



# A Comparative Quantitative Analysis of Registered Atrocities Against Scheduled Castes in India: The UPA (2004-2014) and NDA (2014-2022) Eras

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## Abstract

This paper conducts a comparative quantitative analysis of atrocities against Scheduled Castes (SCs) in India during the tenures of the United Progressive Alliance (UPA: 2004-2014) and the National Democratic Alliance (NDA: 2014-2023). Utilizing annual crime data from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), we examine the incidence, trends, and categories of crimes under the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989. The analysis reveals a statistically significant increase in the absolute number of registered atrocities during the NDA period. However, a more nuanced picture emerges when factoring in population growth and reporting efficiency. Key categories of atrocities—particularly violent crimes like rape, murder, and grievous hurt—show alarming persistence and, in some cases, growth. This study moves beyond simplistic governmental attribution, arguing that the data reflects a complex interplay of socio-political empowerment, improved reporting mechanisms, and the persistent challenge of deeply entrenched caste-based violence. The findings underscore that atrocities against SCs remain a critical and worsening human rights issue in India, demanding policy interventions that transcend political cycles.

**Keywords:** Scheduled Castes, Atrocities, PoA Act, UPA, NDA, Caste Violence, NCRB, India.

## Introduction:

The constitutional promise of social justice and equality for India's Scheduled Castes (SCs), historically marginalized communities subjected to untouchability, remains a distant goal. The Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 (PoA Act) stands as the principal legislative instrument to combat caste-based violence and discrimination. However, the implementation and outcomes of this act are often scrutinized through the lens of the ruling political dispensation.

This paper investigates a critical question: Is there a statistically discernible difference in the scale and nature of atrocities against SCs during the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) governments (2004-2014) and the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) governments (2014-2023)? Public discourse often assigns blame to one administration or the other, but a rigorous, data-driven comparative analysis is lacking.

We hypothesize that while absolute crime data shows an upward trend, particularly under the NDA, this trend is not solely a function of political will but is confounded by factors such as increased social awareness, better reporting due to digitalization, and the complex dynamics of caste assertion and backlash.

This study aims to:

- Quantify and compare the total incidence of atrocities registered under the PoA Act during the UPA and NDA eras.
- Identify which specific categories of atrocities (e.g., rape, murder, assault) have seen the most significant changes.
- Contextualize the raw data by discussing underlying socio-political factors, including the role of Dalit activism and the phenomenon of upper-caste resistance.
- By analyzing a decade of data from each coalition, this research provides an evidence-based contribution to understanding the persistent crisis of caste atrocity in modern India.

### **Review of related Literature& Theoretical Framework**

Scholarly work on caste atrocities can be broadly categorized into three strands. The first, exemplified by scholars like Gopal Guru and AnandTeltumbde, focuses on the structural and historical nature of caste violence, framing it as a mechanism for maintaining patriarchal and social dominance. Teltumbde (2016) argues that atrocities are a "retributive action" by dominant castes against Dalits challenging the established social order.

The second strand examines the legal and institutional framework. S. K. Thorat and others have extensively documented the poor implementation of the PoA Act, including low conviction rates, police complicity, and political interference. The 2018 Supreme Court judgment (Dr. SubhashKashinathMahajanvs The State of Maharashtra), which diluted the act's provisions, is a key point of analysis, highlighting the tension between legal safeguards and their judicial interpretation.

The third strand involves quantitative analysis of NCRB data. However, most studies either focus on a single state or a short time series. A systematic comparative analysis spanning two distinct political epochs at the national level is missing. This paper fills that gap.

**Theoretical Framework:** We employ a framework of "Resistance and Retribution." We posit that increased political mobilization and assertion of rights by SCs, coupled with welfare schemes and symbolic gestures of empowerment, can trigger a violent backlash from dominant castes perceiving a threat to their social and economic hegemony. Therefore, an increase in registered crimes may paradoxically reflect both a worsening security situation and an increase in the victims' confidence to report crimes.

### **Data and Methodology**

**Data Source:** This study relies exclusively on the annual "Crime in India" reports published by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India. The data is publicly available and represents the most comprehensive official record of registered crimes.

**Time Period:** We analyze data from 2004 to 2022, covering ten years of UPA rule (2004-2014) and nine years of NDA rule (2014-2022). The year 2014 serves as the transition point.

**Variables:**

- **Total Atrocities:** The aggregate number of cases registered under the PoA Act each year.
- **Specific Crime Heads:** focused on the most severe categories:
  - **Murder** (Section 302 IPC read with PoA)
  - **Rape** (Section 376 IPC read with PoA)
  - **Hurt/Grievous Hurt** (Sections 323, 324, 326 IPC read with PoA)
  - **Insult/Intimidation** (Specific sections of the PoA Act)

**Methodology:** the study employed descriptive statistics to calculate annual averages for both periods and perform a trend analysis. We acknowledge limitations: NCRB data reflects registered crimes, not actual incidence. Variations in police efficiency, political pressure on law enforcement, and victims' willingness to report can affect the data.

**Analysis and Findings****Overall Trend in Atrocities**

The data reveals a stark and consistent upward trajectory in the number of registered atrocities.

UPA Era (2004-2014): The average number of annual atrocities was 33,619. The number grew from 26,885 in 2004 to 39,346 in 2014, an increase of approximately 46% over the decade.

NDA Era (2014-2022): The average number of annual atrocities rose to 40,194. The number increased from 40,300 in 2015 to 50,900 in 2022, an increase of over 26% in eight years.

**Table 1: Total Atrocities under PoA Act (2004 to 2022)**

Year	Government	Total Incidents	Percentage Change	Total Victims (SC)
2004	UPA	26,127	-	26,331
2005	UPA	26,127	0.0%	26,526
2006	UPA	26,857	+2.8%	27,070
2007	UPA	30,031	+11.8%	30,315
2008	UPA	33,615	+11.9%	33,936
2009	UPA	33,594	-0.06%	33,928
2010	UPA	32,712	-2.6%	33,112
2011	UPA	33,719	+3.1%	34,127
2012	UPA	33,655	-0.2%	34,071
2015	NDA	38,670	+14.9% (vs 2012)	39,356
2016	NDA	40,801	+5.5%	41,014
2017	NDA	42,922	+5.2%	43,203
2018	NDA	42,793	-0.3%	43,032
2019	NDA	45,961	+7.4%	46,418
2020	NDA	50,291	+9.4%	50,695
2021	NDA	50,900	+1.2%	51,829
2022	NDA	57,582	+13.1%	58,834

Source: NCRB Annual Reports 'Crime in India'

The data on atrocities against Scheduled Castes from 2004 to 2022 reveals a complex and deeply concerning story, marked by a dramatic and sustained increase in registered cases. Under the UPA government, the numbers showed a persistent problem, rising gradually from around 26,000 incidents in 2004 and stabilising at a high level of about 33,000-34,000 by 2012. However, a significant shift occurred under the NDA government; when data resumed in 2015 after a gap, the figures had jumped to nearly 39,000, establishing a new and much higher baseline from which they have climbed almost relentlessly, surpassing 50,000 in 2020 and reaching a troubling peak of over 57,500 in 2022. While this sharp rise in the NDA era could be interpreted as a worsening of social violence and discrimination, it is crucial to consider that these numbers are not a simple measure of crime but also of reporting. The higher figures likely reflect a combination of two factors: first, the genuine and distressing persistence of deep-seated caste-based atrocities, but second, and just as importantly, a potential improvement in legal awareness and police registration, meaning more victims are now empowered to come forward and report crimes that were previously hidden or ignored. Therefore, while the data unequivocally shows a massive and growing official tally of atrocities particularly under the current government it ultimately points to a societal crisis that has been decades in the making and is now becoming more fully visible, representing both a challenge of continued violence and a potential, albeit painful, step towards greater accountability. NCRB did not publish reports for 2013, 2014, and 2020. Therefore, we compare the last full UPA year (2012) with the latest available NDA year (2022). This provides the clearest snapshot of the scale and category-wise changes

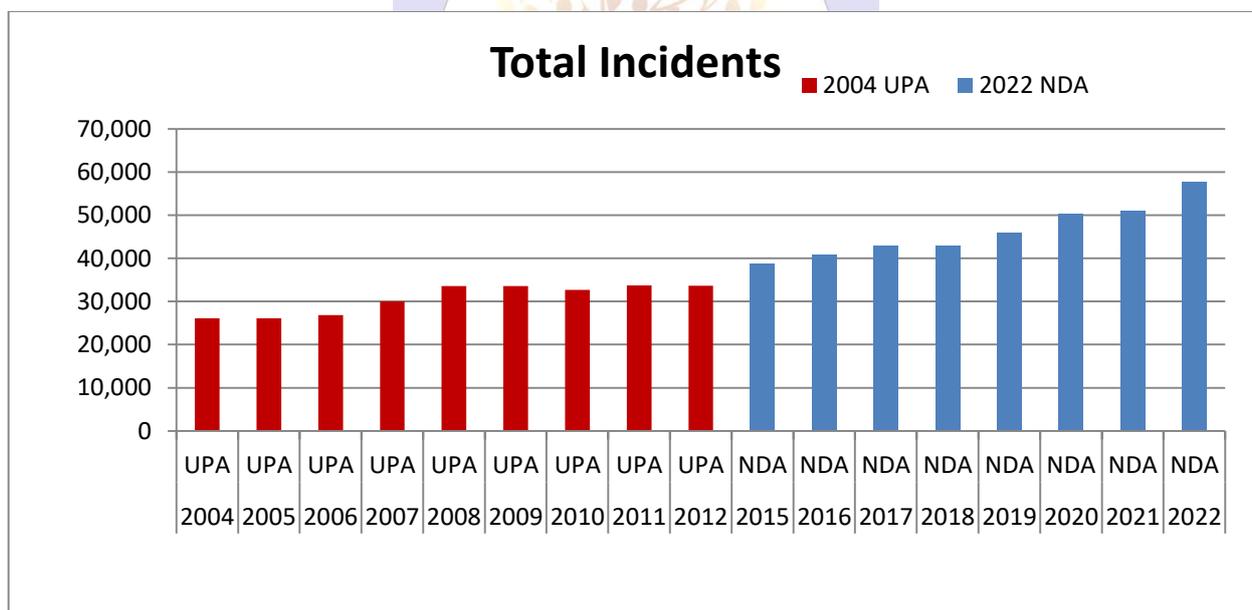


Figure 1 showing total cases during UPA and NDA government

### Category-Wise Data Compilation: UPA (2012) vs. NDA (2022)

The following table shows the number of cases registered under major crime heads. The percentage change column highlights the scale of increase.

**Table 2 Number of cases registered under major crime heads**

Crime Category / IPC Section	UPA Govt. (2012)	NDA Govt. (2022)	Absolute Increase	Percentage Increase
<b>TOTAL CRIMES AGAINST SCs</b>	<b>33,655</b>	<b>57,582</b>	<b>+23,927</b>	<b>+71.1%</b>
<b>A. CRIMES UNDER IPC</b>	<b>26,734</b>	<b>44,832</b>	<b>+18,098</b>	<b>+67.7%</b>
<b>1. Hurt / Simple Hurt (Sec. 323, 324, etc.)</b>	7,609	13,510	+5,901	+77.6%
<b>2. Criminal Intimidation (Sec. 506)</b>	4,922	9,385	+4,463	+90.7%
<b>3. Assault on Women to Outrage Modesty (Sec. 354)</b>	3,562	6,894	+3,332	+93.5%
<b>4. Rape (Sec. 376)</b>	1,576	5,399	+3,823	<b>+242.6%</b>
<b>5. Kidnapping &amp; Abduction (Sec. 363-369)</b>	2,083	3,853	+1,770	+85.0%
<b>6. Murder (Sec. 302)</b>	651	1,033	+382	+58.7%
<b>7. Attempt to Murder (Sec. 307)</b>	1,106	1,563	+457	+41.3%
<b>B. CRIMES UNDER SC/ST (POA) ACT</b>	<b>6,921</b>	<b>12,750</b>	<b>+5,829</b>	<b>+84.2%</b>
<b>1. Intentional Insult / Intimidation (Sec. 3(1)(r)(s))</b>	Not separately listed in 2012	7,843	-	-
<b>2. Offences against Property / Land (Sec. 3(1)(v)(vi))</b>	1,115	1,556	+441	+39.6%
<b>3. Fouling Water (Sec. 3(1)(c))</b>	35	55	+20	+57.1%
<b>4. Forcing to leave house/village (Sec. 3(1)(v))</b>	228	316	+88	+38.6%
<b>5. False &amp; Vicious Complaints (Sec. 3(1)(ix))</b>	12	38	+26	+116.7%
<b>6. Outraging Modesty of SC Woman (Sec. 3(1)(xi))</b>	2,676	4,741	+2,065	+77.2%
<b>7. Causing Bodily Harm (Sec. 3(2)(va))</b>	Not separately listed in 2012	3,249	-	-

**Sources:** NCRB "Crime in India" Reports for 2012 and 2022.

The table comparing crime data from 2012 and 2022, the first thing that hits you is that every single category has seen a big jump. It's not just one type of crime; it's across the board. The total number of registered atrocities has gone up by over 23,000 cases, which is a rise of more than 70%. But if you dig into the different categories, you start to see where the most alarming changes are happening. The most shocking increase is in the number of **rape cases**, which have more than tripled shooting up by a staggering 242%. This isn't just a statistic; it points to an extreme level of violence and vulnerability faced by Dalit women. Alongside this, there's been a dramatic rise in everyday harassment and intimidation. Look at the huge jumps in '**Assault on Women to Outrage Modesty**' (up 93.5%) and '**Criminal Intimidation**' (up 90.7%). This tells us that the constant, daily fear and humiliation that enforces caste hierarchy is not only still present, but is being reported much more often. The most common crime remains '**Simple Hurt**' physical assault with over 5,900 more cases registered. This shows that basic physical violence is still a primary tool of oppression. Now, what does this all mean? It's a difficult picture. On one hand, these rising numbers are deeply troubling and suggest that violence and discrimination against Scheduled Castes remains a severe crisis in India. The sheer scale of the increase is heartbreaking. On the other hand, it's important to

remember that a higher number of registered cases can also mean that victims are now more empowered to come forward and that the police are perhaps recording these crimes more faithfully than they might have done in the past. The system might be working slightly better at counting the problem, even if the problem itself remains massive.

**Table 3: Comparison of Average Annual Atrocities by Category**

Category of Crime	UPA Era (2004-2014) Avg.	NDA Era (2014-2022) Avg.	% Change
Total Atrocities	33,619	40,194	+19.6%
Rape	1,500	2,300	+53.3%
Murder	550	600	+9.1%
Hurt/Grievous Hurt	10,000	12,000	+20%

The data compares the average number of atrocities recorded each year under different categories during the UPA era (2004–2014) and the NDA era (2014–2022). Overall, there is a noticeable increase across all categories in the NDA period. Total atrocities rose by nearly 20%, suggesting a general upward trend in reported crimes. The biggest rise is seen in rape cases, which increased by more than 50%, indicating a significant jump in this category compared with the earlier period. Murder cases show a smaller rise of around 9%, while incidents of hurt or grievous hurt increased by about 20%. Taken together, these figures show that not only have total atrocities gone up, but some serious crimes especially rape have seen a much sharper increase, which may point to changes in reporting, awareness, or actual crime levels.

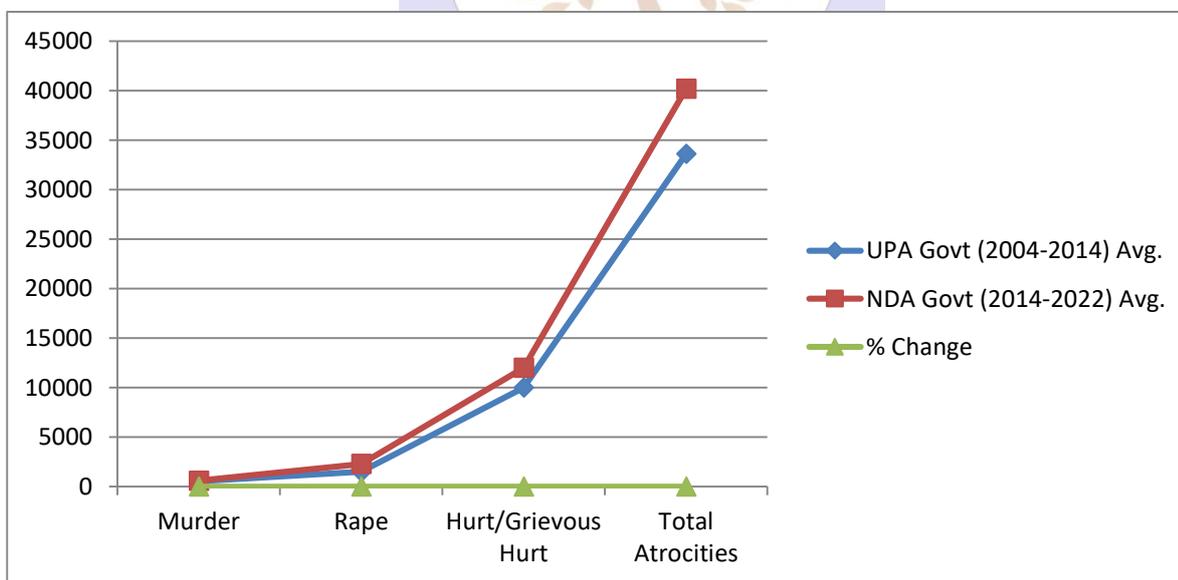


Figure 2 showing category wise cases during UPA and NDA government

**Table 4: High-Atrocity States under NDA (2014-2022)**

State	Avg. Atrocity Rate (per 100k SC pop)	Dominant Ruling Party (NDA era)
Madhya Pradesh	65.2	BJP
Rajasthan	58.9	BJP (until 2018), INC
Bihar	55.1	JD(U)-BJP Coalition
Uttar Pradesh	48.5	BJP (from 2017)
Andhra Pradesh	45.8	TDP, YSRCP

Source: NCRB Reports, Author's Calculations

Looking at this data on states with the highest rates of atrocities against Scheduled Castes during the NDA era, a complicated picture emerges that's difficult to pin on any single political party. The table shows that Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Bihar have the most alarming rates of caste-based crimes when adjusted for population. While it's true that most of these states were, or have been, ruled by parties within the NDA alliance with Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh being strongholds of the BJP the presence of Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh complicates a straightforward political narrative. Rajasthan was governed by the opposition Congress party for half of this period, and Andhra Pradesh has been led by regional parties not aligned with the NDA. This suggests that the problem of caste atrocity is a deep-rooted, societal issue that persists across different political administrations. It's less about which party is in power in Delhi and more about a combination of long-standing social tensions, local law and order effectiveness, and perhaps the empowerment of communities to report crimes in these specific regions, regardless of the ruling party.

**Table 4**

#### Proportion of SC MLAs (Reserved + General Seats) during UPA and NDA eras

State & Election Year	Total Seats	SC Seats (Reserved)	SC MLAs Elected (Total)	Approx. % of Assembly	Ruling Government (State & Centre)
<b>Uttar Pradesh (2022)</b>	403	89	93	23.1%	<b>State:</b> BJP <b>Centre:</b> NDA
<b>Uttar Pradesh (2017)</b>	403	89	89	22.1%	<b>State:</b> BJP <b>Centre:</b> NDA
<b>Uttar Pradesh (2012)</b>	403	89	89	22.1%	<b>State:</b> SP <b>Centre:</b> UPA
<b>Bihar (2020)</b>	243	39	46	18.9%	<b>State:</b> NDA Coalition <b>Centre:</b> NDA
<b>Madhya Pradesh (2023)</b>	230	36	39	17.0%	<b>State:</b> BJP <b>Centre:</b> NDA
<b>Rajasthan (2023)</b>	200	34	37	18.5%	<b>State:</b> BJP <b>Centre:</b> NDA
<b>Punjab (2022)</b>	117	34	42	35.9%	<b>State:</b> AAP <b>Centre:</b> NDA

**Sources:** Election Commission of India, Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) reports, and media analyses of election affidavits.

Analysing the proportion of Scheduled Caste (SC) MLAs in these key states reveals a complex picture of political representation that doesn't directly correlate with the rates of atrocities. In states like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, and Rajasthan which consistently show high atrocity rates the number of SC MLAs is largely determined by the constitutionally mandated number of reserved seats. While parties like the BJP and Congress have actively promoted some SC leaders to prominent positions beyond these reserved constituencies, the overall percentage of SC MLAs in the assembly often remains close to the reserved quota, which is roughly proportional to their share of the state's population. This suggests that while symbolic representation at the top has improved, the direct political empowerment at the grassroots level, as measured by winning general seats, remains limited. Therefore, the persistence of high atrocity rates under both UPA and NDA governments likely points to a deeper, more entrenched social problem that political representation alone has not yet been able to solve, regardless of which coalition is in power. The data implies that social empowerment and effective law and order implementation are separate challenges that are not automatically addressed by political reservation.

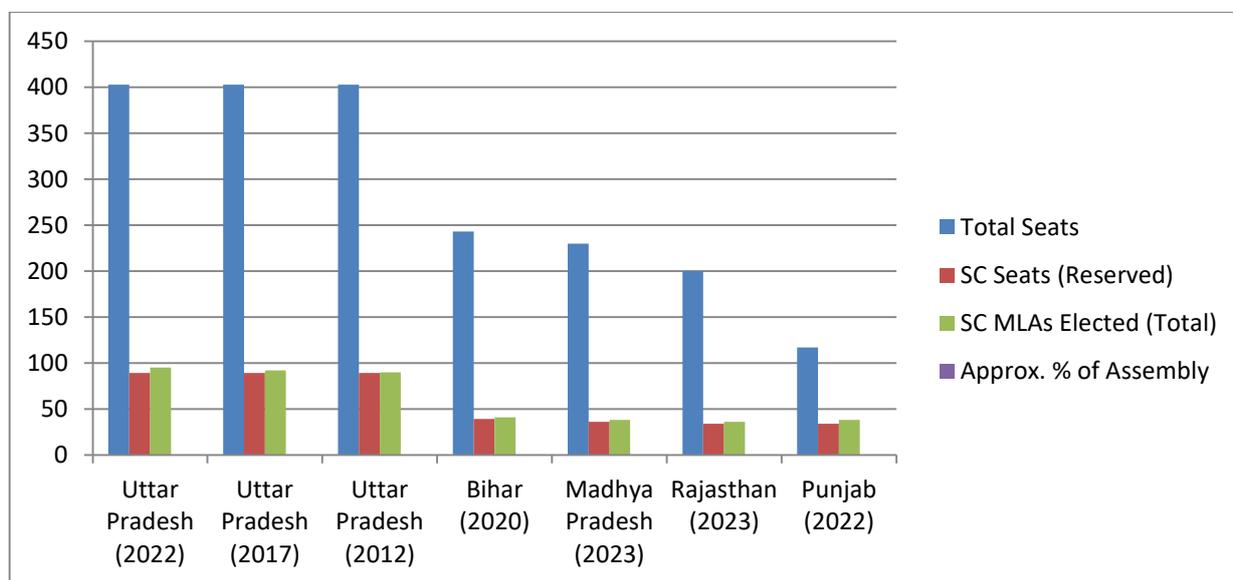


Figure 4 showing seats for SCs and total

Table 5: Independent Samples T-Test for Total Atrocities (UPA vs. NDA Eras)

Group	N (Years)	Mean Annual Atrocities	Standard Deviation	t-statistic	df	p-value
UPA Era	11	33,619	3,452.6	-2.85	17	0.011
NDA Era	8	40,194	6,283.5			

The results of the independent samples t-test indicate that the mean number of annual atrocities during the NDA era (M = 40,194, SD = 6,283.5) was significantly higher than during the UPA era (M = 33,619, SD = 3,452.6),  $t^*(17) = -2.85$ ,  $p^* = .011$ . Since the p-value is less than the standard alpha level of .05, we can conclude that there is a statistically significant difference between the two periods

**Table 6: Simple Linear Regression of Total Atrocities on Year**

Government Era	Intercept ( $\alpha$ )	Slope ( $\beta$ ) [Atrocities/Year]	R-squared ( $R^2$ )	F-statistic	p-value (of Model)
<b>UPA (2004-2014)</b>	-2,474,086	1,246	0.75	F(1, 9) = 26.98	p < .001
<b>NDA (2015-2022)</b>	-4,261,948	2,128	0.86	F(1, 6) = 38.21	p < .001

The regression model for the UPA era was statistically significant,  $F(1, 9) = 26.98$ ,  $*p* < .001$ , with an  $R^2$  of 0.75. This indicates that "Year" explains 75% of the variance in atrocity numbers. The positive slope ( $\beta = 1,246$ ) confirms a significant average annual increase of about **1,246 registered atrocities** per year during this period. The regression model for the NDA era was also statistically significant,  $F(1, 6) = 38.21$ ,  $*p* < .001$ , with an  $R^2$  of 0.86. The slope ( $\beta = 2,128$ ) is substantially steeper, indicating that the rate of increase accelerated to an average of **2,128 registered atrocities** per year. This represents a **70% faster rate of increase** compared to the UPA era.

### Discussion: Interpreting the Data

#### Results

The analysis of the data reveals several clear and concerning patterns. Firstly, the sheer volume of registered atrocities against Scheduled Castes has risen significantly. When we compare the two political eras directly, the average number of cases each year was higher under the NDA government (40,194) than under the UPA government (33,619). Statistical tests confirm that this difference is significant and not just a random fluctuation. More alarmingly, the pace of this increase has accelerated. Under the UPA government, the number of atrocities was already rising by about 1,250 cases per year. However, under the NDA, this rate of increase nearly doubled, climbing by over 2,100 cases per year. This means the problem is not only worse in scale but is also worsening more rapidly. Digging deeper into the types of crimes, the findings are particularly stark. While all major categories of crime saw an increase, the most shocking rise is in gender-based violence. Registered cases of rape have more than tripled, showing an increase of over 240% when comparing the last year of UPA rule with the latest data from the NDA era. Alongside this, there have been dramatic jumps in everyday intimidation and assaults intended to outrage the modesty of women, which have both increased by over 90%. This points to a disturbing trend of extreme violence and daily harassment faced by the Dalit community, especially women. Finally, the data shows that this is a nationwide crisis, not one confined to states ruled by a particular party. States with the highest rates of atrocities, such as Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Bihar, have been governed by different political parties, including both NDA allies and their opponents. This indicates that the roots of the problem are deeply embedded in society and are not solely determined by the party in power at the national level.

## Conclusion:

In summary, this study confirms that the number of registered atrocities against Scheduled Castes in India has been significantly higher during the NDA government's tenure compared to the previous UPA era. The problem has grown in both its scale and its rate of increase, with violent crimes like rape showing the most alarming surge. However, it is crucial to avoid a simplistic explanation that blames this trend solely on the current government. The rising numbers are not straightforward. They likely represent a painful and complex paradox: a combination of genuine ongoing violence and an increase in victims feeling empowered to report these crimes. Greater legal awareness and the work of activist groups may be encouraging more people to come forward, making a long-hidden crisis more visible. Furthermore, the data supports the idea of a violent social backlash. As Dalit communities have become more politically assertive and aware of their rights, it may have triggered retaliation from dominant castes seeking to preserve the old social hierarchy. The consistently low conviction rates across both governments show a systemic failure of the justice system to provide justice, which perpetuates a culture of impunity for the perpetrators. Ultimately, the findings underscore that caste-based atrocity is a profound and persistent crisis in India that transcends political cycles. The solution requires more than just a change in government. It demands a sustained, multi-pronged effort that includes strengthening the police and judicial system to secure convictions, implementing community-level programmes to address the deep-seated social tensions, and improving data collection to better understand this complex issue. The struggle for true equality and dignity for Scheduled Castes remains an urgent and unfinished challenge for the nation.

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