Contents

Foreword xiii
Preface xv
Acknowledgements xvii

1. Introduction: Journey Towards Dalit Feminist Hermeneutics 1
    1.1. Introduction 1
    1.2. Statement of the Problem 4
    1.3. Elaboration of the Problem 4
    1.4. The Need for Dalit Feminist Hermeneutics 7
    1.5. Significance of the Research 7
    1.6. Limitations 10
    1.7. Hypotheses 10
    1.8. Objectives 11
    1.9. Aims 11
    1.10. Use of the Term Feminism/Feminist 11
    1.11. Research Methodology 12
        1.11.1. Tools of Data Collection 13
        1.11.2. Data Used 16
        1.11.3. Analysis of the Data 17
        1.11.4. Limitations of the Empirical Research 17
        1.11.5. Difficulties Faced by the Researcher 17
    1.12. Theoretical Tools Used in the Study 17
    1.13. Plan of Research Work 18
    1.14. Conclusion 20
2. Theological Enterprise In India: A Dalit Feminist Assessment 25
    2.1. Introduction 25
    2.2. Missionary Theology 26
    2.3. Early Indian Christian Theology 29
    2.4. Dalit Theology 31
    2.5. Feminist Theology in India 31
    2.6. Feminist Hermeneutical Search of Identity 32

2.7. Dalit Feminist Hermeneutics: An Added Dimension to Indian Christian Theology 35
2.8. Conclusion 37

3. Presentation of Data and Findings of the Status and Identity of South Andhra Lutheran Church Women 43
3.1. Introduction 43
3.2. Beginnings of SALC 44
3.3. Findings from the Field Research 45
3.3.1. General Information 47
3.3.2. Educational Status 47
3.3.3. Status in Employment 49
3.3.4. Status in the Family 50
3.3.5. Status in the Church 52
3.6. Caste System and Women in SALC 56
3.7. Violence Against Women 61
3.7.1. Dowry-related Violence Against Women 62
3.7.2. Violence Related to Alcoholism 63
3.7.3. Violence Related to Widowhood 65
3.7.4. Wife Battering 66
3.8. Intervention of Missionaries 67
3.9. Conclusion 70

4. The Concept of Identity: Theoretical Perspectives in Search of a Dalit Feminist Identity 77
4.1. Introduction 77
4.2. Definitions and the Nature of the Term Identity 78
4.3. Origins of the Concept of Identity 79
4.3.1. Identity Crisis 80
4.3.2. The Identity Formation Process 80
4.4. Selected Approaches to Identity 83
4.4.1. Socio-Cultural Approach to Identity 83
4.4.2. Historical Approach to Identity 85
4.4.3. Post-modern Approach to Identity 86
4.4.4. Post-colonial Approach to Identity 87
4.4.5. Feminist Approach to Identity 89
4.4.6. Narrative Approach to Identity 92
4.5. Who Should Speak for Dalit Identity? 97
4.6. In Search of Dalit Feminist Identity 98
4.6.1. Identity Formation Among Dalit Women 99
4.7. Conclusion 100

5. The Image of God: Dalit Feminist Hermeneutical Study Towards The Empowerment of Dalit Women 107
5.1. Introduction 107
5.2. Re-visiting the Image of God 108
5.2.1. Biblical Images of God: A Brief Overview 112
5.3. The Image of God: Depatriarchalization 115
5.4. The Image of God: Reconstructions 119
5.5. Reclaiming the Selected Biblical Images of God 122
5.5.1. God as Life: Towards a Theology of Fullness 123
5.5.2. God as Freedom: Towards Svathanthra 126
5.5.3. God as Shakti (Power): Towards Empowerment of Dalit Women 130
5.6. God as Life, *Svathanthra*, and *Shakti*; Implications for the Empowerment of Dalit Women 133
5.6.1. God's Identity as Life: Towards Inclusive Identity of Dalit Women 133
5.6.2. God as Svathanthra: Towards the Liberation of Dalit Women 134
5.6.3. God as Shakti: Towards Dalit Women's Empowerment 135
5.7. Conclusion 136

Appendix 1: Questionnaire 145

Bibliography 151