



# NATIONAL DALIT CHRISTIAN WATCH

## QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

July - September 2024



**“THE STRENGTH OF A  
COMMUNITY LIES IN THE  
EMPOWERMENT OF IT’S  
WEAKEST MEMBERS.”  
-MAHATMA GANDHI**





# NDCW PAYS ITS TRIBUTE TO MRS GUNASEELI VINCENT

Mrs. Gunaseeli or Guna as she was affectionately called, wife of Rev. Dr. Vincent Manoharan, Founder Member of the National Dalit Christian Watch (NDCW); passed away on October 06, 2024. She was born on May 05, 1954.

Guna started her career as a Field Worker in the Peoples Education for Action and Liberation (PEAL), Madurai before joining the Central Excise Department in 1979. She took voluntary retirement to accompany Dr Vincent Manoharan during his Doctoral Studies in Birmingham, UK.

Guna founded the Mahalir Shakthi (translated as Women's Power) in 2005, an Organization committed to the empowerment of marginalized women and the educational empowerment of children from the slums of Madurai.

Guna is well known locally, nationally, and internationally for her concern for Dalits and the marginalized communities, especially women and children; her passion for active involvement in their struggles and challenges; and her commitment to their development and liberation.

Guna's quiet strength, depth of conviction and determination will inspire many to follow in her footsteps. She is a strong person with a deep Dalit rights conviction

We express our heartfelt condolences to Rev. Dr. Vincent Manoharan and his family; and pray that God may comfort them and grant them courage to bear this great loss.

We pray that Guna's soul rests in eternal peace as we pay our tribute for the life and witness of Mrs. Gunaseeli and we celebrate her life and work and what she contributed quietly but fully with all her strength and power!

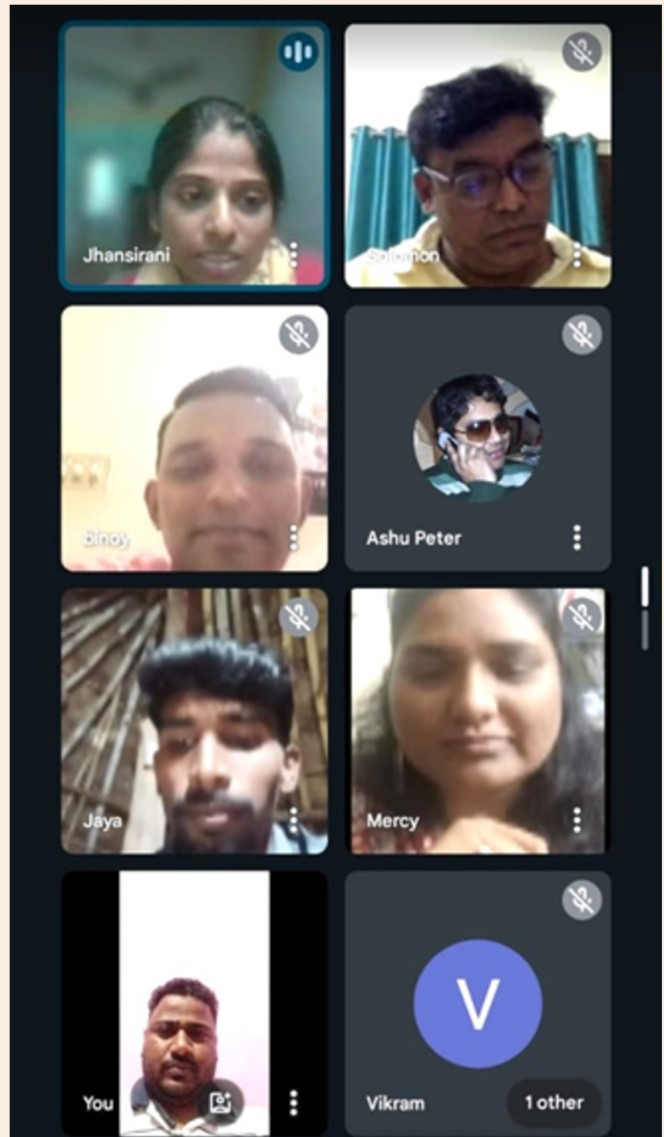




# OVERVIEW OF NDCW PROGRAMS

## NDCW Hosts Follow-Up Meeting After Dalit Christian Writers' Conference

On July 9th, the National Dalit Christian Watch (NDCW) held a follow-up meeting after the Dalit Christian Writers' Conference to maintain momentum and keep the participating writers engaged. The meeting saw the participation of eight members, who discussed the development of the Dalit Christian Dialogue (DCD) website. Writers were encouraged to contribute articles, which will be featured on the DCD website, with the aim of enhancing its content and visibility. The primary goal is to publish a significant number of articles to strengthen the platform and amplify the voices of Dalit Christian writers.



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***Equality may be fiction but  
nonetheless one must  
accept it as a governing  
principle - Dr. BR.  
Ambedkar***

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# EMPOWERING THE DALIT CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

## A Stakeholders Meeting at Pillar Campus, Madurai

On the 18th of July, 2024, a significant gathering took place at the Pillar Campus in Madurai, marking a crucial step forward in the National Dalit Christian Women's (NDCW) mission to support and empower the Dalit Christian community. This stakeholders meeting was a unique assembly of community leaders, civil society representatives, and religious figures, all coming together to share insights, experiences, and envision a brighter future.

The meeting was graced by the presence of esteemed individuals such as Dr. Deena Bandhu Manchala, Dr. Richard Devadoss (NDCW Chairperson), Fr. Emmanuel Savariar Adimai, and several bishops and reverends from different denominations. Advocates, and community members from Ayyampati and Kottapalyam were also in attendance, making it a truly diverse and representative gathering.

The objectives of the meeting were clear: to engage and collaborate, to assess the needs of the Dalit Christian community, and to strategically plan for the next three years. Sr. Manju, the National Secretary, warmly welcomed everyone and outlined the meeting's goals. Bishop Nithyanandam set the tone with an opening prayer, and Sr. Manju proceeded to introduce the national team members, Chair Dr. Richard, and Governing Body member Adv. Franklin Ceasar, along with other dignitaries.







Sr. Manju provided an overview of NDCW's profile, vision, mission, objectives, and the current status of Dalit Christians. Dr. Richard then shared vital statistics on Dalit Christians and Dalit Bishops in various churches, recounted NDCW's past activities,



The voices of the community were heard loud and clear when Mr. Joseph from the Ayyampati Dalit community spoke about the discrimination they faced within the church and how NDCW stood by them in their struggles. He highlighted the partial recognition of their status and their ongoing fight for rights. Das Prakash from Kottapalyam, Trichy, echoed these sentiments, discussing issues such as taxes, separate cemeteries, and funeral arrangements. These narratives sparked a lively discussion on current atrocities and views.

This stakeholders meeting at Pillar Campus, Madurai, was more than just a gathering; it was a pivotal moment in the journey towards empowering the Dalit Christian community. With such a dedicated and diverse group of stakeholders, the future looks promising for the NDCW and its mission.





# NORTH REGION EVALUATION MEETING

## STRENGTHENING THE TEAM



On July 11th, 22 members North region coordinator conducted North Region Evaluation Meeting. The gathering proved to be highly productive, with fruitful discussions and sharing of updates on achievements, ongoing initiatives, and planned activities. Many participants shared details of their upcoming interventions and follow-up programs scheduled for the coming days.



On July 12th, the North Region Coordinator convened a strategic meeting with all core members of the Odisha team to evaluate ongoing programs and review the action plan. A key decision from the meeting was to replace inactive core members with dynamic individuals who are actively contributing to society. We are pleased to announce the induction of four new Dalit Christian leaders into the Odisha team, hailing from various districts across the state. These leaders have made significant contributions to society over the past decades.

# STAKEHOLDERS MEETING

**17th August 2024 at CBCI Conference Centre, New Delhi**

On August 17, 2024, a Stakeholders Meeting was held at the CBCI Conference Centre in New Delhi. Participants included representatives from various Christian denominations and faith-based organizations like CRI, Samaj Sewa Trust, Sewa Bharat, United Christian Forum, and others.

Sr. Manju, National Secretary of the National Dalit Christian Watch (NDCW), welcomed attendees and introduced NDCW's mission to combat discrimination within the church. She outlined the meeting's objectives and highlighted the current status of Dalit Christians.

Discussions focused on capacity building, fact-finding, and collaborating with research and theological institutions to challenge caste dynamics. Participants also emphasized awareness initiatives targeting Dalit youth and education. The meeting ended with Sr. Manju expressing gratitude to all attendees, followed by a shared lunch, where a collective commitment to NDCW's goals was affirmed.







## NDCW Kerala Wing Hosts Online Discussion on Justice Balakrishnan Commission's Public Hearing

On July 28th, the NDCW Kerala wing organized a highly successful and insightful online discussion regarding the Justice Balakrishnan Commission's visit and public hearing in Kerala. The session, featuring Advocate Franklin Ceaser Thomas, attracted 49 participants. Franklin Sir provided an in-depth explanation of the various legal contexts relevant to the Dalit Christian community's fight for justice and offered guidance on how to prepare clear and compelling evidence to present before the commission. The meeting saw a productive exchange, with participants raising important questions about the petitions.

Kudos to Mr. Shibu Joseph and the NDCW Kerala wing for initiating and organizing this meaningful discussion. Special thanks to the NDCW team members from both the South and North region for their valuable support and contributions to the event's success.

**National Dalit Christian Watch Kerala Region**

**Online meeting**  
**28.07.2024**  
**Sunday 8 PM**

**How to approach Justice Balakrishnan Commission**

**Adv. Franklin Ceaser Thomas**

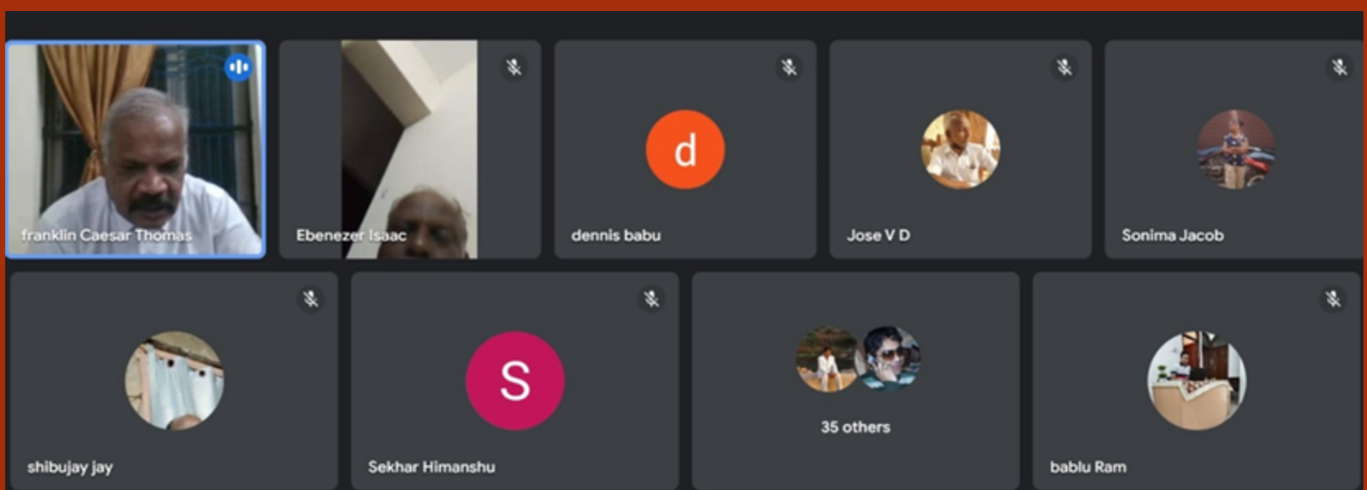
**Welcome**

**Moderator**  
**Shibu Joseph**  
**Co Ordinator Kerala**

**Pushpa Christy**  
**Co Ordinator Kerala**

**NDCW**

**Vote of Thanks**  
**Dr Sonima Jacob**  
**South Regional Cordinator**





# BROADENING IMPACT THROUGH COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS

Mr. Bablu Ram, the North Region Coordinator, and National Secretary Sr. Manju have embarked on a commendable initiative to promote the objectives of the National Dalit Christian Watch (NDCW). Their efforts involve actively engaging with various stakeholders, broadcasting vital information about the NDCW, and participating in numerous meetings organized by like-minded individuals and organizations across India.



On July 26th, the National Dalit Christian Watch (NDCW) was invited to a high-level meeting at CNI Bhavan to discuss and plan the upcoming agitation at Jantar Mantar, scheduled for March 10th. NDCW's participation in this crucial planning session marked a significant opportunity to collaborate with key religious leaders and organizations.

## NDCW HONORS THE LEGACY OF FR. STAN SWAMY ON MEMORIAL DAY

The National Dalit Christian Watch (NDCW) had the honor of paying tribute to the late Fr. Stan Swamy on his Memorial Day. His unwavering commitment to justice, human rights, and the marginalized, especially the Dalit and Adivasi communities, continues to inspire NDCW's mission. This remembrance served as a heartfelt acknowledgment of his profound contributions and a call to continue the fight for equality and dignity for all.



On August 9th, Advocate Selvi, one of NDCW's prominent stakeholders, organized a significant MPs conference featuring key figures like MP Thol. Thirumavalavan and former Delhi Government minister Rajendra Gautam. Several other non-Christian stakeholders committed to social justice and equality also attended.

The North Region Coordinator, Mr. Bablu, represented NDCW at the event held at Jawahar Bhavan, engaging in fruitful discussions with MPs, MLAs, and other prominent stakeholders. He had the valuable opportunity to meet MP Thol. Thirumavalavan, where they discussed NDCW's efforts to support Dalit Christians. Mr. Bablu also shared NDCW's vision and mission with non-Christian stakeholders, expressing a desire for future collaboration in the pursuit of social justice.







On August 10th, the National Dalit Christian Watch (NDCW) organized a protest in Warangal and Hyderabad at ACTC, marking it as "Black Day" to demand SC status for Dalit Christians. Participants from various denominations joined in solidarity, voicing their demands with powerful slogans that resonated throughout the event. A press conference was held where a unified statement was released, highlighting the collective call for justice and equality.





On 10th August The National Dalit Christian Watch (NDCW) actively participated in a prayer and protest organized alongside ecumenical and Christian bodies committed to social justice. This united effort took place at Jantar Mantar, advocating for SC status for Dalit Christians. NDCW's participation underscores its solidarity with marginalized communities and its dedication to the on-going struggle for equality and justice within society.



On August 11th, the National Dalit Christian Watch (NDCW) participated in the India Adivasi Cultural Program. Represented by the North Region Coordinator, this event provided a valuable opportunity to connect with various cultural representatives and gain insights into their needs and aspirations. NDCW's involvement in the program reflects its commitment to understanding and supporting diverse communities in their pursuit of cultural recognition and empowerment.





On August 15th, the National Dalit Christian Watch (NDCW) was invited to participate in the Independence Day celebration organized by the Christian Institute for Study of Religion and Society (CISRS). The event was attended by NDCW's North Region Coordinator, Bablu Ram, who represented the organization in the celebration, reinforcing NDCW's ongoing engagement with faith-based institutions and its commitment to social justice and equality.



On August 20th, the National Dalit Christian Watch (NDCW) participated in a protest at Jantar Mantar organized by All India Dalit under the banner "Women's Rights Now—Citizens Against Gender-Based Violence." This event provided an invaluable opportunity for NDCW to connect with prominent women advocates working for social justice and equality. During the protest, North region coordinator shared NDCW vision and mission, reinforcing the commitment to empowering marginalized communities and addressing gender-based violence





On September 10th, the National Dalit Christian Watch (NDCW) participated in a forum advocating for SC status for Dalit Christians and addressing the atrocities, discrimination, and exclusion faced by Dalit communities.



On September 14th, NDCW's National Secretary Sr. Manju and DCD Coordinator Ms. Mercy Margaret participated in a significant program focused on fundamental issues surrounding religious freedom for Dalits. The event featured insights from esteemed speakers, including Fr. Bosco SJ, Advocate Ajay ADF, and Advocate Franklin Ceaser, a member of NDCW's Governing Body. The discussions centered on exploring how the Justice Balakrishnan Commission can address and rectify historical injustices faced by Dalits. NDCW's involvement in this meeting underscores its commitment to advocating for the rights and freedoms of marginalized communities.

INVITATION

# Denial of Religious Freedom to Dalits: Can Justice Balakrishnan Commission Deliver Justice?

Civil Rights Initiative Internationale (CRII) cordially invites you to attend a pivotal conference featuring distinguished thought leaders, legal experts, and civil rights advocates. The event will address fundamental issues surrounding religious freedom for Dalits and explore the role of the Justice Balakrishnan Commission in redressing historical injustices.

**CRII**  
CIVIL RIGHTS INITIATIVE INTERNATIONALE

**DATE:**  
14TH SEPTEMBER 2024,  
10 AM

**VENUE:**  
TOURISM PLAZA,  
2ND FLOOR,  
BEGUMPET,  
HYDERABAD

**PROGRAM CONVENER**  
DR. K. BABU RAO  
IPS(RET'D)  
FORMER ADDL DGP  
NATIONAL PRESIDENT, CRII





NDCW was honoured to be invited to the public meeting titled "Curtailed Freedoms: A Travesty of Justice." This event served as a significant platform for engaging with prominent leaders and expressing NDCW's mission. A particularly memorable moment was the opportunity to share greetings on behalf of NDCW with the former Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh and a senior leader of the National Congress at the Constitution Club of India.



National Dalit Christian Watch National Secretary Sr. Manju was actively involved in a program organized by the Believers Eastern Church, part of the broader Pentecostal church community. Her emceeing the felicitation ceremony of His Holiness Moran Mor Samuel Mor Theophilus Metropolitan was a highlight. Her graceful presence, well-expressed delivery, and excellent coordination were instrumental in making the event flow smoothly and beautifully. This engagement not only showcased her professional skills but also highlighted the NDCW's commitment to fostering interfaith dialogue and cooperation.





On September 16th, the Safe India Missionary Diocese of the Anglican Episcopal Church hosted an Ordination Ceremony, inviting NDCW National Secretary Sr. Manju and Dr. Richard, NDCW Chairperson, as special guests. This event provided a wonderful opportunity for NDCW to participate in a significant milestone within the church community, with both leaders contributing to the ceremony and celebrating the occasion.





# LEADING THE WAY

## NDCW STATE CONVENORS CHAMPION DALIT CHRISTIAN RIGHTS

NDCW Convenor Ratna Sri organized a powerful rally on the National Day of Prayer and Protest in Guntur, Andhra Pradesh. Her initiatives have not only raised awareness for the rights of Dalit Christians but also galvanized community support for social justice. We are proud of her efforts in championing this important cause and mobilizing collective action for change.





Ratna Sri Organized Charitable Initiatives for Flood Victims in Andhra Pradesh. Her efforts include distributing essential items such as food, clothes, candles, mosquito coils, and water bottles to those in need. Kudos to Ratna Sri for her dedication and compassion in helping those affected by the floods. Her initiatives not only provide immediate relief but also foster a sense of community and support during challenging times.





Mr Abhishek Kumar Dash Presenting a paper on "POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT OF DALIT CHRISTIAN; CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES" at Bhubaneswar during the eastern regional conclave of the National Campaign for Dalit Christians (NCDC)



Delhi State Convenor Rev. Deepak Rajpal actively participated in the campaign advocating for the establishment of a statue of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar in front of the New Parliament. His involvement highlights NDCW's commitment to honoring the legacy of Dr. Ambedkar. Rev. Rajpal's participation underscores the importance of recognizing and celebrating the values Dr. Ambedkar championed for marginalized communities.



# GOVERNING BODY MEETING

On October 3rd, the NDCW team convened a Governing Body meeting to discuss the status of ongoing projects and strategize for upcoming initiatives. The meeting provided an opportunity to review progress and outline future goals. Additionally, new governing body members were warmly welcomed, enhancing the team's diverse perspectives and expertise.





# STRENGTHENING LEADERSHIP

## NEW MEMBERS JOIN NDCW GOVERNING BODY



Ms. Priscilla Suresh Rawade holds a Master of Sacred Theology and has made remarkable contributions in various capacities throughout her career. She has served as an Assistant Professor at Bishop's College and worked with the National Council of Churches in India (NCCI) as a Consultant for the ESHA (Ecumenical Solidarity for HIV and AIDS) program. Currently, she is the Executive Secretary for the Gender and Social Justice Desk at the Student Christian Movement of India (SCMI).

In addition to her academic pursuits, Ms. Priscilla has published journals, presented insightful papers, and served as a resource person for various workshops, displaying her dedication to education and advocacy.

We are delighted to welcome Ms. Priscilla as a member of our Governing Body at the National Dalit Christian Watch (NDCW), and we look forward to her valuable contributions. NDCW warmly welcomes you!

# STRENGTHENING LEADERSHIP

## NEW MEMBERS JOIN NDCW GOVERNING BODY

Rev. Dr. Deenabandhu Manchala has served as a programme executive at the World Council of Churches in Geneva, Switzerland, coordinating Theological Reflection for the Decade to Overcome Violence (2000-2006) and the Just and Inclusive Communities (2007-2014) Earlier, he was on the staff of the National Council of Churches in India and Gurukul Lutheran Theological College, Chennai, India.

He is a distinguished theologian, recently returned to India after serving eight years as the Area Executive for Southern Asia in Global Ministries of the United Church of Christ and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), USA. He is currently facilitating a CWM-sponsored theological study on Transformative Ecumenism and is part of ICCJ, a collective of Christians involved in justice actions and people's movements.

With a doctorate in theology focused on Dalit Ecclesiology, Rev. Dr. Manchala has spent over three decades actively engaged in ecumenical initiatives, social movements, and addressing issues such as caste discrimination, racism, and human trafficking. His published works reflect his deep commitment to mission and justice.

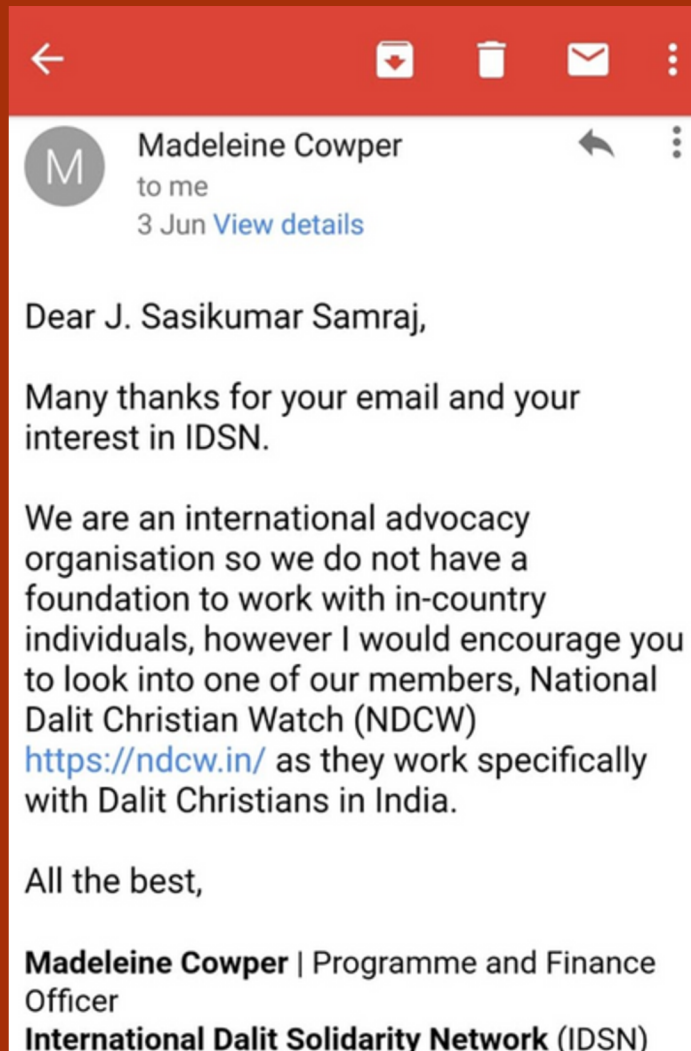
We are honored to welcome him to our Governing Body team at NDCW.





# RECOGNITION OF NDCW BY THE COMMUNITY

## A PATH TO EMPOWERMENT



The National Dalit Christian Watch (NDCW) has earned widespread recognition as a voice for Dalit Christians, addressing systemic issues of caste-based discrimination within the church and society. One such example comes from a Dalit CSI Christian family in Sawyerpuram, Thoothukudi district, where members have faced challenges in navigating the discrimination embedded within church structures.

When they reached out to the International Dalit Solidarity Network (IDSN) for guidance, IDSN connected them with NDCW. Through this network, they came into contact with Mr. Shekhar, Convenor in the Tamil Nadu chapter, who in turn directed them to the NDCW leadership. This act of connecting communities shows the significant trust and recognition NDCW has earned at both national and international levels for being a dedicated platform that advocates for equal rights, especially within faith-based institutions.

Many such families, who experience similar struggles, seek membership in NDCW as they believe in its vision of addressing caste-based discrimination and uplifting marginalized communities. The recognition NDCW receives isn't just from organizations but from individuals and communities who see the organization as a beacon of hope. They aspire to become active members of the NDCW ecosystem to not only find solutions for their own struggle but to also help their fellow people combat discrimination within the church.

## CONCLUSION

Pope Francis once remarked, "Rivers do not drink their own water; trees do not eat their own fruit; the sun does not shine on itself and flowers do not spread their fragrance for themselves. Living for others is a rule of nature. We are all born to help each other. No matter how difficult it is .... life is good when you are happy, but much better when others are happy because of you." The National Dalit Christian Watch stands as a testament to this principle, tirelessly working to uplift and empower Dalit Christians, ensuring that no one is left behind in the pursuit of a more equitable and compassionate society. Their efforts are a beacon of hope, reminding us that true progress is measured not by individual achievements, but by the collective well-being of all. As we move forward, let us all strive to embody the spirit of selfless service. In doing so, we not only enrich the lives of others but also find our own lives enriched in ways we never imagined

# STAY TUNED!



[www.ndcw.org](http://www.ndcw.org)



National Dalit Christian Watch-NDCW