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Title: Need to extend benefits to Dalits converted to Christianity and Islam.

SHRI ABDUL RAHMAN (VELLORE): Sir, I thank you for giving me the opportunity. This is the last day of the 15th Lok Sabha.

Our Constitution is a secular Constitution and there is no religious discrimination in our Constitution. Under article 341 of our Constitution, the hon. President has been empowered to provide status of Scheduled Castes to those people who are in the lower strata of our society and they are called Dalits. Using this power, the hon. President, by an order of 1950, restricted the status only to those who profess Hinduism and their religion. There is no objection in this regard but while dalits convert themselves into Muslims or Christians as their religion without changing their caste, why not they get the status of dalit to avail their legitimate rights in the country? Those people are basically very much backward both educationally and socially. Justice has to be done to them.

15.07 Â½ hrs.

At this stage, Shri Thol Thirumaavalavan and some other

hon. Members came and stood on the floor near the Table.

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The Scheduled Caste benefits have been subsequently extended to Dalits converted to Sikhism and Buddhism in the years 1956 and 1990 respectively. But such Scheduled Caste benefits have not been extended to Dalits converted to Christianity and Islam. This is religious discrimination which goes against articles 14, 15 and 16 of our Constitution. This also is against natural justice, human rights and fundamental rights of human kind.

15.08 hrs

At this stage, Shri Thol Thirumaavalavan and some other

hon. Members went back to their seats.