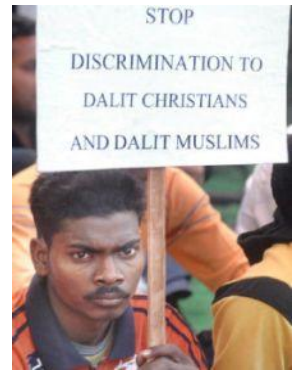


National Consultation on Dalit Christians
29th April 2011, International Conference Centre
YMCA



A One Day National Consultation on "Constitutional Rights and Dalit Christians: Possibilities and Challenges" was jointly organized by NCCI, NCDC, YMCA, ISI, CBCI and Archdiocese of Delhi on 29th April, 2011. The sessions gave a detailed analysis of the struggle of the Dalit Christians for the past 60 years and how their rights are being neglected. Sending of memorandums, conducting rallies and hunger strikes has bought in some momentum and has encouraged the government to look into this issue seriously.

The sessions threw light on the history of the struggle of the Dalit Christians since 1936 and till now this issue has neglected even by the media. Various recommendations have been given by the National Mission of Scheduled Caste to extend the issue of rights to Dalit Muslims as well.

It is time to think and act creatively to achieve the ultimate goal of providing justice to the Dalits.

Stages of Struggle-

- **Stage-1 (1950-1984)**

Demand for justice started in the year 1950 and in that year there was a direct appeal to the President and the Prime Minister. Till 1974, a lot of appeals were made but no tangible results were seen.

- **Stage-2 (1985-2004)**

10 big rallies, hunger strikes were done in Delhi, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. Some ecumenical delegations which were led by church officials and people's movements met social justice ministers and public leaders appealing for SC/ST quota for the Dalit Christians. Till the year 1996, various rallies took place in Kerala as well and a bill was presented in the same year, but was not passed because of some procedural lapses. These initiatives gave some hope but nothing concrete came up.

- **Stage-3 (2005-present)**

The National Council of Dalit Christians was formed with CBCI (Catholic Bishop's Conference of India). No serious response from government and bought a setback to the momentum. In July, 2006, the All India Morcha organized a rally for including the rights of Dalit Muslims to the struggle of the Dalit Christians. In this phase, it got some media attention by which awareness was spread especially at the grass roots.

Important points:-

- The impact of the programmes was minimal but some amount of pressure was felt.
- Some support was seen from other secular groups which helped in mobilizing more people in the struggle.
- Involving All India Morcha into the struggle helped in creating more awareness among the people.
- Reaching and appealing the grass roots is very important
- Lack of information among the people is seen, thus it's necessary to gather and communicate effectively.

Regional Initiatives

1. Kerala

- The state has various district level committees which are working on this issue
- Had various regional workshops to have dialogues on this issue

2. Tamil Nadu

- Many press conferences held in Tamil Nadu
- 1000 people surrendered their voter ids during election as a symbol of their protest

Future Initiatives

- Have a rally in Jantar Mantar on 10th August 2011 (tentative) which will have representatives from all the local chapters as well as the partners.
- Communicate effectively to other organizations as well which would have a strong voice against this issue.
- Reaching the grass roots is important
- Strengthening the existing networks
- Continuous work to be done in the areas like Punjab
- Have more media coverage for a better impact
- Submit memorandums

