

Violation of Human Rights Against Scheduled Castes in Tamil Nadu

انتهاك حقوق الإنسان ضد الطوائف المُصنّفة في تاميل نادو

A. RANJITHKUMAR ^{1*}

¹ Assistant Professor of Political Science, School of Law, Vel Tech Rangarajan Dr. Sagunthala R&D Institute of Science and Technology Avadi, Tamil Nadu - 600 062, India

* Corresponding Author: A. RANJITHKUMAR (drranjithkumara@veltech.edu.in)



This file is licensed under a

[Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

Accepted

قبول البحث

2024 /9/3

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31559/CSSS2024.2.2.7>

Revised

مراجعة البحث

2024 /4/30

Received

استلام البحث

2024 /2/16

Abstract:

Objectives: This study seeks to examine the ongoing human rights violations against Scheduled Castes (SCs) in Tamil Nadu, despite the formal abolition of the caste system. It aims to identify the various forms of discrimination and violence faced by SCs, evaluate the effectiveness of existing legal frameworks, such as the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, and assess the role of civil society in addressing these challenges.

Methods: The research employs secondary data analysis to investigate human rights violations against Scheduled Castes (SCs). This methodology involves analysing data from government reports, academic studies, legal documents, and media sources, including newspapers, to evaluate the prevalence and impact of such violations. Content analysis was conducted to examine the portrayal and reporting of human rights issues in public discourse. The study also incorporates statistical analysis of reported incidents and case studies to identify patterns and outcomes.

Results: The findings reveal that SCs in Tamil Nadu continue to experience significant discrimination and violence, including the denial of resources, social exclusion, and political underrepresentation. The study identifies gaps in the implementation of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, highlighting issues related to enforcement and cultural resistance.

Conclusions: Despite the existence of legal provisions, human rights violations against SCs persist due to inadequate implementation of laws and deeply entrenched social prejudices. The role of civil society organisations is crucial in raising awareness and advocating for systemic reforms. The study underscores the need for more effective enforcement of existing laws and the importance of ongoing efforts to challenge discriminatory attitudes and practices.

Keywords: Scheduled Castes (SCs); Human Rights Violations; Caste Discrimination; Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act; Social Inequality; Civil Society Advocacy.

الملخص:

الأهداف: تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى استقصاء انتهاكات حقوق الإنسان المستمرة ضد الطوائف المُصنّفة (Scheduled Castes - SCs) في ولاية تاميل نادو، على الرغم من الإلغاء الرسمي لنظام الطبقات. كما تسعى لتحديد أشكال التمييز والعنف المختلفة التي يواجهها أفراد هذه الطوائف، وتقييم فعالية الأطر القانونية القائمة، مثل قانون منع الفظائع ضد الطوائف المُصنّفة والقبائل المُصنّفة لعام 1989، ودراسة دور المجتمع المدني في التصدي لهذه التحديات. المنهجية: تعتمد الدراسة على تحليل البيانات الثانوية لاستقصاء انتهاكات حقوق الإنسان ضد الطوائف المُصنّفة. تشمل هذه المنهجية تحليل تقارير حكومية، ودراسات أكاديمية، ووثائق قانونية، ومصادر إعلامية، مثل الصحف، لتقييم مدى انتشار وتأثير هذه الانتهاكات. تم استخدام تحليل المحتوى لفحص كيفية تناول قضايا حقوق الإنسان في الخطاب العام، بالإضافة إلى التحليل الإحصائي للحوادث المبلغ عنها ودراسة حالات محددة لتحديد الأنماط والنتائج.

النتائج: تكشف الدراسة أن الطوائف المُصنّفة في تاميل نادو ما زالت تعاني من تمييز كبير وعنف، بما في ذلك حرمانها من الموارد، والتمهيش الاجتماعي، ونقص التمثيل السياسي. كما تحدد الدراسة فجوات في تنفيذ قانون منع الفظائع ضد الطوائف المُصنّفة والقبائل المُصنّفة، مسلطة الضوء على مشكلات تتعلق بالتنفيذ والمقاومة الثقافية.

الخلاصة: على الرغم من وجود أحكام قانونية، فإن انتهاكات حقوق الإنسان ضد الطوائف المُصنّفة لا تزال مستمرة بسبب ضعف تطبيق القوانين والتحديات الاجتماعية المتجذرة. يلعب دور منظمات المجتمع المدني دورًا حيويًا في زيادة الوعي والدعوة إلى إصلاحات منهجية. وتؤكد الدراسة على الحاجة إلى تطبيق أكثر فعالية للقوانين القائمة وأهمية الجهود المستمرة لمواجهة المواقف والممارسات التمييزية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: طوائف المُصنّفة؛ انتهاكات حقوق الإنسان؛ التمييز الطبقي؛ قانون منع الفظائع ضد الطوائف المُصنّفة والقبائل المُصنّفة؛ عدم المساواة الاجتماعية؛ مناصرة المجتمع المدني.

Citation

RANJITHKUMAR, A. (2024). Violation of Human Rights Against Scheduled Castes in Tamil Nadu. Contemporary Studies in Social Sciences, 2(2), 193-207. <https://doi.org/10.31559/CSSS2024.2.2.7>

1 Introduction

Scheduled Castes (SC), also known as *Dalits*, refer to historically marginalized communities in India that have faced social, economic, and political discrimination for centuries. The term "Scheduled Castes" is a constitutional categorization used in India to identify specific groups that have historically been subjected to untouchability and social exclusion. The term "Dalit" translates to "oppressed" or "broken" and is often used by these communities to assert their identity and challenge historical injustices.

The historical background of Scheduled Castes is deeply rooted in the caste system, a rigid social hierarchy that has characterized Indian society for centuries. Traditionally, society was divided into four main varnas or classes, with Dalits relegated to the lowest rung. Dalits were often subjected to social segregation, forced to perform degrading tasks, and denied access to education and other societal privileges. The caste system was legitimized through religious texts and practices, further entrenching the social hierarchy. Over time, various reform movements, including those led by social reformers like B.R. Ambedkar, sought to challenge and dismantle the discriminatory aspects of the caste system.

The Constitution of India, adopted in 1950, recognized the historical injustice faced by Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. It included provisions for affirmative action to uplift these communities and eliminate discrimination. Article 17 of the Constitution specifically abolished untouchability and made its practice a punishable offense.

Reservation Policies are to address historical injustices and promote social equality, the Indian government implemented reservation policies that provide affirmative action in education, employment, and political representation for Scheduled Castes. Despite these measures, challenges persist, and instances of discrimination and violence against Dalits continue to be reported.

Understanding the historical background of Scheduled Castes is crucial for comprehending the context in which contemporary issues related to their human rights violations and social status arise. The struggle for the rights and dignity of Scheduled Castes remains an ongoing process in India.

Human rights are fundamental rights and freedoms that every individual is entitled to, irrespective of their race, ethnicity, gender, religion, or social status. These rights are universal, inherent, and inalienable, meaning they belong to every person simply by virtue of being human. Human rights encompass a wide range of civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights, and they are enshrined in international instruments such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and various international treaties and conventions. The core principles of human rights include dignity, equality, non-discrimination, and the right to life, liberty, and security. Governments, institutions, and individuals are obligated to respect, protect, and fulfill these rights, ensuring that everyone can live with dignity and without fear of discrimination or oppression.

Addressing human rights violations against Scheduled Castes is of paramount importance due to several reasons: Scheduled Castes have historically faced social discrimination and exclusion based on the caste system. Addressing human rights violations is a crucial step toward achieving social justice and dismantling deeply ingrained discriminatory practices. The Indian Constitution recognizes the historical injustices faced by Scheduled Castes and mandates special provisions, including affirmative action, to uplift and empower these communities. Addressing violations aligns with the constitutional commitment to ensuring equality and justice for all. India is a signatory to various international human rights treaties and conventions. Addressing violations against Scheduled Castes reflects the country's commitment to upholding human rights standards on the global stage.

Protecting the human rights of Scheduled Castes is essential for their empowerment and inclusion in all spheres of life. It ensures equal opportunities in education, employment, and political participation, contributing to their overall socio-economic development. By addressing violations, society can work towards eradicating discriminatory attitudes and practices. This contributes to building an inclusive and tolerant society where individuals are treated with dignity and respect, irrespective of their caste or social background. Upholding the rights of all citizens, including Scheduled Castes, fosters a sense of national unity and cohesion. It promotes the idea that diversity is a strength and that every citizen has a role in the nation's progress.

Addressing human rights violations against Scheduled Castes is not only a legal and constitutional imperative but also a moral and ethical obligation to build a just, inclusive, and equitable society. It requires a comprehensive approach that combines legal measures, social awareness, and policy initiatives to eliminate discrimination and promote the well-being of all citizens.

Scheduled Castes (SCs), also known as **Dalits**, refer to historically marginalised communities in India that have faced social, economic, and political discrimination for centuries. The term "Scheduled Castes" is a constitutional categorisation used in India to identify specific groups that have historically been subjected to untouchability and social exclusion. The term "Dalit" translates to "oppressed" or "broken" and is often embraced by these communities to assert their identity and challenge historical injustices.

The historical background of Scheduled Castes is deeply rooted in the caste system, a rigid social hierarchy that has characterised Indian society for centuries. Traditionally, society was divided into four main **varnas** or classes, with Dalits relegated to the lowest rung. Dalits were often subjected to social segregation, forced to perform degrading tasks, and denied access to education and other societal privileges. The caste system was legitimised through religious texts and practices, further entrenching the social hierarchy. Over time, various reform movements, including those led by social reformers like **B.R. Ambedkar**, sought to challenge and dismantle the discriminatory aspects of the caste system.

The Constitution of India, adopted in 1950, recognised the historical injustices faced by Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. It included provisions for affirmative action to uplift these communities and eliminate discrimination. Article 17 of the Constitution specifically abolished untouchability and made its practice a punishable offence.

To address historical injustices and promote social equality, the Indian government implemented reservation policies that provide affirmative action in education, employment, and political representation for Scheduled Castes. Despite these measures, challenges persist, and instances of discrimination and violence against Dalits continue to be reported.

Understanding the historical background of Scheduled Castes is crucial for comprehending the context in which contemporary issues related to their human rights violations and social status arise. The struggle for the rights and dignity of Scheduled Castes remains an ongoing process in India.

Human rights are fundamental rights and freedoms that every individual is entitled to, irrespective of their race, ethnicity, gender, religion, or social status. These rights are universal, inherent, and inalienable, meaning they belong to every person simply by virtue of being human. Human rights encompass a wide range of civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights, and they are enshrined in international instruments such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and various international treaties and conventions. The core principles of human rights include dignity, equality, non-discrimination, and the right to life, liberty, and security. Governments, institutions, and individuals are obligated to respect, protect, and fulfil these rights, ensuring that everyone can live with dignity and without fear of discrimination or oppression.

Addressing human rights violations against Scheduled Castes is of paramount importance for several reasons: Scheduled Castes have historically faced social discrimination and exclusion based on the caste system. Addressing these violations is a crucial step toward achieving social justice and dismantling deeply ingrained discriminatory practices. The Indian Constitution recognises the historical injustices faced by Scheduled Castes and mandates special provisions, including affirmative action, to uplift and empower these communities. Addressing these violations aligns with the constitutional commitment to ensuring equality and justice for all. India is a signatory to various international human rights treaties and conventions; thus, addressing violations against Scheduled Castes reflects the country's commitment to upholding human rights standards on the global stage.

Protecting the human rights of Scheduled Castes is essential for their empowerment and inclusion in all spheres of life. It ensures equal opportunities in education, employment, and political participation, contributing to their overall socio-economic development. By addressing violations, society can work towards eradicating discriminatory attitudes and practices. This contributes to building an inclusive and tolerant society where individuals are treated with dignity and respect, irrespective of their caste or social background. Upholding the rights of all citizens, including Scheduled Castes, fosters a sense of national unity and cohesion. It promotes the idea that diversity is a strength and that every citizen has a role in the nation's progress.

Addressing human rights violations against Scheduled Castes is not only a legal and constitutional imperative but also a moral and ethical obligation to build a just, inclusive, and equitable society. It requires a comprehensive approach that combines legal measures, social awareness, and policy initiatives to eliminate discrimination and promote the well-being of all citizens.

2 Objectives

- To assess the extent and nature of human rights violations experienced by Scheduled Castes in Tamil Nadu, focusing on discrimination, violence, and socio-economic disparities.

- To examine the effectiveness and enforcement of existing legal frameworks and policies aimed at safeguarding the rights of Scheduled Castes in the state.
- To explore the societal and cultural factors contributing to the persistence of human rights violations against Scheduled Castes and their impact on these communities.
- To propose evidence-based recommendations for policy reforms and interventions that can mitigate human rights violations and promote social justice for Scheduled Castes in Tamil Nadu.

3 Methodology

This research employs secondary data analysis to investigate human rights violations against Scheduled Castes (SCs). It involves a comprehensive review of various data sources, including government reports from agencies like the National Commission for Scheduled Castes, which provide official data on incidents and governmental responses. Academic studies offer theoretical and empirical context, while legal documents such as case laws and judgments reveal the application and challenges of protective laws like the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989. Media sources, including newspapers and other outlets, are analysed through content analysis to understand the portrayal and reporting of these violations in public discourse. Additionally, statistical analysis of reported incidents and case studies helps identify patterns and trends, providing a detailed examination of the prevalence and impact of human rights violations against SCs. This multifaceted approach aims to offer a thorough understanding of both systemic issues and the effectiveness of existing measures.

4 Literature Review

Anandhi's (2013) article, "Embodying Dalit Women: 'Identity' and the Politics of Representation," featured in the book "Power, Protest and Participation: Local Elites and Development in India," explores the intersection of caste and gender in India. It delves into how Dalit women negotiate their identities and navigate representation in a society marked by caste-based discrimination. The article emphasises the unique challenges faced by Dalit women due to the dual burden of caste and gender discrimination. It also highlights the need to move beyond stereotypical representations and acknowledge the diverse experiences and agency of Dalit women. Anandhi's work calls for a more nuanced approach to representational politics that respects and amplifies the voices of Dalit women.

S. R. Nair's (2007) article, "At the Crossroads of Gender and Caste: The 'Dalit Woman' in Tamil Dalit Literature," published in the *Economic and Political Weekly*, explores the intersection of gender and caste through the lens of Tamil Dalit literature. The article examines how Dalit women are portrayed and represented in these literary works, emphasising their unique experiences and challenges arising from both caste and gender discrimination. Nair's work highlights how Tamil Dalit literature provides a platform for Dalit women to assert their identities and voices, challenging prevailing narratives and offering a space for their struggles and aspirations. It underscores the importance of recognising and addressing the specific issues faced by Dalit women in their quest for equality and social justice within the complex interplay of caste and gender.

In S. R. Nair's (2003) article, "Caste, Class, and Power: Changing Patterns of Stratification in a Tanjore Village," published in the *Economic and Political Weekly*, the author investigates the evolving patterns of social stratification in a village in Tanjore, India. Nair explores how caste, class, and power dynamics are shifting within the village, reflecting broader changes in Indian society. The article delves into the complex interplay of these factors and their impact on the social structure of the village, particularly in relation to caste-based hierarchies. Nair's work offers valuable insights into the dynamics of rural India's changing social landscape and the challenges and opportunities it presents for various communities.

In S. Sathiamoorthy's book, "Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in India: A Socio-Economic Profile," published by Oxford University Press in 2003, the author provides a comprehensive analysis of the socio-economic status of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in India. The book offers a detailed profile of these marginalised communities, examining various aspects of their lives, including education, employment, income, and social mobility. Sathiamoorthy's work highlights the persistent disparities and challenges faced by these groups, shedding light on the need for targeted policies and interventions to address their socio-economic disadvantages. The book serves as a valuable resource for scholars, policymakers, and anyone interested in understanding the socio-economic conditions of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in India.

"No Alphabet in Sight: New Dalit Writing from South India," edited by K. Satyanarayana and Susie Tharu and published by Penguin Random House India in 2019, is a collection of contemporary Dalit literature from South India. This anthology showcases the diverse voices and experiences of Dalit writers, providing a platform

for their narratives to be heard. The book presents a wide range of literary forms, including poetry, fiction, and essays, reflecting the rich literary contributions of Dalits in the region. It sheds light on the complexities of caste-based discrimination and the resilience of Dalit communities in the face of adversity. "No Alphabet in Sight" is a significant addition to the body of literature that challenges dominant narratives and amplifies marginalised voices from South India.

"Dalit Identity and Politics" (2006), edited by Ghanshyam Shah, published by Sage Publications, explores the intricate relationship between Dalit identity and politics in India. It delves into the multifaceted dimensions of Dalit identity and how it intersects with the political landscape, shedding light on the struggles and aspirations of Dalit communities.

"Scheduled Castes: Identity and Development" (2012) by K. K. Singh, published by Serials Publications, examines the identity and development of Scheduled Castes in India. It delves into the challenges and opportunities faced by Scheduled Castes, exploring how their identity shapes their development trajectories.

"The Dalit Movement in India and Its Leaders" (2007) by T. Thirumavalavan, featured in *Dalit Solidarity*, provides insights into the Dalit movement in India and its prominent leaders. It highlights the voices and actions of leaders who have played a pivotal role in advocating for the rights and empowerment of Dalit communities.

"Uproot Hindutva: The Fiery Voice of the Liberation Panthers" (2009) by T. Thirumavalavan, published by Popular Prakashan, discusses the Liberation Panthers and their impassioned struggle against Hindutva. It offers a perspective on the political and social challenges posed by Hindutva ideologies in India.

"Caste and Economic Discrimination: Causes, Consequences, and Remedies" (2007) by S. Thorat and K. S. Newman, featured in *Economic and Political Weekly*, explores the root causes, consequences, and potential remedies for caste-based economic discrimination. It delves into the complexities of this issue and suggests ways to address it.

"Untouchability and Caste Discrimination in Urban Areas of India" (2015) by S. Thorat and R. Sengupta, published by the Indian Institute of Dalit Studies, examines the persistence of untouchability and caste discrimination in urban settings in India. It sheds light on the challenges faced by Dalit communities in urban areas and their experiences of discrimination.

This comprehensive review provides an insightful overview of various works and publications that collectively offer a deep understanding of the complex issues related to caste, gender, identity, and social dynamics in India. Anandhi's exploration of the politics of representation and the unique challenges faced by Dalit women underscores the importance of nuanced approaches to empower marginalised voices. S. R. Nair's examination of gender and caste through Tamil Dalit literature offers a platform for Dalit women to assert their identities and challenges prevailing narratives.

Furthermore, S. R. Nair's study of changing patterns of stratification in a Tanjore village provides valuable insights into the shifting dynamics of caste, class, and power in rural India. Sathiamoorthy's analysis of the socio-economic status of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes highlights the persistent disparities and the urgent need for targeted interventions.

The anthology "No Alphabet in Sight" serves as a significant contribution by amplifying the voices of Dalit writers and shedding light on the complexities of caste-based discrimination. Additionally, works like "Dalit Identity and Politics," "Scheduled Castes: Identity and Development," and "The Dalit Movement in India and Its Leaders" delve into the multifaceted dimensions of Dalit identity, politics, and leadership.

T. Thirumavalavan's "Uproot Hindutva" provides valuable insights into the challenges posed by Hindutva ideologies in India, and S. Thorat and K. S. Newman's exploration of caste-based economic discrimination offers potential remedies for this deep-rooted issue. Lastly, the examination of untouchability and caste discrimination in urban areas in "Untouchability and Caste Discrimination in Urban Areas of India" further underscores the ongoing challenges faced by Dalit communities.

Collectively, these works offer a comprehensive understanding of the complex socio-cultural and political landscape in India, with a particular focus on the experiences and struggles of Dalit communities and the need for meaningful change and representation.

5 Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

The theoretical and conceptual framework for understanding the **violation of human rights against Scheduled Castes in Tamil Nadu** is a complex issue that can be comprehensively analysed through a structured approach. This framework combines essential theories and concepts to provide insights into the root causes, manifestations, and consequences of these violations.

Central to this framework is the recognition of caste-based discrimination and oppression as fundamental concepts. The caste system in India, though officially abolished, continues to shape societal structures and attitudes. This theoretical perspective underscores how Scheduled Castes have historically faced systemic discrimination, including practices such as untouchability, restricted access to resources, and limited socio-economic opportunities.

The framework also incorporates the theory of intersectionality, acknowledging that individuals' experiences are shaped by multiple identities, including caste, gender, class, and religion. This perspective highlights the intersecting factors that influence the experiences of Scheduled Castes in Tamil Nadu. For instance, Dalit women may face compounded forms of discrimination due to the convergence of caste and gender biases, necessitating a more nuanced understanding of their unique challenges.

Human rights principles and legal frameworks play a pivotal role in this framework. It emphasises that human rights are universal and inalienable, applicable to all individuals regardless of their caste identity. This perspective underscores the significance of international and national human rights instruments, such as the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, in safeguarding the rights of Scheduled Castes. It calls for the protection of fundamental human rights, including the right to equality, freedom from discrimination, and the right to life and security for Scheduled Castes communities.

The framework highlights the concepts of empowerment and social justice as essential principles in addressing human rights violations against Scheduled Castes in Tamil Nadu. It underscores the need for proactive policies and initiatives that go beyond merely eliminating discrimination and actively empower marginalised communities. Concepts like affirmative action, inclusive development, and social justice underscore the importance of measures aimed at uplifting Scheduled Castes economically, socially, and politically. Incorporating these principles into the framework advocates for comprehensive interventions that rectify historical injustices and promote equality and human rights for Scheduled Castes communities.

This integrated theoretical and conceptual framework provides a holistic approach to analysing and addressing the violation of human rights against Scheduled Castes in Tamil Nadu, offering a comprehensive understanding of the issue and guiding efforts towards social justice and equality.

6 Violation of Human Rights Against SCs in Tamil Nadu

Violations of human rights against Scheduled Castes (SCs) in Tamil Nadu have been a matter of concern for many years. While the state has made significant progress in terms of social and economic development, there are still several challenges related to caste-based discrimination and violence faced by SC communities. Crimes against Scheduled Castes in Tamil Nadu are a significant concern, with the government and various organisations actively working to reduce and prevent such incidents. Scheduled Castes, historically disadvantaged communities in India, are protected under various laws, including the Prevention of Atrocities Act, which is designed to deter crimes against them. Despite legal protections, the persistence of crimes indicates ongoing challenges in social integration and law enforcement.

It's also worth noting that the actual number of incidents could be higher, as not all cases might be reported. Various factors, including stigma and fear of retaliation, can affect reporting rates. Additionally, efforts to improve the reporting process, raise awareness, and implement preventative measures can impact these figures over time.

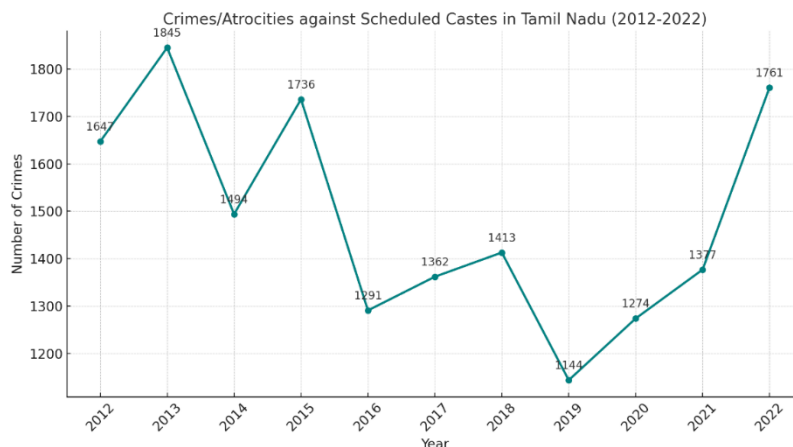


Figure 1: Crime/Atrocities against Scheduled Castes in Tamil Nadu (2012-2022)

The chart above visualises the trend of crimes/atrocities against Scheduled Castes in Tamil Nadu from 2012 to 2022. The number of reported crimes is plotted against each year, showing the fluctuations over the **eleven-year** period. Over this **timeframe**, there were a total of **16,344 reported crimes**. On average, approximately **1,485.82 crimes** were reported per year. The year 2013 recorded the highest number of crimes at **1,845**, while 2019 had the lowest at **1,144**. A general decreasing trend in reported crimes was observed, although the trend is not statistically significant, indicating that the decrease is not necessarily steady or guaranteed to continue. The correlation coefficient is approximately **-0.398**, which indicates a slight overall decreasing trend in the number of crimes over the years. The standard deviation is **229.24**, signifying that the number of crimes reported annually varied by this amount from the average. The negative value for the trend slope suggests that, despite yearly fluctuations, there is a general trend of decrease in the number of crimes over the period analysed. However, it is important to note that the trend is not strong, and additional statistical analysis could provide further insights, such as a regression analysis for a more precise determination of the trend.

It is also important to note that crime data can be influenced by many factors, including changes in reporting practices, law enforcement effectiveness, and social developments. Thus, the trend should not be interpreted as a direct measure of actual crime rates without considering these factors. Crimes against Scheduled Castes in India are a significant concern, with the government and various organisations actively working to reduce and prevent such incidents. Scheduled Castes, historically disadvantaged communities in India, are protected under various laws, including the **Prevention of Atrocities Act**, which is designed to deter crimes against them. Despite legal protections, the persistence of crimes indicates ongoing challenges in social integration and law enforcement. It is also worth noting that the actual number of incidents could be higher, as not all cases might be reported. Various factors, including stigma and fear of retaliation, can affect reporting rates. Additionally, efforts to improve the reporting process, raise awareness, and implement preventative measures can impact these figures over time.

6.1 Case 1: Dharmapuri Dalit Vanniyar Atrocity (2012)

In November 2012, **the Dharmapuri district** in Tamil Nadu witnessed a tragic incident that resulted in violence and displacement in three Dalit villages. The incident was triggered by the suicide of a Vanniyar community member, who allegedly took his own life in response to his daughter's inter-caste marriage with a Dalit youth. Following the suicide, tensions escalated, leading to an outbreak of violence primarily targeting Dalit residents. The situation escalated to the point where houses in Dalit colonies were set on fire, and residents were subjected to physical attacks. The violence and unrest created a climate of fear and insecurity within the affected Dalit communities.

The consequences of the incident were severe, particularly for the Dalit families residing in the affected villages. Many homes were destroyed as a result of the arson, leaving numerous families displaced and without shelter. The immediate aftermath of the violence witnessed a significant disruption in the lives of the Dalit residents, who faced the dual challenges of rebuilding their homes and coping with the trauma of the attacks. The incident also drew attention to the broader issue of caste-based violence and the extent to which inter-caste marriages can provoke hostility within certain communities. The outcomes underscored the need for urgent intervention to address the immediate needs of the affected families and to prevent further incidents of violence in the region.

The Dharmapuri Dalit Vanniyar Atrocity had a profound impact on both the local community and the broader society. The incident highlighted the deep-seated caste animosities prevalent in the region, exposing the extent to which inter-caste relationships can trigger extreme reactions. The incident drew attention to the urgent need for societal change, emphasising the importance of fostering an environment that promotes inclusivity and tolerance. The violence underscored the critical role of effective implementation of laws and interventions to prevent and address caste-based violence. It became a rallying point for advocates of social justice and anti-discrimination efforts, prompting calls for community reconciliation and education to challenge deeply ingrained prejudices. In the aftermath of the incident, there were increased discussions on the need for targeted measures to address caste-based tensions and promote harmony within communities. It also led to a renewed emphasis on the importance of implementing and strengthening laws to prevent atrocities against Scheduled Castes and Tribes, emphasising the broader societal responsibility to ensure the protection and dignity of all individuals, regardless of caste.

6.2 Case 2: Caste Discrimination in Schools

In various incidents reported across Tamil Nadu, instances of caste discrimination in schools have been documented, revealing a deeply ingrained issue within the educational system. Dalit students have faced discrimination in different forms, including segregation, verbal abuse, and denial of access to facilities based on their caste identity. Dalit students have reported being subjected to discriminatory treatment by both peers and teachers. The discrimination often manifests in the form of exclusion, where Dalit students are made to sit separately or face isolation from their classmates. Verbal abuse, insults, and derogatory remarks based on caste identity have been reported, creating a hostile environment for Dalit students within the school setting. Furthermore, there have been instances where Dalit students are denied access to common facilities such as water sources, playgrounds, and even toilets. This segregation and discrimination contribute to the alienation and marginalisation of Dalit students within the educational system.

The discriminatory practices in schools have severe consequences for Dalit students. One of the immediate outcomes is the increased likelihood of dropout rates among Dalit students. The hostile environment created by caste-based discrimination negatively impacts their emotional well-being and psychological health, making the educational experience distressing. Dalit students may face challenges in focusing on their studies, participating in school activities, and forming healthy social relationships. The denial of access to facilities also affects their overall academic experience and impedes their ability to fully engage in the educational process.

The impact of caste discrimination in schools extends beyond the immediate consequences for individual students. The perpetuation of discriminatory practices contributes to the reinforcement of social hierarchies and reinforces the stigmatization of Dalit communities.

The discriminatory experiences in schools can have a lasting impact on the self-esteem and self-worth of Dalit students. It may hinder their personal development, creating barriers to achieving their full potential. The negative experiences in schools can also shape their perceptions of the broader society, influencing their future aspirations and interactions. Addressing discrimination within educational institutions is crucial not only for the well-being and academic success of individual Dalit students but also for challenging systemic inequalities. These cases underscore the importance of implementing policies and awareness programmes within schools to create an inclusive and supportive environment that fosters equal opportunities for all students, regardless of their caste background.

6.3 Case 3: Honor Killing in Udumalaipettai (2016)

In 2016, Udumalaipettai witnessed a horrific incident of honour killing when Shankar, a Dalit man, was brutally murdered for marrying a woman from a higher caste. The assailants responsible for the crime were family members of the woman who vehemently opposed the inter-caste marriage. The motive behind the murder was rooted in the deeply entrenched social norms and prejudices surrounding caste hierarchies. Shankar's decision to marry outside his caste was perceived as a breach of societal norms, leading to severe consequences. The assailants, driven by caste-based notions of honour, sought to punish Shankar for defying traditional boundaries of caste endogamy.

The case gained widespread attention both regionally and nationally, sparking outrage and condemnation from various quarters. The shocking nature of the crime and the blatant caste-based motive led to swift action by law enforcement agencies. Arrests were made in connection with the murder, and legal proceedings were initiated against the perpetrators. The case became emblematic of the grave consequences individuals may face when attempting to challenge caste-based restrictions on marriage.

The Udumalaipettai honour killing case had a profound impact on public discourse and awareness. It shed light on the prevalence of honour killings in the context of inter-caste marriages, exposing the extent to which caste prejudices can manifest in extreme acts of violence. The incident underscored the urgent need for stronger legal measures to prevent and address honour killings. It prompted discussions about the effectiveness of existing laws and the necessity of stricter penalties for those involved in such heinous crimes. The case also emphasised the importance of social awareness and education to challenge regressive attitudes rooted in caste-based discrimination. The tragic death of Shankar became a rallying point for advocates of social justice, leading to increased calls for societal change and a re-examination of cultural norms that perpetuate violence in the name of caste honour. It highlighted the imperative of creating an environment where individuals are free to make personal choices without fear of reprisal based on their caste identity. The Udumalaipettai honour killing serves as a stark reminder of the challenges individuals face when confronting deeply ingrained social norms.

The incident has fuelled efforts to address the root causes of honour killings, advocating for legal reforms, and promoting social awareness to create a more just and equitable society.

6.4 Case 4: Perumal Murugan Controversy (2015)

Perumal Murugan, a prominent Tamil writer, faced a significant controversy surrounding his novel "Madhorubagan" (One Part Woman), published in 2010. The novel delves into the sensitive theme of an inter-caste relationship set against the backdrop of societal norms and cultural practices. The narrative explores the challenges faced by a couple from different castes trying to conceive a child during a temple festival where consensual relations were allowed. The novel, despite being well-received critically, triggered intense backlash from certain conservative groups who objected to its portrayal of caste dynamics and traditions. The controversy escalated as community leaders and political figures criticised the book for allegedly hurting sentiments and distorting cultural practices. The author, Perumal Murugan, and his family became the target of harassment and threats from groups and individuals opposed to the content of the novel. The intimidation extended beyond the literary sphere, affecting Murugan's personal life and safety. Faced with intense pressure and fearing for his well-being, Perumal Murugan took the extraordinary step of publicly declaring his "death" as a writer. In a Facebook post in January 2015, he announced that he would stop writing, publishing, and participating in literary activities, effectively declaring an end to his literary career.

The incident ignited a broader national debate on freedom of expression and the right of artists to explore challenging themes in their work. Intellectuals, writers, and activists rallied behind Perumal Murugan, emphasising the importance of protecting artistic freedom. Murugan's decision to "die" as a writer became a symbol of artistic resistance against censorship and societal pressures. The incident prompted discussions on the role of literature in addressing social issues and challenging established norms. Following the controversy, the Madras High Court intervened in support of Perumal Murugan, affirming the writer's right to freedom of expression. The court observed that the author should be allowed to write and express his thoughts without fear of persecution.

The literary community, both in India and internationally, expressed solidarity with Perumal Murugan. Writers, publishers, and readers defended the author's right to explore complex themes and condemned the intimidation he faced. Over time, with the legal and moral support he received, Perumal Murugan gradually returned to writing. While the controversy left a lasting impact on him, he resumed his literary career, contributing to discussions about the role of literature in challenging societal norms.

The Perumal Murugan controversy serves as a poignant example of the challenges faced by artists when they confront deeply ingrained societal norms, particularly those related to caste. It also highlights the importance of safeguarding freedom of expression and protecting artists from undue threats and harassment.

6.5 Case 5: Vachathi Case (1992)

The Vachathi case is a tragic incident that occurred in the Vachathi village, a tribal settlement in Tamil Nadu, in 1992. The incident involved the sexual assault and abuse of adivasi (tribal) women by forest officials during an anti-smuggling operation. Additionally, there were reports of the destruction of property belonging to the adivasi community. During the operation, forest officials, who were conducting raids to curb illegal activities in the forest area, allegedly perpetrated sexual violence against tribal women. The incident unfolded as a gross violation of human rights, involving the abuse of power and authority by those entrusted with the responsibility of law enforcement.

Legal proceedings were initiated against the perpetrators involved in the sexual assault and abuse. However, the case faced delays, which raised concerns about the timely delivery of justice. The delays in the legal process further compounded the trauma experienced by the survivors and their community. The incident sparked public outcry and protests from human rights activists, tribal organisations, and concerned citizens. Demonstrations were organised to demand justice for the victims and accountability for the perpetrators. The Vachathi case brought attention to the vulnerability of tribal communities, particularly in the context of interactions with law enforcement agencies. It highlighted the need for safeguards and protection mechanisms to prevent the abuse of power and ensure the well-being of marginalised communities.

The incident prompted discussions on the broader issue of tribal rights, land ownership, and the protection of indigenous communities. Advocacy for the rights of tribal populations gained momentum, with calls for policies and measures to safeguard their interests. The Vachathi case became emblematic of larger human rights concerns, shedding light on the importance of preventing sexual violence, abuse, and exploitation, especially within vulnerable and marginalised communities. The incident led to calls for reforms in the conduct of law

enforcement agencies during anti-smuggling or anti-poaching operations. It emphasised the necessity of training and sensitisation to ensure that authorities respect the rights and dignity of the communities they serve.

While legal proceedings were initiated, the delays and challenges in the justice system underscored the difficulties in ensuring accountability for such heinous acts. The Vachathi case stands as a reminder of the ongoing need to address power imbalances, protect vulnerable communities, and advocate for the rights of marginalised populations.

6.6 Case 6: Kizhvenmani Massacre (1968)

In Kizhvenmani, a Dalit settlement in Tamil Nadu, a caste-based massacre occurred in which 44 Dalit agricultural labourers, including women and children, were killed in retaliation for demanding higher wages. The attack was orchestrated by landlords from the dominant caste. The incident drew attention to the exploitation of Dalit labourers and the need for agrarian reforms. It became a symbol of Dalit resistance against economic exploitation and social injustice.

6.7 Case 7: Kizhvenmani Massacre (1968)

The Kizhvenmani Massacre is a tragic incident that took place on 25 December 1968, in Kizhvenmani, a Dalit settlement in Tamil Nadu. The massacre was a brutal act of violence perpetrated against Dalit agricultural labourers who were demanding higher wages from landlords of the dominant caste.

At the heart of the incident was a long-standing dispute over fair wages and working conditions. The Dalit labourers, predominantly agricultural workers, had been organising and demanding better remuneration for their labour. This movement for economic rights was perceived as a challenge to the existing social order by the landlords from the dominant caste. On that fateful day, Christmas Day, tensions reached a boiling point. The landlords, in retaliation against the demands of the Dalit labourers, orchestrated a brutal attack. A mob armed with weapons descended upon the Dalit settlement, resulting in the massacre of 44 Dalit men, women, and children.

The incident became a symbol of Dalit resistance against economic exploitation and social injustice. It highlighted the courage of Dalit labourers who dared to demand their rights in the face of entrenched caste-based discrimination. The massacre drew attention to the exploitation of Dalit labourers in the agrarian sector, bringing to the forefront the harsh working conditions, meagre wages, and systemic inequalities that persisted in rural Tamil Nadu. The Kizhvenmani Massacre fuelled demands for agrarian reforms to address the unequal power dynamics between landlords and agricultural labourers. The incident contributed to discussions about the need for fair wages, land reforms, and better working conditions in the agricultural sector.

The incident prompted political mobilisation among Dalits and progressive groups. It led to increased activism and advocacy for the rights of Dalit communities, sparking discussions on the broader issues of social justice and equality. The Kizhvenmani Massacre found resonance in Dalit literature, becoming a theme in poems, stories, and literary works that explored the resilience and struggles of Dalit communities against caste-based oppression. The massacre site in Kizhvenmani has been memorialised as a reminder of historical injustice and the resilience of Dalit communities. The memorial serves as a focal point for reflection and remembrance of those who lost their lives in the pursuit of economic justice.

The Kizhvenmani Massacre remains a stark chapter in the history of Dalit struggles in Tamil Nadu, symbolising the enduring quest for economic rights, dignity, and social justice. The incident has left an indelible mark on the collective memory of Dalit communities and continues to be cited in discussions on the broader issues of caste-based discrimination and exploitation.

6.8 Case 8: Dalit Youth Murdered for Marrying Upper-Caste Woman (2021)

In June 2021, a tragic incident unfolded in Thoothukudi, Tamil Nadu, where a young Dalit man named V. Sankar was murdered for marrying an upper-caste woman. The assailants were reportedly relatives of the woman, and their actions were driven by opposition to the inter-caste marriage. Sankar's decision to marry a woman from a higher caste was met with strong resistance from some members of her family. The opposition was rooted in deeply ingrained caste prejudices, where inter-caste marriages are often viewed as violations of traditional norms and perceived as threats to social hierarchies. The assailants took violent action against Sankar, leading to his tragic death. The murder underscored the persistent challenges faced by individuals who choose to defy caste-based restrictions and societal expectations in matters of love and marriage.

Following the murder, law enforcement authorities took prompt action, leading to the arrests of those involved in the crime. Legal proceedings were initiated against the perpetrators, signalling a commitment to

ensuring justice for the victim. The murder of V. Sankar sparked public outcry and drew attention to the deeply rooted issue of honour killings in the context of inter-caste marriages. Civil society, activists, and concerned citizens expressed their condemnation of such crimes and called for societal change. The incident brought to the forefront the continued prevalence of honour killings in certain communities, reflecting the resistance to social and cultural changes. It emphasised the urgent need to address regressive attitudes and promote acceptance of inter-caste marriages. The murder of V. Sankar shed light on the challenges faced by couples who choose to marry across caste lines, raising awareness about the need for legal protection and social support for individuals who make choices contrary to traditional expectations. The incident fuelled discussions on the necessity for legal reforms to address honour killings and provide enhanced protection for couples involved in inter-caste marriages. It underscored the importance of stringent measures to deter potential perpetrators.

The murder of V. Sankar tragically highlighted the intersection of caste-based discrimination, societal expectations, and the vulnerability of individuals who challenge traditional norms in matters of love and marriage. The incident prompted broader discussions on the need for societal change, legal reforms, and the protection of individuals' rights to choose their life partners irrespective of caste.

6.9 Case 9: Tirunelveli Caste Violence (2017)

In 2017, Tirunelveli in Tamil Nadu witnessed a tragic incident involving caste-based violence. Gokulraj, a young Dalit man, was allegedly murdered for being in a relationship with a girl from a higher caste. The incident underscored the deeply rooted prejudices and hostility associated with inter-caste relationships in certain communities. Gokulraj's relationship was perceived as a transgression of societal norms and caste boundaries, leading to violent consequences. The perpetrators, driven by caste-based prejudices, targeted him for his perceived defiance of traditional expectations regarding inter-caste interactions.

The murder of Gokulraj received widespread attention both regionally and nationally. The shocking nature of the crime and the underlying caste dynamics drew public scrutiny and condemnation. The incident led to protests and demands for swift justice. Civil society, activists, and concerned citizens rallied to bring attention to the injustice and to call for accountability for the perpetrators. Law enforcement authorities took action by initiating legal proceedings against those responsible for Gokulraj's murder. The case became emblematic of the urgent need for legal intervention to address caste-based violence and honour killings.

Gokulraj's murder prompted broader discussions on the persistent issue of caste-based violence in society. It fuelled debates about the challenges faced by individuals in inter-caste relationships and the need for societal change. The incident underscored the imperative for societal change to prevent caste-based violence and honour killings. It prompted conversations about the importance of fostering a more inclusive and accepting society that respects individuals' choices in matters of relationships and marriage. Gokulraj's case contributed to advocacy for awareness programmes aimed at challenging deep-seated caste prejudices and fostering dialogue to bring about attitudinal changes within communities.

The Tirunelveli caste violence incident reflects the ongoing struggle against caste-based discrimination and the challenges faced by individuals who defy traditional norms. It highlights the need for both legal reforms and concerted efforts to address societal attitudes that perpetuate violence and discrimination based on caste. The case serves as a reminder of the broader societal responsibility to create an environment where individuals can live free from fear and prejudice, irrespective of their caste background.

6.10 Case 10: Dharmapuri Violence (2012)

In November 2012, Dharmapuri district in Tamil Nadu witnessed a disturbing incident of caste-based violence that unfolded as a consequence of an inter-caste marriage. The incident revolved around the suicide of a Vanniyar community member, which was reportedly linked to his daughter's marriage to a Dalit youth.

The trigger for the violence was the inter-caste marriage between a Vanniyar girl and a Dalit youth. Inter-caste marriages are often met with resistance and social stigma, especially in communities where caste identities are deeply entrenched. Allegedly unable to accept his daughter's inter-caste marriage, a member of the Vanniyar community took his own life. The suicide served as a catalyst for heightened tensions in the region. In the aftermath of the suicide, members of the Vanniyar community launched violent attacks on Dalit villages. Reports indicated that houses in Dalit colonies were set on fire, and residents were subjected to physical attacks and intimidation.

Several Dalit families were severely affected by the violence, with many homes being destroyed in the attacks. The scale of destruction led to the displacement of Dalit residents, creating a humanitarian crisis in the affected areas. The incident raised serious concerns about the well-being and safety of the displaced Dalit

families. It highlighted the vulnerability of marginalised communities and the urgent need for humanitarian assistance and protection. In the aftermath of the violence, there were calls for community reconciliation efforts to bridge the divide between the Vanniyar and Dalit communities. Reconciliation initiatives aimed at fostering understanding and harmony were deemed essential to heal the wounds inflicted by the violence. The violent attacks and destruction prompted legal actions against those involved in the violence. Law enforcement authorities took steps to identify and prosecute individuals responsible for the attacks on Dalit villages. The incident drew attention to the persistent caste-based tensions and prejudices prevalent in certain regions. It underscored the challenges associated with inter-caste relationships and the need for social and cultural changes to promote inclusivity and acceptance.

The Dharmapuri violence of 2012 serves as a stark reminder of the deep-seated caste divisions in certain communities and the challenges faced by individuals who defy traditional norms, particularly in the context of inter-caste marriages. The incident prompted reflections on the urgent need for societal change, community reconciliation, and legal interventions to address caste-based violence and discrimination.

6.11 Case 11: Villupuram Violence (2013)

In 2013, an incident of violence and discrimination occurred in Villupuram district, Tamil Nadu, targeting a Dalit family. The incident centred around the family's refusal to perform a task traditionally assigned to Dalits, leading to tension and subsequent caste-based discrimination.

The incident began when a Dalit family refused to dispose of a dead calf. Traditionally, certain tasks, such as handling animal carcasses, are relegated to Dalits due to deeply entrenched caste-based occupations. In many places, Dalits have historically been assigned tasks considered impure or polluting, contributing to their social marginalisation. Disposing of dead animals is one such task often assigned to Dalit communities based on societal hierarchies. The Dalit family's refusal to perform the task led to tension in the community. The incident escalated as a result of entrenched caste prejudices, with discrimination directed at the Dalit family for deviating from the assigned role.

The incident brought attention to the persistent issue of caste-based discrimination, where certain communities face social exclusion and mistreatment based on their caste identity. The incident underscored the ongoing challenges faced by Dalit communities in asserting their rights and challenging traditional norms that perpetuate caste-based discrimination. The incident prompted discussions about the need for community awareness and education to challenge deeply ingrained prejudices. Advocacy for sensitisation programmes to foster understanding and harmony within communities gained importance. The discrimination faced by the Dalit family raised legal and human rights concerns. Incidents of caste-based discrimination can violate laws protecting the rights of marginalised communities, and legal actions may be taken to address such instances. Community leaders, activists, and concerned citizens often use incidents like these to call for broader social change. The incident contributed to discussions on the importance of dismantling caste-based norms and fostering a more inclusive and egalitarian society.

The Villupuram violence in 2013 serves as a microcosm of the larger challenges related to caste-based discrimination in various parts of India. It emphasises the need for ongoing efforts to challenge societal norms that perpetuate discrimination and to promote a more just and equitable society.

6.12 Case 12: Manual Scavenging Incidents in Tamil Nadu

Manual scavenging, a degrading practice associated with the cleaning of human excreta from dry latrines, open drains, and sewers, has unfortunately persisted in various parts of India, including Tamil Nadu. Dalits, who are often marginalised in the caste system, are disproportionately affected by this practice. Here are some details related to incidents of manual scavenging in Tamil Nadu:

Manual scavenging often involves the engagement of Dalit workers who are coerced into this occupation due to social and economic vulnerabilities. These workers are subjected to hazardous conditions, dealing with human waste without proper protective equipment. Workers engaged in manual scavenging face extremely hazardous working conditions, including exposure to toxic gases, risk of infections, and lack of proper safety measures. The practice is not only dehumanising but also poses severe health risks to those involved. Manual scavenging is prohibited under various laws in India, including the Employment of Manual Scavengers and Construction of Dry Latrines (Prohibition) Act, 1993. Despite legal provisions, instances of manual scavenging continue to be reported, indicating a lack of effective enforcement.

The prevalence of manual scavenging in Tamil Nadu and other parts of India has led to several outcomes and consequences: Incidents of manual scavenging underscore the urgent need for stricter enforcement of

existing laws prohibiting this practice. Authorities are called upon to take proactive measures to identify and penalise those responsible for engaging individuals in manual scavenging. The dehumanising nature of manual scavenging has led to increased advocacy for the rehabilitation of affected individuals. Efforts are made to provide alternative livelihoods, education, and support to help them break free from this exploitative practice. NGOs, human rights organisations, and activists engage in public awareness campaigns to highlight the inhumanity of manual scavenging and promote social change. These campaigns aim to change societal attitudes and eliminate the acceptance of such practices. Governments at various levels are urged to implement comprehensive initiatives to eradicate manual scavenging. This includes identifying and rehabilitating manual scavengers, providing skill development programmes, and ensuring access to dignified livelihoods. Human rights activists and organisations often take legal recourse to address cases of manual scavenging. This includes filing petitions, pursuing court cases, and advocating for the rights of affected individuals.

While progress has been made in addressing manual scavenging, incidents continue to highlight the systemic challenges and the need for sustained efforts to eliminate this degrading practice and uplift the affected communities. The outcomes mentioned above reflect the multifaceted approach required to tackle the complex issue of manual scavenging in Tamil Nadu and across India.

6.13 Case 13: Caste Discrimination in Educational Institutions

Instances of caste-based discrimination in educational institutions are unfortunate but recurring realities in various parts of India, including Tamil Nadu. Dalit students, who belong to historically marginalised communities, may face discrimination, bullying, and unequal treatment based on their caste identity within the academic environment.

Dalit students may experience discrimination in the form of verbal abuse, bullying, isolation, and exclusion from certain activities based on their caste identity. These actions are often rooted in deeply ingrained social biases and prejudices. Dalit students may be subjected to differential treatment in terms of academic opportunities, participation in extracurricular activities, and access to resources. Discrimination can manifest in various forms, impacting the overall educational experience of Dalit students. The discriminatory practices contribute to the perpetuation of social stigma surrounding caste identities. Students from marginalised communities may face challenges in asserting their rights and fully participating in the educational process due to the biases they encounter.

Incidents of caste-based discrimination in educational institutions lead to several outcomes and consequences: Dalit students subjected to discrimination may experience stress, anxiety, and a negative impact on their academic performance. Discrimination creates an unwelcome and hostile learning environment that hinders the overall development of affected students. Discrimination can have severe psychological effects on Dalit students, leading to a sense of exclusion, low self-esteem, and mental health issues. The emotional toll can hinder their ability to engage effectively in educational pursuits. Discrimination may create barriers for Dalit students in accessing educational opportunities, scholarships, and career advancement. The unequal treatment they face can limit their potential for academic and professional success. Incidents of caste discrimination prompt calls for institutional changes to create inclusive and discrimination-free educational environments. There is an emphasis on developing policies and mechanisms to address and prevent caste-based discrimination within institutions. Human rights activists, educational institutions, and civil society organisations often advocate for awareness programmes to sensitise students, faculty, and administrators about the impact of caste-based discrimination. These programmes aim to foster a more inclusive and understanding atmosphere. Cases of caste discrimination may lead to legal interventions, with affected students or advocacy groups filing complaints or legal actions against educational institutions. Legal measures are sought to ensure accountability and adherence to anti-discrimination laws.

Addressing caste discrimination in educational institutions requires a comprehensive approach, involving awareness-building, policy reforms, and changes in institutional culture. It underscores the broader societal challenge of dismantling caste-based prejudices and fostering environments that promote equal opportunities for all students.

These thirteen instances in Tamil Nadu exemplify a spectrum of human rights infringements, encompassing caste-based discrimination, violence, and atrocities directed towards Scheduled Castes and other marginalised groups. Each case underscores the significance of enacting legal reforms, raising social consciousness, and safeguarding the rights and dignity of individuals hailing from marginalised backgrounds. These cases vividly portray the intricate challenges faced by Scheduled Castes in Tamil Nadu, which encompass issues of violence, discrimination, and societal disparities. Addressing such occurrences necessitates a

multifaceted approach involving legal reforms, community awareness initiatives, and efforts to challenge deeply ingrained societal attitudes. For the most up-to-date and specific case studies, it is advisable to refer to recent reports from human rights organisations and official sources in Tamil Nadu.

The examination of human rights violations against Scheduled Castes in Tamil Nadu reveals a complex web of challenges rooted in historical prejudices, socio-economic disparities, and discriminatory practices. The key findings underscore the urgent need for comprehensive and sustained efforts to address and prevent such violations. Scheduled Castes in Tamil Nadu continue to face discrimination across various spheres, including education, employment, and access to public spaces. Caste-based prejudices and societal attitudes contribute to the perpetuation of injustice. While legal safeguards, such as the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, exist, challenges in their implementation, delayed justice, and resistance to change hinder their effectiveness in providing timely relief to victims.

Economic vulnerabilities, limited access to resources, and challenges in land ownership exacerbate the socio-economic disparities faced by Scheduled Castes, making them more susceptible to exploitation and marginalisation. Addressing human rights violations against Scheduled Castes requires a multifaceted approach, encompassing legal reforms, community empowerment programmes, educational initiatives, and changes in societal attitudes. Non-governmental organisations and civil society play a crucial role in advocating for the rights of Scheduled Castes, conducting awareness campaigns, providing legal aid, and implementing community empowerment programmes. Education and awareness emerge as powerful tools to challenge stereotypes, dismantle discriminatory practices, and empower Scheduled Castes to assert their rights. Policy changes, political representation, economic inclusion, and social security measures are among the recommended interventions to address human rights violations comprehensively.

In conclusion, addressing human rights violations against Scheduled Castes in Tamil Nadu is not only a legal imperative but also a moral and societal obligation. The creation of an inclusive, just, and equitable society necessitates collective efforts from government bodies, civil society, and the community at large. By fostering awareness, implementing effective policies, and challenging discriminatory practices, Tamil Nadu has the potential to set an example for positive societal transformation that upholds the dignity and rights of all its residents. The journey toward true social justice requires continuous commitment and collaboration to create a future where every individual, regardless of caste, can live free from discrimination and oppression.

References:

- Anandhi, S. (2013). *Embodying Dalit women: 'Identity' and the politics of representation*. In K. G. Nayar (Ed.), *Power, protest and participation: Local elites and development in India* (pp. 31-50). Routledge.
- Bama. (1997). *Karukku*. Oxford University Press.
- Chalam, K. S. (2000). *The agony of the Indian Dalit*. Dalit Sahitya Akademi.
- Chandra, K. (2004). Dalit identity and the dialectics of oppression and emancipation in India. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 27(5), 763-783. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Deshpande, S. (2003). Caste at birth? Redefining disparity in India. *Review of Development Economics*, 7(3), 343-362. [[CrossRef](#)]
- George, S. (2009). Dalit women's struggles for identity, space, and gender justice. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 32(5), 346-354. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Guru, G. (2000). Dalit women talk differently. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 35(50), 4370-4376.
- Irudayam, A., Mangubhai, J. P., & Lee, J. (Eds.). (2011). *Dalit women speak out: Caste, class, and gender violence in India*. Zubaan.
- Jodhka, S. S. (2005). Caste and untouchability in rural Punjab. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 40(5), 405-412.
- Kumar, S. (2017). Reconstructing Dalit women's history through oral narratives: A study from Tamil Nadu, India. *Oral History Review*, 44(1), 115-129.
- Madheswaran, S., & Attewell, P. (2007). Caste discrimination in the Indian urban labour market: Evidence from the National Sample Survey. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 42(41), 4146-4153.
- Mohanty, M. (2008). Caste and its contemporary forms. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 43(8), 49-56.
- Nair, S. R. (2003). Caste, class, and power: Changing patterns of stratification in a Tanjore village. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 38(26), 2697-2704.
- Nair, S. R. (2007). At the crossroads of gender and caste: The 'Dalit woman' in Tamil Dalit literature. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 42(41), 4173-4179.

- Nandy, A. (1983). *The intimate enemy: Loss and recovery of self under colonialism*. Oxford University Press.
- Omvedt, G. (1995). Dalits and the democratic revolution: Dr. Ambedkar and the Dalit movement in colonial India. *Economic and Political Weekly, 30(4)*, 177-189.
- Omvedt, G. (2008). *Dalits and the democratic revolution: Dr. Ambedkar and the Dalit movement in colonial India*. Sage Publications.
- Pai, S., & Prakash, S. (2008). Manual scavenging, Dalit women and alternatives. *Economic and Political Weekly, 43(42)*, 63-69.
- Parry, J. P. (1994). *Caste and kinship in Kangayam: A South Indian village*. University of California Press.
- Raj, R. (2010). Dalit women, domestic work, and sexual slavery: Trafficking of Dalit women in Nepal and India. *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice, 26(4)*, 370-388. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Sathiamoorthy, S. (2003). *Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in India: A socio-economic profile*. Oxford University Press.
- Satyanarayana, K., & Tharu, S. (Eds.). (2019). *No alphabet in sight: New Dalit writing from South India*. Penguin Random House India.
- Shah, G. (Ed.). (2006). *Dalit identity and politics*. Sage Publications.
- Singh, K. K. (2012). *Scheduled Castes: Identity and development*. Serials Publications.
- Thirumavalavan, T. (2007). The Dalit movement in India and its leaders. *Dalit Solidarity, 89-98*.
- Thirumavalavan, T. (2009). *Uproot Hindutva: The fiery voice of the Liberation Panthers*. Popular Prakashan.
- Thorat, S., & Newman, K. S. (2007). Caste and economic discrimination: Causes, consequences, and remedies. *Economic and Political Weekly, 42(41)*, 4141-4145.
- Thorat, S., & Sengupta, R. (2015). *Untouchability and caste discrimination in urban areas of India*. Indian Institute of Dalit Studies.