forced to participate in this turbulent agitation. The priests justified their role and actions in the whole agitation. The protection of the Grace Church, its properties and ensuring proper entry into the Grace Church for devotees are the spiritual concerns of the pastors. During the whole agitation process, the two Grace Church pastors, Victor and Emmanuel, expressed solidarity, led agitation, and coordinated the problem at various levels with the higher-level leaders and local government officials.

A kind of suspicion propped up whether there are backdoor communication channels between Victor and Emmanuel with their central executive council members. If such a backdoor communication channel operated, then there was every possibility of informing the agitated crowd's plans well in advance to the central executive committee members. However, no visible suspicion is pointed out against the two Grace Church priests. A few protestors have good contacts with their administrative leadership at some other level.

Thus, there was every possibility that the decisions of protestors got leaked well in advance to the central executive committee members. In a way, the agitation appeared genuine and is led with commitment against their central executive members.

The middle- and lower-income people participated in the whole agitation against the lease deal in obstructing their entry into the Grace Church premises. At the most, some 20-30 persons must have been seriously involved in the whole agitation directly. A few youths also took an active part in the whole agitation process. Moreover, most visibly seen youth has a role in the Grace Church administration, like having a place in the Church committee. A few women devotees are also well associated with the agitation from various age backgrounds, primarily from middle to old age, but not the young ones.

At a certain level of analysis, the professional and economic life of a agitators is entangled with the Grace Church properties protection and promotion. Their livelihood was dependent on the Grace Church prosperity. The employees of the Congregation-A are dependent on the salaries offered by the central executive. The central executive can offer salaries only when properties are well maintained and revenue generation is adequate.

### **Well Coordinated Semi Christmas**

During the semi-Christmas celebration preparatory activities time, both pastors are active, in addition to other Grace Church Committee members. These persons guided the other youth on moral and legal terms concerning spending certain monetary expenses. Mostly the researcher observed moral command in such directions, especially concerning the finalization of a few things, like monetary offering (contribution to be made) to the guests, gifts, food items to be prepared and served, etc. A collective consensual decision is taken, like; how much monetary offering should be made to the main guest message delivery preacher. Accordingly, the whole semi-Christmas programme is organised grandly. The organising team decided to invite a few central executive governing council members to this event. They extended a formal invitation to a few central executive committee members.



### **Dual Role: Mistrust, Criticism and Engagement**

The researcher observed a quite contradictory position of the Grace Church priests, devotees, staff and leaders with a few top central governing council members on semi-Christmas occasion. Though most of the Grace Church followers led an agitation against its central executive committee members, in December 2012 the Church devotees however invited the central executive committee members to their semi-Christmas celebrations. The event went on well on a fine evening. Good food was also prepared and served.

Interestingly, though the Grace Church committee members led an agitation against their central executive council to lease out their Grace Church properties, this time they extended an invitation to a few of them though they held the same opinion against them. This time, the Grace Church committee members, devotees, staff and priests and attended central governing council members participated in the semi Christmas event without any rivalry and difference among them, visibly. Everyone maintained a cheerful mood. Moreover, the whole event went on well.

The entire semi Christmas celebration event explains that within the Grace Church and Congregation-A, the involved sections has developed a certain kind of democratic attitude and manner and accordingly they have been conducting. Though they have sharp differences and mistrust, the semi Christmas event exposed the dual nature of the Church priests, devotees, and central executive committee members at some other level. Because even without a full-fledged address of the Grace Church lease deal problem, the Grace Church committee started to engage with the Congregation-A's central executive members on a cheerful mode. Moreover, most importantly, though the agitated section has mistrust and accused the central executive leadership as corrupt, this time, they engaged with them cheerfully.

On one side, openly and in private conversations, the Grace Church devotees and staff expressed dissent and negative opinion against their central executive members as corrupt and accused them as resorted to immoral lease deals. On another side, the same Grace Church devotees and staff started to engage cheerfully with the same central

executive committee members. All this establishes that all the involved sections has developed certain common interests associated with the Grace Church and Congregation-A. As a result, they have been continuing their association with the Grace Church on dual-mode. The Congregation-A is providing substantive social, spiritual and economic support for its devotees. As a result, though all the involved parties have sharp differences, they cultivated the habit to lead everyday engaged life at some other level.

### **Congregation-A as a Socio-Economic Institutional Structure**

The Congregation-A has a huge setup for providing internal employment opportunities to various persons. Mostly, the Congregation-A affiliated devotees themselves are beneficiaries of the whole procedural process of employment. Moreover, most of them belong to the Mala Christian community. Thus, it is very clear that the whole Congregation-A has developed, nurtured, and promoted institutional structure over the years. As a result of the well-placed structure, huge employment and empowerment of various Christian families has undergone. However, over the years, such a development process started to result in a defunct mode in various capacities. The effective delivery mechanism of the Congregation-A institutions like schools, colleges, hospitals, etc. have been under decline due to various factors. An effort to regenerate the institutional capabilities is unsatisfactory.

Former AP CM, YSR had brought forward a proposal to legislate an enactment to protect properties of the Christian congregations. He primarily put forward such a proposal during his tenure as leader of the opposition in the AP legislative assembly. Moreover, he reiterated the same during his CM tenure regime too. However, unfortunately, he passed away without initiating concrete steps towards the realisation of such a proposal. Moreover, there were mixed reactions to this proposal from Christians too.

Even in City-Q, there are mixed reactions towards the previous proposal of late YSR. A few among those agitated against the Grace Church lease deal preferred such enactment to protect their Congregation-A properties. On the other side, a few, like those at the helm of Congregation-A's administration and leadership, disliked losing their Congregation's property rights and management to the government.

Late YSR used to highlight that on par with Muslim devotees' properties protection act and board, i.e. WAQF; similar legislation would be a suitable solution to prevent misappropriation of Christian properties. A person associated with Congregation-A, Benzman, expressed dislike to lose Congregation-A's administrative rights to the government based on law enactment as proposed by late YSR. Further, Benzman critiqued and questioned how the government could protect the Christian properties when the government is misappropriating the WAQF properties? Interestingly, Benzman has proximity with the leadership of Congregation-A.

Reverend RR has a different perspective against some of the prominent sections and persons of the Congregation-A and their role concerning promotion and protection of properties. Reverend RR has a prior prolonged association with the Congregation-A. Moreover, he still proclaimed as a follower of Congregation-A's theological and spiritual perspective. Reverend RR expressed dislike and suspicion towards the presence of persons like Benzman, who, in his opinion, were some of the people behind Congregation-A properties misappropriation. Thus, all this indicated that both genuine devotees and devotees with a mask to misappropriate the properties are much present within the same Congregation-A.

At some level, both genuine and non-genuine devotees knew their identities and prospects to some extent, either in the Congregation-A or in the broader society. However, Congregation-A is facing high-level misappropriation of properties. The genuine devotees could not protect and promote their properties in a perpetual positive way for their Congregation's betterment. The genuine devotees are not much into leadership dynamics and are by and large passive in nature.

Interestingly, Benzman has claimed that his family had prolonged generations together association with the Congregation-A. Towards this direction, he justified his proactive role in the Congregation-A. The primary role of Benzman is an association with a Congregation-A's professional college in City-Q. He is able to secure and continue in the administrative position of an educational institution based on his and his family's long association with the Congregation-A. Benzman has network with various sections of the Congregation-A's higher managerial and administrative authorities over the years at

another second level. Benzman has a civil society projection too. He actively participated as and when required in Christian Dalit activism. He self-projected as a promoter of the Christian Dalit rights and championing their cause. In City-Q, a few walls are painted by projecting Benzman as championing the cause of Christian Dalits.

### **BC-C Versus SC (Christians)**

Interestingly, Benzman proclaimed championing only the cause of converted Christian Dalits, i.e. those covered under the BC-C category. Moreover, most Benzman associates and Benzman are not interested in the mainstream Dalit movement, led by SC (Christians). Only on a few occasions, the networks between Benzman and mainstream SC leaders converged and led social movements. In another way, there is a class consciousness among the BC-C groups that they are superior to their counterparts in the SC category, though a significant section of SC too adopted Christianity informally.

The BC-C devotees held their esteem high for not deceiving the State, government, and society and for not continuing under the SC category. On the other hand, the SC Christians proclaimed that acquiring and continuing under the SC category was their right, which the 1950 Constitutional Order denied them. Thus, the Christian Dalits under BC-C and SC Christian categories are divided over the issue of the 1950 Constitutional Order and failed to have a single path to adopt, adhere and triumph discourse. Thus, the plotted attempts of Indian State to divide them paved certain results, but not absolutely. Since only a microscopic section has opted for the BC-C category and most others are not seeking the same category, the passive resistance to the 1950 Presidential Order has continued.

According to the SC Christians perspective, they are continuing 'civil disobedience' against the State for not letting them utilise their genuine SC status as per the original Constitution of India's spirit. Further, according to them, the Indian State pushed them towards the BC-C category. The Christian Dalits are quite aware that while their counterparts in the ST category are treated in a religiously neutral way, only they are discriminated under the 1950 Constitutional Order.

According to the Christian Dalits, since they hail from vulnerable backgrounds and poverty-stricken categories, they cannot fight and express dissent 'civil disobedience' against the State for directly denying their genuine SC status. Hence, according to them, though they practice Christianity truly, they continue under the Hindu SC category by 're-deceiving' the State. Since Indian State deceives them, the SC Christians also re-deceive the State and continue under the SC category.

Interestingly Benzman belongs to the Mala community. It is not surprising that most of the devotees associated with the Congregation-A hail from Mala Christian background. Interestingly, as per the researcher's observation, Benzman's family is well settled. His younger brother is a psychologist and counsellor in the USA. Thus, his family was able to migrate abroad. Benzman, in particular, belongs to the BC-C category. Benzman feels pride in having BC-C background and not SC status.

Benzman's organisation and most of his associates have a superior notion for having BC-C status legally. While having superiority notion against their counterparts in the SC (Christian) category, the BC-C groups demand to extend SC status to them. This indicates that all the (Hindu) SC, SC (Christians) and BC-C strata somehow got divided into religious lines in due course of time. Moreover, they are not putting concrete measures to repose their unity under SC category, as per the spirit of the original Constitution of India. These sections shared only occasional caste solidarity.

Organisations led by various individuals should be analysed and categorised on various scales. A few organisations are recognised as letterhead organisations. Another few organisations are recognised as shadow organisations working for the purported larger interests of other organisations. Some other organisations are individual and family-centric, etc. dynamics can be observed. When seen from these perspectives, the self-proclaimed leadership of Benzman is individualistic and letterhead type. He has very less followers. However, he coordinates well with other civil society groups as and when required.

## **Employees Role in Misappropriation of Properties**

The large scale of misappropriation of Congregation-A's properties has been taking place not just in collusion by the Congregation-A central executive council members and outsiders. Even other stakeholders involved in the administration of the Congregation-A are involved in mis-utilization and misappropriation of properties as accused by various Congregation-A's internal sources and external accusations. For instance, even after completing their service and retirement, the Congregation-A employees are not vacating their allotted quarters, as alleged and pointed out by a few persons in City-Q, including those from Dalit-Bahujan sections.

A few accused instances are also heard that a few families and persons got allotted sites on an individual basis. As a result, permanent house construction also takes place. This whole process goes on illegally. As per the Congregation-A constitution, its properties cannot be disposed of permanently. However, colossal scale misappropriation is taking place. Interestingly, every section of category has its share and role in the misappropriation of properties, be it at leadership level or employee range, albeit based on the collusion of mutual interests, as allegedly observed by a few devotes outside the Congregation-A.

As per the Congregation-A constitutional norms, properties should not be sold out permanently. As a result of this obligatory legal clause, the Congregation-A properties have been allocated on a long term lease to the private parties. This dimension makes it clear that every stakeholder involved in the Congregation-A, especially in administrative setup seems to have a certain willful desire to own, continue to own and continue to benefit from their Congregation properties.

Various categories of employees have been staying for a significant longer duration within the Congregation-A quarters. Moreover, even a few persons have occupied significant portions of the Congregation-A properties. For instance, a former Congregation-A President's son has occupied a substantive land portion in the middle of the prime urban location in City-Q. This former Congregation-A President's son is Prem. Moreover, Congregation-A has had been failing to deal effectively with this problem.

Legal cases are ongoing over this issue. Moreover, no compromise and alternative dispute resolution mechanism options were explored effectively. The case of Prem's illegal occupation of a substantive portion of prime land is a peak instance, among various misappropriation issues.

On a fine evening, the researcher went to Prem's residence, which is located on an illegally occupied land. This is a kind of house and office space. A lady receptionist receives the guests. Prem's office and residence spaces have a prominent projection of his fame with various persons of prominence at various points of time. A prominent portrait of his biological father and mother is hung on the wall. From other laminated photos hanging on the wall it is understood that at one point in time, Prem maintained good relations and contacts with mainstream political parties and politicians, i.e. especially with the INC. At some point in time, Prem occupied some prominent positions in the INC state-level minority wing. He took photos with prominent persons like the former AP Governor, etc. However, all the images on the wall belonged to the past, and no current established photos are displayed. In reality, it seem that he failed to sustain in politics for a longer duration.

On the whole, Prem did not choose the path of his biological father and mother and become a Pastor or employee in the Congregation-A. Instead, Prem is interested in posing his father's past position and status and attempted to grab substantial opportunities illegally. The researcher observes that Prem has good contacts at various levels of Congregation-A administration and leadership. As a result, a kind of silence also prevails against his misdeeds in the Congregation-A.

At last, Prem's financial and social position also seem to have degraded to some extent. He seems to have lacked many income sources. His prime income source emanates from occasional rent earned on misappropriated land from the Congregation-A. On his misappropriated land, various kinds of Christian evangelical meetings were organised by various independent Christian Protestant denominations. This indicated that his prime income source emanated from the misappropriated land from the Congregation-A.

All this indicates that most of the sections involved in the management in Congregation-A had certain wishes to own their Congregation's properties illegally after knowing due loopholes. Thus, the collective Christian Dalit identity and shared solidarity has paved the way for committing other misdeeds. For the misdeeds committed, human nature is the prime reason, and even religious moralities chosen by the devotees fail to lead them on the right path for a prolonged duration. However, human beings proclaim religious morality as their sole guiding philosophy in life and propagate the same to others. In reality, other contradictory positions are also involved. Based on religious morality, human beings are notorious for committing serious crimes against other human beings across human history, irrespective of the religious order adopted by any section of human beings, in a few instances.

The devotees misappropriation of Congregation-A properties illustrates that human beings inbuilt nature to deceive their co-religious people. This is in addition to their continued shared collective developed solidarity within Christian discourse. An open and blind game has been continuing in the name of religion. An open game means that others know about the particulars of misappropriated identity within the Church and Congregation and yet keep silent. The blind game means the identity of the misappropriates is unknown. Moreover, the misappropriate also wears a hidden mask to their genuine role.

### **Potential Caste Gulf**

At another level of analysis into the whole lease problem at the Grace Church, the researcher also observes a kind of caste differentiation. As per Purushotam, a caste dimension is also involved in this agitation process against lessee at the Grace Church. Purushotam belongs to the Madiga community and has been associated with the Grace Church since his childhood. Though Purushotam is a Madiga Christian, interestingly, he and his family are associated with the Malas dominated Congregation-A and Grace Church in City-Q.

There are a few Madiga devotees associated with the Grace Church. The researcher found two Madiga Christians associated with the Grace Church after careful search, one



among them happens to be Purushotam. Another Madiga Christian devotee who was found at the Grace Church is Ratnam. While Purushotam is a lower-middle-class Madiga person, Ratnam can be regarded as a middle-class person.

Ratnam is a popular Sitar player. He is widely regarded in his profession and invited on standard terms and conditions of honorarium payable in his professional circles. Both Purushotam and Ratnam have had been associated with the Grace Church for a long time. As a result, they have had continued their association with the Grace Church.

Interestingly, though these Madiga Christian devotees associated with the Grace Church, they did not directly participate in the agitation against lessee. Especially, though Purushotam had a role in the Grace Church Committee, and most of the Grace Church Committee members took part in the agitation, he did not participate. There were a few reasons behind this. Purushotam was busy as a private school teacher, and he was mindful about his family's bread and butter earning, primarily. On the other hand, he has a sort of association, and soft corner towards lessee.

Purushotam shared that the lessee has contacted him personally and sought his support when most of the Grace Church Committee members and others turned against the lessee and started to create troubles concerning the internal leading road issue. According to Purushotam's version, the lessee belongs to the Madiga caste and has Hindu religious practice background. At the same time, the lessee also hailed from affluent backgrounds.

The lessee family has Indian Administrative Service (IAS) background. However, the present generation of the lessee is into commercial business activity like the present nature. In another sense, the lessee parents have a background from the IAS cadre. This indicates that the lessee is not interested in serving the government sector through jobs like the IAS and utilising reservation. Instead, the lessee is interested in establishing and having a mark through lease deals based on professional contacts, and flourish further in commercial business activity. This nature of lessee depicts upward mobility within the SC background sections.

Since the Mala community dominates the Grace Church, the lease deal was vehemently opposed by the Grace Church pastors, committee members and devotees against Madiga

lessee on the pretext of raised conflict over leading path into the compound. However, this caste dimension was not prominently recognised and noted by others in the broader society, as observed by Purushotam. In the media, as per Purushotam's observation, the whole lease problem was portrayed from the narrated perspective of the agitated Grace Church section, and other reasons are not investigated and reported correctly, felt Purushotam.

Purushotam maintained a certain level of close intimacy with the lessee based on 'shared caste solidarity' and other factors, like his role in the Grace Church as a Committee member. As a result of such intimacy, though he was part and parcel of the Grace Church, he did not participate in the agitation against the lessee along with other Grace Church members.

Interestingly, though Purushotam hails from a Madiga Christian background and the lessee is from a Hindu Madiga background, the caste become a prime focal point of their association, keeping aside economic differences and religious faith backgrounds at some level. Purushotam even after remaining and associated with the Grace Church dominated by Malas, has been failing to develop proper spiritual solidarity with his co-Christian Dalit section, i.e. Malas. He had the utmost faith in Christianity, but not proper Christian faith-based solidarity and fellowship with his co-Christian Dalit section, i.e. Malas. The vice-versa can also be observed from Mala Christian's side against Madiga Christians within the same Grace Church or/and Congregation-A. This is a peculiar situation in India, to note, how caste remains a significant connecting thread, at some level, even after conversion to other religions. Caste, at some significant level, remains a solidarity force even after conversion to different religions. The same can be observed from Purushotam and lessee behind nexus against the Grace Church agitated group.

The Grace Church devotees also indicate about lessee background from an affluent Hindu Dalit section. However, the Church devotees and the lessee developed mistrust, quarrelsome positions and lacked caste solidarity. Here class gulf, consciousness and rights discourse prevailed between them in the place of developing shared solidarity. Both parties, i.e. Grace Church devotees and lessee mistreated each other.

A few persons associated with the Grace Church have recounted how rashly and harshly the lessee spoke to them, though both belong to marginalised social backgrounds. The Grace Church devotees predominantly hail from Mala background. On the other hand, the lessee hails from a Hindu Madiga background. The Grace Church's Mala Christians pointed improper attitude and behaviour on the part of the lessee. They attempted to expose and point out class bias, which prevented shared solidarity development based on their marginalised backgrounds, i.e. between Mala Christians and Hindu Madiga lessee. Interestingly, while Purushotam has reported caste angle from 'Grace Church agitation' against Hindu Madiga lessee; Mala Christian agitated devotees reported 'class bias' of the lessee against them.

### **Mixed Identities Collaboration**

The critics in City-Q had made a big observation about how a huge potential exists over misappropriation of the Congregation-A properties. In this respect, a few critics observed how caste, religion, and political nexus are also involved in the whole ongoing process of misappropriation of the Grace Church properties and broader Congregation-A assets. For instance, a person born to the Mala and Kamma caste parents and associated with the TDP is prominently involved in striking certain key lease deals between the Congregation-A's central executive members and lessees.

The involved politician uses one of his Mala caste backgrounds, Christian association of his parents, and other acquired Kamma caste's association via the TDP. In this respect, it should be noted that the TDP is mostly regarded as Kamma dominated party. A Kamma person launched the TDP, i.e. NTR. Since the establishment of TDP, Kamma domination has been visible. For instance, only Kamma caste persons can occupy and sustain in the party as the President and occupy CM position. This is a peculiar, unique and common phenomenon in the Indian political discourse.

A specific caste stratum usually dominates almost every political party. In the coastal AP region, both the Mala and Kamma sections yield a certain level of political clout. As per a few critics, such political and social clout also result in backdoor management of certain things within the Congregation-A. A few critics observe that the TDP associated

politician was key in striking a lease deal between the Congregation-A and lessee in the Grace Church. At some other level, specific accused comments are heard that shareholding dimensions are also taking place due to sustained lease deals operations in the Congregation-A. Later on, after the 2019 election, the researcher also observed through mainstream electronic media reports that even YSRCP MLAs and Ministers are also involved and associated with the other sections of the Congregation-A pastors and administrative staff. And broad-spread allegations are made about their role in attempts to misappropriate assets.

### **Christian Dalit Woman Doctor**

The short entrance leading into the whole premises of the Grace Church compound is adjacent to a slum. The word slum should be primarily understood as surrounded by short spaced houses with a lower level of income section people and low width roads. The Grace Church's main and associate pastors residential quarters are situated outside the compound wall. Within the huge compound, on a corner side, the researcher observed a few old buildings upon going further from the main entrance. In one of the old buildings, a woman Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery (MBBS) qualified doctor is residing, who is a Christian by faith. Moreover, this women doctor is associated with the nursing women's college training activities on the Grace Church premises.

Even the houses of main and associate pastors are located within Congregation-A property. The adjacent location to the Grace Church compound also belongs to the Congregation-A, though not appropriately demarcated. Various houses are located adjacent to the Grace Church compound, and most of them belong to the Congregation-A employees.

The researcher approached the woman doctor's house on a fine morning and tried to introduce himself as a scholar working on the theme of 'Christian Dalits' and sort time to interact with her; since she hails from the same background as known to the researcher through other sources. However, the women doctor felt uncomfortable and wondered how the public traced her caste background and identified her as a Christian Dalit. But then, the woman doctor's husband interfered in the conversation and interacted for a

significantly longer duration with the researcher. The researcher tried to meet the woman doctor for a separate interaction with her in the evening on the same day. However, unfortunately, the woman doctor did not receive the researcher.

The woman doctor's reluctance to identify as 'Christian Dalit' and interact with the researcher testified how certain levels of anti-caste tendencies got well penetrated among a few individuals and how a few lower sections of the society were increasingly trying to debunk caste identity and look forward towards non-caste recognition at-least in a visible public glance. However, contrary to the woman doctor, her spouse was much active towards the cause and concern of the Dalits and Christian Dalits. Upon significant longer hours of interaction with the woman doctor's husband, the researcher had understood how this couple started their conjugal journey with idealism involved in Christian faith and interest towards serving the poor by associating with the Congregation-A. At another level of analysis, one can also observe how Dalit men are more assertive than Dalit women in terms of rights discourse after observing the woman doctor and her husband's instances in the present scenario.

### **Congregation-A Prayer Services**

The Congregation-A and the Grace Church have trained pastors. Most of the pastors are trained in Hyderabad. As per the Congregation-A's worship order, the pastors wear long cassocks with multiple colours. The Grace Church corpus fund appears to be accumulating well due to every weeks offered monetary contributions, primarily. Only on Sundays, the Grace Church receives a large number of devotees. During Sunday main service timings, the Grace Church inside space is insufficient to accommodate the devotees. As a result, a few chairs are placed outside the Grace Church main building for devotees sitting purposes.

The Grace Church is more than one hundred years old. In order to maintain and continue the historical relevance of the Grace Church structure existing building is periodically renovated on a minimal scale. Since the Grace Church is located within huge premises, no traffic disturbance is heard. Moreover, sitting arrangements for the attended devotees are arranged on a few significant occasions like during weekly Sunday main prayer

service, semi-Christmas, Christmas, New Year celebration times, etc. outside the Grace Church premises by arranging a few more extra chairs. Comfortable space is also available for vehicles parking. But vehicles parking space is not properly demarcated. However, since the Grace Church developed a kind of conflict with the lessee over claims and counter-claims on available space, it should be further observed whether the Grace Church might face constraints over parking space availability, unless and otherwise the problem is resolved amicably or legally.

Moreover, the presence of devotees is less during other weekday prayer services like youth meetings and women's prayer services. During the weekday prayer services a few devotees attend the prayer services who could easily be counted. The main pastor leads the Sunday main service, and the associate pastor assists in other ways and forms. The researcher observed various services conducted and coordinated by the main and associate pastors either together or independently. For instance, the associate pastor led successfully a few women's prayer services, which the researcher attended and observed keenly.

The premises have only a short leading road and are surrounded by a good compound wall, constructed long ago. If required, from another side, another entrance, either alternative or independent entrance, can be opened connecting to any major road. However, the whole premises utilise a short side internal road.

### **Madiga-Mala Division in Congregation-A**

During the intense sub-categorisation of the SC-reservation movement period, Mosses, a Madiga Christian occupied the President position of the Congregation-A. In due course of time, the democratically elected Mosses was brutally assassinated. This murder was attributed and rumoured as committed by fundamental Mala Christian forces. When the researcher met and interacted with the former slain Congregation-A President's son, Solomon, Solomon expressed his silent acknowledgement towards prevalent high handed antagonistic caste consciousness in the Congregation-A without naming anyone specifically.

Even after the brutal assassination of his biological father, Solomon continued his association with Congregation-A due to some professional commitments. Solomon was a lecturer in English in one of the colleges maintained and administered by the Congregation-A in City-Q. However, when the researcher met Solomon, he silently expressed his deep agony to associate with the Congregation-A's Church services every week due to the scar inflicted on him after his biological father's brutal murder in a broad daylight. This incident of the brutal, cold-blooded murder of Mosses stands as a clear high-level testimony in the backdrop of the overall antagonistic atmosphere between the Madiga Christian and Mala Christian communities during the 1990 and 2000 decades, primarily. With a certain level of variation, this same antagonistic atmosphere is still prevalent in AP politics and social relations between the Madiga and Mala castes, irrespective of their religious affiliations.

### **Madiga Mayor**

The researcher found an interesting fact that City-Q has seen a Christian Madiga Mayor as the first citizen at some point in time. Though in City-Q Malas are significantly visible and advanced, interestingly, a Madiga person got elevated as the Mayor on behalf of the INC. This Christian Madiga Mayor was Devadanam. He had a distinguished academic profile, and he even got registered scientific patents for his work related to onions. Unfortunately, Devadanam died long ago when he was still Mayor of the City-Q due to cardiac arrest. The researcher found Devadanam's daughter in City-Q, who has an affiliation with the Congregation-A. Devadanam's daughter is Mary Jones. Though Congregation-A is a Mala dominated Christian Congregation, the Mary Jones family has been associated with Congregation-A, though they belong to the Madiga Christian community.

Mary Jones family is seen as well advanced since her father's time. She was given in marriage to one of her father's students. Professionally, she is associated with a Hindutva educational institution as a faculty member on deputation, though she is a permanent faculty member under the Congregation-A's educational institution. She is shifted by the government officials to discharge her duties at another educational institution due to a lack of staff. The distance between the Church controlled educational institution and

Hindutva controlled educational institution is less. The researcher met Mary Jones at her residence and interviewed her. At the time of the interview, in addition to Mary Jones, her husband was also available at the house. However, the researcher interacted only with Mary Jones.

Mary Jones appeared arrogant in receiving the researcher in the initial stage, though she offered a cool drink as a sign of a welcome gesture. The initial arrogant nature of Mary Jones made the researcher feel that she was attempting to show off her socially and economically advanced position in City-Q by assuming the researcher also hailed from City-Q and Dalit background. Though the researcher felt a bit uncomfortable and a little offended by the initial arrogant posture of Mary Jones, he continued his interview in a quiet professional manner. In due course of time, Mary Jones interacted very well with the researcher without further showing off her arrogant nature. She was very articulate in her expressions and feelings convey. Though Mary Jones family belonged to the BC-C category, in due course of time, her children are no more dependent on the BC-C reservation, and they got settled well in the private sector and moved abroad. Thus, while she was able to secure employment in the Congregation-A's educational institution based on her family's affiliation with the Congregation, her father's long-standing association and prominence in the Congregation-A and society, at present, her children are no more dependent on utilising BC-C reservation.

In a way, reservation has given gradual advancement to this family after a few generations of utilisation; they are no more fully dependent on the reservation. State-sponsored reservation and Christian affiliation, especially association with the Congregation-A at a prominent level, paved a gradual up-lift to this family. In terms of Christian spirituality, Mary Jones was well associated with her Church and Congregation-A, and she took proud-ness in her spirituality. However, regarding the activism related to either Dalit or Christian Dalit reservation, either she or her family's role is silent. On the whole, Mary Jones family lineage has an interesting discourse in the Congregation-A from Madiga Christian background.



### **A Few Observations on Christian Dalits and Marriages**

Since most of the Dalits in the coastal Andhra region converted to Christianity, it became difficult for a few left out Hindu Dalit communities to identify potential marriage matches, observed Advocate Dasari. The left out Hindu Dalit communities could not get potential marriage proposals either from SC (Hindus) or from other castes of Hindu sections like from upper or lower castes. The marriages, by and large, occur only based on caste lines, but not much on religious grounds.

A few marriages occurred in close relationships within a community, though they belonged to Hindu and Christian backgrounds, noted Lenin in City-Q. Lenin has even pointed out a few instances in his family. Though Lenin's family has Christian Dalit background, his family chose to have marriage relation with a Hindu background family. Lenin's family preferred to enter into marriage alliance because of the involved extended family relation with the Hindu family. However, after marriage they are leading a Christian life by and large, stressed Lenin.

Usually, there are very less Christian (Dalit) devotees who prefer to engage in marriage alliance with other caste and religion people, noted pastor Victor. At another level, pastor Victor noted that the lower strata of the people with less conversion background to Christianity usually engage in marriage alliance with Hindu people, after careful examination of various available options. Mostly, under unavoidable circumstances only Christian (Dalits) prefer to engage in marriage alliance with their caste counterparts in Hindu religion, stressed pastor Victor.

On the other hand, a few advanced Christian Dalit families, who converted a few generations ago and economically quite advanced, are undergoing marriage alliances based on strict Christian-based faith, irrespective of caste backgrounds. When asked which caste his/her son-in-law and/or daughter-in-law belongs to, some Christian Dalit devotees expressed a lack of information and claimed that the marriage alliance was finalised solely based on Christian faith, but not on caste background. However, a few advanced Christian Dalit families expressed they are unwilling to enter into a marriage alliance with SC Christians unless and otherwise, they acquired BC-C or OC status. If

one fails to claim a reserved category like SC/BC-C, he/she can be automatically considered OC as per the government official record purposes. Primarily, caste identification takes at the school level before appearing for the final class X public examination.

Similarly, most SC Christians are venturing into marriage alliances based on Christian background only, either based on SC Christian background or BC-C category. Most of the SC Christians are not willing to enter a marriage alliance with the SC Hindus. Thus, religion created a potential gulf within the same caste members.

Due to changing societal and professional styles, most BC-C families are not venturing into the government sector jobs, observed Revered RR. For instance, John Babu, associated with the Congregation-A and attended the Grace Church in City-Q, became a chartered accountant in the region. John Babu belongs to BC-C and hailed from the Mala community. The researcher met John Babu at his office and interviewed him. John Babu's office is located in a noted commercial area in City-Q. Similarly, most other BC-C advanced sections preferred to venture into the corporate sector or travel abroad for professional engagements.

Most of the Christian Dalits maintains the Indian lifestyle visibly. Their dressing patterns and maintenance of ornaments reflect their Indian-ness. They even follow mixed marriage customs based on caste traditions and Christian styles. Thus, they started to follow mixed cultural practices of their inherited caste customs and Christian styles upon conversion. As a result, they cultivated hybrid forms of cultural patterns. However, they mostly resemble the Indian outlook. Some pastors even acknowledged that Christian Dalits follow Hindu (Brahminic) auspicious timings to fix important family occasions like marriages, etc.

### **Affluent Christian Dalits Political Ambition**

Various political activities occurred prior to the 2014 general elections to the AP legislative assembly and lok sabha constituencies. In this respect, an affluent Christian Dalit section became active and aspired to capture political power. Various kinds of

informal precursor meetings were organised at various levels. One such informal meeting is also hosted and organised in City-Q.

A few prominent affluent sections within the Christian Dalit background came together by keeping aside their sub-caste differences to the possible extent. A few of the sections that took the initiative for this activity hailed from an affluent background, who converted to Christianity from a Dalit background a few generations ago. They are no more interested in using either SC or Dalit identity. However, they are interested in highlighting and associating only based on Christian religious identity.

Over the years, these affluent people became financially well off and started to perceive all those who lead Dalit caste-based politics, like Madiga, Mala, Dalit, etc. as below their level. Thus, these people developed a kind of class consciousness and started to look down their social category sections, which are not well off, on par with them. These people are not interested in utilising either SC or BC-C reservations anymore. Their children are also into the non-government service sector or migrated abroad, or are well into business. Some of them are retired high-level bureaucrats. A section of them has proper independent business activities too. A few of them established business networks based on the Christian religion itself. These people developed an immense interest to become politically successful based on their Christian identity. They are comfortable with Christian identity but not with caste identity. They feel like Open Category (OC). For them moving to the political domain appeared to be a status symbol, as per the researcher's observation.

Later on, this affluent section established a political party in Christianity itself, i.e. the Indian Christian Secular Party (ICSP). The ICSP's formal launch meeting was held on 22 February 2014 at the Nizam College ground, Hyderabad. One of the prominent agendas highlighted by the ICSP is inclined towards achieving SC status to the Christian Dalits and Muslim Dalit sections.

A Tollywood actor, Raja Abel, also participated in the ICSP inaugural meeting and gave an emotional speech. It was declared in the inaugural meeting that Raja Abel would be fielded in the upcoming 2014 elections and that too, in particular to lok sabha. However,

surprisingly, he campaigned for the YSRCP in the 2014 election. What went behind the scene is unknown in this regard. Though ICSP contested a few constituencies to the AP legislative assembly and lok sabha, the analysis showed poor performance. The main reason for the ICSP's poor performance is the tag highlight in the party's name itself 'Christian' and then proclaiming 'secular' in nature. In addition to this, the prime agenda of ICSP is limited in nature and hurriedly contested in the 2014 election. Most significantly, they launched ICSP just a few months before the scheduled elections in 2014.

The researcher observed a few Congregation-A related devotees, at some level, having a certain level of association with some of the masterminds behind the ICSP launch section well before the launch of the ICSP. A few Congregation-A devotees who are into BC-C or OC range had a particular association with the ICSP and has a passion for political development and leadership of the Christians.

## **Part-B**

### **Congregation-B's Hope Church**

The researcher found a well maintained, administered, and centrally located Congregation-B's Hope Church in City-Q. Congregation-B is a major Church congregation in the Telugu region. Unlike the Congregation-A setup, Congregation-B is loosely organised, giving its constituent Church units huge autonomy. Every Church under Congregation-B enjoys autonomy. However, the constituent Churches collaborates and coordinates under Congregation-B for certain administrative convenience and larger ecumenical direction. Congregation-B's major properties are not located in City-Q. Only Congregation-A major properties are observed in City-Q. Congregation-B has properties in the Prakasam district within the coastal AP region.

Furthermore, the position and prospects of those properties are not upto the mark, as shared by various Christian devotees in City-Q. However, on a comparative basis with Congregation-A, most of the Congregation-B properties and administrative structures are defunct, as shared by Advocate Suraj. Due to severe internal differences, the administrative position of Congregation-B has been in defunct mode over the past few

years. However, sustained attempts to resolve such differences have resulted in futile exercise so far.

The Hope Church started its services in private houses in 1936 and later on continued in thatched sheds till 1956, which got replaced with GC sheets. From the silver jubilee year 1961 onwards, the Hope Church acquired a new pucca structure, which has been modified as per the timely needs since then. As a mark of the bi-century celebrations of Reverend William Carey in 1993, additional spaces were created for the library and office. During 2001 additional space was added for organising Sunday school for the children.

Though City-Q is a traditional stronghold for the Congregation-A, with the expansion of City-Q, the devotees from others places migrated and developed various colonies in City-Q. These migrant people started to associate at the house of a devotee for their spiritual fellowship on Sundays. This fellowship, which started in 1936, is the base for the Hope Church establishment and sustenance. In 1952 thatched house was erected for accommodating some 300 devotees. Prayer services at this thatched house started on February 22, 1952. The Hope Church Constitution was composed and registered in 1952 with the district registrar's office.

As the shed became insufficient to accommodate growing devotees, construction of a new building was roughly necessitated in devotees minds. When this necessitation was in mind, a foreign delegation from the USA visited the Hope Church in 1953 and suggested that they could help them if they could send a proposal for the new Church construction through proper channels. Thus, finally, with the help of a USA based Christian source and other self contributions of the local devotees, additional space for the growing needs of the Hope Church was acquired, and permanent building construction was undertaken. The foundation ceremony for this new structure was laid on January 01, 1960. By the time of the silver jubilee celebrations in 1961, the Hope Church's new building was ready. The Hope Church, which started with 25 devotees, had grown to the range of 700 devotees over 25 years by that time.

After the silver jubilee celebrations, the troubles within the Church got intensified, which continued for many years. The quest of a few individuals to have Church leadership positions, corrupt practices of the leaders, fraudulent practices, etc., were the major reasons for this troublesome duration. The virtual division of the Hope Church devotees took place in 1977. The troubles between the devotees got intensified. Such intense instability came to a temporary halt only during 1977-78, with the starting practice of having two separate services for differing sections. Though it was felt to construct a separate Church for the antagonistic devotees, it maintained a common Hope Church for the aggrieved two sections by having two separate prayer services on Sundays. The plan to construct a separate Church for the disgruntled devotees failed to get materialised. As a result, Hope Church itself continued as a common Church with two different services for some sustained duration.

One of the prime reasons cited for the rift between the different devotees and the Hope Church committee holders was the lack of proper membership list. For proper maintenance of the Church, a second service was added to benefit disgruntled devotees of the Hope Church. However, all the administrative maintenance was within the jurisdiction of the main Church. Later on, a proper list was drawn and maintained properly, which reduced the further rift.

### **Executive Council's Superiority**

The Executive Committee consists of the pastor, chairman, treasurer and secretary. Committee Members consist of five, including two deacons, called deacons of the standing committee, distinguishing from General Body Deacons.

The Congregation-B's Hope church is well administered and maintained by the devotees over the years. The Church has a good building; well polished, well equipped electrical gadgets for proper sound remittance are placed. The Hope Church's financial position also resembled a better stage with a good reserve and accumulating corpus capacity weekly. The Church executive committee appoints the priest. Moreover, the priest continues in his position at the behest trust of the executive committee. The Hope Church executive committee gets elected periodically. Since most of the Madigas are associated

with the Congregation-B - the Hope Church is also dominated by the Madigas. Even the executive committee consists of Madiga Christians only on a resounding majority position. Other caste Christians usually occupies insignificant positions in the executive committee. A clear silent gulf among different castes is visible. The priest also belongs to the Madiga caste. He was trained as a pastor in Hyderabad.

### **Well Maintained Church**

The Hope Church has a balcony also to accommodate more devotees. Special funds were raised for the construction of balcony. However, Hope Church lack sufficient vehicles parking space. The Church consists of the main pastor and an associate pastor. Both pastors are trained in Christian theology. There is also a considerable age difference between the two pastors. While the main pastor is in his mid-age with young children at school and college level study, the associated pastor is a bachelor. During the time of field work the researcher has observed that the associated pastor was about to get married in a near future. In a private interaction, the associate pastor expressed his interest to continue his further theological studies shortly. Moreover, he has shared that he continued his theological studies in English so far and wishes to continue further studies in the same medium of instruction.

Once, the researcher observed a marriage in Hope Church for a few minutes. Though most devotees, guests and family members attended in more or less regular dressing patterns, the bridegroom and bride came to the venue in Christian style. However, the pastor indicated with the researcher that the Indian Christian marriage style follows the Indian style of solemnising the marriage with the sacred thread tied by the bridegroom to the bride's neck. Further, he shared how Indian Christians follow mixed cultural practices, mainly reflecting Indian identity. The researcher observed the marriage in Hope Church only for a few minutes. However, as he was not invited to attend the marriage, he withdrew from the inside Church premises on moral ground and later interacted with the pastor on Christian traditions in marriages and family customs.

### **Dissatisfied Pastor: Pragmatic Compulsions**

In a private conversation, the pastor expressed his displeasure for serving under the Hope Church committee. As per his count of Biblical spiritual discourse, the pastor should be the supreme authority of any Church and serve the devotees by being a supreme leader. However, here at his Hope Church, he was subordinate to his Church executive committee members. Though visibly the pastor receives good faith, trust and respect even from the executive members, in reality, he was not satisfied. However, as per the pastor's Biblical scriptural recount, though the pastor should be supreme by leading a Church at any location, he failed to establish his Church and lead devotees. In a certain visible sense, he contended for having urban life for the betterment of his children.

The pastor is provided accommodation besides an adjacent building to the Hope Church. He and his family reside on the ground floor of the building. On the first floor of the building, regular Sunday school for children takes place. Moreover, some other small utility for provisions preservation is also carved out on the first floor. Pastor's wife serves as Sunday school superintendent. She is assisted by a few other female devotees, primarily. In addition to this, she also assists and coordinates other activities of the Hope Church like regular weekly women meetings, etc.

### **Associate Pastor**

The associate pastor's biological father was also a prominent Christian pastor by profession. His father even served in the Hope Church as pastor for a brief period in the past. The associate pastor was looking after his parents and serving at the Hope Church. Even the older Hope Church committee members talks and engage with the associate pastor intimately. Moreover, such intimate conversations of the Hope Church committee members with the associate pastor made the researcher recount and consider the long association this associate pastor's family has had with the Hope Church over the years.

One of the significant roles entrusted to the associate pastor is to coordinate and engage with the younger generation and lead them towards the spiritual path in various modes. Accordingly, the associate pastor imparts regular weekly training to the youth in various modes like playing musical instruments, innovatively practising new songs for singing in



regular main Sunday services, etc. Overall, the researcher observed the associated pastor moves closely with the youth and has good interaction with various senior and junior devotees in an intimate joyful manner. The major main services and events of the Hope Church are coordinated and conducted by the main pastor in consultation and coordination with the Church executive committee.

Associate Pastor is active on his personal Facebook page and is connected with some of the young devotees. He also informs some of the Hope Church activities through his Facebook account, like Christmas celebration events. He is a source of encouragement to the young generation on this page. Hope Church has an email account, too, operated by the associate pastor on his behalf.

### **Hope Church's Extended Gospel Service**

The Hope Church had the tradition of extending an invitation to a few Christian organisations and leaders at various points in time. For instance, during every month's third Sunday, the Hope Church invited any prominent or non-prominent Christian organisation's leader to deliver the message and share about his organisation's gospel mission activities. In reality, such an invitation was usually extended to those organisations and leaders who are actively involved in grassroots gospel missionary activities in remote parts and corners of AP, primarily. Moreover, special monetary contributions are collected to encourage and conduct such grassroots missionary activity. These contributions will be separately collected; in addition to the regular Hope Church's collected contributions. In addition to this, the Hope Church executive committee also leads a few gospel outreach activities in other parts, away from their Church, on a minimal scale. Basically, in their outreach activities, their Church members participate.

### **Nature of Prayer Services and Devotees Level of Association**

Though the Hope Church conducts prayer services on a few weekdays other than Sunday, a huge turnout is seen during Sunday, and lump sum monetary contributions are offered. The regular Sunday main services continue from morning to evening. In the evening women's prayer service is conducted. On every Sunday night, an English service is organised. For English service also, the researcher observed only a few countable

devotees turn on. The Hope Church's main pastor coordinates and conducts the proceedings or prayer service. On a few occasions, a guest gospel preacher is invited.

Moreover, again, the Hope Church usually offers some monetary contribution to the guest gospel preacher to accept the invitation and deliver his holy message. The Hope Church committee professionally organises and conducts the events. Most of the Church Committee members are well educated and employed.

Moreover, the old and middle-aged devotees are mostly associated with the executive committee of the Hope Church and regular Church activities. Moreover, a few old aged women are also associated with the Hope Church activities, and their association and engagement can be seen and observed as secondary to the male executive committee members, visibly. A few young but married women are associated with the Sunday school activities of the Hope Church, as per the researcher's visible participatory observation.

All this indicates huge age variation and differentiation visible in various activities associated with gender and age differentiation levels in the Hope Church spiritual activities. On the whole, the researcher observed a silent gulf in the participatory variations of the devotees on gender and age differentiation in various programmes. Mostly, the Church's youth is limited to weekly youth sessions, musical and singing sessions of the Hope Church. The youth and women participation in the Church's regular activities is minimal, especially when compared with the Congregation-A.

The researcher observed a particular competitive atmosphere within the Hope Church executive committee members on a few parameters based on spiritual notions, etc. Nathan, a person belonging to the Mala caste is highly associated with Hope Church service for many years. During an interaction with the researcher, Nathan shared his association with the Congregation-B since his childhood. Though Nathan belongs to the Mala community, he is associated with the Madiga dominated Hope Church. Moreover, Nathan's family is accustomed to associate only with the Congregation-B over a few generations. As a result, he is glad to continue the same association. The researcher observed that though Nathan is well educated and retired, he got some nominal position

in the Hope Church's regular executive committee's reconstitution. Professionally, Nathan is a medical doctor.

### **A Serious Nexus of Caste and Religion**

The Congregation-B's Hope Church pastor is appointed by the executive committee on a fixed payable salary and is provided housing space within the Hope Church premises. As per the Congregation-B's principle, the pastor attends prayer services without any cassock, unlike other Protestant congregations like the Congregation-A. Apart from the pastor, the Church also appointed a few attending workers temporarily for cleaning and assisting activities. The attendees also belong to the Madiga community. Thus, this indicates that all the involved persons appointed by the Hope Church committee usually belong to the Madiga community, like the pastor, support staff, etc. This proves that for both the Congregation-A and Congregation-B, an institutionalised caste form has been continuing in strict coherent form even in modern times, albeit subject to some modifications and adjustments from traditional setup.

### **Pastor's Preaching Style**

The pastor attends a few important Church services like the Sunday main service by wearing good impressive dress patterns like mostly suit. However, during other services, he attends and conducts services on a simple dressing pattern. The pastor attends and conducts all the prayer services, as per visible observation, carefully with utmost prior preparation. His preaching voice, if required, sounds like a command of the God Lord based on the Biblical interpretation. However, the pastor is careful enough not to terrify with his Biblical interpretation. His Biblical interpolations continue in a democratic model but left the final command to be adopted by the devotees.

### **Serious Senior Devotees Interest in Biblical Discourse**

A few attending devotees are earnest in receiving, deliberating and following the Biblical scriptural discourse and interpretations, like the senior citizens. These utmost serious senior devotees maintain notes taking of the Biblical interpretations delivered by the pastor. These serious devotees knowledge of biblical interpretations is also very high to

judge the pastor's delivery on rational and critical reasoning based on their long devotional faith experience. The serious devotees carry not just Bible, but a bag containing a songs book, notes to note down, pen, etc.

### **Semi-Christmas Celebration**

All the Churches have the tradition, custom and lineage of organising semi-Christmas celebrations prior to December 25, the actual Christmas day. Suitable arrangements are usually made by the Congregation-B's Hope Church executive committee to mark this event on a prominent basis. Usually, the Congregation-B conducts semi-Christmas programme to show its presence in society and among the co-Christian brotherhood. The researcher observed that the Church executive committee invited a prominent politician for the semi-Christmas celebration in 2012. In the district's geographical region, the invited politician held certain political clout on behalf of a major political party. Most importantly, the Chief Guest of the semi-Christmas event hailed from the Madiga community. Thus, a clear caste nexus is visible in the Hope Church's organising event.

The researcher realised that though the politician obliged to attend the semi-Christmas celebration, in reality, he has less faith in any religion. This nature of the politician indicates that he was satisfying his invitees and diplomatically continued to extend his political hold across various sections by satisfying them like by accepting these kinds of invitations. Most notably, the chief guest happened to be a key person in the then AP government. Thus, both the Church executive committee members and chief guest had sought mutual benefit through this event. Though the chief guest happened to be a non-spiritual person, as per schedule, there was another person or priest to deliver the major semi-Christmas message. The whole event got organised on an impressive scale, which provided short special programmes like skits, special songs, etc.

On the eve of Christmas, the researcher observed that a few business units placed their advertisements outside the Church, which also extended greetings to the devotees on Christmas and New Year. This indicated that Hope Church is recognised as a significant Church by a few sections of City-Q like those from the business community.

### **Advocate SK's Individual Leadership Projection**

Advocate SK, though practices law in the local courts, he does not have good income from legal practices. He is politically ambitious to get exposure as a champion of the marginalised sections like Dalits. However, he is by and large unsuccessful so far. His inclination towards political aspiration has been budding since his university student days. He belongs to the Madiga caste. As a result, he aspires to establish himself as a Madiga leader but remained an individualistic person. He expresses his stout opposition to the MRPS leader, Manda Krishna Madiga and feels that he can be a better leader but cannot become one due to lack of recognition from others. He was active in the MRPS initial formatting years as a young aspirant. Since he failed to become a full-fledged leader, he maintains a certain level of individual association with other disgruntled Madiga and MRPS activists and leaders.

SK projects himself as a Madiga leader during the anti-Telangana movement. Towards this end, he used to release a few letterheads claiming as a Madiga leader from coastal Andhra. He was demanding to keep AP united without forming separate TS. Some sections of mainstream Telugu media used to highlight persons like Advocate SK in their coverage. However, in reality, Advocate SK is a mere individual and projects his candidature as a leadership credential through media coverage. In order to gain recognition in the broader society as a leader, he used to maintain a few individuals beside him, now and then, as his followers.

Unfortunately, SK is not a well-established lawyer in City-Q, and he leads a poverty stricken life. Though SK has a Christian Madiga upbringing, he is not seen as an adherent practising Christian. He does not go to the Church and does not maintain Christian spirituality. Apart from the legal profession, his extended public life revolves around issues related to Dalit and Dalit Bahujan organisations. However, he is well interested to project himself cautiously as a Madiga leader amidst other existing organisations and leaders. In self-projecting as a Madiga leader from the coastal Andhra zone, SK even organises a few meetings at private function halls. Though he is financially struggling to meet his end, he is interested in organising such public events.

In due course of time, the researcher found in City-Q that a few Madiga persons came together during the anti-TS formation movement and had joint agitations. As a result collective leadership emerged. Such initiation of the Madiga elders at some level paid considerable positive yield. As a result, a group of Madigas came together to express their opposition to the INC plans to bifurcate AP. They saw certain damage to the Andhra-Rayalaseema region in case separate TS was formed. However, during this phase, no specific issue of Christian Dalits was ever discussed. Most of the people taking part in the Dalit and Dalit Bahujan organisations belonged to the SC Madiga and Mala background, and most of them had no BC-C lineage.

During his ideal private time, SK is mostly disappointed for failing to settle well as a leader and establish a family. He lives a lonely bachelor life. However, his very aged mother resides at a nearby village. Now and then, SK visits his mother. Though SK is disappointed, he uses to enthuse himself by assuming possible opportunities that may emerge to make him a leader. During the researcher's fieldwork SK developed certain hope on the upcoming leadership of YSRCP, Jagan. He expected that during the next scheduled elections to the AP legislative assembly in 2014, after possible separate TS formation, YSRCP might come to power, and Jagan could become the AP CM.

The researcher also observed SK's wishful intention to get into the eyes of YSRCP leader Jagan, which may benefit him in due course of time for his political upliftment. SK also has a certain antagonistic view and distance with the TDP and TDP's leader, Naidu. Overall, though SK is interested in the issues of Dalits, atrocities against Dalits and Dalit Bahujan concerns, in reality, he is silent on the issue of the Christian Dalits reservation and how to secure Christian Dalit reservation under the SC fold. This is a regular phenomenon in the Telugu region and South India among the Dalit leaders and activists to maintain silence towards the Christian Dalits reservation under the SC fold.

SK failed to settle in life by securing a government job. However, he is primarily associated with the SC Madiga movement section. Most of the Madigas are with Christianity, as per unofficial government records. Like most of the individuals and leaders in the Telugu region, he is also not bothered about the dubious Christian status claimed by the SC Dalits.

The BC-C section is seen as a forward section by the people taking part in the Dalit and Dalit-Bahujan organisations. Moreover, the BC-C category is seen as a well off section by the SC status claimed Dalits. Most of the people with whom the researcher interacted say that nowadays, most Dalits are not opting for BC-C status, consciously, to avoid poverty-stricken life and preferring to opt SC status, though they practice Christianity in the private family realm. It has become a difficult task to find any new family, which opted for BC-C status from an SC background. The SC category people say how well the BC-C category opted people are struck in poverty, as they failed to ameliorate their socio-economic situation by utilising reservation. This establishes that Dalits prime empowerment lay in the utilisation of reservation since they lack other sources of livelihood avenues like agricultural land, etc.

### **Pastor Elisha**

Pastor Elisha is a Protestant denomination pastor in City-Q, having caste and religious affiliation under the Madiga BC-C category. He has Post Graduation degree in English literature. However, he failed to secure a government job and settle well. When the researcher went to his residence, he lived in a rented space, and his residential area and house depicted his poverty background. Caste wise his birth, belonged to the Madiga community. However, since he failed to secure an SC category certificate and obtained a BC-C credential, he is, in a way, forced to lead poverty-stricken life with his wife and children. Elisha's reference was suggested by Advocate SK when the researcher sought details of BC-C category people. Even to SK and others, it became a challenging task to suggest pin pointedly who are under BC-C either under the Congregation-A or Congregation-B domains.

In his professional activities, Elisha is focused on his family and spiritual activities and nowhere visibly concerned and focused on political activity, be it related to Christian Dalit activism or otherwise. Though he is a friend of SK, he is never associated with him for political activities and activism. At another level, due to poverty, Elisha can also be recognised as failing to maintain high-level contacts with affluent sections even in Christianity. If Elisha is a priest in established Congregations like Congregation-A or

Congregation-B, his life would have been a little better. However, he chose to opt and contend with his independent Protestant pastor's professional life.

Pastor Elisha shared once with the researcher that he personally witnessed TDP chief Naidu's negative attitude against the marginalised sections if they are well dressed. In this respect, he said that once he had paid a personal visit to Naidu, by dressing well, Naidu was not interested in looking directly at him and Naidu's face was unhappy. Then, as per his testimony, he realised the feudal mindset and attitude of Naidu, which surprised him.

Elisha clarified that most of his devotees and other Dalits have been acquiring Hindu SC credentials since they cannot prosper socially and economically with the BC-C credentials. However, he is not objecting directly to such a process adopted by most of his devotees. He became a mute spectator to this entire process like most other Christian preaching community leadership. At another level, Elisha also keenly observed Dalit politics and believed that the affluent BC-C section politics and aspiration to lead mainstream (Christian identity) politics would not yield a positive result. He mainly meant the political activities unleashed by the ICSP. He is of the firm view that for Christians, their political and social identity lay in their caste identity, primarily. Thus, he undermine and look down on the mainstream Dalit political leaders, activists, and activism.

### **Summary and Conclusion**

The chapter focused on Congregation-A and Congregation-B unit Churches in City-Q, i.e. Grace and Hope Churches, respectively. Grace Church is under intense land misappropriation deal agitation mode for a significant duration. However, the Grace Church devotees are finally successful in ensuring their victory tilt in their favour through corrigendum issued by their central executive committee. Towards this end, the Grace Church devotees waged a relentless battle against the lessee and the central executive committee members. The agitation undertaken by the Grace Church established how they imbibed and continued democratic ways and means within their Congregation-A. Young and middle-aged devotees are active under the Grace Church.



As per claims and observations made within the Congregation-A and outside the Congregation-A, Congregation-A's properties have been getting misappropriated on a massive scale over the years. As a result, a certain sense of apprehension is expressed that, like Congregation-B's defunct nature, Congregation-A also might lose properties and become defunct.

Congregation-B's asserts got massively misappropriated over the years, and it stood on the defunct front. Efforts to rejuvenate the Congregation-B's glory have been futile so far. However, Hope Church has maintained its glory well in City-Q. This is a kind of unique success of the Hope Church under Congregation-B. The Hope Church is well maintained when compared with the Grace Church. Hope Church is located adjacent to the main road amidst in City-Q. However, on a comparative basis with the Grace Church, the Hope Church has fewer parking spaces. Moreover, space was also less for further expansion of the Hope Church. Only limited extension measures can be initiated to expand the Hope Church.

Both Grace and Hope Churches are dominated by the Mala and Madiga Christian devotees. However, most of the associated Christian Dalits with the two Churches sought SC status for reservation utilization. And, based on SC reservation utilization they wish to advance their social and economic status through government employment, if secured, successfully. Thus, though Christian Dalits mostly profess Christianity over the years and for the past few generations – they have been acquiring SC status, preferably – but not BC-C category. Christian Dalits were fearful and apprehensive about the BC-C status acquisition, which in their fearful view can ruin their life and subsequent generations' life also. Thus, overall, in City-Q, in the light of Grace and Hope Churches, it is well established that there is no Christian Dalit movement within these two Churches. The Christian Dalits feel their historically marginalised caste identity as the prime identity. Later, only Christian identity follows as a subsequent secondary identity concern.

At both the Grace and Hope Churches the devotees are not interested to let the researcher know about their reservation status, i.e. either in SC or BC-C. Same time, the researcher also observed that Christian Dalits in both the Churches are not bothered about the mainstream Dalit movement and they are also by and large unaware of the legal cases

filed and fought by the Christian (Dalit) leaders in the Supreme Court of India. All this establishes that the Christian Dalits are not facing any threat from any sources and leading a comfortable life by seeking their preferred reservation status, i.e., BC-C or SC as per their conviction. Mostly, the Christian Dalits at both the Churches are not having any direct association either with the mainstream Dalit movement or with the mainstream political parties.

## Chapter: VII

# CONCLUSION

### Abstract:

*The whole thesis focus, in some sense, lay in looking at Christian Dalits and Hindutva's opposition to Christian Dalits reservation under Scheduled Castes fold. The chapter provides a kind of summary of the whole thesis. At last, it majorly points out that there is no Dalit Christian movement in the Telugu region for securing reservation under the SC fold. The wider Dalit movement in the Telugu region is silent on this issue. The major style followed in this chapter is based on comparison with the 'review of the literature'. Thus, the 'similarity and contrast' dynamics between 'review of the literature' presented in chapter II and empirical chapters from IV to VI can be observed.*

### **Lack of Mass Movement for Christian Dalit Reservation**

The CBCI and NCCI are at the forefront in seriously engaging with the Christian Dalits reservation issue at the national level. Both the CBCI and NCCI are fighting in the Supreme Court of India to secure SC reservation to the Christian Dalits. Same time, CBCI and NCCI also encourage organising ‘black Sunday’ - every second Sunday in August, protesting against the 10 August 1950 Constitutional Order. As a further extension to this sequence in November, every second Sunday is marked as 'liberation Sunday'. As part of 'liberation Sunday', the necessity to engage with the concept of ‘liberation theology’ is highlighted. In City-Q, the CBCI and NCCI propagated vigour in engaging with the black Sunday and liberation Sunday is not much observed. As a result, the research finds a contract with Fayiz (2020) Louis (2007), Bosco (2010). But then, the Catholic Church, described in chapter V observes liberation Sunday concept as a passing remark. CBCI (2016). Thus, certain similarity is seen between the Catholic Church described in chapter V in City-Q in consonance with the CBCI (2016). Such corresponding consonance is not visible in Grace and Hope Churches, which widely shares network with the NCCI. As a result, in City-Q, it can be concluded, to an extent, that the Catholic Church is following the CBCI directives to an extent, but not the Protestant Church, i.e., Grace and Hope Churches.

In both the Grace and Hope Churches, the particular kind of activism for ‘black Sunday’ and ‘liberation Sunday’ is absent. However, both Congregation-A and Congregation-B are well aware of these issues. Thus, the CBCI and NCCI are inclined towards recognising Christian Dalits problems from the ambit of 1950 Constitutional Order and liberation Sunday. However, in reality, in City-Q, such an impact is minimal. Thus, it establishes that the CBCI and NCCI are forging reformation agenda from ‘above’. However, the same is not well received at the established mainstream Grace and Hope Churches, which operate below. This indicates a gap in communication and commitment to showcasing the same at both the Churches.

The thesis also highlights that both the mainstream Dalit movement and judicial activism led by the CBCI and NCCI fail to converge to express popular will against the 1950 Constitutional Order's categorisation of the SC on religious grounds. This is the unique finding found by the research, which is not established by mainstream literature. Though caste is the central background for Dalits, after conversion to Christianity, Dalits engaged with hybrid forms of cultural practices. As a result, they fail to have marriage alliances with other castes even after conversion. Moreover, they prefer to find caste and religious-based cultural continuity by having marriage alliances with the same caste people in the same religion. Thus, caste and religion is a continuing sequence. Only under exceptional circumstances, such continuity is broken. Very rarely marriages are solemnised based on a strict Christian identity by leaving behind caste identity. (Devi, 2006)

For most of the Christian Dalits, their livelihood revolves around the service sector. This establishes that they lack strong income sources emanating from established business enterprises. Though most Dalits do not have traditional and modern income sources like land and business, some sections of the Christian Dalit population are empowered due to reservation policy under SC or BC-C categories.

## II

### **A Comparison of Grace and Hope Churches**

Though both the Grace and Hope Churches are located within City-Q in different locations, they never had any direct or indirect role related to Christian spirituality or as part of broader led movement against the anti-Telangana movement. Both the Churches and their devotees operate in their respective domains. There lack a certain level of inter-congregational Christian spiritual transaction. However, they are leading a peaceful spiritual activity and life. Primarily, any engagement and communication are held between congregations level but not at respective Church levels. Thus, since Grace and Hope Churches fall under two domains of separate congregations, any direct spiritual engagement is not visible. Moreover, the Congregation-B stands on a defunct mode over the years. As a result, a direct communication channel between Congregation-A and Congregation-B is not operational and visible.

Though Congregation-B stands on a defunct mode over the years, in reality, the Grace Church, which has a wider shared ecumenical direction under the Congregation-B, is able to sustain well and operate independently. This is an exceptional success of the Hope Church. Moreover, unlike Grace Church, Hope Church is well organised and maintained comparatively. While in the Grace Church, young and middle-aged devotees from both genders are active; at the Hope Church, primarily middle and old aged are active. The youth are mostly limited to weekly singing and music practice and display ventures on regular Saturdays and Sundays at the Hope Church. The Hope Church youth concentrate on their academic activities during the remaining weekdays. This is a pretty contrasting situation in both the Churches.

Intense democratic aspirations and engagement are seen at the Grace Church, primarily. Significantly, Congregation-A's lease agreement has created sensational havoc amidst the Grace Church devotees. As a result, they undertook prolonged agitation against their Congregation-A's Central Executive Committee members and at last won victory over the lessee. Due to intensified democratic battle waged by the Grace Church devotees, the Congregation-A's Central Executive Committee released a corrigendum to the original lease deal. This kind of internal democratic fight within Churches and congregations are not well noted in the available literature on Christian Dalits. Thus, chapter VI brings a new discourse into the Christian Dalits internal democratic aspirations articulation. As a result, it can be observed that chapter VI contributes a significant dimension to the available literature on Christian Dalits and the internal democratic process.

Interestingly, the Grace and Hope Churches have democratic processes intact and alive. The respective 'Executive Committee' members of these Churches are democratically elected. However, specific trends are observable even among elected Executive Committee members of these two Churches. For instance, most of the elected members of the Hope Church are in middle and old age. On the other side, most elected committee members hailed from young and mid-age backgrounds at the Grace Church. However, in the Grace Church, the elected young and mid-age devotees maintained varied levels of association and engagement with the other non-active members. Perhaps, by maintaining

such engagement, they wish to keep their vote base intact and increase further, if required to get re-elected on the subsequent occasions.

In both the Grace and Hope Churches, mainly Mala and Madiga Christians are associated on a dominant scale. The prominent devotees in both the Churches are from BC-C or SC backgrounds. However, most Dalit Christians have an SC identity though they practice Christianity adherently. Visibly, both the BC-C and SC maintain good relations in the Church communities. However, the BC-C devotees have a kind of superiority vis-à-vis their SC counterparts. Some of the SC Christians also observed BC-C as an advanced section. Though a few families claimed BC-C status, they failed to ameliorate their condition and secure government jobs. As a result, most Christian Dalits do not prefer to acquire BC-C status. Thus, a kind of class categorisation notions can be observed among the Christian Dalits, i.e., advanced BC-C sections, less advanced BC-C groups and SC Christians. Again within the SC Christian sect, both advanced and less advanced sections can be observed. However, most SC does not prefer to opt for BC-C status. An attempt to compare the Christian Dalits from SC and BC-C backgrounds is not there in literature. Thus, the preset thesis attempts to bridge such gap in literature to an extent by focusing on City-Q churches.

Even if other caste devotees are associated with the Grace and Hope Churches, they are in the minority, on a visible observation as pointed by others. Thus, caste is a prime social factor in bringing together devotees even after conversion to Christianity from previously practised religious and cultural norms. Like other religions in the Indian sub-continent, Christianity has failed to curb caste identities after conversion. Same time, the devotees in the Indian context have been failing to overcome their previous caste identities after conversion.

Caste is a continuing thread before conversion and after conversion. However, upon close observation, certain levels of cultural and spiritual practices have been undergoing drastic variations among the devotees' practices. Thus, after conversion, mainly hybrid cultural practices are observable. The devotees visibly maintained and practised Indian dressing patterns and traditions even in Grace and Hope Churches. Thus, the research finds a similarity with Devi's (2006) observations. As a result, Indian devotees cannot be

considered foreign subjects upon conversion to religions like Christianity. Thus, a certain level of the propagated slogan - 'Hindu is equal to a nationalist', and 'non-Hindu amounts to anti-national' are quite untrue and unrealistic. As a result, it can be observed that the research finds certain similarities with Jaffrelot (2011) in denouncing Hindu nationalists' superiority notion vis-à-vis religious minorities in India.

### III

#### **Passive Christian Dalits and Passive Hindutva**

Though the Hindutva usually rack religious sentiments against the religious minorities like the Christians and Muslims and be successful electorally – that is not the case in City-Q. Though the presence of religious minorities is widespread across City-Q, the Hindutva is passive. Thus, in regions like the South Indian Telugu region, the Hindutva cannot make an issue of widespread religious minorities and be successful electorally. As of now, this position appears to be a challenge to the Hindutva. The Hindutva is also conscious of the presence of Muslims and Christians across the Telugu region. For instance, the Hindutva considers the Muslims to be showcased as a potential threat in the TS and be successful electorally. On the other side, the Hindutva is seriously considering raking religious anxieties in residual AP by showcasing Christians as an immediate threat to the Hindu identity. In this process, the Christian identity of YSRCP leader Jagan is highlighted much. However, on a comparative basis, the Hindutva appears to be successful, on a limited scale, in the TS than in residual AP.

The Hindutva under BJP is not electorally successful in the residual AP region. Due to various factors, the BJP in the electoral fray in the residual AP domain performs poorly. For instance, the BJP headed NDA government's inability and intentional side-track in failing to grant SCS appears to be one prime factor in this respect.

When seen from the realm of historic marginalisation shown against the Dalits, the 1950 Constitutional Order and denial mode to either amend or repeal, especially in favour of Christian Dalits inclusion, indicate that *Sanatana Dharma's* concept is re-invented and operated in varied forms. Thus, the argument finds similarity with Jodhka (2013) that caste re-incarnates as per the evolving circumstances and operates in renewed fashion.



## **A Challenge to Indian Secularism and Secularisation Process**

The decades together deliberate procrastination process adopted by the Indian State, political class and judicial section indicate that the process is dragged intentionally. Such intentional denial of equality and justice by repealing the 1950 Constitutional Order amounts to questioning the operational dynamics of the adopted Constitution. Prolonged procrastination in repealing the 1950 Constitutional Order amounts to not adhering to original Constitution's mandated egalitarian principles of building a social justice based society, through constitutional authority. As a result, the 'secularism policy' and the 'secularisation process', for which the Indian State should strive are under severe threat. Thus, the Indian constitutional vision of building an egalitarian society is intentionally neglected. Thus, in some sense, the research finds similarity with Bhargava (1998, 2010) in exposing limitations of the Indian secularism concerning the Christian Dalits reservation denial mode under the SC fold.

The Hindutva cannot attract Hindu Dalit sections on a massive scale into the fold and rack religious anxieties against the converted sections like Christian Dalits, so far, in the Telugu region. As per some unofficial estimates, most of the Dalits are into Christianity. In case if any Hindu Dalits sail with the Hindutva and attempt to rack religious anxieties, such attempts may not yield substantive results. The majority of the Dalits in the Telugu region are in the fold of Christianity.

Even the significant mainstream Dalit movement, activists and cadre are from Christian Dalit backgrounds, though they are silent about their Christian identity. Thus Dalits are not making their religious identity an issue and racking unnecessary anxieties. However, the Hindutva can co-opt a few individual Hindu Dalits into its fold and rack religious anxieties against the Christian Dalits, now and then on a low intensity. Nevertheless, the Christian Dalits are not fearsome with such attempts. Chapter IV captures and presents such dimensions in the Telugu region.

Overall, the Hindutva is attempting to mobilise the larger societal sections against the Christian Dalit identity by pointing that they are seeking SC certificates by deceiving the State, society, their religion and doing greater injustice to the genuine Hindu Dalit, who

should be able to benefit from the SC reservation domain. To what extent such mass hysteria attempts against Christian Dalits might turn successful or fail is yet to be observed.

In this whole sequence, the Hindutva sections fail to recognise 'religious conversion as a liberal secular right' in modern democracies, which operate based on the Constitution and the rule of law procedures. At the same time, Hindutva is silent against religious conversions of non-Dalit sections and their reservation issues. Thus, Hindutva selectively targets the Christian Dalits in the Telugu region. These dynamics are well covered under chapter IV's focus. Moreover, the Hindutva fails to justify why only SC reservation should be exclusively denied to the Christian Dalits upon their conversion? Thus, the Hindutva attempts to argue and highlight the (discriminatory) 1950 Constitutional Order dynamics but not based on the rational arguments that denounce the relevance of the 1950 Constitutional Order.

#### IV

#### **Decline of Modern Dalit Movement and Rise of Social Media Dynamics**

The modern Dalit movement, which rose to prominence since the Karamchedu massacre, lost its grip after 2004. The YSR regime's welfare programmes scattered the Dalit movement and activists at some level. While Naidu's TDP governance regime was inclined much towards the neo-liberal policies implementation, the YSR regime, in addition to the following of neo-liberal style of economic development, increased the pace of access to welfare programmes. However, the Madiga-Mala rivalry 'for and against' the SC sub-categorisation issue continued upto 2008-2009. The Usha Mehra Committee, which the Union Government constituted to study the feasibility of SC reservation sub-categorisation in AP, submitted its report. However, the Union Government failed to act in time and initiate positive measures paving the way for sub-categorisation of SC reservation.

Meanwhile, YSR died in a tragic helicopter crash. As a result, the Telangana movement took a new leap forward under TRS and other civil society agencies. In the meantime, the Dalit movement declined and started to take sides 'in favour and against' the Telangana

formation. Thus, the united AP Dalit movement, which was present till then, started to disintegrate on regional lines of – coastal Andhra, Rayalaseema and Telangana. Further sub-regional articulations are also visible and audible, like those based on - north coastal Andhra, south coastal Andhra, greater Rayalaseema, north Telangana, etc. These dynamics concerning coastal Andhra's City-Q are well presented in chapter V. However, in due course of time, the INC led UPA Union Government formed separate TS in 2014.

In another way, when the intensified separate Telangana movement started in 2009 and lasted upto 2014, social media dynamics also emerged across the globe. The Telugu region is no exception to the social media space. The Dalit and other marginalised sections presence started to get marked on social media. As a result, the 1980's Dalit movement, activism, activists and leaders started to lose their grip slowly.

Though the YSR regime intensified welfare programmes for the larger benefit of marginalised sections, such a trend failed to pacify the Telangana movement, especially after his death. Also, the INC led the UPA government's intentional procrastination, and failure to sub-categorise the Dalits resulted in a slow decline of the Dalit movement. Thus, the modern Dalit movement, which rose to prominence since the 1985 Karamchedu massacre, lost grip after 20-25 years of operational dynamics. Moreover, new social media dynamics started. Through the lenses of chapter IV, these dynamics can be keenly observed to an extent. Thus, in a way, chapter IV has a unique contribution in presenting the triangular relation of the (Christian) Dalits, Hindutva and mainstream politics in the age of social media domination. Mainly, the inactive mode of the mainstream of the Dalit movement concerning rising Hindutva against Christianity and Christian Dalits can be observed under the lenses of chapter IV. As a result, new social media icons from the Dalit section emerged. This process is continuing.

## V

### **Social Media and Rise of New Dalit Icons**

In addition to mainstream Dalit activists and leaders - a new generation of Dalit and Dalit-Bahujan sections started to mark their presence on mainstream media and social media. The thesis portrayed a few of these new social media dominated Dalit activists

and leaders like Mahesh Kathi; Praveen Kumar, former IPS officer; and Sujatha Surepalli. Though these three Dalit activists had their major emergence to prominence over social media, the mainstream media also recognised their prominence and provided them now and then specific space for expressing their views. However, in reality, such a liberal space provided by social media, in reality, failed to present, as of now, any substantive liberation to the Dalits and Christian Dalits. This predicament nature of the Dalits and Christian Dalits brings to the forefront the critique of liberal democracy presented by Guru (2011) concerning the Dalits.

The other sections of the Telugu region caste groups also started to have their widespread presence across social media. As a result, a certain sense of commotion between the Dalit social media group dynamics versus other caste sections anxieties produced virtual conflict. In this regard, the mainstream Hindutva's target is Mahesh Kathi, Praveen Kumar, and Sujatha Surepalli. Thus, in the neo-liberal era and social media dominant widespread times, the Dalits are treated as Dalits only, and the rest of the caste society cursed their presence on social media. The mainstream Dalit movement activist section and social media emerged activist group also fail to present another leap forward in achieving Dalit unity with other marginalised sections and capturing political power. However, Praveen Kumar is forging attempts on behalf of the BSP to bring unity among Dalits and other marginalised sections in the TS and capture political power. To what extent his actions would result in a positive outcome should be observed.

## VI

### **A Critique of Hindutva**

The thesis also exposed that in City-Q, the Hindutva is passive. A few significant sections are with the Hindutva, like with the BJP's Dalit Morcha. However, the BJP's Dalit Morcha leadership and cadre are inactive and unable to take over against the Christian Dalits. Nevertheless, on behalf of the larger Hindutva, a few groups are operating on social media and attempting to rake religious anxieties against Christian Dalits. As a result, varying groups of Christians (Dalits) and Hindutva are well-positioned against each other on social media. This trend has been continuing.

Though the Hindutva appears to express against the Christians, its prime focal operational focus is against Christian Dalits. Thus, social media-based Hindutva recognises Christianity as a synonymous sect with Dalits. As a result, hatred against foreign-born Christianity now turns out as a renewed hatred against Christian Dalits. This establishes how Dalits, be in Hindu religion or religions like Christianity, face discrimination, commonly in renewed fashion. This is a most significant challenge to the Dalit identity. Thus, the research finds similarities with Teltumbde (2008) Webster (2021). However, Teltumbde and Webster fail to specifically engage with Hindutva in the Telugu region of modern times. As a result, the research from City-Q and united AP gains significance in specifically understanding the dynamics.

The Hindutva expresses prime opposition against the religious conversion of Dalits only but not against the conversion of other sections of the society. The Hindutva perceives conversion of Dalits as problematic and projects as if the decline of Hinduism happens due to the conversion of Dalit masses. By opposing Dalits formal conversion to Christianity, the Hindutva feels that it protects Hinduism and keeps it intact. However, in reality, though they seek SC status legally, the Christian Dalits profess Christianity on an adherent basis in their day-to-day life. Thus, Hindutva is not interested in identifying and recognising caste as a unifying factor and connecting South Asians even after conversion from Hinduism to other religions like Christianity. This is a prominent intellectual, ideological, political, sociological, and cultural drawback of Hindutva and centrist INC. Thus, this argument of the researcher draws close to the critique of Patnaik (2016).

When caste as a unifying factor among South Asians even after conversion to religions like Christianity is well recognised by mainstream political parties, like the BJP and INC, then Indian political discourse will undergo drastic modification. However, Hindutva and centrist INC fail to recognise the caste as a common connecting thread among South Asians after conversion to Christianity. Thus, the mainstream political parties are side-tracking without considering caste criteria upon conversion to non-Indic religions. This researcher's observation finds certain continuing consonance with Parkhe (2007) and Bosco (2010). However, Parkhe (2007) and Bosco (2010) failed to question political dynamics in this process on a concrete process.

### **Caste and Christianity**

The empirical instance of Grace and Hope Churches indicates how caste operates as an intact syndrome even after conversion to Christianity. This dimension in the Grace and Hope Churches presents similarities with Kujur (2010) and Rajpramukh (2008). As a result, based on prime caste identity, the Christian devotees are associated dominantly with their respective Congregation's - A & B. As a result, in the Indian context, caste as a peculiar institution continues before and after conversion. Thus, Indians cannot escape caste clutches either in Hinduism or in religions like Christianity. However, there appears to be some modified variation before and after conversion. (Devi, 2006) For a better study of conversion prospectus before and after conversion is a cultural and sociological domain. However, it is visible that various caste people are coming together based on shared Christian spirituality in a few Churches. Nevertheless, in reality, such collaborative spiritual engagement fails to produce inter-caste marriages on a dominant scale. Thus, the degree of caste engagement and operational dynamics are not fully relaxed psychologically among the devotees.

In City-Q, both the Grace and Hope Churches fail to mobilize Christian devotees on a mass scale in favour of leading activism and movement to repeal the 1950 Presidential Order. If the rallying Christian Dalits for SC status emerges, then such a position might critique that the Indian Church is leading a political movement. The Indian Church denominations are fighting a legal battle to grant SC status to the Christian Dalits. The CBCI and NCCI lead this legal battle. At another level, even if Christian Dalits fail to politicise their faced discrimination, then such a position indicates their inability. Thus, from both sides, critique is visible and constructed. Though the Indian State primarily discriminates against the Christian Dalits, the upper caste dominated political class and judiciary are unable to rectify their problem by repealing the 1950 Presidential Order.

The decades together judicial procrastination in failing to declare null and void the relevance of the 1950 Constitutional Order indicates how vulnerable sections like the Christian Dalits are. They are unable to get justice in India. As a result, it establishes a

genuine need to demand reservation to the vulnerable sections even in the judiciary. When interests of the vulnerable sections are declined and denied over decades together, then such a step should be initiated.

The thesis focused empirical study establishes how there is no collaborative engagement between the mainstream Dalit movement activists and leaders on one side with the Christian Dalit sections who are denied SC status. In another way, though most mainstream Dalit movement leaders and activists have Christian Dalit backgrounds, they fail to highlight and politicise their faced common pertinent problem of repealing the 1950 Presidential Order. However, the mainstream Dalit activists and leaders are divided on the issue of 'sub-categorisation of SC'. Same time, they are primarily united on their respective caste identity tag. This major researcher's observation questions the available major literature on the Dalit movement for failing to observe the Christian background of Dalits and their failure to highlight the discriminatory 1950 Constitutional Order. In this sequence, researchers like Ratnam (2008), Sambaiah (2000), M (2013) failed to critique the Dalit movement from the Christian Dalit background and passive nature of the Christian Dalits in failing to fight for repeal of the 1950 Constitutional Order.

## VIII

### **Hindutva Versus Christian Dalits: Social Media Dynamics**

A few Hindutva affiliated organisations and individuals are attempting to rake the religious identity of the Dalits in Christianity and politicise the dramatics on a mass scale. The mainstream Dalit movement activists and leaders are majorly unwilling to take against this kind of Hindutva group. As a result, a new section of pastors and devotees is primarily based on social media engagement and association against such Hindutva organisations and individuals. These dynamics of Hindutva elements activism against Christian(s) (Dalits) and pastors and devotees counter mobilisation are primarily taking place on social media. The researcher vividly captured and presented these aspects in chapter IV. This is a unique contribution of the researcher. This unique contribution also fills certain available literature vacuum in this direction, especially concerning the Telugu region.

The mainstream Dalit movement activists and leaders fail to provide and lead leadership against the Hindutva sections, which object to the Christian Dalits religious freedom and utilisation of reservation under the SC fold. The Hindutva forces object to mere association with Churches without formal baptism certificates acquisition. This is a gross breach of secular political dynamics and a severe threat to the secularisation process. As a result, the egalitarian principles set forth by the Constitution of India to be strived for and achieved are in severe violation and threat.

On the whole, the shallow nature of the Dalit movement is visible when seen from the lenses of the empirical study in City-Q that though the majority of the Dalits are in Christianity, the broader Dalit movement is unable to lead the movement to recognise them under the SC fold, legally. As a result, only a few Church leaders from Catholic and Protestant sects are coordinating legal battles against the Indian State's selective denial of Christian Dalits religious rights at the Supreme Court of India level. However, the Christian Dalits reservation issue is unable to get effective politicisation and play a dominant role in the electoral domain. When and how such a scenario may or may not emerge is to be observed.

At the Grace and Hope Churches, the Christian devotees, especially those in the SC category, are afraid to share with the researcher about their official caste and religious backgrounds when asked explicitly. As a result, there is a potential problem in specifically constructing qualitative versions from the Christian Dalit devotees regarding the denial of reservation under the SC fold. However, it widely establishes that Grace and Hope Church devotees, though mainly belong to Christian Dalit backgrounds, are not doing any activism to secure their official Christian Dalit reservation under the SC fold. They ideally lead a Christian Dalit life without directly engaging with the mainstream Dalit movement and knowing about the judicial fight going on in the Supreme Court of India on their behalf.

At the Supreme Court of India, judicial fights to secure SC status by repealing the 1950 Constitutional Order are fought by the CBCI and NCCI. At City-Q and in Grace and Hope Churches, the Christian Dalits lead a passive life without bothering about their denial of reservation under SC fold as per the 1950 Constitutional Order. This indicates



their expression of civil disobedience against the Indian State as most of them are not seeking BC-C status but continue to seek SC status. By interfering in the personal faith of the (Christian) Dalits, the Indian State is facing this civil disobedience from the Christian Dalits who seek SC status but not BC-C. Thus, the State encourages the Christian Dalits to show civil disobedience without repealing the 1950 Constitutional Order.

## IX

### **A Critique of Indic and Non-Indic Religions Categorisation**

Considering and treating Buddhism and Sikhism as part of Hinduism is an insult to the former two religions. The practice of considering Buddhism and Sikhism under the Hindu fold as Indic religions is a profoundly flawed phenomenon. By treating in such a manner, the Indian State and political class are primarily failing to have an objective opinion about caste penetration dynamics in an Indian context, into any religion upon one's conversion, be religions from foreign origin like Christianity and Islam or Indic religions like Buddhism and Sikhism. There is plenty of literature to prove and establish how caste is rigidly operating in religions like Christianity and Islam. Even then, the Indian State headed upper-caste dominated political class fails to recognise the same and repeal the 1950 Presidential Order.

Coupled with the inability of the Indian political class is the Indian judicial system, which also fails over the decades to declare null and void the 1950 Presidential Order. All this process, especially from the political front, establishes how both the right-wing and centrist sections, primarily under the BJP and INC blocks, are against the religious freedom of the Christian Dalits. As a result, the INC regime cannot fully proclaim as a liberal and secular manifestation since the Jawaharlal Nehru times. Thus, the majoritarian tendencies are nurtured and promoted by both the right-wing and centrist upper-caste dominated political sections in the Indian context. As a result, India's constitutionally guaranteed liberal secular democracy is severely violated against the Christian Dalits.

Since the vulnerability of the Christian Dalits is a continuing phenomenon before and after conversion, they are unable to voice united opposition to the 1950 Presidential Order. As a result, the Christian Dalits, when attempted to utilise the theoretical liberal-

secular democracy against the 1950 Presidential Order, the result is unable to produce any beacon light so far. This is a severe challenge to the Indian liberal and secular democracy in both theoretical and practical modes of operational styles. In other words, why theoretically constructed and accepted liberal-secular democracy is selectively targeted to exclude certain sections like the Christian Dalits is a fundamental question. The Indian State, dominantly headed by the upper caste political group, cannot provide a convincing reply to this question so far.

## X

### **Hindutva and Mainstream Politics in the Telugu Region**

The AP Christian Dalits for electoral gains are visibly associated with the YRSCP. As a result, some sections treated and propagated this trend as 'shared religious affinity' maintenance by keeping aside caste-based Reddy and Dalit identities. However, in reality, such a notion appears far from realistic understanding. The dominant association of the Christian Dalits with the YSRCP is majorly understood and considered an outcome of mass welfare programmes declaration, which benefitted even the Christian Dalits and other marginalised groups.

The pragmatic prudence in the actions of a few political parties in the Telugu region is quite visible, who are visibly willing to have a long-term association with a few *Swamijis* and their congregations. In this respect, the TRS and KCR are at the forefront of association with China Jeeyar Swami. Continuing the same kind of pragmatic prudence, the YSR family, after forming governments from 2004 onwards, maintains a well-projected association with Swami Swaroopananda, whose congregational base is majorly located at Visakhapatnam city. However, in this respect, the TDP appears to be lagging in having any projected visible association with Hindu *Swamijis* and congregations. This trend is posing a kind of advanced challenge, on a low note to the BJP and other Hindutva sections in failing to brand other mainstream political parties as anti-Hindu and pro-religious minorities and pseudo-secular.

Though Swami Paripoornananda expected to have a preliminary political prospectus on the lines of BJP UP CM, Yogi Adityanath, in reality, he failed to secure such

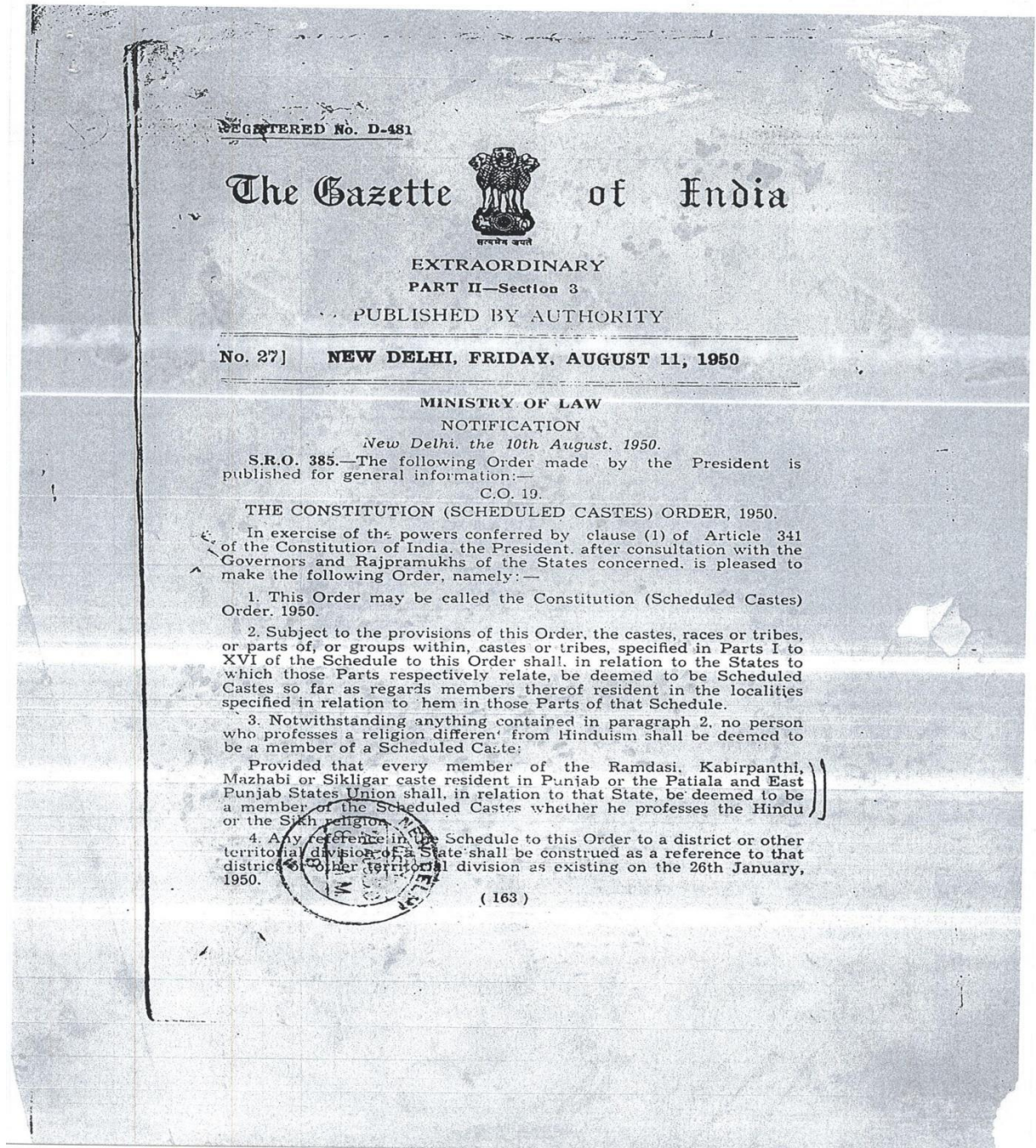
prospectus, at least as of now. Thus, it indicates that the Hindutva and BJP have to adopt and adhere to different styles of leadership dynamics based on prevailing regional political modes. The Hindutva and BJP appear to have realised the same and failed to offer any visibly significant task to Swami Paripoornananda.

The instances of ICSP, IPBP, and PSP to consolidate Christian Dalits have visibly failed during the 2014 and 2019 elections, as these political parties failed to perform impressively. As a result, they can be regarded as mere letter-headed political parties registered with the Election Commission of India. At another level, these political parties and their leaders have failed to realise how a political party's ideological and vote base should be wider to appeal and catch substantive vote share on a convincing tone. Instead of proceeding in such a direction, these parties and their leaders projected their Christian identity on a prime ideological base and sought electoral success. Such an electoral trend poses a serious threat to the secular and secularisation process. At another level, these political parties and their leaders failed to realise the pragmatic operational dynamics of electoral politics in the first-past-the-post style of method.

# **Annexures**

# Annexure - I

## 1950 Constitutional Order



**Source:** Ministry of Social Justice, Government of India.

[https://socialjustice.nic.in/writereaddata/UploadFile/CONSTITUTION%20\(SC\)%20ORDER%201950%20dated%2010081950.pdf](https://socialjustice.nic.in/writereaddata/UploadFile/CONSTITUTION%20(SC)%20ORDER%201950%20dated%2010081950.pdf) – accessed on 19 November 2021.



## Annexure - II

## 1956 Scheduled Castes Order Amendment

834 Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Orders (Amendment) [Act 68]

THE SCHEDULED CASTES AND SCHEDULED TRIBES ORDERS (AMENDMENT) ACT, 1956

ACT No. 63 OF 1956

An Act to provide for the inclusion in, and the exclusion from, the lists of Scheduled Castes and of Scheduled Tribes, of certain castes and tribes and matters connected therewith.

[25th September, 1956]

Enacted by Parliament in the Seventh Year of the Republic of India as follows:—

Short title.  
1. This Act may be called the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Orders (Amendment) Act, 1956.

Definitions.  
2. In this Act,—

(a) "article" means an article of the Constitution;

(b) "census authority" means the Deputy Registrar General, India;

(c) "last census" means the census held in 1951;

(d) "prescribed" means prescribed by rules made under this Act.

Amendment of Scheduled Castes Orders.  
3. (1) The Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950, is hereby amended in the manner and to the extent specified in Schedule I.

(2) The Constitution (Scheduled Castes) (Part C States) Order, 1951, is hereby amended in the manner and to the extent specified in Schedule II.

Amendment of Scheduled Tribes Orders.  
4. (1) The Schedule to the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order, 1950, is hereby amended in the manner and to the extent specified in Schedule III.

(2) The Schedule to the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) (Part C States) Order, 1951, is hereby amended in the manner and to the extent specified in Schedule IV.

835 Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Orders (Amendment)

5. (1) Where the list of Scheduled Castes or Scheduled Tribes in Determination to any State is varied by this Act, the population as at the last census of the Scheduled Castes or, as the case may be, of Scheduled Tribes in that State (including in relation to Assam, Scheduled tribal areas, and the population in each autonomous district thereof) shall be ascertained or estimated by the census authority in such manner as may be prescribed and shall be notified by that authority in the Gazette of India.

Provided that nothing in this section shall apply to any State in relation to which provision for redetermining the population of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes is made in section 42 of the States Reorganisation Act, 1956, or in section 15 of the Bihar and West Bengal (Transfer of Territories) Act, 1956.

(2) The population figures so notified shall be taken to be the relevant population figures as ascertained at the last census and shall supersede any figures previously published.

6. In addition to the duties imposed by section 44 of the States Reorganisation Act, 1956, and any other law on the Delimitation Commission constituted under section 43 of the said Act, it shall be the duty of that Commission—

(a) to redetermine, on the basis of the population figures notified under section 5 of this Act for any State, the number of seats to be reserved for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes of that State in the House of the People and in the Legislative Assembly, if any, of that State, having regard to the relevant provisions of the Constitution and of the States Reorganisation Act, 1956;

(b) if on such redetermination the number of reserved seats of any class in any State is found to be different from the number fixed in Final Order No. 1 of the former Delimitation Commission, to make such amendments in any of the orders made by that Commission under section 8 of the Delimitation Commission Act, 1952, as may be necessary for the purpose of giving proper representation to the Scheduled Castes or the Scheduled Tribes, as the case may be, of that State; and

(c) to take into account the provisions of this section while preparing the Order referred to in sub-section (2) of section 47 of the States Reorganisation Act, 1956.

7. The Central Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, make rules for carrying out the purposes of this Act.

## SCHEDULE I

[See section 3 (1)]

## AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION (SCHEDULED CASTES) ORDER, 1950

1. For paragraph 3, substitute:—

"3. Notwithstanding anything contained in paragraph 2, no person who professes a religion different from the Hindu or the Sikh religion shall be deemed to be a member of a Scheduled Caste."

2. Before the heading "PART I—ASSAM", insert:—

**"PART I—ANDHRA**

Throughout the State:—

1. Adi Andhra
2. Adi Dravida
3. Arundhatiya
4. Bariki
5. Bavuri
6. Chachati
7. Chalavadi
8. Chanar or Muchi
9. Chandala
10. Dandasi
11. Dom, Dombara, Paidi or Pano
12. Ghasi, Haddi or Relhi Chachandi
13. Godagai
14. Godari
15. Gosangi
16. Jaggali
17. Jambuvulu
18. Madasi Kuruva or Madari Kuruva
19. Madiga
20. Mala
21. Mala Dasu
22. Madiga Dasu and Mashteen
23. Matangi

24. Mundala

25. Paky or Moti

26. Pambada or Pambanda

27. Pamithi

28. Panchama or Parah

29. Rehi

30. Samban

31. Sapru

32. Thoti

3. For the heading "PART I—ASSAM", substitute "PART I—ASSAM", and in the said Part,—

(a) for entry 7, substitute:—

"6A. Jalkeot

7. Jhalo, Malo or Jhalo-Malo";

(b) for entry 12, substitute:—

"12. Muchi or Rishi";

4. For **PART H—BIHAR**, substitute:—**"PART H—BIHAR**

1. Throughout the State:—

1. Bantar
2. Bauri
3. Bhogla
4. Chanar or Mochi
5. Chaupal
6. Dabgar
7. Dhobi
8. Dom or Dhangad
9. Duseah, including Dhari or Dharhi.
10. Ghasi
11. Halakhor
12. Hari, Mekhar or Bhangli
13. Kanjar
14. Kurariar
15. Lalbegi


**Source:** Ministry of Social Justice, Government of India.

[https://socialjustice.nic.in/writereaddata/UploadFile/SC%20ST%20ORDER%20\(AMENDMENT\)%20ACT%201956636359887389305949.pdf](https://socialjustice.nic.in/writereaddata/UploadFile/SC%20ST%20ORDER%20(AMENDMENT)%20ACT%201956636359887389305949.pdf) – accessed on 19 November 2021.

Annexure - III

1990 Scheduled Castes Order Amendment

संख्या ३० अ(अए) 127/90



**भारत का राजपत्र**  
**The Gazette of India**

प्रजासत्ताक  
EXTRAORDINARY  
भाग II—खण्ड 1  
PART II—Section 1  
प्रतिपक्षर में प्रकाशित  
PUBLISHED BY AUTHORITY

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सं० 26] नई दिल्ली, सोमवार, जून 4, 1990/ज्येष्ठ 14, 1912  
No. 26] NEW DELHI, MONDAY, JUNE 4, 1990/JYAISTHA 14, 1912

इस भाग में मिला पृष्ठ संख्या दी जाती है जिससे कि यह सलग संकलन के रूप में रखा जा सके।  
Separate page is given to this Part in order that it may be filed as a separate compilation.

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**MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE**  
(Legislative Department)  
New Delhi, the 3rd June, 1990/Jyaistha 14, 1912 (Saka)

The following Act of Parliament received the assent of the President on the 3rd June, 1990, and is hereby published for general information:—

**THE CONSTITUTION (SCHEDULED CASTES) ORDERS (AMENDMENT) ACT, 1990**  
No. 15 of 1990

[3rd June, 1990.]

An Act further to amend the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950 and the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) (Union Territories) Order, 1951 and to amend the Constitution (Jammu and Kashmir) Scheduled Castes Order, 1956, the Constitution (Dadra and Nagar Haveli) Scheduled Castes Order, 1962, the Constitution (Pondicherry) Scheduled Castes Order, 1964 and the Constitution (Sikkim) Scheduled Castes Order, 1978.

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Be it enacted by Parliament in the Forty-first Year of the Republic of India as follows:—

1. This Act may be called the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Orders (Amendment) Act, 1990.

(1)

Authenticated  
*[Signature]*  
[Stamp]



THE GAZETTE OF INDIA EXTRAORDINARY (Part II)

Amendment of the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950.

2. In paragraph 3 of the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950, for the words "or the Sikh", the words "the Sikh or the Buddhist" shall be substituted.

Amendment of the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) (Union Territories) Order, 1951.

3. In paragraph 3 of the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) (Union Territories) Order, 1951, for the words "or the Sikh", the words "the Sikh or the Buddhist" shall be substituted.

Amendment of the Constitution (Jammu and Kashmir) Scheduled Castes Order, 1956.

4. In the proviso to paragraph 2 of the Constitution (Jammu and Kashmir) Scheduled Castes Order, 1956, for the words "or the Sikh", the words "the Sikh or the Buddhist" shall be substituted.

Amendment of the Constitution (Dadra and Nagar Haveli) Scheduled Castes Order, 1962.

5. In the proviso to paragraph 2 of the Constitution (Dadra and Nagar Haveli) Scheduled Castes Order, 1962, for the words "or the Sikh", the words "the Sikh or the Buddhist" shall be substituted.

Amendment of the Constitution (Pondicherry) Scheduled Castes Order, 1964.

6. In the proviso to paragraph 2 of the Constitution (Pondicherry) Scheduled Castes Order, 1964, for the words "or the Sikh", the words "the Sikh or the Buddhist" shall be substituted.

Authenticated  
[Signature]

Secretary to Government  
Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment  
New Delhi

Sec. 1] THE GAZETTE OF INDIA EXTRAORDINARY 3

7. In the proviso to paragraph 2 of the Constitution, (Sikkim) Scheduled Castes Order, 1978, for the words "or the Sikh", the words "the Sikh or the Buddhist" shall be substituted.

Amendment of the Constitution (Sikkim) Scheduled Castes Order, 1978.

V. S. RAMA DEVI,  
Secy to the Govt. of India.

Authenticating  
[Signature]

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CONTROLLED BY THE CONTROLLER OF PUBLICATIONS, DELHI, 1990

Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment  
New Delhi

**Source:** Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India.

[https://socialjustice.nic.in/writereaddata/UploadFile/CONSTITUTION%20\(SC\)%20ORDER%20\(AMENDMENT\)%20ACT%201990.pdf](https://socialjustice.nic.in/writereaddata/UploadFile/CONSTITUTION%20(SC)%20ORDER%20(AMENDMENT)%20ACT%201990.pdf) – accessed on 19 November 2021.

Annexure – IV

Andhra Pradesh Scheduled Castes List

- |  |                                      |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| 01. Adi Andhra   | 30. Kolupulvandlu, Pambanda, Pambala |
| 02. Adi Dravida  | 31. Madasi Kuruva, Madari Kuruva     |
| 03. Anamuk   | 32. Madiga                           |
| 04. Aray Mala  | 33. Madiga Dasu, Mashteen            |
| 05. Arundatiya   | 34. Mahar                            |
| 06. Arwa Mala  | 35. Mala, Mala Ayawaru               |
| 07. Bariki   | 36. Mala Dasari                      |
| 08. Bavuri   | 37. Mala Dasu                        |
| 09. ****   | 38. Mala Hannai                      |
| 10. Bindla   | 39. Malajangam                       |
| 11. Byagara, Byagari   | 40. Mala Masti                       |
| 12. Chachati   | 41. Mala Sale, Netkani               |
| 13. Chalavadi  | 42. Mala Sanyasi                     |
| 14. Chamar, Mochi, Muchi, Chamar-<br>Ravidas, Chamar-Rohidas                                   | 43. Mang                             |
| 15. Chambhar   | 44. Mang Garodi                      |
| 16. Chandala   | 45. Manne                            |
| 17. Dakkal, Dokkalwar  | 46. Mashti                           |
| 18. Dandasi  | 47. Matangi                          |
| 19. Dhor   | 48. Mehtar                           |
| 20. Dom, Dombara, Paidi, Pano  | 49. Mitha Ayyalvar                   |
| 21. Ellamalawar, Yellammalawandlu  | 50. Mundala                          |
| 22. Gashi, Haddi, Relli, Chachandi   | 51. Paky, Moti, Thoti                |
| 23. Godagali, Godagula [in the districts<br>of Srikakulam, Vizianagaram and<br>Visakhapatanam] | 52. ****                             |
| 24. Godari   | 53. Pamidi                           |
| 25. Gosangi  | 54. Panchama, Pariah                 |
| 26. Holey a  | 55. Relli                            |
| 27. Holey a Dasari   | 56. Samagara                         |
| 28. Jaggali  | 57. Samban                           |
| 29. Jambuvulu  | 58. Sapru                            |
|  | 59. Sindhollu, Chindollu             |
|  | 60. Yatala                           |
|  | 61. Valluvan                         |

**Source:** Ministry of Social Justice, Government of India.

## Annexure – V

## Andhra Pradesh Scheduled Castes: 2011 District Census

2011 CENSUS (in Number)								
Sl. No.	District	Total Population			Scheduled Caste Population			
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Sex Ratio
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
1.	Srikakulam	13,41,738	13,61,376	27,03,114	1,25,214	1,30,450	2,55,664	1,042
2.	Vizianagaram	11,61,477	11,82,997	23,44,474	1,21,493	1,26,235	2,47,728	1,039
3.	Visakhapatnam	21,38,910	21,51,679	42,90,589	1,62,873	1,66,613	3,29,486	1,023
4.	East Godavari	26,33,304	26,52,520	52,85,824	4,74,802	4,82,500	9,57,302	1,016
5.	West Godavari	19,93,747	20,01,995	39,95,742	4,09,579	4,13,966	8,23,545	1,011
6.	Krishna	22,67,375	22,50,023	45,17,398	4,35,412	4,35,651	8,71,063	1,001
7.	Guntur	24,40,521	24,47,292	48,87,813	4,76,333	4,81,074	9,57,407	1,010
8.	Prakasam	17,14,764	16,82,684	33,97,448	3,97,242	3,90,619	7,87,861	983
9.	S.P.S. Nellore	14,92,974	14,70,583	29,63,557	3,32,673	3,33,915	6,66,588	1,004
10.	Y.S.R	14,51,777	14,30,692	28,82,469	2,32,123	2,33,671	4,65,794	1,007
11.	Kurnool	20,39,227	20,14,236	40,53,463	3,70,215	3,67,730	7,37,945	993
12.	Ananthapuramu	20,64,495	20,16,653	40,81,148	2,92,379	2,90,756	5,83,135	994
13.	Chittoor	20,90,204	20,83,860	41,74,064	3,89,582	3,96,178	7,85,760	1,017
ANDHRA PRADESH		2,48,30,513	2,47,46,590	4,95,77,103	42,19,920	42,49,358	84,69,278	1,007

**Source:** Page No: 9 of the Andhra Pradesh Statistical Abstract 2019, published by the Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Government of Andhra Pradesh.

<https://des.ap.gov.in/jsp/social/Statistical%20Abstrct%20-%202019.pdf> – accessed on 19 November 2021.

Annexure – VI - A  
Andhra Pradesh 2011 Religious Census

Religion	Percent
Hindu	88.46
Muslim	9.56
Christian	1.34
Sikh	0.05
Buddhist	0.04
Jain	0.06
Other Religions	0.01
Not Declared	0.48

**Source:** <https://www.census2011.co.in/data/religion/state/28-andhra-pradesh.html>

accessed on 19 November 2021.

Annexure – VI - B

Andhra Pradesh Religious Census 2011

Religion	Total	Males	Females
All Religious Communities	76,210,007	38,527,413	37,682,594
Hindu	67,836,651	34,278,050	33,558,601
Muslim	6,986,856	3,562,239	3,424,617
Christian	1,181,917	580,319	601,598
Sikh	30,998	17,264	13,734
Buddhist	32,037	16,342	15,695
Jain	41,846	21,613	20,233
Other Religious Communities	4,768	2,450	2,318

**Source:**

[https://censusindia.gov.in/census\\_data\\_2001/census\\_data\\_finder/c\\_series/population\\_by\\_religious\\_communities.htm](https://censusindia.gov.in/census_data_2001/census_data_finder/c_series/population_by_religious_communities.htm) - accessed on 19 November 2021.

## Annexure - VII

## Andhra Pradesh Scheduled Caste Population Variation 1971-2011

	Description		1971	1981	1991	2001	2011
01.	Scheduled Caste Population	In Lakhs	32.73	46.69	63.19	74.52	84.69
02.	Scheduled Caste Population as a percentage of Total Population	Percentage	11.82	13.99	15.63	16.42	17.08

**Source:** Page No: 08 of the 2019 Statistical Abstract, Directorate of Statistics and Economics, Government of Andhra Pradesh.

<https://des.ap.gov.in/jsp/social/Statistical%20Abstract%20-%202019.pdf> – accessed on 19 November 2021.



## Annexure - VIII

Andhra Pradesh 2011 Religious Census:  
District LevelTABLE- 1.45  
DISTRICT-WISE & RELIGION-WISE POPULATION, 2011 CENSUS

Sl. No.	District	Muslim			Christians		
		Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females
(1)	(2)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)
1.	Srikakulam	9,025	4,427	4,598	18,879	8,995	9,884
2.	Vizianagaram	16,423	8,157	8,266	17,853	8,522	9,331
3.	Visakhapatnam	86,330	43,710	42,620	77,607	37,374	40,233
4.	East Godavari	77,777	38,695	39,082	77,825	36,362	41,463
5.	West Godavari	86,142	42,752	43,390	1,09,120	52,743	56,377
6.	Krishna	3,07,043	1,54,598	1,52,445	1,45,598	70,762	74,836
7.	Guntur	5,59,770	2,79,693	2,80,077	89,763	43,496	46,267
8.	Prakasam	2,20,654	1,10,638	1,10,016	18,775	9,127	9,648
9.	S.P.S. Nellore	2,88,378	1,45,390	1,42,988	26,202	12,592	13,610
10.	Y.S.R	4,54,108	2,28,960	2,25,148	23,281	11,319	11,962
11.	Kurnool	6,70,737	3,38,724	3,32,013	33,165	15,950	17,215
12.	Ananthapuram	4,43,456	2,22,934	2,20,522	20,463	9,918	10,545
13.	Chittoor	3,97,870	1,99,721	1,98,149	24,129	11,667	12,462
	ANDHRA PRADESH	36,17,713	18,18,399	17,99,314	6,82,660	3,28,827	3,53,833

(Contd.)

TABLE- 1.45  
DISTRICT-WISE & RELIGION-WISE POPULATION, 2011 CENSUS

Sl. No.	District	Sikh			Buddhist			Jain		
		Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females
(1)	(2)	(15)	(16)	(17)	(18)	(19)	(20)	(21)	(22)	(23)
1.	Srikakulam	193	98	95	77	50	27	160	77	83
2.	Vizianagaram	380	196	184	114	49	65	815	426	389
3.	Visakhapatnam	2,301	1,288	1,013	850	436	414	2,316	1,154	1,162
4.	East Godavari	738	404	334	413	214	199	4,149	2,139	2,010
5.	West Godavari	288	175	113	209	124	85	1,578	819	759
6.	Krishna	1,393	754	639	863	431	432	6,320	3,221	3,099
7.	Guntur	764	428	336	323	199	124	3,282	1,707	1,575
8.	Prakasam	266	145	121	97	54	43	204	100	104
9.	S.P.S. Nellore	678	407	271	239	123	116	2,610	1,339	1,271
10.	Y.S.R	367	223	144	105	54	51	751	392	359
11.	Kurnool	737	408	329	255	145	110	2,235	1,158	1,077
12.	Ananthapuramu	932	512	420	341	177	164	1,417	762	655
13.	Chittoor	867	466	401	253	134	119	1,322	664	658
	ANDHRA PRADESH	9,904	5,504	4,400	4,139	2,190	1,949	27,159	13,958	13,201

(Contd.)

**Source:** Page No: 71 of the Andhra Pradesh Statistical Abstract, 2019, published by the Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Government of Andhra Pradesh.

<https://des.ap.gov.in/jsp/social/Statistical%20Abstrct%20-%202019.pdf> – accessed on 19 November 2021.



Annexure – IX

Grace Church Weekly Spiritual Activity

<b>Week Day</b>	<b>CONGREGATION-A's Grace Church</b>
Sunday	Main Prayer Service 06:30 am & 09:30 am Sunday School 09:30 am
Monday	
Tuesday	Senior Citizens Meet – Every 1 <sup>st</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> Tuesday 05:00 pm
Wednesday	Total Night Prayer – Every Month 2 <sup>nd</sup> Wednesday – 07:30 pm
Thursday	
Friday	Fasting Prayer 11:00 am to 02:00 pm
Saturday	Individual Prayers 05:30 pm to 07:00 pm Youth Meeting 07:00 pm

Annexure – X

# Hope Church Weekly Spiritual Activity

<b>Week Days</b>	<b>Congregation-B's Hope Church</b>
Sunday	[Main] Prayer 08:30 am [Children's] Sunday School at 08:30 am Women's Meet at 03:30 pm English Service at 06:30 PM
Monday	
Tuesday	
Wednesday	Middle Week Prayer at 06:30 pm
Thursday	Gospel Out Reach at 06:30 pm
Friday	
Saturday	Music Practice at 06:30 pm

## Annexure – XI-A

[Application for Andhra Pradesh Integrated Caste Certificate for Scheduled Castes and Backward Classes in Telugu to be filed over Mee-Seva Centres]



### ఫారం -2(నియమం - 5)

నకు

ది తహశీల్దారు

----- మండలం/డివిజన్,  
----- జిల్లా.

అయ్యా,

నాకు మరియు నా కుమార్తె / కుమార్తె కు షెడ్యూల్ కులము మరియు వెనుకబడిన తరగతుల కులధృవీకరణ పత్రము పొందుటకు ఈ క్రింది వివరములను సమర్పించుకొనుచున్నాను.

- 1 దరఖాస్తుదారుడు పేరు
- 2 దరఖాస్తుదారుడు స్త్రీ/పురుషుడా ?
- 3 అ) తండ్రి పేరు  
ఆ) తల్లి పేరు
- 4 ప్రస్తుత చిరునామా డోర్ నెం : లోకాలిటీ : గ్రామము :  
జిల్లా : పిన్ కోడ్ :
- 5 ధృవపత్రము కోరుతున్న దరఖాస్తుదారుడు మొదటి నోటిఫికేషన్ ప్రకటించే తేది నాటికి ఎక్కడైతే షెడ్యూల్లు కులములు మరియు వెనుకబడిన తరగతులు గా ప్రకటించబడినారో ఆ ప్రాంతములో దరఖాస్తుదారుడు అతని తల్లి, తండ్రి/తాతలు యొక్క శాశ్వత చిరునామా
- 6 పుట్టిన తేది, వయస్సు మరియు పుట్టిన ప్రదేశము (సరి అయిన పుట్టిన తేది తెలియనచో వయస్సును బట్టి పుట్టిన సంవత్సరము వ్రాయవలెను)
- 7 సాధారణ నివాసన స్థలము (ఇంటి పన్ను మరియు భూమి ఇతర స్థిరాస్తులు /పుట్టిన తేది ధృవపత్రము/ రేషను కార్డు/ ఆధార్ కార్డు నెం / పాఠశాల రికార్డులు మొదలైనవి జతచేయవలెను)
- 8 దరఖాస్తుదారుడికి గతంలో జారీ చేయబడిన కుల ధృవీకరణ పత్రము ఏ అధికారి ద్వారా నైనా జారీ చేయబడి ఉన్నట్లయితే సదరు కాపీని జతచేయవలెను.
- 9 కులధృవీకరణ పత్రము ఏ కులమునకు చెందినదో కావలెను ఉప కులముతో సహా పూర్తి వివరములు తెలియజేయవలెను.

//2//

- 10 అ) తండ్రి యొక్క కులము (ఉప కులము తో సహా)  
ఆ) తల్లి యొక్క కులము (ఉప కులము తో సహా)
- 11 దరఖాస్తుదారుడు ఏ మతమున కు చెందినవాడు
- 12 అ) తండ్రి ఏ మతమునకు చెందినవాడు  
ఆ) తల్లి ఏ మతమునకు చెందినవాడు
- 13 దరఖాస్తుదారుడు అతడు/ఆమె తల్లిదండ్రులకు  
సహజంగా జన్మించినారా ? లేక దత్తత కుమార్డు /  
దత్తత కుమార్తె అయ్యి ఉన్నారా ?

### డిక్లరేషన్

దరఖాస్తులో నేను మరియు మా ద్వారా నిక్షిప్తం చేయబడిన సమాచారము అంతయు నిజము మరియు నిర్దారితము. కుల ధృవీకరణ పత్రము కొరకు ధరఖాస్తునకు జత చేయబడిన ఋజు పత్రములు అన్నియూ యదార్థమైనవి. అందలి విషయములు అన్నియూ కూడా యదార్థములు మరియు వాస్తవములు. పైన చెప్పబడిన వాటిలో ఏవైనా తప్పని తేలివచో 1993 సంవత్సరము చట్టం 16 లోని నియమము 10 ప్రకారము చట్ట పరమైన శిక్షకు బాధ్యుడు అగుదునని తెలియజేసుకొనుచున్నాను.

స్థలం: తల్లి/తండ్రి/సంరక్షకు సంతుకం దరఖాస్తుదారుని సంతుకం  
తేది:

### దరఖాస్తు తో జతపరచవలసినది :

1. అఫ్లికేషన్ ఫారమ్ \*
2. దరఖాస్తుదారుని కుటుంబ సభ్యులు/  
బంధువులు ఇంతకు పూర్వం పొందిన కుల ధృవీకరణ నకలు # 1. ల్యాండ్ నెం -----
3. స్కూలు బదిలి సర్టిఫికేట్ నకలు /10 వ తరగతి మార్కుల  
జాబితా నకలు# 2. మొబైల్ నెం-----
3. 1 నుండి 10 తరగతి స్టాడి సర్టిఫికేట్ నకలు/పుట్టిన తేది నకలు # 3. ఈ మెయిల్ ఐ.డి -----
4. షెడ్యూళు 1 నుండి 4 వరకు (వంశ వృక్షము) #
5. రేషన్ కార్డు నకలు/ ఆధార్ కార్డు/ఓటరు గుర్తింపు కార్డు #

(\* ఖచ్చితముగా జత పరచవలెను, #- ఏదో ఒకటి జత చేయవలెను)

**షెడ్యూలు - 1**

**దరఖాస్తుదారు కుటుంబ పుట్టిన తేదీలు**

సంబంధ బాంధవ్యములు	పూర్ణ కులము/తెగ	మతము జన్మస్థానము (పూర్ణ విరునామాతో)	జనన తేదీ	సంవత్సరము	విద్యా విషయములు (విద్యా సంస్థల విరునామాతో)			వృత్తి నివాసము	చనిపోయిన స్థలము తేదీ
					ప్రాథమిక విద్య	ఉన్నత విద్య	కాలేజీ విద్య		
1. తండ్రి	2	3	4	5	6ఎ	6బి	6సి	8	9
2. తల్లి									
3. సోదరులు									
4. సోదరిమణులు									
5. తండ్రి తాతపేరు									
6. తండ్రి తాత భార్య పేరు									
7. ముతాత సంతాన వివరములు									
8. మాతామహిళుడు									
9. అమ్మమ్మ									
10. మాతామహిళులు సంతాన వివరములు									

స్థలము

తేదీ

దరఖాస్తుదారుని సంతకము

సరిపూడిచెన్నెనది: గ్రామ రెవెన్యూ అధికారి వారి సంతకం

## షెడ్యూలు - 2

## దరఖాస్తుదారుల భార్య / భర్త కుటుంబ పుట్టు పూర్వోత్తరములు

సంబంధ భాగస్వాములు	పూర్తి కులము/తెగ	మతము జన్మస్థానము (పూర్తి విరునామాతో)	జనన తేదీ	సంవత్సరము	విద్యా విషయములు (విద్యా సంస్థల విరునామాతో)			వృత్తి నివాసము	చనిపోయిన స్థలము తేదీ
					ప్రాథమిక విద్య	ఉన్నత విద్య	కాలేజి విద్య		
1. తండ్రి	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
2. తల్లి									
3. సోదరులు									
4. సోదరిమణులు									
5. తండ్రి తాతపేరు									
6. తండ్రి తాత భార్య పేరు									
7. ముత్తాత సంతాన వివరములు									
8. మాతామహుడు									
9. అమ్మమ్మ									
10. మాతామహులు సంతాన వివరములు									

స్థలము

తేదీ

దరఖాస్తుదారుని సంతకము

సరిమాడడమైనది: గ్రామ రెవెన్యూ అధికారి వారి సంతకం

షెడ్యూలు - 3

దరఖాస్తుదారుని ఆస్తి వివరములు

ఆస్తి వివరములు (ఇల్లు భూములు)	వివరి పేరు నవోదయ అయి యున్నది	ఆస్తి ఉన్న గ్రామము విరునామా ఇతర వివరములు

స్థలము

రిజిస్ట్రే

సంవహించబడినది: గ్రామ రెవెన్యూ అధికారి వారి సంతకం

దరఖాస్తుదారుని సంతకము

షెడ్యూలు-4

దరఖాస్తుదారుని సంతాన వివరములు

సంబంధ బాంధవ్యములు	పూర్తి కులము/ తెగ	మతము జన్మస్థానము (పూర్తి విరునామాతో)	జనన తేదీ	సంవత్సరము	విద్యా విషయములు (విద్యా సంస్థల విరునామాతో)			వృత్తి నివాసము	చనిపోయిన స్థలము తేదీ
					ప్రాథమిక విద్య	ఉన్నత విద్య	కాలేజీ విద్య		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
కుమారులు									
కుమార్తెలు									

స్థలము తేదీ

దరఖాస్తుదారుని సంతకము

సరిమాడడమైసరి: గ్రామ రెవెన్యూ అధికారి వారి సంతకం



Annexure – XI-B

[Application in Telugu to file for Integrated Scheduled Caste and Backward Classes Certificate over Village/Division/Ward level *Sachivalayam* (Secretariat) in Andhra Pradesh]



గ్రామ - వార్డు సచివాలయము  
ఆంధ్రప్రదేశ్ ప్రభుత్వం



**ISES Integrated**

<b>Applicant Details:</b>	
Student ID	
Student Sur Name	
Student Name	
Gender	
Father/Mother Name	
Date of birth	
Native District	
Native Mandal/Municipality	
Native Village/Ward	
Aadhaar number	
Mobile Number	
Ration Card Number	
Nativity Details	
Native Address	
Caste Category	
Caste	

<b>Informant Details:</b>			
Informant Name			
Relation			
Ration Card No			
Aadhaar Card no			
Address			
Pin code			
Mobile			
Delivery type	Manual	Post Local	Non Local

**Certificate Details:**

Purpose

**Documents to be enclosed:**

Physical Application

Applicant's Signature

Annexure – XI-C

[Application for Other Backward Classes Certificate (OBC) to be filed in Andhra Pradesh in English. Christian Dalits covers under OBC category at the national level]



ANNEXURE - B

APPLICATION FORM FOR CERTIFICATE OF ELIGIBILITY FOR RESERVATION  
OF JOBS FOR THE OTHER BACKWARD CLASSES IN CIVIL POSTS AND SERVICES UNDER  
CENTRAL GOVT. OF INDIA

Sir,

I request you a CERTIFICATE in respect of Reservation for BACKWARD CLASSES in civil POSTS & SERVICES under Government of India be granted to me.

I. Given below of the necessary particulars

1. Full name of the Applicant  
(In BLOCK LETTERS) :
2. Gender :
3. Date of Birth :
4. Complete Resident Address :
  - a) PERMANENT  
D.No: Locality: Village:  
Mandal: District: Pincode:
  - b) PRESENT (Postal Address)  
D.No: Locality: Village:  
Mandal: District: Pincode:
5. Religion :
6. Caste :
7. Sub-Caste :
8. Issued Caste Certificate In Past : YES/NO
9. Education Certificate Contains Caste : YES/NO
10. Occupation Group :
11. SERIAL NUMBER of the Caste in the  
CENTRAL LIST OF OBCs :
12. Name of the Father :
13. Name of the Mother :
14. Name of the Husband :
15. Status of the Parents(S) / Husband : Father/ Mother/  
Husband wife
- a) Constitutional Posts :
- b) Designation :
- c) i) Services: CENTRAL / STATE :
  - ii) Designation :
  - iii) Scale of Pay, including  
Clarification if any :
  - iv) Date of Appointment of Post :
  - v) Age of the time of Promotion  
to Class I post (if applicable) :

II. EMPLOYMENT IN INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION E.G., U.N., UNICEF, WHO

- i) Name of the Organization :
- ii) Designation :
- iii) Period of Service : FROM TO  
(Indicate Date)

P.T.O

III. A. DEATH / PERMENT INCAPACITION (OMIT IF NOT APPLICABLE)

- i. Date of death / Permanent Incapacitation putting an Officer Out of Service :
- ii. Details of permanent incapacitation :

B. EMPLOYMENT IN PUBLIC SECTOR UNDERTAKING ETC.,

- i. Name of the Organization :
- ii. Designation :
- iii. Date of appointment to the Post :

C. ARMED FORCES INCLUDING PARA MILITARY FORCES (THIS WILL NOT INCLUDE PERSONS HOLDING CIVIL POSTS)

- i. Designation :
- ii. Scale of Pay :

D. PROFESSIONAL CLASS (OTHER THAN THOSE COVERED IN THE ITEM NOS. B&C AND THOSE ENGAGED IN TRADE, BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY)

- i. Occupation / Profession :

E. PROPERTY OWNERS:

- I. Agricultural land holding owned by mother / father and minor Children :
- i. Location :
- ii. Size of holding :
- iii. a) IRRIGATED (TYPE OF IRRIGATION LAND)
  - i)
  - ii)
  - iii)
  - b) UNIRRIGATED
  - iv) Percentage of Irrigated Land holding to statutory ceiling limit under State Land Ceiling Land :
  - v) If land holding is both irrigated / unirrigated total irrigated land holding on the basis of conversion formula in State Land Ceiling :
  - vi) Percentage of total irrigated land holding to statutory ceiling limit as per (vi) :

TO BE CERTIFIED DISTRICT REVENUE OFFICER NOT LOWER THAN MANDAL REVENUE OFFICER / TAHSILDAR

II. PLANTATION

- i. Crops / Fruits :
- ii. Location :
- iii. Area of Plantation :

F. III. VACANT LAND AND / OR BUILDING IN URBAN AREA OF URBAN AGGLEMERATION

- i. Location of Property :
- ii. Details of Property :
- iii. Use to which it is put :

G. INCOME / WEALTH

- i. Annual Income from all Source (Family Income) (Excluding Salaries and Income from Agrl. Land) :
- ii. Whether Tax Paid : YES / NO
- iii. Whether covered in Wealth Tax Act. (Yes / No) (If so furnish details) :

- 16. Family members consisting :
- 17. Purpose of Caste Certificate :
- 18. Ration Card Number :
- 19. Aadhar Number :
- 20. Any other Information :

21. I certify that the above said particulars are true to the best of my knowledge and belief and that I do not belongs to CREAMY LAYER of OBCs and eligible to be considered for posts reserved for OBCs. In the event of any information being found false or incorrect of ineligibility being detected before of after the selection. I understand that my candidature appointment is liable to be cancelled and I shall be liable to such further action as may be provided under law /or rules.

Yours faithfully,

Place:  
Dated:

Signature of the Candidate

**Procedure (following to be enclosed)**

- 1) Application \*
- 2) Ration Card/Aadhar Card/EPIC Card #
- 3) Applicant Father/Mother property particulars #
- 4) Applicant Father/Mother Employment Particulars/Income Tax returns (for professionals) \*

**Contact Details**

**Land Line Number:**  
**Mobile Number:**  
**E- Mail ID:**

**(\* -mandatory # -any one of them)**

# Christian Dalits and Secular Democracy: A Study of United Andhra Pradesh

*by S Swaroop Sirapangi*

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