

REQUEST TO THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA TO AMEND THE CONSTITUTION OF INDIA, TO EXTEND SCHEDULE CASTE STATUS TO MEMBERS OF THE SCHEDULE CASTE COMMUNITY IN INDIA WHO HAVE CONVERTED TO CHRISTIANITY.

RESOLUTION OF THE ANDHRA PRADESH LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

DATE: 24.03.2023.

1. Scheduled Caste converts to Christianity continue to retain their disabilities including untouchability and other economic and social backwardness even after the conversion and therefore there is a strong legitimate basis for including them in the list of Scheduled Castes, so as to allow them to enjoy the benefits available to other Scheduled Castes which are enumerated in the Constitution (Scheduled Caste) Order.
2. Government of Andhra Pradesh have extended certain non-statutory concessions available to Scheduled Castes of Hinduism to Scheduled Castes converted to Christianity vide G.O Ms..No.341 of SW (B2) Department dated 30-08-1977, including economic support schemes sanctioned by AP Scheduled Castes Cooperative Finance Corporation Limited.
3. Government of Andhra Pradesh through its inclusive approach to development is implementing the Navaratnalu schemes for all sections of the society on a saturation basis.
4. However, several representations have been received by the Government that the Scheduled Caste persons who converted to Christianity continue to face social, economic and political discrimination and that they deserve better treatment on an equal footing as those who converted to Sikhism and Buddhism and requested to recommend to Government of India for amendment of the Constitution for making the Scheduled Caste converts to Christianity eligible to be treated as Scheduled Castes.

5. The Government is of the opinion that the socio-economic conditions of Scheduled Castes of Hinduism and Scheduled Castes who converted to Christianity are one and the same, as they live in the same horizon in the outskirts of the villages, follow the same traditions and customs and suffer humiliation, discrimination in the society and none of these things change by a person converting into one or another religion. Moreover, what religion one practices is an individual's choice and it should not have any bearing on determination of the caste.

6. Based on the above mentioned observations,

The Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly unanimously resolves that, 'The socio-economic conditions of Scheduled Castes of Hinduism and Scheduled Castes who converted to Christianity are one and the same, as they live in the same horizon in the outskirts of the villages, follow the same traditions and customs and suffer humiliation, discrimination in the society and none of these things change by a person converting into one or another religion. Moreover, what religion one practices is an individual's choice and it should not have any bearing on determination of the caste.

Government of India is requested to consider amending the Constitution of India, to extend Scheduled Caste status to the members of the Scheduled Castes community in India who have converted to Christianity, so that they can enjoy the same rights, protection & benefits as all the other Scheduled Castes.

Dated:24.03.2023

Sri Merugu Nagarjuna
Hon'ble Minister for Social Welfare