CHAPTER – 11

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY
11.1. SOCIO ECONOMIC STATUS

The DCs were found to be very backward on most of the items that constitute Socio-economic Status (SES).

1. In the matter of family size and type, both categories of respondents did not differ significantly. More than 60% in both the cases were nuclear families, and almost 70% of the families in both the categories had a family size of 4 to 5.

2. Regarding literacy, the DC sample was found to be a little below the state literacy rate (88.4% and 90.2% respectively), with only 11.6% of the households having illiterate members.

3. When it comes to higher education, from graduation upwards, more of the NDC households and less of DC households were found to have members doing higher studies.

4. The DC households were found to be backward as far as educational status, occupational status and per capita and family income were concerned. 3.9% of the DC sample reported paying income tax. 2.8% (8) of the DC households under the study reported having earning members abroad, compared to 20% of the NDCs under the study.

5. The financial backwardness of the DCs is reflected in the family composition. It was observed that 51 of the DC households had unmarried single women. Lack of income to provide for an acceptable amount of money in dowry was said to be the major contributing factor.

6. The DCs were lagging behind in land ownership, and as far as the type of housing was concerned. 10.5% of the DC respondents reported having no land, while 34.7% were living on patches of land which were smaller than 5 cents in size, and which were often being shared by 2 or more families (of siblings).

7. Regarding the access to safe drinking water and sanitary toilet facilities, the DCs were lagging behind. However, all the DC households under the study had access to drinking water. About 15% of the DCs did not have toilet facilities.
8. 73% of the DCs had outstanding loans. Though the loan amounts were comparatively small in size, the purpose of the loans - such as treatment, marriage and house construction or repair - is indicative of their low SES.

9. Saving habit was reported by 49.8% of the DCs compared to 47.8% of the NDCs. It was found that the practice has been much influenced by the SHG concept promoted by both the government and the dioceses.

10. From the point of view of possession of vehicles, cattle, and other amenities like telephone, refrigerator etc. the DCs were found to be much behind the NDCs.

11. In the case of the use of communication media - both visual and print - the DCs were much behind the DCs. Though only 31% of the DCs had TV, 50% of them reported that they watched TV. 77% of the DCs reported that they read newspapers, while only 37% of them subscribed to any newspaper. Some sort of Catholic magazines were being made available to many of the DCs, at times free of cost.

12. A majority of the DCs (75% and 85% respectively) reported attending *kutumbasree* programmes and the *Gamasabha*. Less than 50% of the NDCs took part in the *Gamasabha* meetings.

13. The total scores of the SES items show that there is a statistically significant difference between the SES of the two communities, and that the DCs evidently lag behind, with majority of them falling in the lower middle or poor categories. As far as the NDC respondents are concerned, majority of them fall in the Lower Middle and Upper Middle categories.

14. However, when the SES of the respondents is examined against the independent variables of sex, concentration of Dalit population in the parishes, and diocesan affiliation, they did not show any statistically significant association with SES.

15. The hypothesis (#1) that “there is a significant difference in the socio-economic status of the Dalit Christians and the Non-Dalit Christians” was tested true and accepted through a *t* test based on the mean percentage score for SES according to the scale developed by Aggarwal et al (2005).

16. The hypothesis (#2) that ‘the socio-economic status of the Dalit Christians is influenced by the level of their concentration in a
particular parish’ was tested false and rejected on the basis of one-way ANOVA test.

11.2. RANKING

1. In ranking of the problems, some similarity was found between the two groups in that the ranking of both are found same for poverty (2nd rank), lack of support (4th rank), discrimination by the State (6th rank) and lack of saving habit (9th rank). All others were found to be different.

2. In spite of same or more or less same ranking, there was statistically significant difference in perception regarding the severity of the problems, between the two groups, as indicated by the mean percentage scores for each of the items.

3. In all the cases, (taken it caste wise, or sex wise) Poverty, unemployment and Lack of education ranked the first three among the ten items.

4. Analysing the data on the basis of the independent variables, ‘unemployment’ seems to be the most crucial among the problems. Except in the case of the caste categories, in all other cases alcoholism and lack of savings were ranked 8th and 9th respectively.

5. The ranking of the problems reveals a set of underlying prejudices against the DCs.

6. The ranking by the men and women also showed statistically significant difference in perception.

7. The various independent variables of age, parish and diocese did not seem to have significant influence on the way in which the respondents looked at the problems facing the DCs.

8. The crucial factor influencing the difference in perception regarding the severity of the problems the DCs faced seemed to be that of their being dalits or non-dalits (in other words, caste).

9. The prejudices that are prevalent against the Dalits such as they are generally lazy, alcoholic, careless, and that they lead a wanton life-style are revealed in the enlisting of the causes of the problems.

10. The reasons for the problems indicate multiple causality and vicious circle of the problems.
11. The hypothesis that ‘it was likely to find a significant difference between the perceptions of the DCs and NDCs regarding the ranking of the problems faced by the Dalit Christians’ was tested to be true and accepted on the basis of t-test.

12. The ranking by the DCs themselves, of the problems faced by Dalit Christians is likely to be significantly different based on their concentration in parishes.

11.3. PROBLEMS AND THEIR CAUSES

1. In asking the respondents to list the causes of the problems they had ranked, for most of the problems the majority were not able to give any cause as such.

2. The listed causes for poverty include unemployment, lack of education, laziness or unwillingness to work, extravagance and lack of thrift, alcoholism and economic insecurity from low wages and irregular income.

3. The causes listed for unemployment were lack of employment opportunities and increasing mechanization, discrimination/neglect by the governments, lack of wealth to respond to the demands of bribe or donation to get jobs and laziness & too many demands on the part of the Dalits. Lack of education and lack of appropriate education was a cause equally stressed by both the respondent groups.

4. The causes leading to backwardness in education according to the respondents were: lack of parental education and awareness regarding the importance of education, family background of general backwardness, high cost of education, antagonism to the Non-Dalits and lack of support of the government, lack of aptitude in learning, lack of opportunities and financial constraints leading one to enter labour force.

5. 22.1% of the DC respondents cited lack of initiative on the part of the Church authorities, and 11.2% of them cited caste mentality of the NDCs as the cause of not getting support. 10.4% of the NDCs and a few of the DCs referred to the dealings and attitude of the DCs as the causes leading to getting no support from the community.

6. According to the respondents, discriminatory attitude of the NDCs was due to the caste mentality of the NDCs, the approach and dealings of the DCs, lack
of initiative on the part of the Church authorities and lack of Christian unity and spirit.

7. The respondents cited lack of political influence and organization, lack of foresight and initiative on the part of the Church leadership, caste discrimination against the Christians and the vested interests behind the government system as the causes leading to the discriminatory treatment towards the DCs on the part of the state.

8. Lack of landed property as a problem, according to the respondents, had its roots in having no ancestral land, a long tradition of slavery and exploitation, wrong policies of the government including the land reforms, and having no savings due to lack of income, debts and alcoholism.

9. The main reasons cited for alcoholism were: as a means to cope with the miseries and tensions of life, on account of lack of education and awareness, parental and peer influence and family background, a working class habit, lack of self control and an indulgent way of life. Some others pointed out government liquor policy as well as the NDC manipulation of the Dalit situation (offer of alcohol for getting things done) as causes leading to alcoholism.

10. Lack of saving habit or thrift was on account of lack of direction and concern for future, addiction to alcohol, lack of awareness, lack of regular employment and lack of income to save.

11. The respondents listed lack of education, poverty, inferiority, DC approach towards others, discrimination and lack of unity among Christians, lack of unity and political organization among the DCs as the causes of general backwardness of the DCs.

12. On the whole, the theory of multiple and mutual causation of social problems (Dasgupta, 2007) can be found applicable in this case.

11.4. PROBLEMS : MEASURES TAKEN

The data regarding the listing of measures taken by the various stake holders to address the problems faced by the DCs indicate that:

1. A vast majority (in most of the cases coming to more than 50%) of both the respondent categories reported either ignorance regarding the measures
taken or denial regarding the presence of any measures. The next consistently occurring highest category of response was that of ‘some-thing’ being done, without knowing what specifically that something meant.

2. The measures listed in general were reported by only a small percentage of both the respondent categories, usually coming to less than 10%.

3. The few measures which had a greater incidence of reporting include: SHGs (>20%), Awareness Programmes/Classes (>10%), campaign for reservation (>15%), educational support, scholarships by the Church (>20%), reservation in jobs/admission (>15%), financial aid and support for housing/marriage/treatment etc. (>10%), poverty alleviation programmes including PDS (>25%), and educational concessions by the government (>25%).

4. The data points to the repeated reference to the community based schemes of SHGs/ Kutumbaśri as a solution to various problems, viz. poverty, unemployment, support, alcoholism, and developing the savings habit. This indicates that the strategy of community-based organizations or people’s organizations (POs) has a proven appeal among the affected people, especially the poor.

5. When the three categories of the stake-holders are compared, the respondents’ perceptions indicate that Church or Christian community has taken much more effort than the government or the DCs themselves through their organization DCMS.

6. While education as an engine of progress has been the one of the measures that has been promoted, a comparative status of the two sections still point towards the need for support and targeted efforts in this field, especially with respect to higher and technical education of the DCs. There is a general feeling of dissatisfaction among the DCs regarding not being adequately supported in the Catholic institutions in this regard.

7. Two areas which are highlighted through these findings, especially through the eyes of a DC, as not being adequately addressed are: (i) Lack of landed property and (ii) discriminatory practices within the Church

8. The two areas where some work is being recognized for the DCs are (i) the area of education and (ii) the area of savings. The latter could be explained in terms of the increasing number of activities based on SHGs promoted either by the respective diocese or by the parish/social service wing of the diocese.
9. The general trend of difference of perception between the two respondent categories is also evident: More of the NDCs are of the view that things have been done for the DCs, whereas more of the DCs are of the view that not much has been done.

10. The hypothesis (#5) “there is likely to be a significant difference between the DCs and the NDCs in their views regarding interventions made on behalf of the DCs” was tested applying ‘t’ test, and was disproven in the areas of a) measures taken by the Church and b) the State; but was proven true in the areas of c) measures taken by DCs themselves, and d) by all concerned (composite score).

11.5. PROBLEMS : STEPS TAKEN & EFFECTIVENESS

1. When the three categories of the stake-holders are compared, the respondents’ perceptions indicate that the Church or Christian community has taken much more efforts than the government or the DCs themselves through their organization DCMS.

2. Education as an engine of progress has been the one factor that has been promoted both by the Church and the state. Both the respondent categories had the highest percentage of positive responses to the question related to the problems of education. By the Church: DC-42.5%, NDC-49.3%; By the state: DC-39.3%, NDC-37.3%.

3. In no case, did more than 50% of the respondents of anyone category mention that things were done to address the DC problems. This is applicable to both the categories.

4. The high rate of negative response regarding the measures could be due to the lack of programmes, lack of proper and effective communication, lack of care or concern for the people affected.

5. None of the stake holder scores for effective intervention by either of the categories exceeded 45. The only stakeholder group that had a score above 40 in either of the cases, was the Christian community itself.

6. Regarding effectiveness of the measures taken, both the groups did not significantly differ in their views, their Mean Percentage Scores being very low at less than 20 in the case of measures by any of the stakeholders.
7. An analysis of the various measures by the three dioceses from a Professional Social Work-CO-CD perspective shows hardly any planned, systematic, participatory and sustainable efforts. The measures are hardly ever rights based or strengths base; but are more in the nature of welfarist and top-down in approach. A noticeable absence of capability building measures, participatory & professional management, and bringing up second line of leadership marks the programmes.

8. Pala diocese presents a comparably more systematic capacity building and Human Resource development approach.

9. The hypothesis (#6) that “there is likely to be a significant difference between the DCs and the NDCs in their views regarding the effectiveness of the interventions made on behalf of the DCs by the Church, the State, the DCs themselves and combinedly by all concerned, was proven wrong in all cases, through the application of t test.

11.6. PERCEPTIONS ABOUT DISCRIMINATION

1. A vast majority of the respondents (DC - 73.3%; NDC - 57.5%) reported that the DCs were discriminated against.

2. The fields of discrimination listed by the respondents include education, employment, ecclesiastical, government-related, and socio-political.

3. Statistically significant difference in scores regarding discrimination was found in the matters of Church-related life, Government services and welfare services, and in all fields put together.

4. There was no statistically significant difference in scores regarding discrimination in the matters of neighbourhood interactions, educational institutions and political circles.

5. The administration of a self-constructed discrimination scale revealed statistically significant difference between the two groups in their disposition towards the DC community, with the DCs having a significantly higher positive score.

6. Only a very few of the respondents find measures being initiated to correct the discrimination by the traditional Christians. The few measures include preaching, circulars, campaigns and the organization of DCMS by the
Church, and involvement in the Church committees and work with DCMS by the Dalits themselves. No role of the state is seen in this regard.

7. Regarding reservation policy of the Church majority expressed ignorance (65.3%), and many expressed dissatisfaction (13.3%).

8. Reservation of 5% and above, and reservation proportionate to their population are the main suggestions in this regard.

9. Regarding discrimination by the state, there were many who expressed ignorance (DC-NDC: 53.7%-52.2%), who said there was nothing being done (DC-NDC: 20%-16.4%), and a few who referred to campaigns (15.1%, 17.2%) by the Church.

10. Regarding the same, DC-NDC respectively 58.9% and 67.2% expressed ignorance, while 13.7% and 12.7% respectively said that nothing was being done. 22.8% and 15.7% referred to campaigns and struggles.

11. Among the responses regarding the measures taken by the Church to address discrimination a small number of respondents reported grants/financial aid for marriage, housing etc, SHG/training or conscientisation, scholarships, struggle for equality through DCMS, representation in Church bodies, spiritual and religious support and renewal programmes and reservation in jobs.

12. Among the measures by the state 1% reservation, fee concession and stipend, anti-poverty schemes, programmes through PCC, SHGs and Kutumbasree etc. were pointed out by a small number of respondents.

13. Regarding the reservation policy of the state, 26% DCs and 20.1% NDCs felt it was insufficient, and majority of both the groups expressed ignorance of any measures.

14. Among the steps initiated by the respondents themselves were: active involvement in DCMS/SHGs, awareness programmes, prayer, involvement with socio-cultural programmes, self help etc. on the part of the DCs themselves, and equal treatment, assistance in need etc. on the part of the NDCs.

15. The suggestions regarding the steps to be taken by the Church included: conscientisation programmes, promotion of higher and technical education, reservation in Church based institution, work against alcoholism, financial and material help and special care, ending referring to them as DCs,
establishing equality through adequate dalit representation and studies on DCs and their needs.

16. The main suggestions regarding the steps to be taken by the state include equal status and privileges with the SC communities, and making the PCC function more effectively.

17. The majority of the respondents (DC-63.4%, NDC-67.2%) said that there was a positive change in the discriminatory attitude. The reasons for this include: improvement in education in general and in particular of the DCs, increased interaction between the two groups, influence of the changes in the society, DC involvement in Church and their efforts to be at par with the NDCs, efforts by the Church and Christian spirit.

18. The emotional responses in the face of discrimination were chiefly anger and sadness, especially when the respondent himself/herself was the victim. The majority said that they wouldn’t feel anything on such occasions.

19. The physical response in this situation for the vast majority was 'silence,' with a few (around 25%) responding in various manners including retaliation, correction, questioning etc.

20. The hypothesis (#7): “There is likely to be a significant difference between the perception of the DCs and NDCs regarding discrimination against the DCs” was (i) proven true in the matters related to: a. Church involvement, c. Welfare Schemes and e. Government Services as well as when the composite scores for all fields were taken together, and (ii) was disproven in the matters of b. Neighbourhood relations, d. Education, and f. Political involvement.

11.7. IDENTITY & ASSERTION

1. The majority of the DC respondents (59%) reported that they were third generation or beyond in their Christian tradition

2. The majority of the DC respondents (76.1%) had membership or some official position in DCMS.

3. There were only a very few DC respondents who had membership in Church based organizations other than DCMS

4. Perception regarding Christian identity did not show any statistically significant difference between the DCs and the NDCs.
5. While a majority of both the respondent categories reported that being a Christian had ‘often’ been helpful, 20 DC respondents as opposed to 1 NDC respondent said that it had never been helpful.

6. Christianity proved helpful to the respondents because of the dignity and pride, peace, hope and happiness, trust in God, freedom from slavery, knowledge of God and the privileges and support of the community.

7. 23.2% of the DC respondents and 5.2% of the NDC respondents considered reconversion to Hinduism as an option occasionally, while 1.8% and 3% respectively, considered it an option always.

8. No support from the Church and opportunities of employment and education were the main reasons cited by the respondents for the reconversion option.

9. A vast majority of the respondents (DC-67.7%; NDC - 74.6%) said that it was not necessary to retain elements of the Dalit tradition.

10. The features of Dalit Tradition suggested by the few respondents who feel that they should be retained are: art forms, folk music, martial arts, handicrafts, traditional medicines, agricultural methods, taste for physical labour, sincerity and Christian faith.

11. The appellations used to refer to them include even today putukristyānikaḥ (New Christians), avaśakristyānikaḥ (Depressed Christians), Harijan Christians and Dalit Christians. Dalit Christians/Catholics is the term being promoted and being increasingly used, though it has yet to become popular. Hardly anyone uses the term ‘mārgavāsikaḥ and it is considered derogatory. Reference using the caste suffix Pulaya Christians or merely Pulayar is still in vogue, though more among the older generation.

12. The two categories did not have a statistically significant difference of opinion regarding the right term to be used to refer to the DC community.

13. The preferred nomenclature as far as the respondents are concerned is Christian or RC (Roman Catholic).

14. A majority of the DCs (77.2%) agreed with the statement that they had inferiority complex, 24.5% felt angry about DC status, 36% felt ashamed about introducing oneself as a DC, 69.8% did not wish to reveal one’s identity as a DC, 75.8% felt that there was no need for a separate group of Dalit Christians among Christians, and 54.7% expressed the view that they were a lower race.
15. While majority of both the DC (76.5%) and NDC (78.4%) respondents had a moderate self-esteem score; there were many more among the NDC in the ‘high’ score category (17.9% to 9.8% of the DCs), and many more of the DCs in the ‘lower’ score category (13.7% to 3.7% of the NDCs).

16. The hypothesis (#8): “There is likely to be a significant difference in perception between the DCs and the NDCs regarding their Socio-religious identity” was tested false and rejected, on the basis of ‘t’ test results.

17. The univariate hypothesis (#9) : “The majority of the DCs are likely to consider re-conversion to Hinduism as an option” was proven false and rejected.

18. The hypothesis (#10): “There is likely to be a significant difference between the self-esteem of the DCs and the NDCs” was tested true and accepted, and the DCs were found to have a statistically significant lower self-esteem score in comparison with that of the NDCs.

19. The hypothesis (#11), that ‘there is a significant association between the socio-economic status and the self-esteem of the Dalit Christians’ is proven, and hence, is accepted.

20. The hypothesis (#12) that ‘there is a significant association between the self-esteem of the Dalit Christians and the level of their concentration in a parish’ is not proven true, and hence is rejected.

11.8. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The total scores of the SES items show that there is a statistically significant difference between the SES of the two communities, and that the DCs evidently lag behind, with the majority of them falling in the lower middle or poor categories. As far as the NDC respondents are concerned, the majority of them fall in the Lower Middle and Upper Middle categories.

However, when the SES of the respondents is examined against the independent variables of sex, concentration of Dalit population in the parishes, and diocesan affiliation, they did not show any statistically significant association with SES.

In the light of these findings regarding their SES, it can be seen that the findings by Kariyil (1995) with respect to Syrian Catholic community, in which he disproves Weberian postulation of Protestant Ethic as the Spriit behind capitalism, do not really
apply to this section of Syrian Catholic community. The spirit of capitalism, thrift and entrepreneurship is yet to take on them.

A large section of both the Dalits and Non-Dalits of the Syrian Catholic Church find that there are several socio-economic problems that the DCs face, and that the measures being taken are inadequate and ineffective. The most important among the measures cited are: reservation privileges, educational concessions, SHGs – both by the Church and by the State (Kuṭumbāśrī). When analysed from the angle scientific methods of professional social work, especially community organization with a rights and strength based approach, the measures taken by all the stakeholders appear inadequate, and at the best welfarist and paternalistic.

The respondents of both the categories agree to the reality of discrimination against the DCs. However, the DCs feel this more acutely. The scale shows a comparatively more negative attitude of the NDCs towards the DCs (than by the DCs themselves).

Concluding on the basis of the perceptions and experiences shared by the respondents, it can be said that there is the relationship between the NDCs and DCs of Syrian Catholic community is based on the caste lines. The application of caste theory as already proven in the Catholic Church by Koilparampil (1982) in inter-rite relationship of Latin and Syrian communities, is applicable in the case of the intra-rite relationship between the DCs and NDCs of the Syrian Catholic Church. Thus it underscores that there are factors besides the ‘rite’, contributing to the caste based relationships.

Regarding one’s Christian identity, majority among both the respondent sections, feel good. For the vast majority of the DCs, re-conversion is out of question. Self-esteem of both the categories indicate relatively high score. However, the DCs have a lower self-esteem when compared to the NDCs. Kuriedath’s findings (1989) on the authority structure of Syrian Catholic community are worth recalling here. That the Dalit section is still far away from the authority structure is an important factor to be borne in mind, when the Dalit self-esteem is concerned. That should lead to mechanisms that would consciously and deliberately include them in the authority structures, which could go a long way in raising their self-esteem. The typical field is that of vocations to priesthood. Besides, ensuring Dalit presence in the authority structure, this could go a long way in boosting the self-esteem of the DC section.
Koilparampil (1982) had proven the application of ‘reference group’ theory in his study of inter-rite relationships. However, when it comes to this intra-rite groups, the reference group theory is not really found applicable. From the researcher's participant observation, it was found that the Dalits do not, in general, try to emulate the Non-Dalits of the faith community, nor do they look up to as models. The concept of disharmonic society which Koilparampil (1982) had demonstrated as applicable to Catholic Churches in Keralam - where ideal differs from praxis - seems to be applicable as far as these inter-group relationships within the Syrian Catholic community are concerned.

The majority of the respondents are at a loss as to how to respond to the situations of discrimination, whether directed against oneself, or others. Most of them have no response or are indifferent. The few who respond to the question, have feelings of anger and sadness, and many among such are willing to question and challenge such attitudes and actions.

There was a general consensus regarding the usefulness of such studies, and the need for presenting the findings on all fora of significance for the DCs.