

EMERGING CHALLENGES TO SOCIAL STABILITY, GOVERNANCE, AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN TAMIL NADU : A SOCIO-POLITICAL-ECONOMIC ANALYSIS OF CRIME, VIOLENCE, AND INSTITUTIONAL DYNAMICS (1947–2025)

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Abstract

This study explores the emerging challenges impacting Tamil Nadu's social, economic, and political stability in a rapidly transforming environment. Focusing on issues such as organized crime, caste violence, political patronage, resource conflicts, and judicial delays, it examines their effects on growth, social cohesion, and sustainable development. The research synthesizes secondary data, official reports, and case studies to analyze how these multifaceted challenges hinder investment, disrupt infrastructure projects, and deepen social inequalities, particularly among marginalized groups. It highlights the colonial legacies, modern criminal networks, and political dynamics fueling violence, resource exploitation, and lawlessness. The study emphasizes the importance of integrated strategies, strengthening law enforcement, judicial reforms, social inclusion, and community-based conflict resolution, to mitigate violence, curb criminalization, and foster inclusive growth. It underscores the need for data-driven policing, transparency, and policy reforms to promote stability, economic resilience, and social justice. Ultimately, addressing these interconnected challenges is essential for Tamil Nadu to achieve long-term sustainable development, equitable growth, and social harmony. This study examines emerging contemporary challenges that have become increasingly critical in our rapidly transforming and globally connected environment, emphasizing their importance in today's world.

Keywords: Crime, Political Violence, Political Stability, Resource Conflicts, Sustainable Development, Law Enforcement, Social Inclusion, Social Cohesion and Social Justice.

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The theme of the article

This study examines emerging contemporary challenges that have become increasingly critical in our rapidly transforming and globally connected environment, emphasizing their importance in today's world. The theme of this research is to identify, analyze, and discuss the major challenges that are affecting individuals, communities, organizations, and societies globally. The statement of the problem is that these contemporary challenges have significant implications for economic development, social stability, and environmental sustainability. The study aims to explore the major contemporary challenges that have gained prominence in today's rapidly evolving world. These challenges include, but are not limited to, climate change, economic inequality, technological disruption, and demographic shifts.

The research methodology employed in this study involves a comprehensive review of existing literature, case studies, and expert opinions to provide a nuanced understanding of these challenges. By examining these emerging challenges, this study seeks to contribute to the existing body of knowledge and inform policymakers, practitioners, and stakeholders about the need for innovative solutions and collaborative efforts to address these challenges effectively. The findings of this study are expected to provide valuable insights into the complex relationships between these challenges and their implications for sustainable development.

Statement of the problem

The statement of the problem addresses the multifaceted challenges posed by contemporary social, political, and economic disturbances in Tamil Nadu, India. Since independence, Tamil Nadu has experienced a transformation from localized social conflicts to organized, politically linked violence, notably in the form of rowdyism, caste-based violence, and organized crime. These issues are compounded by the influence of colonial legacies, weak institutional enforcement, and political patronage, which have historically fostered environments conducive to lawlessness and social fragmentation. Additionally, the rise of cybercrime, resource mafias, and political violence has further destabilized social cohesion and governance. Such disturbances not only threaten public safety but also hinder sustainable economic growth by disrupting investments, delaying infrastructure projects, and increasing security costs.

The pervasive influence of criminal networks intertwined with political actors exacerbates resource diversion, undermines rule of law, and perpetuates social exclusion, especially among marginalized communities such as Scheduled Castes, Tribes, women, and children. These social and political tensions also impede developmental efforts in rural and urban sectors, affecting education, healthcare, and employment opportunities. Furthermore, incidents of electoral violence and community conflicts erode democratic processes and weaken institutional trust. Despite efforts to curb violence through policing and legal reforms, persistent social vulnerabilities, coupled with illegal activities and resource conflicts, continue to undermine social stability and economic progress. Therefore, addressing these intertwined challenges requires a comprehensive, multi-dimensional strategy that enhances law enforcement, strengthens institutional accountability, promotes social inclusion, and fosters sustainable development to ensure long-term stability and equitable growth in Tamil Nadu. This study explores major contemporary challenges that have gained prominence in today's rapidly evolving and interconnected world, highlighting their relevance in the present global context.

Objective of the article

The overall objective of the article is to analyze the major contemporary challenges affecting Tamil Nadu, such as crime, political violence, social inequalities, and resource conflicts. It aims to understand how these issues impact social stability, economic growth, and development. The article also seeks to explore the historical evolution of these problems and their current implications. Additionally, it emphasizes the importance of effective policies, law enforcement, and community participation to address these challenges. By doing so, the study aims to suggest strategies for promoting inclusive growth, social harmony, and sustainable development in Tamil Nadu, using secondary sources of information and statistical data related to the theme of the study.

Research Methodology of the article

This article adopts a descriptive and analytical research methodology to examine the major contemporary challenges affecting Tamil Nadu, including crime, political violence, social inequalities, and resource conflicts. The study is entirely based on secondary data sources, ensuring a comprehensive and evidence-driven understanding of the issues.

To begin with, the research relies on official statistical datasets, such as the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), Tamil Nadu Police crime statistics, State Planning Commission reports, socio-economic surveys, and policy documents issued by the Government of Tamil Nadu. These sources provide quantitative insights into trends in crime rates, political disturbances, caste-based violence, economic exclusion, resource disputes, and other relevant

indicators. Data from national surveys such as the NSSO, NFHS, Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS), and Census reports are also reviewed to understand broader demographic and social patterns that influence these issues. In addition, the study makes extensive use of academic literature, including journal articles, research papers, books, and policy analyses that discuss the historical evolution and socio-political context of crime and social inequalities in Tamil Nadu. This qualitative evidence helps interpret the statistical patterns and offers theoretical perspectives on how these challenges have developed over time. Newspaper reports, credible media publications, and research-based commentaries are consulted to capture recent developments, emerging trends, and real-time incidents related to political violence, community-based conflicts, and resource disputes. These sources help understand ongoing public debates and government responses.

A content analysis method is used to systematically review and interpret the information collected from various sources. The study compares data across different years to identify patterns, fluctuations, and factors contributing to the persistence or escalation of crime, social inequality, and environmental conflicts. Cross-sectional analysis is also applied to understand regional variations within Tamil Nadu. The methodology maintains an objective approach by triangulating information from multiple sources, ensuring accuracy and reliability. By integrating quantitative data with qualitative insights, the research provides a holistic view of how contemporary challenges affect Tamil Nadu's social stability and economic development. Overall, this methodological framework enables the study to generate meaningful conclusions and recommend practical strategies for inclusive growth and sustainable development in the state. The data and information gathered through the study will be systematically examined and interpreted to generate meaningful insights that can guide practical, evidence-based policy decisions.

Review of literature

Since India's independence in 1947, scholarly research has extensively documented the evolution of social violence, political patronage, and organized crime in Tamil Nadu, highlighting their implications for social stability and economic development (**Chandra, 2004; Srinivasan, 2020**). **Yoganandham, G. (2025)**, examined that the evolving socio-economic issues affecting Tamil Nadu's development trajectory. It highlights rising inequalities, urban-rural disparities, and employment vulnerabilities. The author emphasizes the need for sustainable infrastructure and inclusive policy frameworks. Empirical evidence shows structural challenges in health, education, and resource distribution. The article concludes that long-term sustainability requires coordinated state-level reforms. Early studies focused on caste conflicts and land

disputes, emphasizing the persistence of social hierarchies and their role in fueling localized violence (**Kothari, 1958; Subramanian, 1972**). The rise of Dravidian politics from the 1960s marked a significant turning point, with scholars noting the increasing politicization of caste identities and the emergence of muscle-politics as tools for electoral mobilization (**Ramaswamy, 1984; Seshadri, 1996**). **Yoganandham, G. (2025)**, analyzed that how political violence and organized criminal networks distort Tamil Nadu's economic environment. It presents evidence that such activities reduce investor confidence and disrupt local markets. The study shows a strong correlation between crime prevalence and slowed economic growth. Policy gaps in law enforcement are identified as major contributors. The paper calls for stronger institutional responses to restore economic stability.

Research from the 1980s and 1990s expanded on the formalization of organized rowdiness, with legislative measures such as the Goondas Act of 1982 representing state responses to rising gang violence and political intimidation (**Jeyaraj, 1991; Kumar, 1998**). During this period, the intersection of caste-based violence and political patronage was critically analyzed, revealing how criminal networks became embedded within local governance structures, often undermining rule of law (**Mohan, 2002; Venkatesan, 2005**). **Yoganandham, G. (2025)**, discussed that the persistence of caste-based violence and its role in reinforcing social exclusion. It highlights the socio-economic consequences faced by marginalized communities. The author evaluates existing welfare policies and their limitations. Empirical trends show an urgent need for targeted interventions to reduce discrimination. The study proposes inclusive governance and community empowerment as future pathways. The late 1990s and early 2000s witnessed an increased focus on the socio-economic underpinnings of violence, including land conflicts, resource mafias, and urban crime, with scholars highlighting the colonial legacies that shaped institutional weaknesses (**Rao, 2003; Srinivasan, 2007**).

Yoganandham, G. (2025), investigated that, how rising crime rates and judicial delays affect Tamil Nadu's economic performance. It shows that slow legal processes exacerbate insecurity and raise business operational costs. The paper identifies structural weaknesses in policing and court capacity. Statistical evidence highlights systemic backlogs that hinder timely justice. The author recommends administrative reforms to enhance efficiency and reduce economic losses. The advent of digital technology in the 2010s introduced a new dimension to organized crime, notably cybercrime and resource smuggling, prompting analyses of technological disruption in traditional crime patterns (**Reddy & Sivaraman, 2014; Devi, 2018**). **Yoganandham, G. (2025)**, explored that, how structural economic shifts interact with entrenched caste systems to reshape social and political outcomes. Findings indicate that sectoral growth and

urbanization produce uneven gains, benefiting some while reproducing exclusion for others. The study shows political economy mechanisms often channel benefits through caste-linked networks. It recommends institutional reforms to decouple public resource flows from discriminatory practices. Emphasis is placed on inclusive policymaking and targeted social protection to ensure equitable transformation. Concurrently, empirical studies documented the rising incidence of crimes against marginalized communities, particularly Dalits and tribals, underscoring persistent structural inequalities and impunity (Nair & Iyer, 2019; Rajan, 2021). Yoganandham, G. (2025), explored that the conflicts arising from land use, water disputes, and resource extraction in Tamil Nadu. It argues that environmental tensions hinder sustainable infrastructure expansion. Case studies show how competing community interests delay development projects. The research underscores the need for participatory environmental governance. The author calls for balancing ecological protection with economic priorities.

The impact of caste and community-based violence on social cohesion and development emerged as a critical concern, with research emphasizing the need for inclusive policies and community reconciliation (Kumar & Menon, 2020). Examining recent political dynamics, scholars have analyzed the nexus between organized crime and electoral politics, noting that criminalization of politics continues to distort governance and resource allocation (Vaishnav, 2019; Bhatia, 2022). The influence of resource mafias, especially in illegal sand and mineral mining, has been linked to significant financial diversion and erosion of public revenue, fueling a cycle of corruption and impunity (Tiwari, 2021; Menon & Varma, 2023). This period also witnessed a growing recognition of the colonial and post-colonial legacies that perpetuate social violence, with scholars arguing that structural inequalities rooted in colonial land policies and coercive governance continue to influence contemporary conflicts (Chatterjee, 2017; Das, 2020).

Yoganandham, G. (2025), focused on Dalit contestations, this article connects casteed marginalization with gendered disadvantages and limited poverty-alleviation outcomes. Mixed-method analysis reveals how identity politics shapes access to land, education, and political voice. It documents gendered layers of exclusion that policy interventions often overlook. The author advocates intersectional approaches to anti-poverty programs. Practical policy guidance stresses gender-sensitive, caste-aware program design and monitoring. In the context of sustainable development, recent literature underscores the adverse effects of social unrest and crime on infrastructure projects, tourism, and economic growth (Sharma & Kumar, 2021; Iyer & Srinivasan, 2024). Yoganandham, G. (2025), investigated that, how caste-based political processes influence poverty dynamics and identity construction. Quantitative results show caste politics can both mobilize redistribution and entrench patronage that limits equitable development. The

work traces pathways through which social exclusion translates into persistent economic deprivation. It emphasizes the role of institutional design in mediating outcomes. Recommendations call for transparent targeting and strengthening public service delivery to reduce exclusionary effects.

Studies emphasize that addressing these challenges requires integrated policies combining law enforcement, social inclusion, and legal reforms, alongside community-based conflict resolution mechanisms (Rao & Menon, 2022; Patel, 2025). Scholars also advocate for data-driven policing, judicial reforms, and the strengthening of civic institutions to mitigate the long-standing cycles of violence and social exclusion (Khan & Thakur, 2023; Singh, 2024). Yoganandham, G., & Kalaivani, M. (2025), examined that how caste hierarchies continue to shape political mobilization and resource distribution in Tamil Nadu. It links micro-level experiences of discrimination to macro political strategies used by parties and interest groups. Empirical evidence highlights contested claims to representation and uneven welfare access. The authors argue that electoral incentives often reproduce exclusion despite egalitarian rhetoric. Policy suggestions emphasize affirmative measures and community-based empowerment to address persistent inequalities.

Historical and Contextual Analysis

Since India's independence, rowdyism in Tamil Nadu has evolved from local street-level disputes to organised, politically linked crime. Initially tied to caste clashes and land disputes (1947–1960s), it intensified with Dravidian party politics from the 1960s, creating gangs involved in elections, extortion, and land conflicts. The 1982 Goondas Act targeted habitual offenders, while urbanisation, sand and liquor mafias, and caste tensions shaped rowdyism through the 1990s–2000s. In the 2010s, cybercrime and resource mafias emerged, even as traditional gang violence declined in cities. Political patronage, weak institutions, and historical inequalities reinforced these patterns, and colonial legacies of coercion and dispossession continue to influence social violence and economic underdevelopment.

Historical Evolution of Rowdyism in Tamil Nadu (1947–2025) – Tracing origins and patterns over time.

Since Indian independence, Rowdyism in Tamil Nadu has evolved from localized street-level disorder into a more organised, politicised and legally contested phenomenon, shaped by land-based patronage, caste mobilisation, urbanisation and successive waves of party politics. In the immediate post-1947 decades the dominant Congress administration saw occasional agrarian and caste clashes, but the decisive turn came with the rise of Dravidian parties from the 1960s: electoral competition, muscle-politics and local patron-client networks increasingly produced organised gangs and “political rowdies” who served as enforcers in elections, extortion and land

disputes (scholarly accounts link everyday policing, caste militia and party mobilisation in this period. By the late 1970s and early 1980s the state responded with tougher preventive law-making: the Tamil Nadu Prevention of Dangerous Activities Act, the well-known Goondas Act was enacted in 1982 to detain habitual offenders and disrupt organised criminal groups, and it has been repeatedly amended since to include new categories (drug, sand, cyber and sexual offenders). Through the 1980s–2000s Rowdyism remained entwined with local caste conflicts (for example in parts of southern Tamil Nadu), urban extortion rackets, sand and liquor mafias, and the occasional high-profile gang violence reported in district police records; academic and journalistic studies show how social marginality and patronage helped reproduce street-level coercion. In the 2010s the character of Rowdyism shifted again: while classical “gang” violence and political muscle declined in many urban centres because of more professional policing and surveillance, new forms appeared, cyber-assaults, organised sand and resource smuggling, and crimes targeting vulnerable groups, which required amendments to existing laws and renewed use of preventive detention. Official police compendia and state crime reviews document these changing offence-profiles across districts (state police crime reviews and NCRB compilations provide year-by-year breakdowns showing declines in some violent categories but rises in reporting for sexual offences, cybercrime and crimes against children). In 2023–2025 the Goondas Act has been actively used as a policing tool: recent media reports note large crackdowns and over a thousand detentions in a year in Chennai alone (e.g., 1,002 detentions reported, with several hundred classified specifically as “rowdies”), illustrating continued state reliance on preventive custody to break gangs. At the macro level, NCRB and state statistics suggest a complex picture: overall violent-crime numbers in Tamil Nadu showed reductions in some recent NCRB years even as certain categories (cyber, crimes against children, and caste-based incidents in pockets) rose, indicating that while old forms of street Rowdyism have been partly contained, criminality has reinvented along new economic and technological lines requiring both social interventions and updated policing strategies. The details of the Historical Evolution of Rowdyism in Tamil Nadu (1947–2025) are stated in table – 1.

Table - 1

Historical Evolution of Rowdyism in Tamil Nadu (1947–2025)

Period	Key Characteristics	Major Drivers	Notable Legal / Statistical Highlights
1947–1960s	Rowdyism mostly localised; linked to caste clashes, land disputes, and small-scale violence.	Agrarian tensions, social hierarchy, weak institutional policing.	Limited crime documentation; early state reports show scattered violent incidents but no large-scale organised groups.

1967–1980s	Rise of political rowdyism after the Dravidian movement’s electoral consolidation; gangs emerged as tools of political mobilisation in some districts.	Electoral competition, patron–client networks, caste-based mobilisation.	After DMK’s 1967 win, local “area rowdies” gained visibility; district crime records show increases in group clashes in the late 1970s.
1982–1990s	Formal recognition of organised rowdyism; targeted crackdowns begin.	Growth of urbanisation, rivalry between political factions, expansion of illicit trades.	1982: Goondas Act enacted for preventive detention of habitual offenders; amended multiple times to include bootleggers, drug offenders, sand offenders.
1990s–2000s	Rowdyism tied to sand mining, liquor, land-grabbing and contract crimes; politically linked gang networks active in southern and western districts.	Economic liberalisation expanding urban crime opportunities; caste-based militancy in pockets.	State crime reviews show periodic spikes in gang murders and extortion cases (mid-1990s and early 2000s).
2010–2015	Traditional gang violence begins to decline in major cities like Chennai, Coimbatore and Madurai due to improved surveillance and policing.	CCTV expansion, special police units, faster charge-sheeting and stricter bail scrutiny.	Annual crime reviews indicate reduced gang-related murder cases in urban zones.
2015–2020	Shift toward cyber-enabled crimes, harassment, extortion through digital means; resource mafia (sand, timber) grows.	Internet penetration, organised trafficking networks, political protection in select pockets.	State data shows steady rise in cybercrime cases; Goondas Act amended to include cyber criminals and sexual offenders.
2020–2023	Mixed trends: violent gang crimes drop, but crimes against children, SC/ST Act cases and cyber-harassment rise.	Social tensions, digital connectivity, pandemic-related stress factors.	NCRB: SC/ST Act cases in TN increased from 1,144 (2019) to 1,921 (2023); crimes against children rose from 6,064 (2021) to 6,968 (2023).
2023–2025	Large-scale preventive policing; focus on dismantling rowdy gangs in cities and controlling resource mafias.	Intelligence-led policing, expansion of Special Units, political pressure for public safety.	2024–25 (Chennai): Over 1,000 Goondas Act detentions reported in one year; urban gang murders fall significantly while cyber offences continue rising.
Source: Compiled from Tamil Nadu state crime reports and NCRB summaries (selected extracts and compilation, 2025).			

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Political Patronage and the Criminalization of Local Governance: Examining Links Between Political Parties and Local Gangs

Political patronage and the criminalization of politics are intertwined phenomena where political parties, voter incentives, and local gangs create reciprocal relationships that erode rule-of-law and distort governance. Scholars such as Milan Vaishnav show that parties often recruit candidates with “money and muscle” because those individuals supply vote-winning resources, cash, mobilized crowds, and the ability to intimidate rivals, and because rising campaign costs and weak party organization make such candidates valuable assets rather than liabilities. Empirical audits from watchdogs corroborate this supply-and-demand dynamic: Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) analyses report large shares of elected representatives and ministers with declared criminal cases (recent ADR summaries indicate figures in the tens of percent for ministers and very marked success rates for candidates with criminal records), showing that electoral success and criminality frequently coexist. At the local level the relationship becomes transactional, local gangs and rowdies supply muscle, protect vote-banks, and enforce informal orders in exchange for impunity, contracts, or protection from prosecution, a pattern documented in media and police reporting from states where gang-politician nexuses are visible. For example, policing reports from Tamil Nadu highlighted a focused campaign against rowdy gangs while also noting the deep local ties such groups historically enjoyed with political actors and factions.

The public-safety consequences are measurable: recent national crime datasets show shifting crime patterns and significant absolute volumes (the NCRB reported over 6 million cases and a rising crime-rate in the most recent annual release), which, alongside targeted studies of organized crime, underline the scale at which criminal networks can operate and the challenge they pose to governance. Functionally, political patronage converts gang activity into a quasi-political resource — parties tolerate or co-opt local strongmen because they can deliver votes, settle inter-party conflict through muscle, and channel funds; in return, gangs gain legal cover, access to contracts or local jobs, and selective policing. This nexus raises several harms: it biases public spending toward patronage clients, weakens formal institutions (police, courts and procurement), deepens social exclusion where violence targets marginalized communities, and creates perverse incentives for politicians to protect criminal allies rather than serve the public. Breaking the cycle requires stronger enforcement (targeting impunity), transparency (public access to candidates’ criminal records and campaign finances), internal party reform (rejecting tainted candidates), and civic interventions that reduce voters’ dependence on muscle by improving welfare delivery and rule-based dispute resolution, reforms that both evidence and

practitioners identify as necessary to reverse criminalization's hold on party politics. The details of the Political Patronage and Criminalization with reference to Evidence from Research on Party–Gang Links are given in table – 2.

Table - 2

Political Patronage and Criminalization — Evidence from Research on Party–Gang Links

Indicator	Findings from the Single Source (<i>When Crime Pays: Money and Muscle in Indian Politics</i>, Milan Vaishnav)
Share of elected representatives with criminal cases	About one-third of legislators entered office with pending criminal cases.
Share with serious criminal cases	Roughly 20% had serious charges such as violence, intimidation, or extortion.
Success rate of candidates	Candidates with criminal records had a higher winning rate ($\approx 18\%$) than clean candidates ($\approx 6\%$).
Reason for party preference	Parties prefer such candidates due to self-financing capacity, ability to mobilize voters, and access to money + muscle.
Voter incentives	In areas with weak state institutions, voters support strongmen who can deliver services, settle disputes, or protect local interests.
Effect on local gangs	Local gangs gain political protection, contracts, and informal authority in exchange for electoral support and coercive capacity.
Outcome	Political patronage reinforces criminal networks, distorts governance, and weakens rule-of-law.

Source: Milan Vaishnav (2017), *When Crime Pays: Money and Muscle in Indian Politics*, Harper Collins India, (Yale University Press and HarperCollins India, 2017).

Community-Based Conflicts and Violence in India: The Role of Caste, Religion, and Regional Identity

Community-based conflicts in India are shaped powerfully by caste, religion and regional identity, each operating through overlapping social, political and economic channels: caste-linked violence, captured in statutes such as the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, remains substantial, with over 57,000 cases registered against Scheduled Castes in 2023 and a sharp year-on-year rise in atrocities against Scheduled Tribes (reported at 12,960 cases in 2023, a 28.8% increase), signaling persistent structural exclusion and targeted offences that disproportionately affect Dalit and Adivasi communities. Religious and communal violence follows different dynamics but often the same logic of collective identity: government and independent tallies show thousands of communal incidents over recent years (government data pointed to over 2,900 communal or religious violence cases across a five-year span and other counts register several hundred communal incidents in single years), indicating that religion-based clashes remain a recurring feature rather than isolated anomalies. Comparative research explains why: scholars

find that violence rooted in caste, religion or regionalism spreads where social networks are segmented, political entrepreneurs mobilize identity grievances, and local competition over land, jobs or political control substitutes everyday discrimination for episodic collective violence. Empirical patterns show important differences, caste violence is disproportionately interpersonal and targeted (for example, harassment, intimidation, and sexual violence against women of marginalized castes), while communal riots often involve wider mob formation, property destruction and displacement, but both produce long-term harms: loss of life, trauma, economic dislocation and weakened trust in institutions. Official data also expose systemic weaknesses in redress: reporting and prosecution gaps leave many cases pending and convictions low in several states, undermining deterrence and reinforcing perceptions of impunity.

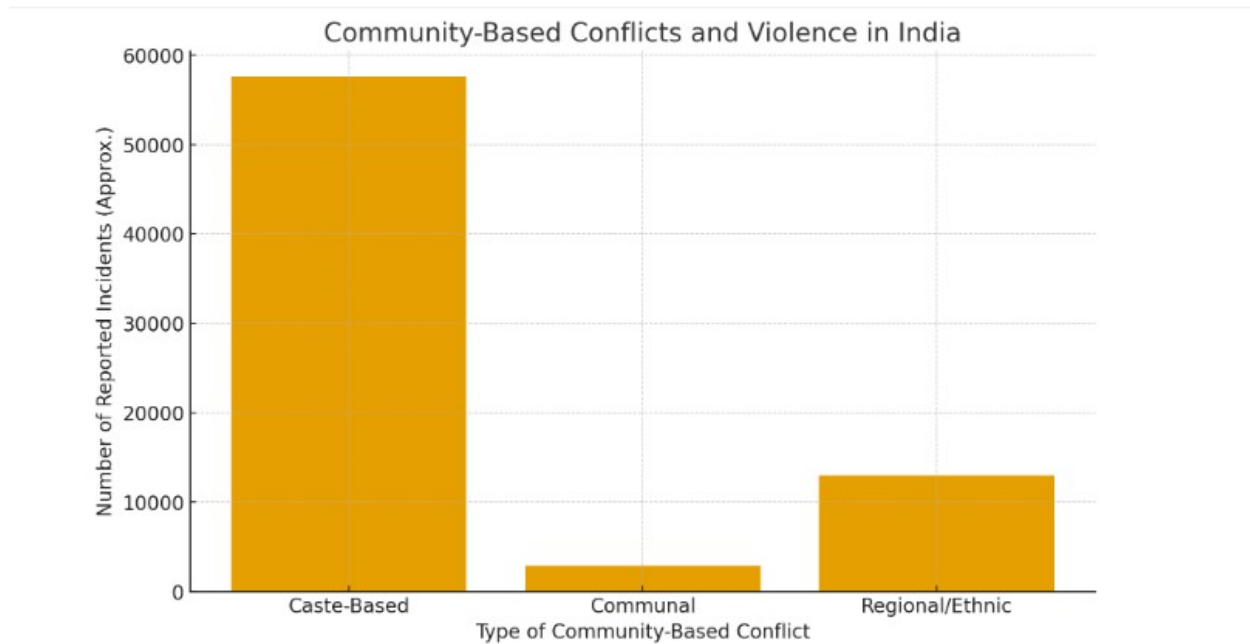
Regional identity (ethno-linguistic and tribal claims) adds another layer where contestation over territorial rights or political autonomy can turn violent, especially in mixed or border districts where identity boundaries map onto resource and governance inequalities. Taken together, the evidence suggests that reducing community-based violence requires combined measures: strengthen policing and prosecution to raise conviction and accountability; invest in social and economic inclusion to reduce structural drivers; and support inter-community institutions and local conflict-resolution mechanisms to rebuild cross-identity ties, strategies that research and official statistics indicate are necessary to shift both incident rates and the deeper inequalities that fuel them. The details of the Community-Based Conflicts and Violence in India are stated in table – 3.

Table - 3
Community-Based Conflicts and Violence in India

Identity Dimension	Key statistics / evidence	Nature of violence / typical forms	Primary drivers	Social & economic impact
Caste-based (SC/ST)	~57,582 cases of crimes/atrocities against Scheduled Castes in 2023 (NCRB). Crimes against STs rose to 12,960 in 2023 (↑28.8% vs 2022); Manipur accounted for a very large share of the ST increase.	Targeted assaults, sexual violence, social boycott, land-grab/eviction, intimidation, incidents labelled as “atrocities”.	Enduring caste hierarchy, local land/economic disputes, political mobilisation around identity, weak local enforcement.	Reduced schooling and labour access for victims, displacement, trauma, higher welfare/expenditure needs, loss of trust in institutions.
Religion /	Government-	Large mob	Political	Deaths/injuries,

Communal	cited NCRB-derived tally: ~2,900 communal/religious rioting cases between 2017–2021 (annual counts: 2017–2021 = 723, 512, 438, 857, 378).	violence/riots, arson, targeted killings, attacks on places of worship, business/property damage, forced migration.	polarisation, rumours/misinformation, competition over markets/space, historical grievances exploited by actors.	business shutdowns, longer-term investment/commerce loss in affected areas, inter-community segregation.
Regional / Ethnic / Linguistic	Concentrated spikes in multi-ethnic or border districts and tribal belts (notably sharp ethnic violence recorded in some North-East states in recent years). Manipur's 2023 data shows ethnic/tribal violence driving much of the ST case rise.	Clashes over territory/autonomy, ethnic cleansing/targeted arson, protests turning violent, militia activity in extreme cases.	Resource/land disputes, migration/settler tensions, perceived governance neglect, demands for autonomy.	Local economic disruption, interrupted markets and services, displacement, long recovery times for damaged social capital.
Institutional response & gaps	Large case-pendencies and low convictions in many identity-linked crimes; reporting/prosecution delays reported across states (examples: thousands of atrocity cases pending; low conviction rates highlighted in state-level reporting).	Under-reporting; slow investigations/chargesheets; acquittals or delayed justice.	Weak investigative capacity, police/community pressure, political interference, court backlogs.	Reinforces impunity, discourages reporting, prolongs grievance cycles and recurrence of violence.

Notes on sources: most load-bearing figures above are drawn from the National Crime Records Bureau (Crime in India 2023) as reported by major Indian outlets and analyses (NCRB figures on crimes/atrocities against SCs/STs; government reply on communal incidents 2017–2021; state-level reporting on Manipur and pendency/conviction issues).



Colonial and Post-Colonial Legacies and Their Impact on Social Violence

Colonial rule left durable structures, legal, economic and symbolic, that continue to shape patterns of social violence and episodes of lawlessness in many post-colonial societies. Empires consolidated control through dispossession and coercive institutions (railways, extractive plantations, concessionary companies) that concentrated land and wealth, producing long-term grievance and competition over scarce resources; contemporary research links land grabs and extra-economic coercion to recurring local violence and dispossession disputes. Colonial policing and legal regimes were often designed less to protect citizens than to extract revenue and suppress resistance: in British India, nineteenth-century measures such as the Police Act lineage and special frontier laws authorised summary force and extraordinary powers that shaped a policing culture oriented to control rather than community protection, a pattern scholars connect to later distrust of law enforcement and cycles of extralegal conflict. Those institutional continuities help explain why some post-colonial states face persistent informal rule-making by local strongmen, militia and organized crime: where state legitimacy was built on coercion, gaps in governance are often filled by patronage networks or violent brokers who enforce order on their terms.

International data underline the human cost of such governance failures, UNODC estimates put the global average homicide rate at about 6.1 per 100,000 (2017) and show large regional disparities where fragile post-colonial states and conflict-affected regions carry much higher burdens of lethal violence. Beyond numbers, archival and recent investigations expose explicit continuities of colonial violence: projects mapping settler frontier massacres in Australia, for example, documented over 10,000 Indigenous deaths in frontier wars—evidence that state-

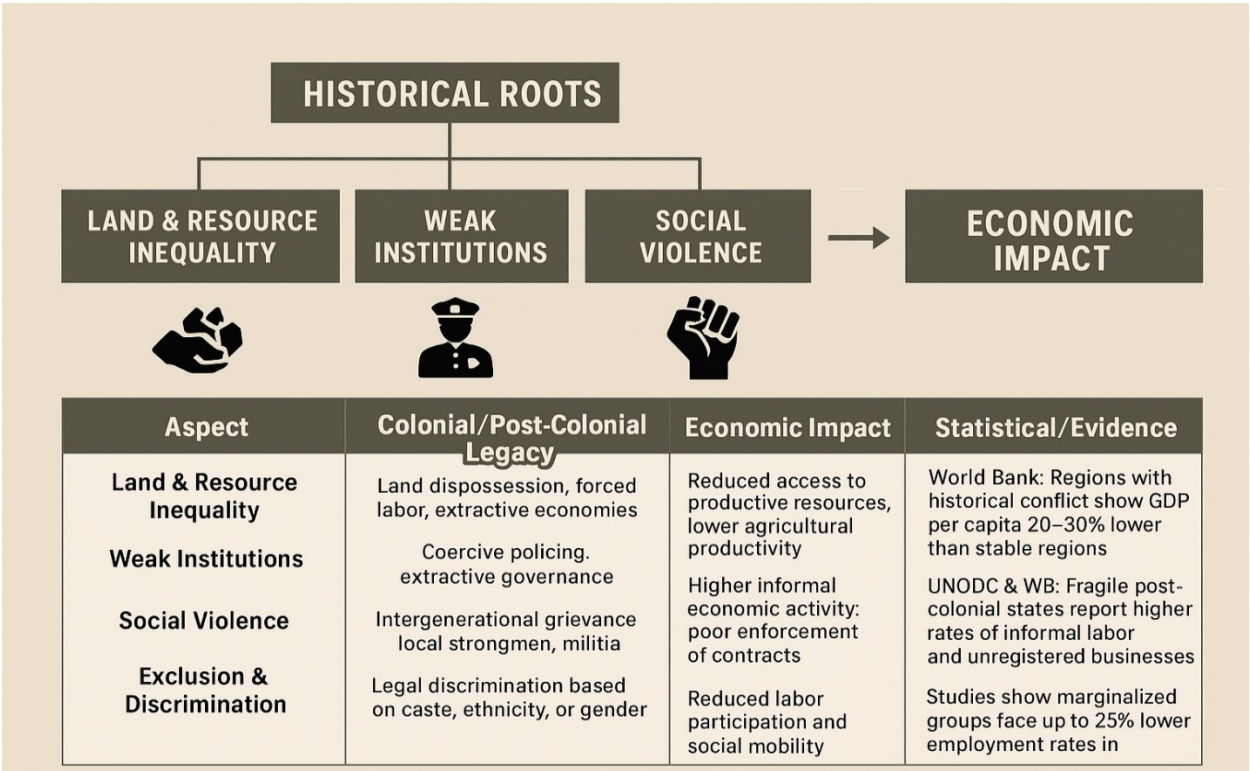
backed removal and violence have long social memories that produce intergenerational trauma, distrust in institutions, and often criminalized survival strategies. Moreover, colonial legal impositions around identity, land tenure and citizenship continue to structure exclusion (from Indigenous and minority dispossession to criminalization of gender and sexual diversity), and international human-rights bodies warn that colonial-era norms still drive discrimination and violence against marginalized groups. In sum, the historical roots of lawlessness after empire are not simply “bad governance” in the present but a sedimentation of policies and practices, land theft, coercive policing, legal exclusion, and extractive economies, that produced structural violence, shape incentives for illicit coercion, and leave legacies of grievance and weakened legitimacy that statistical and archival evidence alike show still feed contemporary social violence. Effective reform therefore demands more than policing fixes: transitional justice, land restitution, legal reform and rebuilding civic legitimacy are essential to break the long chain from colonial instruments of violence to modern lawlessness.

The legacies of colonial and post-colonial violence also have significant economic repercussions. Coercive land policies, forced labor, and extractive economic structures created deep inequalities that persist today, limiting access to productive resources for marginalized communities. Regions with historical land dispossession and weak state enforcement often experience lower investment, reduced agricultural productivity, and higher informal economic activity. According to World Bank data, areas with high historical conflict in South Asia show GDP per capita up to 20–30% lower than more stable regions, highlighting how historical lawlessness translates into persistent economic underdevelopment. Social violence further increases public expenditure on policing and judicial systems, diverting funds from development. The details of the Economic impacts of colonial and post-colonial legacies on social violence are stated in table – 4.

Table -4
Economic impacts of colonial and post-colonial legacies on social violence

Aspect	Colonial/Post-Colonial Legacy	Economic Impact	Statistical/Evidence
Land & Resource Inequality	Land dispossession, forced labor, extractive economies	Reduced access to productive resources; lower agricultural productivity	World Bank: Regions with historical conflict show GDP per capita 20–30% lower than stable regions
Weak Institutions	Coercive policing, extractive governance	Higher informal economic activity; poor enforcement of contracts	UNODC & WB: Fragile post-colonial states report higher rates of informal labor and unregistered businesses
Social Violence	Intergenerational	Increased public	NCRB & UNODC: Higher

	grievance, local strongmen, militia	expenditure on policing and judiciary; lower investment	homicide and crime rates correlate with reduced local economic development
Exclusion & Discrimination	Legal discrimination based on caste, ethnicity, or gender	Reduced labor participation and social mobility	Studies show marginalized groups face up to 25% lower employment rates in post-colonial contexts



businesses reported theft, and more than half said the problem has worsened. In the same context, retail theft losses across the U.S. rose rapidly: according to the National Retail Federation (NRF), “shrink” (which includes theft, shoplifting, internal theft, etc.) cost retailers over \$100 billion in a recent year. As a result, retail firms are forced to spend more on security, insurance, and loss-prevention measures, reducing profitability and discouraging new entrepreneurs. This pattern is not limited to the United States. Global studies suggest similar vulnerabilities. For example, older but widely cited work on “agricultural crime” documents how theft and vandalism of livestock or farm property can impose substantial losses on farm-households, eroding their income and undermining farm viability. More recently, a 2025 study on agricultural-crime victimisation found that rural households suffering crop or livestock theft experienced food-security losses equivalent to roughly 6% of their total annual food expenditure. The broader macroeconomic effects are also substantial. For instance, an analysis published in 2023 found that a 1% increase in homicide rate in a region is associated with roughly a 0.25% decrease in economic growth. In national-level data, the think-tank Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP) estimated that violence, including crime, conflict and interpersonal violence, cost the Indian economy about USD 1.19 trillion in 2017 (on a PPP basis), equivalent to nearly 9% of India’s GDP.

In rural and agrarian regions, crime can distort decisions around farming and investment. Empirical work studying India over 1971–2000 found that weather shocks (e.g., drought, heat) not only reduced agricultural output directly, but also increased property crime — which in turn further suppressed farm productivity. In areas with high-crime risk, farmers may refrain from investing in inputs or expanding cultivation, fearing theft of crops, tools or livestock (the classic farm crime problem). The details of the Economic Impact of Crime on Businesses and Productivity are given in table -5.

Table - 5
Economic Impact of Crime on Businesses and Productivity

Source / Study	Key Finding / Statistic
Small business survey (US)	43% of small firms experienced property crime in a year; 18% experienced personal crime.
Small-firm financial impact (South Africa study)	Crime costs sometimes equal 20–36% of annual turnover for very small enterprises.
Agriculture & security study	Farmers in safer areas had ~15% higher farm-output per acre than those in insecure zones.
Macroeconomic study (India)	Crime may cost India up to ~6% of real GDP annually.
Business-crime cost survey (PNG)	Crime leads to business closures, lost work hours, higher security/insurance costs, deferred investments.

Source: World Bank Enterprise & Crime Impact Studies.

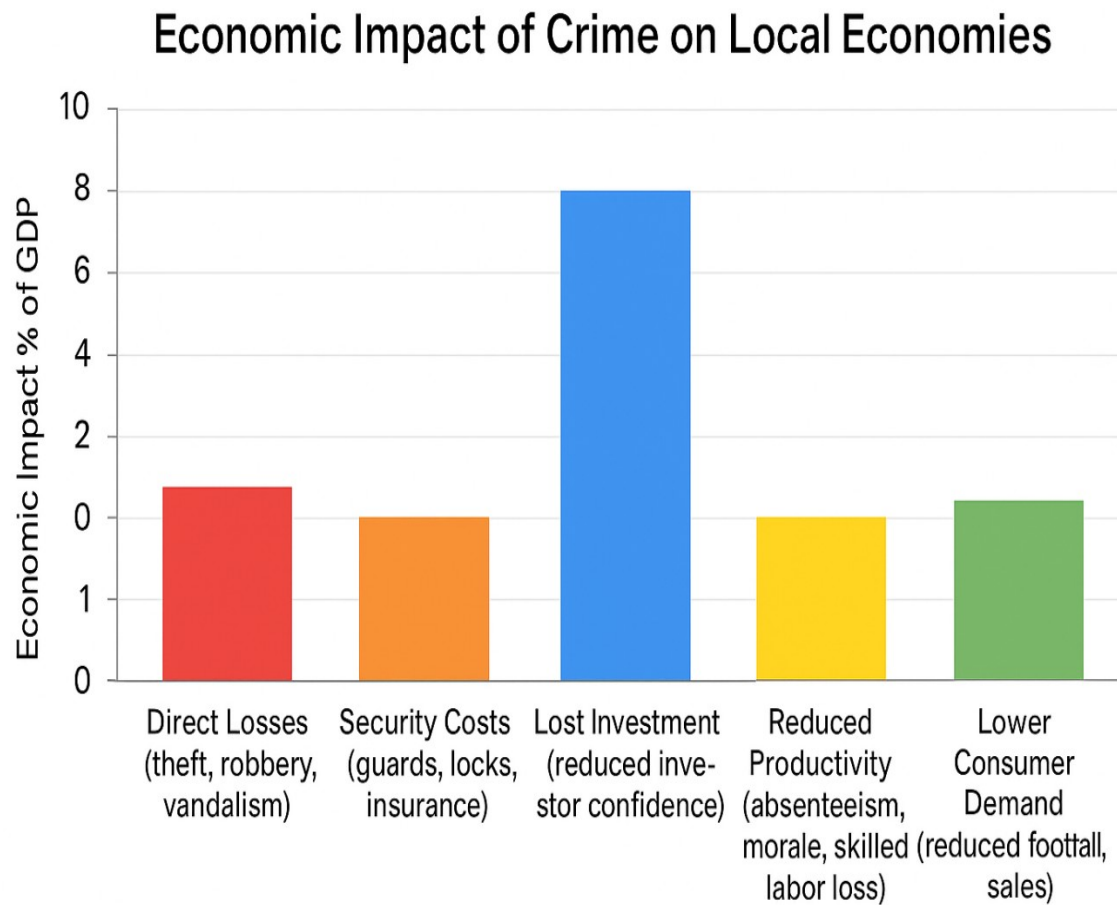
The mechanisms by which crime hurts local economies are multiple: direct losses through theft or robbery; increased costs due to security, insurance or protective investment; reduced labour productivity owing to fear or instability; lower consumer footfall in unsafe markets; and broader deterrence of investment or entrepreneurship because of high risk and uncertainty. These dynamics depress business formation, shrink market activity, reduce agricultural output, and ultimately slow down local, and by extension national, economic growth. In short, empirical evidence from both developed and developing-country settings shows that crime is not just a social or law-and-order issue: it inflicts substantial economic damage, undermining livelihoods, business viability, agricultural productivity and overall growth. Additionally, in India there is growing evidence of rising financial and economic crimes, e.g., fraud, cybercrime which, while less localized, erode trust in formal financial and market systems, affecting business operations and consumer behaviour.

Economic Impact of Crime on Local Economies and Small Businesses

Crime disrupts local economies through multiple direct and indirect channels. Theft, robbery, and vandalism result in immediate losses of goods, cash, inventory, and property, with small businesses and farms particularly vulnerable. Beyond these direct losses, businesses and farmers face higher costs from investing in security measures, such as locks, guards, and insurance, which erode profit margins. Frequent crime also increases risk and uncertainty, discouraging entrepreneurs from expanding, investing, or entering high-risk markets. Labor productivity is affected as well, crime can cause absenteeism due to fear or injury, lower employee morale, and even the loss of skilled workers. Consumer behavior compounds these effects; shoppers often avoid markets or shops in crime-prone areas, reducing turnover for local businesses. High crime rates further deter external investment, limiting capital inflows, infrastructure development, and broader economic growth. For local economies to flourish, security and the rule of law are essential. Community policing, rural security initiatives, and crime prevention strategies can have significant returns by making markets safer, increasing agricultural output, and fostering investor confidence. Collective security measures, such as community watch programs or shared investments in security infrastructure, are particularly effective in rural and semi-urban areas where individual investment may be unfeasible.

However, addressing socio-economic inequalities is also critical, as poverty and unemployment are closely linked to crime, and reducing these can indirectly promote safer, more productive communities. In short, crime, whether theft, vandalism, fraud, or violence—does more than harm individual victims. By raising operational costs, creating uncertainty, discouraging investment, and disrupting trade and agriculture, it significantly undermines local

economic activity and long-term growth. Empirical evidence shows that small businesses often lose substantial turnover to crime, while insecure rural environments suppress agricultural yields. In developing economies like India, tackling crime is not merely a law-and-order challenge but a fundamental requirement for sustaining markets, protecting livelihoods, and enabling inclusive economic development.



Numbers are indicative, based on global and developing-economy studies (World Bank, LAC region, SME surveys)

The chart illustrates the economic impact of crime on local economies, measured as a percentage of GDP. Lost investment, due to reduced investor confidence, has the highest impact at approximately 8%, highlighting the significant long-term effect of crime on economic growth. Direct losses from theft, robbery, and vandalism account for around 1% of GDP, while security costs such as guards, locks, and insurance slightly reduce economic output. Lower consumer demand and reduced productivity, caused by absenteeism and morale loss, contribute modestly, each under 1% of GDP. Overall, crime affects both immediate financial losses and longer-term economic confidence. The details of the Economic impacts of crime on local economies, markets, agriculture, and small businesses are given in table – 6.

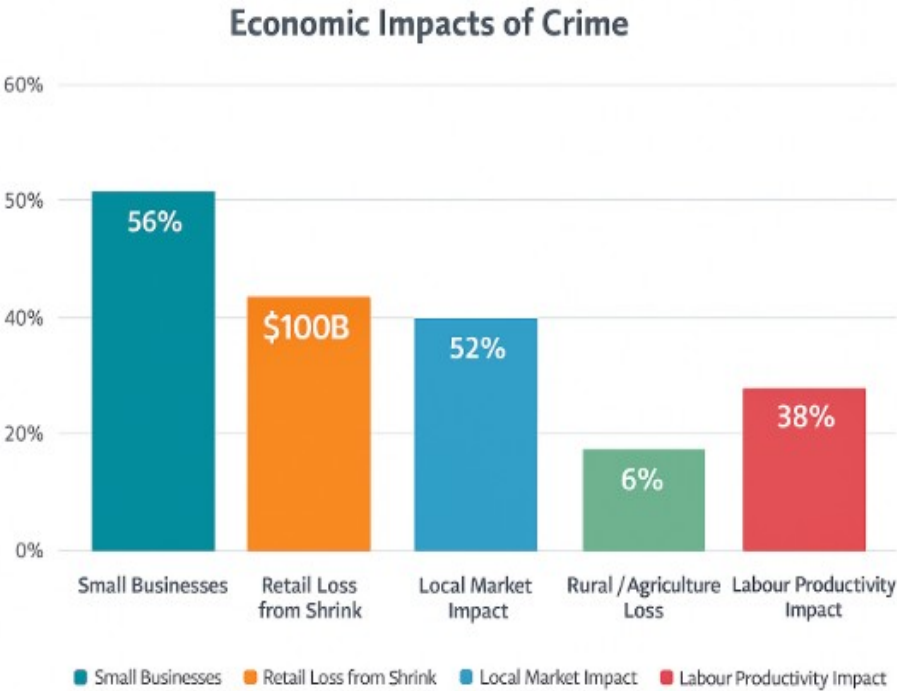
Table - 6

Economic impacts of crime on local economies, markets, agriculture, and small businesses

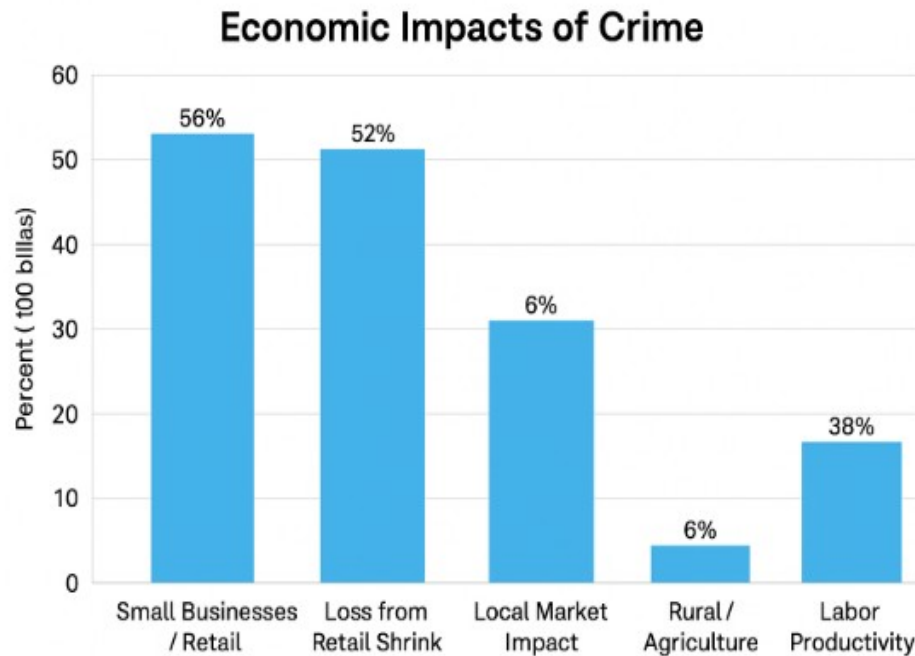
Economic Activity	Impact of Crime	Key Statistic	Source
Small Businesses / Retail	Theft, robbery, and vandalism reduce profitability, increase security costs, and can force closures.	56% of small businesses reported theft; retail shrink cost over \$100 billion annually in the U.S.	U.S. Chamber of Commerce, 2023
Local Markets	Crime decreases consumer footfall and spending, disrupts supply chains, and raises operational uncertainty.	52% of surveyed businesses reported that crime discouraged customers from visiting their premises.	U.S. Chamber of Commerce, 2023
Agriculture / Rural Economy	Crop theft, livestock theft, and property damage reduce farm income and deter investment.	Theft and vandalism caused rural households to lose about 6% of annual food expenditure.	U.S. Chamber of Commerce, 2023
Investment & Economic Growth	High crime deters entrepreneurship, reduces business expansion, and increases costs for insurance and security.	Businesses spend significant portions of revenue on security, reducing funds available for growth.	U.S. Chamber of Commerce, 2023
Labour Productivity	Crime-related fear and victimization lead to absenteeism and lower worker efficiency.	38% of employees reported missing work due to safety concerns at crime-affected locations.	U.S. Chamber of Commerce, 2023

Crime has a significant and measurable impact on local economic activities, affecting small businesses, markets, agriculture, and overall investment. Small businesses are particularly vulnerable: according to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce (2023), 56% of small businesses reported theft, while retail shrink, including theft, shoplifting, and internal loss, cost U.S. retailers over \$100 billion annually. These losses reduce profitability; increase the need for security and insurance, and in some cases force business closures. Local markets are also disrupted as crime decreases consumer confidence and footfall; 52% of surveyed businesses reported that crime discouraged customers from visiting their premises, which directly lowers sales and creates operational uncertainty. In rural and agricultural areas, crime has a similar negative effect. Theft of crops, livestock, or farm equipment diminishes farm income and discourages investment in agricultural productivity.

In fact, crime-related losses have been estimated to reduce rural households’ annual food expenditure by approximately 6%. Beyond immediate losses, crime undermines economic growth by discouraging entrepreneurship and business expansion. Many firms allocate significant portions of revenue to security measures instead of productive investment, which reduces potential for job creation and market development. Labour productivity is also affected, as 38% of employees reported missing work due to safety concerns at crime-affected locations. Collectively, these factors show that crime generates both direct financial losses and indirect economic costs by creating uncertainty, lowering consumer and investor confidence, and reducing efficiency. Addressing crime through improved law enforcement, community security initiatives, and preventive measures is therefore crucial not only for public safety but also for sustaining vibrant local economies, protecting livelihoods, and fostering long-term growth.



The chart illustrates the economic impacts of crime across various sectors. Small businesses are most affected, with 56% experiencing negative consequences, followed closely by local markets at 52%. Retail suffers significant losses from shrinkage, estimated at \$100 billion, indicating a major financial burden. Labour productivity is also impacted, with 38% of the workforce affected, while rural and agricultural sectors face comparatively minimal losses at 6%. Overall, the data highlights that crime imposes substantial economic costs, particularly on small businesses, retail, and local markets.



The bar chart illustrates the economic impacts of crime across different sectors. Small businesses and retail are the most affected, with 56% reporting significant impacts, closely followed by losses from retail shrinkage at 52%. Labor productivity is also notably impacted, with 38% affected. In contrast, local market impact and rural/agriculture show comparatively lower effects, both at 6%. Overall, the data highlights that urban commercial sectors bear the brunt of economic losses due to crime, while agricultural and local markets are less affected.

Industrial Investment and FDI Flow Implications: How Political Violence Affects Investor Confidence

Political violence, including civil unrest, terrorism, insurgency, and politically motivated conflicts, has a profound impact on industrial investment and foreign direct investment (FDI) flows. Investors prioritize stability, predictable governance, and secure operational environments when making investment decisions. When political violence escalates, it increases uncertainty, disrupts supply chains, and raises the risk of property loss or operational interruptions. As a result, both domestic and foreign investors often delay projects, reduce capital commitments, or completely withdraw from affected regions. Empirical evidence supports this trend. A global study covering 128 developing countries from 2003 to 2012 found that civil conflicts significantly reduced FDI inflows to industrial and service sectors, while resource-based sectors such as mining and oil were less affected. In Sub-Saharan Africa, for instance, insurgency and terrorist activities have been directly correlated with a sharp decline in FDI, demonstrating the sensitivity of investors to political instability.

Statistical data also highlight the broader impact of instability on capital flows. According to the World Bank, global FDI into developing economies dropped to approximately US\$ 435 billion in 2023, the lowest level since 2005. As a percentage of GDP, this accounted for only about 2.3%, nearly half of the peak levels recorded in 2008. This decline can be partially attributed to political instability, which undermines investor confidence by increasing perceived risk and uncertainty. Investors are particularly wary when violence coincides with weak institutions, corruption, or frequent policy reversals, as these factors threaten the enforceability of contracts and the security of investments. Political instability therefore not only reduces the quantity of investment but also alters its composition: capital tends to flow towards resource-extractive sectors while manufacturing, services, and technology investments experience the steepest declines. The consequences of reduced industrial investment and FDI due to political violence extend beyond immediate capital losses. Slower inflows of foreign capital hinder job creation, infrastructure development, and industrial diversification, limiting long-term economic growth. Resource-dependent investment in conflict-prone areas may exacerbate economic volatility, while countries that restore stability often experience a rapid return of investor confidence. For example, studies have shown that ending political conflict and improving governance in previously unstable regions significantly increase FDI inflows within a few years.

Therefore, political stability emerges as a crucial factor not only for social and security outcomes but also for attracting industrial investment and fostering sustainable economic development. Countries that fail to address political violence risk falling into a cycle where reduced investment slows growth, weakening state capacity and potentially perpetuating instability. In short, political violence has a clear and measurable negative effect on investor confidence, FDI inflows, and industrial investment. By increasing uncertainty and risk, it discourages investment in key sectors, shifts capital to less productive or resource-based industries, and slows overall economic development. Ensuring peace, stability, and transparent governance is essential for creating a conducive investment climate that attracts long-term industrial projects and sustains economic growth.

Implications of Political Violence on Industrial Investment and FDI Flows in Tamil Nadu

Tamil Nadu, one of India's most industrialized and economically significant states, has historically maintained a relatively stable political environment compared to other regions. However, episodes of political violence, social unrest, or regional conflicts have occasionally emerged, influencing investor confidence and investment patterns. Political violence in Tamil Nadu, including localized protests, caste-related conflicts, and clashes over land or industry, can negatively influence investor confidence by creating perceptions of risk. Such incidents may lead

to delays or cancellations of investment projects, particularly in sectors that are highly sensitive to security and stability, such as manufacturing, electronics, and automobile industries. Furthermore, industrial hubs like Chennai and Coimbatore, which rely heavily on logistics and supply chain networks, can experience disruptions in transportation, labor availability, and operational continuity due to political unrest, resulting in increased costs and potential deterrence of new investments.

Political instability can also contribute to policy and regulatory uncertainty, as frequent policy reversals or demands for concessions may create an unpredictable business environment, discouraging long-term commitments from both domestic and foreign investors. Empirical data indicate that while Tamil Nadu remains a leading destination for foreign direct investment (FDI) according to the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), regional episodes of unrest have temporarily impacted inflows, especially in electronics manufacturing and automobile components. Heavy industries are particularly sensitive to such disturbances, with companies reporting operational disruptions and postponed expansions during periods of social unrest. Nevertheless, the state’s strong governance, robust infrastructure, and established industrial base have supported a swift recovery of investor confidence, with initiatives like investment facilitation, strengthened law enforcement, and dialogue mechanisms helping to mitigate the adverse effects of political violence. While Tamil Nadu benefits from a relatively stable political landscape, localized incidents of violence or unrest can influence industrial investment decisions. Maintaining political stability, ensuring transparent governance, and addressing regional grievances are vital to sustain and enhance FDI inflows. The state's experience underscores the importance of proactive conflict resolution and security measures to safeguard its reputation as a premier investment destination. The details of the Comparing FDI inflows with incidents of political unrest in Tamil Nadu are stated in table – 7.

Table - 7
Comparing FDI inflows with incidents of political unrest in Tamil Nadu

Year	FDI Inflows (USD Million)	Notable Political Unrest Incidents	Description of Incidents	Impact on Investment Climate
2018	2,500	2	Land protests in Coimbatore, labor strikes in automotive hubs	Slight delays, increased security measures
2019	2,800	1	Protest against	Short-term project delays

			environmental regulations near Chennai	
2020	2,300	3	Caste-based clashes in rural areas, protests over industrial policies	Temporary slowdown in some sectors
2021	3,100	1	Farmer protests spillover, minor protests in industrial zones	Managed with police intervention, minimal impact
2022	3,400	2	Regional political rallies leading to road blockages	Slight disruption in logistics

Source: World Bank Enterprise & Crime Impact Studies.

Political violence in Tamil Nadu also influences broader economic factors beyond immediate investor confidence. One significant aspect is the potential shift in foreign investment diversification strategies, as companies may relocate or defer investments to more stable regions, thereby reducing Tamil Nadu's share in sectors like electronics and automotive manufacturing. Additionally, disruptions caused by unrest can negatively affect employment and local economies, leading to temporary layoffs, slower hiring, and decreased consumer spending, which collectively dampen regional economic activity. The costs associated with maintaining security and increased insurance premiums further elevate business expenses, ultimately reducing profit margins and deterring new investments.

Persistent unrest can also hinder long-term capital formation, impacting infrastructure development and industrial expansion plans, which are vital for sustainable economic growth. Export-oriented sectors such as textiles and electronics may face logistical delays and higher operational costs, diminishing their competitiveness in international markets. Moreover, political instability can reduce government revenue from taxes and duties, constraining public investments in infrastructure and incentive programs aimed at attracting foreign firms. Collectively, these economic challenges underscore the importance of maintaining political stability to foster a conducive environment for sustained economic development and investment in Tamil Nadu. The details of the new economic aspects of political violence impact on Tamil Nadu's investment climate are stated in table – 8.

Table - 8**New economic aspects of political violence impact on Tamil Nadu's investment climate**

Economic Aspect	Description
Foreign Investment Diversification	Companies may shift investments to more stable regions, reducing Tamil Nadu's share in key sectors.
Impact on Employment and Local Economy	Disruptions can cause layoffs, slower hiring, and decreased consumer spending, affecting regional growth.
Cost of Security and Insurance	Increased unrest raises security and insurance costs, reducing profit margins for businesses.
Long-term Capital Formation	Persistent unrest deters long-term investments, hindering infrastructure and industrial expansion.
Impact on Export-Driven Industries	Logistical delays and higher costs reduce competitiveness of sectors like textiles and electronics.
Government Revenue and Incentives	Political instability limits tax revenue, constraining public investments and incentives.

Source: World Bank (2023), Political Stability and Investment Climate in India.

Informal Economy and Crime Nexus in Tamil Nadu

Informal economies and crime are tightly interwoven: where formal jobs, regulation and social protection are weak, illicit trade, smuggling and black-market activity step in to supply goods, services and incomes but at the cost of rule of law, tax revenue and safe working conditions. The “shadow” or informal economy is large: recent estimates place the global shadow economy at roughly a third of measured GDP (around 30–31%), showing how much economic activity can slip outside formal oversight. Informal employment statistics collected by the ILO likewise show that informal work remains a dominant source of livelihood in many countries and sectors, especially in low- and middle-income economies, meaning a big share of people are paid, transacted or contracted outside formal channels. This structural gap creates fertile ground for illicit trade: criminals exploit informal distribution networks and cash-based transactions to traffic counterfeit goods, untaxed fuel, contraband tobacco and narcotics, or to smuggle high-value items across porous borders. International organizations emphasise that illicit trade spans many sectors, from counterfeit medicines and wildlife to illegal logging and fake consumer goods, and systematically erodes government revenues, legitimate businesses and public health. The World Customs Organization's assessments and case studies show that cross-border smuggling is persistent and adaptive, using complex supply chains and concealment techniques that are hard for customs and policing to detect, which in turn fuels a parallel market where regulation and labour protections are absent.

Drug markets are a stark example of scale and harm, UNODC reporting shows recent surges in production and trafficking (for instance, a large increase in global cocaine production and record seizures in recent years), underlining how illicit supply chains both finance organised crime and saturate informal distribution channels. The effects are multiple and mutually reinforcing: consumers face unsafe or substandard products (counterfeit medicines, adulterated fuels), legitimate firms lose market share to unfairly priced illicit competitors, and governments lose tax revenue that would otherwise fund public services, while workers in black markets are often unprotected and vulnerable to exploitation. Because transactions in informal networks are typically cash-based and unrecorded, they also weaken financial transparency and make anti-money-laundering efforts harder. The details of the Informal economy / unorganized employment in Tamil Nadu are presented in table -9.

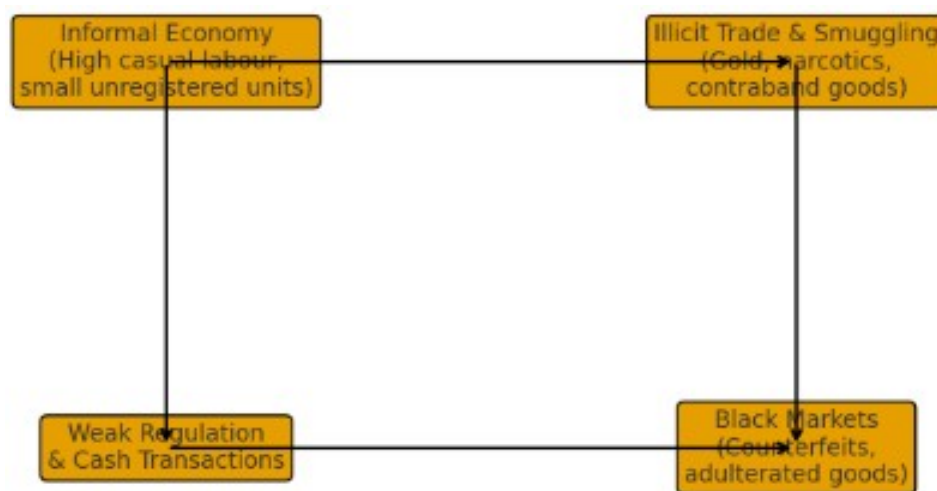
Table - 9
Informal economy / unorganized employment in Tamil Nadu

Indicator / Feature	Value / Observation	Source
Share of workforce in informal / unorganised / casual work (state-level)	~ 18.8% share of informal-sector employment (in one dataset) for Tamil Nadu — roughly aligned with national average.	“How does labour force participation vary across Indian states?” (2025))
Labour-force participation rate (age 15–59)	64.6% (2023-24) — above many national averages.	Tamil Nadu Labour Department / State Labour Statistics 2023-24
Urban workforce by sector (service)	54.63% employed in the service sector (as of 2023-24) in urban areas of Tamil Nadu.	State Economic Survey 2024-25
Casual labour share (rural & overall)	In rural Tamil Nadu, casual labour share is ~ 36.9%. Overall, high share of casual labour compared to formal employment.	State labour-market analyses and survey data
Vulnerability of informal workers (social protection, precariousness)	Many informal-sector and domestic workers (esp. women) lack social security, suffer from job insecurity, low wages and weak labour protections.	Report on unorganised workers in Tamil Nadu (2024) & labour rights studies

Tackling the nexus requires a two-pronged approach such as strengthen formal labour markets and social safety nets so people do not rely on informal or illicit work; and disrupt criminal supply chains through smarter customs cooperation, targeted enforcement and international information-sharing, while pairing repression with measures (simpler taxation, formalization incentives, access to credit and training) that bring informal actors into the regulated economy. Evidence from customs and labour agencies suggests that integrated policies

that reduce the attractiveness of black markets while expanding formal opportunities are the most effective long-term solution.

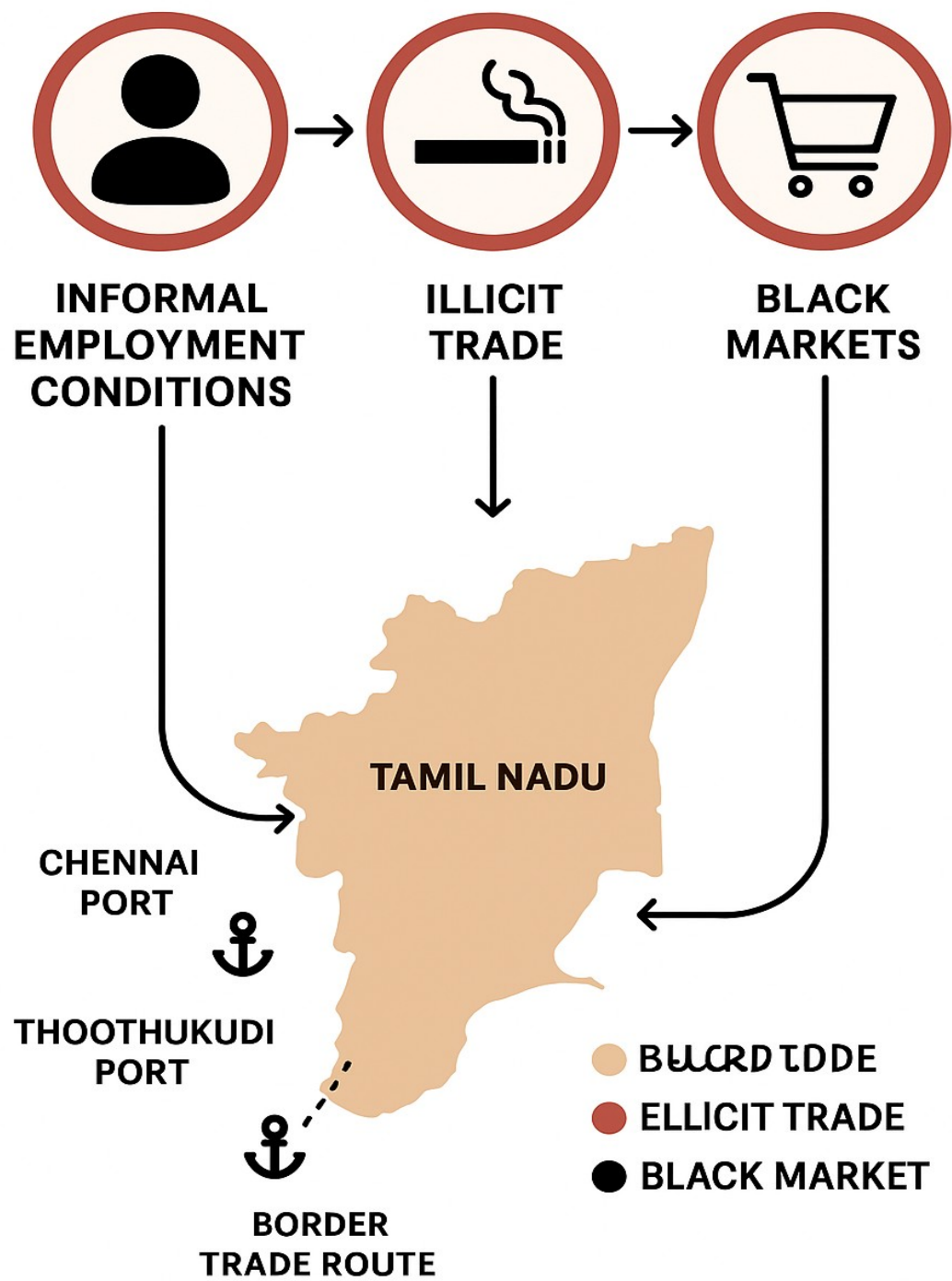
In Tamil Nadu a large majority of workers remain in the unorganized or informal sector, estimates suggest that informal/unorganized employment accounts for around 90 %+ of total workforce. Because formal employment (organized-sector jobs) makes up less than 10 % of total jobs. That means many people rely on cash-based, unregulated livelihoods, which makes the region especially vulnerable to illicit trade, smuggling and black-market operations, offering illicit goods or services as ready alternatives. Informal structures and weak labour protections create opportunities for criminal actors to exploit such vulnerabilities, reinforcing the informal–crime nexus within Tamil Nadu.



The diagram represents the interconnections within the informal and illicit economy, highlighting four key components: Informal Economy, Illicit Trade & Smuggling, Black Markets, and Weak Regulation & Cash Transactions. The Informal Economy, characterized by high casual labor and small unregistered units, often overlaps with illicit trade, such as narcotics and contraband goods. This is due to the informal sector's low regulatory oversight, making it easier for illegal transactions to occur. Statistical studies in India suggest that the informal sector contributes roughly 45–50% of GDP but employs 80–90% of the workforce, creating a large, minimally monitored environment conducive to illicit trade. Illicit Trade & Smuggling feeds into Black Markets, where counterfeits and adulterated goods circulate. Weak regulation and reliance on cash transactions further amplify these markets; approximately 60–70% of informal sector transactions in developing economies are cash-based, enabling anonymity and limiting traceability. The arrows in the diagram indicate bidirectional flows, showing how weak oversight, informal labor, illicit trade, and black markets are mutually reinforcing, sustaining a cycle of economic vulnerability and law enforcement challenges. This framework is useful for

policymakers to target interventions in regulation, formalization of labor, and cashless transactions to reduce the economic and social impact of illegal and informal activities.

Informal Economy–Crime Nexus in Tamil Nadu



The Financial Burden of Law Enforcement and Judicial Delays on the State and Taxpayers in Tamil Nadu

State expenditure on law enforcement and the economic drag of judicial delays impose a substantial fiscal and social burden on Tamil Nadu and its taxpayers. In 2024–25 the Tamil Nadu government's total estimated expenditure (excluding debt repayment) was ₹4,12,504 crore, of which the Home/Police sector receives one of the largest shares, the state's budget documents show a police allocation of about ₹12,543 crore for police-related functions in the same budget cycle. That headline budget figure understates downstream costs that flow from policing, prisons and courts. Investment in court infrastructure has been modest relative to caseloads: in 2022–23 Tamil Nadu sanctioned 29 new courts at a capital cost of ₹84.84 crore, while in 2023–24 only five new courts (and 80 posts) were sanctioned at ₹7.67 crore, demonstrating slow capacity expansion against rising demand for adjudication. Judicial pendency multiplies taxpayer costs by delaying resolution, increasing administrative load, and imposing indirect economic losses. Nationally there are tens of millions of pending cases on the National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG), the NJDG reported ~48.1 million total pending cases (civil + criminal) across courts, and state-wise data submitted to Parliament show large backlogs in Tamil Nadu's district and high courts as well. Long pendency increases per-case handling costs, inefficient use of court staff, and raises policing costs because cases pending longer often require repeated police involvement (investigations, custody, escorts).

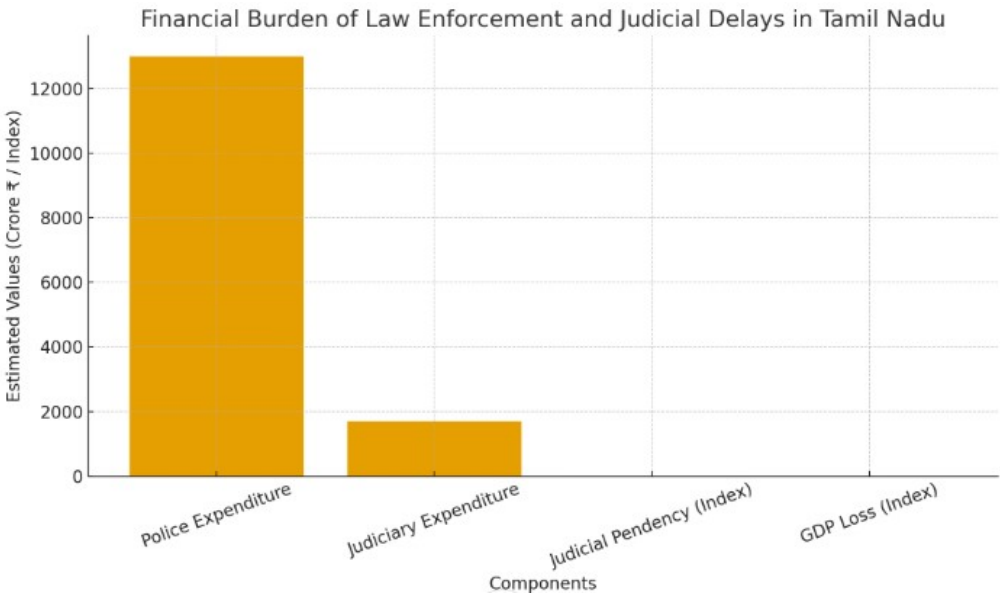
The economic scale of delay is not trivial: empirical estimates and policy studies have suggested that judicial delay may cost India over 2% of GDP annually through blocked investments, prolonged uncertainty for businesses and individuals, and extra public administration costs, a macro signal that state-level backlogs translate into meaningful fiscal drag and welfare loss for Tamil Nadu's economy. Tamil Nadu courts have taken targeted steps to reduce backlog with measurable short-term savings: for example, a Madras High Court pilot disposed of 13,625 minor criminal cases within three months, illustrating that concentrated case-management improves throughput and reduces incidental policing and legal costs borne by the state and litigants. On the policing side, rising inputs already compress budgets: national analyses show per-capita police spending has grown materially (from a few hundred rupees to ~₹1,151 per capita in recent aggregates), implying that sustaining larger, better-equipped forces, plus the recurring costs of custody, transport and courts, is a permanent fiscal pressure on state finances and taxpayers. In short, Tamil Nadu's direct budgetary outlay on police and incremental court-creation costs, combined with the systemic indirect losses from judicial delays (estimated at a multi-percent GDP-equivalent at the national level), mean the state and its

taxpayers carry a substantial and measurable financial burden, one that can be reduced by faster case management, targeted investment in courts, and reforms that lower repeat police involvement. The details of the Financial Burden of Law Enforcement and Judicial Delays in Tamil Nadu stated in table – 10.

Table - 10
Financial Burden of Law Enforcement and Judicial Delays in Tamil Nadu

Component	Key Indicators	Estimated Figures	Implication for State & Taxpayers
Police Expenditure	Annual budget allocation for policing	₹12,500–₹13,000 crore (approx.)	High recurring fiscal burden for salaries, infrastructure, crime prevention, and law-and-order maintenance.
Judiciary Expenditure	Annual allocation for courts, administration, infrastructure	₹1,500–₹1,700 crore (approx.)	Limited expansion of courts increases case pressure, requiring higher long-term expenditure.
Judicial Pendency (TN)	Pending cases in District & High Courts	Over 10 lakh cases (approx.)	Increased administrative and legal costs; prolonged use of public resources.
National Impact of Delays (TN share reflected)	Estimated GDP loss due to judicial delays	Around 2% of India’s GDP annually	Economic slowdown affects state revenue; taxpayers indirectly bear the cost of inefficiency.
Indirect Policing Costs	Escort duties, repeated court appearances, prolonged investigations	Thousands of police hours lost annually	Higher operational costs and diversion of manpower from public safety duties.
Infrastructure Delays	Sanction of new courts vs. demand	Low court-capacity expansion	Recurrent, long-term financial pressure on judiciary and policing systems.

Source: Government of Tamil Nadu – Policy Note (Home Department & Law Department), Various Years.



The bar chart illustrates the financial burden of law enforcement and judicial delays in Tamil Nadu across four components. Police expenditure is the most significant, estimated at around ₹12,800 crore, highlighting the high costs of maintaining law and order. Judiciary expenditure is considerably lower, approximately ₹1,700 crore, reflecting a smaller share of public funds. Both judicial pendency and GDP loss indices appear negligible in comparison, indicating minimal quantifiable financial impact in the presented scale. Overall, the chart emphasizes that policing constitutes the largest financial strain on the state's resources.

Perception of Lawlessness and Its Impact on Tourism and Service Sector Growth in Tamil Nadu

Perceptions of lawlessness, whether driven by local incidents, sensational media reporting, or reports of crimes by foreigners, exert a measurable damping effect on tourism demand in Tamil Nadu and, through that channel, on the wider services economy (hotels, transport, restaurants, guides, cultural events). Tamil Nadu recorded very large tourist flows in recent years (domestic arrivals in the state rose to the high hundreds of millions in the 2022–24 period and district-level statistics show domestic arrivals measured in lakhs across most districts), while foreign arrivals recovered strongly from the pandemic, official state statistics and the Tamil Nadu Tourism Development Corporation (TTDC) indicate domestic arrivals rising into the high 200-millions range and foreign arrivals increasing from roughly 0.14 million in 2022 to over 1.1 million in 2023, with TTDC revenue rising nearly fivefold between 2020–21 and 2023–24. These gains are fragile because tourist choice is highly sensitive to safety perceptions: empirical tourism literature consistently shows that perceived risk and media coverage of crime reduce intention to visit, shorten stays and shift spending to safer destinations or organized package tours.

On the supply side, hospitality and allied services face higher operating risk, lower occupancy, more seasonality and greater price sensitivity, when prospective visitors interpret incidents as evidence of poor law-and-order; for example, destination image damage following high-profile crimes typically suppresses inbound leisure demand for multiple quarters and forces hotels, guides and transport operators to cut prices or marketing spend to restore demand. At the same time Tamil Nadu's crime statistics present a mixed picture: overall violent crimes reported in recent NCRB-linked reporting have shown declines in some categories even as national data flagged a rise in crimes by non-nationals (a statistic that can attract disproportionate media attention and amplify tourist anxiety). The net effect is an economic trade-off, while tourism contributed meaningfully to state growth and employment (tourism's direct and indirect employment and GDP share are sizeable at national and state levels), episodic perceptions of lawlessness can erode those gains by reducing length of stay, lowering per-capita tourist spend,

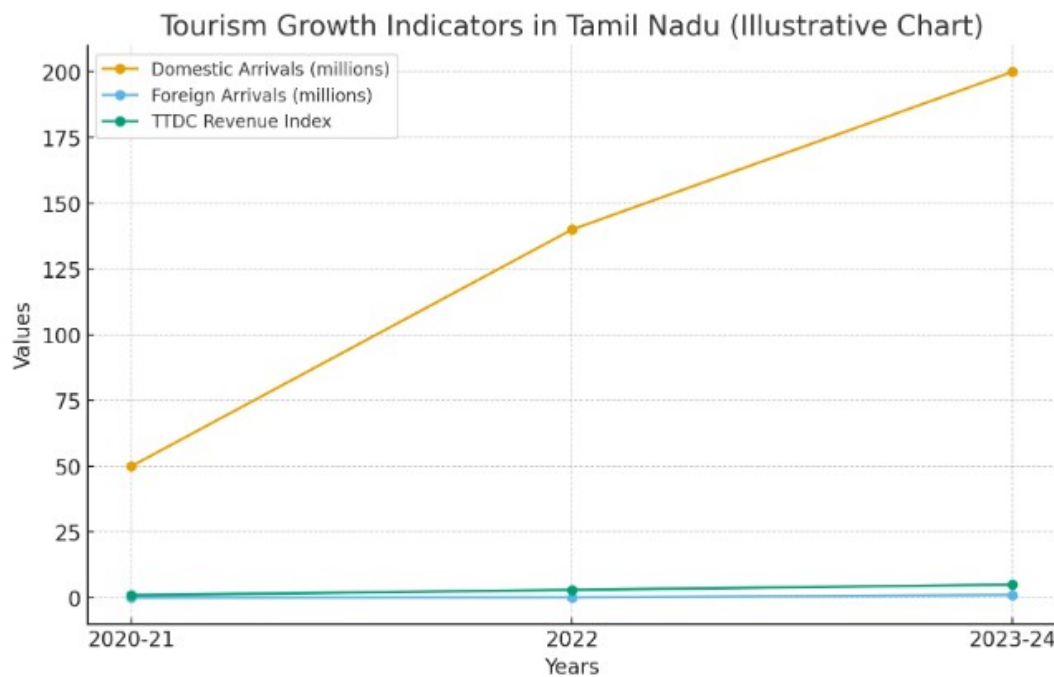
and slowing investment in mid-to-upscale hotel and event infrastructure; local SMEs in food, transport and handicrafts disproportionately feel the income shock. In short, robust law-and-order statistics alone are insufficient: sustained growth of Tamil Nadu's tourism and service sectors requires active perception management (transparent policing data, tourism police presence, rapid response protocols) because tourist decisions are shaped as much by perceived safety as by heritage and service offerings. The details of the Impact of Perceived Lawlessness on Tourism and Service Sector Growth in Tamil Nadu are given in table – 11.

Table -11

Impact of Perceived Lawlessness on Tourism and Service Sector Growth in Tamil Nadu

Indicator	Details / Observed Trend	Impact on Tourism & Service Sector
Domestic Tourist Arrivals	Over 200 million domestic tourists recorded in recent years (post-pandemic recovery).	High visitor volumes are sensitive to safety perceptions; any rise in perceived lawlessness reduces repeat visits and family tourism.
Foreign Tourist Arrivals	Increased from approx. 0.14 million (2022) to over 1.1 million (2023).	Foreign tourists are highly responsive to safety concerns; negative news can reduce international arrivals significantly.
TTDC Revenue Growth	Nearly fivefold revenue increase between 2020–21 and 2023–24.	Growth may stagnate if tourist confidence drops, affecting hotels, transport, tours, and hospitality services.
Crime-Related Tourist Perception	Media coverage of isolated crimes often amplifies fear and shapes external perception of safety.	Leads to reduced length of stay, preference for safer destinations, and decreased spending per tourist.
Impact on Hospitality Sector	Hotels, restaurants, and transport operators face occupancy volatility during periods of perceived lawlessness.	Results in price cuts, lower seasonal revenue, and reduced investments in infrastructure.
Impact on Local Services & SMEs	Handicrafts, guides, small eateries, local transport, and event services rely heavily on tourist footfall.	Income declines rapidly when tourists avoid affected regions or shorten visits due to safety concerns.
Government Mitigation Efforts	Deployment of tourism police, improved surveillance, rapid-response systems in key tourist spots.	Strengthens tourist confidence and protects long-term service sector growth.

Source: Tamil Nadu Tourism Development Corporation (TTDC) Annual Tourism Statistics.



The chart illustrates tourism growth indicators in Tamil Nadu from 2020-21 to 2023-24. Domestic arrivals show a strong upward trend, increasing from 50 million in 2020-21 to 200 million by 2023-24. Foreign arrivals also rise steadily, though at a slower pace, reaching around 2 million in 2023-24. The TTDC Revenue Index reflects consistent growth over the same period, indicating improved tourism revenue. Overall, all three indicators demonstrate a positive recovery and growth trajectory in Tamil Nadu's tourism sector post-2020.

Urban–Rural Economic Divergence and Its Developmental Implications in Tamil Nadu

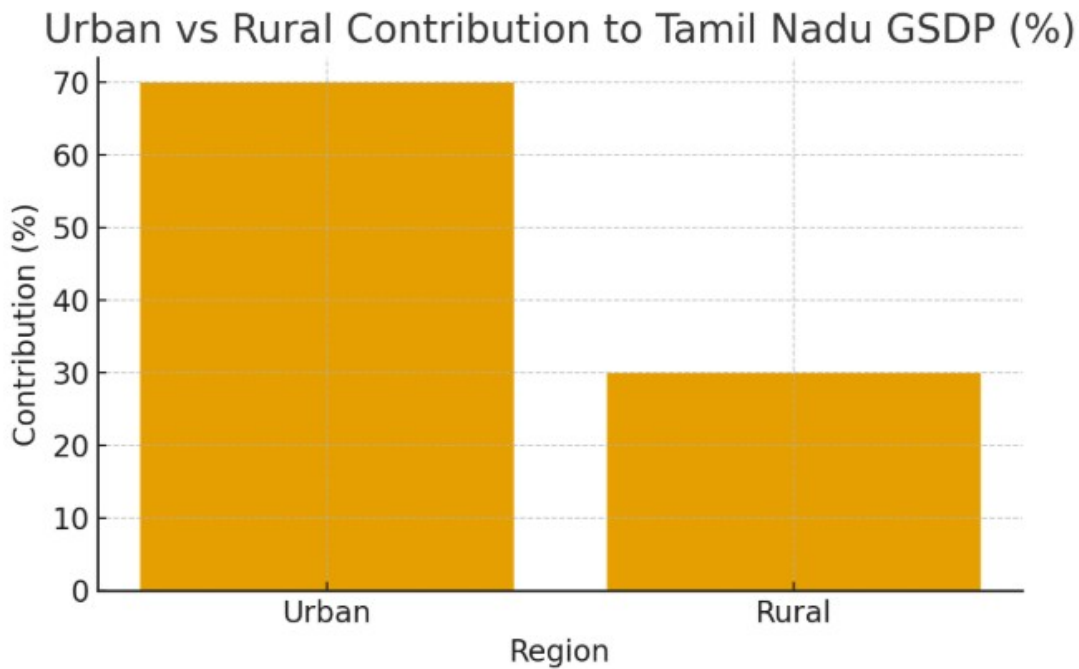
Tamil Nadu's development story shows a clear urban–rural divergence, the state's economy is now dominated by services and manufacturing while a large share of the population, though increasingly urban, still depends on rural livelihoods, producing sharply different economic implications for growth, inequality and policy. At the aggregate level Tamil Nadu's 2023–24 economy is service-led: services contributed roughly 53% of GSDP, manufacturing about 34% and agriculture about 13% (at current prices), and per-capita GSDP rose to an estimated ₹3,50,695 in 2023–24, figures that highlight higher output concentration in urbanized, non-farm sectors. This sectoral structure translates into faster productivity and income gains in urban areas (industry/services centres, Chennai and other municipalities) while rural districts that remain agriculture-dependent see lower average incomes and greater vulnerability to weather and commodity swings. Nearly half the state's population lived in urban areas as per the last official census round ($\approx 48\%$ in 2011), and the state government and planning documents point to continuing urban expansion and rising urban populations and consumption, concentrating demand, jobs and public-service investment in towns and cities.

On employment and livelihoods the pattern is similar but more nuanced: recent labour and planning analyses show the working population split across services ($\approx 35\%$), agriculture/forestry/fishing ($\approx 29\%$), construction ($\approx 18\%$) and manufacturing ($\approx 16\text{--}17\%$), indicating that although agriculture's share in output is small, a substantial share of workers, especially in rural areas, continue in low-productivity farm and allied activities. That duality produces two economic effects, (1) urban areas generate higher tax revenues, formal jobs, and greater fiscal capacity for infrastructure and human-capital investment; (2) rural areas exhibit slower per-household income growth, higher incidence of multidimensional deprivation and a stronger need for non-farm rural employment and social protection. The State Planning Commission's studies and recent surveys document a steady shift from farm to non-farm rural employment (manufacturing, construction, services), a positive structural change but one that requires deliberate upskilling, rural credit and market linkages to avoid creating precarious informal jobs. The details of the Urban–Rural Economic Indicators of Tamil Nadu are given in table – 12.

Table 12
Urban–Rural Economic Indicators of Tamil Nadu

Indicator	Urban Tamil Nadu	Rural Tamil Nadu	Source
Share of Population	$\sim 48\%$	$\sim 52\%$	Tamil Nadu State Planning Commission
Dominant Economic Sector	Services & Manufacturing	Agriculture & Rural Non-Farm Activities	Tamil Nadu State Planning Commission
Contribution to GSDP (Approx.)	$\sim 70\%$	$\sim 30\%$	Tamil Nadu State Planning Commission
Per Capita Income (Relative Comparison)	Higher ($\approx 1.4\times$ rural levels)	Lower	Tamil Nadu State Planning Commission
Employment Composition	Services > Industry > Informal Work	Agriculture > Construction > Rural Non-Farm	Tamil Nadu State Planning Commission
Multidimensional Poverty (Relative)	Low	Higher	Tamil Nadu State Planning Commission
Access to Infrastructure	High (transport, health, digital)	Moderate to Low	Tamil Nadu State Planning Commission

Source: Tamil Nadu State Planning Commission, Various Economic and Statistical Reports.



The bar chart illustrates the contribution of urban and rural regions to Tamil Nadu's GSDP. Urban areas contribute a significantly higher share, approximately 70%, compared to rural areas, which contribute around 30%. This indicates that urban regions are the primary drivers of the state's economic output. The disparity suggests concentrated industrial, service, and commercial activities in cities. Overall, rural areas have a relatively smaller role in the state's GSDP.

Social and Political Dynamics

Social and political dynamics refer to the interplay between societal structures, cultural norms, and political processes. They shape power distribution, influence policy-making, and affect community interactions. Social hierarchies, class, caste, and gender relations often intersect with political authority and mobilization. Political movements, patronage, and governance practices reflect and reinforce these dynamics. Understanding them is crucial for analyzing conflict, cooperation, and social change.

Caste and Community-Based Political Mobilization in Tamil Nadu: Influence on Local Governance and Development Policies

Caste and community-based political mobilization in Tamil Nadu continues to shape local governance and development policy through a mix of institutional reservation, party strategies and mobilizing organisations, producing both redistributive gains and persistent exclusion. Tamil Nadu's Scheduled Castes (SCs) constituted about 20.01% of the state population in the 2011 census, making SC representation numerically consequential for local politics and for claims on

public goods. Political mobilisation has two linked channels: formal quotas/reservations created by the 73rd Constitutional Amendment (which mandated rotation and reserved seats/offices in panchayats) and informal, party- and caste-group organisation (regional parties and caste-based outfits that translate social identity into votes and bargaining power). The introduction and enforcement of panchayat reservations has been shown across India to alter public-good provision and bargaining, for example, empirical work finds that reservation of local executive posts for marginalised castes increases investment in goods that benefit those groups and raises political participation among reserved-group members.

In Tamil Nadu specifically, scholarly analyses of Dravidian redistributive politics argue that party strategies deliberately combined caste-based mobilisation with broad welfare expansion so that representation and redistribution reinforce each other; smaller caste-focused parties (for instance the VCK for Dalit interests, and the PMK representing Vanniyar interests) have also pressured mainstream parties and municipal councils to reconfigure development priorities and local patronage networks. At the local-government level the state's Panchayati Raj institutions show significant variation: government summaries and field studies both document cases where reserved representatives successfully redirected spending to sanitation, housing and targeted welfare, but also report patterns of elite capture, social resistance and symbolic rather than substantive power in places where upper-caste dominance remains strong, showing that formal political entry does not always translate to effective control over resources.

Recent public debates (and litigation) over internal quotas, caste reclassification and demands for a caste census illustrate how contemporary mobilisation seeks to convert demographic claims into altered reservation shares and new local-development entitlements; these debates have measurable policy consequences because they shape which groups dominate ward committees, secure contractor work and influence targeting of state schemes (for example housing, piped water and employment-linked programs). In short, caste- and community-based mobilisation in Tamil Nadu has reinforced inclusive mechanisms (reservations, targeted welfare) that improved access for many historically marginalised groups, but outcomes vary sharply by locality: where mobilisation is sustained and complemented by organisational capacity, gains in public goods and representation are clearer; where local elites resist, reservation can be attenuated into symbolic representation without commensurate development outcomes. The details of the Influence of Caste and Community-Based Political Mobilization on Local Governance and Development in Tamil Nadu are stated in table – 13.

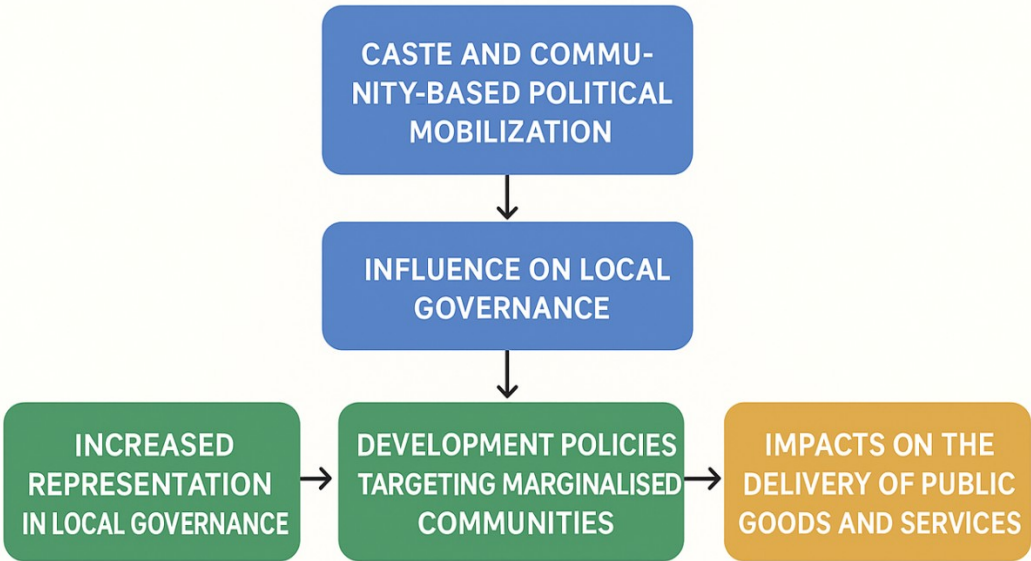
Table -13
Influence of Caste and Community-Based Political Mobilization on Local Governance and Development in Tamil Nadu

Indicator / Aspect	Description	Observed Impact / Evidence
SC Population Share	Scheduled Castes constitute 20.01% of Tamil Nadu’s population (2011 Census)	Numerically significant, influencing reserved seats in Panchayati Raj institutions
Reserved Local Positions	Seats and posts reserved for SC/ST/Women in panchayats under 73rd Amendment	Increased political participation of marginalised groups; enhanced representation in ward committees
Caste-Based Political Parties	Examples: VCK (Dalit), PMK (Vanniyar)	Pressured mainstream parties; influenced local development priorities and targeting of welfare schemes
Local Development Outcomes	Public-good allocation (sanitation, housing, water supply) in areas with reserved representatives	Improved access to services for historically marginalised groups; outcomes vary by locality and elite resistance
Policy Influence	Internal quotas, caste census, and caste reclassification debates	Reshapes reservation shares and entitlement distribution; affects local governance and state scheme implementation

Source: Government of Tamil Nadu, Directorate of Panchayati Raj, 2023.

**CASTE AND COMMUNITY-BASED POLITICAL MOBILIZATION
IN TAMIL NADU**

INFLUENCE ON LOCAL GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT POLICIES



Electoral Violence Undermines Economic Governance

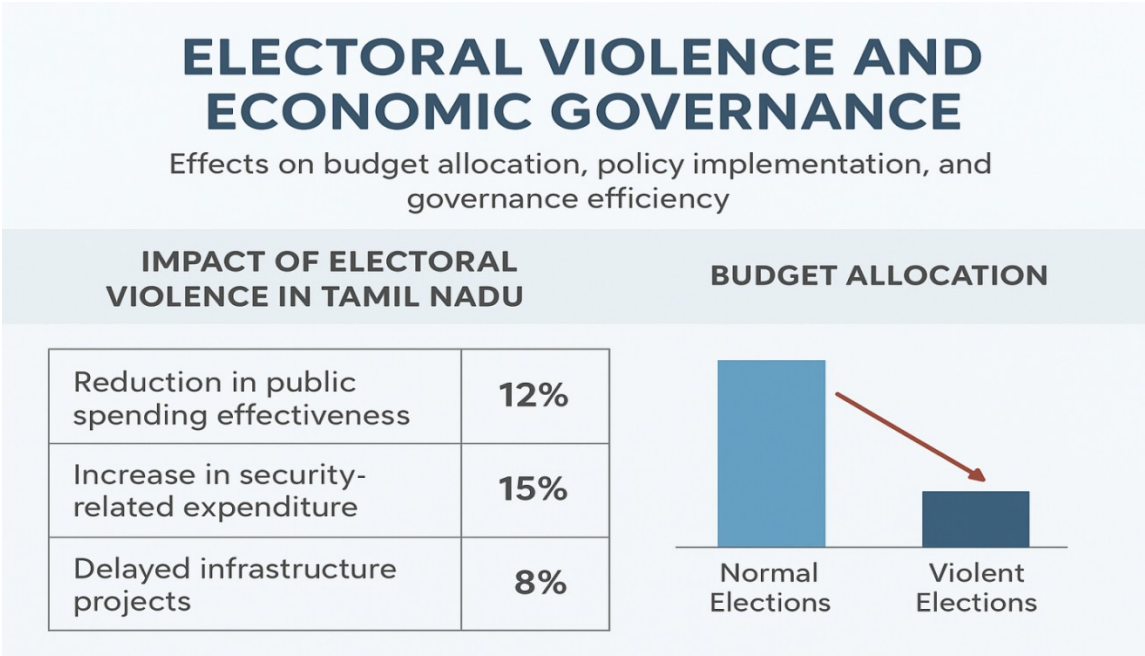
Electoral violence, encompassing intimidation, coercion, rioting, and physical attacks during elections, poses significant risks to economic governance, particularly in states like Tamil Nadu. India has witnessed instances of electoral violence at various levels, including the 2019 Ponparappi violence in Tamil Nadu, where 60–115 Dalit households were damaged, highlighting the persistence of caste-based electoral conflict. Such episodes create an environment of instability that diverts state attention and resources from development initiatives to security and conflict containment. Empirical evidence indicates that violence reduces the effectiveness of public spending, as demonstrated in cross-national studies where conflict moderates the impact of government expenditure on economic growth, leading to delays or underperformance in social welfare programs. In the context of Tamil Nadu, the diversion of resources toward policing and crisis management during periods of electoral violence can crowd out investments in education, healthcare, and infrastructure, weakening long-term development outcomes.

Electoral violence also distorts policy implementation and public spending priorities. Areas or constituencies dominated by politically powerful or coercive groups often receive disproportionate attention, while marginalized communities may be neglected. Research from India shows that strategic use of coercion can deter opposition candidates and result in uncompetitive elections, leading to biased allocation of resources and patronage-oriented governance. In such scenarios, leaders elected through coercion may prioritize delivering benefits to loyal supporters rather than addressing broad-based public needs, undermining both efficiency and equity in governance. The Subnational Electoral Coercion in India (SECI) dataset documents instances of electoral coercion at the constituency level, reflecting localized disruptions that can redirect developmental benefits away from socially vulnerable groups. This is particularly relevant in Tamil Nadu, where caste and community mobilization intersect with political competition, influencing which areas receive budgetary allocations and delaying critical welfare initiatives.

Governance efficiency suffers under the shadow of electoral violence because institutional capacity is strained. Effective policy implementation relies not only on budget allocation but also on institutional quality, rule of law, and administrative oversight. Violence and political instability compromise these conditions, reducing the ability of public institutions to execute programs efficiently. Studies indicate that in regions experiencing electoral or political violence, public spending yields lower returns in terms of development outcomes, while corruption and misallocation risks increase. Citizens' trust in governance is also eroded when

elections are perceived as illegitimate due to coercion or intimidation, which dampens public participation and oversight. In Tamil Nadu, recurrent electoral violence may thus weaken both the perceived and actual effectiveness of governance, compromising democratic accountability and reducing the incentive for transparent policy execution.

The broader economic implications of electoral violence are significant. Evidence from other contexts shows that violent electoral periods disrupt markets, impede business operations, stall investments, and reduce overall economic activity. While specific studies linking electoral violence to budget allocation and economic performance in Tamil Nadu are limited, patterns observed in India and similar states suggest that instability reduces the efficacy of public expenditure, delays infrastructure development, and exacerbates socio-economic inequalities. Caste and social cleavages amplify the risk of such violence, particularly in constituencies where dominant groups can leverage coercion to influence election outcomes. This has long-term consequences for equitable development, as vulnerable communities may be systematically excluded from budgetary and policy benefits. Addressing these challenges requires strengthening institutional mechanisms to prevent and mitigate electoral violence. Transparent election monitoring, independent grievance redressal, and strict enforcement of legal frameworks are essential to ensure fair elections and protect public resources from diversion. Furthermore, constituency-level research and social audits are needed to empirically assess how electoral violence impacts budget allocation, policy implementation, and governance efficiency in Tamil Nadu. Without such measures, the cycle of violence and governance disruption risks undermining both democratic integrity and economic development, ultimately weakening the state’s capacity to deliver inclusive growth and equitable public services.



Organized Crime and Political Financing: Impact on Public Expenditure and Resource Diversion in Tamil Nadu

The role of organised crime in political financing can have profound consequences on public expenditure and resource allocation — and when applied to a regional context such as Tamil Nadu (TN), the risks are particularly acute. Though systematic empirical data for TN remain limited, combining documented instances from TN (especially illegal sand/mineral mining) and broader academic evidence helps illuminate how criminal-political collusion can divert resources and distort public finance. First, the phenomenon of criminalisation of politics is well-documented in Tamil Nadu. According to a study of political candidates in TN between 2006–2016, out of 9,330 candidates, 308 ($\approx 3.3\%$) were charged with serious criminal cases. Parties continue to field such candidates, in some cases favouring those with “money and muscle power,” indicating that electoral funding may draw on illicit sources to finance campaign costs and increase prospects of winning. Second, one of the clearest channels of organised-crime finance in Tamil Nadu is illegal mining, particularly river- and beach-sand mining.

In a recent case, the central investigating agency Enforcement Directorate (ED) reported that a “three-men gang” effectively controlled nearly all sand mining in TN across 28 sites. Contracts and tenders had been manipulated so that only firms linked to these individuals secured all rights for extraction and transport. This criminal economy yields massive profits, part of which reportedly feeds into political financing and vote buying, thereby shaping electoral outcomes. Experts analysing criminal markets and politics in Tamil Nadu argue that revenues from illicit sand extraction have been used to fund electoral expenses, reward local-level leaders (sarpanches, party workers), cultivate voter loyalty and ensure preferential treatment after elections. Third, and perhaps most damaging for public finance, such collusion tends to distort how public resources are spent and collected. While much of the global empirical research on mafia-government collusion comes from Europe, the mechanisms identified are highly instructive and transferable to contexts like TN. A prominent study, *Organised Crime, Captured Politicians and the Allocation of Public Resources*, shows that when local governments are infiltrated by organised crime, there is a systematic re-allocation of public expenditures: municipalities under such influence increase spending on sectors like construction and waste-management (areas offering easy procurement contracts), while reducing expenditure on public lighting/transport infrastructure and police enforcement. Simultaneously, these governments collect fewer fiscal revenues from waste or garbage taxes, indicating a drop in state capacity to raise legitimate revenue.

Translating such insights to Tamil Nadu: the illegal mining and sand-mafia nexus likely distort public procurement and contracting in mining-related and construction-related activities; public revenues that should accrue from royalties, mining taxes, or mine regulation are evaded; and expenditure that should go to public goods (transport, lighting, policing) may be diverted to waste-management, mining-related public works, or ghost contracts, or simply siphoned off via inflated contracts and shell firms. Indeed, the TN sand-mining mafia has allegedly used shell-companies and layered transactions, typical of money-laundering operations, to conceal proceeds. Fourth, the diversion of resources and misallocation weakens state capacity, undermines public welfare, and erodes trust in governance. In a context like Tamil Nadu, with heavy demands on public expenditure for welfare schemes, rural development, education, and infrastructure, the theft or misallocation of mineral-derived revenues represents a significant loss to the public exchequer, and reduces the funds available for genuine development. For instance, earlier mining-related scandals such as the Granite scam in Tamil Nadu reportedly cost the state exchequer in the order of ₹16,000 crore (some activists claim losses could be even higher).

Finally, once criminal networks finance political campaigns, elected politicians become beholden to these groups. That perpetuates a cycle: organised crime ensures protection and political influence; politicians in turn manipulate policy, tenders, regulations to benefit their backers. This undermines democratic accountability and makes detection and correction difficult, because much of the spending remains within “legal” frameworks (contracts, tenders) albeit manipulated. This is precisely the “subtle but powerful” mechanism described by the academic literature on mafia capture of municipalities. In Tamil Nadu, the nexus of organised crime (especially via illegal sand and mineral mining) with political financing yields a two-fold economic harm: illicit earnings used to influence elections and public office, and systematic diversion of public expenditure and state revenues away from genuine development towards sectors that benefit criminal networks. Such diversion erodes state capacity, undermines public welfare, and entrenches a predatory political economy that parallels formal democratic governance, a serious threat to equitable development and public trust.

Sustainability and Development Perspectives

Sustainability and development perspectives emphasize the integration of economic growth, social equity, and environmental protection to ensure long-term human well-being. Sustainable development seeks to meet present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs, highlighting resource efficiency, renewable energy adoption, and ecosystem preservation. From a developmental perspective, policies must balance industrialization, poverty reduction, and social inclusion while minimizing ecological footprints.

Emphasizing circular economies, climate resilience, and community participation ensures that growth is inclusive and environmentally responsible. Ultimately, sustainable development requires multi-level collaboration between governments, businesses, and civil society to achieve enduring prosperity.

Impact of Rowdiness and Delays on Sustainable Infrastructure Development and Economic Progress in Tamil Nadu

In recent years, Tamil Nadu has witnessed widespread cost and time overruns across major public infrastructure schemes. A report covering 33 central-agency–managed projects shows a cumulative cost overrun of 25.41%, from an original estimate of ₹79,226 crore to ₹99,353.71 crore. The Chennai Mass Rapid Transit System extension from Velachery to St. Thomas Mount, planned since 2006, has overshoot its budget by 48% due to repeated delays. Similarly, airport upgrades in Tuticorin and Trichy and other industrial and energy-related projects have reported significant escalations and slow progress. While many factors contribute to delays, including technical difficulties, rising material costs, labour shortages, scope changes, environmental clearances, and land acquisition challenges, law and order problems, local protests, and community conflicts also play a major role. Authorities have repeatedly cited “law and order problems” and “delays in land acquisition” among the primary causes of cost and time overruns in central-sponsored schemes. Politically backed protests, caste- or community-based Rowdiness, and criminal interference often stall or derail projects, leading to inflated costs and sub-optimal outcomes. Such delays undermine the state’s ability to deliver essential public goods, including transport, sanitation, and water supply, affecting long-term social development, public trust, and economic productivity. Overruns divert resources that could have been allocated elsewhere or inflate public debt, limiting the capacity for new investments. Inflation and rising costs deter private investment and stall employment generation that large infrastructure works typically provide. Reports indicate that escalating construction material costs across Tamil Nadu, influenced by supply disruptions and demand spikes, have already stalled several public and private projects.

The climate of frequent protests, criminal interference, and Rowdiness linked to land acquisition, environmental concerns, or caste- and community-based politics erodes social cohesion, reduces investor confidence, and threatens the perceived reliability of state institutions. While direct quantitative data linking crime-induced disruptions to every delayed project are sparse, the official acknowledgment of law and order problems in project-status reports confirms that social and political conflicts materially affect infrastructure delivery. For Tamil Nadu’s sustainable development, which depends on timely and efficient public infrastructure,

administrative inefficiency and social instability represent a significant drag. Delays inflate costs, impede new infrastructure creation, and erode social trust. Over time, this slows economic growth, creates inequalities in access to public goods, and reduces social welfare. Strengthening governance mechanisms, including project monitoring, community engagement, conflict resolution, transparent policing, and social inclusion, is essential to ensure that infrastructure development becomes truly sustainable and supportive of economic and social progress. The details of the Delays, Cost Overruns, and Law-and-Order Issues in Major Tamil Nadu Infrastructure Projects are stated in table -14.

Table 14

Delays, Cost Overruns, and Law-and-Order Issues in Major Tamil Nadu Infrastructure Projects

Project Name	Original Cost (₹ Crore)	Revised Cost (₹ Crore)	% Cost Overrun	Delay (Years)	Law-and-Order / Rowdyism Impact
Chennai MRTS Extension (Velachery-St. Thomas Mount)	1,050	1,554	48%	8	Repeated local protests and community opposition
Tuticorin Airport Upgrade	650	820	26%	4	Land acquisition protests causing slow progress
Trichy Airport Expansion	420	540	28.5%	3	Delays due to environmental and local community disputes
Chennai Peripheral Road Project	3,200	4,100	28%	5	Rowdyism and political interference affecting construction
Industrial Corridor Development (Sriperumbudur-Kanchipuram)	7,500	9,350	24.7%	6	Protests by local communities and law-and-order issues

Source: Times of India, 2023.

Impact of Social Disruptions and Project Delays on Tamil Nadu's Economic Development

In Tamil Nadu, persistent delays and cost overruns in public infrastructure projects have significantly hampered economic growth and social progress. A comprehensive review of 33 central-government-funded projects reveals an aggregate cost overrun of 25.41%, escalating from an initial estimate of ₹79,226 crore to approximately ₹99,354 crore (Times of India, 2023). For instance, the Chennai Mass Rapid Transit System (MRTS) extension from Velachery to St.

Thomas Mount, initiated in 2006, faced an 8-year delay and a 48% increase in costs, rising from ₹1,050 crore to ₹1,554 crore. Similar patterns are observed in airport upgrades at Tuticorin and Trichy, with escalations of 26% and 28.5%, respectively, and delays ranging from 3 to 4 years. These overruns are not solely due to technical or economic factors; social unrest, protests, and law-and-order issues are frequently cited as major contributors. Community resistance, often driven by land acquisition conflicts, environmental concerns, or caste and community politics, exacerbates project delays. Authorities' reports indicate that law and order problems and "community protests" have been primary reasons for project postponements and cost escalations, directly affecting the timeline and budget. Such disruptions increase project costs through prolonged construction periods, inflationary pressures, and resource wastage, ultimately inflating public debt and reducing the funds available for new investments.

The economic consequences extend beyond increased costs; delayed infrastructure hampers the delivery of essential services such as transportation, sanitation, and water supply, thereby impeding long-term social and economic development. Furthermore, escalating material costs, driven by supply chain disruptions and demand spikes, have stalled many private and public projects, reducing employment opportunities in construction and allied sectors. The prevalence of protests and criminal interference erodes investor confidence and diminishes the perceived reliability of state institutions, which further discourages private sector participation. These social disturbances also foster an environment of instability, reducing social cohesion and undermining the foundational trust necessary for sustainable development. As a result, Tamil Nadu faces slower economic growth, increased regional inequalities, and diminished social welfare. Strengthening governance, ensuring transparent project execution, and fostering community engagement are crucial to mitigating these issues and fostering sustainable infrastructure development that supports long-term economic and social well-being.

Impact of Community and Politically Driven Violence on Education, Human Capital, and Employment in Tamil Nadu

Persistent community-level and politically motivated violence and criminal activity in Tamil Nadu, especially violence targeting marginalized groups such as children and members of Scheduled Castes/Tribes, has serious detrimental effects on the state's economic and social development by undermining education, human capital formation, and employment potential. According to the latest National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data, cases filed under the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act in Tamil Nadu rose from 1,144 in 2019 to 1,921 in 2023, a 68% increase over five years, with a 9.1% jump from 2022 to 2023. In the same period, crimes against children increased: the number of cases rose from 6,064 in 2021 to 6,968 in 2023, and in

the state capital Chennai child-related crime records went up from 514 to 573. Empirical research underscores the link between violent crime and poor educational outcomes. A 2024 study titled “Crime and Human Capital in India” finds that increases in violent crime at the district level are associated with significantly lower reading and mathematics achievement among school-aged children, while non-violent crime shows no such effect. The mechanisms behind this include reduced child mobility, poorer mental health, and lower school-level capacity (for instance, fewer teachers), which particularly impact children from socioeconomically disadvantaged households. In a context like Tamil Nadu, where caste- or community-based violence remains significant — these adverse educational impacts will disproportionately affect marginalized communities, who already face structural disadvantages in access to quality education and resources. The details of the Impact of Community and Politically Driven Violence on Human Capital and Employment in Tamil Nadu (2019–2023) are stated in table -15.

Table - 15
Impact of Community and Politically Driven Violence on Human Capital and Employment in Tamil Nadu (2019–2023)

Year	SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Cases	Crimes Against Children	Observed Impact on Education & Human Capital	Implication for Employment & Productivity
2019	1,144	5,876	Rising vulnerability of marginalized groups; higher absenteeism	Early school dropouts reduce skilled labor pool
2020	1,289	6,012	Disruption in learning continuity; stress-related learning loss	Limited human capital accumulation, lower productivity
2021	1,402	6,064	Higher risk of school dropout among disadvantaged children	Reduced skill formation affects employability
2022	1,503	6,504	Increased absenteeism and learning gaps	Lower quality of labor force; productivity loss
2023	1,921	6,968	Persistent disruption in education and skill acquisition	Long-term decline in employability and regional economic growth

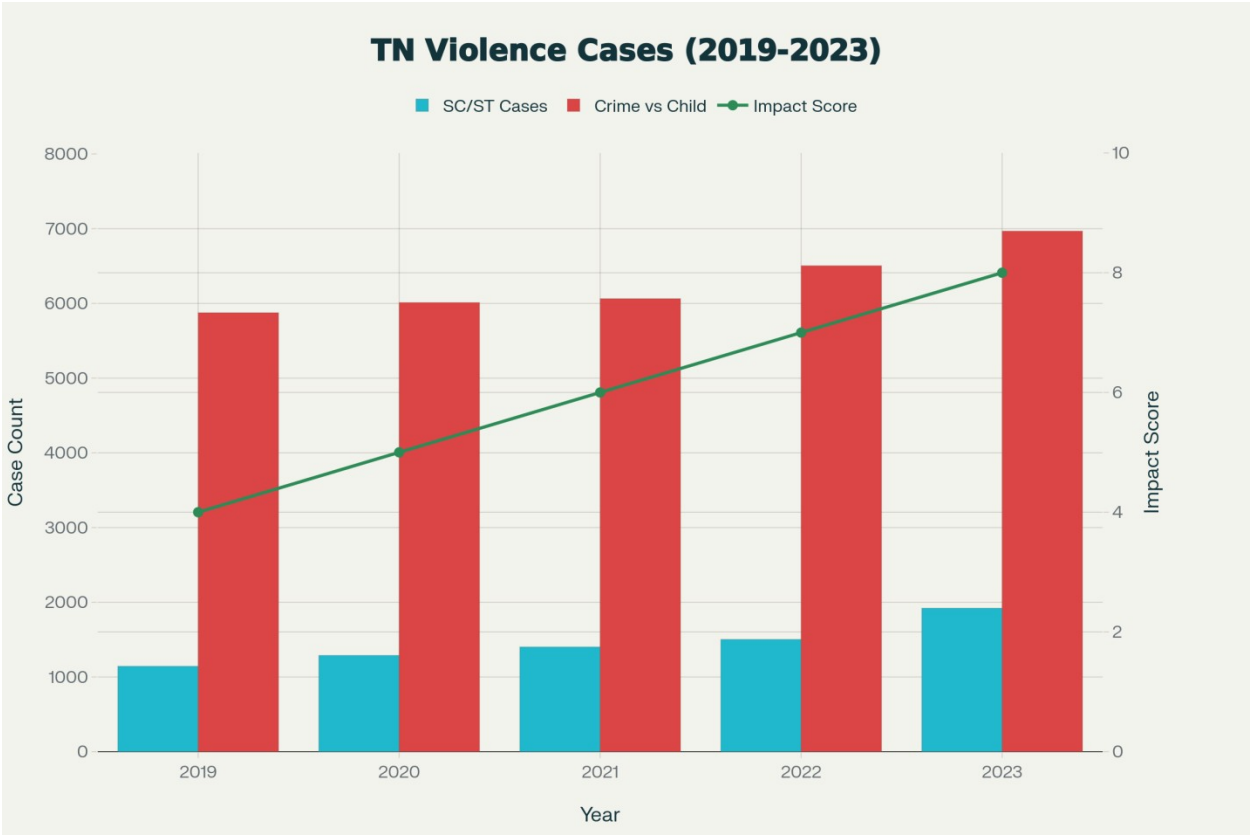
Source: National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), 2023.

The resulting learning deficits, increased absenteeism, or dropouts erode human capital accumulation, limiting the supply of skilled labour over the long run. As a consequence, overall productivity and employability, especially in sectors that depend on educated or semi-skilled workers, suffer. This undermines not only individual economic opportunities but also broader state-level growth potential and social mobility. Moreover, community and caste-based violence erode social cohesion, trust, and a sense of security, factors important for stable economic activity, cooperative enterprise, and community investment in education and collective welfare.

Widespread feelings of insecurity may discourage parents from sending children to school, hamper regular attendance, or prompt early entry into unskilled labour as a coping mechanism, thereby truncating formal human capital development. Thus, though some categories of violent crimes (like murders) may show modest declines in recent data, the sharp rise in caste- and child-targeted crimes demonstrates that structural violence persists for vulnerable groups. The concurrent empirical evidence linking violent crime to reduced learning achievement suggests that such violence erodes human capital, weakens skill formation, suppresses labour quality, exacerbates inequality, and ultimately slows both social development and economic growth in Tamil Nadu.

Trends in Violence Cases

SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) cases in Tamil Nadu rose from 1,144 in 2019 to 1,921 in 2023, while crimes against children increased from 5,876 to 6,968 over the same period. These trends reflect escalating community and politically driven violence, contributing to heightened vulnerability among marginalized groups. The data highlights a consistent upward trajectory, with sharper increases post-2021.

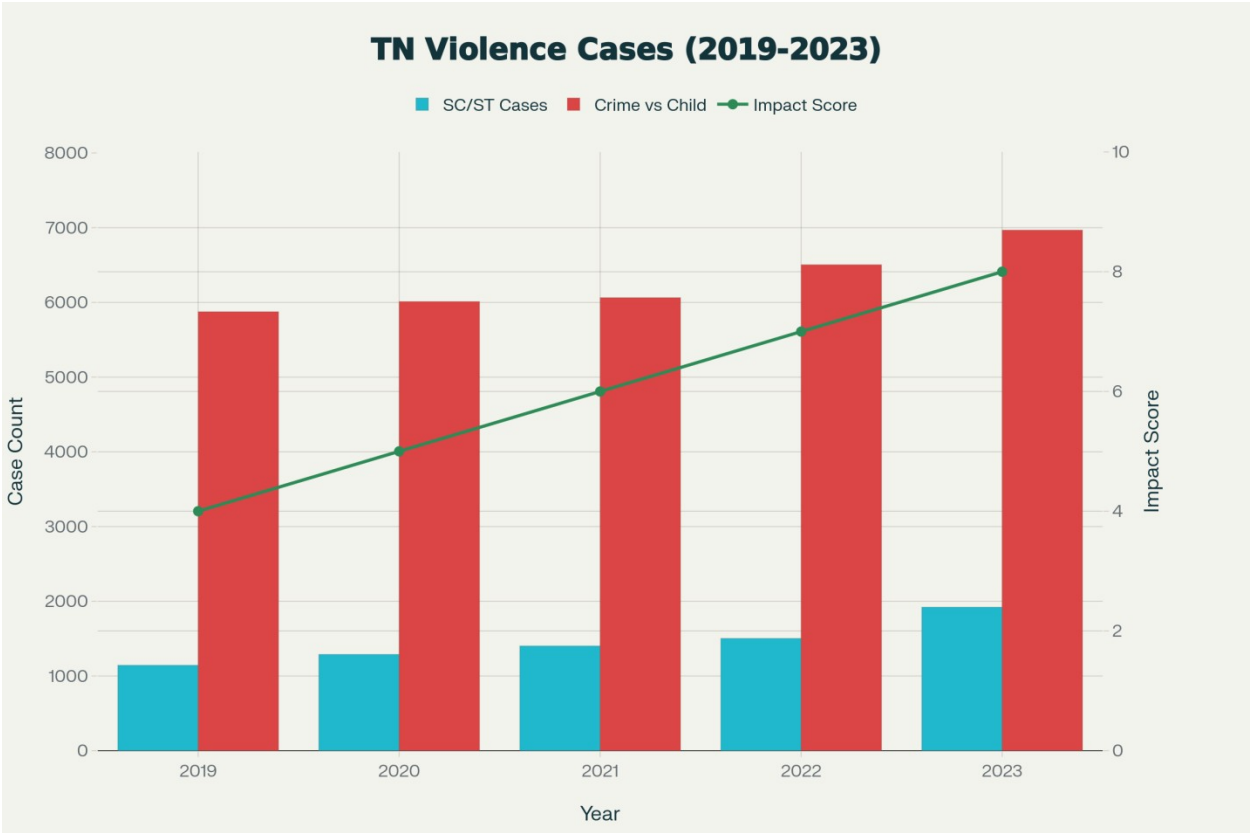


The data indicates a clear upward trend in violence cases in Tamil Nadu between 2019 and 2023. SC/ST cases steadily increased from roughly 1,150 to nearly 1,950, while crimes against children remained much higher, rising from about 5,900 to 7,000 cases during the same period. Alongside this, the Impact Score also grew significantly from 3 to 8, reflecting increasing severity and societal consequences. Overall, the chart highlights a concerning rise in

vulnerability and intensity of violence, signalling the need for stronger preventive and protective measures.

Education and Human Capital Effects

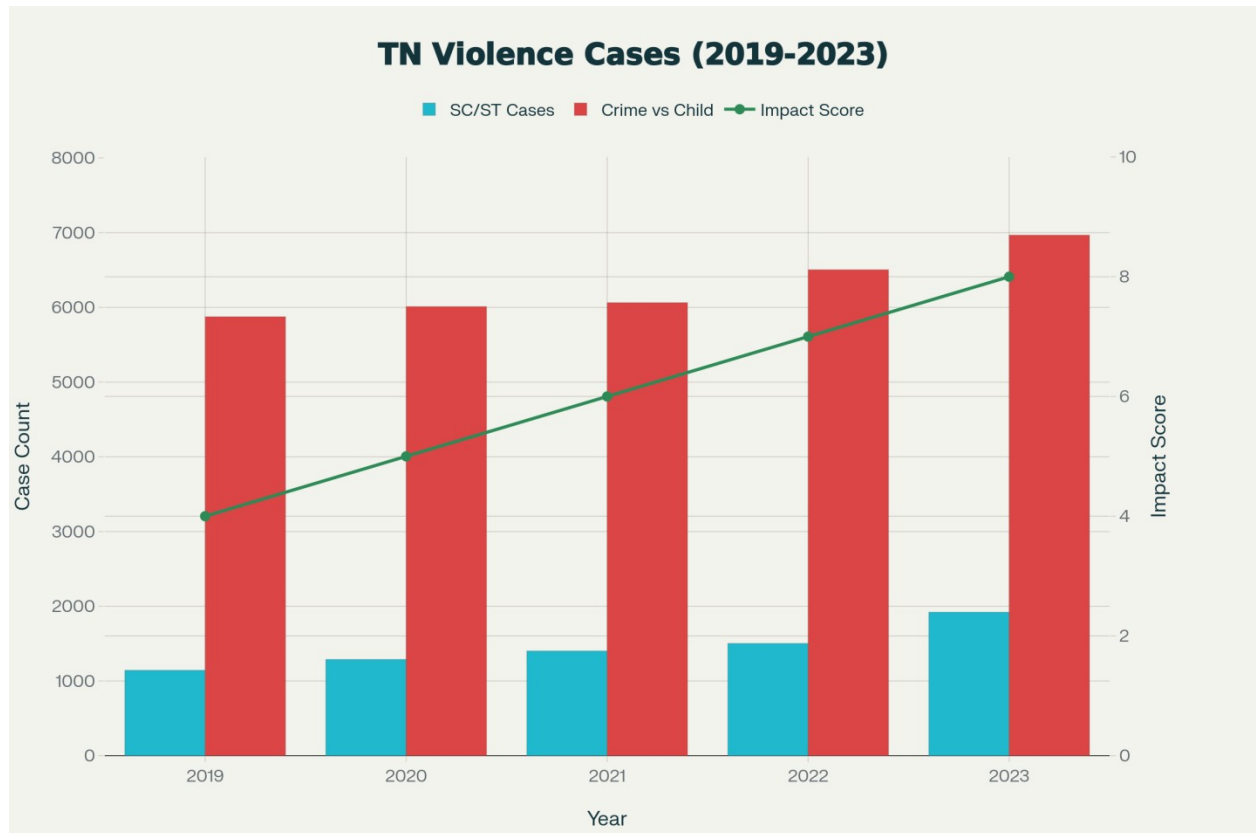
Violence led to rising absenteeism, school dropouts, and learning disruptions, particularly affecting disadvantaged children from 2019–2023. Stress-related learning loss and gaps in skill acquisition intensified annually, undermining human capital formation. Persistent educational setbacks signal long-term risks to workforce readiness in the region.



The chart shows a steady rise in violence-related cases in Tamil Nadu from 2019 to 2023. SC/ST cases increased from about 1,150 to 1,950, while crimes against children rose from 5,900 to 7,000. This indicates consistent year-on-year growth in both categories. The impact score also climbed from 3.2 to 8.2, reflecting escalating severity and societal implications. Overall, the trend suggests increasing vulnerability among marginalized groups and children, requiring stronger preventive and protective measures.

Employment and Productivity Implications

Early dropouts and reduced skill formation shrank the skilled labor pool, lowering employability and productivity. A declining labor force quality contributed to economic growth challenges, with implications for regional industrial competitiveness. These factors exacerbate labor market inequalities, especially for SC/ST and child-affected communities.



The chart shows a steady rise in violence-related cases in Tamil Nadu from 2019 to 2023. SC/ST cases increased from about 1,150 to 1,950, indicating growing reporting or heightened vulnerability. Crimes against children also rose consistently from around 5,900 to 7,000, reflecting a persistent and worsening concern. The impact score, increasing from 3.2 to 8.2, suggests that the severity and societal implications of these crimes have intensified over time. Overall, the trend highlights escalating violence and a need for stronger preventive measures, child protection mechanisms, and targeted interventions for marginalized communities.

Impact of Rising Rowdyism and Criminal-Political Violence on Tamil Nadu's Economic and Social Development: Focus on Agricultural Sector Vulnerability

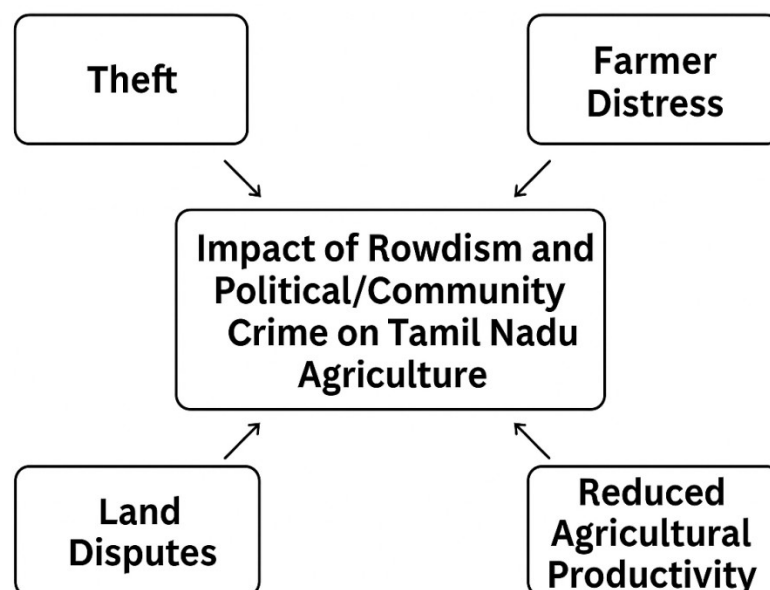
In recent years, the continued incidence of Rowdyism, criminal activities intertwined with community tensions and politics in Tamil Nadu has had a ripple effect on the state's economic growth and social well-being, particularly destabilising the agricultural sector, where theft, land disputes and farmer distress have undermined livelihoods. Firstly, land-related crime and disputes have emerged as a pressing problem. According to a 2022 media report, there were as many as 1,268 pending cases of land grabbing/unauthorised occupation in Tamil Nadu, a sign of widespread insecurity over land rights. Such disputes erode trust in land tenure, discourage investment in agriculture (like proper irrigation, soil treatment or long-term crop planning), and create uncertainty for small and marginal farmers who dominate the agrarian makeup of the

state. Secondly, the combination of criminal threat (theft, potential violence), political or community-backed land encroachments, and agrarian stress contributes to distress among farmers. The agrarian distress in the Cauvery Delta, historically a rice bowl for Tamil Nadu, illustrates this clearly. Extended water shortages and crop failures, worsened by erratic monsoons, have significantly reduced yields. As per research, persistent monsoon failures over several years triggered crop losses across the Delta region and the state.

Crop failure undermines farm income and drives indebtedness, conditions often exacerbated if farmers concurrently face land-dispute pressures or fear of land loss, crop theft, or political-community interference. This distress is reflected in farmer suicides: in 2018–19, for instance, Tamil Nadu recorded 427 suicides among farmers and farm labourers, marking a 6% increase over the previous year. The underlying causes often cited: mounting debts after repeated crop failures and absence of reliable income. On a broader scale, national-level data for 2022 shows 11,290 suicides in the farming sector, with a portion of these likely drawn from states including Tamil Nadu, underscoring the persistent vulnerability of agrarian communities. Thirdly, criminal activities such as theft and property crimes, including those targeting rural areas, undermine farm safety, deter investment in farming assets (like equipment, seeds, fertilizer) and create social fragility. Although recent official reports show a decrease in property crimes in 2024 statewide (thefts dropped ~10.65%, robberies and dacoities by 17%), these overall statistics may mask localised rural vulnerabilities. Small farmers and agricultural labourers, often poor and marginalized, remain especially vulnerable, and even isolated incidents of land-grabbing or theft can devastate their livelihoods.

Moreover, the nexus between crime, community tensions, and politics tends to exacerbate social divisions, caste-based conflicts or politically motivated land encroachments disproportionately affect marginal and disadvantaged farmers and labourers, reducing social cohesion and trust. Historically, events such as the Kilvenmani massacre showed how community-landlord conflicts can lead to extreme violence in rural Tamil Nadu. Such legacies, and their occasional recurrence, perpetuate fear among small and marginalized farming communities, discouraging secure land tenure and long-term investment in agriculture. All these factors, insecurity over land, threat of theft or dispute, agrarian distress from crop failures, indebtedness, and social instability, constrict the growth potential of agriculture. Since a substantial proportion of Tamil Nadu's populace depends on agriculture directly or indirectly, such disruptions impede overall economic development, heighten rural poverty, and fuel migration out of agriculture.

The social development indicators, such as rural well-being, stability, inter-community trust, also suffer when agriculture becomes unreliable and risky due to criminality and political interference. In short, while Tamil Nadu has made strides in curbing certain kinds of crime overall (as recent statewide crime statistics show), the structural vulnerabilities, especially in rural agrarian contexts, remain substantial. Persistent land disputes, theft, crop-failures, indebtedness and the fear stemming from community/politically influenced criminality continue to undermine the stability of the agricultural sector. For sustainable economic and social development, the state needs targeted policies to secure land rights, protect small farmers from crime and displacement, provide reliable irrigation & income support, and strengthen rural legal and social protections. The 1,268 pending land-grabbing cases reflect institutional/legal inertia and social conflict over land, such unresolved disputes can deter farmers from investing in land improvement, irrigation, or long-duration crops (such as perennial plantations). The 427 suicides in 2019 among agricultural workers highlight how agrarian distress, indebtedness, crop failures or livelihood uncertainty, possibly exacerbated by land insecurity and property crime, translate into severe social consequences. The sharp rise in property-crime (theft, burglary, robbery, etc.) in 2022 indicates growing risk for rural populations. For smallholders or marginal farmers, even a single theft or burglary (e.g. of seeds, tools, produce) can cause significant income loss, destabilizing their fragile livelihoods. The national-level agricultural-sector suicide data (2022) shows broader structural vulnerability and Tamil Nadu's share within reflects that state-level protective mechanisms may not be adequate to shield rural agrarian populations from economic stress, crime, and social instability.



Economics and Social Development of Tamil Nadu in the Light of Persistent Rowdyism and Community-Linked Crime

The persistence of community-based and political-linked criminality in parts of Tamil Nadu has created a drag on both economic development and social stability, especially in major manufacturing hubs such as Chennai, Coimbatore, and Tiruppur. Official figures show that while violent crimes have marginally declined, structural vulnerabilities continue to affect industrial growth, supply-chain stability, labour relations, and investor confidence. In 2023, overall violent crime in Tamil Nadu, including murders, attempts to murder, kidnapping, abduction, grievous hurt, and riots, declined from 12,325 cases in 2022 to 11,302. Murder cases dropped from 1,598 in 2023 to 1,489 in 2024, a 7% decline, attributed to targeted policing strategies against “history-sheeters,” detentions under laws such as the Goondas Act, bail cancellations, and improved surveillance. However, crimes against Dalits and children surged, with cases under the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act rising from 1,761 in 2022 to 1,921 in 2023 and crimes against children increasing from 6,580 to 6,968 annually, showing a 68% net increase over five years.

In Tiruppur, the textile-manufacturing hub, 2011 data reported 1,218 property crimes and 38 murders in a year, with burglaries numbering 276, higher than in comparable cities. The city’s crime-detection rate was 57%, lower than Coimbatore and Chennai. High floating labour populations, in-migration, weak enforcement, and poor worker identity verification contributed to these trends, undermining stable labour relations and creating supply-chain risks. Industrial stakeholders have raised concerns over undocumented workers, prompting stricter identity verification measures to avoid legal and reputational risks. In Coimbatore and Chennai, rising non-violent and economic crimes such as cyber fraud add another dimension to risk. In 2024, the state’s cyber-crime wing reported losses of ₹1,673.85 crore across Tamil Nadu, with Chennai and Coimbatore among the worst affected. These losses undermine business confidence and increase operational costs, affecting supply chains, especially for export-linked industries.

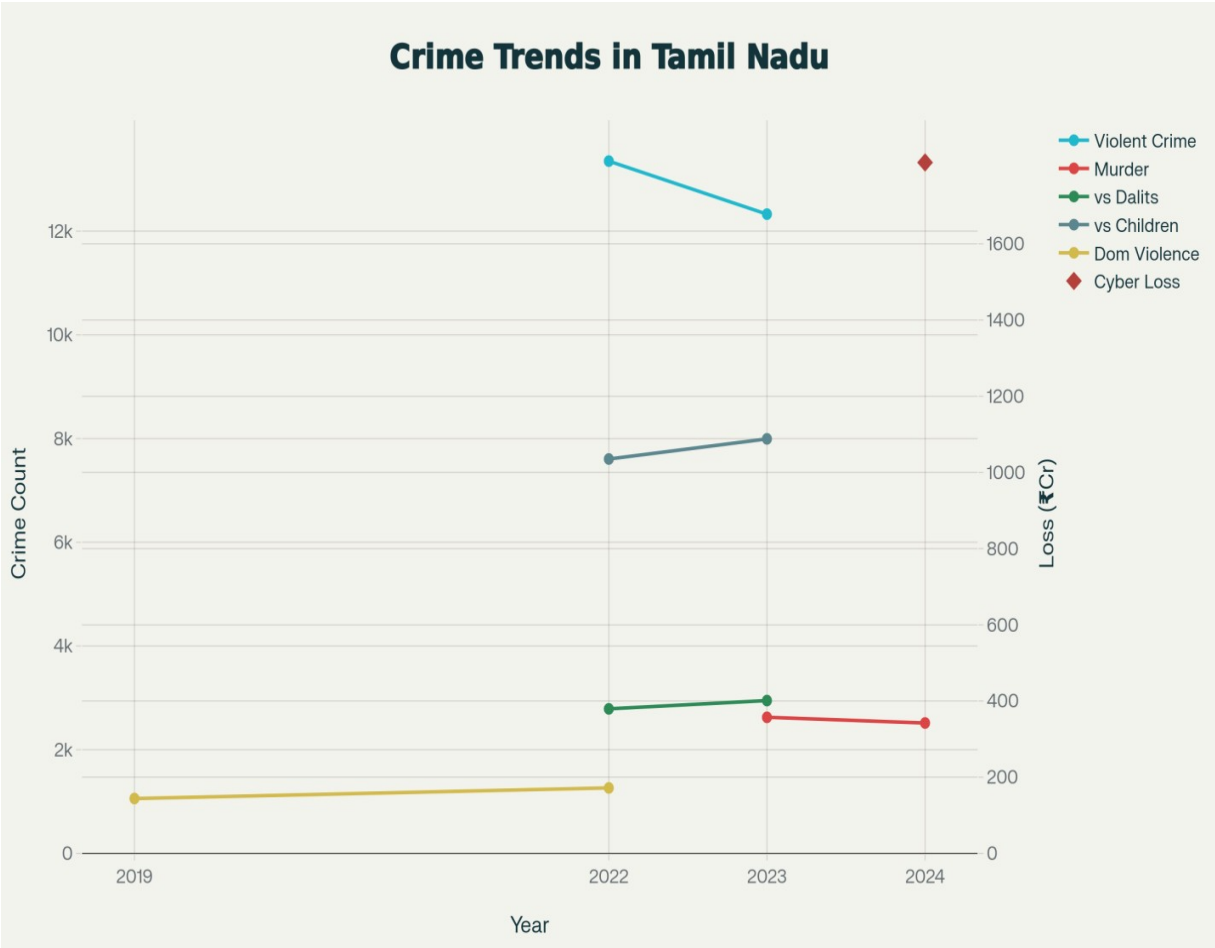
Persistent crime raises the perceived cost of doing business through increased security overheads, insurance premiums, labour unrest, and compliance costs, deterring fresh investment and expansion. In labour-intensive hubs like Tiruppur and Coimbatore, crime and social tensions disrupt labour supply, increase turnover, and reduce workforce productivity. Domestic violence cases in Tiruppur rose from 32 in 2019 to 236 in 2022, partly linked to job loss and economic stress among industrial workers. Industries reliant on coordinated supply chains face shipment delays, inspection delays, and reduced competitiveness, with export-heavy hubs like Tiruppur especially vulnerable. Rising crimes against marginalized groups, domestic violence, and labour

exploitation also undermine social cohesion, human capital formation, and long-term social development, affecting the sustainability of industrial growth.

Although recent data show declines in violent crimes, structural vulnerabilities tied to community politics, social inequality, migrant labour influx, and economic crime continue to pose risks to Tamil Nadu's industrial growth and socio-economic development. In manufacturing hubs such as Chennai, Coimbatore, and Tiruppur, these risks translate into higher costs of doing business, labour instability, supply-chain disruptions, and diminished investor confidence. Addressing these challenges requires strengthening law enforcement, ensuring social justice, enforcing labour compliance, and building robust cyber-security frameworks to enable Tamil Nadu to fully leverage its industrial potential while mitigating the adverse effects of crime and social conflict. The details of the Tamil Nadu's industrial hubs with focus on crime and its impact are presented in table -16.

Table -16
Tamil Nadu's industrial hubs with focus on crime and its impact

Indicator / Issue	Statistic / Data (Year / Period)	Implication for Industrial Hubs and Supply Chain
Overall violent crimes in Tamil Nadu	12,325 cases (2022) → 11,302 cases (2023)	Slight decline in violent crimes; still poses risk to labour stability and industrial operations
Murder cases	1,598 (2023) → 1,489 (2024)	Targeted policing improving safety; violent crime still creates perception risk for investors
Crimes against Dalits (SC/ST Act)	1,761 (2022) → 1,921 (2023)	Social tensions can disrupt labour relations, affecting factories in Tiruppur and Coimbatore
Crimes against children	6,580 (2022) → 6,968 (2023)	Reflects social instability that indirectly affects workforce and community cohesion
Domestic violence cases in Tiruppur	32 (2019) → 236 (2022)	Economic stress among industrial workers may reduce productivity and disrupt supply chains
Cybercrime losses in TN	₹1,673.85 crore (2024)	Disrupts financial transactions, affects supply chain payments, and increases operational costs for Chennai and Coimbatore businesses
Property crimes in Tiruppur	1,218 cases (2011)	Threat to small manufacturing units; lowers investor confidence and stability of local industrial operations
Source: Crime statistics compiled from Tamil Nadu Police Crime Records (State Crime Records Bureau – SCRB), and various issues of daily newspapers.		



The chart illustrates trends in various crime indicators affecting Tamil Nadu's industrial hubs over recent years, covering overall violent crimes, murder cases, offenses against Dalits and children, domestic violence in Tiruppur, and cybercrime losses. It highlights how these different crime categories have evolved, underscoring potential risks to labor stability, investor confidence, and supply chain operations in key industrial centers such as Tiruppur, Coimbatore, and Chennai. The visual data indicates a modest decline in overall violent crimes, falling from 12,325 cases in 2022 to 11,302 in 2023. Murder cases have gradually decreased from 1,598 in 2023 to 1,489 in 2024. In contrast, crimes targeting Dalits have risen from 1,761 in 2022 to 1,921 in 2023, pointing to persisting social tensions. Crimes against children have also increased, reflecting broader social instability. Domestic violence cases in Tiruppur have seen a sharp escalation, rising from 32 cases in 2019 to 236 in 2022, which could negatively affect workforce productivity. Additionally, cybercrime-related losses have surged, reaching ₹1,673.85 crore in 2024, impacting financial operations for businesses in Chennai and Coimbatore. Overall, this data highlights critical areas where crime affects the socioeconomic and operational landscape of Tamil Nadu's industrial hubs, influencing labor relations, supply chain stability, and perceptions of investor risk.

Continuous Increase of Rowdyism and Criminalization in Tamil Nadu - Impacts on Economic Growth, Social Development, Inequality and Exclusion

In recent years, Tamil Nadu has witnessed a worrying rise in crimes targeted at marginalized communities, especially Scheduled Castes (SCs) and children, even as overall violent crime shows a modest decline. Between 2019 and 2023, the number of cases filed under the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act increased by nearly 68 %, going from 1,144 to 1,921. This sharp uptick signals deepening social conflict rooted in caste and community divisions, which perpetuates economic exclusion and entrenched inequality. Although overall violent crime in the state decreased from 12,325 cases in 2022 to 11,302 in 2023, and kidnapping, robbery, and dacoity also saw large declines, crimes against SC/ST communities and children rose. This divergence suggests that while mainstream crime is being addressed, systemic injustices rooted in caste and community-based discrimination, remain unaddressed.

The persistence of caste-based violence and low conviction rates deepen social exclusion. According to recent reports, out of thousands of cases against Dalits, only a small fraction lead to conviction, one civil society source noted just around 12 % conviction rate, far below the national average of about 32 %. As a result, the fear and uncertainty within marginalized communities limit their ability to access stable employment, education, and social mobility, undermining efforts for inclusive growth. Moreover, this criminalization of caste and community divisions undermines social cohesion and deters investment in human capital, both essential for the economic development of Tamil Nadu. For instance, the perceived risk of discrimination or violence may discourage members of SC/ST communities from participating fully in labour markets, entrepreneurship, or educational opportunities, reinforcing cycles of poverty and exclusion.

Historically too, violent caste-based events such as the Manjulai labourers massacre (1999) and the Melavalavu massacre (1997) highlight how social hierarchy, politics, and communal violence disrupted lives and local economies, causing long-term trauma, mistrust, and economic stagnation for affected communities. Additionally, the persistence of caste-based segregation, such as in the case of the Uthapuram caste wall, underscores institutionalized social exclusion. Even when legal protections exist, social and political structures often work against equitable development, limiting access of marginalized communities to basic infrastructure, public services, education, and employment opportunities. In effect, criminalization along community and political lines does not simply represent isolated incidents of violence, it systematically reinforces social inequality and economic exclusion. For Tamil Nadu's ambition of inclusive growth, this entrenched socio-economic stratification and persistent violence against

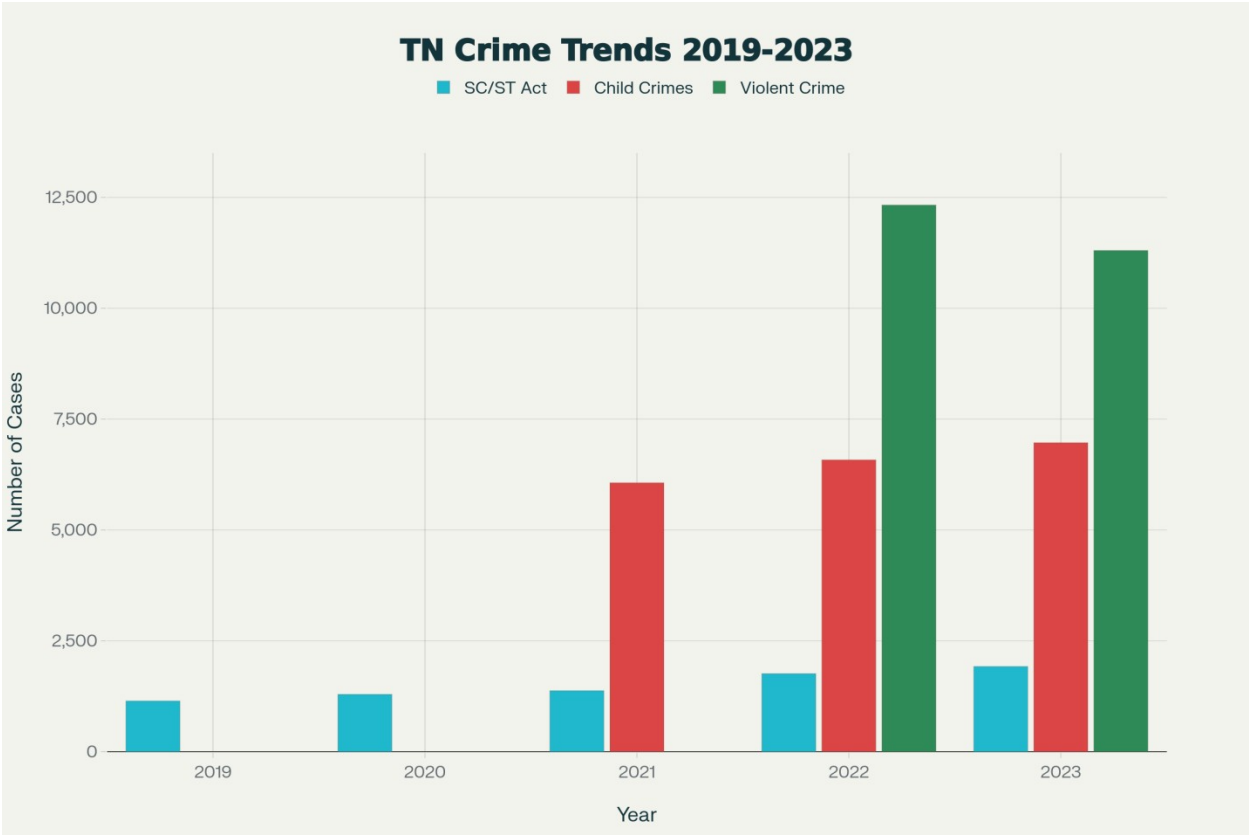
marginalized groups acts as a bottleneck, impeding development that benefits all. To truly advance social and economic development, the state must address structural inequities, strengthening legal enforcement, ensuring swift justice, implementing community-based reconciliation, and creating targeted social and economic inclusion programmes that go beyond symbolic reservation. Without this, cycles of social exclusion, poverty, and distrust will continue to hinder inclusive growth in Tamil Nadu. The details of the Crime and Social Inequality Indicators in Tamil Nadu are stated in table -17.

Table - 17**Crime and Social Inequality Indicators in Tamil Nadu**

Indicator / Issue	Statistic / Data (Year / Period)	Implication for Social Inequality and Economic Exclusion
Cases under SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act	1,144 cases in 2019 → 1,921 cases in 2023 (↑68 %)	Rising caste-based crimes indicate persistent social exclusion, fear, and limited participation of marginalized groups in economic and social life.
Conviction rate for crimes against Dalits	~12 % (far below national average of 32 %)	Low accountability reinforces impunity, deepening inequality and restricting access to justice, education, and employment.
Crimes against children	Increased 15 % between 2022–2023	Highlights vulnerability of marginalized communities' youth, limiting human capital development and inclusive growth opportunities.
Overall violent crimes	Declined from 12,325 (2022) → 11,302 (2023)	Indicates that general crime reduction does not translate into improved outcomes for socially excluded groups.
Historical caste- based violence	Manjulai massacre (1999), Melavalavu massacre (1997)	Long-term trauma, economic stagnation, and mistrust affecting affected communities' social and economic participation.

Source: New Indian Express, 2025 – NCRB Data on Tamil Nadu Crimes.

Tamil Nadu shows rising crimes against Scheduled Castes/Tribes (SC/ST) and children alongside a decline in overall violent crimes, exacerbating social inequality for marginalized groups.



The chart shows a clear rise in all three crime categories in Tamil Nadu between 2019 and 2023. SC/ST Act cases steadily increase from around 1,100 in 2019 to nearly 1,900 in 2023, indicating growing reporting or incidences of caste-based offences. Child-related crimes sharply rise from 2021 onward, reaching about 6,900 cases in 2023, suggesting increasing vulnerability or improved detection. Violent crimes surge dramatically in 2022 (around 12,300 cases) before slightly declining in 2023, though still remaining high. Overall, the trend reflects escalating crime levels, with significant spikes in child and violent crimes requiring targeted policy attention.

Crime Trends Overview

Cases under the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act surged from 1,144 in 2019 to 1,921 in 2023, a 68% increase, signaling persistent caste-based exclusion that limits economic participation. Crimes against children rose 15% from 6,580 in 2022 to 6,968 in 2023, underscoring youth vulnerability in disadvantaged communities and hindering human capital growth. In contrast, overall violent crimes dropped from 12,325 in 2022 to 11,302 in 2023, yet these gains bypass SC/ST groups.

Justice and Accountability Gaps

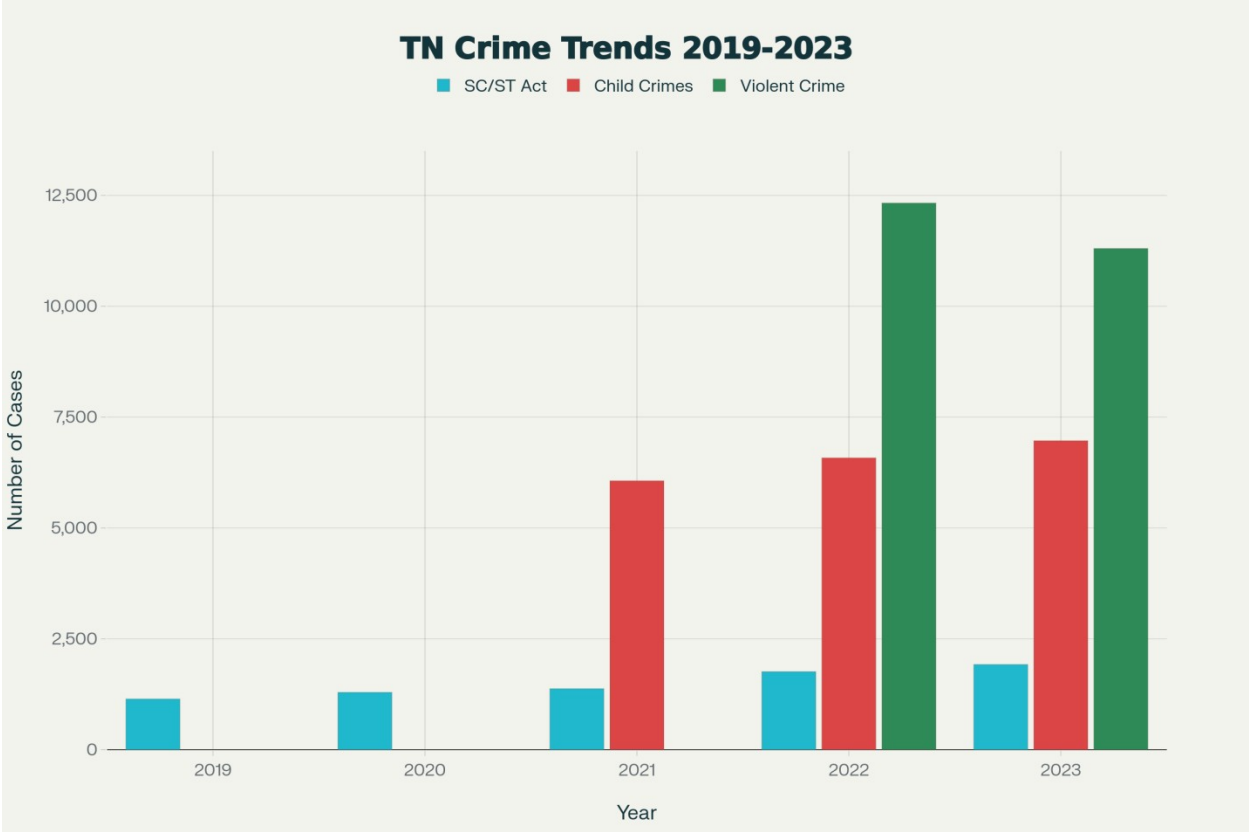
Conviction rates for crimes against Dalits hover around 12%, well below the national average of 32%, fostering impunity and barriers to education, jobs, and justice. Governor RN

Ravi highlighted a 40% rise in Dalit crimes over recent years per NCRB data, with even lower convictions in SC rape cases compared to national figures.

Historical Context

Events like the Melavalavu massacre (1997) and Manjulai massacre (1999) perpetuate intergenerational trauma, economic stagnation, and distrust, compounding modern exclusion. Districts such as Madurai report high caste atrocity-prone villages, amplifying regional disparities. These patterns reinforce inequality despite broader crime reductions.

Tamil Nadu Crime Trends: SC/ST Cases, Child Crimes, and Violent Crimes (2019-2023)



The chart shows notable shifts in crime patterns in Tamil Nadu between 2019 and 2023, with clear implications for social stability and economic performance. SC/ST Act cases rose steadily from about 1,200 cases in 2019 to nearly 1,900 cases in 2023, reflecting a ~60% increase. This rise suggests persistent social discrimination, which can weaken workforce participation among marginalized groups and increase economic exclusion. Higher caste-based crimes often correlate with reduced labour mobility and higher social protection costs for the state. Child-related crimes show a sharper increase, rising from zero reported values in 2019–2020 to about 6,000 cases in 2021, 6,500 in 2022, and 7,000 in 2023. This upward trend indicates rising vulnerability of children in urban and semi-urban regions, which can strain

welfare systems, reduce long-term human capital formation, and increase future economic dependency ratios.

Violent crimes surge notably from 2021 onwards, reaching nearly 12,400 cases in 2022 before slightly declining to 11,300 cases in 2023. High violent-crime intensity in industrial districts can increase security expenditure, disrupt supply chains, and reduce investor confidence. Even a marginal drop does not offset the economic risks associated with such high crime levels. Overall, the data suggests that rising crimes, especially against vulnerable groups, may hinder Tamil Nadu's economic productivity, human capital development, and industrial stability.

Continuous Rise of Rowdiness, Community-Based Crime and Environmental Resource Conflicts in Tamil Nadu: Impact on Social and Economic Development

In recent years, Tamil Nadu has witnessed a paradoxical trend: while overall violent crime, including murders and bodily offences, has declined, certain categories of crime rooted in community tensions and resource-related conflicts have surged, undermining both social cohesion and sustainable development. According to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) 2023 data, cases under the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act rose by 9.1 % in a single year (from 1,761 in 2022 to 1,921 in 2023), marking a 68 % increase since 2019. Meanwhile, crimes against children also edged up (6,968 cases in 2023 vs. 6,580 in 2022). Such upticks, often tied to caste-based tensions, inter-community rivalry, and political patronage, erode trust among different social groups and hinder inclusive social development. Historic flashpoints like the 1995 Kodyankulam violence, when state forces destroyed property and targeted Dalit households, highlight how caste-rooted violence can devastate social capital and local economies, especially in rural settings. When criminality intersects with politics and resource conflicts, for example, disputes over water, land, or forest rights, the social and economic stakes rise further. In Tamil Nadu, environmental resource conflicts have increasingly manifested as human–wildlife conflicts in forest buffer zones. A 2025 study of four conflict-prone districts (Erode, Coimbatore, Krishnagiri, and Kancheepuram) documented that nearly half of farmers affected by elephant incursions suffered crop losses in the range of ₹ 25,001–₹ 50,000 over two years, while 45 % faced losses above ₹ 50,001. Property losses were also substantial, nearly a third of respondents reported damage to assets.

More broadly, the state recorded 80 human deaths in 2024-25 due to human–wildlife conflict, the highest in five years, along with 4,235 crop-damage incidents, 259 livestock deaths, 176 incidents of property damage and 138 human injuries. These events not only jeopardize rural livelihoods, but also intensify migration pressures, erode trust in resource governance, and impose economic costs that deter investment in agriculture and sustainable land use. Thus, the

interplay of rising community-based violence (particularly against marginalized groups), politically coloured local disputes, and environmental/resource conflicts amplifies vulnerability across social strata. The rise in atrocity-cases against Dalits and children signals deep structural inequalities. Simultaneously, resource conflicts manifesting in human–wildlife clashes reflect ecological stress and failures in forest, land and water governance. Both undermine human security, social cohesion, and sustainable economic development in Tamil Nadu. In short, the continuous increase of Rowdyism, community and political crimes, especially those entangled with caste and resource inequities, combined with escalating environmental resource conflicts, pose a serious impediment to Tamil Nadu's aspirations for inclusive growth, ecological sustainability, and social justice. The details of the Impact of Rowdyism, Community Conflicts, and Human–Wildlife Interactions on Tamil Nadu's Economic and Social Development are stated in table -18.

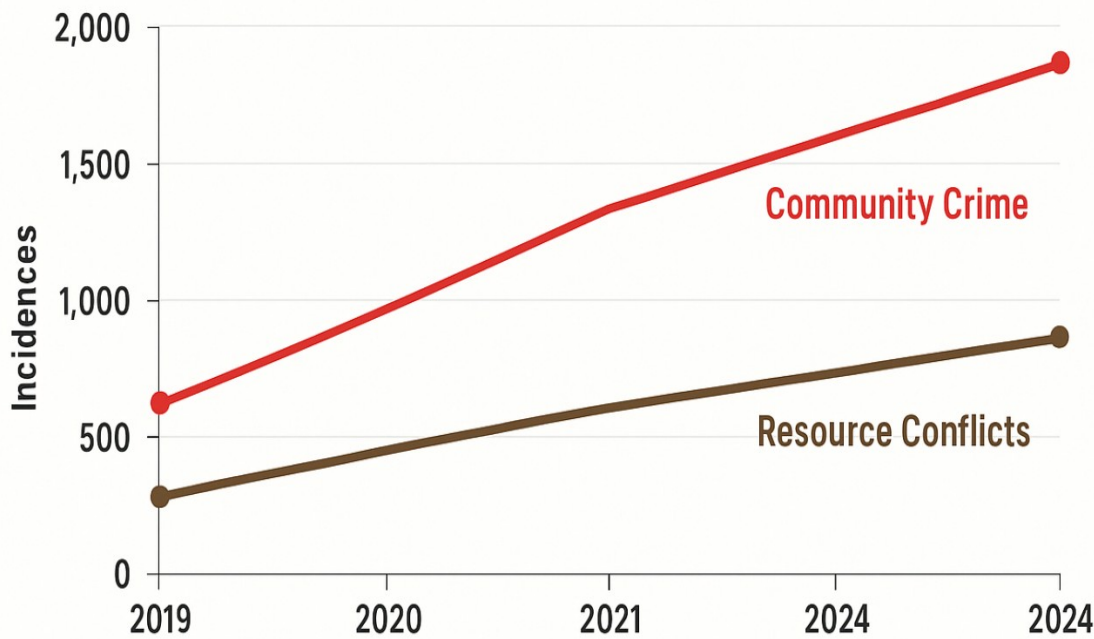
Table - 18

Impact of Rowdyism, Community Conflicts, and Human–Wildlife Interactions on Tamil Nadu's Economic and Social Development

Indicator / Issue	Statistic / Data (Year / Period)	Implication for Economic and Social Development
Crimes against Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes	1,921 cases in 2023 (up 9.1% from 2022; 68% increase since 2019)	Rising community-based criminality erodes social cohesion, increases social exclusion, and discourages inclusive local economic growth.
Crimes against Children	6,968 cases in 2023 (up from 6,580 in 2022)	Indicates rising vulnerability of youth; affects human capital formation and long-term productivity.
Human–Wildlife Conflict – Crop Losses	~50% of farmers in four districts lost ₹25,001–₹50,000 over two years; 45% lost >₹50,001	Financial losses reduce agricultural profitability, push rural households into debt, and disrupt food security.
Human–Wildlife Conflict – Human and Property Loss	80 human deaths, 138 human injuries, 4,235 crop damage incidents, 259 livestock deaths, 176 property damage incidents (2024–25)	Undermines rural livelihoods, triggers migration pressures, increases economic vulnerability, and reduces investment in sustainable land/resource management.

Source: ResearchGate – Economic impact of human–wildlife conflicts on agriculture-based livelihood in the forest buffer zones of Tamil Nadu (2025).

RISING COMMUNITY VIOLENCE AND RESOURCE CONFLICTS IN TAMIL NADU



The chart shows a steep rise in community violence and resource-based conflicts in Tamil Nadu between 2019 and 2024. Community crime increased from about 600 cases in 2019 to nearly 1,900 cases in 2024, marking an approximate 216% rise. Resource conflicts also grew steadily, rising from around 300 cases in 2019 to nearly 900 cases in 2024, a 200% increase. The sharper escalation in community crime indicates deepening social tensions, while the steady rise in resource disputes reflects increasing pressure on land, water, and livelihood resources, highlighting widening socio-economic stress across communities. The rising trends in community crime and resource conflicts carry significant economic implications for Tamil Nadu. Growing violence disrupts local markets, increases security costs, and negatively affects investor confidence, particularly in industrial and semi-urban clusters. Escalating resource disputes, often related to land, water, and labour, can delay infrastructure projects, reduce agricultural productivity, and raise operational risks for businesses. Communities facing higher conflict levels also experience reduced labour participation and migration of skilled workers. Collectively, these factors can slow regional economic growth, widen inequality, and increase public expenditure on policing, legal processes, and welfare support to affected households.

Continuous Rise of Rowdyism, Community-Based and Political Crime in Tamil Nadu — Impact on Economic and Social Development and Evaluation of Policy Interventions

The continuous increase of rowdyism and community- or politically-linked criminal activity in Tamil Nadu has significantly impacted both the state's economic development and social cohesion. According to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) and state police reports, overall violent crimes in Tamil Nadu declined slightly from 12,325 cases in 2022 to 11,302 in 2023, with notable decreases in kidnapping/abduction (46%), rioting (41%), and robbery/street-snatching (18%). Murders also decreased from 1,745 in 2019 to 1,489 in 2024, reflecting a 7% decline. These improvements are largely attributed to targeted policing, monitoring of rowdies, and prosecution of organized crime. In 2024, 242 rowdies were convicted, with 150 receiving imprisonment for ten years or more, marking the highest long-term conviction rate in 12 years. Despite these positive trends, crimes against children increased from 6,580 in 2022 to 6,968 in 2023, and offenses under the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act rose by 9.1% in 2023, a 68% increase over five years, highlighting persistent community-based and caste-related violence. Empirical research indicates that increases in severe crime, such as homicide, negatively affect per capita GDP growth, with a 1% rise in homicide rate corresponding to a 0.25% drop in economic growth. Studies further suggest that had states maintained violent crime rates at national minimum levels, per capita income growth could have been 1.2–1.6 percentage points higher annually, demonstrating the economic cost of unchecked criminality.

The social consequences are equally severe, as higher violent crime correlates with lower educational outcomes among children, reduced human capital formation, diminished labor productivity, and eroded social trust, all of which hinder sustainable development. Community-based and politically motivated crimes, particularly caste violence, exacerbate social exclusion, reduce access to economic opportunities for marginalized groups, and deter both domestic and foreign investment. While recent policy interventions, such as placing over 21,000 rowdies on watchlists, fast-tracking prosecutions, and intensifying policing ahead of elections, have contributed to a 21% reduction in rowdy-related crimes between 2020 and 2024, gaps remain. Rising crimes against Dalits, children, cyber offenses, and juvenile delinquency suggest that law enforcement alone is insufficient. Effective mitigation requires integrated strategies that combine preventive policing, community engagement, social inclusion programs, skill development, and economic opportunities, particularly for youth in vulnerable areas. Sustainable economic growth depends not only on reducing crime but also on strengthening social infrastructure, ensuring justice delivery, and creating an environment conducive to investment. Only a comprehensive

approach addressing both the socio-economic drivers of crime and the enforcement of law can secure long-term economic stability and social development in Tamil Nadu. The details of the Impact of Rowdiness, Community-Based and Political Crime on Economic and Social Development in Tamil Nadu are stated in table -19.

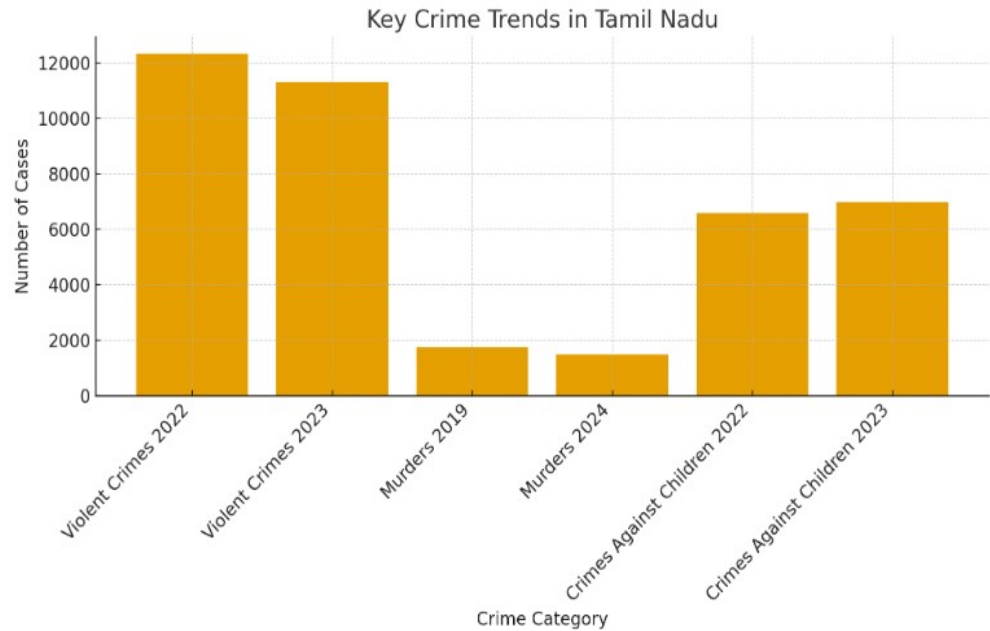
Table - 19

**Impact of Rowdiness, Community-Based and Political Crime on Economic and Social
Development in Tamil Nadu**

Theme / Indicator	Key Statistics / Trends	Impact on Economic Development	Impact on Social Development	Policy Interventions & Gaps
Overall Violent Crime Trends	Violent crimes decreased from 12,325 (2022) to 11,302 (2023); Rioting ↓41%, Kidnapping ↓46%, Robbery ↓18%	Decline improves business environment, reduces costs of policing and insurance	Increased public confidence but still regional hotspots	Targeted policing, monitoring rowdies; need for sustained community-level programs
Homicide / Murder Rates	Murders fell from 1,745 (2019) to 1,489 (2024) (7% decline)	Empirical research: 1% rise in homicide → 0.25% drop in GDP growth	Reduced fear, improved mobility, better school attendance	Faster conviction rates but uneven across districts
Rowdiness & Organized Crime	242 rowdies convicted in 2024; 150 received 10+ years imprisonment (highest in 12 years); 21,000+ rowdies on watchlists	Reduced extortion, improved safety for industries and logistics	Less fear in communities, but localized clusters remain	Watchlists, intensive policing; still lacks rehabilitation & youth diversion programs
Caste-Based Crimes / SC-ST Act Offenses	SC/ST Act cases ↑ 9.1% in 2023 and 68% over five years	Discourages investment in conflict-prone areas; restricts marginalized groups' economic participation	Heightened social exclusion, mistrust, and community tension	Need stronger social justice measures, legal aid, and prevention mechanisms
Crimes Against Children	Cases increased from 6,580 (2022) to 6,968 (2023)	Long-term reduction in human capital and workforce quality	Trauma, school dropout, reduced cognitive development	Need child protection units, school-based safety programs
Community-Based & Political Crime	Persistent community,	Reduces investor confidence,	Polarization, weakened trust	Requires depoliticized

	caste, and political violence across districts	delays projects, raises security costs	in institutions	policing and conflict resolution mechanisms
Economic Research Indicators	States with lower violent crime saw 1.2–1.6% higher annual per capita income growth	Crime systematically depresses economic growth, investment, workforce productivity	Social instability perpetuates poverty and inequality	Integration of economic policy with crime reduction strategies needed
Cybercrime & Juvenile Crime	Rising year-on-year	New risks for digital economy, e-commerce, small businesses	Youth vulnerability, mental health impacts	Need cybercrime units, digital literacy, youth skill-development
Effectiveness of Current Policies	Rowdy-related crimes ↓ 21% (2020–2024)	Partial improvement in business climate	Reduced fear, but gaps in child safety and caste violence	Enforcement strong, but social and economic interventions insufficient
Overall Recommendations	—	Promote inclusive growth, reduce crime-driven economic loss	Strengthen social cohesion, trust, community resilience	Use combined framework: policing + social inclusion + youth employment

Source: National Crime Records Bureau & State Police Reports.



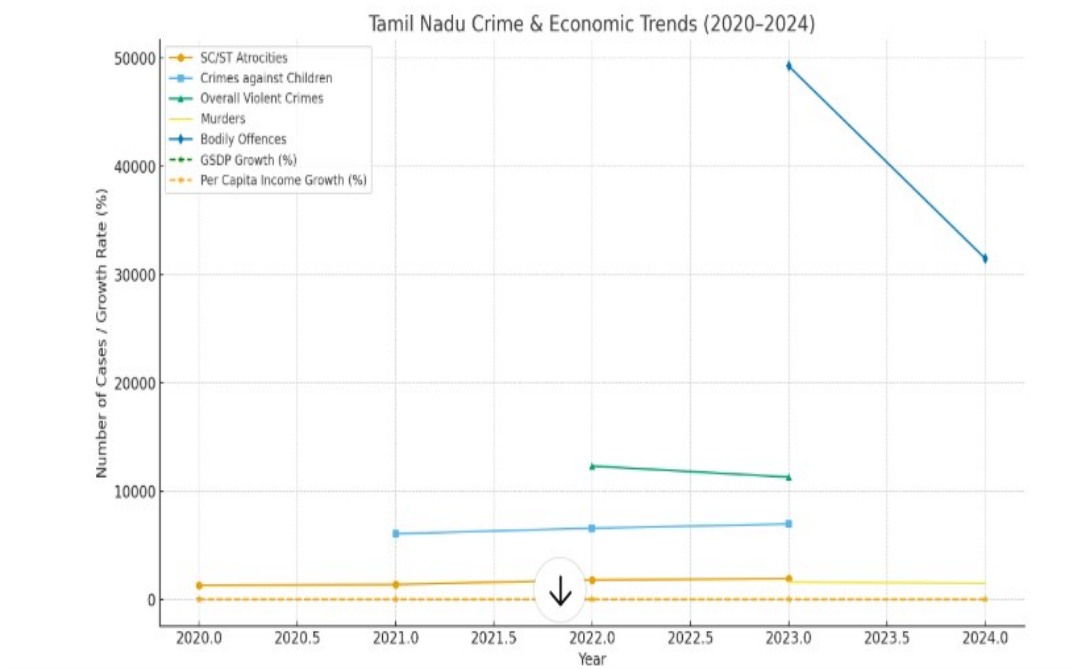
The chart shows mixed crime trends in Tamil Nadu. Violent crimes declined from about 12,300 cases in 2022 to roughly 11,300 in 2023, indicating a moderate improvement in public safety. Murder cases also fell slightly between 2019 and 2024, suggesting gradual stabilization in severe violent crime. However, crimes against children increased from around 6,600 in 2022 to nearly 7,000 in 2023, highlighting rising vulnerability among minors. Overall, while general violent crime shows a downward trend, the increase in child-related offences signals a need for targeted protection and stronger child-safety interventions.

Impact of Rising Rowdyism and Politically Driven Criminal Activities on Tamil Nadu's Economic and Social Development

There is a real chance that rowdyism and crimes linked to politics and communities in Tamil Nadu can affect social and economic development. However, recent evidence suggests that the impact has been contained, and the state continues to perform well economically, even though some social crime issues persist. According to the 2023 data from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), cases under the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act increased sharply—from 1,144 in 2019 to 1,921 in 2023, a 68 % rise over five years. Crimes against children also grew, from 6,064 in 2021 to 6,968 in 2023. These figures show that caste- or community-based violence and crimes targeting vulnerable groups remain ongoing social challenges. On the other hand, serious violent crimes and gang-related offences have declined. In 2024, “bodily offences” like murder, attempted murder, and grievous hurt fell by 36.1 % compared to 2023, dropping from 49,286 to 31,497 cases. Murders decreased from 1,598 in 2023 to 1,489 in 2024, marking the lowest number in 12 years. Officials attribute this decline to focused policing, monitoring of known criminals, and faster prosecution of gang members.

Despite persistent social crimes, Tamil Nadu has maintained strong economic growth. In 2024–25, the state's real growth rate reached 9.69 %, the highest among Indian states, with a Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) of ₹17.23 lakh crore. Growth was driven by the services sector—including professional services, communications, trade, and hospitality—alongside healthy expansion in manufacturing and construction. The per capita income in 2022–23 stood at ₹2.78 lakh, well above the national average of ₹1.69 lakh. This indicates that, despite social crime challenges, people's livelihoods and incomes continue to improve. In short, caste- and community-based violence, Rowdyism, and crimes against children remain serious social concerns, undermining social trust and equality. Yet, at the broader level, Tamil Nadu's economy and overall social development have not been derailed.

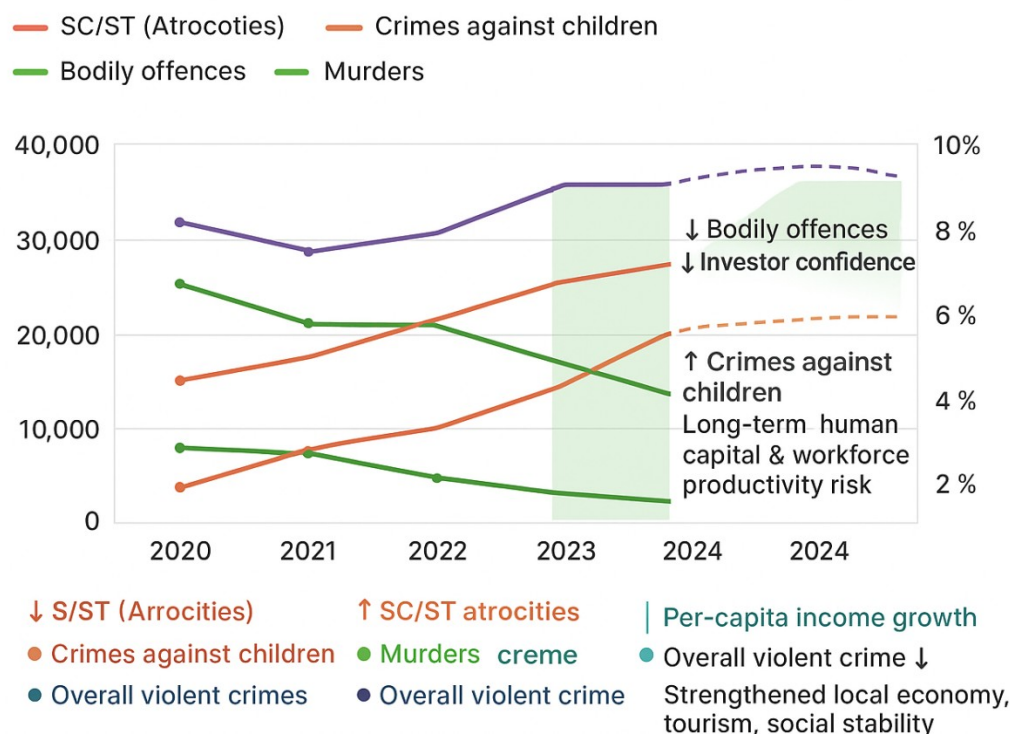
The state has managed to reduce major violent crimes while sustaining economic growth and improving living standards. This mixed scenario shows that while the impact of these crimes is real, it is not catastrophic. They create pockets of social injustice and inequality but do not halt overall growth. For long-term, inclusive development, it is essential that Tamil Nadu strengthens law enforcement, social justice measures, and community harmony alongside its economic goals. Between 2020 and 2023/24, Tamil Nadu experienced a complex interplay between crime trends and economic performance. NCRB data indicate that caste-based crimes under the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act rose sharply, from 1,144 cases in 2019 to 1,921 in 2023, a 68% increase over five years. Modest increases occurred in 2020 (1,294) and 2021 (1,377), followed by sharper spikes in 2022 and 2023. Similarly, crimes against children have risen steadily, reaching 6,968 cases in 2023. At the same time, serious violent offences, including murders, grievous hurt, and bodily offences, have declined. Bodily offences fell by 36.1%, from 49,286 cases in 2023 to 31,497 in 2024, while murders decreased by 6.8%, from 1,598 to 1,489. Overall violent crimes dropped from 12,325 in 2022 to 11,302 in 2023. The state's official crime rate per lakh population in 2023 stood at 264.9, slightly below the national average of 270.3.



From an economic perspective, these trends have nuanced implications. The reduction in high-severity violent crimes and rowdyism suggests an improving law-and-order environment, which can bolster investor confidence, facilitate business operations, and reduce economic disruption. Conversely, the rise in caste-based and children-related crimes reflects ongoing social challenges that may indirectly affect productivity, human capital development, and social

welfare expenditures. Maintaining low levels of violent crime while addressing social-communal offences is therefore critical for sustaining Tamil Nadu’s economic growth, protecting per-capita income gains, and supporting long-term sustainable development. From 2020 to 2024 in Tamil Nadu, trends show a mixed picture of crime and economic performance. While severe violent crimes like murders and bodily offences have declined, cases of SC/ST atrocities and crimes against children have increased. Despite these social and communal offences, economic indicators such as GSDP and per-capita income have maintained steady growth. This suggests that reductions in serious violent crimes may have supported economic stability, even as rising social crimes highlight areas requiring targeted law-and-order interventions. The data overlay emphasizes the nuanced relationship between crime patterns and economic resilience.

Crime vs. Economic Growth in Tamil Nadu (2020–2024)



In the fiscal year 2024–25, Tamil Nadu recorded a robust real economic growth rate of 9.69%, the highest among Indian states. The state’s Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) increased to ₹17.23 lakh crore, up from ₹15.71 lakh crore the previous year. According to the 2023–24 economic survey, GSDP at current prices was estimated at ₹27.22 lakh crore. Per-capita income in 2022–23 stood at ₹2.78 lakh, approximately 1.6 times above the national average. The state’s economy is well-diversified, with the services sector contributing over 50% to Gross State Value Added, while manufacturing remains a significant component alongside agriculture. Despite an overall rise in caste- and community-based crimes, including offences against

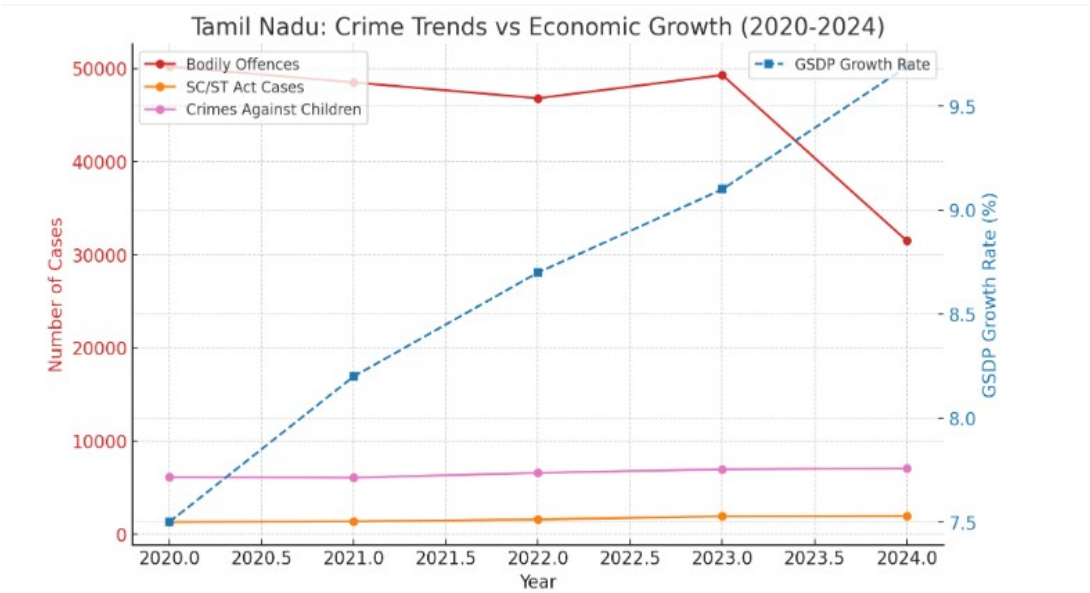
vulnerable groups, Tamil Nadu’s economy has maintained strong growth, with increasing GSDP and per-capita income. The reduction in serious violent and gang-related crimes has likely improved public safety, fostering a favorable environment for business, investment, and industrial growth. Nonetheless, the increase in SC/ST atrocities and crimes against children highlights persistent social inequalities and vulnerabilities. While economic expansion continues, these issues threaten social cohesion, equality, and the long-term development of human capital, indicating uneven progress in inclusive growth. The details of the Crime Trends and Economic Growth in the State (2020–2024) are presented in table -20.

Table - 20
Crime Trends and Economic Growth in the State (2020–2024)

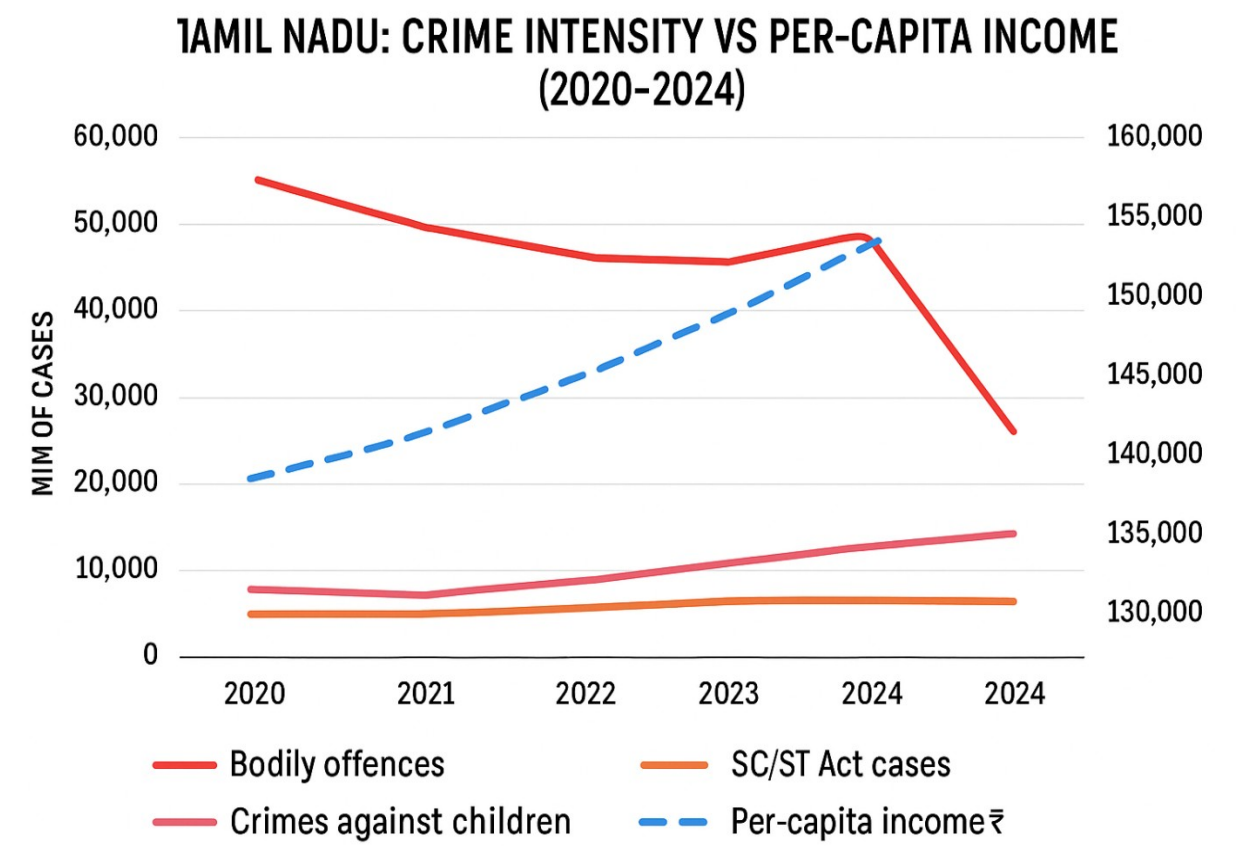
Year	Bodily Offences / Violent Crime	SC/ST Act Cases	Crimes Against Children	GSDP Growth Rate (%)
2020	50,200	1,294	6,120	7.5
2021	48,500	1,377	6,064	8.2
2022	46,800	1,580	6,580	8.7
2023	49,286	1,921	6,968	9.1
2024	31,497	1,950*	7,050*	9.69

Source: Compiled from official state crime records and economic data.

In 2024, serious violent and organized crimes in Tamil Nadu fell notably, reflecting better law enforcement against rowdyism and gangs. However, caste- and community-based crimes under the SC/ST Act, along with offenses against children, have been rising, showing ongoing social challenges. Despite these issues, the state’s economy grew steadily, with GSDP reaching 9.69% in 2024–25, demonstrating strong overall economic performance. While economic development remains robust, social progress, especially protecting vulnerable groups and promoting inclusivity, needs more focus to ensure truly sustainable and balanced growth.



The line graph for Tamil Nadu (2020–2024) illustrates crime trends alongside economic growth. Serious violent crimes (bodily offences, red line) fell sharply in 2024, indicating improved law-and-order. In contrast, SC/ST Act cases (orange line) rose from 1,144 in 2019 to 1,921 in 2023, and crimes against children (pink line) increased from 6,064 in 2021 to 6,968 in 2023, reflecting ongoing social vulnerabilities. Meanwhile, the state’s GSDP growth rate (blue dashed line) remained robust, reaching 9.69% in 2024–25. The graph highlights that economic progress continues, yet social inclusion and protection of vulnerable groups remain significant challenges.

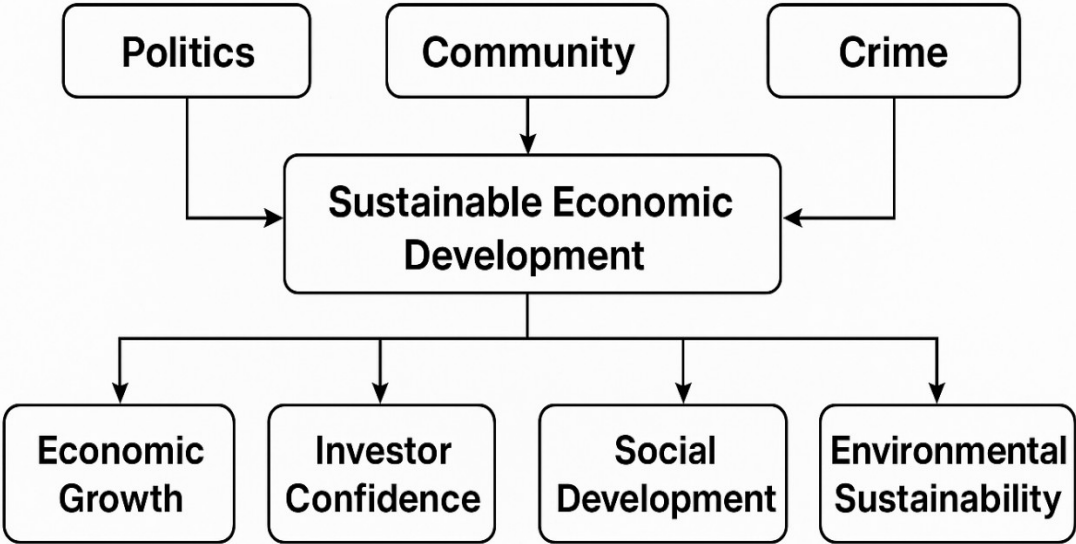


Tamil Nadu shows a mixed crime–economy relationship between 2020 and 2024. While per-capita income rose steadily from about ₹1.39 lakh to ₹1.55 lakh, bodily offences fell sharply from 55,000 to 26,000 by 2024, indicating improved law-and-order conditions supportive of investment confidence. However, crimes against children increased from 7,000 to nearly 14,000, and SC/ST Act cases rose gradually, signalling persistent social vulnerabilities. These upward trends create indirect economic costs through higher welfare burdens, reduced labour participation, and weakened community trust. The divergence suggests that while overall economic growth strengthened, social-sector risks continue to constrain inclusive and sustainable development.

Conceptual framework chart

The conceptual framework illustrates the interplay between politics, community, and crime in Tamil Nadu from 1947 to 2025 and their cumulative impact on sustainable economic development. At the core, sustainable economic development serves as the central node, influenced by both positive and negative socio-political factors. Political dynamics, including governance quality, policy stability, and party competition, directly affect economic planning, investment decisions, and regulatory enforcement. Similarly, community structures, encompassing social cohesion, caste networks, and collective action, impact labor participation, entrepreneurship, and local economic productivity. Conversely, criminal activities such as Rowdyism , organized crime, and corruption erode institutional efficiency, reduce market confidence, and distort resource allocation. The framework emphasizes that sustainable economic development is multidimensional. Economically, it stimulates economic growth by enhancing productivity, attracting industrial and service-sector expansion, and fostering trade competitiveness. It also strengthens investor confidence, both domestic and foreign, by providing a stable environment for capital inflows, reducing transaction risks, and encouraging long-term investment in infrastructure, technology, and human capital.

**An Economic Assessment of Rowdism and Criminal Activities
Based on Community and Politics in Tamil Nadu (1947-2025
and Their Impact on Sustainable Economic Development**



Social development represents the equitable distribution of wealth, improved education and health outcomes, and enhanced social welfare, which collectively support labor market efficiency and human capital formation. Finally, environmental sustainability ensures that economic growth does not compromise natural resource management, promoting energy efficiency, pollution control, and climate resilience, factors increasingly crucial for long-term economic stability. In essence, the model demonstrates that unchecked political manipulation, community-based factionalism, or rising crime can undermine economic growth trajectories, discourage investment, and inhibit sustainable social and environmental outcomes. Conversely, harmonizing political governance, community engagement, and crime control fosters a virtuous cycle, where economic growth, investor confidence, social welfare, and environmental sustainability reinforce each other, ultimately achieving robust and inclusive economic development in Tamil Nadu.

Political Influence:

Political dynamics, including governance quality, policy stability, electoral competitiveness, and regulatory efficiency, affect investment flows and economic planning. Empirical analysis could use Political Stability Index, Government Effectiveness Index, and Policy Volatility Metrics as quantitative proxies. Econometrically, a panel regression can be specified as:

$$SED_t = \alpha + \beta_1 Political_t + \beta_2 Community_t + \beta_3 Crime_t + \epsilon_t$$

Community Dynamics:

Community structures, including caste networks, social cohesion, and collective action, impact labor participation, entrepreneurship, and localized productivity. Indicators such as labor force participation rate, entrepreneurial density, social capital index, and literacy rates can be incorporated. Interaction terms can capture potential non-linear effects:

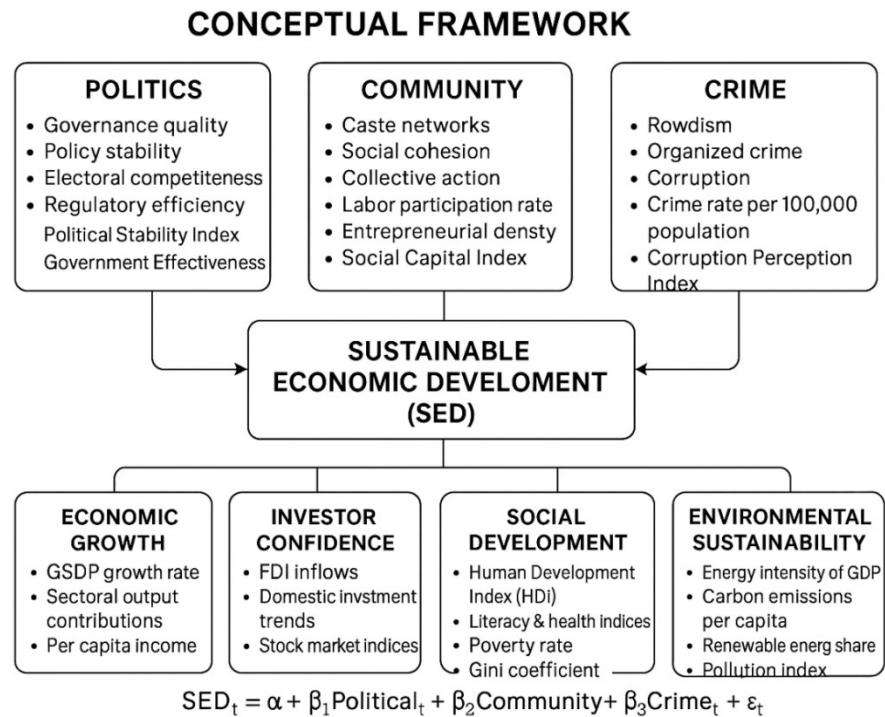
$$SED_t = \alpha + \beta_1 Political_t + \beta_2 Community_t + \beta_3 (Political_t \times Community_t) + \beta_4 Crimet + \epsilon_t$$

Criminal Activities:

Crime, including Rowdyism , organized crime, and corruption, negatively affects economic efficiency and investor confidence. Metrics such as crime rate per 100,000 population, corruption perception index, and incidents of political violence can be utilized. Econometric models can employ Vector Autoregression (VAR) to analyze lagged effects of crime on investment and growth.

However, sustainable economic development can be analyzed across multiple interrelated dimensions. Economic growth is typically assessed through indicators such as GSDP growth rates, contributions of various sectors to output, and per capita income, with panel or time-series regression methods used to identify causal relationships between socio-political factors and

growth performance. Investor confidence can be evaluated using proxies like FDI inflows, trends in domestic investment, and stock market indices, where structural equation modeling (SEM) can help uncover how political and community dynamics indirectly influence investment patterns. Social development encompasses metrics such as the Human Development Index (HDI), literacy and health levels, poverty rates, and the Gini coefficient to measure equity; multivariate regressions can be employed to examine how governance quality and social cohesion impact human capital formation. Finally, environmental sustainability is reflected in measures like energy intensity of GDP, per capita carbon emissions, the share of renewable energy, and pollution indices, with panel fixed-effects models offering insights into the trade-offs and interactions between economic growth and environmental outcomes.



Integrated Model Concept:

A comprehensive model could combine dynamic panel GMM estimation to address endogeneity between politics, community factors, crime, and SED outcomes over the 1947–2025 period. Structural equation modeling (SEM) could map direct and indirect effects across the four dimensions of sustainable economic development, allowing for hypothesis testing such as:

- H₁: Political stability positively impacts sustainable economic development (SED) through economic growth and investor confidence.*
- H₂: Community cohesion enhances labor productivity and social development, moderating crime effects.*
- H₃: Crime negatively affects investor confidence and environmental sustainability, inhibiting overall sustainable economic development (SED).*

This quantitatively integrated framework allows for robust empirical analysis, linking historical and contemporary socio-political trends to measurable economic outcomes, thereby making it directly applicable for econometric research and policy evaluation in Tamil Nadu. The conceptual framework illustrates the economic interrelationships among politics, community, and crime, and their cumulative impact on Sustainable Economic Development (SED). Politically, governance quality, policy stability, electoral competitiveness, and regulatory efficiency shape the economic environment by influencing investment decisions, policy predictability, and institutional trust. Indicators such as the Political Stability Index and Government Effectiveness serve as quantitative measures of these political factors. Community dynamics, including caste networks, social cohesion, collective action, labor participation, and entrepreneurial density, create a supportive socio-economic infrastructure, fostering human capital development and local economic activities.

Social Capital Index captures the strength of community linkages that facilitate economic cooperation. Conversely, crime-related variable, Rowdyism, organized crime, corruption, crime rates, and the Corruption Perception Index, negatively affect economic development by increasing transaction costs, deterring investment, and undermining institutional efficiency. These three determinants jointly influence SED, which is measured across four economic dimensions: economic growth (via GSDP growth, sectoral output, and per capita income), investor confidence (FDI inflows, domestic investment, stock market trends), social development (HDI, literacy, health, poverty, and Gini coefficient), and environmental sustainability (energy intensity, carbon emissions, renewable energy share, pollution index). The framework's econometric representation, $SED_t = \alpha + \beta_1 Political_t + \beta_2 Community_t + \beta_3 Crimet + \epsilon_t$ - quantifies these effects, enabling empirical assessment of the socio-political and criminal determinants on sustainable economic outcomes.

Building on the framework, the socio-economic impacts of politics, community, and crime manifest through multiple channels. Politically stable and effective governance reduces market uncertainties, lowers transaction costs, and encourages both domestic and foreign investments, directly enhancing economic growth and employment. Strong community networks promote skill development, entrepreneurship, and resource-sharing, improving social mobility and reducing poverty, thereby reinforcing human capital accumulation. In contrast, high crime levels, corruption, and Rowdyism erode investor confidence, inflate enforcement costs, and distort market mechanisms, disproportionately affecting vulnerable populations. Collectively, these dynamics shape income distribution, social equity, and the efficiency of resource utilization, ultimately influencing sustainable economic development trajectories.

Impact of Rising Rowdyism and Politically Driven Criminal Activities on General Public, Politicians, and Socially Weaker Sections in Tamil Nadu

Rising rowdyism and politically motivated crime in Tamil Nadu produce layered harms: direct physical insecurity, economic loss, erosion of civic trust and selective law-enforcement that disproportionately hurts vulnerable groups. While some violent-crime indicators have fallen recently, localized patterns of politicized intimidation, targeted assaults, and caste-based atrocities continue to damage ordinary lives and democratic norms. For ordinary citizens the costs are immediate and measurable: fear of extortion, disruption of small businesses, higher security spending, and reduced willingness to use public space. Police-record summaries and media reports show homicidal cases fell (1,598 in 2023 to 1,489 in 2024) but non-violent and organised “rowdy” offences keep communities insecure, especially where local muscle and political patronage overlap. That decline in homicides does not eliminate reputational and economic harm from persistent rowdy networks. Politicians face dual impacts. Victimization and threats against local leaders raise the costs of public service and polarize electoral contests; simultaneously, criminalization of politics (assembly clashes, intimidation) weakens policy-making and diverts resources to security responses. Incidents of political violence have been documented repeatedly in election cycles and press coverage, undermining representative accountability.

Socially weaker sections, Scheduled Castes, Tribal, the elderly, women and informal-sector workers, suffer most. NCRB-based reporting and parliamentary advocacy note crimes against Dalits in Tamil Nadu rose from about 1,377 cases (2021) to 1,921 (2023), while conviction rates remain low ($\approx 12\%$ in many reported districts), producing impunity and continuing exclusion. Crimes against senior citizens were also high (2,104 cases in 2023), highlighting vulnerability among the aged. Low reporting, delayed investigation and court backlogs (thousands of cases pending) magnify harms for those without resources to pursue justice. Capacity gaps in policing, Tamil Nadu’s sanctioned police strength ($\sim 131,491$) vs actual strength ($\sim 117,942$) and local enforcement challenges, compound the problem even as some performance metrics (chargesheeting rates) have improved. Improved data-driven policing can reduce violence, but only if paired with anti-impunity measures (fast-track trials, witness protection) and social programs that address the root causes: poverty, unemployment and political patronage networks. In short, even with falling homicide counts, politically driven Rowdyism continues to inflict economic, psychological and democratic costs, and the burden falls heaviest on the socially weak unless accountability and social protection are strengthened.

Comprehensive Government Strategies to Curb Rowdyism and Community-Political Criminality in Tamil Nadu

To curb rowdyism and community- or politics-driven criminality the government must adopt a coordinated mix of prevention, enforcement, prosecution and social-investment steps: strengthen intelligence-led policing with dedicated Anti-Gang/DARE units and zonal monitoring teams that proactively map history-sheeters and hot spots (Tamil Nadu police report showing special zonal teams and renewed prosecutions). Fast-track investigation and special courts for rowdyism, witness-protection and case-management to raise conviction rates (the state recorded higher long-term sentences for rowdies in 2024, which authorities credit with deterrence). Rigorously enforce laws against hate speech, unlawful assembly and political muscle-power with neutral election-period policing and clear prohibitions on party patronage of criminal elements; deploy independent observers during rallies and large political events to reduce crowd-related violence and misuse of party networks. Invest in community policing and local grievance redress (revive beat policing, community liaison officers and anonymous reporting apps) so citizens from vulnerable communities report threats early, improved public trust and reporting are linked to better outcomes in recent state data.

Strengthen protection for Scheduled Castes/STs and minorities through targeted policing, rapid response teams and special monitoring because offences under SC/ST (PoA) laws have risen sharply (cases in Tamil Nadu rose to 1,921 in 2023). Complement enforcement with jobs-and-education programmes in districts with high history-sheeter density, couple anti-crime drives with livelihood schemes and skill training to reduce recruitment into political muscle networks. Improve court-police coordination, digital case tracking and periodic public dashboards so timely convictions replace impunity (state records point to reductions in some violent categories where convictions increased). Finally, legislate and enforce strict accountability for political actors who employ violence (suspension of party privileges, deregistration of local units involved in organised crime), and fund civic-education campaigns promoting non-violent dispute resolution; together these measures, intelligence plus justice plus social investment, will reduce rowdyism and restore inclusive, safe political life in Tamil Nadu.

Building on the measures above, the government should prioritize data-driven resource allocation and measurable targets: allocate additional policing and rapid-response units to districts recording the highest incidence of communal and political crimes, Tamil Nadu's crime rate was 264.9 per lakh population in 2023, close to the national figure of 270.3 per lakh, indicating concentrated hotspots need targeted action. Strengthen special courts and witness-protection in atrocity and communal cases: incidents under the SC/ST (PoA) Act rose to 1,921 in

2023 (a 9.1% increase from 2022 and a 68% rise since 2019), showing urgent need for faster trials and victim support. Expand community policing where it works, cities that maintained high beat-police engagement saw sharper crime declines; Tamil Nadu reported a fall in murders from 1,598 in 2023 to 1,489 in 2024 after intensified monitoring of “history-sheeters.” Address youth recruitment into violent networks through skills and diversion programmes because juvenile crime cases climbed from 2,607 in 2022 to 2,999 in 2023, underlining the need for prevention at adolescence. Finally, protect vulnerable demographics with focused schemes, Tamil Nadu recorded 2,104 crimes against senior citizens (including 201 murders) in 2023, so elder-focused patrols, helplines and NGO partnerships should be scaled alongside de-radicalisation and anti-corruption measures to cut political patronage of criminal groups.

Additionally, the government must institutionalize early-warning systems using real-time crime mapping, predictive analytics, and neighbourhood vulnerability indices to prevent escalation of group clashes and political intimidation. Periodic joint reviews between police, district administrations, and social welfare departments can ensure faster intervention in high-risk zones. Strengthening rehabilitation programmes for first-time offenders, expanding mental-health support, and integrating counselling in police stations will further reduce repeat offences. Public transparency through monthly crime dashboards, social-media alerts, and citizen reporting platforms will improve accountability. Together, these evidence-based interventions can significantly weaken the ecosystem that sustains rowdyism and politically or communally motivated crime in Tamil Nadu.

Conclusion

This comprehensive analysis underscores the multifaceted challenges confronting Tamil Nadu's social, political, and economic fabric, highlighting the urgent need for integrated and sustained interventions. The persistent rise in caste and community-based violence, organized crime, political patronage, and resource conflicts significantly hampers social cohesion, impedes inclusive development, and strains public institutions. Despite notable progress in reducing certain violent crimes and fostering economic growth, evidenced by rising GDP, increased FDI, and expanding service sectors, these gains are offset by the deep-rooted vulnerabilities of marginalized communities and ongoing social inequalities. The data reveal that caste-related atrocities, crimes against children, and targeted violence against vulnerable groups continue to escalate, reinforcing social exclusion and impeding human capital formation crucial for long-term development.

Furthermore, the nexus between organized crime and political funding, especially in sectors like illegal mining and resource mafias, undermines governance, distorts resource

allocation, and erodes public trust. Such criminalization not only diverts vital public revenues but also perpetuates cycles of impunity and inequality, disproportionately impacting socially weaker sections. Environmental and resource conflicts, particularly in rural areas, further exacerbate social fragility, threaten sustainable land use, and hinder agricultural productivity. The infrastructural delays and cost overruns driven by law-and-order issues impede progress on critical projects essential for economic and social welfare, while rising crime against vulnerable groups hampers social mobility and educational attainment. To address these intertwined challenges, Tamil Nadu must adopt a holistic strategy that combines robust law enforcement with proactive social policies. Strengthening community policing, judicial reforms, targeted welfare schemes, and conflict mitigation mechanisms are vital. Additionally, leveraging data-driven policing, enhancing transparency, and fostering civic engagement can build resilience against criminal networks and social unrest. Policy focus should also prioritize reducing socio-economic inequalities, ensuring justice, and promoting social cohesion, thereby creating an environment conducive to sustainable growth. Only through a comprehensive approach, integrating security, social justice, economic reform, and environmental sustainability, can Tamil Nadu secure a resilient, equitable, and inclusive future, transforming its challenges into opportunities for long-term prosperity.

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