

SC Quota for Dalit Muslims and Christians

What is the issue?

Several petitions are pending before the Supreme Court seeking Scheduled Caste (SC) reservation benefits for Dalits who converted to Christianity or Islam.

What is the provision for Dalits who convert to Christianity and Islam?

There is a 15% quota for Scheduled Castes in government jobs.

- **Article 341** of the Constitution- The President may specify the castes, races or tribes or parts of or groups within castes, races or tribes which shall be deemed to be Scheduled Castes.
- The first order issued in 1950 under this provision covered only Hindus.
- An order was issued in 1956 including Sikhs of Dalit origin and in 1990, the government acceded to include Buddhists of Dalit origin among the beneficiaries of the SC quota.
- The order was revised as: “No person who professes a religion different from the Hindu, the Sikh or the Buddhist religion shall be deemed to be a member of Scheduled Caste.”
- This religion-based bar **does not apply** to converted **STs and OBCs**.
- The Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) website states that the rights of a person belonging to a Scheduled Tribe are independent of his/her religious faith.

Maharashtra Minister has alleged that Sameer Wankhede, Mumbai Zonal Director of the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB), benefitted from the reservation for Scheduled Castes (SCs) despite being ineligible for it.

To know about Sameer Wankhede’s reservation case, click [here](#)

What efforts were taken for inclusion of Dalits of other religion?

- **Bills**- In 1996, The Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Orders (Amendment) Bill was drafted, but was not introduced in Parliament.
- **Committees**- The National Commission for Religious and Linguistic Minorities, popularly known as the **Ranganath Misra Commission** was constituted in 2004.
- The Commission recommended that SC status should be completely de-linked from religion and Scheduled Castes should be made fully religion-neutral like Scheduled Tribes.
- **Sachar Committee** was formed in 2005 to study the social, economic, and educational condition of Muslims.

- The report observed that the social and economic situation of Dalit Muslims and Dalit Christians did not improve after conversion.
- In 2008, a status report by a team of sociologists led by Satish Deshpande said that there was a strong case for extending SC status to Dalit Christians and Dalit Muslims.
- However, the recommendations were not accepted in view of inadequate field data.

References

1. <https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/scheduled-caste-quota-for-dalit-muslims-and-christians-story-so-far-8160838/>
2. <https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/aryan-khan-drugs-case-nawab-malik-allegations-sameer-wankhede-sc-quota-muslim-7941107/>

