Dalits in the Muslim and Christian Communities

A Status Report on Current Social Scientific Knowledge

PREPARED FOR THE

National Commission for Minorities
Government of India

BY

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List of Abbreviations

CES	Consumption Expenditure Survey (of the NSSO)
DC, DCs	Dalit Christian, Dalit Christians
DM, DMs	Dalit Muslim, Dalit Muslims
EUS	Employment & Unemployment Survey (of the NSSO)
GoI	Government of India
MPCE	Monthly Percapita Consumption Expenditure
NCBC	National Commission for Backward Classes
NCM	National Commission for Minorities
NSSO	National Sample Survey Organisation
OBC	Other Backward Classes
SC	Scheduled Castes
ST	Scheduled Tribes
UC	'Upper' Castes (i.e., not belonging to ST, SC or OBC)

Executive Summary

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

1) What is the contemporary status of Dalit Muslims and Dalit Christians in terms of their material well being and social status?

2) How does their situation compare with that of: a) the non-Dalit segments of their own communities (i.e., Muslims and Christians); and b) the Dalit segments of other communities?

3) Do the disabilities suffered by these groups justify state intervention within the spirit of the Constitution as interpreted by the judiciary, and in keeping with evolving national norms?

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

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

- With respect to *proportions of population in poverty or affluence*, DMs are unquestionably the worst off among all Dalits, in both the rural and specially the urban sector. DMs are completely absent in the affluent group for urban India. There is a significant gap between DMs and DCs and Dalit Sikhs, and small one between them and Hindu Dalits. DCs may be said to moderately better off than other Dalits except Dalit Sikhs, who are even better off. DCs have a much higher proportion in poverty than Dalit Sikhs, specially in rural India, but roughly comparable populations in affluence.

- When it comes to intra-community comparisons, DMs and DCs are a study in contrasts. DMs are only slightly worse off than non-Dalit Muslims, specially the OBCs, but this is because non-Dalit Muslims are much worse off than their non-Muslim counterparts. In other words, the Muslim community as a whole tends to be very badly off compared to other communities, specially in the urban areas, and consequently the intra-community gap between Dalits and non-Dalits is by far the smallest for Muslims. DCs are at the other end of the spectrum, with the highest inter-caste differentials, but for the opposite reason, namely, that non-Dalit Christians and specially the upper castes tend to be much better off. However, DCs are closest to Dalit Sikhs, who are actually slightly better off than them on the whole, but have less poverty (specially rural poverty) so that their inter-caste differentials are lower than those for Christians.

- The picture with respect to *average levels of consumption* measured by percentiles of MPCE confirms and amplifies the findings based on proportions of population in poverty and affluence. However, what this analysis brings out clearly is that, with the exception of rural Dalit Sikhs who are slightly better off all along the economic spectrum except at the very top, all other Dalits are basically the same in economic terms. Whatever differences there are among Dalits of different religions only become visible in the top 25% of the distribution. In other words, other than rural Dalit Sikhs, 75% of all other Dalits are economically indistinguishable from each other, both in the urban and specially the rural areas. Another point that is strongly emphasised in this analysis is the serious levels of poverty among urban Muslims of all castes including Dalits.

- With respect to comparisons of *occupational structure*, there seem to be no dramatic contrasts in rural India. The only noteworthy feature is that it is only in this non-decisive area of comparison (i.e., the data is more prone to ambiguity) that DMs are *not* the worst off group, being slightly better represented among the 'self-employed in agriculture' (taken as a rough proxy for access to land) category than other groups. In urban India, however, DMs are back in the bottom slot, with the highest proportion in 'casual labour' and the lowest proportion in the 'regular wage' category. In rural India, DCs are between Buddhists and Sikhs (who have a slightly better profile) and Muslims and Hindus (who have a worse profile). In urban India, DCs have the highest proportion in the 'regular wage category' among all Dalits, but Dalit Sikhs are almost equal to them.

- With respect to comparisons of *educational levels,* DMs are the worst off in rural India in terms of illiteracy, but are closely matched by Hindu Dalits in both rural and urban India. DCs are slightly better off in rural, and significantly better off in urban India. At the other end of the educational spectrum, there are no major differences across Dalits in rural India (except Buddhists, who seem to have comparatively high proportions with graduate or higher degrees). DCs are significantly better off than other Dalits except for Buddhists, who are much better off and by far the best among Dalits in this respect. However, in both rural and urban India, and at both ends of the educational spectrum, all Dalits except Muslims do much worse than their non-Dalit co-religionists, specially the upper castes. As with the economic data, intra-Muslim differences are the least – in fact, the inter-caste differentials in education appear to be even less than those in terms of consumption levels.

On the whole, it can be said that inter-Dalit economic differences across religion are not very significant for most criteria and for most of the population. DMs are the worst off while the top quarter of the DCs may be slightly better off than all others except Dalit Sikhs, who are even better off than them. Urban Muslims exhibit worrying levels of economic vulnerability across caste groups. Occupational differences are generally not significant, and where significant, show DMs to be worst off in urban India. Educational differences are slight, and work across contexts only for DCs. However, intra-community caste differentials are very high for all except the Muslims, so that Dalits in general are much worse off educationally than non-Dalits.

The **ethnographic materials** reviewed included studies by academics as well as surveys and reports produced or sponsored by advocacy groups and NGOs. The data cover four decades from the 1950s to the present, and use varied methodologies ranging from formal survey methods to long-duration ethnographic fieldwork. The main conclusions that can be drawn from this large and varied body of work, a sample of which is summarised in Appendix A, are the following:

- There can be no doubt whatsoever that DMs and DCs are socially known and treated as distinct groups within their own religious communities. Nor is there any room for disputing the fact that they are invariably regarded as ‘socially inferior’ communities by their co-religionists. In short, in most social contexts, DMs and DCs are Dalits first and Muslims and Christians only second.

- While the overall status imposed on DMs and DCs is always that of an inferior group, the manner in which social distance or superiority is asserted by non-Dalits (and specially the ‘upper’ castes) varies both across DMs and DCs and also across regions and contexts. Such variation is present in all Dalit communities of all religions. Thus, despite the universal presence of practices of discrimination and exclusion against DMs and DCs, it is harder to generalize about the specific content and intensity of such practices.

- Universally practiced forms of discrimination and exclusion include social and cultural segregation, expressed in various forms of refusal to have any social interaction; endogamy, expressed through the universal prohibitions on Dalit-non-Dalit marriages, and through severe social sanctions on both Dalits and non-Dalits who break this taboo. Social segregation extends to the sphere of worship and religious rituals, with separate churches and priests being almost the norm among DCs and not uncommon among DMs. Forms common to both DMs and DCs include various modes of subordination in churches and mosques, as well as insistence on separate burial grounds. Occupational segregation and economic exploitation are also very common and usually related practices, though somewhat less widespread than segregation or marriage bans. Untouchability proper is sometimes practiced, but is not widespread, and its forms vary greatly.

Based on the above material, the Report finds that ***there is a strong case for according Scheduled Caste status to Dalit Muslims and Christians*** which is summarised in the short Conclusion (Chapter 5).

Chapter 1

Introduction: Objectives, Scope and Main Features

This Report is concerned with the 'Dalits', or the so-called ex-'untouchable' caste groups, among Indian Muslims and Christians. It is necessary to clarify at the outset that 'Dalit' is a self-chosen and largely accepted, but not unanimously approved, term used to refer to the ex-untouchable caste-communities in India.[1] It will be used throughout this Report as a convenient shorthand term to refer to those Muslims and Christians who occupy – or claim to occupy, or are believed to occupy – a position in society comparable to that of the officially designated SCs belonging to the Hindu, Sikh or Buddhist religious communities. The term 'Dalit' has fewer problems than alternatives like 'SC', 'ex-untouchable', 'Harijan' and so on; it is moreover the term currently used by the majority of those belonging to these communities themselves; finally it is also increasingly the most prefered term in scholarly usage. While 'Dalit' has been prefered for these reasons, it should be clarified that it is used here in a strictly nomenclatural sense and has no other implications; in particular, the term should not be interpreted as an official or normative term. The terms 'Dalit Muslim' and 'Dalit Christian' are also abbreviated in this Report as DMs and DCs for ease of reference.

Objectives

This study was commissioned by the National Commission of Minorities in April 2007. Its main objective is to produce a compendium of the available social scientific knowledge on the social and economic conditions of Dalit Muslims and Dalit Christians. Within this overall framework, the study addresses the following questions:

a) What is the contemporary nature and extent of the deprivation, discrimination and exclusion suffered by these groups?

b) How does their situation compare with that of: i) the non-Dalit segments of their own communities (i.e., Muslims and Christians); and ii) the Dalit

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[1] See Gopal Guru 2001 for a discussion of the changing positions within the Dalit community on this and other alternatives for self-description.

segments of other communities?

c) Do the disabilities suffered by these groups justify state intervention within the spirit of the Constitution as interpreted by the judiciary, and in keeping with evolving national norms?

Thus, the study seeks to determine the current status of knowledge on the above questions; other than original compilations of the latest statistical data, the study has not undertaken any primary research.

Scope

The study has tried to cover all significant ethnographic studies and sources of statistical data. The study also includes relevant semi-academic literature, such as materials produced by advocacy groups, and government reports, wherever such sources have been available. The focus is on the contemporary period, specially the last two decades. The study has an all-India perspective, with regional coverage being dependent on the content of the existing literature. The main sources for statistical data are the National Sample Survey Organisation's Consumption Expenditure, and Employment and Unemployment surveys. While other sources such as government reports have been consulted, the NSSO data remains the basic source. The entire statistical analysis is based on a fresh primary analysis of the unit-level records in electronic format undertaken specifically for this study. The main focus is on the most recent big sample round of the NSSO, the 61st Round of 2004-05, since this is the latest available statistical profile of the nation.

Data Limitations

Dalit Muslims and Dalit Christians suffer from the familiar vicious circle of lack of formal recognition as a social category leading to absence of authoritative data (specially statistical data), and the lack of such authoritative data in turn creating difficulties for their recognition as social categories. While considerable information including statistical data is available for the constitutional categories of the SCs and STs, and more recently (and to a lesser degree) for the OBCs, there is an almost complete data vaccuum when it comes to DMs and DCs.

As is well known, the Constitution originally recognised all the tribes and castes listed in the official Schedules that were part of the Government of India Act of 1935. In these Schedules, persons belonging to any and all religions were enumerated as STs, while only Hindus could be enumerated as SCs. In 1956, a Presidential Order was passed to include within the purview of the Schedules those ex-untouchables belonging to the Sikh faith. In 1990, a similar Presidential Order served to include ex-untouchables of the Buddhist faith. As a result of these constitutional decisions, the Census offers data on the STs and SCs, including on individual castes or tribes within these categories, but does not enumerate any other caste category. The Census also offers data on religious communities, but these data do not identify members of religious communities by caste. Therefore, with the partial exception of those included in the official Schedules, it is not possible to cross-tabulate the caste or tribe data in the Census with the religion data. There is in short no data whatsoever on DMs and DCs in the Census.

The National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) conducts regular annual surveys in its Rounds, as well as big or 'thick-sample' surveys every five years. Every such survey collects detailed information on two subjects, namely consumption expenditure and employment and unemployment, apart from any additional subjects that are decided upon from time to time. The big sample rounds of the NSSO cover approximately 125,000 households and more than 600,000 individuals across the country. Data is presented for the constitutionally recognised social groups, including castes, tribes and religions. Since its 55th Round of 1999-2000, the NSSO also presents data separately for the Other Backward Classes or the OBCs. From around the same time, i.e., after the year 2000, the NSSO has also been making available to researchers its unit- or household-level data in compact disks. Since both religion and caste are recorded for each household and each person, it is possible for researchers to cross-tabulate the two to come up with statistics on each 'socio-religious community' formed by the intersections of caste and religious affiliations. Thus, even though DMs and DCs are not officially recognised, it is possible to isolate them as a category in the NSSO data. The data presented in this Report are almost entirely from the NSSO's surveys.

However, the NSSO data on Socio-Religious Communities or srcs, is entirely self-reported data. This means that the NSSO investigators are required only to record whatever answers are given by respondents to the questions on caste or religious affiliation. There is no further attempt (as there in the Census operations) to check or verify the names of the castes and tribes and to match them with the official schedules for that region and state. Because of this, there is considerable room for confusion and misunderstanding, particularly for relatively new and administratively complex categories like the OBCs. This problem is particularly acute for DMs and DCs because they are recognized as obcs in many states. It is entirely possible therefore that members of these communities may answer 'yes' to the question 'Do you belong to the OBCs?'. There is no way within the NSSO surveys of being able to separate out those obcs who are actually DMs and DCs. It is therefore almost certain that the number of households and persons identified as DMs and DCs in the NSSO surveys is only a subset of their true number, and that a significant proportion is 'lost' in the obc category. Since there is no way of quantifying the degree to which DMs and DCs have declared themselves as obcs, the only alternative is to confine the analysis to the clearly identified segment of these groups, with the understanding that this is the best that can be done under the circumstances. This is the option taken throughout this Report – the data presented here are confined to those respondents who returned themselves as 'SC' and as either 'Muslim' or 'Christian'.

The non-statistical and specially the anthropological, ethnographic or sociological data on DMs and DCs does not face this problem since it consists mostly of direct empirical research on these communities themselves. However, this material is very uneven, with studies differing widely not only in terms of the methods used but also in terms of their overall quality. Moreover, much of the more rigorous academic work on DMs and DCs is done as part of larger frameworks of analysis that do not necessarily emphasize the question of caste disabilities or discrimination. This Report retains a narrow focus on the question of relative social and economic status; it does not dwell on the more general social characteristics of DMs and DCs.

A significant segment of the material available on DMs and DCs is produced not by academic researchers or institutions but by community organisations or NGOs. These NGOs are often directly involved in advocacy campaigns on behalf of DMs and DCs. While the fact of such involvement should not in itself lead us to discount this research, it is also necessary to be aware of the context in which it was produced. In this Report all NGO material is explicitly identified as such, and care is taken to specify the possible limitations of the data presented.

Wherever relevant or necessary, further discussion of data issues occurs in the main text.

Structure of this Report

Apart from this Introduction, this Report has three substantive chapters, namely 2, 3 and 4.

Chapter 2 is devoted to the social scientific literature on the question of the relative social and economic status of DMs and DCs. Both academic and NGO material is considered here. The emphasis is on summarising the available evidence on two basic issues: a) How are the DMs and DCs distinguishable from their co-religionists of other castes? and b) Is this distinct identity accompanied by a distinct relative status – i.e., How does the material and social condition of the DMs and DCs compare with that of their other caste co-religionists on the one hand, and with Dalits of the Hindu, Sikh and Buddhist communities on the other hand?

Chapter 3 is concerned with presenting the available statistical data on the DMs and DCs. The NSSO surveys are the chief source of information, but all the tabulations here have been specially prepared for this report. Wherever possible and/or necessary, the NSSO data is compared or contextualised with respect to data from other sources such as the Census.

Chapter 4 provides a brief overview of the judicial discourse on the issue of granting SC status to DMs and DCs. After a brief history of the Government of India Act of 1935, the main Supreme Court decisions on this matter are summarised. The chapter concludes with an overview of the main issues of evidence and law that have arisen in this context.

The Conclusion summarises the findings of this study. Supporting material is presented in the Appendices, and these are discussed or refered to in the appropriate places in the main text of the Report. An extensive Bibliography on DMs and DCs is also provided, although only a small representative sample of this material is cited in the body of the Report.

Chapter 2

Social Science Perspectives on Caste Among Indian Muslims and Christians

This chapter seeks to answer two basic questions based on the existing literature in the social sciences, specially in sociology, social anthropology and related fields. First: In the collective opinion of social scientists, does caste (or something resembling caste) exist in Islam and Christianity as it is practiced in India? If it does, then what are the implications of caste identity for those who belong to the lowest castes: Does caste impose the same (or comparable) disabilities on Muslims and Christians who belong to Dalit castes as are commonly imposed on Dalit castes among Hindus, Sikhs and Buddhists?

While these questions may seem straightforward enough, it is important to explicitly underline some complications that may not be immediately obvious. The first question is complicated by the sub-continental dimensions of Indian society and the vast variation across regions (not to speak of time periods) in the concrete forms of the practices by which social and cultural institutions may be identified. Thus, for example, 'being Christian' or 'being Muslim' may involve very different practices of marriage or worship in different regions, despite the simultaneous existence of similarities that allow us to recognize these practices as Muslim or Christian. Because such variations are common to all communities and institutions to a greater or lesser degree, both the norm used as the benchmark for comparison and the phenomenon being compared are not singular or homogenous but represent a wide, multi-dimensional spectrum. In other words, given that the institution of caste varies enormously even within its 'home ground' of Hinduism, it is not a simple matter to use 'Hindu practice' as a norm with which another, equally variable, instance of caste can be compared.

The second question is complicated by the apparent need to establish a causal rather than merely correlative relationship between caste identity and social disability. It is not enough to show that, for example, Hindu, Muslim and Christian Dalits roughly resemble each other in terms of their relative economic or social status – it is necessary to show that this similarity is *due to their caste identity* rather than other possible causes. However, as is well known, such causal connections are hard to establish in the social sciences and remain inferential to some degree. The matter is made even more difficult by the embarassment of caste and the tendency to disown or deny it. The argument is routinely offered that something other than pure caste identity – poverty, illiteracy, backwardness etc. – is responsible for the prejudiced reactions of the so-called ‘upper castes’ against the members of the so-called lower castes. While some effort obviously needs to be made to design ‘controls’ for these variables – i.e., to check for caste inequality, discrimination or prejudice *within* the same educational, economic or occupational groupings – such disputes cannot usually be fully resolved to the satisfaction of both sides.

Finally, though this issue will be discussed more fully in Chapter 4, it remains to be pointed out that when it comes to determining the entitlement of a particular caste or community to some benefits or special treatment, social scientific evidence is rarely decisive. Such questions are, not surprisingly, fundamentally *political* issues – they can hardly be otherwise. However, social scientific evidence is certainly important, and regardless of how decisions may actually be arrived at, it is generally helpful to be aware of the possible grounds on which such decisions might rest. In this regard it is specially important to remind ourselves that neither the original Presidential Order of 1950 identifying the castes and tribes to be included among the Scheduled Tribes and Castes (which took over with minor changes the first lists created under the Government of India Act of 1935), nor the two subsequent Orders of 1956 and 1990 amending the SC list to include Dalits of Sikh and Buddhist faiths offered any explicit justification or rationale. Indeed, the standards of evidence invoked in a particular context are themselves a political matter. To say this is not to absolve social scientists of their responsibility to investigate such questions according to the standards of academic practice, but to recognize the larger socio-political context within which they do their work.

2.1 The Presence of Caste Among Indian Muslims and Christians

A large and varied body of social scientific literature establishes a fact that is now largely taken for granted, namely that like other religious communities, Muslims and Christians in India are heterogenous rather than monolithically homogenous communities. The most prominent divisions and differences have to do with the presence of multiple sects and denominations among both Muslims and Christians, with the Shia-Sunni or the Catholic-Protestant divide being the best known. However, caste refers to an institution of a different sort, one which would generally be expected to reproduce itself across and within denominational or sectarian boundaries. The specific notion of caste involved here is that of *jati* rather than *varna*. While scholars differ on the exact relationship between these two categories, it is generally agreed that the latter refers to an overarching pan-Indian division between the four major groupings of castes (the so called *chatur-varna:* brahman, kshatriya, vaishya and shudra), whereas jati is a more local category indicating an endogamous group with a strong network of social and kinship ties.

Common social-anthropological definitions of caste include the following features:

1. A caste is a *closed, ascriptive group* whose membership is decided by birth and is hereditary (i.e., one inherits the caste of one's parents); mandatory (i.e., it is not a matter of choice); and unalterable (i.e. caste identity cannot be changed).
2. Castes impose *rules of conduct* on their members, the most prominent being those on marriage (endogamy, or marriage within the caste group, is a common requirement); social interaction (including specially the sharing of food and water); and occupation (castes were traditionally restricted to particular occupations, though these restrictions are much weaker now than they used to be).
3. Castes are part of a *system* in which they are both strictly separated and closely integrated in a hierarchy determined, in the original Hindu case, by notions of graded ritual purity or pollution. This hierarchy is supposed to be authorized by Hindu religious scriptures, though the precise nature and extent of this authority are matters of debate. Thus, taken as components of a system, castes are non-competing, inter-dependent but strictly hierarchized groups.

Before we ask whether caste in this definitional sense exists among Muslims and Christians in India, it should be noted that the above definition is an ideal typical construct that rarely exists in reality. Even among Hindus, there is considerable regional and temporal variation in the concrete, living forms of caste, which correspond only roughly to the theoretical model. The effective question therefore is not whether some classic definition of caste can be found on the ground, but whether caste-like groups, or social divisions displaying a significant proportion of these features (albeit in modified form) are present in Muslim and Christian society today.

When asked in this form, there is an overwhelming consensus on the answer – scholars are almost unanimous in their opinion that caste-like divisions exist among Muslims and Christians in India. But while this fact itself is beyond debate, there is some variation of opinion on the issues of the origins and the precise nature of caste among Muslims and Christians. On the whole, there seems to be more of a debate with regard to Muslim society than Christian society. In the latter, it is generally agreed that caste tends to survive the process of conversion, so that Christian communities reproduce the caste structure prevalent in Hindu society, at least in its broad features if not in exact detail. In the case of Muslims, scholars have differing interpretations of the degree to which caste is: a) a purely Hindu 'survival' in post-conversion communities; b) a 'learnt' or newly reproduced institution due to the influence of surrounding Hindu society; and c) the product and expression of tendencies internal to Islam.

What precisely is caste-like about the caste-analogues found in Muslim and Christian society? The answer to this question is more complicated because of considerable variation in the relative importance of different aspects and features of caste in different communities and regions. While there will always be exceptions in particular cases, it is possible to arrive at the following general order of caste features, beginning with the most universal aspects found everywhere, to the most differentiated aspects on which there is too much variation to permit easy generalisation:

1. Hereditary membership conferred by birth.
2. Endogamy, usually strictly observed, but with 'hard' and 'soft' divisions.
3. Social segregation, i.e., the exclusion of lower by higher all along the hierarchy.
4. Occupational segregation and economic differentiation.
5. Specific practices of untouchability and other forms of exclusion against Dalits.
6. Belief in notions of ritual purity and pollution as the basis for caste divisions.

Of these six broad features of caste, the first two may be safely said to be universally present in Muslim and Christian society in India. The simplest way of stating this fact is to say that in India, one is never 'just' a Muslim or a Christian. The Muslim and Christian communities – like other religious communities in India – are always further subdivided into caste-like social groups to which individuals belong. Membership in these groups is determined by birth and is taken to be hereditary, so that one's parentage is always a salient feature of one's community identity. Further, the pattern of marriage relations usually follows these caste-like divisions strictly, though the degree to which this is enforced tends to vary. In general, the strictest taboos are invariably directed at the Dalit communities or those identified as such. The Dalit castes cannot marry outside their boundaries because none of the other caste groups will consent to such relations. Violations of this prohibition usually invite severe social sanctions, including in most cases the ex-communication of the erring family of the higher caste. Apart from the Dalit—Non-Dalit divide which is always a 'hard' boundary, other boundaries are 'softer' to a greater or lesser degree. This means that prohibitions on inter-marriage across non-Dalit caste groups may or may not invite severe social sanction. Although such marriages are discouraged, they tend to be tolerated, particularly if they occur within the same broad class or economic status grouping.

Thus, it can be said that there is hardly any variation in these two features of caste grouping, so that they may be considered to be a routinely present aspect of Indian Muslim or Christian identity as it exists in practice.

The next two features, namely social segregation along caste lines, and hierarchization in economic and occupational terms, are also universally present, but with significant variations in the nature and extent of such hierarchical segregation. The social scientific literature of the last four decades shows that caste-like identities among Muslims and Christians are generally closely aligned with larger social, economic and political hierarchies despite local differences. Social segregation and economic hierarchies *always* follow the caste hierarchy – i.e., the 'lowest' castes are always the most excluded and most resource-poor; there is never an instance where the hierarchies are reversed or even disturbed substantially. What can and does vary greatly, however, the distance that separates different caste groups – in some contexts the distance separating the lowest from the highest may be relatively small, in other cases quite large. It is also possible for some sections or small portions of a particular caste grouping to be at roughly the same level as lower or higher groups, but this rarely happens for the group as a whole or even for a substantial portion of the group. Thus, for example, while it is possible for some sections of the upper castes to be quite poor, or for a few families or clans among the lower castes to be quite wealthy, these remain exceptions to the general rule.

The most common segregation practices, apart from endogamy, are those involving differential access to community resources, including specifically religion-related areas. Thus, access to collective worship may be actively denied to the lowest castes, or may only be granted on differential terms. As the studies described later in this chapter show, Dalit Christians generally tend to have separate churches and are served by different priests. In the case of Muslim Dalits, actual exclusion is unusual (though not unknown), but is at the cost of an unambiguously inferior status expressed through such practices as having to sit in the back, not being allowed to sit in front of (or to precede) the upper castes, and so on.

Not surprisingly, social segregation maps quite directly on to economic status hierarchies. The lower and specially the lowest caste groups among both Christians and specially Muslims find themselves left out of the networks that provide social capital, which in turn can yield opportunities for accumulating economic capital. (The macro view on such economic differentials will be discussed in detail in Chapter 3.) Once again the patterning of difference is very stable and follows caste hierarchy, though the extent of difference between high and low may vary.

The fifth aspect of caste, specific practices of untouchability, are subject to great variation. In some instances, as with Christian communities in south India and specially Kerala, these practices seem to be virtually identical with Hindu practice. In other instances, the specific belief in or practice of untouchability may be absent, although the Dalit castes are marked out in every other way. As already noted, it is not useful to ask only whether untouchability of a particular sort is practiced or not – it is much more important to ask about the concrete nature of inter-caste relations. So, although there is a lot of variation with regard to the practice of untouchability, and many Muslim and Christian communities in many regions do not seem to have this institution, it is still true nevertheless that Dalits in these communities are at the receiving end of a variety of discriminatory and derogatory practices, as well as being at the bottom of the material status hierarchy.

Finally, beliefs about ritual purity and pollution are the most variable. They are present in some communities, but not in most; even where they are present, they are subject to change like all other aspects of society. However, whether these beliefs are present or absent, they do not seem to make very much difference to the material and social condition of Dalits vis-à-vis non-Dalits.

The latter half of this chapter provides details on the available studies that offer evidence on the various aspects of caste discussed above in both the Muslim and Christian communities across India.

2.2 The Implications of Caste for Dalit Muslims and Dalit Christians

If, as the above discussion has established, caste is a reality for Indian Muslims and Christians, then does caste impose the same disabilities on Dalit Christians and Dalit Muslims as are known to be imposed on Dalits of other religions? Before one proceeds to answer this question in detail, one unmistakable conclusion needs to be stressed. Regardless of whether and to what extent the caste disabilities of Dalit Muslims and Dalit Christians resemble those of Hindu or other Dalits, this survey of social scientific literature establishes beyond doubt that, compared to other castes, Dalits suffer the most from their caste identity. Thus, whatever the nature and extent of the disabilities imposed by caste on Muslims and Christians, it is beyond debate that such disabilities are imposed most severely on Dalit Muslims and Dalit Christians. In short, if Muslims and Christians in India 'have' caste, then it is clear that Dalit Muslims and Dalit Christians have it the most.

To begin a detailed consideration of this question it is necessary to go back to the earliest attempts to identify the 'depressed classes' as they were known in the early twentieth century. The most significant such effort is no doubt that of the 1931 Census (see Box 1). This effort is all the more important since it became, in effect, the basis for the inclusion of particular Tribes and Castes in the Schedules drawn up as part of the Government of India Act of 1935 which inaugurated the 'reservations' policy in India. The list of questions created by the then Census Commissioner (and later professor of anthropology at Cambridge) Sir J.H. Hutton (see Box 1 below) are not necessarily the best or the most decisive. As scholars including Lelah Dushkin and Marc Galanter have shown, some of these questions don't have clear answers,

Box 1

Criteria Used to Identify 'Depressed Classes' in the 1931 Census

As devised by J.H. Hutton, Census Commissioner.
These were effectively also the criteria used to identify
the Tribes and Castes to be listed under the
Schedules created by the Government of India Act 1935.

1. Whether the caste or class in question can be served by Brahmans or not.
2. Whether the caste or class in question can be served by barbers, water-carriers, tailors etc. who serve the caste Hindus.
3. Whether the caste or class in question pollutes a high-caste Hindu by contact or proximity.
4. Whether the caste or class in question is one from whose hands a caste Hindu can take water.
5. Whether the caste or class in question is debarred from using public conveniences, such as roads, ferries, wells or schools.
6. Whether the caste or class in question is debarred from the use of Hindu temples.
7. Whether in ordinary social intercourse a well-educated member of the caste or class in question will be treated as an equal by the high-caste member of the same educational qualifications.
8. Whether the caste or class in question is merely depressed on account of its own ignorance, illiteracy or poverty and but for that would be subject to no social disability.
9. Whether it is depressed on account of the occupation followed and whether but for that occupation it would be subject to no social disability.

Source: Marc Galanter 1984: *Competing Equalities: Law and the Backward Classes in India*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, pp.127-28; this is a citation from the Census of India, 1931, vol.1, Part 1, Appendix 1, p.472; reprinted in Hutton 1961:194.

and some others which can be easily answered are not very helpful. If this were to be used a standard for identifying Dalits today, there would be considerable variation even among Hindu castes long recognised as Dalits, leave alone among other religious communities. But the basic feature of this list, namely various forms of religious and social exclusion and discrimination, would certainly be found among Muslims and Christians.
Box 2 summarises the basic position among scholars regarding the presence – and salience – of caste-like institutions (caste-analogues) among Muslims in India.

Despite the presence of larger groupings like 'Ashraf' and 'Ajlaf', what really matters in everyday social life and in interaction with other groups, both within the Muslim community as well as with members of other communities, is the caste-analogue. In terms of social significance, therefore, the caste-analogue matters more than other identities which may also be used.

Box 2

The Salience of Caste-Analogues in Indian Muslim Society

[R]ecent empirical sociological literature suggests that the conception of Muslim society as divided into two broad categories, 'ashraf' and 'ajlaf', is a gross over-simplification of the existing reality.

Social stratification among Muslims in any local area or community presents a highly complex picture. In any local area or community the Muslim population is divided into a number of social groups which are analogous to castes among Hindus. These caste-analogues are small, and they are named groups of persons characterised by endogamy, hereditary membership, and a specific style of life, which sometimes includes the pursuit by tradition of a particular occupation and is usually associated with a more or less distinct ritual status in a hierarchical system. Persons belonging to different caste-analogues are to some extent expected to behave differently and to have different values and ideals. The 'ashraf-ajlaf' dichotomy presents a convenient set of values to people, and people do fit themselves into this frame. But the real units of social stratification are the caste-analogues, and the day-to-day relationships between different individuals in any local community are determined by their membership of the caste-analogue rather than by the broad categories. In the study of Muslim social stratification, therefore, it is the caste-analogue which constitutes a more significant analytical unit.

Source: Imtiaz Ahmad 1967: 'The Ashraf and Ajlaf Categories in Indo-Muslim Society', in *Economic and Poltical Weekly,* May 13, p.890.

What consequences follow if one is belongs to a caste-analogue identified as Dalit (i.e., as a convert from the untouchable castes of Hinduism)? The types of discriminatory behaviour and social sanctions that are practised by the rest of the community are many and an illustrative compendium of the empirical evidence on such practices are provided in Appendix A: *A Compendium of Illustrative Ethnographic evidence on Dalit Muslims and Dalit Christians*.

Compared to Muslims, there is much less ambiguity about caste practices amongs Indian Christians. And as discussed in the next chapter, a substantial proportion (ranging from 50 to 75%) of the Christian community is said to be made of former Hindu untouchable castes. Box 3 below provides an example of the type of ethnographic evidence that is available on how Dalit Christians are treated by their co-religionists.

There is now considerable social scientific as well as NGO material available on Dalit-Non-Dalit relations among Muslims and Christians. A sampler from this literature – from different time periods ranging from the 1960s to the present day; using different types of methodologies including surveys and ethnographic observation; and from different disciplinary and institutional sources – is presented in Appendix A in summary form, tabulated under the following heads:

1. Untouchability
2. Endogamy
3. Occupational Segregation
4. Social and Cultural Segregation
5. Economic Discrimination
6. Social Change and Forms of Protest and Resistance

As already indicated, this evidence is variable. On some criteria, like untouchability, there is a lot of inter-regional and inter-community difference in existing practices. On others like endogamy and social and cultural exclusion, there is much greater uniformity, since these seem to be universally practiced. It is to be stressed again that similar patterns of variation will be found on examining Dalit and non-Dalit relations among any of the officially recognized groups such as Hindus, Sikhs or Buddhists. Moreover, the question of setting a threshold for determining whether a practice is widespread is a complex one and cannot avoid some degree of arbitrariness. Thus, no matter what the set of criteria employed it is unlikely that Muslim and Christian Dalits will be substantially different from their Hindu, Sikh or Buddhist counterparts, at least in so far as their social status and standing in the community are concerned.

Box 3

Relations between Dalit and non-Dalit Christians: Kerala in the 1970s

Lack of integration between the Syrian Christians and converts from lower castes is revealed both at the social as well as at the denominational levels. The old Christians are known as Syrian Christians whereas Harijan converts are known as *Putu Christians* (Neo-Christians), Chermar Christians, Pulaya Christians etc. During the course of the field work, it was found that only Syrian Christians were referred to as 'Christians', and Pulaya Christians were referred to as 'Pulayas' by all, including the Pulaya Christians themselves. The Pulaya Christians addressed the Syrian Christians by honorific titles such as *Tampuran* (Lord), *Panikke* (Master), whereas Syrian Christians added the suffix 'Pulaya' while addressing a Pulaya Christian. For example, a Thoma is called Thoma Pulayan, a Chacko as Chacko Pulayan, and so on, as is done in the case of Hindu Pulayas.

In the presence of rich Syrian Christians, the Harijan Christians had to remove their head-dress. While speaking with their Syrian Christian masters, they had to keep their mouth closed with a hand. Pulaya Christians are not given food inside the house of a Syrian Christian or in a good dish, but only outside the house in some broken dish. After taking food, they have to wash it.

[…] Even though neither the Mar Thoma church nor the Church of South India officially approves of the segregation of their Syrian and Pulaya members, such segregation is actually prevalent. It was found that the Syrian and Pulaya members of the same Church conduct religious rituals separately in separate buildings. The Syrian Christian priests who conduct the ritual at the Syrian Christian churches do not go to or perform rituals in the church of the Pulayas, but there are separate persons specially appointed for this purpose. There is no positive ban on the Pulayas attending the rituals at the Syrian Christian churches, but few Pulayas ever do so. In the organisation of the Church also, the Pulayas are not given proper representation. For example, in the Mar Thoma Church, every Syrian Christian parish is entitled to send representatives to the representative body called Mandalam, but the Pulaya churches are not entitled to this right. A Pulaya has yet to be made a priest in the Mar Thoma church.

In the Jacobite Church, the number of lower caste converts are relatively few, and usually they attend the services at the Syrian churches. However, they usually occupy only back seats in the Church.

Source: K.C. Alexander 1977: 'The problem of caste in the Christian Churches of Kerala', in Harjinder Singh (ed) *Caste among non-Hindus in India*, National Publishing House, New Delhi, p.54-55

Chapter 3

Caste Inequalities Among Muslims & Christians in India
A Statistical Analysis Based on NSSO 61st Round Data

The ethnographic evidence obtained via direct firsthand observation that was discussed in the previous chapter is obviously indispensable. It is only on the basis of such evidence that one can begin to investigate whether and to what extent Dalit Muslims and Christians are a distinct social group. However, such evidence has some unavoidable limitations – while it helps to establish a concrete case, it cannot be generalised at the macro level. The observed facts that have been noted in a specific case may or may not hold in other cases and contexts. Although it is possible to work towards generalisation by accumulating many local studies – as was done in the previous chapter – it is also necessary to look at evidence of a different kind that works by aggregation across large groups rather than by observing the singular case. The most common evidence of this kind tends to be statistical, since numbers are specially suited for aggregation.

This chapter discusses the available macro-statistical data on caste inequalities among Muslims and Christians in India. The basic questions around which the data are organised remain the same: how do Dalit Muslims and Christians compare with a) their own community members of different castes; and b) Dalits of other religious communities? The main source of the data used here is the National Sample Survey Organisation's most recent five-yearly survey from its 61st Round, canvassed in 2004-05. These data are the latest available at the national level, and are widely used by social scientists and policy makers in a variety of contexts.

3.1 Data Limitations and Sample Profile

For obvious reasons state institutions are the most important sources of social statistics all around the world. Given this fact, it follows that social groups which are not recognized by the state tend to become statistically 'invisible', for the state organs that routinely collect data – the Census, other government departments and official survey organisations – do not record information on such groups. This is in fact the most discouraging aspect of studying groups like Dalit Muslims and Christians. The legal definition of 'Scheduled

Castes' was originally restricted to those professing the Hindu faith, and though it was later extended to those professing Sikhism (in 1956) and Buddhism (in 1990), Muslims and Christians continue to be excluded and cannot be classified as Scheduled Castes regardless of their caste status.

However, despite receiving no official recognition at the central level, Dalit (and backward caste) Muslims and Christians have been recognised to varying degrees and in different ways by many state governments. In fact, as many as 12 major states accord recognition to sections of their Muslim and Christian populations within the Other Backward Classes (OBC) category.[2] Ironically, this recognition creates further problems in the context of national level surveys where information on DMs and DCs may be available. As discussed in the Introduction, DMs and DCs may return themselves as OBCs because they are recognised as such in their state and region. This makes it virtually certain that the numbers of DMs and DCs as revealed by caste-religion crosstabulations of NSSO data are significantly understated, without any reliable method of being able to estimate the extent of such underestimation. This problem seems to be particularly acute in the case of DCs, as discussed below.

Apart from this, DMs and DCs also run into purely statistical problems associated with sample surveys. Because they are such a small proportion of the population, they are naturally a small proportion of the sample as well, even of a large one such as that of the NSSO's big five-yearly surveys. This means that it is virtually impossible to do any disaggregated analyses on DMs and DCs due to the sample size being unacceptably small and thus statistically unstable. Hence this Report is restricted to national level analyses, though the usual division into the rural and urban sectors is maintained throughout. For this reason no regional, gender- or occupation-specific analyses has been attempted.

Tables 1 and 2 below show the distribution of the NSSO 61st Round sample for the rural and urban sectors respectively. These are the unweighted or 'raw' sample sizes – they represent the actual number of households surveyed. Due the fact that the sample involves several stages (including administrative and other regions of dissimilar size) and strata (again not of uniform size), each 'raw' sample household stands for or 'represents' differing numbers of households in the population. To take care of this variation, each household (and individual) is associated with a sampling 'weight' which adjusts the statistical ‘contribution’ of the household to its proper representative extent. As can be seen from Tables 1 and 2, the actual (raw) number of Muslim sample households that

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[2] See Appendix for a detailed listing of specific castes included in the Central OBC List.

Table 1

Number of Sample Households by Caste and Religion
NSSO 61st Round, Rural India, 2004-05

Caste → Religion	Scheduled Tribes	Scheduled Castes	Other Backward Classes	Upper Castes	All Castes	Missing Values	Grand Total
Hindu	6,845	12,704	26,011	15,149	***60,709***	32	60,741
Muslim	115	93	3,011	5,261	***8,480***	6	8,486
Christian	4,203	155	494	787	***5,639***	16	5,655
Sikh	17	634	493	1,076	***2,220***	1	2,221
Buddhist	533	336	27	105	***1,001***	1	1,002
Others	978	7	78	123	***1,186***	6	1,192
All Religions	***12,691***	***13,929***	***30,114***	***22,501***	***79,235***	--	--
Missing Values	3	0	2	1	--	3	9
Grand Total	12,694	13,929	30,116	22,502	--	65	79,306

NOTE: Table shows unweighted numbers of households in the 61st Round rural sample. Due to the many stages and strata in the sample design, each sample household represents different numbers of population households, and is weighted accordingly in estimation procedures. Computations involving caste and religion are limited to the 79,235 households (out of the 79,306 surveyed) for which this data is available.

Table 2

Number of Sample Households by Caste and Religion
NSSO 61st Round, Urban India, 2004-05

Caste → Religion	Scheduled Tribes	Scheduled Castes	Other Backward Classes	Upper Castes	**All Castes**	Missing Values	Grand Total
Hindu	1,314	5,735	13,172	14,092	***34,313***	12	34,325
Muslim	161	59	2,395	3,683	***6,298***	1	6,299
Christian	1,788	123	419	586	***2,916***	4	2,920
Sikh	4	139	177	496	***816***	0	816
Buddhist	66	292	3	16	***377***	0	377
Others	176	7	66	383	***632***	4	636
All Religions	***3,509***	***6,355***	***16,232***	***19,256***	***45,352***	--	--
Missing Values	0	0	0	1	--	0	1
Grand Total	3,509	6,355	16,232	19,257	--	21	45,374

NOTE: Table shows unweighted numbers of households in the 61st Round urban sample. Due to the many stages and strata in the sample design, each sample household represents different numbers of population households, and is weighted accordingly in estimation procedures. Computations involving caste and religion are limited to the 45,352 households (out of the 45,374 surveyed) for which this data is available.

claimed to belong to the SC category (presumably on caste grounds, since they are not officially recognized as such) are 93 and 59 respectively. Similarly, 155 rural and 123 urban Christian households also claimed SC status. The bulk of the analysis in this Report is based, ultimately, on data from these households where DMs and DCs are concerned, and more generally, on the 79,235 rural and 45,352 urban households for whom both caste and religion data are available.[3]

3.2 Numbers – How Many Dalit Muslims And Christians Are There?

While this Report is mainly concerned with the relative status of DMs and DCs, it is nevertheless important to begin with some sense of the absolute numbers involved. Just how many DMs and DCs are there in India? There are no authoritative estimates available for the reasons mentioned above. But if some rough estimates are to be constructed, they must begin with the NSSO data. The general procedure that is followed here is to ascertain the NSSO shares or *proportions* and to apply these proportions to the *population totals* obtained from the Census.

But before we begin this process, we need to get an idea of where the NSSO stands in relation to the Census on the question of the larger categories of both religion and caste of which the DMs and DCs are subsets. This is done in Tables 3 and 4 below. Table 3 compares the NSSO and the Census with respect to their respective estimation of the population shares of the STs and SCs. The Census figures are derived from the actual population counts of 2001, while the NSSO figures are estimates based on the (weighted) sample for the 61st Round survey done in 2004-05. Table 4 does the same for the major religions of India.

The main point made by Table 3 is that the NSSO's estimate of the population shares of the SCs for both rural and urban India exceeds the Census figures by well over three percentage points. This is broadly in keeping with the past trend as the NSSO estimates have generally tended to be higher than the Census, specially for this category. While the scholarly debate on this continues, it is reasonable to point out that this discrepancy could be due as much to conservatism on the part of the Census as to sampling errors in the NSSO survey, or non-sampling errors induced by misreporting due to confusion about the official category of the Scheduled Castes. This is not a controversy that is easily settled, and while a difference of three plus percentage points is to be noted, it does not pose any insurmountable problems for further statistical analysis.[4]

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[3] After weighting, in the rural sector the DMs get 'scaled up' from 93 to about 112 households while the DCs get 'scaled down' from 155 to 118 households; in the urban sector, the DMs get scaled down from 59 to 36 households while the DCs get slightly scaled up a bit from 123 to about 126 households. While this is what happens in computations, the actual data come from the 'raw' households.

Table 3 — **Population Shares of Castes** (percent)
Comparison of NSSO 2004-05 Estimates with Census 2001

Caste Groups	RURAL			URBAN		
	CENSUS 2001	NSSO 2004-05	(NSSO – Census)	CENSUS 2001	NSSO 2004-05	(NSSO – Census)
Scheduled Tribes	10.42	10.26	– 0.16%	2.44	3.04	+ 0.60%
Scheduled Castes	17.91	21.32	+ 3.41%	11.75	15.02	+ 3.27%

NSSO 2004-05 estimates are from the Employment & Unemployment Survey data (Schedule 10.0)

Table 4 — **Population Shares of Religious Communities** (percent)
Comparison of NSSO 2004-05 Estimates with Census 2001

Religious Communities	RURAL			URBAN		
	CENSUS 2001	NSSO 2004-05	(NSSO – Census)	CENSUS 2001	NSSO 2004-05	(NSSO – Census)
Hindus	82.33	83.36	+ 1.03	75.60	77.40	+ 1.80
Muslims	11.96	11.50	**– 0.46**	17.26	16.38	**– 0.88**
Christians	2.14	2.07	**– 0.07**	2.86	2.53	**– 0.33**
Sikhs	1.90	2.01	+ 0.11	1.79	1.54	– 0.25
Buddhists	0.66	0.59	– 0.07	1.07	0.87	– 0.20
Others	0.95	0.47	– 0.48	1.34	1.28	– 0.06
All Religions	100.00	100.00	–	100.00	100.00	–

NSSO 2004-05 estimates are from the 61st Round Employment & Unemployment Survey data (Schedule 10.0)

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[4] Dalits have often complained that the Census officials are prone to undercount their numbers. These complaints are often reported in the press, along with the more commonly reported upper caste fears of "everyone" returning themselves as lower caste in the hope of garnering some benefit from doing so. However, it is not clear how individuals choosing to return themselves as SC in a survey such as that of the NSSO can hope to derive a personal benefit. For an example of a relatively balanced report of this kind, see the story by V.Venkatesan in *Frontline*, March 3-16, 2001 which relates to the enumeration process of the 2001 Census.

Table 4 tells us that, going by the Census, the NSSO appears to slightly overestimate the population share of Hindus (by about 1% in rural and little less than 2% in urban India), it very slightly underestimates all minorities except rural Sikhs. However the discrepancies here are very minor and well in keeping with the error margins associated with sample surveys. It should be noted in passing that Muslims on the whole tend to be underestimated the most – by almost half a percentage point in rural and a little less than one point in urban India. Christians are also marginally underestimated, more so in urban India, by about one-third of one percent. So all in all, the apparent overestimation – relative to the Census figures – of Dalits is the most significant point to be kept in mind.

Moving on to the next step in estimating the population of DMs and DCs, Tables 5 and 6 show the NSSO estimates of the caste composition of different religious communities in rural and urban India. It can be seen right away that DMs are a very tiny proportion of the Muslim population, being just over half of one percent in both rural and urban India. DMs are thus by far the least numerous Dalits of any religious community, specially if one sets aside the anomalous "Others" category (consisting of Jains, Zoroastrians, other religions and persons with no religion). Muslims also seem to have by far the largest proportion of 'Upper' castes. (It should be pointed out that in these tables, as in the many others to follow, the term 'Upper' caste (also abbreviated as UC) refers to those who do not belong to the ST, SC or OBC categories; they are thus identified residually, not positively through caste identification. However, it is less misleading to refer to them as 'Upper' caste than to use the term 'Other' castes that is used in the official documents.)

Table 5	**Estimated Caste Composition of Religions Rural India, 2004-05**				
Religious Communities	Scheduled Tribes	Scheduled Castes	Other Backward Classes	'Upper' Castes	All Castes
Hindu	11.2	23.4	44.6	20.9	100.0
Muslim	0.5	**0.6**	39.7	59.2	100.0
Christian	38.9	**9.4**	20.9	30.8	100.0
Sikh	1.2	34.8	24.3	39.8	100.0
Buddhist	11.4	85.0	0.6	3.1	100.0
Others	72.9	2.0	4.2	20.9	100.0
All Religions	*10.6*	*20.9*	*42.8*	*25.7*	*100.0*

Source: NSSO 61st Round Unitlevel Data

Compared to Muslims, Christians seem to have a much larger proportion of Dalits – around 10%, with a little less in rural and a little more in urban India. These figures are almost universally believed to be gross underestimates of the true proportion of Dalits among Indian Christians. Most scholars and activists put the proportion at between 50 and 75% percent of all Indian Christians, although it is not possible to corroborate these claims in any decisive manner due to the difficulty of the category being officially unrecognized.[5] Since the lower bound of such 'guesstimates' seems to be 50%, it should be kept in mind that the proportion (and therefore also the number) of DCs could be at least five times what the NSSO estimates show it to be.

Table 6 **Estimated Caste Composition of Religions Urban India, 2004-05**

Religious Communities	Scheduled Tribes	Scheduled Castes	Other Backward Classes	Upper Castes	All Castes
Hindu	3.0	18.2	36.4	42.4	100.0
Muslim	0.3	**0.6**	38.4	60.7	100.0
Christian	17.5	**10.5**	31.8	40.3	100.0
Sikh	0.1	15.2	18.6	66.2	100.0
Buddhist	1.7	97.0	0.3	1.0	100.0
Others	10.1	1.4	1.8	86.7	100.0
All Religions	*2.9*	*15.7*	*35.6*	*45.8*	*100.0*

Source: NSSO 61st Round Unitlevel Data

Tables 7 and 8 show the shares of the major caste groups in the population of the main religions of India. They show that Dalits are overwhelmingly Hindu – more than 93% in rural and 90% in urban India. In fact, Dalits are the caste category with the highest proportion of Hindus, and the other religions contribute very small proportions. Within these the share of Muslim and Christian Dalits amounts to a miniscule 1.2% in rural and 2.3% in urban India. However, the share of DCs is about three times that of DMs in rural more than double in urban India.

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[5] Thus, for example, Father S. Lourduswamy states the Dalit Christian population in 2001 to be 18 millions out a total Christian population of 24 millions, making for a proportion of 75% (Lourduswamy 2005:20). Felix Wilfred writes: "It is a fact that about 75% of all Christians in India are of Dalit origin, and about 60% of all Catholics are dalits." (Wilfred 1995:124). George Kuruvachira states that "About 65% of Catholics belong to the backward classes and scheduled castes and tribes". (Kuruvachira in Sebasti L. Raj & G.F. Xavier Raj (eds) 1993:37). Jose Kannanaikil says: "According to rough estimates, more than 50 percent of the Chrisitians in India are of Scheduled Caste origin." (Kannanaikil 1983:1). The Dalit scholar and writer Paul Chirakarodu writes that: "In the absence of any methodological studies, we can roughly conclude that more than 50 to 60% of the Christian population are converts from the Scheduled Castes". (Chirakarodu in E.C. John & Samson Prabhakar (eds) 2006:31). These examples could easily be multiplied. But the fact remains that there is no systematic statistical estimate of the number or proportion of Dalit Christians, and it is hard to see how such an estimate might be produced in the absence of a Census-like effort.

Table 7	**Estimated Religious Composition of Castes Rural India, 2004-05**				
Religious Communities	Scheduled Tribes	Scheduled Castes	Other Backward Classes	'Upper' Castes	*All Castes*
Hindu	88.3	93.4	87.3	68.0	*83.7*
Muslim	0.6	**0.3**	10.6	26.2	*11.4*
Christian	7.3	**0.9**	1.0	2.4	*2.0*
Sikh	0.2	3.2	1.1	3.0	*2.0*
Buddhist	0.6	2.2	0.0	0.1	*0.5*
Others	3.0	0.0	0.0	0.4	*0.4*
All Religions	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	*100.0*

Source: NSSO 61st Round Unitlevel Data

Table 8	**Estimated Religious Composition of Castes Urban India, 2004-05**				
Religious Communities	Scheduled Tribes	Scheduled Castes	Other Backward Classes	Upper Castes	*All Castes*
Hindu	79.9	90.3	79.3	71.9	*77.6*
Muslim	1.8	**0.7**	17.7	21.7	*16.4*
Christian	14.3	**1.6**	2.1	2.1	*2.4*
Sikh	0.1	1.6	0.9	2.4	*1.7*
Buddhist	0.5	5.7	0.0	0.0	*0.9*
Others	3.4	0.1	0.1	1.9	*1.0*
All Religions	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	*100.0*

Source: NSSO 61st Round Unitlevel Data

Finally, Table 9 presents the estimates of population for DMs and DCs based on the NSSO proportions already discussed in Tables 5 and 6. DMs appear to be only about 8 lakhs in all, 5 in rural and 3 in urban India. DCs are almost four times the number of DMs at 23.5 lakhs, almost 15 lakhs in rural India and a little less than 9 lakhs in urban India. As discussed earlier, the figures for DCs are very likely to be substantial underestimates. Nevertheless, it should be noted that DMs and DCs are a very small part of the Indian Dalit population. Quite apart from the huge numbers of Hindu Dalits – over 18 crores – DMs and DCs are considerably smaller than even the Buddhists (over 71 lakhs) and Sikhs (almost 57 lakhs).

Table 9 **Estimated Population of Dalits in Major Religions**
(NSSO estimate of caste shares applied to Census religion totals)

Major Religious Communities	RURAL INDIA			URBAN INDIA			ALL INDIA
	Census 2001 Count of Population (Lakhs)	NSSO 2004-05 Estimate of Dalit Popn Share (%)	Estimated Dalit Population (Lakhs)	Census 2001 Count of Population (Lakhs)	NSSO 2004-05 Estimate of Dalit Popn Share (%)	Estimated Dalit Population (Lakhs)	Estimated Dalit Population (Lakhs)
Hindus	61,12.6	*23.35*	14,27.3	21,63.2	*18.20*	3,93.7	18,21.0
Muslims	8,87.9	*0.55*	**4.9**	4,93.9	*0.63*	**3.1**	**8.0**
Christians	1,58.9	*9.40*	**14.9**	81.9	*10.51*	**8.6**	**23.5**
Sikhs	1,41.1	*34.76*	49.0	51.1	*15.17*	7.8	56.8
Buddhists	48.9	*84.97*	41.6	30.6	*97.01*	29.7	71.3

Population estimates column = ((Census count x NSSO share) ÷ 100) and rounded to nearest 10,000.

3.2 The Material Status of Dalit Muslims and Dalit Christians

The rest of this chapter is devoted to a comparative assessment of the material status of DMs and DCs. In keeping with the objectives set for this Report, the comparative analysis employs two main reference groups: a) the non-Dalit co-religionists of DMs and DCs; and b) Dalits of other religions, namely Hindus, Sikhs and Buddhists. How does the condition of the DMs and DCs compare with that of non-Dalit Muslims and Christians, and with non-Muslim and non-Christian Dalits? These are the basic questions addressed.

Four main types of evidence are considered:

1) **Poverty profiles** of the different socio-religious groups with the main focus on DMs and DCs. Evidence of this sort mainly involves looking at the *distribution of the population of a group across the economic spectrum.* What proportion of each group is very poor, and what proportion is affluent? How do these proportions compare with the group's share in the total population – i.e., is the community over-represented or under-represented among the rich or the poor? Clearly, a group that has larger proportions in poverty and lower proportions among the affluent is considered to be worse off and vice versa. The main data on which this kind of evidence relies is the monthly percapita consumption expenditure data collected by the NSSO. This is the principal source for determining poverty levels and is extensively utilised in scholarly literature and in designing and evaluating developmental policies.

2) **Average Consumption Levels** are the second set of criteria considered. Here the focus is not so much on the proportion of population falling in particular class segments, but on the *absolute levels of average consumption.* This involves looking at the levels of monthly percapita consumption expenditure (henceforth MPCE), whether in terms of averages like the median, or a broader view profiling the entire distribution via selected percentiles of MPCE. In this Report, the three quartiles (i.e., the 25th, 50th and 75th percentiles) as well as the 95th percentile are considered. This helps us to get a better sense of the overall economic condition of a social group, something which averages (like the median or mean) are unable to convey on their own.

3) **Occupational Structure** is the third dimension of comparison. This provides a rough sense of the economic condition of a social group. In both the rural and urban sectors, there are some occupational categories that indicate relatively higher economic status than others; so comparing the proportions of population of each group that fall in these categories tells us about their relative condition. For rural India, the NSSO provides a broad classification of households into the following types: a) self-employed in agriculture; b) agricultural labour; c) other labour; d) self-employed in non-agricultural activities; and e) others , which is obviously a residual category. For urban India, the categories provided are: a) self-employed; b) regular wage or salaried employment; c) casual labour; and d) others.

All other things being equal, it is generally true that households in the 'self-employed in agriculture' category are much better off than households in the 'agricultural labour' category. The former usually implies landownership or at least some sort of stable access to land, while the latter usually indicates landless labour. Similarly, in the urban sector, the category ‘regular wage or salaried employment’ is clearly a better place to be than ‘casual labour’. Comparing the proportions of households in different social groups that are in these ‘better’ or ‘worse’ occupational groupings gives us some sense of their relative status.

4) **Educational Status** is the final criterion for comparison. This requires little explanation. The NSSO provides data on the levels of general education ranging from ‘not literate’ to ‘diploma holder, graduate, or above’, with primary, secondary and higher secondary school levels in between. Unlike the occupational category criterion, which has the household as its unit, the unit for education is the person. This data is available from the Employment and Unemployment survey (Schedule 10.0) of the NSSO survey. Comparisons of proportions of population at different educational levels provides one more way of assessing the relative status of different social groups.

The following sections consider evidence along each of these dimensions in turn, always with the focus on the comparative status of DMs and DCs relative to non-Dalits within their own communities and to Dalits of other communities.

Two further points need to be noted. First, the Scheduled Tribes have been excluded from the following analysis since they fall outside the purview of this report. Second, since Buddhists are almost entirely Dalit (and ST) with only a tiny proportion in the OBC and UC categories, they are included only for comparisons among Dalits, and excluded when the analysis involves other castes like the OBC and UC.

3.3 Comparative Poverty Profiles

This section considers relative proportions of the population that are in different economic classes as defined by MPCE. The focus is on the bottom and the top ends of the economic spectrum. The bottom is defined by the official Poverty Line, which represents the minimum level of consumption expenditure needed to meet basic nutritional norms. As is well known, the PL is a very conservative and strict measure of poverty since it specifies what is almost a biological minimum for survival.

The top of the economic spectrum is defined by the level of MPCE that represents the top five percent (or roughly the 95th percentile) of the national population (including all castes and religions for each sector). The top 5% level may seem rather a high level to take, but this is done to offset the fact that consumption expenditure severely underestimates inequality. Because MPCE does not take account of savings, investments or accumulated wealth, it tends to understate the actual income of the rich (who spend a relatively small fraction of what they actually earn) and overstate the income of the poor (who may actually be forced to spend more than they earn by incurring debt). The MPCE levels of the top are thus relatively low levels and they seem to include a much larger proportion of the population than the category intuitively suggests. Thus, for example, Rs. 2500 is the 'top 5%' level of MPCE for urban India. This implies a household of 5 with a monthly expenditure of about Rs. 12,500 at 2004-05 prices! It is difficult to think of such a household as being really rich – but the NSSO data suggest that it belongs in the top 5% of the class spectrum of urban India. That is why taking the top 5% may not be as restrictive as it appears at first.

Comparing Dalit Muslims and Dalit Christians to other Dalits

Tables 10 and 11 provide data on the proportion of population of Dalits belonging to different religions that falls in different economic classes along the spectrum of MPCE. Five size classes of MPCE are shown, ranging from the Below Poverty Line or BPL category right up to an MPCE of Rs.1200 for rural and Rs. 2,500 for urban India. While the five classes give a sense of the entire distribution, for the purposes of this Report the first and last classes are the ones to focus on in order to get a quick sense of the comparative position of different groups.

Table 10 **Estimated Class Composition of Dalits by Religion Rural India, 2004-05**

Religious Community	MONTHLY PERCAPITA CONSUMPTION EXPENDITURE CLASSES					All Classes
	Below PL	*Rs.357–450*	*451–650*	*651–1200*	*Rs.1200 +*	
Hindu	37.7	23.6	25.0	11.7	2.0	100.0
Muslim	**39.6**	15.8	37.1	4.9	**2.6**	100.0
Christian	**30.1**	33.5	14.0	16.4	**6.1**	100.0
Sikh	7.6	19.1	41.2	28.5	3.6	100.0
Buddhist	45.9	21.4	23.7	6.6	2.5	100.0
All Dalits	*36.8*	*23.5*	*25.4*	*12.2*	*2.1*	*100.0*

Source: Computed from NSSO 61st Round data. Cells show estimated percentage of population in each MPCE class. Poverty Line is as per official estimate of Planning Commission Expert Group *(Rs.356.30 for Rural India for 2004-05.)*. Rows may not add up due to rounding.

Table 10 shows that, in rural India, the Dalit Sikhs are the only group that is significantly better off than other Dalits. Less than 8% of Dalit Sikhs are in the BPL category compared to at least 30% of more for all others. Buddhists are the worst off, followed by DMs at nearly 40%. After Sikhs, DCs are the next best though they have a BPL rate of over 30%. At the other end of the spectrum, it is the DCs that are best off with about 6% in the Rs.1200 & above category. DMs do slightly better than Hindu dalits, but the difference is not significant. Thus, DCs in rural India have substantial numbers of poor, but they also have a small proportion in the affluent category. DMs have more in the poor and less in the affluent category than DCs, but they are broadly comparable to all other dalits except Sikhs.

Table 11 gives us the same profiles for urban India. The most noticeable feature of this table is that DMs are by far the worst off among urban dalits. About 47% of them are in the BPL category – significantly more than Hindu dalits who are the next at about 41%. But the really striking fact is that there seem to be almost no DMs at all in the affluent category, so much so that they don't register as a significant proportion of population. DCs are better off than DMs and all other groups except the Sikhs, who are once again the best off among urban dalits.

Table 11 **Estimated Class Composition of Dalits by Religion**
Urban India, 2004-05

Religious Community	MONTHLY PERCAPITA CONSUMPTION EXPENDITURE CLASSES					All Classes
	Below PL	*Rs.539–800*	*801–1250*	*1251–2500*	*Rs.2500 +*	
Hindu	40.9	28.3	21.2	8.1	1.6	100.0
Muslim	**46.8**	33.1	9.8	10.3	**0.0**	100.0
Christian	**32.3**	30.9	22.0	12.7	**2.1**	100.0
Sikh	24.8	39.6	20.1	12.3	3.2	100.0
Buddhist	28.9	28.1	28.4	13.1	1.6	100.0
All Dalits	39.8	28.5	21.5	8.6	1.6	*100.0*

Source: Computed from NSSO 61st Round data. Cells show estimated percentage of population in each MPCE class. Poverty Line is as per official estimate of Planning Commission Expert Group *(Rs.538.60 for Urban India for 2004-05.)*. Rows may not add up due to rounding.

Tables 12 and 13 look at the degree of over- or under-representation in different economic classes. If the previous tables provided a view of the class composition of dalits of different religions, these tables provide the shares of dalits of different religious groups in the population of each economic class. The way to read these tables is to compare the figures in the last column, which show the approximate share of the group in the overall population of dalits in rural India and urban India, with the figures in the first and last MPCE classes. This tells us whether and to what extent each groups share in the BPL and top MPCE classes is higher or lower than that group's share in the total dalit population.

Table 12 shows that DMs are neither significantly under-represented nor over-represented among either the BPL or the Rs.1200+ group; they are thus at the overall average for all dalits. However DCs are slightly under-represented among the BPL (a share of 0.7% compared to a 0.9% share in total rural dalit population) and significantly over-represented among the Rs.1200+ class at 2.5%. They are thus more like the dalit Sikhs than other dalits, though with a larger presence in the top MPCE class than the latter.

Table 12 **Estimated Population Shares in Different Economic Classes Dalits by Religion, Rural India, 2004-05**

Religious Community	MONTHLY PERCAPITA CONSUMPTION EXPENDITURE CLASSES					*Share in Total Dalit Population*
	Below PL	*Rs.357–450*	*451–650*	*651–1200*	*Rs.1200 +*	
Hindu	95.5	93.9	91.7	89.9	89.1	*93.4*
Muslim	**0.3**	0.2	0.4	0.1	**0.4**	***0.3***
Christian	**0.7**	1.3	0.5	1.2	**2.5**	***0.9***
Sikh	0.7	2.6	5.2	7.6	5.4	*3.2*
Buddhist	2.7	2.0	2.0	1.2	2.6	*2.2*
All Dalits	*100.0*	*100.0*	*100.0*	*100.0*	*100.0*	*100.0*

Source: Computed from NSSO 61st Round data. Cells show estimated share of each group in the total population of each MPCE class. Last column shows estimated share of each group in the total rural Dalit population. Columns may not add up due to rounding.

Table 13 **Estimated Population Shares in Different Economic Classes Dalits by Religion, Urban India, 2004-05**

Religious Community	MONTHLY PERCAPITA CONSUMPTION EXPENDITURE CLASSES					*Share in Total Dalit Population*
	Below PL	*Rs.539–800*	*801–1250*	*1251–2500*	*Rs.2500 +*	
Hindu	92.7	89.6	88.9	85.1	88.9	*90.3*
Muslim	**0.8**	0.8	0.3	0.8	**0.0**	***0.7***
Christian	**1.3**	1.7	1.6	2.4	**2.1**	***1.6***
Sikh	1.0	2.3	1.5	2.3	3.3	*1.6*
Buddhist	4.2	5.7	7.6	8.7	5.7	*5.7*

All Dalits	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	*100.0*
Source: Computed from NSSO 61st Round data. Cells show estimated share of each group in the total population of each MPCE class. Last column shows estimated share of each group in the total urban Dalit population. Columns may not add up due to rounding.						

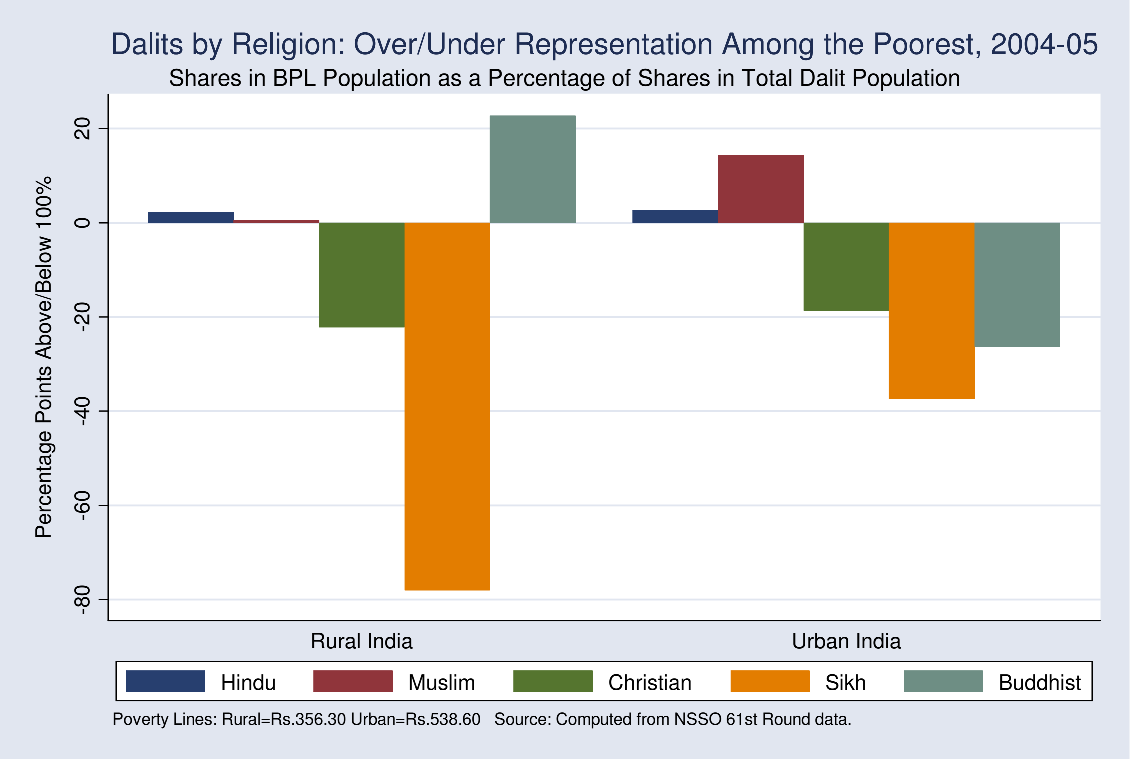
Table 13 provides the same data for urban India. Once again the major point here is the *complete absence* of DMs in the top (Rs.2,500+ MPCE class), though they are only slightly over-represented in the bottom or BPL class. DCs are once again like dalit Sikhs, although the latter are better off here with a lower share in the BPL and a higher share in the Rs.2500+ class.

Figures 1 and 2 present the main findings of Tables 12 and 13 in a sharper and reorganized form. They show us the extent of over- or under-representation in the BPL and the top MPCE class in terms of index numbers. The index numbers are calculated by dividing each group's share in the BPL and Top classes by its share of total Dalit population and multiplying by 100. An index number of 100 would imply exactly proportionate representation in the class concerned, while numbers over 100 imply over-representation, and numbers below 100 imply under-representation. The bars in the graphs shown in Figures 1 and 2 show the extent by which the index numbers for each group exceed or fall short of 100. Thus, bars extending upwards above the zero line indicate over-representation and bars extending downwards indicate under-representation.

Figure 1 shows representation in the BPL category for both rural and urban India (thus combining the BPL columns of Tables 12 and 13) while Figure 2 does the same for the Top MPCE class (Rs.1200+ for rural and Rs.2500+ for urban India). In terms of intra-Dalit differences, it is clear that DMs are severely under-represented in the urban affluent class, while DCs and specially Dalit Sikhs are under-represented among the poorest in both rural and urban India. DCs are significantly over-represented among the rural affluent class, and slightly so in the urban affluent class.

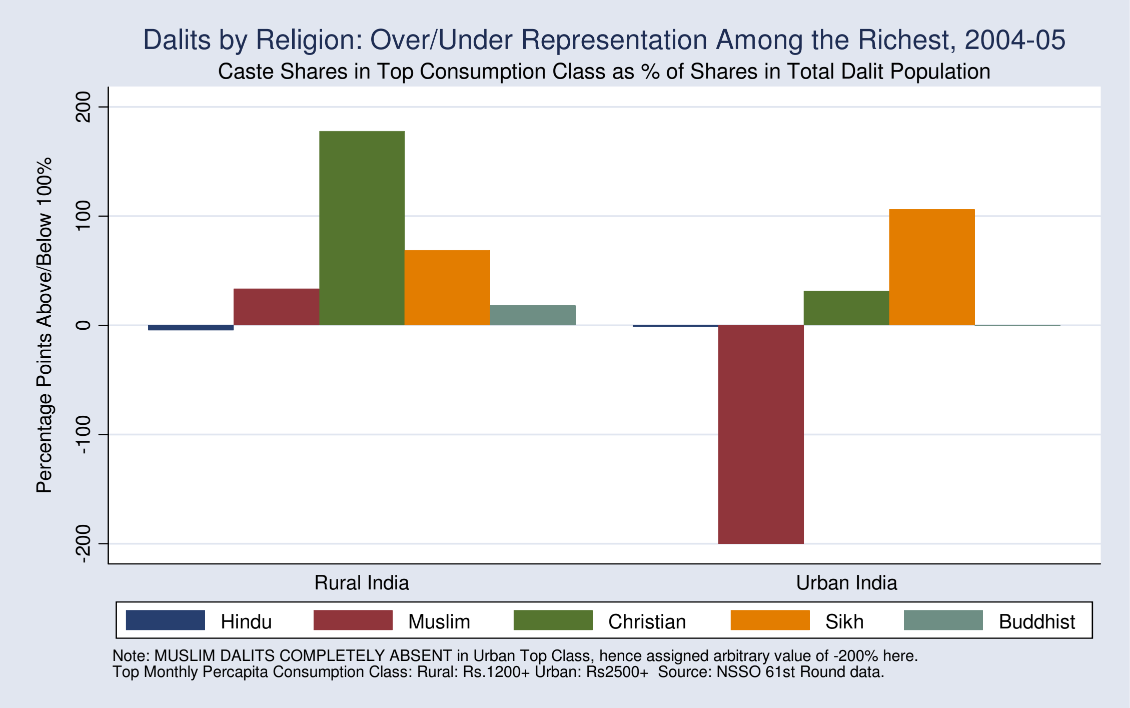
However, it should be remembered that these are data pertaining to intra-Dalit differences and are designed to answer the question of how the DMs and DCs compare with other dalits. The main point here is the overwhelming numerical preponderance of Hindu dalits, so that population shares of all others tend to be marginal. Too much importance should not therefore be attached to these intra-Dalit differences, nor should these be interpreted out of context.

Figure 1



Poverty Lines: Rural=Rs.356.30 Urban=Rs.538.60 Source: Computed from NSSO 61st Round data.

Figure 2



Note: MUSLIM DALITS COMPLETELY ABSENT in Urban Top Class, hence assigned arbitrary value of -200% here.
Top Monthly Percapita Consumption Class: Rural: Rs.1200+ Urban: Rs2500+ Source: NSSO 61st Round data.

Comparing Dalit Muslims and Dalit Christians with non-Dalit Muslims and Christians

We now apply the same criterion, namely the poverty profile or proportion of population in different economic classes, to a comparison of DMs and DCs with non-Dalit members of their own communities.

Tables 14 and 15 provide the break up of the population of Dalits, OBCs and 'Upper' castes among Muslims in rural India and urban India. Unsurprisingly, the DMs are the worst off compared to their OBC and UC counterparts. Their BPL population is higher and their top MPCE class population is lower than that of the other groups. Urban DMs are particularly badly off – their BPL percentage is almost 47%, and they are *completely absent* in the Rs.1200+ category. This is not a rounding problem – there are actually no DM households in this category, which does indeed appear to be a null set.

(This was so striking a fact that it called for re-checking; it is confirmed that of the 53 DM households in the urban sample, not one has an MPCE of more than Rs.2500. Although there are as many as 179 (unweighted) Muslim households in this category, none of them is from the DM category. Only one DM household has a MPCE of over Rs.2000 – and that too only just above at Rs.2026 – and only four have an MPCE of over Rs.1500. However, it should be remembered that: a) the sample size is very small – 53 is a small number; and b) there are problems with the DM category itself since it has no official status at the central level and variable status at the state level.)

Table 14 — **Estimated Class Composition of Caste Groups**
Muslims in Rural India, 2004-05

Caste Groups	MONTHLY PERCAPITA CONSUMPTION EXPENDITURE CLASSES					All Classes
	Below PL	*Rs.357–450*	*451–650*	*651–1200*	*Rs.1200 +*	
SC	**39.6**	15.8	37.1	4.9	**2.6**	100.0
OBC	32.1	21.0	24.3	17.7	5.0	100.0
UC	27.3	22.2	31.0	16.4	3.2	100.0
All Castes	29.2	21.7	28.4	16.8	3.9	*100.0*

Source: Computed from NSSO 61st Round data. Cells show estimated percentage of population in each MPCE class. Poverty Line is as per official estimate of Planning Commission Expert Group *(Rs.356.30 for Rural India for 2004-05.)*. Rows may not add up due to rounding.

Table 15	**Estimated Class Composition of Caste Groups Muslims in Urban India, 2004-05**					
Caste Groups	MONTHLY PERCAPITA CONSUMPTION EXPENDITURE CLASSES					All Classes
	Below PL	*Rs.539–800*	*801–1250*	*1251–2500*	*Rs.2500 +*	
SC	**46.8**	33.1	9.8	10.3	**0.0**	100.0
OBC	45.7	30.7	15.2	7.4	1.1	100.0
UC	38.7	26.1	20.8	11.9	2.5	100.0
All Castes	41.4	28.0	18.6	10.2	2.0	*100.0*

Source: Computed from NSSO 61st Round data. Cells show estimated percentage of population in each MPCE class. Poverty Line is as per official estimate of Planning Commission Expert Group *(Rs.538.60 for Urban India for 2004-05.).* Rows may not add up due to rounding.

But the most notable feature of these tables (particularly Table 15 on urban India) is that *caste inequality is relatively low among Muslims.*[6] However, this is mostly because *Muslims as a whole* – i.e., regardless of caste distinctions – are generally poorer or worse off than almost all other communities in almost all contexts. (This point will be made clearer by Figures 3 and 4 below.)

Tables 16 and 17 provided the same information on Christians in rural and urban India. It is immediately clear from these tables that DCs are considerably worse off than their non-Dalit co-religionists. Indeed, the differences are so great that DCs may almost be living in a different world from other Christians. Table 16 shows that, in rural India, the BPL proportion for DCs is more than double that for OBCs and about four-and-half times that of the ucs. On the other hand, the DC population percentage in the top MPCE class is only one-third that of the OBCs and almost one-fifth that of the UCs.

Table 16	**Estimated Class Composition of Caste Groups Christians in Rural India, 2004-05**					
Caste Groups	MONTHLY PERCAPITA CONSUMPTION EXPENDITURE CLASSES					All Classes
	Below PL	*Rs.357–450*	*451–650*	*651–1200*	*Rs.1200 +*	
SC	**30.1**	33.5	14.0	16.4	**6.1**	100.0
OBC	13.9	14.2	23.7	30.2	18.1	100.0
UC	6.6	5.6	17.8	40.8	29.2	100.0
All Castes	16.2	13.1	25.7	30.2	14.9	*100.0*

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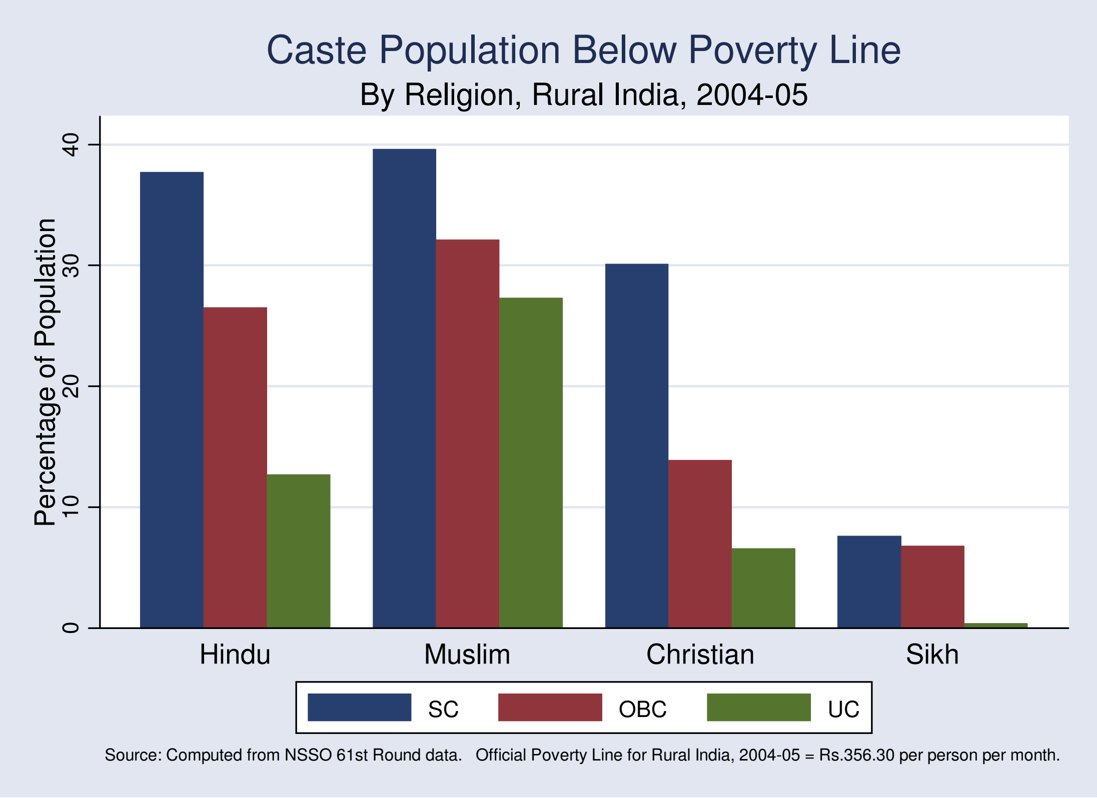
[6] For those interested: the Gini coefficient of the MPCE distribution for Muslims is 0.339 compared to 0.373 for Hindus and 0.366 for Christians in urban India.

Source: Computed from NSSO 61st Round data. Cells show estimated percentage of population in each MPCE class. Poverty Line is as per official estimate of Planning Commission Expert Group *(Rs.356.30 for Rural India for 2004-05.)*. Rows may not add up due to rounding.

Table 17	**Estimated Class Composition of Caste Groups Christians in Urban India, 2004-05**					
Caste Groups	MONTHLY PERCAPITA CONSUMPTION EXPENDITURE CLASSES					All Classes
	Below PL	*Rs.539–800*	*801–1250*	*1251–2500*	*Rs.2500 +*	
SC	**32.3**	30.9	22.0	12.7	**2.1**	100.0
OBC	13.0	23.4	32.2	25.1	6.3	100.0
UC	6.9	15.0	21.8	39.9	16.5	100.0
All Castes	12.5	20.7	26.6	30.8	9.5	*100.0*
Source: Computed from NSSO 61st Round data. Cells show estimated percentage of population in each MPCE class. Poverty Line is as per official estimate of Planning Commission Expert Group *(Rs.538.60 for Urban India for 2004-05.)*. Rows may not add up due to rounding.						

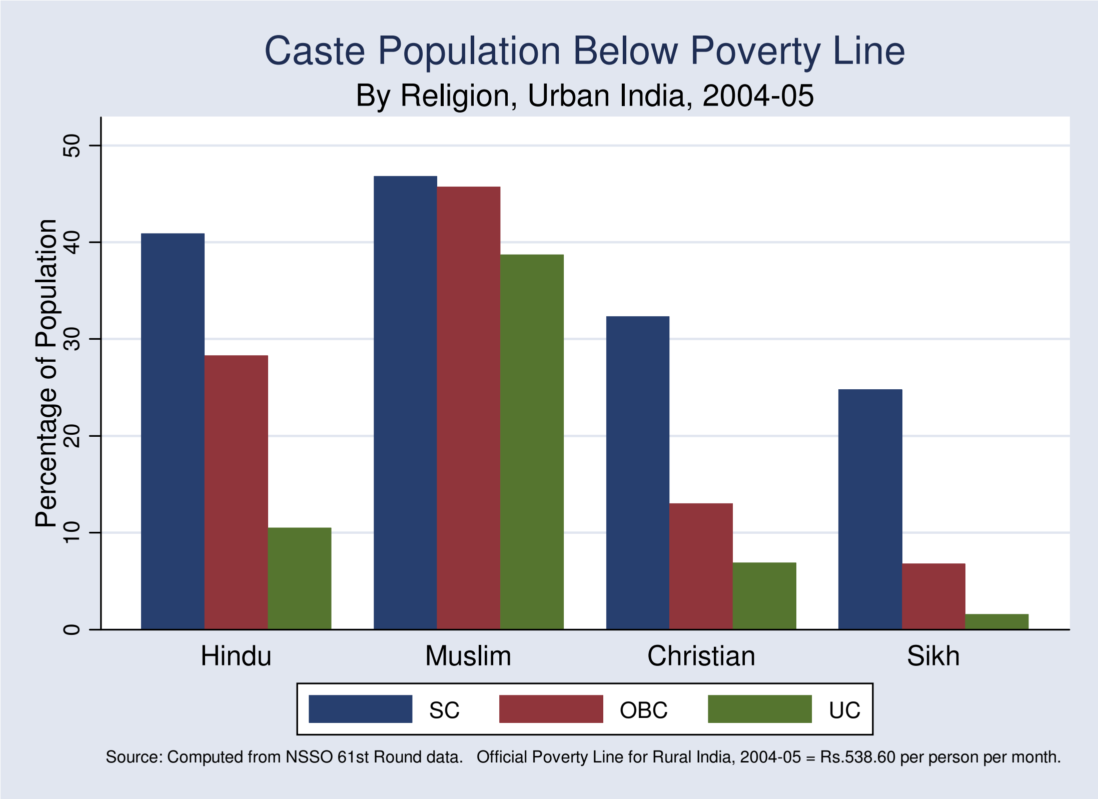
Table 17 establishes that, if anything, DCs in urban India are even worse off relative to other Christians than their rural counterparts. Their BPL percentage is two-and-a-half times that of the OBCs and about four-and-a-half times that of the UCs. In the Rs.2500 and above MPCE class, the DC presence is one-third that of the OBCs and as little as *one eighth* of the UCs. Just as less caste inequality is not good news for Dalit Muslims because Muslims generally are badly off, more caste inequality does not necessarily mean that DCs are worse off in absolute terms – as we saw in the previous section, they tend to be slightly better off than most other dalits except Sikhs.

Figure 3



Source: Computed from NSSO 61st Round data. Official Poverty Line for Rural India, 2004-05 = Rs.356.30 per person per month.

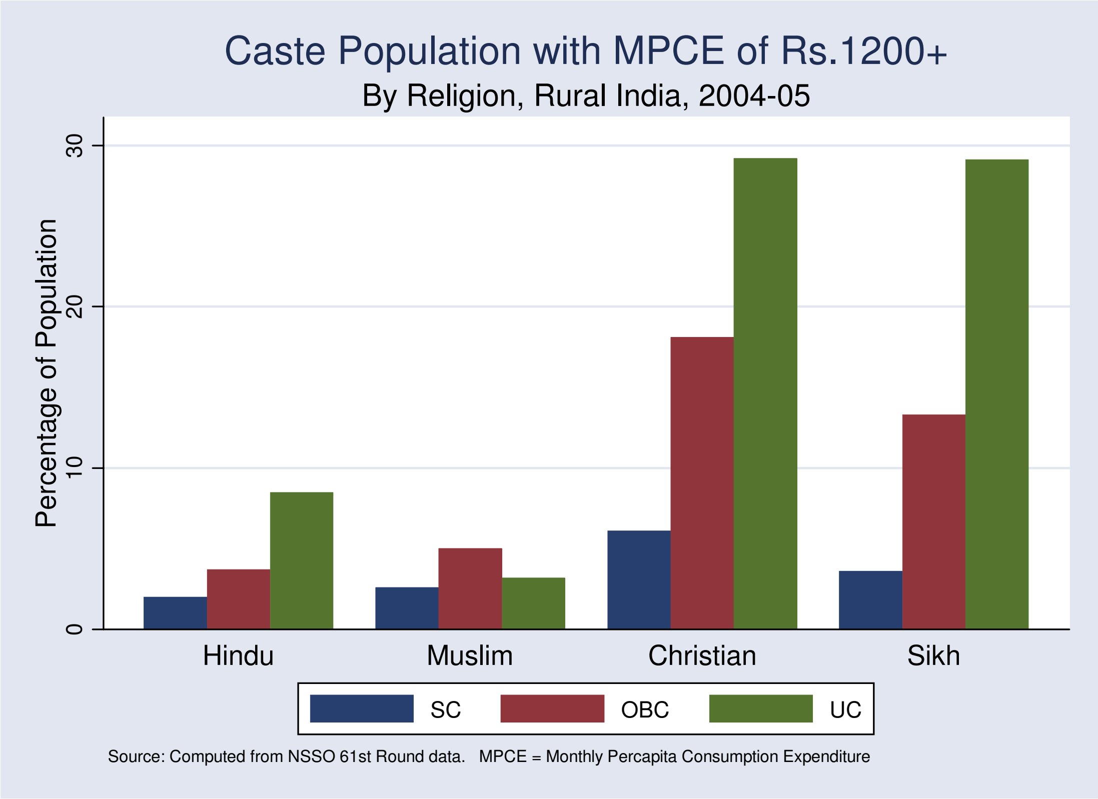
Figure 4



Caste Population Below Poverty Line
By Religion, Urban India, 2004-05

Source: Computed from NSSO 61st Round data. Official Poverty Line for Rural India, 2004-05 = Rs.538.60 per person per month.

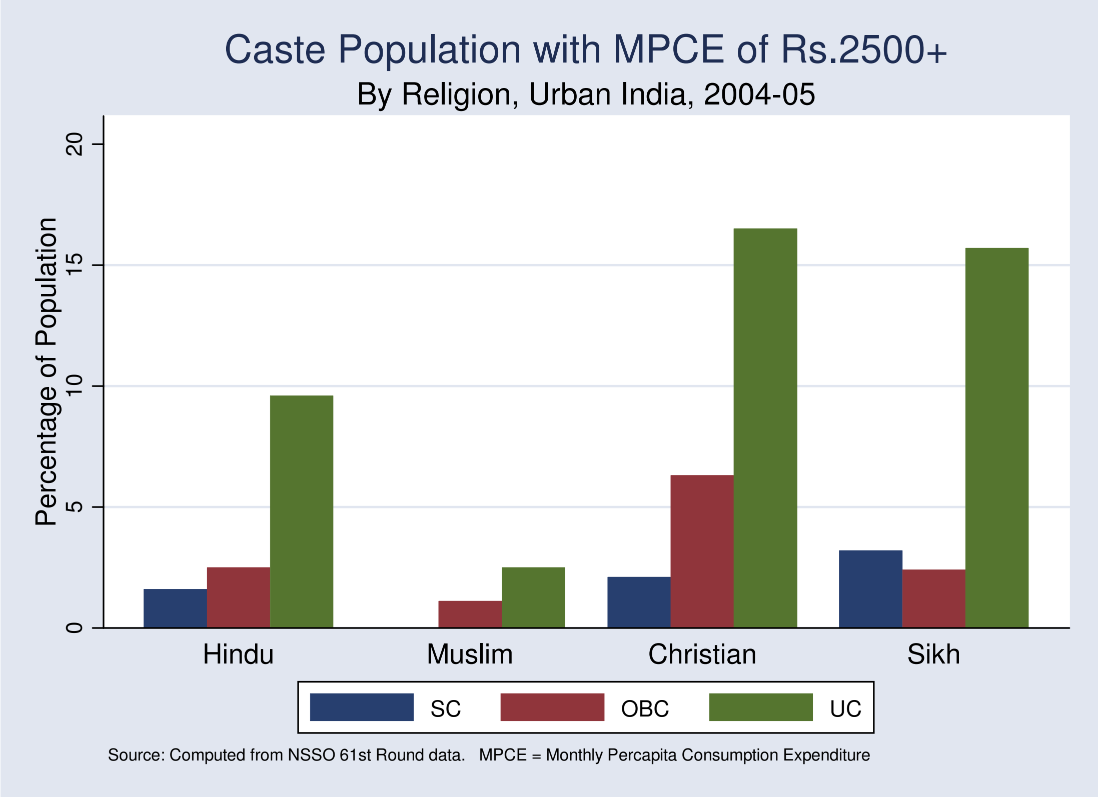
Figure 5



Caste Population with MPCE of Rs.1200+
By Religion, Rural India, 2004-05

Source: Computed from NSSO 61st Round data. MPCE = Monthly Percapita Consumption Expenditure

Figure 6



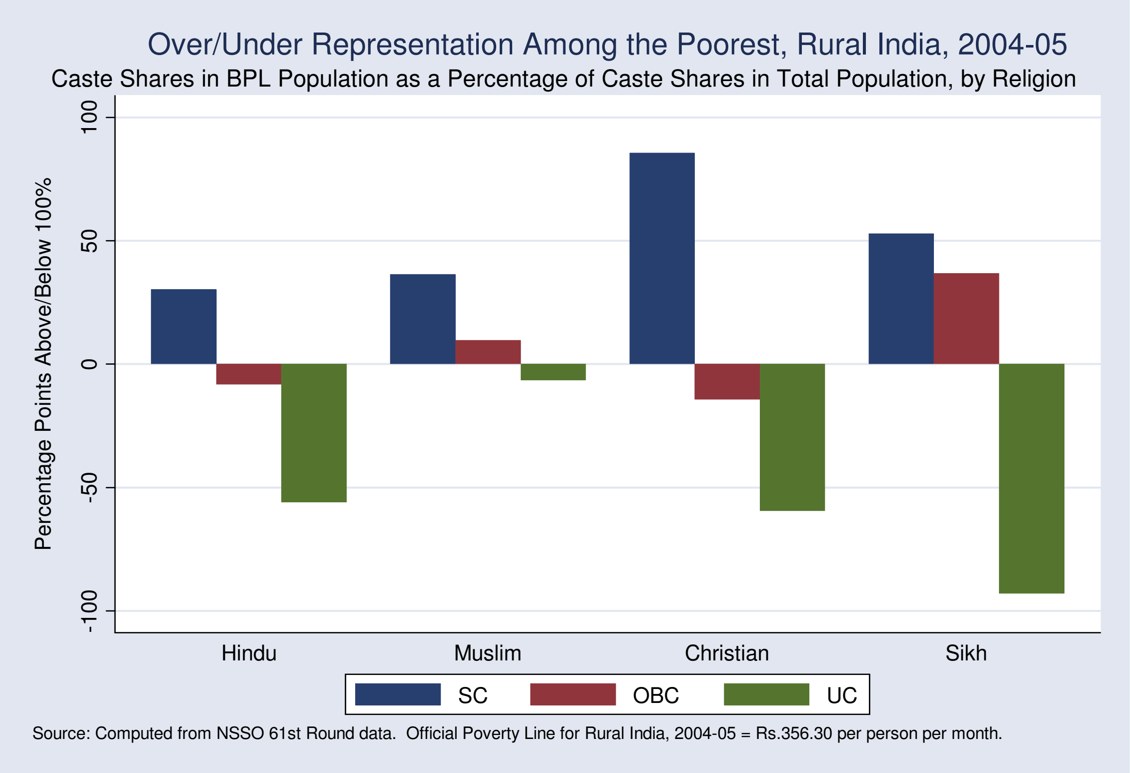
Source: Computed from NSSO 61st Round data. MPCE = Monthly Percapita Consumption Expenditure

Figures 3, 4, 5 and 6 place things in comparative perspective by juxtaposing Muslims and Christians with Hindus and Sikhs. Figures 3 and 4 show the respective population proportions of caste groups within each religion that are in the BPL category in rural and urban India. It is at once clear that Dalits are always the group with the highest proportion of population in the BPL category in both rural and urban India, regardless of religion. Inequalities in BPL proportions are higher in urban than in rural India. The fact that Muslims have less inequality, as well as the fact that they are as a whole worse off than other communities – particularly in urban India – is clear from these tables.

Figures 5 and 6 show the comparative proportions in the highest MPCE class for the two sectors. Once again, Dalits are always the worst off in the sense that they have a lower proportion of their population in this affluent class than their non-Dalit fellow religionists. The only exception – but a relatively small one – is provided by Dalit Sikhs, who just manage to outdo their OBC counterparts in urban India. Note the absence of DMs from the urban affluent class.

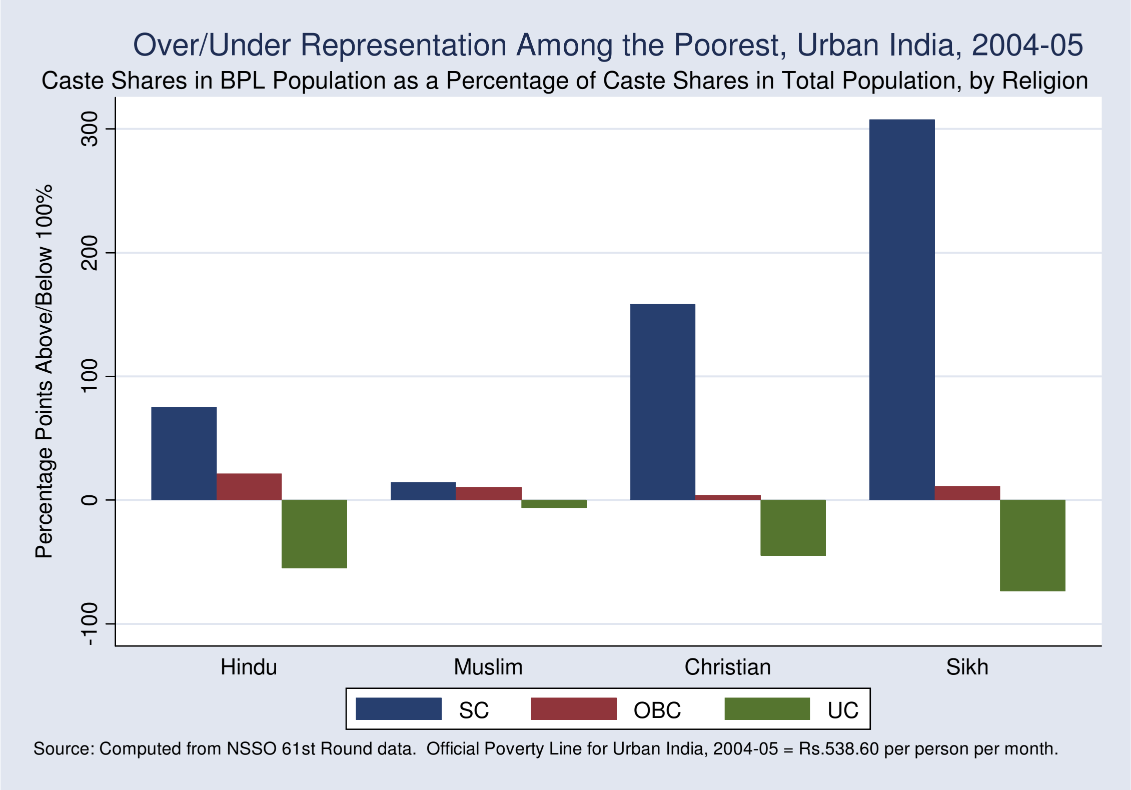
Figures 7 through 10 follow the same format as figures 1 and 2. These figures tell us about over- and under-representation in different economic class, namely the BPL group and the top MPCE group. However, while figures 1 and 2 were about population shares relative to the total Dalit population, here the reference point is the (rural or urban) population of the (religious) community as whole.

Figure 7



Source: Computed from NSSO 61st Round data. Official Poverty Line for Rural India, 2004-05 = Rs.356.30 per person per month.

Figure 8



Over/Under Representation Among the Poorest, Urban India, 2004-05

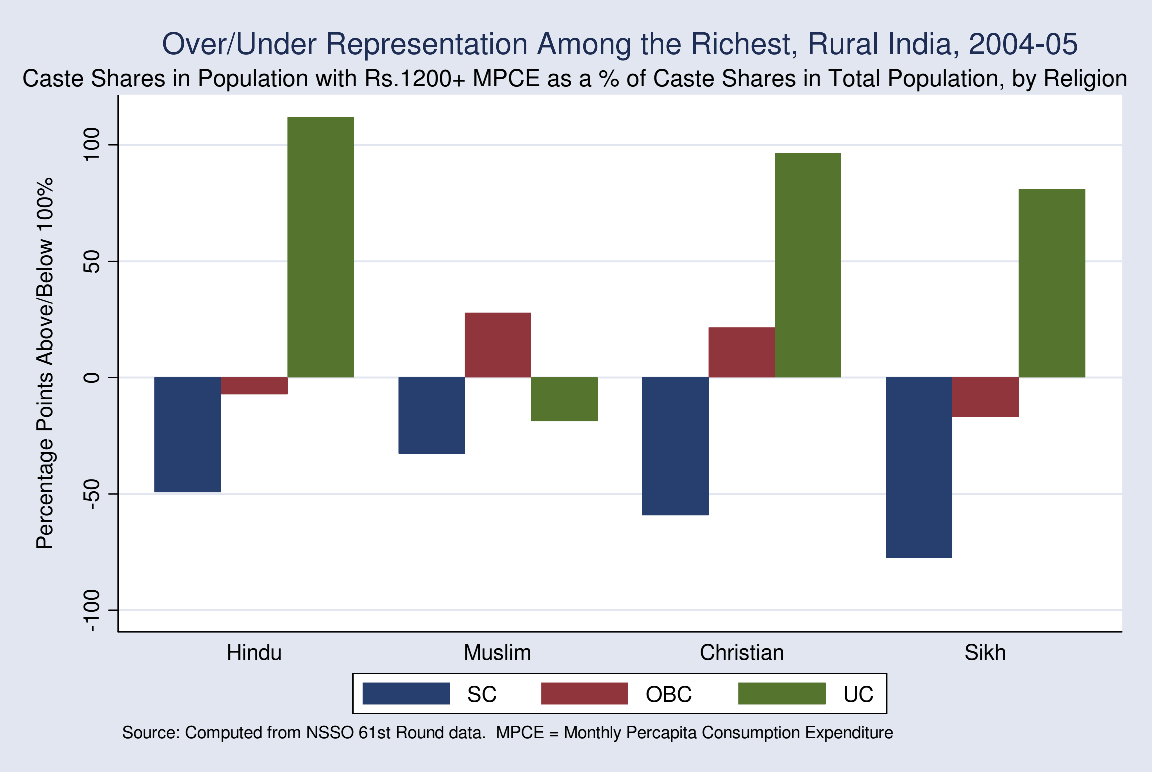
Caste Shares in BPL Population as a Percentage of Caste Shares in Total Population, by Religion

Source: Computed from NSSO 61st Round data. Official Poverty Line for Urban India, 2004-05 = Rs.538.60 per person per month.

Tables 7 and 8 establish that Dalits of all communities are invariably over-represented among the BPL population while the ‘Upper’ castes are invariably under-represented. The degree of over-representation is higher for urban dalits, while the degree of under-representation is higher for rural ‘Upper’ castes.

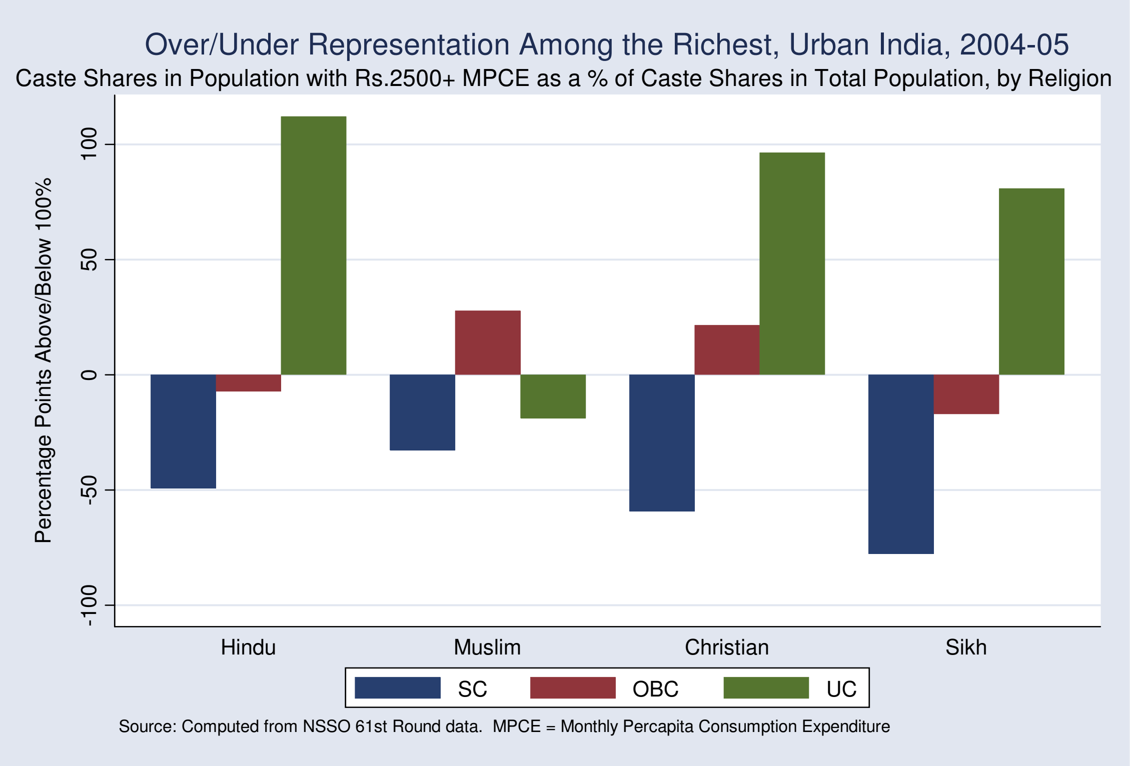
Figures 9 and 10 continue with what should now be a familiar pattern – the Dalits of all religions are under-represented among the top MPCE classes in both sectors, while all ‘Upper’ castes – with the significant exception of the Muslim UCs – are over-represented, usually quite substantially. It is noteworthy that the Hindu upper castes are more than double their proportion of population, while the Christian UCs are close behind. Interestingly, in terms of proportional under-representation, Sikh Dalits seem to be the worst off, followed by the Christian and Hindu Dalits. But the caveats about the distinction between proportionate representation and absolute living standards must be borne in mind here as well.

Figure 9



Source: Computed from NSSO 61st Round data. MPCE = Monthly Percapita Consumption Expenditure

Figure 10



Source: Computed from NSSO 61st Round data. MPCE = Monthly Percapita Consumption Expenditure

3.4 Comparing Average Consumption Standards

In the previous section, we compared DMs and DCs to different social groups on the basis of the proportion of population in various economic classes as defined by MPCE. In this section we look at the same kind of data – consumption expenditure – from a different angle, that provided by different percentiles of the population. This means that we compare the MPCE levels of persons or households in each group who are at the 25th, 50th, 75th and 95th percentile. This is another way of looking at whether one group is, on the whole, richer or poorer than another. The previous section held constant the actual levels of consumption (as determined by the size classes of MPCE) and allowed the proportion of population in each group to vary; in this section we hold the proportion of population constant (by looking at fixed percentiles) but allow the consumption levels to vary across groups.

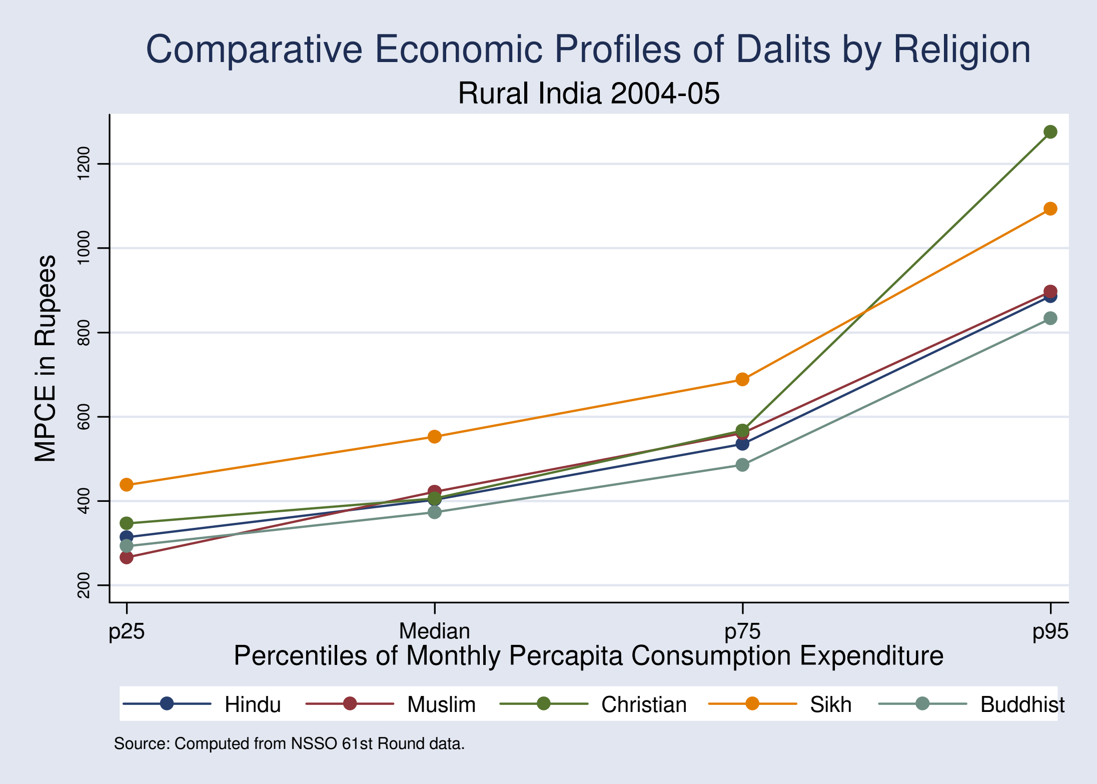
Comparing Dalit Muslims and Dalit Christians to other Dalits

Figures 11 and 12 plot the four percentiles 25th, 50th, 75th and 95th for Dalits in rural and urban India by religious communities. The first point to note from Figure 11 is that there is not much difference in the economic profiles of rural Dalits at least until the 75th percentile. It is only the Dalit Sikhs who appear to be distinctly better off than all other dalits throughout the class spectrum. Somewhere between the 75th and 95th percentile, DCs suddenly improve their consumption levels, and their 95th percentile is higher even than the Sikhs'. However, apart from these exceptions, other dalits (Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims and 75% of DCs) seem fairly close to each other.

Figure 12 for urban India shows that all urban dalit communities are fairly closely bunched until the median (or 50th percentile), after which some differentiation begins to be visible. DMs are clearly the worst off among urban dalits, with their curve being unequivocally lower. By the time the top 5% (or 95th percentile) is reached, there is a clear cut hierarchy in terms of consumption levels topped by the DCs and moving down through Sikhs, Buddhists and Hindus to Muslims at the bottom. There is expectedly much greater inter-Dalit inequality in urban than in rural India.

Figures 13 and 14 allow us to compare differences in consumption levels across all major caste groups broken down by religion in rural and urban India. This also allows us to compare, at the same time, inequality across different religious components of these caste groups

Figure 11



Source: Computed from NSSO 61st Round data.

Figure 12

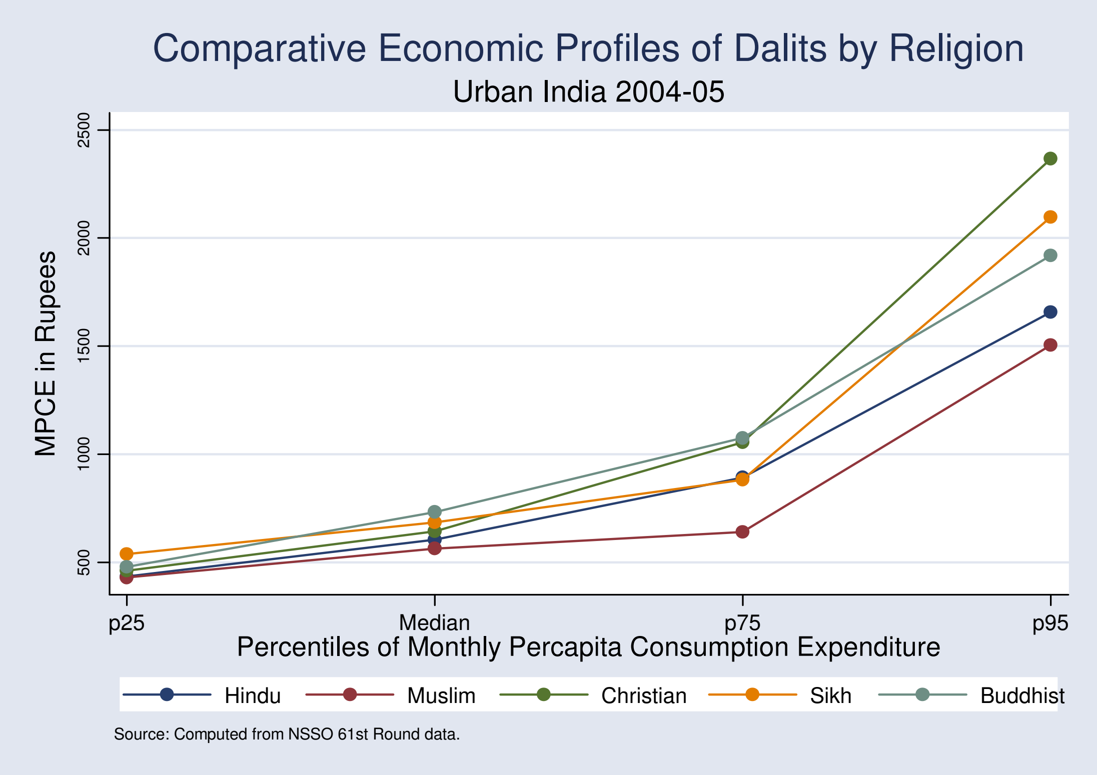


Figure 13

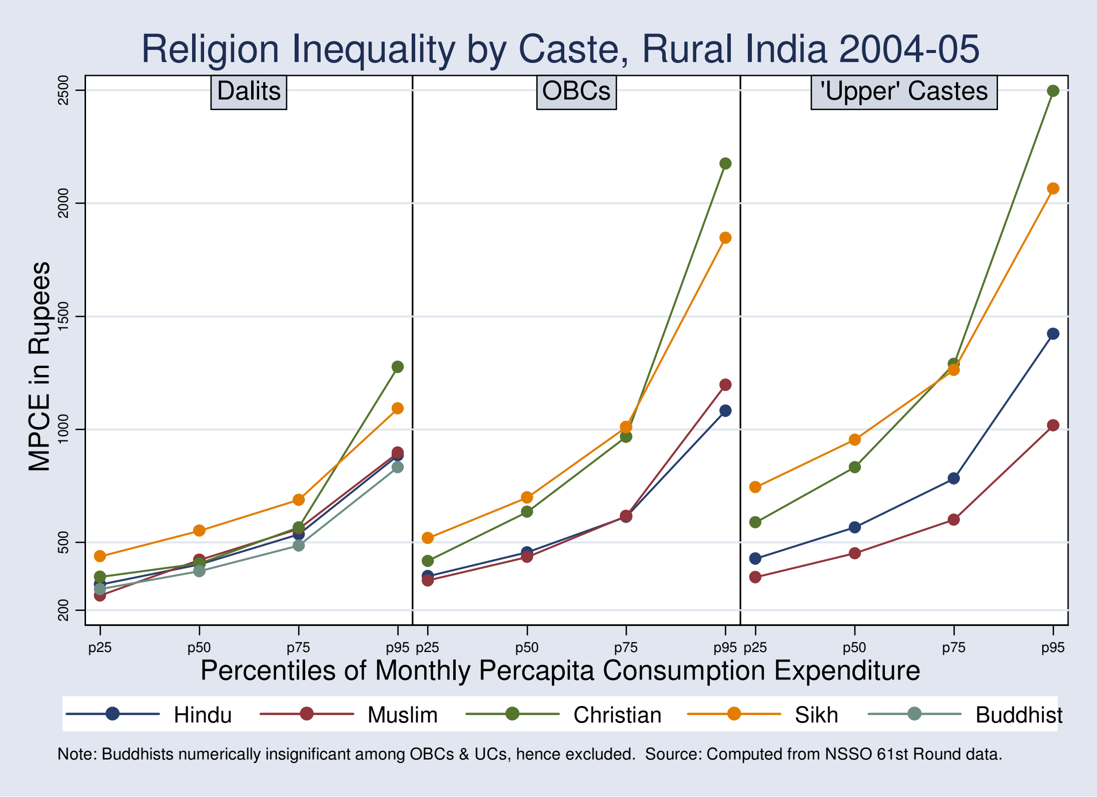
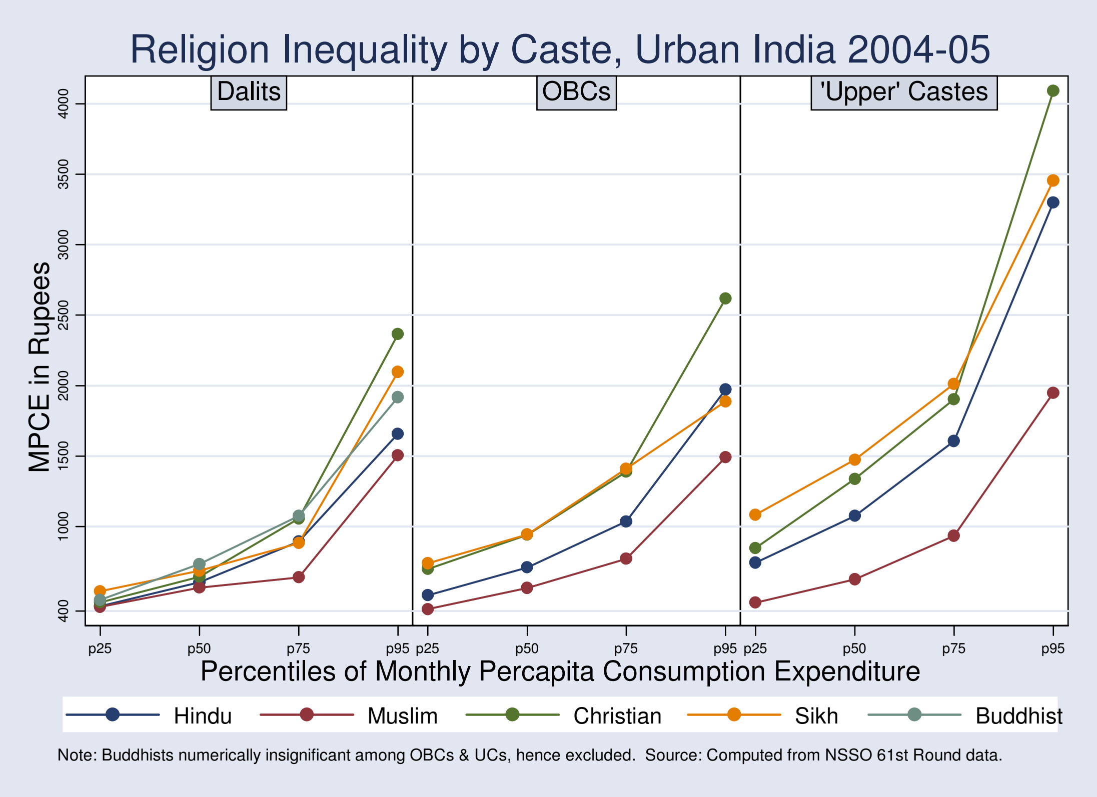


Figure 14



Note: Buddhists numerically insignificant among OBCs & UCs, hence excluded. Source: Computed from NSSO 61st Round data.

As can be seen from Figure 13, inequality across religion is least among the Dalit castes, increases among OBCs and is the greatest among the 'upper' castes. Rural Dalit Sikhs remain the only exception throughout the spectrum. Figure 13 also shows that Dalits of all communities except Muslims are well below their non-Dalit co-religionists, specially the 'upper' castes. By contrast the differences between Dalit, OBC and 'Upper' caste Muslims are comparatively much less.

Figure 14 tells the same story as far as differences across religion but within caste groups is concerned – Dalits are least differentiated, OBCs more so and 'upper' castes the most so. But among Dalits, differentiation is more visible after the median MPCE in urban than in rural India. The striking feature in this figure is that DCs in urban India are clearly the worst off – they are at the bottom of every caste group, and the distance between them and the rest of society is most marked among the 'upper' castes.

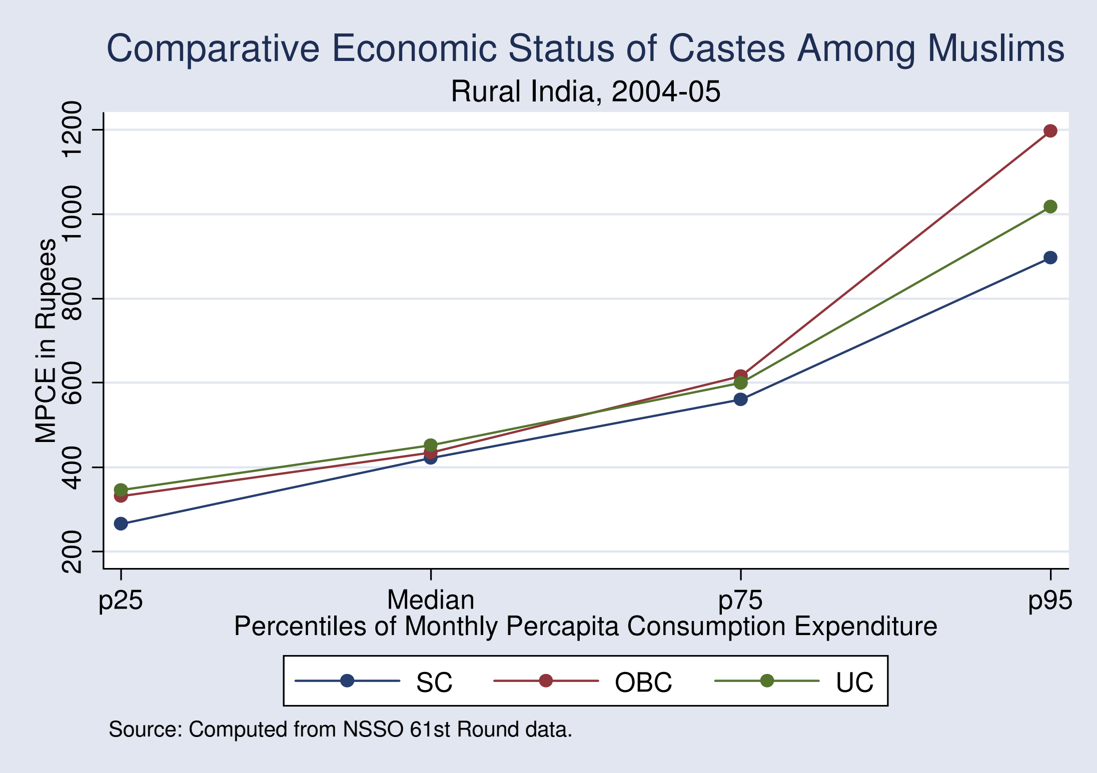
Comparing Dalit Muslims and Christians with non-Dalit Muslims and Christians

Figures 15 and 16 show us that caste inequality among Muslims is relatively low, specially in rural India. It is only in the top 25% of the distribution that some gap opens up between the different caste graphs. Broadly the same is true of DMs in urban India, as shown by Figure 16. However the climb to higher levels of consumption after the 75th percentile is steeper in urban India.

Figures 17 and 18 tell us about caste inequality among rural and urban Christians. Figure 17 shows that, comparatively speaking, caste inequality among Christians is higher and more significant than that in urban India. The climb upwards after the 75th percentile is steepest, and highest, for the 'upper' castes.

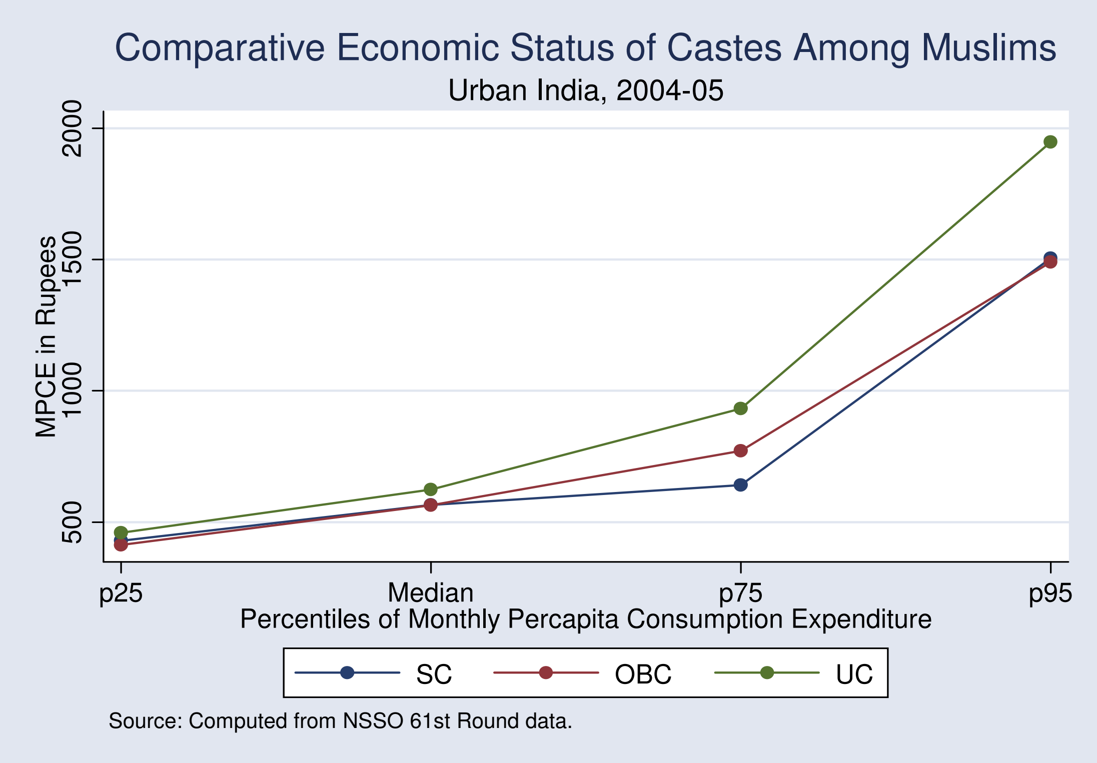
Figures 19 and 20 present a composite overview of caste and religion inequalities in India. In rural India, caste inequalities within religion seem to be the most among the Christians followed by the Sikhs. Muslims have the least caste inequality by far; they are also at a significantly lower level of consumption (perentile by percentile) than other groups. Needless to say that in every religion Dalits are at the bottom of the hierarchy of consumption in in both rural and urban India. The gap between the 'upper' castes and the other castes is much wider in urban than in rural India.

Figure 15



Source: Computed from NSSO 61st Round data.

Figure 16



Source: Computed from NSSO 61st Round data.

Figure 17

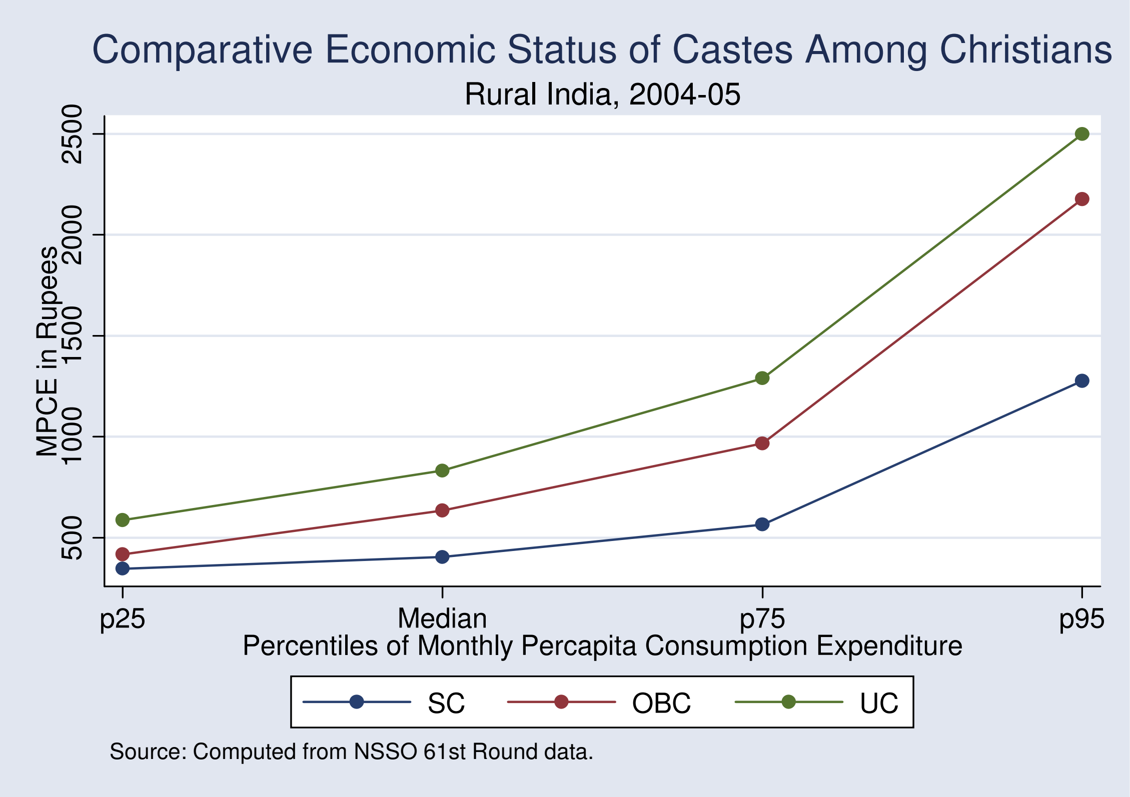


Figure 18

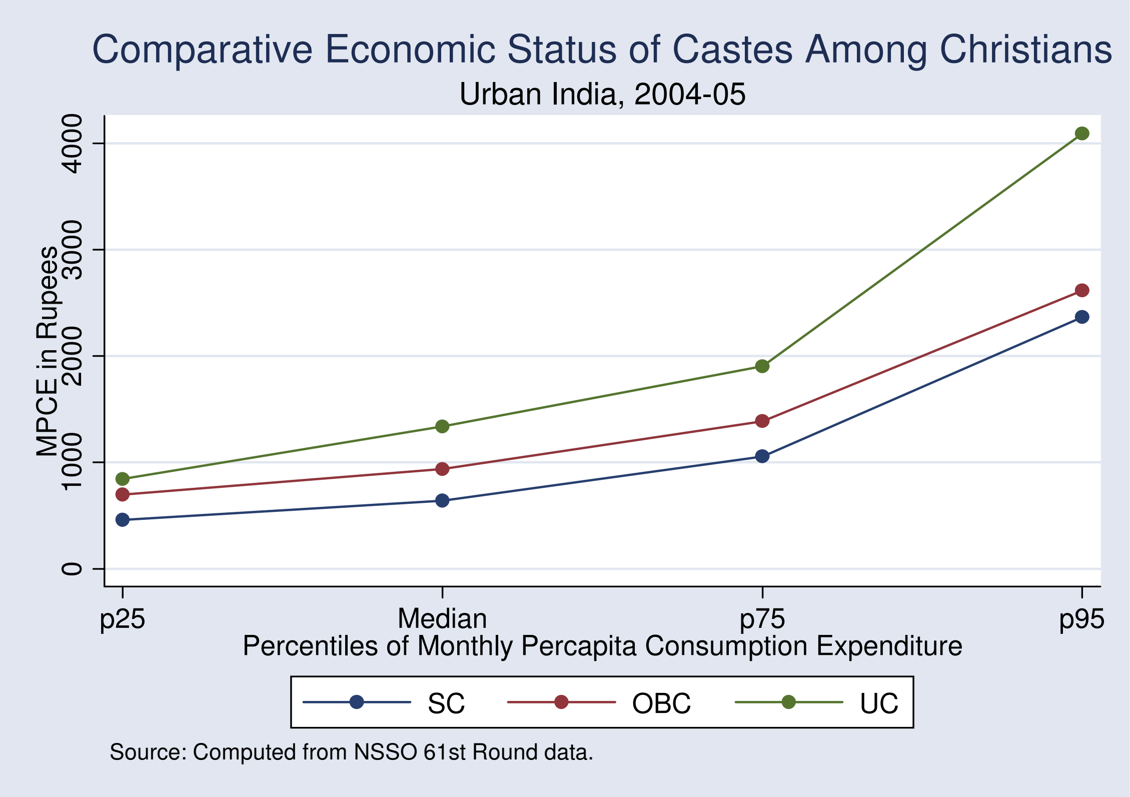
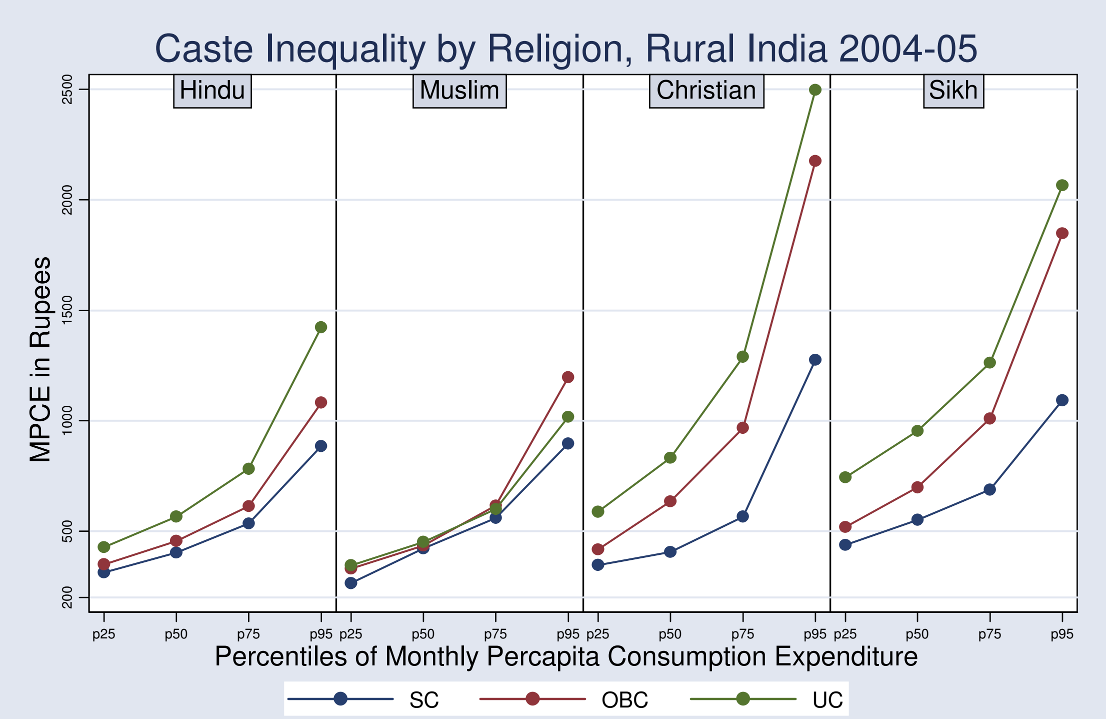
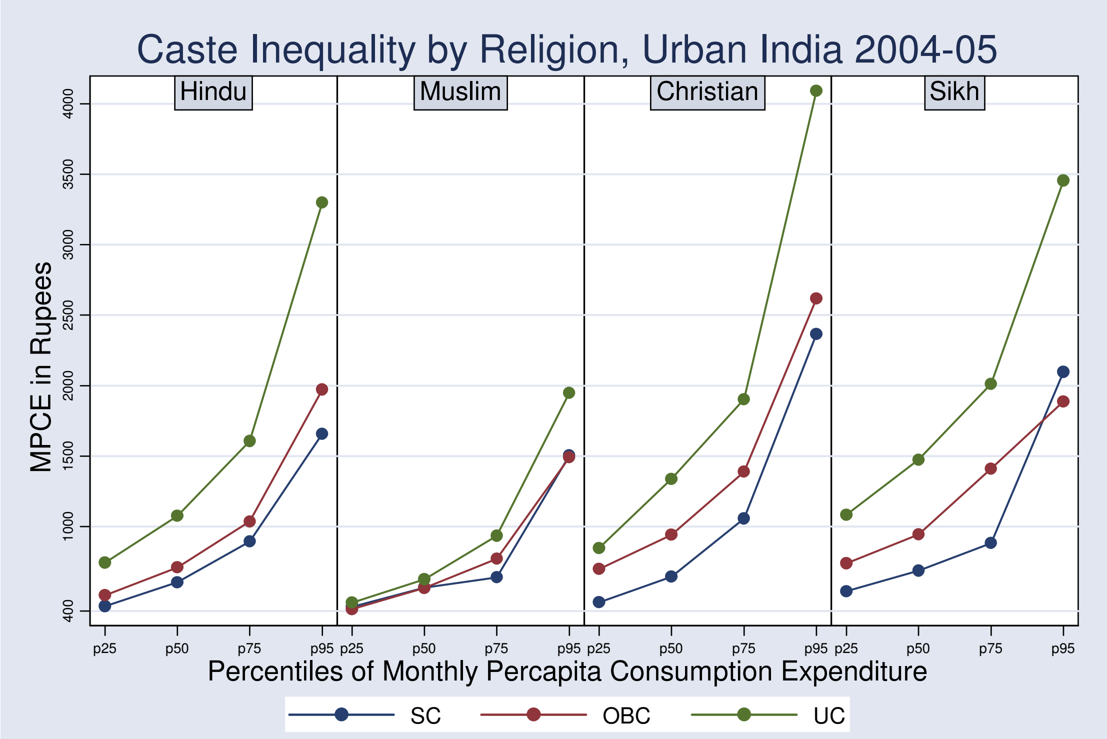


Figure 19



Source: Computed from NSSO 61st Round data.

Figure 20



Source: Computed from NSSO 61st Round data.

3.5 *Comparing Occupational Structures*

In this section we move away from the MPCE data to look at occupational structure as reflected in the data on type of household. This is a less direct and more indicative type of evidence as far as material status is concerned. The broad occupational categories represented here can have very wide variation in class terms: for example, both a streetside cobbler and a surgeon could be "Self Employed". However, at the aggregate level that we are comparing social groups in this Report, it is still useful to see how entire communities fare with respect to these broad categories. It is generally agreed that, by and large, the 'Self Employed in Agriculture' category represents the better off segment of the rural population, while the 'Agricultural Labour' segment indicates relatively lower economic status. Similarly in the urban sector, the 'regular wage and salaried' group is considered better off than the 'casual labour' group. So it is these groups that need to be specially noted when comparing communities, which is done in Figures 21 to 24.

Comparing Dalit Muslims and Dalit Christians to other Dalits

Tables 18 and 19 provide data on the occupational structure of Dalit households in rural and urban India. As can be seen in Table 18, most Dalit communities have a large proportion of their population in the ‘agricultural labour’ category. However, both DMs and DCs are different in that they have a much smaller proportion in this category and a relatively larger proportion in the ‘self-employed in non-agriculture’ category. DMs also have the highest proportion in the ‘self-employed in agriculture’ category, so they are anomalous again in this respect. However, these indicative data would need to be followed up with more detailed investigation of land holding patterns for a fuller interpretation.

Table 19 reiterates the fact repeatedly pointed out by the MPCE data, namely that urban DMs are the poorest. This can be seen in the combination of DMs having the highest proportions in the ‘casual labour’ category and the lowest in the ‘regular wage and salaried’ category. DCs present exactly the opposite profile – they have the highest proportion among the salaried and the lowest in casual labour. The DC profile closely resembles the Dalit Sikh profile. Dalit Buddhists are different in that they also have high proportions in the ‘casual labour category’.

Table 18	**Occupational Structure of Dalit Households, by Religion Rural India, 2004-05**					
Religious Community	Self Emp in Non-Agri	Agricultural Labour	Other Labour	Self Emp in Agriculture	Others	Total
Hindu	14.1	40.1	15.4	20.9	9.5	100.0
Muslim	25.1	24.8	12.4	26.6	11.1	100.0
Christian	17.1	34.7	16.5	7.4	24.3	100.0
Sikh	13.0	45.2	25.3	4.6	12.0	100.0
Buddhist	9.4	56.7	6.8	15.8	11.4	100.0
All	14.1	40.5	15.4	20.2	9.8	100.0
Source: NSSO 61st Round data						

Table 19	**Occupational Structure of Dalit Households, by Religion Urban India, 2004-05**				
SocRel Community	Self Employed	Regular Wage/Salary	Casual Labour	Other Labour	Total

Hindu	30.6	40.6	21.0	7.8	100.0
Muslim	31.9	15.1	38.2	14.8	100.0
Christian	13.9	51.9	24.9	9.3	100.0
Sikh	22.9	51.1	20.9	5.1	100.0
Buddhist	16.6	44.6	31.7	7.2	100.0
All	29.4	41.1	21.8	7.8	100.0

Source: NSSO 61st Round data

Comparing Dalit Muslims and Dalit Christians with non-Dalit Muslims and Christians

Moving now to a comparison of intra-religion differences across caste groups, we find rural DMs to be not very different from other castes within the Muslim community, reiterating the point about low internal differentiation among Muslims. Urban DMs, however, present the standard profile of having more households in the casual labour segment and fewer in the salaried segment compared to Muslims of other caste groups.

Table 20 — **Type of Household by Caste Among Muslims Rural India, 2004-05**

Religious Community	Self Emp in Non-Agri	Agricultural Labour	Other Labour	Self Emp in Agriculture	Others	Total
Dalits	25.1	24.8	12.4	26.6	11.1	100.0
OBCs	32.1	16.4	12.1	23.5	15.9	100.0
‘Upper’ Castes	25.1	24.9	9.6	28.2	12.2	100.0
All	27.7	21.7	10.6	26.4	13.7	100.0

Source: NSSO 61st Round data

Table 21 — **Type of Household by Caste Among Muslims Urban India, 2004-05**

SocRel Community	Self Employed	Regular Wage/Salary	Casual Labour	Other Labour	Total

Dalits	31.9	15.1	38.2	14.8	100.0
OBCs	52.7	23.4	14.4	9.4	100.0
'Upper' Castes	46.8	34.2	12.9	6.1	100.0
All	49.0	30.0	13.6	7.4	100.0

Source: NSSO 61st Round data

Table 22	**Type of Household by Caste Among Christians Rural India, 2004-05**					
Religious Community	Self Emp in Non-Agri	Agricultural Labour	Other Labour	Self Emp in Agriculture	Others	Total
Dalits	17.1	34.7	16.5	7.4	24.3	100.0
OBCs	20.7	18.9	24.6	17.4	18.4	100.0
'Upper' Castes	17.4	16.3	15.6	32.5	18.2	100.0
All	14.9	18.6	14.8	35.1	16.5	100.0

Source: NSSO 61st Round data

Table 23	**Type of Household by Caste Among Christians Urban India, 2004-05**				
SocRel Community	Self Employed	Regular Wage/Salary	Casual Labour	Other Labour	Total
Dalits	13.9	51.9	24.9	9.3	100.0
OBCs	29.6	41.0	16.5	12.9	100.0
'Upper' Castes	29.2	50.8	5.9	14.1	100.0
All Christians	26.6	47.2	11.1	15.1	100.0

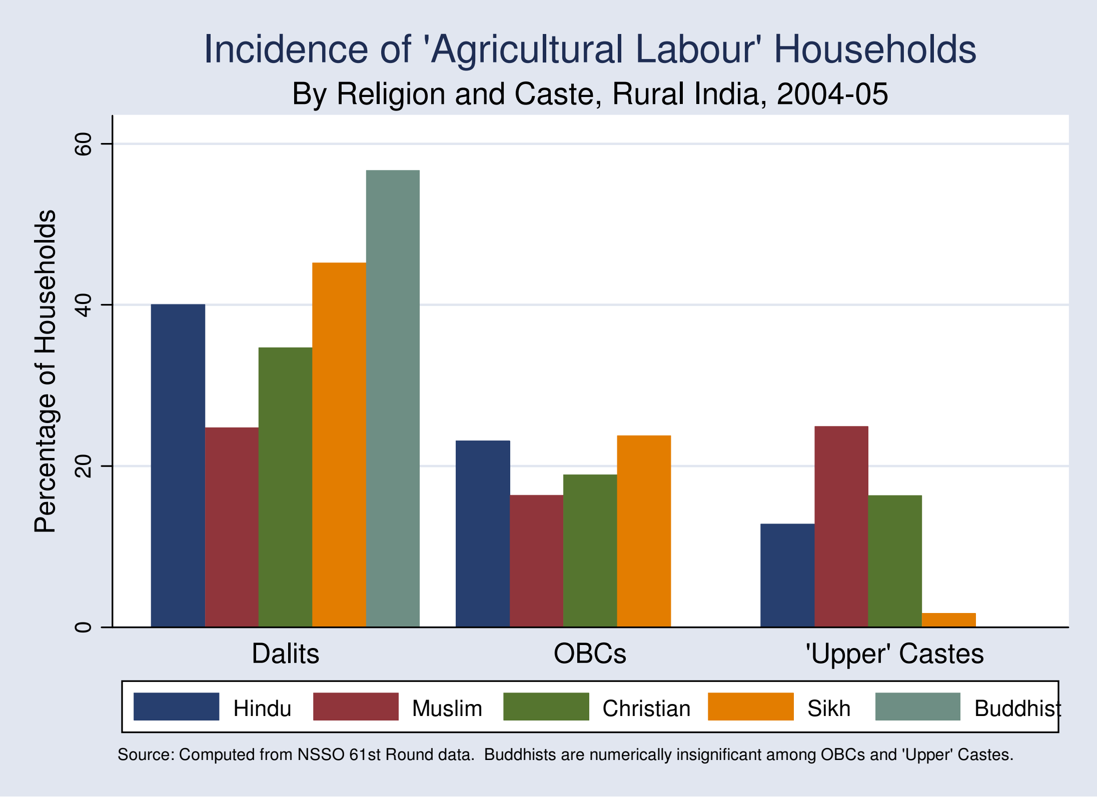
Source: NSSO 61st Round data

Figures 21-24 provide a more comprehensive comparative view including other caste groups. Figures 21 and 22 show that in rural India, Dalits of all communites are distinctly different from other caste groups, having much larger proportions in agricultural labour and much lower proportions amongs the self employed in agriculture.

Figure 23 for urban India shows that incidence of ‘casual labour’ households is significantly higher for all Dalits, with Muslims being particularly noteworthy in this respect, including their ‘upper’ caste segment.

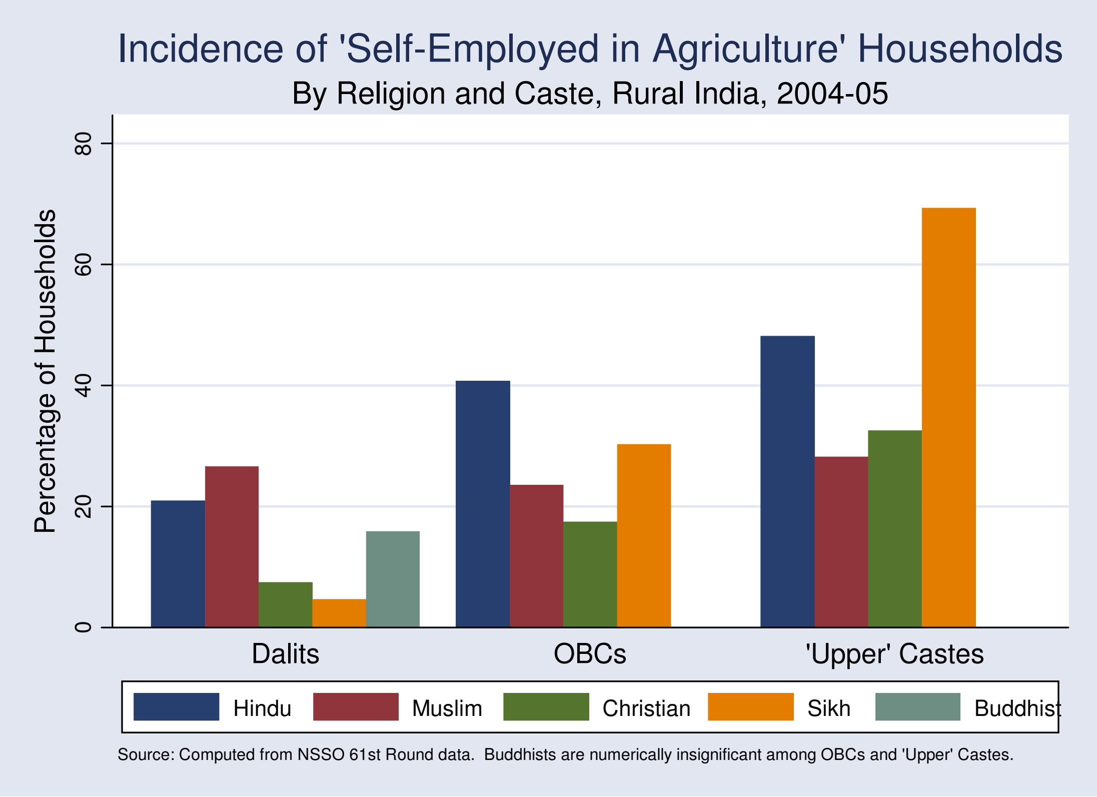
Figure 24 shows the distinctive profile of urban Muslims in that they are significantly below others in every caste category when it comes to the regular wage and salaried category.

Figure 21



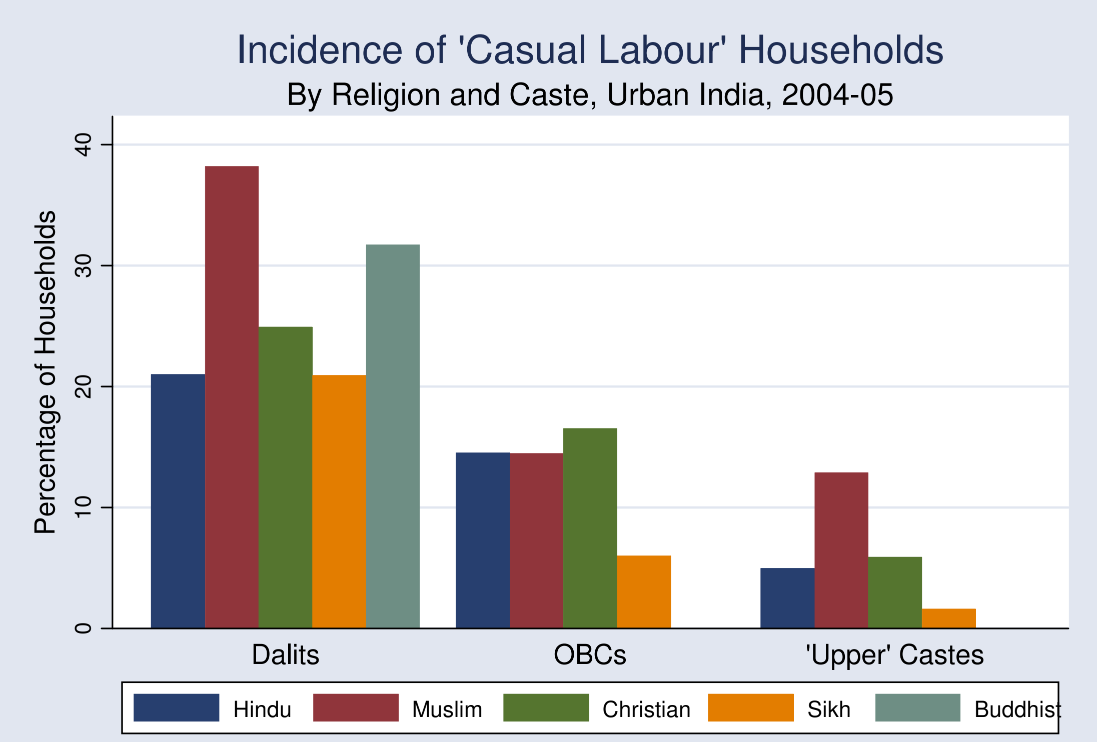
Source: Computed from NSSO 61st Round data. Buddhists are numerically insignificant among OBCs and 'Upper' Castes.

Figure 22



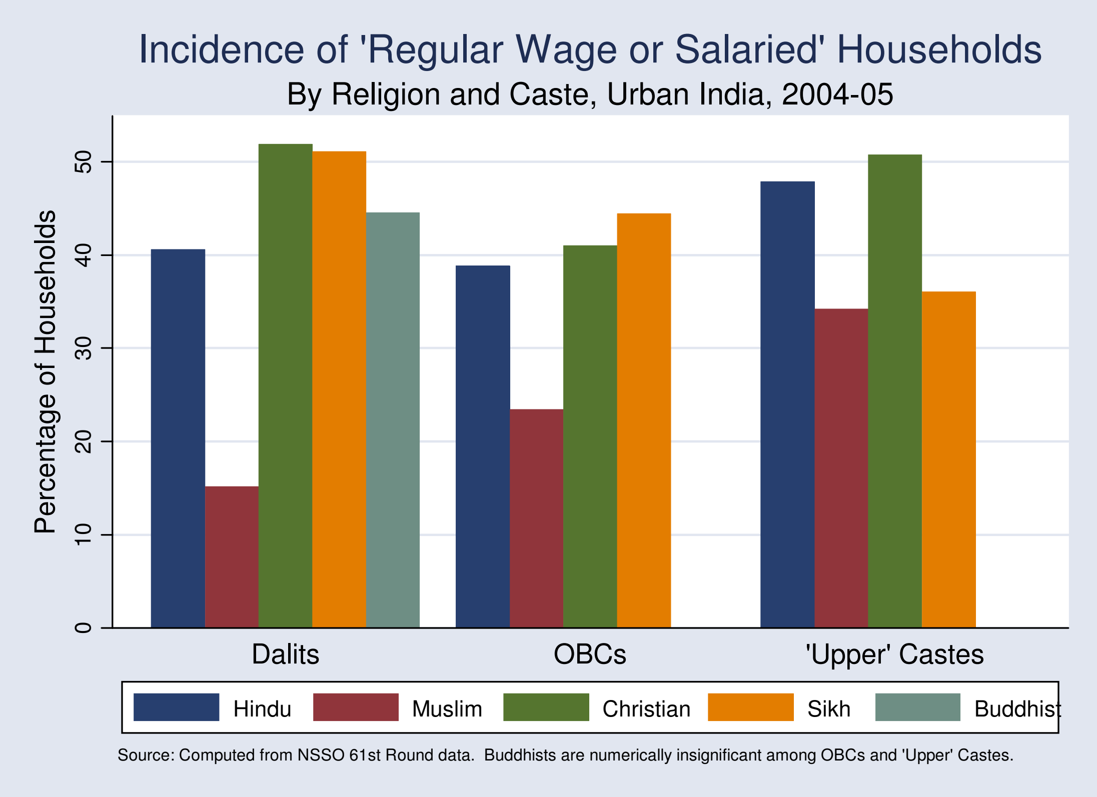
Source: Computed from NSSO 61st Round data. Buddhists are numerically insignificant among OBCs and 'Upper' Castes.

Figure 23



Source: Computed from NSSO 61st Round data. Buddhists are numerically insignificant among OBCs and 'Upper' Castes.

Figure 24



3.6 Comparing Educational Standards

Education is among the most important long term determinants of material status, so it is necessary to look at this dimension as well. This section looks at the educational spectrum for different community groups, with special reference to DMs and DCs. The two categories that are emphasized are the 'not literate' and the 'diploma and graduate or higher degree' categories at either end of the spectrum.

Comparing Dalit Muslims and Dalit Christians to other Dalits

Tables 24 and 25 provide a comparative profile of Dalits across religions. As can be seen in Table 24, all Dalits have high rates of illiteracy, though DCs and Dalit Buddhists seem to be not as badly off as the rest. The big anomaly in the graduate and above category is the figure for Dalit Buddhists, which needs to be investigated further. However, all other Dalits are more or less comparable to each other on this count.

In Table 25, it is Dalit Christians and Dalit Buddhists who stand out, having significantly lower levels of illiteracy and higher proportions in the graduate category. Muslims are the worst off here, followed closely by Hindu Dalits.

Table 24	**Comparative Educational Profile of Dalits by Religion Rural India, 2004-05**					
Religion	Not Literate	Upto Primary	Upto Secondary	Higher Secondary	Diploma & Graduate+	Total
Hindu	48.53	33.31	14.8	1.97	1.38	100
Muslim	48.08	32.85	15.39	2.14	1.53	100
Christian	38.42	30.67	23.1	6.29	1.52	100
Sikh	43.88	34.96	17.33	2.88	0.95	100
Buddhist	33.13	30.99	26.81	4.44	4.63	100
All Dalits	47.9	33.29	15.26	2.1	1.45	100

Cells show estimated percentage distribution of urban population aged 6 and above for each group across the educational spectrum. Source: Computed from NSSO 61st Round data.

Table 25	**Comparative Educational Profile of Dalits by Religion Urban India, 2004-05**					
Religion	Not Literate	Upto Primary	Upto Secondary	Higher Secondary	Diploma & Graduate+	Total
Hindu	30.88	34.29	25.37	4.61	4.85	100
Muslim	31.79	36.95	25.14	1.88	4.24	100
Christian	15.69	33.47	30.95	8.45	11.45	100
Sikh	28.06	33.89	27.13	6.62	4.3	100
Buddhist	17.32	30.05	31.15	8.33	13.15	100
All Dalits	29.78	34.05	25.83	4.91	5.43	100

Cells show estimated percentage distribution of urban population aged 6 and above for each group across the educational spectrum. Source: Computed from NSSO 61st Round data.

Comparing Dalit Muslims and Dalit Christians with non-Dalit Muslims and Christians

Table 26 shows that DMs are very badly off, but so are all other kinds of rural Muslims with respect to education. With illiteracy well above 40%, DMs are only slightly worse than the others.

Table 27 tells us that the picture is only slightly different in urban India, with ‘upper’ caste Muslims being better off than their Dalit counterparts, but not being too well off themselves.

Table 26	**Comparative Educational Profile of Castes Among Muslims, Rural India, 2004-05**					
Religion	Not Literate	Upto Primary	Upto Secondary	Higher Secondary	Diploma & Graduate+	Total
SC	48.08	32.85	15.39	2.14	1.53	100.0
OBC	47.36	33.61	15.97	1.74	1.32	100.0
UC	43.37	39.63	14.24	1.66	1.1	100.0
All	44.91	37.22	14.96	1.7	1.22	*100.0*
Cells show estimated percentage distribution of urban population aged 6 and above for each group across the educational spectrum. Source: Computed from NSSO 61st Round data.						

Table 27	**Comparative Educational Profile of Castes Among Muslims, Urban India, 2004-05**					
Religion	Not Literate	Upto Primary	Upto Secondary	Higher Secondary	Diploma & Graduate+	Total
SC	31.79	36.95	25.14	1.88	4.24	100.0
OBC	35.21	36.89	21.53	3.23	3.15	100.0
UC	27.49	34.59	26.44	5	6.48	100.0
All	30.3	35.34	24.56	4.5	5.3	*100.0*
Cells show estimated percentage distribution of urban population aged 6 and above for each group across the educational spectrum. Source: Computed from NSSO 61st Round data.						

Table 28	**Comparative Educational Profile of Castes Among Christians, Rural India, 2004-05**					
Religion	Not Literate	Upto Primary	Upto Secondary	Higher Secondary	Diploma & Graduate+	Total
SC	38.42	30.67	23.1	6.29	1.52	100.0
OBC	21.19	36.52	31.54	4.26	6.5	100.0
UC	12.88	30.45	39.26	6.26	11.14	100.0
All	24.39	36.44	29.16	4.31	5.69	*100.0*
Cells show estimated percentage distribution of urban population aged 6 and above for each group across the educational spectrum. Source: Computed from NSSO 61st Round data.						

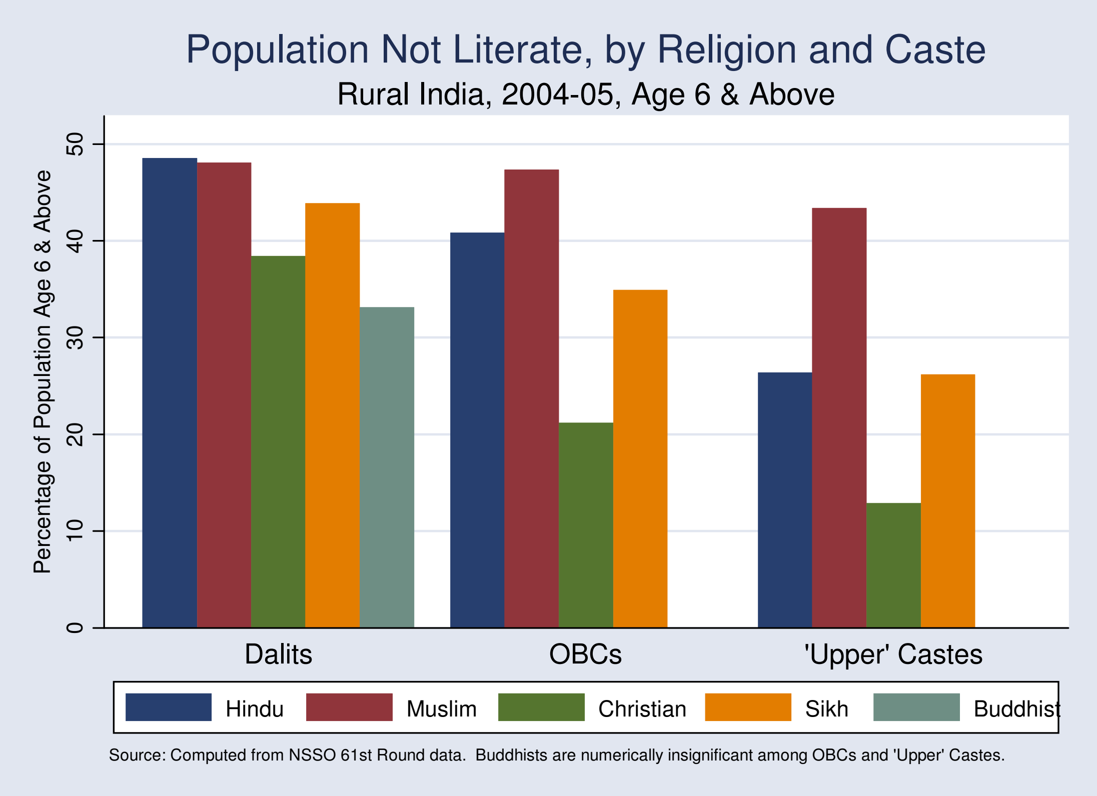
Table 29	**Comparative Educational Profile of Castes Among Christians, Urban India, 2004-05**					
Religion	Not Literate	Upto Primary	Upto Secondary	Higher Secondary	Diploma & Graduate+	Total
SC	15.69	33.47	30.95	8.45	11.45	100.0
OBC	8.72	30.44	35.59	9.36	15.89	100.0
UC	6.49	23.3	36.84	10.34	23.03	100.0
All	8.34	27.74	35.76	10.12	18.03	*100.0*

Cells show estimated percentage distribution of urban population aged 6 and above for each group across the educational spectrum. Source: Computed from NSSO 61st Round data.

Tables 28 and 29 tell us that DCs are distinctly different from other Christians, with the differences being much stronger in rural than in urban India. Rural DCs have a much higher illiteracy rate, and much smaller proportion of graduates. Urban DCs are also in much the same situation, but the gaps involved are smaller.

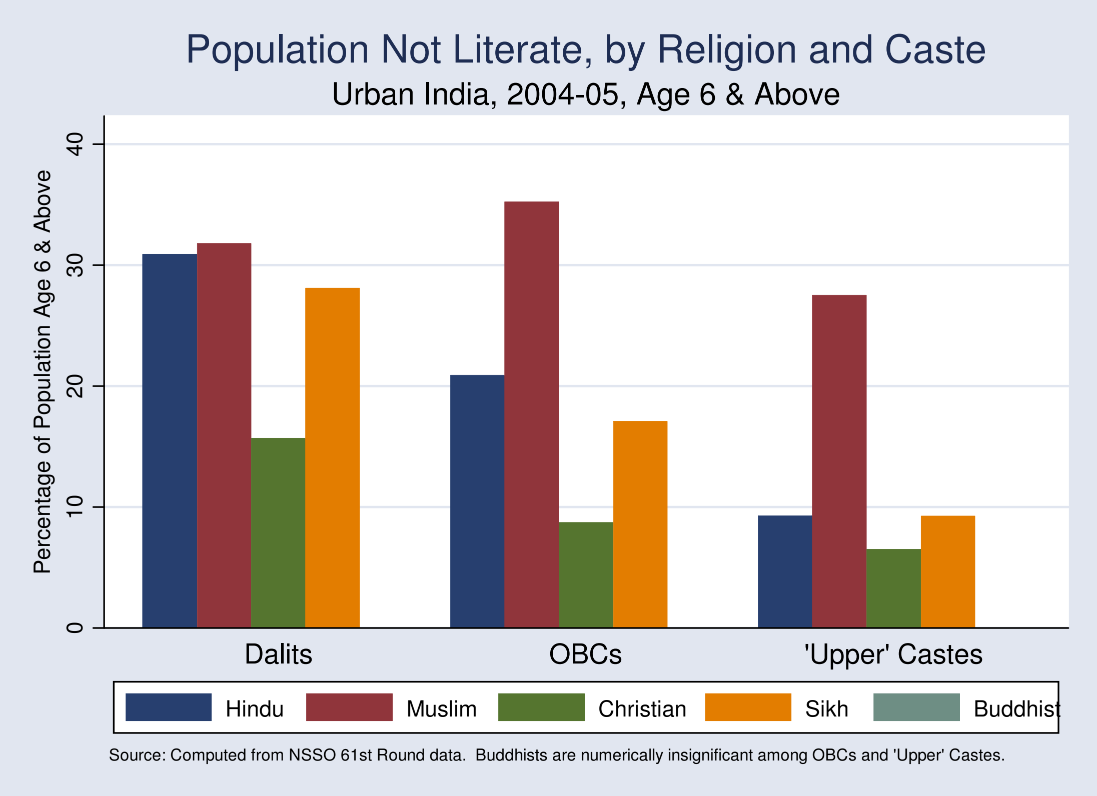
Figures 25 to 28 revisit the same data, but with OBCs and ‘upper’ castes also being included for a broader comparison. Figures 27 & 28 take the population above age 18 as the base for calculating percentages of graduates.

Figure 25



Source: Computed from NSSO 61st Round data. Buddhists are numerically insignificant among OBCs and 'Upper' Castes.

Figure 26



Source: Computed from NSSO 61st Round data. Buddhists are numerically insignificant among OBCs and 'Upper' Castes.

Figure 27

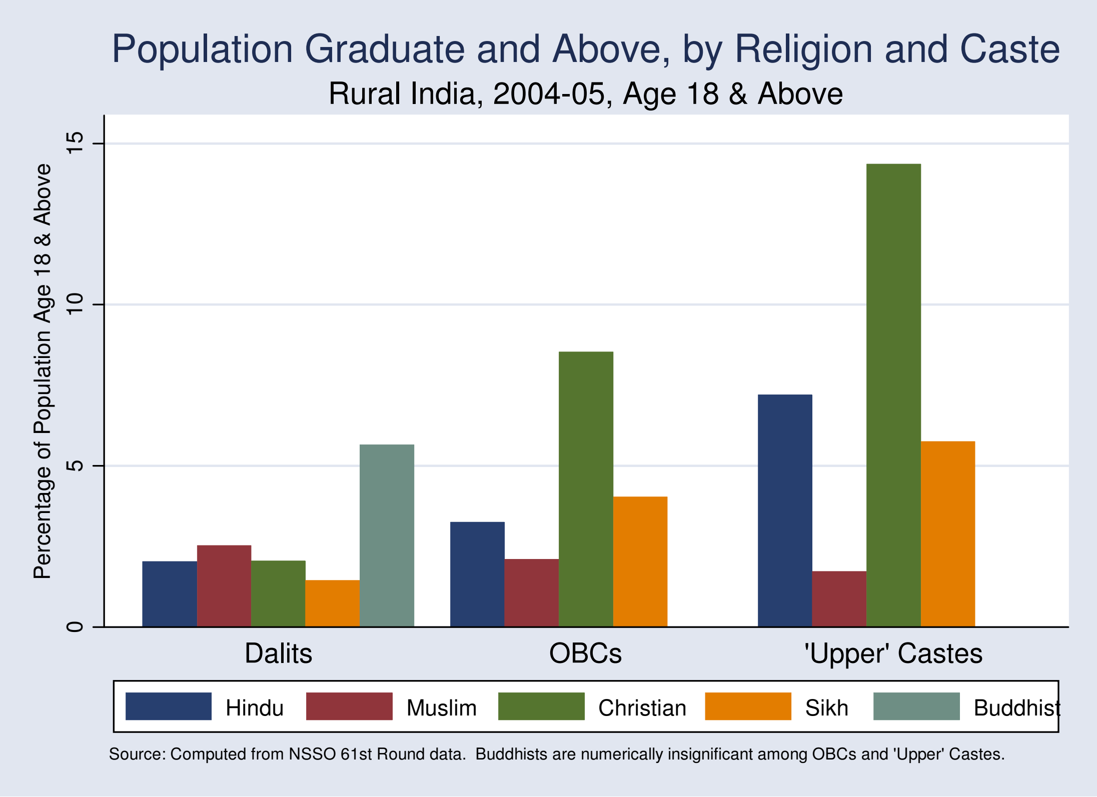
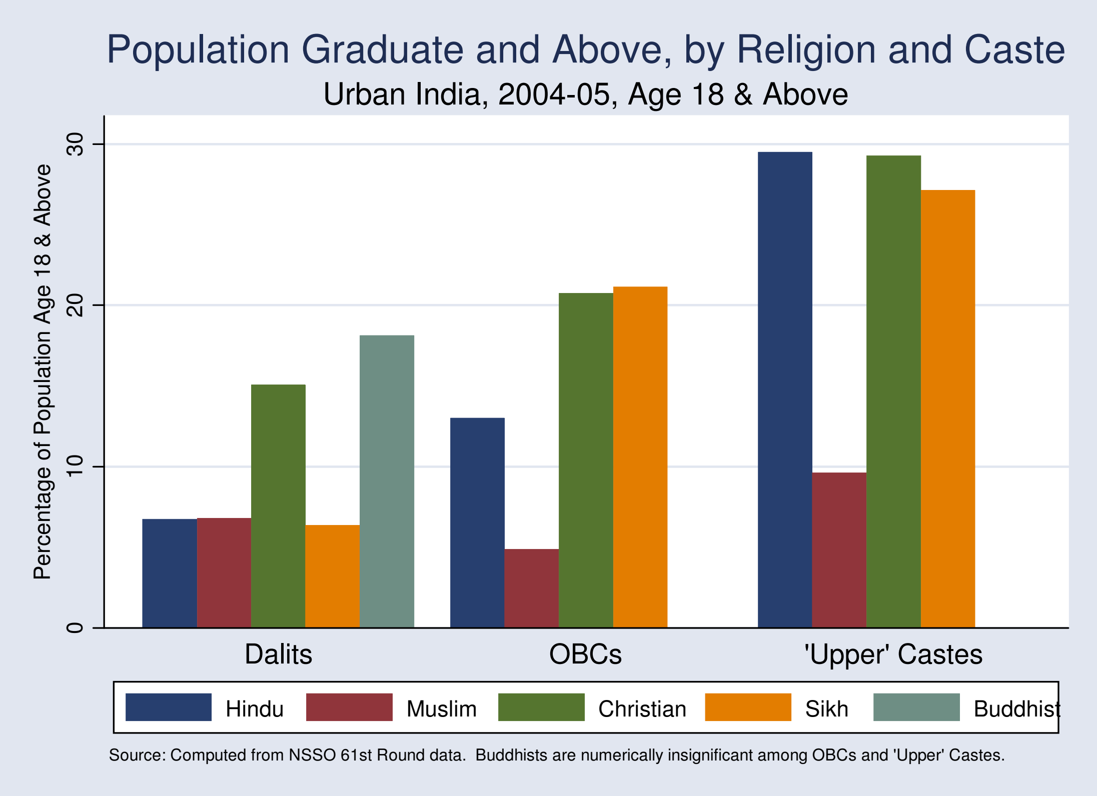

Population Graduate and Above, by Religion and Caste
Rural India, 2004-05, Age 18 & Above
Percentage of Population Age 18 & Above
0
5
10
15
Dalits
OBCs
'Upper' Castes
Hindu
Muslim
Christian
Sikh
Buddhist
Source: Computed from NSSO 61st Round data. Buddhists are numerically insignificant among OBCs and 'Upper' Castes.

Figure 28



Source: Computed from NSSO 61st Round data. Buddhists are numerically insignificant among OBCs and 'Upper' Castes.

The main findings of this chapter may be summarised as follows:

- With respect to *proportions of population in poverty or affluence*, DMs are unquestionably the worst off among all Dalits, in both the rural and specially the urban sector, being completely absent in the affluent group. There is a significant gap between DMs and DCs and Dalit Sikhs, and small one between them and Hindu Dalits. DCs may be said to moderately better off than other Dalits except Dalit Sikhs, who are even better off. DCs have a much higher proportion in poverty than Dalit Sikhs, specially in rural India, but roughly comparable populations in affluence.
- When it comes to *intra-community comparisons*, DMs and DCs are a study in contrasts. DMs are only slightly worse off than non-Dalit Muslims, specially the OBCs, but this is because non-Dalit Muslims are much worse off than their non-Muslim counterparts. DCs are at the other end of the spectrum, with the highest inter-caste differentials, but for the opposite reason, namely, that non-Dalit Christians and specially the upper castes tend to be much better off. However, DCs are closest to Dalit Sikhs, who are actually slightly better off than them on the whole, but have less poverty (specially rural poverty) so that their inter-caste differentials are lower.
- The picture with respect to *average levels of consumption* measured by percentiles of MPCE confirms that, with the exception of rural Dalit Sikhs who are slightly better off all along the economic spectrum except at the very top, all other Dalits are basically the same in economic terms. Whatever differences there are among Dalits of different religions only become visible in the top 25% of the distribution. In other words, other than rural Dalit Sikhs, 75% of all other Dalits are economically indistinguishable from each other,

both in the urban and specially the rural areas. Also strongly emphasised is the serious poverty among urban Muslims.

- With respect to comparisons of *occupational structure*, there seem to be no dramatic contrasts in rural India. The only noteworthy feature is that it is the one area where DMs are *not* the worst off group, being slightly better represented among the 'self-employed in agriculture' (taken as a rough proxy for access to land) category than other groups. In urban India, however, DMs are back in the bottom slot, with the highest proportion in 'casual labour' and the lowest proportion in the 'regular wage' category. In rural India, DCs are between Buddhists and Sikhs (who have a slightly better profile) and Muslims and Hindus (who have a worse profile). In urban India, DCs have the highest 'regular wage' proportion, but Dalit Sikhs are almost equal.
- With respect to comparisons of *educational levels,* DMs are the worst off in rural India in terms of illiteracy, but are closely matched by Hindu Dalits in both rural and urban India. DCs are slightly better off in rural, and significantly better off in urban India. At the other end of the educational spectrum, there are no major differences across Dalits in rural India (except Buddhists, who seem to have comparatively high proportions with graduate or higher degrees). DCs are significantly better off than other Dalits except for Buddhists, who are much better off and by far the best among Dalits in this respect. However, in both rural and urban India, and at both ends of the educational spectrum, all Dalits except Muslims do much worse than their non-Dalit co-religionists, specially the upper castes. As with the economic data, intra-Muslim differences are the least.

Chapter 4

Judicial Perspectives on the Status of Dalit Muslims and Dalit Christians in India

Judicial perspectives on the status of DMs and DCs have been shaped by three main considerations: 1) the Presidential Order of 1950 (and its subsequent amendments); 2) the caste status of converts from Hinduism; 3) the specific grounds on which social groups may be included in the SC list, including questions about the nature and quantum of the admissible evidence in this regard. These three themes are discussed below.

The Presidential Order of 1950 and the Evolution of Judicial Perspectives

In the year 1950, the president of India issued the "Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950" specifying the castes to be recognised as the Scheduled Castes by exercising the authority conferred on him under the article 341(1) of the Constitution India. The third paragraph of the order however qualifies that "notwithstanding anything contained in para 2, no person who professes a religion different from Hinduism shall be deemed to be a member of the Scheduled Castes". Subsequent amendments to the 1950 Presidential Order in 1956 and 1990 provided for the inclusion of Sikhs and Buddhists respectively within the Scheduled Caste category to avail the benefits of reservation. The Constitution, however, does not recognise SC converts to Islam and Christianity as eligible for benefits of affirmative action and this has been the site of struggle for Dalit Muslims and Christians who have challenged the constitutional validity of para 3 of the 1950 order. The main plank of this argument is that denial of SC status to DMs and DCs constitutes a violation of Articles 14 (equality before the law); 15 (prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion); and 25 (freedom to profess and practice any religion) of the Constitution.

The caste status of converts

The original rationale for including only Hindu castes in the SC list (as per the first such list prepared in 1936 by J.H. Hutton, the Census Commissioner for the 1931 Census) was directly linked to the practice of untouchability and other caste sanctions against the lowest castes. Since caste as an institution was said to be native to Hinduism, not being part of the scripture or core beliefs of any other religion, only Hindu Dalits qualified to be designated as SCs. However, the later extension of this designation to Sikhs and then to Neo-Buddhists seems to have been justified on the grounds that these groups were recent converts, and their caste was still the predominant aspect of their social identity. In fact, a few Sikh castes (Mazhabis, Ramdasias, Kabirpanthis and Sikligars) had been included even in the first post-Independence version of the SC lists in the 1950 Presidential Order.[7] The remaining Dalit Sikh castes were added in 1956.

The Courts seem to have been quite willing to concede the point that caste survives conversion, and that despite professing faith in a religion which has no scriptural sanction for caste distinctions, may continue to be identified and treated as a member of the original caste. While they have rejected the claim that caste may be acquired by marriage (as in the *Valsamma Paul (Mrs); v. Cochin University and Others*, case summarised below), they have allowed that it is retained despite conversion and re-conversion (as in the *S. Anbalagan Vs B. Devarajan and others* case summarised below). So the caste status of persons who have converted to other religions and are no longer practising Hindus, and even of those who were born as non-Hindus and never professed the Hindu faith, is not at issue in the courts.

Criteria and Standards of Evidence

These remain the most contentious issues. The extension of SC status to DMs and DCs appears to hinge on the question of evidence according to the crucial *Soosai* case. As Justice Pathak says in his judgement in this case, 'it is not sufficient to show that the same caste continues after conversion. It is necessary to establish further that the disabilities and handicaps suffered from such caste membership in the social order of its origin – Hinduism – continue in their oppressive severity in the new environment of a different religious community.'[8] This distinction is related to the one that is analysed with admirable clarity by Marc Galanter (1984, p.189ff), namely the distinction between caste as a unit designating a portion of the population (that which is to be measured) and as an indicator of status (measuring rod). Justice Pathak here appears to be assenting to the use of caste as a community unit (continuance of same identity after conversion) but questioning its use as a status marker. The contention here is that while castes (in the sense of distinct communities) may exist, this fact, which identifies a group as belonging to a particularl caste, does not by itself allow us to come to any conclusion regarding the status of this caste relative to others. Relative status needs to be established independently of (or in addition to) the mere fact of belonging to a particular community.

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[7] As stated in Justice Pathak's judgement in the *Soosai* case of 1985 in the Supreme Court of India., p.10. See case summary below.

[8] p.11 of the typescript of the judgement.

The same judgement complains about the ‘cursory’ evidence placed before it, and about the absence of any ‘authoritative and detailed’ study on the condition of the DCs. It is also reiterated that in such cases the onus of proof is on the party that is alleging arbitrariness, not on the state. However, there are two separate issues involved here that need to be carefully considered, both individually and together.

First, there is the question of how precisely caste disability is to be established. The response to this seems to be (though it is not explicitly spelt out as such) that the claimant group (in this case DMs and DCs) needs to establish, in addition to the fact of their caste identity, two further facts: 1) that they are worse off than their non-Dalit co-religionists, and that this is due to their caste status; and 2) that they are comparable in status to the Hindu, Sikh and Buddhist Dalits who are already recognised by the state as being in need of special consideration. Whether both these criteria are to be explicitly invoked; and if so, the relative weight that is to be attached to each (if it is not equal) are questions that need to be settled at some point if the legal debate is to make any progress.

The second issue concerns the standards of evidence on whatever set of criteria that is adopted. Here again there seem to be two issues involved. One is that of the quality of the evidence, that is, the standards of competence and levels of expertise that it demonstrates. The second issue is that of the extent (or ‘quantity’) of the evidence and the related consideration of arriving at an overall judgement on a body of material that is bound to present a complex and heterogenous picture. Further clarity on these issues is perhaps only possible after the fact – that is, after a body of material is presented to the courts and they come to some judgement as to their worth on the above counts. It is certainly true that in the two decades since the *Soosai* case (the judgement for which was delivered in 1985) a lot more ethnographic and other empirical evidence has been accumulated on this issue. This is noted both in the extensive Bibliography given in Appendix C, and in the summary of a sample of studies presented in Appendix A.

One noteworthy feature of the case history on this issue is that most of it pertains to the Christian community, and cases are mostly from south India. This reflects, perhaps, the extent of mobilisation and political consciousness amongst the community in comparison to dalit Muslims, although the latter have also been organising of late. Finally, it needs to be pointed out that courts have been willing (specially in the earlier period rather than in more recent judgements) to rely on available social scientific studies, and have in fact done so without on their own whenever they have felt this material to be helpful. This is something that needs to be explicitly noted and addressed. It is encouraging to see that what has mattered for the courts is the actual empirical practices associated with caste rather than a simplistic references to belief systems or rigid rules of formal evidence. This willingness to consider competent evidence provides ample opportunities for further action on this front.

The rest of this chapter summarises the specific constitutional grounds on which special treatment for SCs is based, the major constitutional issues involved, and provides a summary of some of the major cases that have come up on these issues.

Legal Rationale for Special Treatment

- The state may provide special treatment for the advancement of socially and educationally backward classes of citizens or for Scheduled castes and Scheduled tribes. The state to promote the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, and in particular SC's and ST's and protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation.
- The object of Ar. 341(1) is to provide additional protection to the members of the scheduled castes, recognising the educational and economic backwardness from which they suffer.
- Criteria for inclusion of any community in the list of scheduled castes is that such a community should suffer from extreme social, educational and economic backwardness arising out of traditional practices of Untouchability

Constitutional Issues

The range of constitutional issues arising from the demand of Dalit Christians and Muslims for inclusion with the Scheduled Caste category may be broadly summarised under two categories: (a) Position of those claiming SC status; and (b) Perspectives of the State on the issue concerned.

Position of Social Groups demanding SC status for Christians and Muslims

- Social and educational backwardness persists even after conversion. State denies recognition of SC status only on the grounds that the concerned groups profess Islam and Christianity. In refusing SC status to Dalit Muslims and Christians the State violates ar. 14, 15 and 25 of the constitution that guarantees equality before the law and prohibits discrimination on grounds of religion.
- Such benefits have been extended to converts from Hinduism to Sikhism and Buddhism even though both these religions, like Christianity and Islam, do not recognise the caste system. Therefore, the state discriminates on grounds of religion which is violative of the fundamental rights enshrined under the constitution.

Perspectives of the State

- The criteria adopted for determining whether a community is eligible for inclusion in the list of SC's is extreme social, educational and economic backwardness arising out of traditional practices of Untouchability. Since caste system and practices of Untouchability are a feature of Hindu society, historically the system of special representations for SC's was evolved specifically in relation to the position of these castes in Hindu society who were affected by the practice of Untouchability. In conception Christianity is an egalitarian religion which does not recognise caste and is therefore antithetical to practices of Untouchability.
- Lack of authoritative and detailed study on the nature and extent of social disabilities, including Untouchability prevalent in the Christian community in India. Studies available at the time the Supreme or other Courts dealt with this issue did not, in the opinion of the Court, constitute adequate evidence. Similarly, studies based on subjective responses of small sample of SC Christian converts do not conclusively show that their social and economic position is the result of persistence of Untouchability practices.
- In case SC converts to Christianity are accorded the status of SCs, administrative difficulties would arise at the time of issuing caste certificates because of the difficulty, in many cases, of determining their pre-conversion caste standing. The

difficulties in precise and objective determination of pre-conversion caste origin would open the floodgates for issuance of bogus SC certificates which is a cause for concern. In contrast, the nature of conversion to Buddhism has been different. Neo-Buddhists embraced Buddhism voluntarily at the call of Dr Ambedkar in 1956 on account of social political imperatives. The original caste/community of such converts can be clearly determined.

Major Cases and the Judicial Reasoning Involved

1. State of Kerala and another vs. Chandra Mohan (2004) 3 SCC 429

Issue involved: The question before the Supreme Court was whether a person on conversion to another religion (here Christianity) continues to remain a member of his tribe.

Judgement/Reasoning: The court rules that upon conversion a person may be governed by a different law but that does not in itself result in his loss of membership of the tribe, given that it is established that a person who has embraced another religion is still suffering from social disability and following the customs and traditions of the community to which he earlier belonged.

2. Valsamma Paul (Mrs); v. Cochin University and Others, Kerala Public Service Commission v Dr. Kanjamma Alex and Another (1996) SC 3950. (Judgement was followed in 31 cases)

Issue Involved: Two posts of lecturers in Law Department of Cochin University were notified for recruitment, one of which was reserved for Latin Catholics (Backward Class Fishermen). The appellant, a Syrian Catholic (a Forward Class), having married a Latin Catholic, had applied for selection as a reserved candidate. The University selected her on that basis and accordingly appointed her against the reserved post. Her appointment was questioned by one Rani George by filing a writ petition, viz., OP No. 9450 of 1991 praying for a direction to the University to appoint her in place of the appellant to the said post.

Judgement/Reasoning: The Full Bench in the judgment held that though the appellant was married according to the Canon law, the appellant, being a Syrian Catholic by birth, by marriage with a Latin Catholic (Backward Class), is not a member of that class nor can she claim the status as a Backward Class by marriage. The special provisions under Articles 15(4) and 16(4) of the Constitution intended for the advancement of socially and educationally backward classes of citizens cannot be defeated by including candidates by alliance or by any other mode of joining the community. It would tantamount to making a mockery of the constitutional exercise of identification of socially and educationally backward classes of citizens. The appellant, having had the advantage of starting life as Syrian Catholic being born in a forward class, though she voluntarily married a Backward Class citizen, cannot claim the status as a Backward Class to avail of protective discrimination unless she further pleads and establishes that candidates like her suffered all the handicaps and disadvantages having been born as Backward Class citizens or Scheduled Castes or Scheduled Tribes. Mere recognition of and acceptance by the community after her marriage is not relevant for the purpose of availing of the benefit of Articles 16(4) and 15(4). Acceptance may be only for recognition as a legally wedded wife of a Backward Class citizen and nothing more.

3. Soosai Vs Union of India and others (1985) (supp) SCC 590

Issue Involved: The Government of India set up a Special Central Assistance Scheme for the welfare of Scheduled Castes. Consequent to a proposal under this Scheme, allotment of bunk free of cost were to be made to cobblers by profession who worked on the roadside, by the State Government of Tamil Nadu. This Order specifically stated that persons belonging to the Scheduled Castes and who converted to Christianity were not eligible for assistance under the scheme. The petitioner, who was a Hindu belonging to the Adi-Dravida caste and on conversion to Christianity, continued as a member of that caste,-contended in his writ petition to the court that he had been denied the benefit of the welfare assistance intended for Scheduled Castes on the ground that he professes the Christian religion, and that such discrimination had been affected pursuant to the provision contained in paragraph 3 of the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950 and that the provision was constitutionally invalid as being violative of Articles 14 to 17.

Judgement/ Reasoning: The court held the following: "…it cannot be disputed that the caste system is a feature of the Hindu social structure. The division of the Hindu social order by reference at one time to professional or vocational occupation was moulded into a structural hierarchy which over the centuries crystallized into a stratification

> where the place of the individual was determined by birth. Those who occupied the lowest rung of the social ladder were treated as existing beyond the periphery of civilised society, and were indeed not even "touchable". This social attitude committed those castes to severe social and economic disabilities and cultural and educational backwardness. Both history and latter day practice in Hindu society are heavy with evidence of this oppressive tyranny.

…The demand of the Sikhs that some of their backward sections, the Mazhabis, Ramdasias, Kabirpanthis and Sikligars, should be included in the list of Scheduled Castes was accepted on the basis that these sects were originally Scheduled Caste Hindus who had only recently been converted to the Sikh faith and had the same disabilities as Hindu SCs. It is quite evident that the President had before him all this material indicating that the depressed classes of the Hindu and the Sikh communities suffered from economic and social disabilities and cultural and educational backwardness so gross in character and degree that the members of those castes in the two communities called for the protection of the Constitutional provisions relating to the Scheduled Castes... To establish that paragraph 3 of the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950 discriminates against Christian members of the enumerated castes it must be shown that they suffer from a comparable depth of social and economic disabilities and cultural and educational backwardness and similar levels of degradation within the Christian community necessitating intervention by the State under the provisions of the Constitution. It is not sufficient to show that the same caste continues after conversion. It is necessary to establish further that the disabilities and handicaps suffered from such caste membership in the social order of its origin – Hinduism – continue in their oppressive severity in the new environment of a different religions community. References have been made in the material before us in the most cursory manner to the character and incidents of the castes within the Christian fold, but no authoritative and detailed study dealing with the present conditions of Christian society have been placed on the record in this case. It is, therefore, not possible to say that the President acted arbitrarily in the exercise of his judgment in enacting paragraph 3 of the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) order, 1950. It is now well established that when a violation of Article 14 or any of its related provisions is alleged, the burden rests on the petitioner to establish by clear and cogent evidence that the State has been guilty of arbitrary discrimination.

4. K.C Vasanth Kumar and Another vs State of Karnataka (1985) (supp) SCC 714

Issue Involved: The following is not a judgement. However, opinion of the law court is sought on reservations with respect to two issues (a) How to identify backward classes for the purpose of reservation? (b) What should be the permissible extent of reservation? (A bench of 5 Judges have separately responded to the above questions)

Reasoning: In this context, one such judge Chinnappa Reddy J. made a case for caste as the primary index for social backwardness. He argues that "…one must recognise the omnipresence of caste in the Indian society. So sadly and oppressively deep rooted is caste in our country that it has cut across even the barriers of religion. The caste system has penetrated other religious and dissentient Hindu sects to whom the practice of caste should be anathema and today we find that practitioners of other religious faiths are sometimes as rigid adherents to the systems of caste as the conservative Hindus. We find Christian Harijans, Christian Madars, Christian Reddys, Christian Kammas, Mujbi Sikhs etc."

5. S. Anbalagan Vs B. Devarajan and others (1984) AIR SC 411 (Judgement followed in 7 cases)

Issue Involved: The first respondent was elected to the Lok Sabha from a constituency which was reserved for the Scheduled Castes. The appellant challenged the election of the first respondent on the ground that he was not a member of the Scheduled Castes. The appellant urged that the parents and the sisters of the respondent were shown to be Christians and the respondent was born a Christian and there was no way he could acquire a caste and become an Adi Dravida on conversion to Hinduism.

Judgement/ Reasoning: The judge ruled in the above cases that precedents, particularly those from South India, clearly establish that no particular ceremony is prescribed for reconversion to Hinduism of a person who had earlier embraced another religion. Unless the practice of the caste makes it necessary, no expiatory rites need to be performed and, ordinarily, he regains his caste unless the community does not accept him. In fact, it may not be accurate to say that he regains his caste; it may be more accurate to say that he never lost his caste in the first instance when he embraced another religion. The practice of caste however irrational it may appear to our reason and however repugnant it may appear to our moral and social sense is so deep-rooted in the Indian people that its mark does not seem to disappear on conversion to a different religion. If it disappears, it disappears only to reappear on reconversion. The mark of caste does not seem to really disappear even after some generations after conversion. In Andhra Pradesh and in Tamil Nadu, there are several thousands of Christian families whose forefathers became Christians and who, though they profess the Christian religion, nonetheless observe the practice of caste. There are Christian Reddies, Christian Kammas, Christian Nadars, Christian Adi Andhras, Christian Adi Dravidas and so on. The practice of their caste is so rigorous that there are intermarriages with Hindus of the same caste but not with Christians of another caste. Now, if such a Christian becomes a Hindu, surely he will revert to his original caste, if he had lost it at all. In fact this process goes on continuously in India and generation by generation lost sheep appear to return to the caste-fold and are once again assimilated in that fold. This appears to be particularly so in the case of members of the Scheduled Castes, who embrace other religions in their quest for liberation, but return to their old religion on finding that their disabilities have clung to them with great tenacity. We do not think that any different principle will apply to the case of conversion to Hinduism of a person whose forefathers had abandoned Hinduism and embraced another religion from the principle applicable to the case of reconversion to Hinduism of a person who himself had abandoned Hinduism and embraced another religion. … Assuming that the parents and sisters of the first respondent had become Christians and that the first respondent himself had been baptised when he was seven months old, we see no difficulty in holding on the evidence in the case that the first respondent had long since reverted to Hinduism and to the Adi Dravida caste.

6. Kailash Sonkar vs. Smt Maya Devi (1983) SC 295 (Judgement was followed in 16 cases)

Issue Involved: What happens if a member of a scheduled caste or tribe leaves his present fold (Hinduism) and embraces Christianity or Islam or any other religion – (a) does this amount to a complete loss of the original caste to which he belonged, and (b) if so, if he or his children choose to abjure the new religion and get reconverted to the old religion after performing the necessary rites and ceremonies, could the original caste revive? The question posed here arose and has formed the subject-matter of a large catena of decisions starting from the year 1861, traversing a period of about a century and a half, and culminating in a decision of this Court in the case of G. M. Arumugham v. S. Rajagopal.

Judgement/Reasoning: The court held that on reconversion caste automatically revives. Even if a person was born of Christian parents, on voluntary reconversion caste revives. The court also ruled that the views of the community are not all that important and one cannot insist upon the acceptance of the community as a pre requisite for membership within the caste. The main test rather is the expression of a genuine intention of the reconvert to abjure his new religion and completely disassociate himself from it. He must express a genuine intention to adopt the customs and practices of the old fold.

7. C.M Arumugam vs. S. Rajgopal (1976) 1 SCC 863

Issue Involved: The appellant and the first respondent have been opponents in the electoral battle since a long time. The constituency from which they have been standing as candidates is 68 KGF constituency for election to the Mysore Legislative Assembly. They opposed each other as candidates from this constituency in 1967 General Election to the Mysore Legislative Assembly. Now, the seat from this constituency was a seat reserved for scheduled castes and, therefore, only members of SCs could stand as candidates from this constituency. The appellant there upon filed Election Petition challenging the election of the first respondent on the ground that the first respondent was not an Adi Dravida professing Hindu religion at the date when he filed his nomination and was, therefore, not qualified to stand as a candidate for the reserved seat from 68 KGF constituency. The issue before the court was whether a person belonging to adi dravida caste before his conversion to Christianity, could on reconversion to Hinduism, once again become a member of his caste.

Judgement/ Reasoning: In this judgement the court shifts the burden of decision to the community itself. It argues that conversion from Hinduism to another religion may not result in loss of caste. However, ultimately it must depend on the structure of caste and its rules and regulations, whether a person would cease to belong to a caste on abjuring Hinduism. It cannot, therefore, be laid down as an absolute rule uniformly applicable in all cases that whenever a member of a caste is converted from Hinduism to Christianity, he loses his membership of the caste. It is true that ordinarily on conversion to Christianity, he would cease to be a member of the caste, but that is not an invariable rule. It would depend on the structure of the caste and its rules and

regulations. There are castes, particularly in South India, where this consequence does not follow on conversion, since such castes comprise both Hindus and Christians. Whether Adi Dravida is a caste which falls within this category or not is question which would have to be determined on the evidence in this case. There is on the record evidence of Kakkan (PW 13), J. C. Adimoolam (RW 1) and K. P. Arumugam (RW 8), the last two being witnesses examined on behalf of the appellant, which shows that amongst Adi Dravidas, there are both Hindus and Christians and there are inter-marriages between them. It would, therefore, prima facie seem that, on conversion to Christianity, the first respondent did not cease to belong to Adi Dravida caste.
…Further, the court held that having regard to its structure, as it has evolved over the years, a caste may consist not only of persons professing Hindu religion but also person professing some other religion as well, conversion from Hinduism to that other religion may not involve loss of caste, because even persons professing such other religion can be members of the caste. This might happen where caste is based on economic or occupational characteristics and not on religious identity or the cohesion of the caste as a social group is so strong that conversion into another religion does not operate to snap the bond between the convert and the social group. This is indeed not an infrequent phenomenon in South India where, in some of the castes, even after conversion to Christianity, a person is regarded as continuing to belong to the caste.

Chapter 5

Conclusion: Summary of Findings

It only remains to summarise the main findings of this study. Our major objective was to produce a status report on the evidence that is already available to answer the following questions:

1) What is the contemporary status of DMs & DCs in terms of their material well being and social status?

2) How does their situation compare with that of: a) the non-Dalit segments of their own communities (i.e., Muslims and Christians); and b) the Dalit segments of other communities?

3) Do the disabilities suffered by these groups justify state intervention within the spirit of the Constitution as interpreted by the judiciary, and in keeping with evolving national norms?

Ethnographic Data

Chapter 2 tried to answer the first two questions based on the available social scientific and NGO materials. The materials considered here included studies by academics that were intended as contributions to scholarly debates and research agendas, as well as surveys and reports produced or sponsored by organisations that were actively and directly engaged in working for or supporting the DM or DC communities. The time period covered by these studies spans roughly four decades, from the 1950s and 1960s to the early years of the 21st century. The methodologies employed in these various studies range from formal survey methods with structured questionnaires, through less formal community-based investigations and enquiries, to long-duration fieldwork using ethnographic techniques. Most of these studies are in the public domain, being available in scholarly books and journals, while some are part of the NGO literature produced on this and related subjects, which has mostly informal modes of circulation and dissemination.

The main conclusions that can be drawn from this large and varied body of work, a sample of which is summarised in Appendix A, are the following:

- There can be no doubt whatsoever that DMs and DCs are socially known and treated as distinct groups within their own religious communities. Nor is there any room for disputing the fact that they are invariably regarded as 'socially inferior' communities by their co-religionists. In short, in most social contexts, DMs and DCs are Dalits first and Muslims and Christians only second.

- While the overall status imposed on DMs and DCs is always that of an inferior group, the manner in which social distance or superiority is asserted by non-Dalits (and specially the 'upper' castes) varies both across DMs and DCs and also across regions and contexts. Such variation is present in all Dalit communities of all religions. Thus, despite the universal presence of practices of discrimination and exclusion against DMs and DCs, it is harder to generalize about the specific content and intensity of such practices.

- Universally practiced forms of discrimination and exclusion include social and cultural segregation, expressed in various forms of refusal to have any social interaction; endogamy, expressed through the universal prohibitions on Dalit-non-Dalit marriages, and through severe social sanctions on both Dalits and non-Dalits who break this taboo. Social segregation extends to the sphere of worship and religious rituals, with separate churches and priests being almost the norm among DCs and not uncommon among DMs. Forms common to both DMs and DCs include various modes of subordination in churches and mosques, as well as insistence on separate burial grounds. Occupational segregation and economic exploitation are also very common and usually related practices, though somewhat less widespread than segregation or marriage bans. Untouchability proper is sometimes practiced, but is not widespread, and its forms vary greatly.

Statistical Data:

Chapter 3 tried to find answers to the same questions in the most recent national-level macro statistical data available from the 61st Round survey of the NSSO conducted in 2004-05. This data suffers from limitations due to the ambiguous status of DMs and DCs, who are not officially recognised as SCs although some or all of them are recognised in many states as OBCs. Thus the numbers reflected in the NSSO survey are certain to be undercounts, specially for DCs who are believed to be the majority of the Christian population but are shown as having only a 10% share in this data. The consumption expenditure data tend to sharply understate inequalities because they exclude savings, investments and other forms of wealth. Nevertheless, the NSSO 61st Round is the best and most recent dataset that is able to address the kind of questions being asked in this Report.

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

- With respect to *proportions of population in poverty or affluence*, DMs are unquestionably among the worst off Dalits, in both the rural and specially the urban sector. DMs are completely absent in the affluent group for urban India. There is a significant gap between DMs and DCs and Dalit Sikhs, and a small one between them and Hindu Dalits. DCs may be said to moderately better off than other Dalits except Dalit Sikhs, who are even better off. DCs have a much higher proportion in poverty than Dalit Sikhs, specially in rural India, but roughly comparable populations in affluence.

- When it comes to intra-community comparisons, DMs and DCs are a study in contrasts. DMs are only slightly worse off than non-Dalit Muslims, specially the OBCs, but this is because non-Dalit Muslims are much worse off than their non-Muslim counterparts. In other words, the Muslim community as a whole tends to be very badly off compared to other communities, specially in the urban areas, and consequently the intra-community gap between Dalits and non-Dalits is by far the smallest for Muslims. DCs are at the other end of the spectrum, with the highest inter-caste differentials, but for the opposite reason, namely, that non-Dalit Christians and specially the upper castes tend to be much better off. However, DCs are closest to Dalit Sikhs, who are actually slightly better off than them on the whole, but have less poverty (specially rural poverty) so that their inter-caste differentials are lower than those for Christians.

- The picture with respect to *average levels of consumption* measured by percentiles of MPCE confirms and amplifies the findings based on proportions of population in poverty and affluence. However, what this analysis brings out clearly is that, with the exception of rural Dalit Sikhs who are slightly better off all along the economic spectrum except at the very top, all other Dalits are basically the same in economic terms. Whatever differences there are among Dalits of different religions only become visible in the top 25% of the distribution. In other words, other than rural Dalit Sikhs, 75% of all other Dalits are economically indistinguishable from each other, both in the urban and specially the rural areas. Another point that is strongly emphasised in this analysis is the serious levels of poverty among urban Muslims of all castes including Dalits.

- With respect to comparisons of *occupational structure*, there seem to be no dramatic contrasts in rural India. The only noteworthy feature is that it is only in this non-decisive area of comparison (i.e., the data is more prone to ambiguity) that DMs are *not* the worst off group, being slightly better represented among the 'self-employed in agriculture' (taken as a rough proxy for access to land) category than other groups. In urban India, however, DMs are back in the bottom slot, with the highest proportion in 'casual labour' and the lowest proportion in the 'regular wage' category. In rural India, DCs are between Buddhists and Sikhs (who have a slightly better profile) and Muslims and Hindus (who have a worse profile). In urban India, DCs have the highest proportion in the 'regular wage category' among all Dalits, but Dalit Sikhs are almost equal to them.

- With respect to comparisons of *educational levels,* DMs are the worst off in rural India in terms of illiteracy, but are closely matched by Hindu Dalits in both rural and urban India. DCs are slightly better off in rural, and significantly better off in urban India. At the other end of the educational spectrum, there are no major differences across Dalits in rural India (except Buddhists, who seem to have comparatively high proportions with graduate or higher degrees). DCs are significantly better off than other Dalits except for Buddhists, who are much better off and by far the best among Dalits in this respect. However, in both rural and urban India, and at both ends of the educational spectrum, all Dalits except Muslims do much worse than their non-Dalit co-religionists, specially the upper castes. As with the economic data, intra-Muslim

> differences are the least – in fact, the inter-caste differentials in education appear to be even less than those in terms of consumption levels.

On the whole, it can be said that inter-Dalit economic differences across religion are not very significant for most criteria and for most of the population. DMs are the worst off while the top quarter of the DCs may be slightly better off than all others except Dalit Sikhs, who are even better off than them. Urban Muslims exhibit worrying levels of economic vulnerability across caste groups. Occupational differences are generally not significant, and where significant, show DMs to be worst off in urban India. Educational differences are slight, and work across contexts only for DCs. However, intra-community caste differentials are very high for all except the Muslims, so that Dalits in general are much worse off educationally than non-Dalits.

The Case for Recognising Dalit Muslims and Christians:

Going by the overall attitude of the courts as summarised in Chapter 4, the main judicial obstacle to the recognition of DMs and DCs as SCs appears to have been the lack of the appropriate kind of evidence regarding their relative status. The encouraging sign here is that the courts have not refused to entertain this line of argument, they have only asked for proof beyond mere caste identity. While there are important issues of evidence still to be clarified, perhaps this can be best done through direct engagement in the judicial process, in dialogue with the courts.

In the two decades since the last major judicial pronouncement on this question in the *Soosai* case, a lot more evidence has become available. While some parts may be ambigous and others subject to wide variation, this body of evidence when taken as a whole is unambiguously clear on the fact that ***there is no compelling evidence to justify denying SC status to DMs and DCs***. If no community had already been given SC status, and if the decision to accord SC status to some communities were to be taken today through some evidence-based approach, then it is hard to imagine how DMs and DCs could be excluded. Whether one looks at it positively (justifying inclusion) or negatively (justifying non-inclusion), the DMs and DCs are not so distinct from other Dalit groups that an argument for treating them differently could be sustained. In sum, the actual situation that exists today – denial of SC status to DMs and DCs, but according it to Hindu, Sikh and Buddhist Dalits – could not be rationally defended if it did not already exist as a historical reality.

A possible objection to the above argument could be that it is negative and counter factual. One could insist, further, that a positive argument for adding DMs and DCs to an already existing and 'occupied' – but not necessarily 'full' – category is required today, given that SC status is a *fait accompli* for some groups and can hardly be undone. The historical legacy of such an unjustifiable anomaly can only be addressed by robust, evidence-backed reasoning followed up with a broad-based social movement to build popular support.

It must be granted, however, that even a counterfactual argument is successul in establishing that objections or obstacles to the recognition of DMs and DCs are matters of politics and pragmatism rather than principle. The common pragmatic objections that are raised concern the 'feasibility' of the move in terms of the administrative procedures involved. While these may seem difficult initially, we must remember that similar or even greater difficulties have been faced in the other cases, which tend to get forgotten because they are in the past rather than awaiting us in the future. Another pragmatic consideration is that of the numbers involved. Here the weight of the argument is in favour of rather than against inclusion. For both DMs and DCs taken together (at least on the NSSO estimates) appear to be under three million people, constituting about one-and-a-quarter percent of all rural Dalits, and about two-and-a-quarter percent of all urban Dalits. Though it is certain that the NSSO estimates are undercounts, the eventual numbers are highly unlikely to be such that they justify a 'lifeboat' type argument, where further crowding must not be allowed for it would sink the boat and drown everyone.

We are left, then, with the political factors and this is where the imponderables are. It is beyond the scope of this Report to speculate on the political factors involved in decisions of this sort. But one procedural factor can surely be mentioned. This is the fact that, as matters stand, going the judicial route tends to pit the judiciary against the legislature and the executive, in so far as the courts would be asked to find an existing law unconstitutional. There is, of course, nothing in principle against such a route. But given the special circumstances that have shaped the history of this question, the political route may seem to be the more direct one. After all, the previous amendments to the Presidential Order of 1950 have been achieved through that route. And whatever may have happened as part of the procedures followed within the executive, these legislative initiatives themselves have not been explicitly and publicly justified in terms of the kind of evidence that the courts are (rightly) demanding in cases seeking inclusion of DMs and DCs. This is not to say that the groups currently recognized would fail the test of evidence, but to point out that, in effect, different standards are being applied to different groups situated similarly on the same question.

To conclude, based only on the descriptive and statistical evidence available, there is a strong case for including Dalit Muslims and Dalit Christians in the Scheduled Caste category. There are compelling arguments in favour of such an inclusion based on principles of natural justice and fairness. The balance of pragmatic considerations is also in favour of their inclusion. According due statutory recognition to Dalit Muslims and Dalit Christians would not only right a wrong, it would also remove an indefensible anomaly in our politico-legal system that can legitimately be construed as discriminatory. Whether or not such discrimination can be proven in a court of law, it will surely weigh on the conscience of every fair-minded Indian.

Forms of Caste Based Social Discrimination among Muslims and Christians in India

1. Untouchability

Source	*Time Frame*	*Regional Context*	*Forms of Discriminations*
Aggarwal, Pratap C (1966)A Muslim Sub caste of North India: Problems of Cultural Integration. __________. **(1973).** The Meos of Rajasthan and Haryana. __________. **(1973).** Caste Hierarchy in a Meo Village in Rajasthan.	1960- 1970	Meos were a dominant sub caste of mewat region in Rajasthan.	a) Post-Islamisation of the Meos, low caste Hindus refused to accept cooked food from them. b) The caste group maintains separate utensils and does not share the same utensils with lower castes or allow the latter to touch the water source. c) Chamars and Bhangis were segregated in separate hamlets and were denied basic amenities available to the rest of the village. They are often given left over food to eat.
Ahmad, Zeyauddin. (1977). Caste Elements among the Muslims of Bihar.	1970's	Study based upon the Muslim community in Bihar.	The author argues that practices of Untouchability and caste pollution are non existent.
Mines, Mattison (1977) Social Stratification among Muslim Tamils in Tamil Nadu.	1970's	Study based upon the nature of Muslim social stratification in northern Tamil Nadu.	a) Mines points out that there is no recognition of Untouchability among Muslim Tamils. b) Inter dining is quite common amongst different caste groups.
Singh, Inder Paul (1977) Caste in a Sikh Village. **Singh Harjinder (1977)** Caste Ranking in two Sikh Villages	1970's	Study based in a small village in the Majha area of Punjab	a) The author argues that while feelings of pollution do exist, they are on the decline. b) Existence of separate wells for Mazhabis. c) All castes except Mazhabis allowed to stay in gurudwaras

Source	*Time Frame*	*Regional Context*	*Forms of Discriminations*
Fiske, Adele M (1977) Caste among the Buddhists.The essay is written much before the Indian constitution recognised the category of Dalit Buddhists.	1970's		a) Fiske argues that Buddhism functioned as a handicap with respect to the legal rights of untouchables. b) Practices of Untouchability have diminished.
Dube, Leela (1973) Caste Analogues among the Laccadive Muslims.	1970's	The essay examines the nature of social stratification among the Laccadive Muslims of the south west coast of India.	a) Dube points out that Hindu notions of purity of food, of pollution incurred at death and of the pollution of menstrual blood are absent amongst these groups. b) Distance and differentiation in social life was maintained between the lower and higher castes through various means.
Caplan, Lionel (1980). Caste and Castelessness among South Indian Christians. The article is primarily concerned with the ideological dimension of caste. It argues that attention to modes of self ascription reveal a lack of uniformity among the same group. Some make claims to caste status while other don't dependent upon material circumstances.	1980	The study focuses on the protestant community in madras and refers to well educated descendents of poor rural converts. With its focus on urban elites it does not reflect the position of rural peasants or low income urban poor.	a) Refusal to draw water from the same well.
Pandian, MSS (1985) State, Christianity and Scheduled castes. The author has summarised the findings of other scholars and the following instances of discrimination have been quoted	1980's	Christian community in Tamil Nadu	a) The Syrian Christians often treat Pulaya Christians in demeaning manner. Harijan Christians often had to remove their head dress in front of rich Syrian Christians.

Source	*Time Frame*	*Regional Context*	*Forms of Discriminations*
from several different studies and newspaper reports.			
Kananaikil, Jose (1990). Scheduled Caste Converts and Social Disabilities: A Survey of Tamil Nadu. Indian Social Institute: New Delhi _____________. **(1983).** Christians of Scheduled Caste origin. Indian Social Institute. New Delhi	1980-1990	Social survey that examines the social and economic disabilities suffered by Dalit Christians within Tamil Nadu. Based on a comparative approach b/w SC converts vs. SC non converts. Respondents belonging to 17 diff. dalit communities and close to 80% belong to mixed villages within rural areas. Perception of disabilities suffered, further varies across different groups and communities as well as across rural and urban settlements.	The common forms of Untouchability faced by the SC converts included discrimination suffered at common water sources (22% SC converts within the survey experienced such practices), at school (12% of SC converts affirmed being discriminated at school) intermarrying with dalit converts etc. Further, a large majority felt that there was no significant difference in the attitude of the Hindus towards dalit in general or towards dalit converts. Moreover 36% argued that they suffered discrimination at the hands of co religionists.
Mosse, David (1994) Idioms of Subordination and Styles of Protest among Christian and Hindu Harijan Castes in Tamil Nadu.	1990's	Essay based upon fieldwork in a multi caste, multi religious village in southern Tamil Nadu.	Relations of dominance characterised by purity and pollution.
Bhatty, Zarina (1996) Social Stratification among Muslims in India. __________. **(1973)** Status and power in a Muslim dominated Village of Uttar Pradesh.	1970's 1990's	Study is based upon a Muslim village in UP.	Concepts of purity and impurity; clean and unclean castes exist among these Muslim groups.
Tharamangalam, J (1996) Caste among Christians in India.	1990's	Study based in South India.	Untouchability in its evident forms has declined. Further, observance of bodily

Source	*Time Frame*	*Regional Context*	*Forms of Discriminations*
			pollution is weak.
Franco Fernando et al. (2004). Journeys to freedom: Dalit narratives	2000's	Study based on the experience of dalit Christians of central Gujarat. It also employs a comparative perspective b/w Christian and Hindu Vankars.	Different forms of Untouchability still experienced by the Christian Vankars of Gujarat. E.g. one narrative tells of the refusal to drink water from the same glass/vessel. Further higher castes had to be addressed using honorific terms and bodily deference in front of them became an important marker of caste identity.
Anwar, Ali (2005) Masawat ki jung ________. **(2004)** Dalit Musalmaan.	2000's	Both studies are located in the context of post independent Bihar.	Practices of Untouchability continue to persist and defines social interaction among different caste groups even though they are not manifest. For instance, amongst the dhobi caste of Muslim origin based in Patna it is felt that other Muslims do not come to attend their wedding feasts because they serve meat with their hands. Also, low castes celebrate festivals in seclusion of the upper castes and there is little social intercourse between them. There is a constant rue that if there is a death or a wedding amongst the upper caste Muslims, the dalit Muslims make it to the occasion even without being called. However, even if the latter, send special invitations for such occasions, no one from the upper castes turns up. The exclusion is experienced more as an indifference of the higher castes.
Lourduswamy, S. (2005) Towards Empowerment of Dalit Christians:	2000's	The survey studies and the references seem to be limited to	Lourduswamy mentions the modes of discriminations discussed by Antony Raj in

Source	***Time Frame***	***Regional Context***	***Forms of Discriminations***
Equal Rights to all Dalits. The study is a compilation of various resolutions passed by the regional Bishop conferences in India, after deliberations on the issue of casteism and caste discrimination within Christianity.		Tamil Nadu or South India at most but the bishop conference reports seeks to represent the voice of Dalit Christians in general.	his work *Discrimination against Dalit Christians in Tamil Nadu.* Though the tabulation seems to be dated (it is done before 1989) it articulates the structural pretext of contemporary practices of Untouchability. The study suggests that - a) Two chapels are constructed, one for the non Dalits and other for the Dalits. In some parishes liturgical services are conducted separately. b) Separate seating arrangements are made within the same chapel. Dalits are usually seated in the two aisles of the church. Even if there are benches or chairs, Dalits are asked to take their seats on the floor. c) The existence of two separate cemeteries, two separate hearses to carry the dead bodies are found. d) Twos separate queues are formed to receive the sacred body of Christ. In some places Dalits are asked to receive communion only after the non Dalits. e) A dalit is forbidden to be an alter boy at the sacred liturgy. f) The non-Dalits restrict the corpus Christi procession, palm Sunday procession and other processions only to their streets. g) Dalits are not invited to participate in the washing of feet ceremony during Maundy

Source	***Time Frame***	***Regional Context***	***Forms of Discriminations***
			Thursdays. h) For fear of equal participation in the celebration of the parish saint, the parish council decides not to ask any contribution from Dalits. i) The feast of the village patron saint is celebrated separately. j) Archbishop M Arokiasamy makes similar claim in his 1989 report on the status of the Dalit Christians. He claims that in Tamil Nadu, in the predominantly Christian villages the harijan colonies or the cheris are segregated from the upper castes' localities and most of the civic amenities like hospital and school etc. are centred around the upper castes' residences. Furthermore, there is a spatial discrimination towards the dalit Christians in allowing them entry into the churches and also they are not allowed to assist the priest in reading the scriptures. They are also not allowed in the choir when sacraments such as baptism, confirmation and marriage are administered. Even in cemeteries there are at times, walls that separate the dalit Christians graves from the upper caste ones.

2. Endogamy

Source	*Time Frame*	*Regional Context*	*Endogamy/ Marriage*
Aggarwal, Pratap C (1966) A Muslim Sub caste of North India: Problems of Cultural Integration. __________. **(1973)** The Meos of Rajasthan and Haryana. __________. **(1973)** Caste Hierarchy in a Meo Village in Rajasthan.	1960-1970	Meos were a dominant sub caste of mewat region in Rajasthan.	The Meo sub-caste is divided into a large number of exogamous groups. They practice strict village exogamy and avoid cousin marriage of any kind. Further, caste endogamy is restricted within linguistic and spatial bounds.
Ahmad, Imtiaz (1967) The Ashraf and Ajlaf Categories in Indo Muslim Society. The author argues that Caste-analogues are central to the study of Muslim social stratification rather than Ashraf-ajlaf dichotomy which are over arching categories and convenient over simplifications. __________. **(1976)** Caste and Kinship in a Muslim Village of Eastern UP. __________. **(1973)** Endogamy and Status Mobility among the Siddique Sheiks of Allahabad*	1960-1970	Study based upon fieldwork in a multi caste village in eastern UP	a) Ahmad points out that endogamy, hereditary membership, distinct ritual status are features of Muslim communities. b) The Siddique Sheikhs of Allahabad used endogamy for reinforcing group identity and subsequently were able to raise their social standing in the hierarchy of Muslim groups by employing both endogamy and hypergamy*
Ahmad, Zeyauddin. (1977).	1970's	Study based upon the	a) Endogamy and exogamy prevalent amongst these

Source	***Time Frame***	***Regional Context***	***Endogamy/ Marriage***
Caste Elements among the Muslims of Bihar.		Muslim community in Bihar.	groups b) Ashraf castes often constituted two lines of descent: Children of high caste wife and children of low caste wife. The latter are much inferior in status and privileges. c) In a social survey conducted among 800 Muslims, low castes were 100 % endogamous.
Mines, Mattison (1977) Social Stratification among Muslim Tamils in Tamil Nadu.	1970's	Study based upon the nature of Muslim social stratification in northern Tamil Nadu.	a) Mines argues that Tamil Muslims lack caste division in terms of occupational sub division, hierarchically ranked endogamous groups and purity of descent. b) Most marriages are between persons of same subdivisions and inter sub divisional marriages are rare. However, marrying within the subdivision is not based upon the idea of any 'purity of blood' but of marrying within same cultural and religious traditions.
Alexander, KC. (1977) The Problem of Caste in the Christian Churches of Kerela.	1970's	The article examines caste practices within Christian churches in Kerela	a) Marriage practices are largely within caste boundaries. b) Conversion did not bring about a fundamental change in the institution of family and marriage among pulaya converts.
Singh, Inder Paul (1977) Caste in a Sikh Village. **Singh Harjinder (1977)** Caste Ranking in two Sikh Villages.	1970's	Study based in a small village in the Majha area of Punjab	No inter caste marriage in the village and endogamy was observed. Caste was more important than religion in contracting marriages.
D'souza, Victor (1973) Status Groups among the Mophlas on the South West coast of India.	1970's	Fieldwork undertaken among the mophlas of south India, largely Kerela.	Mophlas constitute an endogamous group with rare cases of intermarriage.
Bhattacharya, Ranjit K (1973) The Concept and Ideology of Caste among the Muslims of Rural West Bengal.	1970's	Study based upon the Muslims of rural West Bengal.	Muslim ethnic groups in the region are constituted as endogamous patrilineal descent groups.

Source	***Time Frame***	***Regional Context***	***Endogamy/ Marriage***
Dube, Leela (1973) Caste Analogues among the Laccadive Muslims.	1970's	The essay examines the nature of social stratification among the Laccadive Muslims of the south west coast of India.	Dube shows that these groups are characterised by endogamy, interdependence and are hierarchically ranked.
Caplan, Lionel (1980). Caste and Castelessness among South Indian Christians. The article is primarily concerned with the ideological dimension of caste. It argues that attention to modes of self ascription reveal a lack of uniformity among the same group. Some make claims to caste status while other don't dependent upon material circumstances.	1980	The study focuses on the protestant community in madras and refers to well educated descendents of poor rural converts. With its focus on urban elites it does not reflect the position of rural peasants or low income urban poor.	Collective mass conversion enabled caste groups to reproduce themselves through endogamous marriages. Further while 40% unions within the English church were non endogamous, only 7% within Tamil Churches were genealogically hybrid.

Source	*Time Frame*	*Regional Context*	*Endogamy/ Marriage*
Kaufmann, SB (1981).A Christian Caste in Hindu Society: Religious Leadership and Social Conflict among the Paravas of Southern Tamil Nadu. Article focuses on the colonial period.	1980's	The essay is based upon Paravas, a roman catholic community in Tamil Nadu.	Paravas constitute an endogamous and cohesive jati with strong internal leadership.
Kananaikil, Jose (1990). Scheduled Caste Converts and Social Disabilities: A Survey of Tamil Nadu.Indian Social Institute:New Delhi _____________. **(1983).** Christians of Scheduled Caste origin. Indian Social Institute. New Delhi	1980-1990	Social survey that examines the social and economic disabilities suffered by Dalit Christians within Tamil Nadu. Based on a comparative approach b/w SC converts vs. SC non converts. Respondents belonging to 17 diff. dalit communities and close to 80% belong to mixed villages within rural areas. Perception of disabilities suffered, further varies across different groups and	In this social survey more than half the sample (54%) expressed reservations about intermarrying outside the social group.

Source	*Time Frame*	*Regional Context*	*Endogamy/ Marriage*
		communities as well as across rural and urban settlements.	
Bhatty, Zarina (1996) Social Stratification among Muslims in India. __________. **(1973)** Status and power in a Muslim dominated Village of Uttar Pradesh.	1970's 1990's	Study is based upon a Muslim village in UP.	a) Bhatty points that conversion to Islam did not mitigate caste. Rules of marriage, inheritance and social customs remained unchanged. b) Caste endogamy practiced amongst these groups.
Tharamangalam, J (1996) Caste among Christians in India.	1990's	Study based in South India.	a) Caste endogamy and social exclusiveness practiced among these groups.
Jamous, Raymond (1996) The Meo as a Rajput Caste and a Muslim Community. The meos are both a rajput caste and a Muslim community. Meo's self represenatation is that of a high caste.	1990's	The Meo community is spread across Rajasthan, Haryana and UP.	a) Meos are an endogamous caste divided into patrilineal clans. b) The Meos maintain genealogical records, which is not a matter of kinship alone but of inter caste relations because genealogists are Brahmins and genealogical recording is a caste activity.
Syed, Ali (2002) Collective and Elective Ethnicity: Caste among Urban Muslims in India. The author argues that caste among Muslims is not an all encompassing identity but one that varies in salience between being a collective entity to a matter of individual choice. A majority of the respondent in	2000's	The study is based upon fieldwork amongst urban Muslims in Hyderabad.	a) Qureshis in Hyderabad constitute an endogamous caste and they do not intermarry. They have a caste biradari where economic and marriage related issues are discussed. b) Blood purity an important concern for the Qureshis.

Source	*Time Frame*	*Regional Context*	*Endogamy/ Marriage*
the study are upper caste Muslims.			
Franco Fernando et al. (2004). Journeys to Freedom: Dalit Narratives	2000's	Study based on the experience of dalit Christians of central Gujarat. It also employs a comparative perspective b/w Christian and Hindu Vankars.	The narratives of dalit Christians families indicate that there has been little intercaste marrying and endogamous relations keep caste identity intact among Christians, like the Hindus. Even after conversion, marriage practices underwent little change including the huge expenditure incurred on weddings. The non Vankars for most part regarded Christian Vankars and Hindu Vankars as being simply Vankars. The problem of caste got acutely reflected when catholic Vankars would not marry catholic Rohit or Chamar (lower castes).
Ansari, Ashfaq Husain (2004) Basic Problem of Backward Muslims.	2000's	Based in North India.	a) Belief in caste distinctions and expression of the same in contracting marriages prevalent among the Muslims.
Anwar, Ali (2005) Masawat ki jung ________. **(2004**) Dalit Musalmaan.	2000's	Both studies are located in the context of post independent Bihar.	Anwar by examining four case histories of inter caste marriage among the Muslims of Bihar, shows how caste identity remains an important determinant in shaping marriage practices in Muslim society. By and large, inter caste marriages are rare and have caste backlash through religiously backed panchayats. Anwar describes such marriages, the opposition meted out to them; their survival at the face of these oppositions and the partial acceptance of the couples by their communities long after their marriages. In one such instance, a boy from a Muslim Harijan Family fell in love with a girl of Sheik family. However the caste barriers between the couple remained insurmountable and they decided to elope. However, the village communities found them and the couple had to

Source	***Time Frame***	***Regional Context***	***Endogamy/ Marriage***
			undergo separation. Further, though modes and methods of marriages are not discussed in detail, it appears that Dhobis, Halalkhors, Bakho, Pawariyan, Machuaara, Naalwaara and Nats all are mainly endogamous caste groups.

3. Occupational Segregation

Source	*Time Frame*	*Regional Context*	*Forms of Discriminations*
Aggarwal, Pratap C (1966) A Muslim Sub caste of North India: Problems of Cultural Integration. __________. **(1973)** The Meos of Rajasthan and Haryana. __________. **(1973)** Caste Hierarchy in a Meo Village in Rajasthan.	1960-1970	Meos were a dominant sub caste of mewat region in Rajasthan.	a) Meos a dominant land owning sub-caste make use of economic and ritual services of various sub castes and are part of a ranked social hierarchy. b) Jajmani system and patron client relations are prevalent amongst the Meos.
Ahmad, Imtiaz (1967) The Ashraf and Ajlaf Categories in Indo Muslim Society. The author argues that Caste-analogues are central to the study of Muslim social stratification rather than Ashraf-ajlaf dichotomy which are over arching categories and convenient over simplifications. __________. **(1976)** Caste and Kinship in a Muslim Village of Eastern UP. __________. **(1973)** Endogamy and Status Mobility among the Siddique Sheiks of Allahabad*	1960-1970	Study based upon fieldwork in a multi caste village in eastern UP	a) Historically, there has been discrimination in office, govt and administration between high and low born Muslims. b) Groups bearing distinct names are associated with traditional occupations. Though occupational change has taken place over the years. E.g.: butchers and weavers who have accumulated capital have taken to trading food grains.
Ahmad, Zeyauddin. (1977). Caste Elements among the	1970's	Study based upon the Muslim community in	a) Muslim groups are organised more or less like Hindu castes. Muslim society divided into 4 groups. Ashraf,

Source	***Time Frame***	***Regional Context***	***Forms of Discriminations***
Muslims of Bihar.		Bihar	Hindus of high birth who converted to Islam, clean occupational castes and converts from untouchable castes. b) List of Muslim castes in Bihar includes Atishbaz, Bhand, Bhatiyara, Julaha, Mirasi, Qassab, Faqir, Nanbai, Bhisthi, Mir Shikar.
Mines, Mattison (1977) Social Stratification among Muslim Tamils in Tamil Nadu.	1970's	Study based upon the nature of Muslim social stratification in northern Tamil Nadu.	a) There are four Muslim subdivisions, however these are not hierarchically ranked castes even though this division is dependent upon occupational division. b) Social ranking based upon criteria such as age, wealth, personal character and religiousness.
Weibe Paul & John-Peter S (1977). The Catholic Church and Caste in Rural Tamil Nadu	1970's	The essay examines the caste practices within the catholic church in rural Tamil Nadu	a) Christian castes related through patron client relations where peasant groups constitute the patrons of untouchable castes who work in their fields, take care of their animals etc. b) Recruitment to church is again shaped by patron client relations.
Alexander, KC. (1977) The Problem of Caste in the Christian Churches of Kerela.	1970's	The article examines caste practices within Christian churches in Kerela	a) Problem of caste is reflected in the organisation and recruitment to church. b) Great majority of pulaya Christians are coolies in comparison to Syrian Christians who are well educated and engaged in white collar jobs.
D'souza, Victor (1973) Status Groups among the Mophlas on the South West coast of India.	1970's	Fieldwork undertaken among the mophlas of south India, largely Kerela.	Different social groups constitute a social hierarchy in which Thangals are the highest and Ossans the lowest.
Bhattacharya, Ranjit K (1973) The Concept and Ideology of Caste among the Muslims of Rural West Bengal.	1970's	Study based upon the Muslims of rural West Bengal.	a) Higher castes such as Sayyads desist from manual labour associated with agriculture. b) Caste based occupational specialization prevalent especially among the groups lower in the hierarchy.
Dube, Leela (1973) Caste	1970's	The essay examines the	a) Three major social divisions within the community

Source	***Time Frame***	***Regional Context***	***Forms of Discriminations***
Analogues among the Laccadive Muslims.		nature of social stratification among the Laccadive Muslims of the south west coast of India.	included the landowners, boat owners, traders; tenants' doing menial jobs and finally, tree climbers, toddy tapers, labourers.b) Religious learning, priestly functions were the exclusive prerogative of the upper groups.
Kaufmann, SB (1981).A Christian Caste in Hindu Society: Religious Leadership and Social Conflict among the Paravas of Southern Tamil Nadu. Article focuses on the colonial period.	1980's	The essay is based upon Paravas, a roman catholic community in Tamil Nadu.	Artisans and traders operated in the context of a strong corporate organisation. They were primarily fishermen.
Kananaikil, Jose (1990). Scheduled Caste Converts and Social Disabilities: A Survey of Tamil Nadu. Indian Social Institute: New Delhi _____________. **(1983).** Christians of Scheduled Caste origin. Indian Social Institute. New Delhi	1980-1990	Social survey that examines the social and economic disabilities suffered by Dalit Christians within Tamil Nadu. Based on a comparative approach b/w SC converts vs. SC non converts. Respondents belonging to 17 diff. dalit communities and close to 80% belong to mixed villages within rural areas. Perception of disabilities suffered, further varies across different groups and communities as well as across rural and urban settlements.	Examining the occupational status of SC converts, the survey uses six variables namely agricultural labour, non agricultural labour, self employment, govt. service, private service and unemployment. Here the representation of dalits in govt services is much higher than self employment, while close to 45% of non-convert men were employed in the govt. the corresponding fig. for the covert men was 32%. The gender disparity appeared in the form of – 21% non convert women were employed by govt. in comparison to 13% of convert women

Source	*Time Frame*	*Regional Context*	*Forms of Discriminations*
Pandian, MSS (1985) State, Christianity and Scheduled castes. The author has summarised finding of other scholars and the following instances of discrimination have been quoted from several different studies and newspaper reports.	1980's	Christian community in Tamil Nadu	The author argues that the Church draws its clergy primarily from the upper castes.
Mosse, David (1994) Idioms of Subordination and Styles of Protest among Christian and Hindu Harijan Castes in Tamil Nadu.	1990's	Essay based upon fieldwork in a multi caste, multi religious village in southern Tamil Nadu.	Patron- client relations defined by hierarchical relations of service (both economic and ritual), dependence and mutual obligation exist amongst these groups.
Wilfred, Felix (1995) From the Dusty Soil: Contextual Reinterpretation of Christianity**.**	1990's	Study based in South India	a) Jobs within church administration as well as in church run educational and other institutions go in favour of the middle and upper castes. Share of the upper castes far disproportionate to their numbers. b) There is low representation of Dalits in decision making bodies and in church structures.
Bhatty, Zarina (1996) Social Stratification among Muslims in India. __________. **(1973)** Status and Power in a Muslim dominated Village of Uttar Pradesh.	1970's 1990's	Study is based upon a Muslim village in UP.	a) Patron client relations are prevalent. b) Occupational hierarchy based upon caste and status is determined by that nature of occupation. c) Biradari and caste panchayat are important.
Tharamangalam, J (1996) Caste among Christians in India.	1990's	Study based in South India.	a) There is hereditary membership in hierarchically ranked castes. b) Existence of patron-client relations between caste

Source	*Time Frame*	*Regional Context*	*Forms of Discriminations*
			Christians and dalit Christians.
Syed, Ali (2002) Collective and Elective Ethnicity: Caste among Urban Muslims in India. The author argues that caste among Muslims is not an all encompassing identity but one that varies in salience between being a collective entity to a matter of individual choice. A majority of the respondent in the study are upper caste Muslims.	2000's	The study is based upon fieldwork amongst urban Muslims in Hyderabad.	The author argues that there is little occupational specialization amongst the urban Muslims based on caste.
Alam, Anwar. (2003) Democratisation of Indian Muslims.	2000's		a) Disproportionate representation of backward Muslim groups in state/ govt services as well as over darghas, mosques and minority educational institutions. b) Representation in state structures and organisational structures of political parties dominated by upper castes.
Mondal, Seik Rahim (2003) Social Structure, OBC's and Muslims. **Zainuddin, Sayyed.(2003).** Islam, Social Stratification and the Empowerment of Muslims.	2000's	Studies examine the caste dimensions among the Muslims of north India	a) Caste based occupational segregation evident amongst Muslim groups.
Franco Fernando et al. (2004) Journeys to Freedom: Dalit Narratives	2000's	Study based on the experience of dalit Christians of Central Gujarat. It also employs a comparative perspective	a) Social disability experienced in employment and promotion by Dalit Christians.

Source	***Time Frame***	***Regional Context***	***Forms of Discriminations***
		b/w Christian and Hindu Vankars.	
Ansari, Ashfaq Husain (2004) Basic Problem of Backward Muslims.	2000's	Based in North India.	a) There is poor representation of backward Muslims in state and central govt. as well as other services like police, civil, defence and public enterprises. b) Urban professions are largely dominated by the Ashrafs.
Lourduswamy, S. (2005) Towards Empowerment of Dalit Christians: Equal Rights to all Dalits. The study is a compilation of various resolutions passed by the regional Bishop conferences in India, after deliberations on the issue of casteism and caste discrimination within Christianity.	2000's	The survey studies and the references seem to be limited to Tamil Nadu or South India at most but the bishop conference reports seeks to represent the voice of Dalit Christians in general	a) There is very low representation of Dalits amongst the clergy. b) Holy communion is conducted by upper caste priests only. c) Low occupational status is combined with economic dependence, low educational levels, absence of political support as well as legal disabilities d) In a percentile distribution of occupations of dalit Christians, it is noted that 54.75 are into agricultural labouring, 7.29 are into their own cultivation, 2.68 are in lower administrative jobs and 1.80 percent are in menial jobs
Anwar, Ali (2005) Masawat ki jung ________. **(2004)** Dalit Musalmaan.	2000's	Both studies are located in the context of post independent Bihar.	Representation of dalit Muslims in state services, political parties as well as secular politics, religious bodies, ministerial berths, government institutions etc seems to be abysmally low and on an average more members are dependent upon lesser no. of earning members. Non dalit Muslims monopolise high social rank and become culturally assertive in terms of sharing public spaces like mosques, graveyards etc. In this context, the following castes of halalkhors, lalbegis, bhatiyaras, gorkhan, bakkho, meershikaris, chik, rangrez, and darzis constitute the most stigmatised castes among the Muslims. Even though most

Source	***Time Frame***	***Regional Context***	***Forms of Discriminations***
			of these caste members are in transition from their older professions but they feel that they are still recognized by others (upper caste Muslims) in relation to their older professions. Thus they say for e.g. that a halalkhor's progeny is seen as halalkhor always and is denied social position available to others. Anwar's own tabulation from his survey shows that out of hundred Dalit Muslim families with a population of 574, only 11 are educated at higher than matric level and all are unemployed, only 5 are in govt. jobs in total — two of them as peons, another two as sweepers and one as a constable in police.

4. Social and Cultural Segregation

Source	*Time Frame*	*Regional Context*	*Forms of Discriminations*
Aggarwal, Pratap C (1966)A Muslim sub caste of North India: Problems of Cultural Integration. __________. **(1973).** The Meos of Rajasthan and Haryana. __________. **(1973).** Caste Hierarchy in a Meo Village in Rajasthan.	1960-1970	Meos were a dominant sub caste of mewat region in Rajasthan.	a) Social interaction between castes governed by rules of caste propriety. b) Meos often used brute force to perpetuate the caste system that was beneficial to them.
Ahmad, Imtiaz (1967) The Ashraf and Ajlaf Categories in Indo Muslim Society. The author argues that Caste-analogues are central to the study of Muslim social stratification rather than Ashraf-ajlaf dichotomy which are over arching categories and convenient over simplifications. __________. **(1976)** Caste and Kinship in a Muslim Village of Eastern UP. __________. **(1973)** Endogamy and Status Mobility among the Siddique Sheiks of Allahabad*	1960-1970	Study based upon fieldwork in a multi caste village in eastern UP	a) The division between High born vs low born Muslims was important in determining social status. Further, status was marked by social exclusiveness b) Existence of separate quarters. c) Intimate social intercourse was dictated by internal grouping rather than wider ethnic group category. d) Separate mosques were built for different castes. For e.g.: the julahas built their own mosque after disputes with the khanzadas.
Ahmad, Zeyauddin (1977) Caste Elements among the Muslims of Bihar.	1970's	Study based upon the Muslim community in Bihar	a) Lower castes such as Halalkhors and lalbegis while not refused permission in religious places, these distinctions are observable in social gatherings.

Source	*Time Frame*	*Regional Context*	*Forms of Discriminations*
			b) There has been a survival of Hindu rituals centring around birth, marriage and death even after embracing Islam.
Weibe Paul & John-Peter S (1977). The Catholic Church and Caste in rural Tamil Nadu.	1970's	The essay examines the caste practices within the catholic church in rural Tamil Nadu.	a) Social organisation of protestant church split along lines of caste.
Alexander, KC. (1977) The Problem of Caste in the Christian Churches of Kerela.	1970's	The article examines caste practices within Christian churches in Kerela.	a) Christians of Kerela divided into ethnic groups on the bases of their caste background. b) Social life is segregated around caste lines. c) While conversion bought about an improvement in life chances (education, employment) the low caste converts continue to be treated as Harijans. d) There is segregation in church b/w Syrian and Pulaya members. e) The low castes are required to address the high caste Christians through honorific terms such as lord, master etc. f) Anxiety over maintenance of caste identity among the Syrians.
D'souza, Victor (1973) Status Groups among the Mophlas on the South West coast of India.	1970's	Fieldwork undertaken among the mophlas of south India, largely Kerela.	a) Recent converts referred to as 'New Muslims' have an inferior social status. b) Social groups that are low in the hierarchy need to provide deferential treatment to those above them. Separate seating arrangements are observed at social functions. c) Low status groups address higher ones through honorific titles d) In situations of great social distance b/w groups there are separate mosques, quadis (priests) religious organisations and burial grounds as well as segregated

Source	*Time Frame*	*Regional Context*	*Forms of Discriminations*
			residential quarters.
Singh, Inder Paul (1977) Caste in a Sikh Village. **Singh Harjinder (1977)** Caste Ranking in two Sikh Villages.	1970's	Study based in a small village in the Majha area of Punjab	a) Social life defined along caste lines viz occupation, commensal relations, social intercourse governed by caste. b) Different castes accorded different amount of prestige.
Fiske, Adele M (1977) Caste among the Buddhists. The essay is written much before the Indian constitution recognised the category of Dalit Buddhists.	1970's		a) Buddhism has had less of an exterior effect in terms of social economic or educational gains but provided more of an interior impact i.e. a positive psychological impact
Bhattacharya, Ranjit K (1973) The Concept and Ideology of Caste among the Muslims of Rural West Bengal.	1970's	Study based upon the Muslims of rural West Bengal.	a) Different ethnic groups constitute a ranked social hierarchy. b) Some restrictions around commensality and inter dining operate, though these are less elaborate than their Hindu counterparts. Commensal restrictions based upon notion of social hygiene and cleanliness.
Dube, Leela (1973) Caste Analogues among the Laccadive Muslims.	1970's	The essay examines the nature of social stratification among the Laccadive Muslims of the south west coast of India.	Differences in rank expressed through the idiom of social disabilities suffered by the groups. These disabilities were an integral part of the deference structure.
Kaufmann, SB (1981).A Christian Caste in Hindu Society: Religious Leadership and Social Conflict among the Paravas of Southern Tamil Nadu. Article focuses on the colonial period.	1980's	The essay is based upon Paravas, a roman catholic community in Tamil Nadu.	a) The author in this essay argues that the system of caste leadership among the paravas is more elaborate and longer lived than most Hindu groups in south India. b) Notions of caste rank and ceremonial precedence are prevalent as among the Hindus of south. c) The practice of allocating ritual privileges and honours within churches and religious festivals was followed among these groups.

Source	*Time Frame*	*Regional Context*	*Forms of Discriminations*
			d) Converts reconciled Hindu beliefs and practices with strong roman catholic affiliations.
Caplan, Lionel (1980). Caste and Castelessness among South Indian Christians. The article is primarily concerned with the ideological dimension of caste. It argues that attention to modes of self ascription reveal a lack of uniformity among the same group. Some make claims to caste status while other don't dependent upon material circumstances.	1980	The study focuses on the protestant community in madras and refers to well educated descendents of poor rural converts. With its focus on urban elites it does not reflect the position of rural peasants or low income urban poor.	a) There was an observation of commensal restrictions and other forms of pollution. b) The caste Christians provided opposition to missionary insistence on inter dining. c) Educational attainments were determined by position within the caste hierarchy. d) Onset of puberty was marked among Tamil Christian women. e) Funerary practices were in accord with Hindu custom.
Pandian, MSS (1985) State, Christianity and Scheduled Castes. The author has summarised finding of other scholars and the following instances of discrimination have been quoted from several different studies and newspaper reports.	1980's	Christian community in Tamil Nadu	a) There were separate churches for separate groups e.g. Syrian Christians, low caste converts b) Social segregation existed within the church. E.g.: SC Catholics were to occupy the rear of the church. c) Dead of the upper caste and Harijans were buried in separate cemeteries.
Kananaikil, Jose (1990). Scheduled Caste Converts and Social Disabilities: A Survey of Tamil Nadu. Indian Social Institute: New Delhi _____________. **(1983).**	1980-1990	Social survey that examines the social and economic disabilities suffered by Dalit Christians within Tamil Nadu. Based on a comparative approach	a) The survey finds that close to one-third of the respondents didn't have access to safe drinking water, further while non dalits lived in better houses than Dalits, the non converts seemed to have a somewhat better housing than the converts. 50% of the dalit converts lived in mud houses, the corresponding figure for non converts is

Source	*Time Frame*	*Regional Context*	*Forms of Discriminations*
Christians of Scheduled Caste origin. Indian Social Institute. New Delhi		b/w SC converts vs. SC non converts. Respondents belonging to 17 diff. dalit communities and close to 80% belong to mixed villages within rural areas. Perception of disabilities suffered, further varies across different groups and communities as well as across rural and urban settlements.	46%. Cumulatively, 84% of dalit converts lived in mud or straw houses, the figure for non converts was 74%. b) With respect to the levels of education it was found that a majority (48.4%) of the respondents believed that the educational facilities enjoyed by the converts and the non coverts were more or less the same. Further, while 19% thought that the educational levels of the converts is better; about 30% believed that the converts were worse off than the non converts in matters of education. The condition of girls from convert families seemed to be worst
Mosse, David (1994) Idioms of Subordination and Styles of Protest among Christian and Hindu Harijan Castes in Tamil Nadu.	1990's	Essay based upon fieldwork in a multi caste, multi religious village in southern Tamil Nadu.	a) Subordination expressed through forms of dress, terms of address as well as by physical posture. b) Prohibition on access to high caste streets, drinking water sources, village temples and tea shops. c) Honours system of village church legitimised a hierarchical ranking of castes and sub castes.
Wilfred, Felix. (1995). From the Dusty Soil: Contextual Reinterpretation of Christianity**.**	1990's	Study based in South India	Practices of discrimination continued within the everyday life of the church. The dalit Christians were referred to as new Christians. Separate churches for worship, segregation even in burial grounds, and exclusion from decision making in the parishes and the Christian communities constituted some of the forms of discrimination experienced by dalit Christians. Any challenges to social segregation within the church were often met by violent responses.
Bhatty, Zarina (1996) Social Stratification among Muslims in	1970's 1990's	Study is based upon a Muslim village in UP.	a) Recent converts to Islam were treated as that of lower status, referred to as the new Muslims.

Source	*Time Frame*	*Regional Context*	*Forms of Discriminations*
India. __________. **(1973)** Status and power in a Muslim dominated Village of Uttar Pradesh.			b) Caste represents social, political, economic as well as ritual status. c) Commensal restrictions were observed. d) Term 'zat' is evoked to refer to oonchi and neechi zat. e) Minor disputes were settled by caste panchayats.
Tharamangalam, J (1996) Caste among Christians in India.	1990's	Study based in South India.	a) Physical segregation of quarters; restrictions on dining; use of honorific terms to address high caste Christians were some of the common forms of social discrimination. b) Segregation within the church took the forms of separation at the lords table; separate churches; parallel sets of bishops, churches, priests, colleges and hospitals. c) Restrictions on commensality and social intercourse were sharpest where distance between groups in terms of socio- eco status and power was also sharpest.
Fernandes, Walter. (1996). Conversion to Christianity, Caste Tension and Search for an Identity in Tamil Nadu.	1990's	The essay examines Christian conversions in Tamil nadu	Looking at Christian conversions in Tamil Nadu Walter Fernandes in this essay examines the claims of Dalit Christians' experience of double discrimination. On the one hand dalit Christians are discriminated by the state, which does not extend SC privileges to them. On the other hand by the church, which treats them as inferior within the Christian community. The author provides instances of discrimination faced within the church such as, division within the church buildings, separate entrances for high caste and dalit Christians, procession routes for marriages and ceremonies were exclusively reserved fro the upper castes. Such segregation often produced intense and bloody conflicts between different caste groups and church became a site of bitter contestation between these groups.

Source	*Time Frame*	*Regional Context*	*Forms of Discriminations*
Jamous, Raymond (1996) The Meo as a Rajput Caste and a Muslim Community. The meos are both a rajput caste and a Muslim community. Meo's self represenatation is that of a high caste.	1990's	The Meo community is spread across Rajasthan, Haryana and UP.	a) Death rituals in accord with Islamic principles and rules with respect to pollution are not very rigid. They bury their dead in their own cemetery. b) They differentiate b/w kaccha and pacca food as well as b/w everyday and ceremonial food.
Syed, Ali (2002) Collective and Elective Ethnicity: Caste among Urban Muslims in India. The author argues that caste among Muslims is not an all encompassing identity but one that varies in salience between being a collective entity to a matter of individual choice. A majority of the respondent in the study are upper caste Muslims.	2000's	The study is based upon fieldwork amongst urban Muslims in Hyderabad.	a) The author points out that there is no segregation by caste in the neighbourhoods.
Alam, Anwar. (2003) Democratisation of Indian Muslims.	2000's		a) Caste governs interpersonal and social relations amongst Muslims.
Mondal, Seik Rahim (2003) Social Structure, OBC's and Muslims. **Zainuddin, Sayyed.(2003).** Islam, Social Stratification and the Empowerment of Muslims.	2000's	Studies examine the caste dimensions among the Muslims of north India.	a) Caste defines boundaries of social intercourse. b) The position of Muslim OBC in comparison to their Hindu counterparts much more dismal. Educational backwardness far worse among the Muslims. c) Amongst the nashyas (new muslims) in WB 40% illiterate; 23% only literate, 30% with primary education. And only 6% have secondary education.
Ansari, Ashfaq Husain. (2004).	2000's	North India	Levels of literacy are extremely low among the backward

Source	*Time Frame*	*Regional Context*	*Forms of Discriminations*
Basic Problem of Backward Muslims			Muslim groups.
Aloysius,Irudayam s.j, Jayshree P Mangubhai, Joel G Lee (2004). Dalit Women Speak Out: Violence against Dalit Women in India 1999-2004. The following account is based upon the testimonies of 3 dalit women: two Christian and one Muslim.	2000's		a) Dalit women experience violence both within the family as well as by the community. Nature of violence includes physical assault, verbal abuse, rape, sexual exploitation, domestic violence, kidnapping and abduction. b) Levels of education are low.
Lourduswamy, S. (2005) Towards Empowerment of Dalit Christians: Equal Rights to all Dalits. The study is a compilation of various resolutions passed by the regional Bishop conferences in India, after deliberations on the issue of casteism and caste discrimination within Christianity.	2000's	The survey studies and the references seem to be limited to Tamil Nadu or South India at most but the bishop conference reports seeks to represent the voice of Dalit Christians in general	One of the important concerns expressed in the text is that more than 85% of the dalit Christians stay in 'cheris' (slums). In the villages they are subjugated because of their subordination to the landlords for whom they work and many times social power and domination is expressed through the threat of rape, abuse and beatings by the upper castes. Lourduswamy also argues that a dalit Christian faces persecution by upper caste Hindus because the latter feel that through conversion the erstwhile Hindu dalit wants to move up on the social ladder. Also, he points out that the number of murders of dalit Christians attest to the fact that they do not have "constitutional safeguards" to survive the onslaught of the upper castes.
Anwar, Ali (2005) Masawat ki jung ________. (**2004**) Dalit Musalmaan.	2000's	Both studies are located in the context of post independent Bihar.	Low caste Muslims experience deep forms of social and cultural segregation within society. These assume several different forms that mark their everyday life. Ali Anwar explores in detail the derogatory puns hurled at low caste

Source	*Time Frame*	*Regional Context*	*Forms of Discriminations*
			Muslims. For instance terms like Bhatiyara are both an abuse as well as the name of a caste. The group, historically considered as keepers of working classes inns, besides the upper castes' sarais, where their women (were) are seen as to be indulgent into prostitution, is sexually stigmatized. While discussing the marginality of the Ansaris' (Julahas), he extensively quotes vernacular (hindi-bhojpuri) sayings and proverbs that he claims are used in common parlance to denigrate the ansaris and similar other castes. In practice there seem to be two distinct ways of registering the social positions of various castes like julaha, bakko, nat, manihar, halalkhor etc. vis-à-vis the rest of the hindu-muslim caste members: one, through a constant ridicule and denigration and second, by simply excluding them from mainstream and high occasions of the communities, including weddings and festivals. Further, caste based discrimination takes it most evident form in practices around worship and burial. Though the mosques are not exclusively for one caste or a set of castes, the upper castes are expected to offer their prayers from first few rows and lower castes behind their backs. In the times of conflict, the lower castes stand to loose from the mosque space as well. The dead of the lower castes, in most cases are to be buried separately under the supervision of lower caste Maulvis. The Halalkhors based in Phoolwali Sar in Patna say that they can cremate their dead only in the cemetery allocated to their caste members. Otherwise the common grievance is that upper caste

Source	*Time Frame*	*Regional Context*	*Forms of Discriminations*
			Muslims evade attending feasts, social functions, mosques, funeral etc. and this is accentuated by the fact that most of the dalit Muslims are geographically segregated.

5. Economic Discrimination

Source	*Time Frame*	*Regional Context*	*Forms of Discrimination*
Ahmad, Zeyauddin (1977) Caste Elements among the Muslims of Bihar.	1970's	Study based upon the Muslim community in Bihar.	Political power, economic advantages and social privileges centre around ashraf castes. Occupational castes that are low in the hierarchy have a very low standard of living.
Weibe Paul & John-Peter S (1977). The catholic church and caste in rural Tamil Nadu.	1970's	The essay examines the caste practices within the catholic church in rural Tamil Nadu.	The author argues that there is no longer any economic advantage in converting to Christianity as Govt. welfare programmes discriminate against Christians.
Alexander, KC. (1977) The Problem of Caste in the Christian Churches of Kerela.	1970's	The article examines caste practices within Christian churches in Kerela.	a) Syrian Christians enjoy a higher standard of living. b) They are well educated and occupationally are landowners, traders, businessmen, independent farmers etc. c) Further, they live in well furnished houses with modern amenities. In comparison, pulaya Christians live in houses made of mud and coconut leaves with no electric light, bathroom or sanitary latrine. Household equipment is also

Source	***Time Frame***	***Regional Context***	***Forms of Discrimination***
			scarce. Further, pulayas are largely illiterate.
Mosse, David (1994) Idioms of Subordination and Styles of Protest among Christian and Hindu Harijan Castes in Tamil Nadu.	1990's	Essay based upon fieldwork in a multi caste, multi religious village in southern Tamil Nadu.	The village district has a relatively high % (54%) of landowning among Harijans and this has been a relatively recent phenomenon.
Tharamangalam, J (1996) Caste among Christians in India.	1990's	Study based in South India.	Inter caste rivalry over struggle for power and control over church resources.
Alam, Anwar. (2003) Democratisation of Indian Muslims.	2000's		a) Upper caste Muslims maintain hegemony over resources and institutions of the community. And there is a deliberate exclusion of low caste Muslims from sharing of resources.
Mondal, Seik Rahim (2003) Social Structure, OBC's and Muslims. **Zainuddin, Sayyed.(2003).** Islam, Social Stratification and the Empowerment of Muslims.	2000's	Studies examine the caste dimensions among the Muslims of north India	Hindu OBC's share in landholding went up from 6% to 20% in post independent India. For Muslim OBC's the situation is dismal.
Franco Fernando et al. (2004). Journeys to freedom: Dalit narratives	2000's	Study based on the experience of dalit Christians of central Gujarat. It also employs a comparative perspective b/w Christian and Hindu Vankars.	Christian Vankars seem to better off in comparison to their Hindu counterparts. On an average, they enjoy a larger household size in comparison to Hindu Vankars. With respect to land ownership and employment they are more or less at par with Hindu Vankars. The Christians Vankars are further better educated in comparison to Hindu Vankars. Here Christian missionaries and Christian schools have played a very important role in providing better chances of learning with an emphasis on English language. Education however has not been matched by parallel employment opportunities. Consequently, post conversion

Source	*Time Frame*	*Regional Context*	*Forms of Discrimination*
			economic condition has remained the same. They continued to be viewed as Harijans by fellow villagers. However, in few cases Christian identity, to the extent that it was associated with power, social standing and education enabled the bearer to mitigate his /her caste identity. In such instances, educational opportunities and organizational support offered dalit Christians a degree of economic and social improvement over Hindu Dalits in the region.
Aloysius,Irudayam s.j, Jayshree P Mangubhai, Joel G Lee (2004). Dalit Women Speak Out: Violence against Dalit Women in India. 1999-2004. The following account is based upon the testimonies of 3 dalit women: two Christian and one Muslim.	2000's		Most of these women worked as daily wage agricultural labourers marked by insecure livelihoods and employment and were susceptible to caste based violence from the dominant and upper castes. Dominant caste money lenders often resorted to sexual violence, intimidation and threat under the pretext of indebtedness.
Anwar, Ali (2005) Masawat ki jung ________. **(2004)** Dalit Musalmaan.	2000's	Both studies are located in the context of post independent Bihar.	Economic marginalisation of the backward Muslim communities is perpetuated and coincides with their social and cultural marginality. Thus, as stated above occupational representation in govt and state services is almost negligible. Most caste groups subsist on occupations and professions that are of lowly scale and our often viewed disparagingly by society. This is compounded by the fact that on the whole there is increasing deprivation in the absence of opportunities of education, employment on the one hand and lack of any social cultural or economic capital on the other.

6. Social Change and Forms of Protest and Resistance

Source	*Time Frame*	*Regional Context*	*Forms of Social Change and Protest*
Aggarwal, Pratap C (1966) A Muslim sub caste of North India: Problems of Cultural Integration. **(1973).** The Meos of Rajasthan and Haryana. **(1973).** Caste Hierarchy in a Meo Village in Rajasthan.	1960-1970		Post partition there has been greater islamisation of the meos and a giving up of Hindu practices. There has also been the breakdown of the traditional jajmani system.
Ahmad, Zeyauddin. (1977). Caste Elements among the Muslims of Bihar.	1970's	Study based upon the Muslim community in Bihar.	In recent times, income, education and property are replacing caste as a determinant of marriage.
Weibe Paul & John-Peter S (1977). The catholic church and caste in rural Tamil Nadu.	1970's	The essay examines the caste practices within the catholic church in rural Tamil Nadu.	With introduction of cash economy, loss of traditional occupations, the former dependencies associated with jajmani system have been undermined.
Alexander, KC. (1977) The Problem of Caste in the Christian Churches of Kerala.	1970's	The article examines caste practices within Christian churches in Kerala.	Forms of protest over caste based discrimination have included: a) Re-conversion back to Hinduism. b) Formation of PRDS to annihilate caste distinctions.
Dube, Leela (1973) Caste Analogues among the Laccadive Muslims.	1970's	The essay examines the nature of social stratification among the Laccadive Muslims of the south west coast of India.	Dube identifies forms of protest such as: a) Defying customary practices that were indicative of their low status. For e.g., wearing sandals, walking on public paths, using fireworks at the melachari wedding. b) Representations and appeals to inspecting officers.
Pandian, MSS (1985) State, Christianity and	1980's	Christian community in Tamil Nadu	Complaints were often made by the Harijan youth against the admission policy of the seminary where they were deliberately

Source	*Time Frame*	*Regional Context*	*Forms of Social Change and Protest*
Scheduled castes. The author has summarised finding of other scholars and the following instances of discrimination have been quoted from several different studies and newspaper reports.			excluded.
Mosse, David (1994) Idioms of Subordination and Styles of Protest among Christian and Hindu Harijan Castes in Tamil Nadu.	1990's	Essay based upon fieldwork in a multi caste, multi religious village in southern Tamil Nadu.	Social Change a) There was a commonality in the strategies of social mobility employed by Christian and Hindu Harijans. b) Relations were no longer hereditary. c) There was a greater dependence on market for work and credit. Forms of Protest d) There exist both organised and unorganised forms of protest. e) Dalit Christains and Dalit Hindus manipulated the very institutions and symbols which defined their subordination. These included withdrawal form low status and dis honorific services. For e.g.: withdrawal from village services like grave digging, carrying fire pots at funerals etc; withdrawal from patron client relations; from generalised dependence as village servants; refusal of prestations; challenge subordination by reciprocating gifts. Further, they drew upon horizontal networks of support. f) They established independent Christian shrines g) Forms of protest were addressed to the state including both organised mass action as well as appeals to the state. h) Conversion and embracing of alternative religious identity

Source	*Time Frame*	*Regional Context*	*Forms of Social Change and Protest*
			such as Islam was yet another symbol of resistance. i) Emergence of a new dalit Christian theology.
Wilfred, Felix. (1995). From the Dusty Soil: Contextual Reinterpretation of Christianity**.**	1990's	Study based in South India	Forms of protest included: a)Emergence of movements for the self assertion of Dalit Christains. E.g.: Dalit Christian Liberation Movement. b) Agitation through mass mobilisations. c) Conversion to Islam or Hinduism. d) Formation of dalit churches.
Bhatty, Zarina (1996) Social Stratification among Muslims in India. **(1973)** Status and power in a Muslim dominated Village of Uttar Pradesh.	1970's 1990's	Study is based upon a Muslim village in UP.	a) Desire for upward social mobility expressed through sanskritisation which often involved withdrawal of women from economic activity and through seclusion. b) There was a progressive disassociation of caste and occupation. Intrusion of market in the relationship of interdependence b/w occupational castes and the "sarkar" (dominant castes) was yet another form of social change.
Tharamangalam, J (1996) Caste among Christians in India.	1990's	Study based in South India.	Forms of protest included: a) Leaving Christian fold and re-conversion to Hinduism. b) Establishment of exclusively dalit churches or secession from mainstream churches; emergence of dalit churches with dalit ideologies c) Emergence of dalit theology and the DC movements within the church. d) Mass conversion movements produced new Christian castes referred to as neo- Dalits, neo-Christians.
Webster, John C.B. (1999). Religion and dalit Liberation: An Examination of Perspectives	1990's		Forms of protest included: a) Emergence of dalit religious movements such as Dalit Avtaris. the Dalit Avataris have a three point message to fellow bhangis, "become Dalit Avataries, educate your children, give up

Source	*Time Frame*	*Regional Context*	*Forms of Social Change and Protest*
			cleaning latrines” b) Adoption of various religious strategies to achieve greater equality, dignity and respect. These include sanskritsation, self-redefinition, conversion to several differing religions and inner transformation.
Syed, Ali (2002) Collective and Elective Ethnicity: Caste among Urban Muslims in India. The author argues that caste among Muslims is not an all encompassing identity but one that varies in salience between being a collective entity to a matter of individual choice. A majority of the respondent in the study are upper caste Muslims.	2000’s	The study is based upon fieldwork amongst urban Muslims in Hyderabad.	Social Change a) Caste no longer provides economic or political resources. Status on the other hand is dependent upon education profession or income. Therefore Muslims in Hyderabad experience caste as an elective identity. b) Vertical interdependence being replaced by competition among groups for resources. c) Caste experienced symbolically without much consequence and does not offer social prestige on its own accord.
Anwar, Ali (2005) Masawat ki jung ________. **(2004)** Dalit Musalmaan.	2000’s	Both studies are located in the context of post independent Bihar.	Social change While there has been a gradual diminishing of traditional caste roles, these have been substituted by minor and lowly professions that come to be the share of low caste Muslims and on the whole there is an increasing deprivation. For example, The Bakhos used to sing praises at the time of childbirth in families but overtime have picked to selling steel utensils in exchange of old clothes from people. For Bhatiyaras, Anwar claims that at some point, historically, they were considered to be people who used to put their women into prostitution at the

Source	***Time Frame***	***Regional Context***	***Forms of Social Change and Protest***
			inns, later they started making *Tikiyas* of coal for the *Hookah* but with the hookah also going out of vogue they have taken to horse carting (*Tanga*) and putting food stalls at the railways platforms. Most communities articulate that much hasn't changed except those who were nomadic like Bakhos and Nats have been granted land under Indira Vikas Yojna but the overall social condition has only deteriorated. Protest and resistance The last decade has seen an increasing mobilisation of backward Muslims especially in some parts such as Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra. Political and social struggle has been undertaken by backward Muslims and their leaders with an attempt to bring the issue of social discriminations faced by them to the fore of society as well as politics. Many dalit leaders have tried to convince the upper caste Muslim members that caste exists within Muslims but such leaders are often marginalised and sometimes also threatened. Resistance on a daily basis centres around being more assertive towards articulating their neglect by upper caste communities. This has often produced intense caste conflict between different groups such as conflicts over burial space, cremation, rights over place of worship etc.

APPENDIX B

Muslim and Christian Castes and Communities Included in the Central OBC List

State/Union Territory	*Muslim Castes*	*Christian Castes*
Andhra Pradesh	Arekatika Katika Quresh Methar	Scheduled Castes converts to Christianity and their progeny.
Assam	Maimal Manipuri (including Manipuri Brahmin and Manipuri Muslim)	Scheduled Caste persons converted to Christianity.
Bihar	Bhathiara Chik Churihar Dafali Dhobi Dhunia Idrisi or Darzi Kasab (Kasai) Madari Mehtar Lalbegi Halalkhor Bhangi Miriasin Mirishikar Momin Mukri (Mukeri) Nalband Nat Pamaria Rangrez Rayeen or Kunjra Sayee Sai Kalgar	Christian converts from Other Backward Classes Christian Converts from Scheduled Castes
Chandigarh		Christian converts from Scheduled Castes

Dadra and Nagar Haveli	Makrana	
Daman and Diu		Christian Chamar Christian Mahar
NCT of Delhi	Julaha-Ansari Kasai, Qassab, Quraishi	
Goa		Christian Dhobis Christian Kharvi
Gujarat	Bafan Dafer Fakir or Faquir Gadhai Galiara Ganchi Hingora Jat Ansari Halari Khatki Majothi Makrani Matwa or Matwa Kureshi Mirasi Miyana, Miana Mansuri-Pinjara Sandhi Sipai Pathi Jamat or Turk Jamat Theba Hajam; Khalipha Vanzara of Dangs district only Wagher	Gujarati Christian (converts from Scheduled Caste only)
Haryana	Meo	
Himachal Pradesh	Julaha-Ansari	
Jammu and Kashmir		
Karnataka	Chapparband Chapparbanda Other Muslims excluding i Cutchi Memon ii Navayat iii Bohra or Bhora or Borah	Scheduled Castes converts to Christianity

	iv Sayyid v Sheik vi Pathan vii Mughal viii Mahdivia/ Mahdavi ix Konkani or Jamayati Muslims	
Kerala	Other Muslims excluding i Bohra ii Cutchi iii Menmon iv Navayat v Turukkan vi Dakhani Muslim	Latin Catholic Nadar belonging to Christian religious denominations other than SIUC Scheduled caste converts to Christianity
Madhya Pradesh	Rangrez Bhishti, Bhishti- Abbasi Chippa/Chhipa Hela Bhatiyara Dhobhi Mewati, Meo Pinjara, Naddaf Fakir, Faquir Behna Dhunia Dhunkar Mansoori Kunjara, Raine Manihar Kasai, Kasab, Kassab, Quasab, Qassab, Qassab-Qureshi Mirasi Barhai (Capenter) Hajjam, Nai,(Barber) Salmani Julaha- Momin Julaha-Ansari Momin-Ansari Luhar, Saifi, Nagauri Luhar, Multani Luhar Tadavi Banjara, Mukeri, Makrani Mochi Teli, Nayata, Pindari (Pindara) Kalaigar	Scheduled Castes who have embraced Christianity

	Pemdi Nalband Mirdha (excluding Jat Muslims) Nat (other than those included in the SC list) Niyargar, Niyargar-Multani, Niyaria Gaddi	
Maharashtra	Chapparband Julaha Momin Julaha- Ansari Momin- Ansari	Christians converted from Scheduled Castes Christian Kolis
Manipur	Kasai-Qureshi	
Orissa		Scheduled Castes converts to Christianity and their progeny.
Pondicherry		Converts to Christianity from Scheduled Castes Christian Nadar Paravan
Punjab		Christians converted from Scheduled Castes
Rajasthan	Julaha	
Sikkim		
Tamil Nadu	Dekkani Muslim	Converts to Christianity from Scheduled Castes irrespective of the generation of conversion Christian converts from any Hindu backward classes Latin Catholic Pattanavar Sembadavar Mukkuvan, Mukkuvar or Mukayar Christian Nadar Christian Shanar Christian Gramani Paravar (converts to Christianity)

Tripura		
Uttar Pradesh	Momin (Ansar, Ansari) Julah Muslim Kayastha Qassab (Qureshi) Sheik Sarvari (Pirai) Teli Malik	
West Bengal	Jolah (Ansari Momin) Kasai-Quraishi	Scheduled Castes converts to Christianity and their progeny.

Source: Website of the National Commission for Backward Classes

APPENDIX C

BIBLIOGRAPHY ON DALIT MUSLIMS & CHRISTIANS

NOTE: The following is a list of books, articles, reports and other miscellaneous material of possible interest on the subject of 'Caste among Muslims and Christians'. The references used within the Report are a more limited and representative sample from the list below.

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APPENDIX D

RELEVANT CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS

Articles 14 and 15

Equality before Law and Right to Equality

14. Equality before law.- The State shall not deny to any person equality before the law or the equal protection of the laws within the territory of India.

Prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth.

15. Prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth.- (1) The State shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them.

(2) No citizen shall, on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them, be subject to any disability, liability, restriction or condition with regard to-

(a) access to shops, public restaurants, hotels and places of public entertainment; or

(b) the use of wells, tanks, bathing ghats, roads and places of public resort maintained wholly or partly out of State funds or dedicated to the use of the general public.

(3) Nothing in this article shall prevent the State from making any special provision for women and children. Nothing in this article or in clause (2) of article 29 shall prevent the State from making any special provision for the advancement of any socially and educationally backward classes of citizens or for the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes.

Article 17

Abolition of Untouchability

"Untouchability" is abolished and its practice in any form is forebidden. The enforcement of any disability rising out of "Untouchability" shall be an offence punishable in accordance with law.

Article 25

Right to Freedom of Religion

Freedom of conscience and free profession, practice and propagation of religion.

(1) Subject to public order, morality and health and to the other provisions of this Part, all persons are equally entitled to freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess, practise and propagate religion.

(2) Nothing in this article shall affect the operation of any existing law or prevent the State from making any law-

(a) regulating or restricting any economic, financial, political or other secular activity which may be associated with religious practice

(b) providing for social welfare and reform or the throwing open of Hindu religious institutions of a public character to all classes and sections of Hindus.

Explanation I.- The wearing and carrying of kirpans shall be deemed to be included in the profession of the Sikh religion.

Explanation II.- In sub-clause (b) of clause (2), the reference to Hindus shall be construed as including a reference to persons professing the Sikh, Jaina or Buddhist religion, and the reference to Hindu religious institutions shall be construed accordingly.

Article 46

46. Promotion of educational and economic interests of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and other weaker sections

The State shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, and, in particular, of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation.

Article 341

341. Scheduled Castes.- (1) The President may with respect to any State or Union territory and where it is a State, after consultation with the Governor thereof by

public notification, specify the castes, races or tribes or parts of or groups within castes, races or tribes which shall for the purposes of this Constitution be deemed to be Scheduled Castes in relation to that State or Union territory, as the case may be.

(2) Parliament may by law include in or exclude from the list of Scheduled Castes specified in a notification issued under clause (1) any caste, race or tribe or part of or group within any caste, race or tribe, but save as aforesaid a notification issued under the said clause shall not be varied by any subsequent notification.

Article 366 (Definitions)

Clause 24:

(24) "Scheduled Castes" means such castes, races or tribes or parts of or groups within such castes, races or tribes as are deemed under article 341 to be Scheduled Castes for the purposes of this Constitution.