



NDCW
Christ and Caste cannot go together



QUATERLY NEWS LETTER

LET'S
NOT LET
THINGS
UNNOTICED

APRIL - JUNE

2024

NDCW.ORG

REVEALING



ILLUMINATING PATHS OF HOPE.

"Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves"
- Proverbs 31:8

THE NATIONAL DALIT CHRISTIAN WATCH

(NDCW) is a watchful organization that identifies and addresses caste discrimination within the church, by the general public, and by the state through fact-finding, reporting, and public hearings.

OBJECTIVES

- Awareness
- Capacity Building
- Advocating for Equal rights
- Social Upliftment
- Empowering Youth
- Empowering Women
- Development Programs



EDITORIAL

Dalit Christians along with other marginalised communities of India have been breathing a sigh of relief since Indian general election results were declared on June 4. Although Narendra Modi-led Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is back in power, its diminished strength in the Parliament has given a new lease of life to hitherto cornered opposition, civil society, religious minorities, Dalits and Adivasis.



The results hold significance for India's Christian community too, which constitute 2.3% of the total population. In absolute numbers, there are 22.31 million Christians in the country. The community has been at the receiving end for the last 10 years. Since 2014, with the ascendancy of Narendra Modi as prime minister, there has been an alarming rise in the atrocities perpetrated against Christians and churches. Christian NGOs have been delegitimised by labelling them as 'centres of religious conversion', which consequently led to the cancellation of their FCRA (Foreign Contribution Regulation Act) license. Many organisations, thus led by the Church and its affiliate organisations, including educational institutions and health centres, have been deprived of their financial sources. Many spiritual leaders have been falsely implicated and sent to prison. As many as 12 states in the country now use the strong arm of the state in the form of anti-conversion laws to harass the Christian community.

For the last five years, there has been no representation of Christians and Muslims in the Union cabinet. In the absence of voices in the Parliament, these two communities, adversely affected by the majoritarian impulses of

the BJP government, has been placing trust in the Congress party and other secular parties to foreground their concerns and to voice their demands. One of their key demands to be accorded Scheduled Caste status for Dalit Christians and Muslims remains unmet.

The Church, however, engrossed in its own matters, has largely remained indifferent to the socio-political churn on the ground. However, the likes of Peter Machado, Metropolitan Archbishop of Bangalore, in their individual capacities, tried to draw the attention of the larger civil society to the suffering of the Christian community in the country. Jesuits, Salesians, and several religious Sisters also worked hard behind the scenes to drum up support for secular parties and to safeguard human rights.

It is to be seen if the third Modi government, with its reduced numerical strength, would demonstrate any change in terms of its treatment of religious minorities and marginalised communities. The electorate, through their vote, has made it amply clear that employment, development, economy and standards of living matter over religious politics.

The plight of Dalit Christians is real, both the Church and the State have a lot to do to inspire confidence in them and to bring about a positive turnaround in their lives.

Sr Manju Devarapalli CM

National Secretary

National Dalit Christian Watch

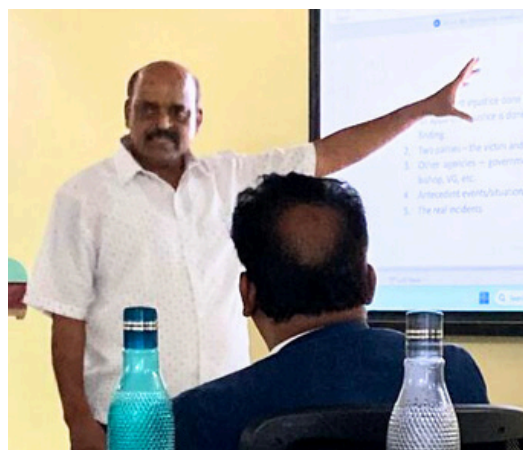
EMPOWERING VOICES

Highlights from the Writer's Workshop on Dalit Christian Issue

We are thrilled to share the success of the recent "Writer's Workshop," held from April 27th to 29th. This unique initiative aims to transform scholars into proficient writers and content creators. NDCW brought together eight passionate participants from diverse states across India, all united by a common goal: to address and highlight Dalit Christian issues through impactful writing.

The workshop was a comprehensive training program focused on various text types, genres, and writing purposes. Participants were immersed in the exploration of different writing styles, enhancing their ability to produce compelling and effective texts.

Dr. Fr. Selvaraj, Director of ISI, Bangalore led a session on the Structure of writing, emphasizing that good writing and communication skills are crucial and can be achieved with proper training and practice. He highlighted that an article or story should convey the writer's emotions effectively.



Dr. Richard Devadoss, Chairperson of NDCW, presented on the Fact Finding method, providing an example from a fact-finding mission conducted by NDCW in Kerala in 2018. He emphasized the importance of following up on the fact-finding process to determine the eventual outcome of each case.



Mr. Vishal Arora, a Delhi-based journalist who writes on religion, culture, politics, and foreign affairs for media outlets in India, the UK, and the US, including CARAVAN MAGAZINE, led a session outlining the basic structure and genres of writing: News Report, Feature, and Op-Ed.

Ms. Mercy Margaret, a poet, short story writer, and social worker from Hyderabad, India, She shared what inspired her to write and how her work led to a revolution in her neighborhood and society, encouraging scholars to write for social upliftment.

The workshop concluded with a certificate distribution and a vote of thanks from Sr. Manju, who congratulated the participants and encouraged them to continue writing on Dalit issues.

The Writer's Workshop was more than just a training session; it was a platform for empowerment, enabling participants to amplify their voices and advocate for change through the power of the written word. We look forward to witnessing the impactful contributions these talented writers will make to the Dalit Christian Digest and beyond.

IGNITING CHANGE

North Regional Dalit Christian Intellectuals Round Table Conference



The National Dalit Christian Watch (NDCW) on April 21st, 2024 organized the North Regional Dalit Christian Intellectuals Round Table Conference on the theme “Dalit Christianity: Inclusivity and Exclusivity.” This conference aimed to revive the position of Dalit Christians within the Church and to establish the Dalit Christian Intellectual Forum.

Dr. John Dayal, Senior Journalist & Writer, highlighted the lack of representation of the Christian community in the current election as either participants or influencers.

Dr. Richard Devaodass, Chair of NDCW, inaugurated the program by providing a brief history of missionaries and their interventions in India.

Dr. Arun Kumar, Senior Economist at the Institute of Social Science,

presented on the economic status of Dalit Christians and their contribution to the national economy. He identified poor government policies as the primary cause of poverty and compared employment rates, showing that countries like China, Brazil, and the US have higher employment rates (70%) compared to India (45%).

Adv. Ajay Shaw from ADF provided a historical account of laws pertaining to Dalit Christians in India and their impact.

Dr. Annie Namala, Director of the Center for Social Equity and Inclusion, discussed the status and contributions of Dalit Christian women in the Church. She noted that despite their significant involvement in religious activities, women are often not given leadership positions in the church, except in Pentecostal churches.

Dr. Emmanuel Nahar, Political Scientist at Punjab University, highlighted facets of discrimination against Dalit Christians in the Church.

This conference was a significant step toward addressing the issues faced by Dalit Christians and promoting their inclusion and representation in the Church and society.



INTER-FAITH INTELLECTUAL CONFERENCE

Cultivating Harmony and Solidarity



On May 20th, NDCW organized an Inter-Faith Intellectual Conference in Srinagar. Prominent intellectuals from various religious groups participated, with around 80 attendees contributing their views and ideas to cultivate harmony, brotherhood, and express solidarity for justice and equality for oppressed and excluded communities.



Mr. Sameer Sadique from the Muslim community highlighted a contemporary issue, stating, "Nowadays, religious teachers are using religious teachings as their bread and butter. We are not focusing on our ethics and fundamental human equalities."

Fr. Jaimon Joseph emphasized the importance of inter-faith dialogue, saying, "Inter-faith dialogue fosters willingness and openness. It is crucial for cultivating religion. God is the source of peace and justice."

Narinder Singh Khalsa from the Sikh community referenced Guru Nanak ji, stating, "Guru Nanak ji said, 'I am for the downtrodden, not for the stronger.' Our first and foremost initiative is to bring all faiths together. We need to learn tolerance of each other."

Sr. Manju, National Secretary of NDCW, shared insights about the organization's origins and mission, explaining, "NDCW emerged in 2016 to address discrimination against Dalit Christians. Dalits are born with a caste, but their religion is their freedom."

Dr. Fr. Selvaraj, ISI Director, Bangalore, stated, "There is no religion that spreads violence."

Dr. Richard Devodass, Chair of NDCW, concluded with a powerful message, "Be faithful to religion and be faithful to human beings."

The conference marked a pivotal moment in advancing inter-faith understanding and promoting unity for justice and equality.



TRANSFORMING DALIT CHRISTIAN LIVES

Empowerment and Awareness in Action



National Dalit Christian Watch Holds Capacitation Program

Andhra Pradesh

On May 6, 2024, the National Dalit Christian Watch (NDCW) hosted a capacitation program at District Pensioners Hall in Guntur, Andhra Pradesh. Pastor Mr. Vinaya Babu started the program with a prayer. Program was moderated by Mr. Krishnakar Kummari, the NDCW South regional coordinator. Sr. Manju Deverapalli, the National Secretary of NDCW, presented the organization's Vision and Mission, effectively outlining its goals and objectives.

Following the presentation, participants engaged in an open discussion on current Dalit Christian issues, actively sharing their experiences from various congregations. A core committee and two conveners, ensuring gender balance, were established to further NDCW's mission.



National Dalit Christian Watch Holds Empowerment Program

📍 Jammu and Kashmir

On May 16, 2024, The National Dalit Christian Watch (NDCW) hosted an Empowerment program to address caste discrimination faced by Dalit Christians. Bishop Ivan Pereira highlighted exclusion issues within Christian institutions in Jammu & Srinagar, advocating for equal participation. Fr. Jaimon Joseph discussed the history and challenges of Dalit Christians, while Sr. Manju, National Secretary, NDCW focused on the contributions of Dalit Christian women. Participants called for 50% female representation in church committees. Mr. Kalshutra Sahab presented Dr. Ambedkar's views on Dalit Christian liberation, and Dr. Fr. Selvaraj and Adv. Fr. Arul Nirmal addressed legal and constitutional rights. The event concluded with action plans to empower Dalit Christian youths.



Awareness Program Telangana

On May 18, 2024, the National Dalit Christian Watch (NDCW) organized an awareness program at Balavikasa Training Center in Kazipet, Warangal, Telangana. Mr. Krishnakar Kummari, the South regional coordinator, welcomed the guests and participants. Pastor Emmanuel from the Tri Christian Fellowship opened the event with a prayer.



Sr. Manju Deverapalli, the National Secretary of NDCW, explained the organization's vision and mission. The discussion then focused on current issues facing Dalit Christians. Participants actively shared their experiences in various churches. A core committee and two gender-balanced conveners were established.

Capacitation program Kerala

On April 20, 2024, NDCW held a capacitation program in Kerala aimed at enhancing the skills and knowledge of the local community. This initiative was a key part of NDCW's commitment to fostering community development and empowering individuals through education and training.



The event was graced by the presence of Rev. Dr. Robinson David Luther, Major Archbishop of South India, from the Lutheran Major Arch Diocese, . During the program, Mr. Krishnakar Kummari, the NDCW South Regional Coordinator, delivered an insightful presentation on the organization's Vision and Mission. He effectively communicated the NDCW's goals and objectives, emphasizing the importance of awareness, capacity building, advocating for equal rights. He highlighted how these initiatives are designed to bring about positive change and improve the quality of life for individuals within the community.

Proposal Writing Session ISI Bangalore

On May 10, 2024 Governing Body member Dr. Fr. Selvaraj, Dr. Richard Devadoss (Chairperson, NDCW), and Sr. Manju (National Secretary, NDCW) gathered at ISI Bangalore for a proposal writing session. Over two days, they collaborated to draft a proposal addressing the needs of Dalit Christians.



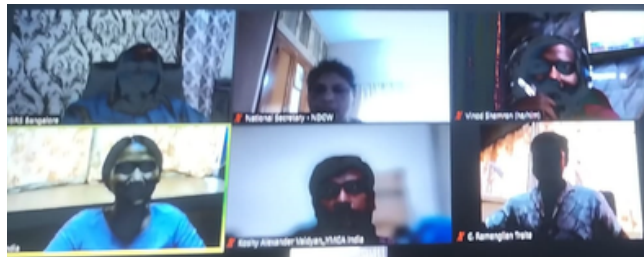
Strengthening Alliances

On April 8th, 2024, NDCW and MIJARC ASIA held a fraternal meeting to discuss legal matters and explore ideas for project improvements.

EXPANDING HORIZONS

Collaborations with Partner Organizations

On 6th April 2024 Mr. Bablu, North Region Coordinator, attended the "Current Challenges of Dalit Women" conference organized by All India Dalit Mahila Adhikar Manch in New Delhi. The conference provided valuable insights into the challenges faced by Dalit women and offered an opportunity to share NDCW's vision and mission.



On 12th April 2024 NDCW National Secretary Sr. Manju Devarapalli attended the Kairos Palestine meeting NDCW has been part of Palestine struggle for freedom Meeting was called for by SCM, to discuss the role of each organisation

CURRENT CHALLENGES OF DALIT WOMEN

6th of April, 2024 • 4.00 to 6.00 pm
Jawahar Bhawan Auditorium
Dr Rajendra Prasad Road, New Delhi

Speakers:
Abirami Jotheeswaran
Beena Pallical
Gauhar Raza
Hemlata Mahishwar

Nandita Narain Sings
Faiz Ahmad Faiz & Habib Jalib

Screening of :
2500 years of Slavery: Voices of Dalit Women
by Gauhar Raza & Rakesh Andania

Queries: 8368112775

Organised by :
All India Dalit Mahila Adhikar Manch (AIDMAM-NCDHR)
in collaboration with :
Science Outreach and Communication Foundation (SOCP)



On 15th May 2024 NDCW National Secretary participated in the Core Team Meeting of the Christian Network Against Caste Discrimination, UK. NDCW was invited to share the discrimination in relation to synodality. This meeting provided a platform to represent NDCW on a global level.

On 28th May 2024 Bablu, North Region Coordinator, participated in the Human Trafficking and Livelihood program organized by PUSH NETWORK at CBCI. This meeting facilitated networking with various individuals and sharing information about NDCW.



On June 25th, Mr. Bablu, the North Region Coordinator, attended the 2nd National Convention on V.P. Singh organized by the Truth Seekers and Students' Federation of Dravidians. The convention focused on advocating for a nationwide caste census and addressing the 50% reservation gap. The event provided valuable insights and an opportunity for Mr. Bablu to meet with prominent Dalit leaders. He also shared the vision and mission of the NDCW with attendees.



WELCOME ABOARD

Introducing Our New Team Members

We are pleased to welcome Ms. Mercy Margaret as our new DCD Coordinator. Ms. Mercy Margaret is a poet, short story writer, and playwright from Hyderabad, Telangana, India. She gained recognition as a poet through her works published on various print and digital platforms and rose to fame after receiving the Kendra Sahitya Akademi Yuva Puraskar Award in 2017 for her first poetry book, "Matala Madugu" ("మాటల మడుగు") in Telugu.



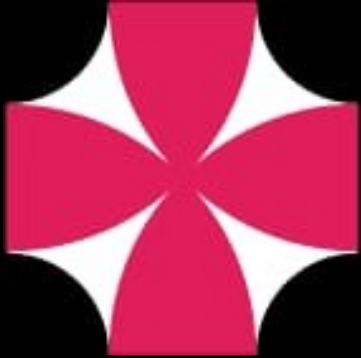
Ms. Margaret has also served as an Assistant Professor at Bharat PG College and worked on the "SWAEROWOOD Film Technology Project" for the Social Welfare Gurukul Society. We are excited to have her on board and look forward to her contributions to our organization.



We are delighted to announce the appointment of Ms. Sonima Jacob as our South Region Coordinator. Ms. Sonima Jacob is a Ph.D. scholar with an M.Phil. and a Master's degree in Sociology. She has extensive research experience, having worked as a Research Assistant on an ICSSR-funded project titled "Praxis Intervention Research with the Dalit Christians and Other Marginalized Communities of Manjadikkari,

Kottayam District, Kerala." She also contributed as a Research Assistant on a Kerala Planning Board-funded project titled "Gender-Based Violence in Kerala: An Evaluation Study of the Roles and Functioning of Jagratha Samithis." Ms. Sonima Jacob has presented numerous papers, She has also published various articles on Dalit Christians.

We are thrilled to welcome Ms. Sonima Jacob to our team and look forward to her valuable contributions.



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STAY UPDATED!

Visit Our Website and Facebook for the Upcoming Events and Programs!



www.ndcw.org



National Dalit Christian Watch-NDCW