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# Disproportionately high population of Dalits, Adivasis lodged in jails, says study

Citing data from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), the report says, “Dalits and Adivasis - two of the most vulnerable sections of Indian society - make up a considerable number of India’s prison population.”

By: [Express News Service](#)

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The report says that these two communities account for about 24.2 per cent of the country's population, but constitute 34 per cent of prisoners.

Dalits and Adivasis constitute a disproportionately high number of prisoners with respect to their share of the country's population, a study has shown, which adds that even behind bars, these prisoners face caste discrimination from jail authorities and their fellow inmates.

A report titled 'Criminal Justice in the Shadow of Caste', released by the National Dalit Movement for Justice (NDMJ) this week, details how caste discrimination affects Dalit and Adivasi prisoners in terms of their right to food, wage, employment, accommodation, medical, bail, parole, and similar rights to trial and appeals. "Deeply entrenched prejudices against Dalits and Adivasis play an important role in their harassment and incarceration," it states.

Citing data from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), the report says, "Dalits and Adivasis – two of the most vulnerable sections of Indian society – make up a considerable number of India's prison population." The report says that these two communities account for about 24.2 per cent of the country's population, but constitute 34 per cent of prisoners.

NCRB 2015 data shows that 21.6 per cent of undertrials (61,139 out of 2,82,076) belong to Scheduled Castes (SCs) and 12.4 per cent (34,999 out of 2,82,076) are from Scheduled Tribes (STs). As per the 2011 Census, the SC and ST population accounts for 16.2 per cent and 8.2 per cent of the overall population, respectively.

States that show a significantly disproportionate percentage of prisoners as compared to their actual population are in Assam, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, and Rajasthan. For instance, the percentage of SC/ST population in Tamil Nadu is 21.2, while the percentage of SC/ST prisoners in the state is 38.6.

The study is based on detailed interviews with 21 prisoners, convicts, those acquitted, or those out on bail in Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, and Maharashtra.

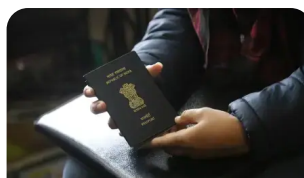
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“Most of them reported to have faced discrimination in terms of accommodation, bedding, food that is served to them, and even employment and wages provided

within the jail. Another issue is also problem faced in accessing legal aid,” said advocate Rahul Singh from NDMJ.

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