Trends of Crimes Against Scheduled Castes in Chhattisgarh: A Statistical Analysis (2017-2022)

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ABSTRACT

This research paper analyzes the trend of crimes against Scheduled Castes in Chhattisgarh, based on data from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) for the years 2017 to 2022. Crimes against Scheduled Castes also have a deep historical context. The main objective of this research paper is to examine the changes in the number of incidents, the number of victims, and the crime rate under various crime heads registered under the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act. The analysis of the data reveals that the total number of registered cases has consistently increased during this period, and there has been no decline in atrocity cases. A large number of serious cases, including murder, rape, riots, and cases under the POCSO Act, have been registered against members of the Scheduled Caste community, indicating an extremely alarming level of crime. This research paper also discusses the proper implementation of the law and ensuring social justice.

KEY WORDS

Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, Crime trends, Chhattisgarh, Atrocities Act.

INTRODUCTION

In the Indian social system, those whom we currently refer to as Scheduled Castes or Dalits have historically been known by names such as 'Shudra', 'Atishudra', 'Das', 'Untouchable', etc. The inhumane treatment meted out to the Scheduled Caste group was not merely limited to social customs. It was a consequence of its legitimization in ancient religious and legal texts in the name of religion and justice.

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From ancient times, attempts were made to isolate the Scheduled Caste community from the mainstream of society. They were deprived of education and the right to own property. Their women were subjected to rape, men were given harsh physical punishments, and entire families were forced into bonded labor. These were not merely practical social evils. Many texts justified these inhuman practices as just, religious, and divinely ordained. This is what makes this history even more poignant, tragic, and horrific.

The Vedas are considered the oldest books in Indian society. While the term 'Scheduled Caste' is not directly found in the Vedas, the Purusha Sukta presents a concept of the origin of society into four varnas (classes). This later provided a basis for the scriptures. According to the Purusha Sukta, Brahmins originated from the mouth, Kshatriyas from the arms, Vaishyas from the thighs, and Shudras from the feet. This symbolism suggests that the mouth, associated with knowledge and speech, represents the Brahmin; the arms, associated with power and governance, represent the Kshatriya; the thighs, associated with the economy, represent the Vaishya; and the lowest part of the body, connected to the earth and considered inferior, became the symbol of the Shudra. This verse in itself is not discriminatory or violent, but Indian religious texts and society seized upon this symbolism to create a large and permanent structure of hierarchy, master-servant relationships, and purity-impurity throughout society.

The Manusmriti places Shudras even below animals and states that their only duty is to serve the other three varnas selflessly. The Manusmriti considers Shudras to be inherently slaves and attributes their status to the sins of their previous lives. The Manusmriti prescribes very harsh laws for the Shudra class. It states that a Shudra should not accumulate wealth, and if a Shudra does accumulate wealth, a Brahmin has the right to seize it, because if a Shudra accumulates wealth, he will not perform service. According to the Manusmriti, if a Shudra does not perform service, the entire social order will be disrupted and society will become chaotic. In this way, Shudras were always kept separate from knowledge, scriptures, land, and capital, and this separation was declared a divine order, making them permanent slaves.

Kautilya wrote the 'Arthashastra'. Kautilya's Arthashastra is primarily a treatise on politics and economics. It does not contain the same harsh penal system for the Shudra class as the Manusmriti. Rather, the Arthashastra speaks of their right to wages, the right to buy their freedom, and protection against excessive oppression. However, he does not want to completely liberate the Shudra class under any circumstances. He wants to keep them under the control of the Aryans. In Kautilya's Arthashastra, the Shudra class is considered important in the social economy and useful in production, but they are not given full rights and equal status.

In the 19th and 20th centuries, when European ideas spread in this country, modern laws were enacted, newspapers expanded, and social reform movements gained momentum, criticism of the extremely casteist and discriminatory system based on the Manusmriti and other religious scriptures began. Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar played a special role in all of this. He described the Manusmriti as the ideological basis of caste oppression and symbolically burned it. Dr. Ambedkar led movements like the Mahad Satyagraha and fought against caste oppression. Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar primarily blamed the system of these Smriti texts for excluding untouchables and Shudras from religion, knowledge, politics, and the economy. After independence, a new constitution was drafted in India, which abolished these old traditions. Article 15 prohibited discrimination on the basis of religion, caste, gender, etc. Article 17 abolished untouchability and declared any practice of it a punishable offense. Later, in 1989, the government specifically enacted the 'Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act,' which provided for stringent punishments for all types of atrocities and inhumane acts against the Dalit community (Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes), and also mandated the establishment of special courts.

However, the great irony today is that despite constitutional laws and measures, there has been no change in the mindset of society. Society repeatedly reverts to the old, traditional social system and considers committing crimes against the Scheduled Castes, beating them, and threatening them as its right. Data from the

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National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) shows a continuous increase in the number of crimes registered against Scheduled Castes. In 2022, 57,582 cases were registered against Scheduled Castes, which is an increase of approximately 13% compared to 2021.

In other words, the "culture" of keeping certain groups at the bottom of society, which was created from the Vedas to the Dharmashastras and given the name of religion, continues to persist even in our modern democratic system.

Literature Reviews

1. According to **Tiwari (2017),** the media plays a crucial role in strengthening justice in such cases.
2. **Patel (2018)** found in his study that disputes over land and water resources in rural areas often lead to serious violent incidents against Scheduled Castes.
3. **Govind Rao (2019)** identified several obstacles in the implementation of the SC/ST Act, highlighting issues such as police inaction and social pressure.
4. According to **Sharmila and Mishra (2020),** sexual offenses against Dalit women also reflect social structures and gender inequality.
5. The National Commission for SC and ST (2021) report indicates that the low conviction rate in cases registered under the Act is a major challenge.

Research Gaps

1. Most studies are at the national or regional level; there is a lack of analysis of long-term trends focused on Chhattisgarh state.
2. In-depth comparative analysis using data categorized by detailed crime heads from the NCRB is limited.
3. Studies focusing on crime rates across different types of crimes such as murder, rape, and child sexual abuse are scarce.

methdology:

This research paper utilizes secondary data for the study. The source of the secondary data is the annual reports of the NCRB and Crime in India. The collected data was analyzed using descriptive analytical techniques to examine the changes over time in the number of cases, victims, and rates for various crime categories. Comparative analysis was also conducted to highlight the differences in crime rates across different years.

The Objective of the Research

1. To conduct a comparative study of crimes against Scheduled Castes in Chhattisgarh between 2017 and 2022 and identify patterns.
2. To analyze the rate of change in various types of serious crimes such as murder, rape, grievous hurt, acid attacks, and child sexual abuse.
3. To present suggestions for strong administrative and social reforms based on the data to control crime and ensure justice for the victims.

Crimes Against Scheduled Castes (Analysis)

In 2017, a total of 180 cases were registered against Scheduled Castes, with 286 teams (presumably special teams formed for investigating or resolving the cases) involved. The crime rate that year was 8.6 (per lakh population).

This rate increased to 10.01 by 2022, clearly indicating a rise in the total number of crimes.

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The number of serious crimes like murder also ranged between 6 and 10. The highest number of murders, 10, were recorded in 2020. Similarly, cases of attempted murder (under Section 307 of the Indian Penal Code) reached their highest number in 2022.

Murder and attempted murder are among the most serious crimes, reflecting the hatred and violent mentality prevalent in some sections of society towards Scheduled Castes. The data also shows a continuous increase in the crime rate between 2017 and 2020.

Table 01: Crime/Atrocities against Scheduled Caste(s) (Crime Head 2017-2022)

S.No	Year	SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act r/w IPC (Total)			SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act					
					Murder (Sec. 302 IPC)			Attempt to Commit Murder (Sec. 307 IPC)		
		I	V	R	I	V	R	I	V	R
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1	2017	280	286	8.6	6	8	0.2	4	6	0.1
2	2018	264	268	8.1	4	4	0.1	4	4	0.1
3	2019	339	346	10.4	8	8	0.2	3	3	0.1
4	2020	321	335	9.8	10	10	0.3	8	8	0.2
5	2021	316	330	9.7	8	8	0.2	4	4	0.1
6	2022	330	346	10.1	6	6	0.2	9	12	0.3

*(**Source:** NCRB Report 2017-2022)*

Details of Crimes Against Scheduled Castes (Related to Injuries)

A study of the table reveals that between 2017 and 2022, there has been a continuous increase in cases of simple hurt (Section 323, IPC). In 2017, 42 cases were registered, involving 42 victims, with a crime rate of 1.3. This increased to 74 cases in 2022, involving 77 victims, and the crime rate rose to 2.3. This increasing crime rate indicates a serious criminal trend.

Meanwhile, the number of cases registered under grievous hurt (Sections 325 and 326, IPC) shows fluctuations. This number remained between 2 and 6 from 2017 to 2022. This situation indicates that the Scheduled Caste community is facing violence, harassment, and humiliation in their daily lives, which is a major cause for concern for society.

Table 2: Crime/Atrocities against Scheduled Caste(s)

S.No	Year	Simple Hurt (Secs. 323 r/w IPC 324, 327, 328, 330, 332, 353 IPC)			SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act					
					Grievous Hurt (Sec. 325 & 326 IPC) (Total)			A) Grievous Hurt		
		I	V	R	I	V	R	I	V	R
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1	2017	42	42	1.3	2	2	0.1	2	2	0.1
2	2018	40	42	1.2	5	5	0.2	5	5	0.2
3	2019	53	53	1.6	3	3	0.1	3	3	0.1
4	2020	54	59	1.6	2	2	0.1	2	2	0.1
5	2021	66	67	2.0	6	6	0.2	6	6	0.2
6	2022	74	77	2.3	4	5	0.1	4	5	0.1

*(**Source:** NCRB Report 2017-2022)*

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Sexual Crimes Against Scheduled Caste Women and Girls (Chhattisgarh)

Analysis of the table reveals that sexual crimes against Scheduled Caste women and girls in Chhattisgarh increased between 2017 and 2022. The data clearly shows that the number of sexual assault cases ranged from 42 to 68 between 2017 and 2022, indicating a steady upward trend, meaning these crimes continued unabated during this period.

There has been a significant increase in sexual offenses against girls under 18 years of age under the POCSO Act (Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act). In 2017, 32 cases were registered, involving 32 victims, with a crime rate of 1.00. This number peaked at 64 cases in 2021, and the crime rate increased to 2.00. This means that the crime rate doubled during this period, which is a matter of serious concern. However, only 2 cases of attempted rape were registered during the same period.

Cases of mob violence and riots also increased during this period. Seven cases were registered in 2017, while this number increased to 15 in 2022. These figures point to increasing mob violence, lynching, and rising communal tensions in the community.

Table 3: Crime/Atrocities against Scheduled Caste(s) (Crime Head)

S.No	Year	Assault on Women with Intent to Outrage her Modesty (Adults+Children)			SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act					
					A) Assault on Women (Above 18 years)			a1) Assault on Adult Women with Intent to Outrage her Modesty (Sec. 354 IPC)		
		I	V	R	I	V	R	I	V	R
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1	2017	68	68	2.1	55	55	1.7	39	39	1.2
2	2018	54	54	1.6	46	46	1.4	33	33	1.0
3	2019	49	49	1.5	35	35	1.1	27	27	0.8
4	2020	42	43	1.3	38	39	1.2	33	34	1.0
5	2021	57	57	1.7	44	44	1.3	32	32	1.0
6	2022	45	46	1.4	34	35	1.0	25	26	0.8

*(**Source:** NCRB Report 2017-2022)*

Suggestions

The following suggestions are presented to address this serious problem:

1. Strengthening the Administrative and Police System: Special Investigation Teams should be formed for the swift and impartial investigation of cases under the SC/ST Act. Sensitivity training should be made mandatory for police personnel so that they adopt a sympathetic attitude towards the victims and do not neglect registering or investigating cases. The efficiency of special courts designated under the Prevention of Atrocities Act should be increased in every district, and the speedy disposal of pending cases should be ensured.

2. Social Awareness and Education: To promote social harmony, emphasis should be placed on equality, human dignity, and constitutional values in everything from school curricula to community programs. Community dialogue against caste discrimination and violence should be encouraged. The media should play a constructive role in reporting such cases impartially and promoting positive social change.

3. Economic Empowerment and Access to Resources: Disputes over resources such as land and water often lead to violence. Scheduled Caste families should be provided with sustainable means of livelihood, and strict action should be taken against illegal occupation of their land and property. A transparent mechanism should be developed to ensure that they effectively receive the benefits of government schemes.

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4. Political Will and Monitoring: The monitoring role of institutions such as the State Human Rights Commission and the Scheduled Castes Commission should be activated. Data on these crimes should be regularly analyzed and made public so that the policy-making process is evidence-based. Strict action should be taken against officials who violate the Act or are negligent in its implementation.

5. Victim Support and Rehabilitation: Victims should be immediately provided with legal aid, medical facilities, psychosocial counseling, and financial compensation. Victims and witnesses should be provided with security so that they can cooperate in the justice process without fear.

CONCLUSION

This research paper presents an in-depth analysis of the trends of crimes against Scheduled Castes in Chhattisgarh state during the period from 2017 to 2022. This study, based on NCRB data, clearly demonstrates that during this six-year period, not only has the number of crimes steadily increased, but the nature of the crimes is also becoming more serious and violent. A continuous rise in the total number of registered cases and the crime rate (per lakh population); the prevalence of heinous crimes such as murder and attempted murder; a sharp increase in cases of simple hurt, indicating the normalization of violence in daily life; and an alarming surge in cases of child sexual abuse under the POCSO Act. The picture that emerges from these statistics is that despite constitutional guarantees and stringent laws (SC/ST Prevention of Atrocities Act), social hatred, violence, and discrimination against Scheduled Castes in Chhattisgarh remain deeply entrenched. The nature of the crimes suggests that this violence is not merely limited to overt conflicts but is a result of a mindset of one section of society seeking to control, suppress, and systematically violate the human rights of another. In conclusion, while stricter laws are necessary, they are not sufficient. Addressing the challenge of rising crimes against Scheduled Castes in Chhattisgarh requires a comprehensive strategy that includes effective law enforcement, administrative efficiency, economic justice, and collective efforts towards social awareness. Only then can the ideals of equality, liberty, and dignity enshrined in the Constitution be translated into reality for all citizens, especially historically marginalized communities.

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