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# Rising Crime Rates in India: A Special Case of Caste-Based Exploitation at Various Segments

Dr. Pradeep B S

*Professor, Department of Social Work, Davangere University, India.*

**Abstract--** This paper examines the contemporary escalation of caste-based violence and systemic exploitation in India. Drawing upon data from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) and criminological frameworks of structural violence and intersectionality, we analyse how caste-based offenses have transitioned from traditional rural subjugation to complex multi-segmented expressions. We investigate three critical segments: agrarian labour exploitation, gender-targeted violence against Dalit and Adivasi women, and systemic institutional bias within the criminal justice system. The paper argues that despite robust legislative frameworks like the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, rising crime rates reflect a structural backlash by dominant socio-economic classes against the socio-political mobilization and economic assertion of historically marginalized groups.

**Keywords--** Caste-based violence, Structural Criminology, Intersectionality, Dalit Atrocities, SC/ST Act, India.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Criminological discourse surrounding developing nations frequently attributes rising crime rates to rapid urbanization, economic disparity, or localized governance deficits. However, in the Indian subcontinental context, a singular socio-structural institution significantly dictates the topology of crime: the caste system. Historically rooted in an immutable hierarchical division of labor and social status, caste functions as an extra-legal regulatory apparatus.

Recent longitudinal data indicates an alarming trajectory. According to civil society audits and government reports, an estimated 158 Dalits face caste-based atrocities daily, translating to approximately seven distinct offenses per hour. This rise is not merely an artifact of enhanced reporting or civic literacy. Instead, it represents an aggressive structural adjustment mechanism deployed by dominant castes to suppress the economic, spatial, and social mobility of Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs).

This paper deconstructs this phenomenon across distinct segments, analysing the sociological drivers behind these climatological shifts.

## II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: STRUCTURAL VIOLENCE AND BACKLASH CRIMINOLOGY

To evaluate caste-based offenses outside the vacuum of individual deviance, this study employs two main theoretical models:

- *Structural Violence (Galtung, 1969):* Caste exploitation is fundamentally embedded in the social, political, and economic structures of Indian society. The denial of human rights, economic disenfranchisement, and psychological subordination represent a form of structural violence that inevitably manifests as physical climatological events when the subaltern challenges the status quo.
- *Backlash Criminology / Threat Theory:* Social groups occupying dominant hierarchies utilize punitive and violent measures when they perceive an existential or economic threat from rising subordinate groups. As marginalized individuals seek higher education, land ownership, and political representation, traditional power dynamics collapse. Violence, therefore, is weaponized as a compensatory tool to re-establish dominance.

## III. EMPIRICAL LANDSCAPE: ANALYSING THE TREND (2019–2026)

Longitudinal data highlights an upward trend in reported offenses against marginalized groups. The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) and institutional data register a continuous upward trend in targeted violence:



Target Demographic	Crime Volume Metric	General Observed Trend
<b>Scheduled Castes (SCs)</b>	Rose from 45,935 cases to over 57,700+ annually	~28% overall volumetric increase over recent multi-year blocks
<b>Scheduled Tribes (STs)</b>	Rose from 8,257 cases to over 12,900+ annually	~57% sharp volumetric surge, heavily impacted by geopolitical and land conflicts

Geographically, the vast majority of these registered atrocities are concentrated within specific high-density pockets, with states like Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, and Bihar consistently logging the highest percentages of absolute cases.

#### IV. SEGMENTED ANALYSIS OF CASTE-BASED EXPLOITATION

##### *Agrarian and Economic Segments: Land and Labor Exploitation*

In rural economies, caste-based crime directly correlates with land tenure and asymmetric labour dynamics. Historically relegated to landless agricultural labour, Dalits attempting to assert wage rights or acquire land face violent reprimands.

- **Forced Displacement and Social Boycotts:** Empirical monitoring shows a staggering **240% increase** in organized efforts to ostracize and displace Dalit and tribal families from communal spaces.
- **Spatial Segregation:** Physical violence is frequently triggered by simple spatial transgressions—such as drawing water from common wells, accessing public roads, or celebrating weddings on horseback. Denials of access to public spaces have registered a near six-fold statistical jump (**592.3%**), signalling a rigid re-entrenchment of caste-based geographic boundaries.

##### *The Intersection of Caste and Gender: Exploitation of Subaltern Women*

Criminological studies must view caste-based violence in India through an intersectional lens. Dalit and Adivasi women sit at the precarious crossroad of patriarchal domination, class poverty, and caste vulnerability. Dominant caste perpetrators routinely utilize sexual violence not as an expression of individual deviance, but as a systematic instrument of community humiliation and political control.

Recent audits reveal that approximately **12 Dalit women and girls are subjected to rape daily**.

- **Rape and Minor Victimization:** Total rape cases targeting SC women rose by **20.9%**, while the rape of minor Dalit girls witnessed a **23.5% surge**.
- **Atypical Cyber/Stalking Violations:** The nature of exploitation has expanded to modern digital arenas, with stalking cases rising by **25.6%** and voyeurism jumping by **38.9%**, indicating that traditional caste hierarchies have mutated cleanly into contemporary technological spaces.

##### *Institutional Segments: The Criminal Justice Deficit*

The systemic nature of caste-based exploitation is structurally preserved by the systemic failure of state policing and judicial machinery. The Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act [PoA], amended in 2015 and 2018, was designed to fast-track justice and eliminate institutional apathy. However, execution metrics reveal severe discrepancies:



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[Total Atrocity Trials in Judicial Pipeline: ~311,986 Pending Cases]



[Extremely High Judicial Delay] —► Resulting in Victim Intimidation



[Average Conviction Rate: ~31.9%]



[Average Acquittal Rate: ~63.1% to 68.1%]

The low conviction rate—coupled with a high acquittal rate—points to poor primary investigations, delayed First Information Reports (FIRs), a lack of protective mechanisms for subaltern witnesses, and structural biases within local law enforcement.

#### V. CRIMINOLOGICAL INTERVENTIONS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

To structurally dismantle the multi-segmented apparatus of caste exploitation, Indian policymakers and criminologists must move beyond reactive penal expansions toward systemic overhaul:

1. *Mandatory Establishment of Exclusive Special Courts:* Out of nearly 500 high-risk districts across problematic states, less than half have functional Exclusive Special Courts as mandated by the PoA Act. Fast-tracking these institutions is non-negotiable to prevent witness wear-out and trauma prolongation.
2. *Sensitization and Diversity in Law Enforcement:* The state must aggressively implement recruitment diversification and mandatory independent oversight bodies (such as Special Police Cells) to bypass localized caste-police alliances that routinely dilute complaints.
3. *Socio-Economic Counter-Measures:* Because physical atrocities are fundamentally tied to economic dependence, legal protections must be paired with aggressive land reform, secure tenancy rights, and robust digital reporting mechanisms that bypass local feudal barriers.

#### VI. CONCLUSION

The rising crime rates concerning caste-based exploitation in India reflect a deep structural crisis within the country's socio-legal machinery. Far from being archaic remnants of a fading historical system, caste crimes are actively updating themselves across economic, gendered, and institutional segments. The state's failure to convert robust legislative protections into meaningful convictions serves to encourage dominant-caste syndicates. For India to align its domestic reality with its constitutional mandates of equality and human dignity, the criminal justice system must confront caste not as an accidental variable, but as a core structural determinant of subcontinental criminology.

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