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NCRB data on caste violence in south India reveals alarmingly low conviction rates

NCRB data shows, for example, that of the 9,588 cases that went to trial in Karnataka, there were convictions only in 25 cases, a conviction rate of only 0.26%.



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NEWS CRIME | TUESDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2019 - 17:29



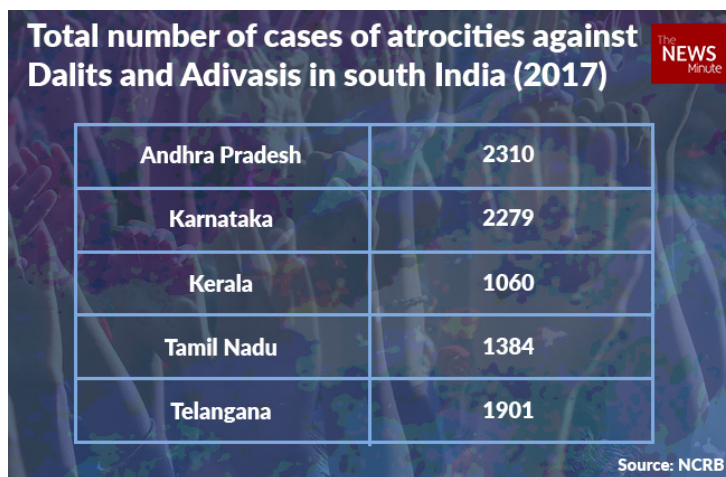
Written by [Theja Ram](#) [Follow @thejaram92](#)

The year 2017 witnessed several instances of caste-based violence in south India. In Andhra Pradesh's Jaeripothulapalem village, a Dalit woman was allegedly dragged on the streets and had her clothes torn off, after she objected to the digging of a pit. A woman in Karnataka's Bijapur district was set ablaze by her family members for marrying a Dalit man. A 21-year-old Dalit man was murdered in Tamil Nadu allegedly by three caste Hindu men, ostensibly for breaking a plastic tap in their field. Several cases of brutal caste-related violence have also been reported in the years that followed.

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Despite the growing caste-based violence, the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data for the year 2017 released on Tuesday shows that conviction rates are very low. Alarming, Andhra Pradesh stands fifth in the country in the total number of registered cases of atrocities against Dalit and Adivasi communities in India with 2,310 reported incidents. The highest number of caste-based crimes have been reported in Uttar Pradesh, followed by Bihar, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh.

Total number of cases of atrocities against Dalits and Adivasis in south India (2017)



Andhra Pradesh	2310
Karnataka	2279
Kerala	1060
Tamil Nadu	1384
Telangana	1901

Source: NCRB

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Of the reported incidents in the five southern states, 14.9% of the total number of cases were from Bengaluru, 5.6% from Hyderabad, 1.5% from Kochi, 1% from Chennai and 0.1% from Coimbatore.

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Conviction rates

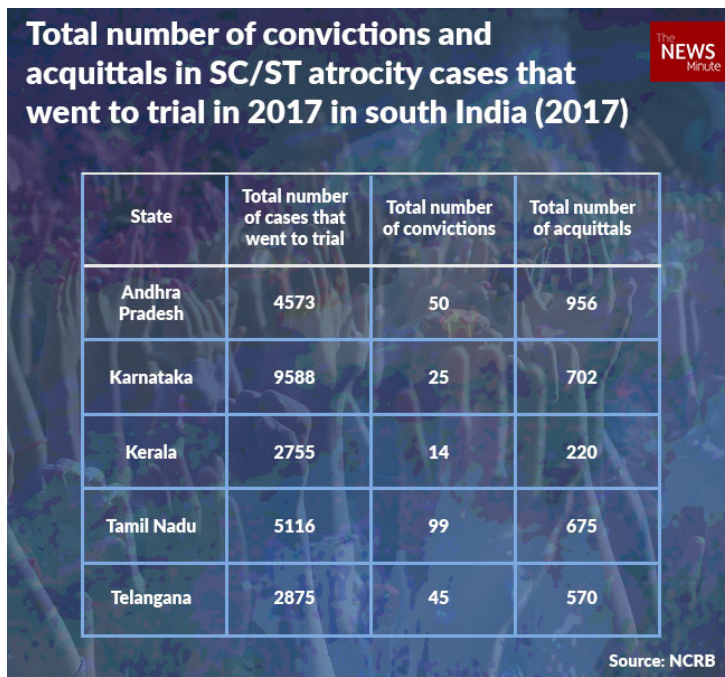
Of the five southern states, Karnataka recorded the highest number of cases of atrocities against Dalits and Adivasis that went to trial in 2017. NCRB figures also show that the conviction rates in such cases are abysmally low.

Of the 9,588 cases that went to trial in Karnataka, there were convictions only in 25 cases. This means that convictions occurred only in 0.26% of the cases that went to trial. Kerala recorded 0.51% convictions in cases of atrocities against Dalits and Adivasis that went to trial in 2017. Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Telangana recorded convictions in 1.09%, 1.94% and 1.57% of the cases that went to trial in 2017.

Karnataka has the lowest conviction rate in cases of atrocities against Dalits among the five southern states at 3.6%. The conviction rate in Tamil Nadu stands at 12.5%, while it is 8.1% in Telangana, 5.5% in Andhra Pradesh and 5.9% in Kerala.

The conviction rate for cases of atrocities against Adivasis too is abysmal in four of the five southern states in India. Andhra Pradesh has the lowest conviction rate among the five states at 1.4% followed by Karnataka with a 3% conviction rate. Telangana, Kerala and Tamil Nadu have conviction rates of 4.8%, 6.5% and 33.3% respectively in cases of atrocities against Adivasis.

Total number of convictions and acquittals in SC/ST atrocity cases that went to trial in 2017 in south India (2017)



State	Total number of cases that went to trial	Total number of convictions	Total number of acquittals
Andhra Pradesh	4573	50	956
Karnataka	9588	25	702
Kerala	2755	14	220
Tamil Nadu	5116	99	675
Telangana	2875	45	570

Source: NCRB

Pending investigations

The number of cases of SC/ST atrocities pending investigation, according to NCRB figures, is appalling. Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Telangana, Tamil Nadu and Kerala have 5,158, 3,342, 3,281, 2,034 and 1,756 such cases pending investigation.

Speaking to TNM, retired IPS officer K Annamalai, says that the primary reason for the huge number of cases pending investigation is the lack of hard evidence.

“In most of these cases, a closure report is filed, the eyewitnesses turn hostile or there is intimidation from the accused persons. With no evidence to file chargesheets, it becomes difficult,” he says.

One of the major hurdles for low convictions, he says, is that the witnesses turn hostile. In Karnataka, just 10 days ago, DG and IG Neelamani Raju issued a circular stating that all eyewitness testimonies must be videotaped by the police during questioning.

“Videotaping of eyewitness testimonies was not done in the past. Even during trials, in the cases where eyewitnesses testify, they will be persons from the same Dalit community. The defense counsel will argue that it is vested interest. The problem here is that it becomes difficult to prove intent. Conviction in atrocity cases happen mostly when the crime is grievous, where there are physical injuries, else intent is hard to prove,” Annamalai adds.

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Karnataka speaker UT Khader criticised for inviting religious leaders to address first-time MLAs

Jagruta Nagarika Karnataka, a citizens' collective, slammed the decision to invite religious personalities, calling them communal.



POLITICS | SATURDAY, JUNE 24, 2023 - 18:40



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The Karnataka Assembly speaker UT Khader is facing criticism for its decision to invite religious leaders to give inspirational talks to newly elected legislators. Khader had earlier said that people including Rajya Sabha member and trustee of the Dharmasthala temple Veerendra Heggade, and founder of Art of Living Sri Sri Ravishankar would be among the speakers invited.

Jagruta Nagarika Karnataka, a citizens' collective, has condemned the decision to invite religious personalities to address first-time MLAs. Members of the collective said the MLAs should listen to people who talk about social justice, democracy, constitutional values, and secularism, and not religious values.

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“You have invited advocates of communal policies and controversial persons. We are concerned about the kind of role models such speakers can provide to new legislators,” the collective said in a statement. “The MLAs should develop scientific temper. The people of the state have decimated the BJP that engaged in communal politics and voted to uphold democratic values,” it added.

The statement was signed by personalities including activist KS Vimala, writers SG Siddaramaiah and K Marulasiddappa, and academic Rajendra Chennai. The event is scheduled to be held from June 26 to June 29.

Reacting to criticism over the state government's decision, Khader told reporters in Mangaluru that the speakers list is yet to be finalised.

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"The training for newly elected MLAs will be through experts including H K Patil, B L Shankar, T B Jayachandra, Krishna Byregowda, Mukyamantri Chandru, Siddaramaiah, B S Yediyurappa, MPs, and others to make them understand their roles as legislators. Along with this, spiritual sessions will be conducted to make the MLAs work without stress. We have planned to invite a few spiritual leaders. However, we have not received confirmation yet from all of them," Khader said.

He added that the initiative should be reviewed after it is concluded. "Those who criticise the training programme should wait and see the outcome of it. They can give us feedback about such training programmes in the future," Khader said.

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Nalin Kumar Kateel says he has not resigned as Karnataka BJP President

Nalin Kumar Kateel, who is an MP from Dakshina Kannada, said he is taking moral responsibility for the BJP's defeat in the Karnataka elections.