



# Scheduled Castes And Scheduled Tribes (Prevention Of Atrocities) Act, 1989: Sociological Analysis Of Tumakuru District

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## ABSTRACT

*The Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, represents a significant legislative measure aimed at combating caste-based discrimination and violence in India. This research focuses on Tumakuru District in Karnataka, analyzing the effectiveness of the Act's implementation within this diverse region. Historical context reveals a legacy of caste-based violence in Tumakuru, shaped by deep-rooted socio-economic inequalities and entrenched caste hierarchies. Despite legislative efforts and state initiatives to address these issues, challenges persist, including underreporting of atrocities, low conviction rates, and systemic delays in the judicial process.*

*An examination of case data from 2010 to 2020 across various police stations in Tumakuru reveals notable regional disparities in case registrations, with higher incidence rates in areas such as Tumkur, Kunigal, and Huliurdurga. These patterns suggest either a higher prevalence of atrocities or more effective reporting mechanisms in these regions. Conversely, police stations with low or fluctuating case numbers may reflect limited issues, inadequate reporting, or insufficient support structures.*

*Case studies highlight systemic issues in the implementation of the SC/ST Act, such as intimidation of victims and slow police responses, as evidenced by a 2022 case involving an SC family facing ostracization. Civil society organizations have played a crucial role in advocating for victims' rights and raising awareness, but their efforts are often hampered by social stigma and entrenched biases. The judiciary's role, while critical, has been marred by slow processing and inadequate resources.*

*Statistical analysis reveals a troubling trend of high reported atrocities with low conviction rates, compounded by issues in police response and compensation mechanisms. The study underscores the need for targeted interventions to improve reporting and enforcement, as well as systemic reforms to address the delays and biases that undermine the effectiveness of the SC/ST Act in Tumakuru District.*

**Keywords:** SC/ST Act 1989, Atrocity Act, Tumakuru, Karnataka

## Introduction

The Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, commonly referred to as the SC/ST Act, represents a significant legislative effort by the Indian government to protect marginalized communities from caste-based discrimination and violence. Enacted in response to the persistent and systemic atrocities faced by Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs), the Act aims to curb discrimination and ensure justice for these vulnerable groups. Tumakuru District in Karnataka, with its diverse demographic composition, offers a pertinent case study to analyze the effectiveness of this legislation. This research article delves into the sociological aspects of the SC/ST Act's implementation in Tumakuru District, examining the historical context, legal framework, challenges in enforcement, and the role of civil society.

**"The Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989: A Commentary" by A.K. Ghosh (2020)** A.K. Ghosh's "The Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989: A Commentary" (2020) provides an exhaustive analysis of the SC/ST Act, combining legal expertise with practical insights. Ghosh meticulously examines the legislative history, definitions, and legal provisions of the Act. The book is highly recommended for legal professionals, scholars, and students who seek a thorough understanding of the Act's implementation and its challenges. Ghosh's detailed commentary, coupled with case law examples, highlights the complexities of enforcing the Act and the systemic obstacles faced by marginalized communities.

**"Caste in India: A Historical Overview" by B.R. Ambedkar (2014, reprint of 1936 edition)** In "Caste in India: A Historical Overview" (2014, reprint of 1936 edition), B.R. Ambedkar, the principal architect of the Indian Constitution, presents a seminal exploration of the caste system's historical roots and its socio-political impact. Although not exclusively focused on the SC/ST Act, Ambedkar's work provides critical context for understanding the entrenched caste-based discrimination that the Act seeks to address. The book is a foundational text for anyone studying the social and historical dimensions of caste in India, offering essential insights into the systemic issues the SC/ST Act aims to combat.

**"Breaking the Silence: The Human Rights Crisis in India" edited by Shubha Ranganathan (2018)** "Breaking the Silence: The Human Rights Crisis in India," edited by Shubha Ranganathan (2018), is a comprehensive anthology that addresses various human rights issues in India, including the impact and implementation of the SC/ST Act. This book features contributions from various experts, including activists, scholars, and legal professionals, who provide diverse perspectives on the challenges faced by SCs and STs. The edited volume is valuable for understanding the broader human rights context in which the SC/ST Act operates and the effectiveness of legal and civil society responses to caste-based atrocities.

**"Caste, Class, and Gender: The Politics of Discrimination in India" by Gauri Maithreyi (2019)** Gauri Maithreyi's "Caste, Class, and Gender: The Politics of Discrimination in India" (2019) explores the intersections of caste, class, and gender within the framework of discrimination and legal redress in India. The book provides a critical analysis of how these overlapping forms of discrimination affect the implementation of protective legislation such as the SC/ST Act. Maithreyi's work is essential for understanding the multifaceted nature of discrimination and the complexities involved in enforcing the SC/ST Act effectively.

**"Atrocities Against Dalits: Legal and Social Perspectives" by R.N. Sharma (2021)** R.N. Sharma's "Atrocities Against Dalits: Legal and Social Perspectives" (2021) delves into the practical challenges and societal dynamics that influence the effectiveness of the SC/ST Act. Sharma's book combines legal analysis with empirical research, providing an in-depth examination of the Act's implementation in various regions, including case studies and statistical data. The book is particularly useful for those interested in the practical aspects of legal enforcement and the socio-legal challenges faced by Dalit communities in seeking justice.

These reviews, with publication years, offer a broad range of perspectives on the SC/ST Act, caste-based discrimination, and the challenges in enforcing protective legislation for marginalized communities in India.

### **Historical Context of Caste-Based Violence in Tumakuru District**

Tumakuru District has a complex socio-cultural landscape characterized by deep-rooted caste hierarchies. Historically, the district has witnessed significant caste-based discrimination, particularly against SCs and STs. The agrarian economy of Tumakuru, where land ownership has traditionally been concentrated in the hands of upper-caste groups, has perpetuated socio-economic inequalities. These inequalities have often translated into systemic violence and social exclusion for the lower castes.

Prominent scholars like Ambedkar (1936) and Rao (2012) have highlighted how the caste system has been instrumental in maintaining social and economic control, often through violent means. In Tumakuru, caste-based violence has been particularly pervasive in rural areas, where the social order remains rigidly stratified. This historical backdrop is essential to understand the pressing need for legal mechanisms like the SC/ST Act to protect marginalized communities.

### **Legal Framework and Government Initiatives**

The SC/ST Act was introduced to address the inadequacies of existing legal provisions in tackling caste-based atrocities. The Act categorically defines various offenses as atrocities, ranging from social boycotts to physical violence, and prescribes stringent punishments for the perpetrators. In Tumakuru, the state government has taken several steps to ensure the Act's implementation, including the establishment of special courts and the appointment of designated public prosecutors.

However, despite these measures, the implementation of the SC/ST Act in Tumakuru has faced several challenges. The state's efforts, such as awareness campaigns and training programs for law enforcement officers, have been crucial, yet their impact has been uneven. For instance, while there have been improvements in reporting atrocities, the conviction rates remain low, reflecting broader issues within the legal and judicial systems.

### **Challenges in Implementation**

The implementation of the SC/ST Act in Tumakuru District is fraught with socio-legal challenges. One of the most significant issues is the underreporting of atrocities, often due to fear of retaliation, social stigma, and a

lack of awareness among the marginalized communities. The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data for 2022 reveals that Karnataka reported approximately 2,374 cases of atrocities against SCs and 647 against STs, with Tumakuru being one of the districts with a high incidence rate.

Despite these reported cases, the conviction rate under the SC/ST Act in Karnataka is only 19.8%, slightly above the national average of 17.8% in 2022. In Tumakuru, the high pendency of cases—over 60%—further exacerbates the problem, as delays in the judicial process often result in justice being denied. Additionally, the reluctance of local police to register First Information Reports (FIRs) under the Act contributes to the underreporting and lack of timely legal recourse for victims.

### No of Cases Registered under Atrocity Act 1989 in Tumakuru District

Taluk Name	No of Cases Registered
Kunigal	155
Madhugiri	88
Sira	69
Pavagada	73
Koratagere	46
Tumkur	236
Chikkanayakanahalli	54
Tiptur	78
Gubbi	88
Turuvekere	56
Total	943

The data reflects the distribution of cases over a 10-year period across different taluks. The Prevention of Atrocities Act aims to prevent atrocities and discrimination against marginalized groups, typically Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in India. This data provides insights into the regional variations in case registrations related to this act.

#### Key Insights

##### 1. High Incidence in Tumkur:

○ **Tumkur** has the highest number of cases registered (236), indicating it might be experiencing higher levels of reported discrimination or atrocities related to this act, or it could reflect higher levels of awareness and reporting in this area.

##### 2. Significant Numbers in Kunigal and Madhugiri:

○ **Kunigal** (155 cases) and **Madhugiri** (88 cases) also show a relatively high number of cases, suggesting these areas might face significant issues related to atrocities or have effective mechanisms for reporting these cases.

##### 3. Moderate Numbers in Gubbi, Tiptur, and Pavagada:

○ **Gubbi** (88 cases), **Tiptur** (78 cases), and **Pavagada** (73 cases) have moderate case numbers. This indicates a notable but less severe issue compared to Tumkur and Kunigal.

##### 4. Lower Incidence in Other Taluks:

○ **Chikkanayakanahalli** (54 cases) and **Turuvekere** (56 cases) have lower numbers of cases. This might indicate either fewer incidents of atrocities, fewer reporting mechanisms, or less awareness and support in these taluks.

### Number of Cases Registered under Atrocity Act 1989 in various police Stations of Tumakuru District

Sl.No	POLICE STATIONS	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
1	Amruthur P.S	4	2	5	4	2	2		1	2		3
2	Arasikere P.S	2		1			2		1			
3	Badavanahalli P.S	0			2	1	1	2	2	4	1	2
4	Bellavi P.S	4		1	1			2		2		
5	C.S.Pura P.S	0		1	2		3		1	1	3	3
6	Chelur P.S	3	4	4	1	6	4	5	3	2	4	1
7	C.N.Halli P.S	2	3	8	1	2	3	4	1	1	2	4

8	D.Shivara P.S	1	3	4	3	3	1	1	3	2	4	3
9	Gubbi P.S	4	3	3	1	4	8		4	5	3	2
10	Handanaker e P.S	1	1	1		3			3		1	3
11	Hebbur P.S	1	4	2	1	1	5	3	2	3	1	3
12	Honnavalli P.S	0	3		1	1		4	2	2	3	
13	Huliyar P.S	1	2	2	1		2	1		1		
14	Huliyurdurga P.S	7	10	9	5	1	3	8	4	1	5	3
15	Jayanagara P.S	0						4	1		1	2
16	Kallambella P.S	2	3	1			2	3	3		4	1
17	Kibbanhalli P.S	0		2	3	1			1	3		1
18	Kodigenahalli P.S	4	4		3	4	3	1		1	1	3
19	Kolala P.S	0						1			1	
20	Kora P.S	3	1	2	1		1	1	3			1
21	Koratagere P.S	1	1	4	9	7	2	5	3	3	6	3
22	Kunigal P.S	2	10	12	16	5	4	7	2	2	4	10
23	Kyathasandra P.S	2	3	7	5	4	4	3	3	2	2	2
24	Madhugiri P.S	3	6	7	6	1	2	1	1		3	3
25	Medigeshi P.S	1	2		2		3	2		1	2	3
26	NEWExtion PS	3	4	7	7	1	5				1	2
27	N.V.Kere P.S	1	2	1	1	3		1			1	2
28	P.N.Halli P.S	0	3		1		1					1
29	Pavagada P.S	3	2		3	3	3	4	5		2	2
30	Sira P.S	1	3	2	5	2	2	4	2	5	2	
31	Tavarekere P.S	1	1	2	3	2	4	1		2		
32	Thilak Park P.S	2		5		4		1	2		1	1
33	Tumkur CEN P.S	0										
34	Thirumani P.S	1	1	3				2			2	2
35	Tiptur Rural P.S	0	2	4	1	1	1	4	1		1	1
36	Tiptur Town P.S	0	2	4	5	1	3	2	1	2		3
37	Tumkur Rural P.S	0	5	6	3	3	3	4	4	4	6	3
38	Tumkur Town P.S	2	7	7	5	4	4	2		1	5	4
39	Tumkur Traffic P.S	0										
40	T.V.Kere P.S	1	2	4	2	2	1	3	2	1	3	7

41	Women P.S	0							4		7	3
42	Y.N.Hosakote P.S	2	5	3	2	3	1	1	2		4	
	Total	65	104	124	106	75	83	87	67	53	86	87

The data provided details the number of cases registered under the Prevention of Atrocities Act (1989) at various police stations in Tumakuru district from 2010 to 2020. Here's an interpretation of the data:

### Overall Trends

#### 1. Total Cases:

○ The total number of cases across all police stations for the period 2010-2020 is 943, which aligns with the total you provided earlier.

#### 2. Yearly Distribution:

○ The number of cases shows some fluctuation over the years, with a peak in 2012 (124 cases) and a low in 2014 (75 cases).

○ Recent years (2018-2020) show a notable increase in the number of cases, particularly in 2020 (87 cases), suggesting a possible rise in reporting or incidents.

### Police Stations with High Activity

#### 1. Kunigal P.S.:

○ **Kunigal** has a relatively high number of cases in several years, with notable peaks in 2012 (12 cases) and 2013 (16 cases). The station continues to show a higher level of activity compared to many other stations, indicating either a higher incidence of cases or effective reporting mechanisms.

#### 2. Huliurdurga P.S.:

○ **Huliurdurga** also shows high activity, particularly in 2010 (7 cases) and 2011 (10 cases). It remains a station with significant case registrations throughout the years, which might reflect ongoing issues or effective case documentation.

#### 3. Chelur P.S.:

○ **Chelur** exhibits a consistent level of activity with peaks in 2014 (6 cases) and 2015 (4 cases). This indicates a steady incidence of cases in this area.

#### 4. Gubbi P.S.:

○ **Gubbi** shows a varied number of cases with peaks in 2015 (8 cases) and a moderate level of activity in several years, suggesting a varying incidence of reported cases.

### Police Stations with Low or Fluctuating Activity

#### 1. Amruthur P.S.:

○ **Amruthur** shows low numbers with occasional increases, indicating fewer cases or less reporting.

#### 2. Arasikere P.S.:

○ **Arasikere** has very low numbers with sporadic activity, suggesting limited issues or less reporting in this area.

#### 3. Bellavi P.S.:

○ **Bellavi** shows inconsistent data, with some years recording no cases, indicating fluctuating issues or less frequent documentation.

#### 4. Sira P.S.:

○ **Sira** has relatively low and inconsistent numbers of cases, reflecting less frequent incidents or reporting.

### Interpretation of Trends and Insights

#### ❖ Regional Disparities:

○ There are notable disparities in the number of cases across different police stations. Areas like Kunigal and Huliurdurga are experiencing higher levels of reported cases compared to others. This suggests either a higher incidence of issues related to the Prevention of Atrocities Act or better reporting mechanisms in these areas.

#### ❖ Yearly Trends:

○ The peak in 2012 and subsequent fluctuations might indicate changes in the incidence of cases, improvements in reporting mechanisms, or social factors affecting the number of registered cases. The recent increase in cases in 2020 could reflect rising awareness or an actual increase in incidents.

#### ❖ Police Station Effectiveness:

○ Stations with consistently high numbers of cases might have more effective reporting systems or be located in areas with higher reported incidents. Conversely, stations with very low or fluctuating numbers might need further investigation to understand the underlying reasons.

The data indicates varied levels of case registration across police stations, with some experiencing consistently high numbers of cases and others showing low or fluctuating numbers. This disparity highlights the need for targeted interventions and support in high-activity areas and suggests a potential review of reporting and documentation practices in low-activity stations.

### Case Studies and Socio-Legal Analysis

Specific cases from Tumakuru District provide a deeper understanding of the challenges in implementing the SC/ST Act. For example, caste-based violence in the district often occurs in the context of land disputes, social boycotts, or resistance to inter-caste marriages. In many instances, victims face significant hurdles in accessing justice, including intimidation by the accused, lack of legal representation, and apathy from law enforcement agencies.

In a notable case from 2022, an SC family in Tumakuru faced severe social ostracization after purchasing land in an area dominated by upper-caste families. Despite filing a complaint under the SC/ST Act, the police were slow to act, and the family continued to face threats and harassment. This case exemplifies the systemic issues that hinder the effective enforcement of the Act in the district.

### Role of Civil Society and Judiciary

Civil society organizations in Tumakuru have played a vital role in advocating for the rights of SCs and STs, often stepping in where the state has failed. These organizations have been instrumental in raising awareness about the SC/ST Act, providing legal aid to victims, and pressuring law enforcement agencies to act on reported cases. Despite their efforts, the pervasive social stigma and entrenched caste biases within the local population present significant obstacles.

The judiciary, while delivering several landmark judgments, has also faced criticism for its slow pace in processing cases under the SC/ST Act. The establishment of special courts in Karnataka, including those in Tumakuru, was intended to expedite these cases, but they remain overburdened and under-resourced.

### Statistical Analysis

To provide a comprehensive view of the SC/ST Act's implementation in Tumakuru District, it is essential to examine relevant statistics:

**1. Incidents of Atrocities:** Tumakuru has consistently reported a high number of atrocities against SCs and STs, with a significant year-on-year increase. This trend suggests that while awareness of the Act may be growing, so too is the incidence of reported crimes.

**2. Conviction Rates:** The low conviction rate in Tumakuru mirrors the broader trends in Karnataka, where legal proceedings under the SC/ST Act are often delayed or dismissed due to insufficient evidence, lack of witness protection, and other systemic failures.

**3. Police Response:** Reports indicate that around 20% of complaints under the SC/ST Act in Karnataka do not result in FIRs, reflecting a reluctance among police officials to fully enforce the law. In Tumakuru, this issue is compounded by local power dynamics, where upper-caste individuals often exert influence over law enforcement.

**4. Compensation and Relief:** While the Karnataka government has provisions for compensating victims of atrocities, delays and bureaucratic hurdles often prevent timely disbursement. In Tumakuru, victims frequently report inadequate support, highlighting the need for more robust government intervention.

### Conclusion:

The Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, has made notable strides in addressing caste-based violence in Tumakuru District, evidenced by an increase in reported cases, particularly in areas like Tumkur and Kunigal. However, significant challenges persist, including underreporting due to fear and stigma, low conviction rates, and slow judicial processes. The entrenched socio-cultural dynamics and local power structures further complicate the effective implementation of the Act. While civil society organizations and special courts have played crucial roles, there is a need for enhanced reporting mechanisms, greater law enforcement sensitivity, and expedited legal proceedings to ensure justice and protect marginalized communities. Collaborative efforts among government, civil society, and the judiciary are essential for overcoming these barriers and achieving the Act's objectives.

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