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Title: Need to include Dalit Christians and Muslims in the list of Scheduled Castes.

SHRIMATI J. HELEN DAVIDSON (KANYAKUMARI): I would like to raise the issue for inclusion of Dalit Christians and Muslims in the list of Scheduled Caste.

Out of the total Christian population of 24 millions in our Country, the Christians of Scheduled Caste origin come to about 65 percent. Thus the Christians of Scheduled Caste origin who form more than half of Christian population in India, are not eligible for legal protection (Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities), Act 1989 because they chose to follow a religion of their choice, a fundamental right that is guaranteed in the Constitution of India- Articles 15, 25 and 21. Also, I bring to your kind notice that the Dalit Christians and Dalit Muslims have been denied SC status for the last fifty nine years of their constitutional rights and entitlement. As per National Commission for Religious and Linguistic Minorities non-inclusion of SC Christians and SC Muslims in the SC list is a discrimination based on Religion and goes against the articles 14, 15 and 25 of the Constitution of India. Religion must be de-linked from caste. The discriminatory Para 3 of the Constitutional Scheduled Caste Order 1950 can be deleted by appropriate provisions. But the Union Government has not taken any action on this report and millions of SC Christians and Muslims continue to suffer unjustly. The Scheduled Caste Hindus, Sikhs and Buddhists are given the Constitutional protection and other benefits whereas the Christians and Muslims of Scheduled Caste origin are denied of the same protection and benefits. Being a secular country, every community in the country must be treated equally, irrespective of religion.

I, therefore, kindly request you to take necessary steps for the inclusion of Dalit Christians and Muslims in the list of Scheduled Castes.