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**Date:17/11/2010 URL:
http://www.thehindu.com/2010/11/17/stories/2010111753700700.htm**

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Tamil Nadu

Dalits in Gengavalli block to enter temple on Nov.21

Special Correspondent

Decision taken at the peace committee meeting

SALEM: Dalits in the East Rajapalayam village in Gengavalli block in Salem district have decided to bury their differences at a peace committee meeting, which paved way for the re-entry of Dalits into the HR and CE-controlled ancient Sri Chidambareshwarar Temple on November 21.

The marathon five-hour-long meeting held at the Gengavalli tahsildar office on Monday evening, in which the village elders and important persons from both caste groups besides an official team from Revenue, HR and CE and Police participated, convinced the caste Hindus that the rights of Dalits to enter the temple to offer prayers could not be denied.

Attur RDO Sirajunnisa chaired the meeting.

Affidavits signed

The elders from caste Hindus had also signed affidavits assuring all help to the administration to make Dalits enter the temple in a peaceful environment.

The meeting had ensured the Dalits to make use of the Village Community Hall and Public Library, from which they have been barred so far.

The 250 families of Dalits entered the temple on October this year in the presence of officials. But since then they faced discrimination and intimidation, which made them to live in fear. They were also not permitted to enter the temple again. The denial forced the Dalits to take up the issue once again to the notice of Salem district administration.

A complaint was preferred at Veeraganur Police station and they also submitted a petition to the Office of HR and CE at Salem on September 15.

The Hindu carried a detailed report on November 14 about their plight and the caste-based discrimination the Dalits faced following which the District administration organised a peace committee meeting on Monday in which both caste groups agreed for a peaceful co-existence.