ABSTRACT

Religious Conversion is nothing new to India, but it becomes more serious issue today. Religious Conversion perpetuates disharmony among various segments of our country. It is targeted among the socially, economically weaker segments of our country. So, the root cause and consequences of Religious Conversion is to be identified and examined with a view to preserve the communal harmony.

Yet another dimension is prevalence of caste system, which discriminated the members into high and low. The low caste men and women are subjected to inhuman treatment, denial of basic rights are common in rural India. Therefore, the mass conversion is a regular incidence in this country. The struggle for human rights in recent years resulted into Mass conversion. Hence, the present study is focused on the issue of Religious Conversion.

The research endeavour has been undertaken among converts from Dindigul and Coimbatore District of Tamilnadu state with the objectives of investigating the socio-economic background of respondents, social structure, circumstances and factors behind the Religious Conversion and impact of Religious Conversion. This study has also covered the inter caste perception of both caste Hindus and Non-converts of scheduled Caste groups.

This research has been undertaken among 100 converts each from two districts of Tamilnadu namely Dindigul district and Coimbatore district where Religious Conversion had occurred in the recent past.

The converted mass, non-converted Scheduled Caste people, caste Hindus, religious and caste leaders formed the universe of the study. From which 200 converts were selected as respondents by adopting purposive sample procedure in this study.
Besides this, focus group discussions were undertaken from, non-converted Scheduled Caste people, caste Hindus, religious, caste leaders and other knowledgeable leaders. Available data had been subjected to process statistically leading to analysis and interpretation. Based up on analysis and findings, suggestions have been given for promotion of a just social order.

This research consists of five chapters. The first Chapter presents introduction which deals with the phenomenon of Religious conversion in brief and also touches upon major theoretical perspectives in the field of Sociology besides reviewing of few studies on Religious Conversion in order to find out the research gap. In the chapter second, the issue of Religious Conversion and its problems were elaborately discussed under the caption Religious conversion: the Scenario. The methodological framework of the study is presented in the third chapter.

The fourth chapter is devoted for an analysis and discussion of the primary data, which comprises seven major parts, to fulfill the major objectives of this study. In addition few case studies have also been presented at the end of this chapter. The fifth chapter reveals the summary of major findings, suggestions and conclusion Bibliography is presented at the end of the report followed by appendices.

On the whole, this research work discusses the issues in Religious conversion with reference to caste structure and denial of human rights to certain groups in society. By highlighting the above, it has noted the need to build a harmonious society.