Hate Crimes in India: An Economic Analysis of Violence and Atrocities against Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes

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Abstract

Crimes against the historically marginalized Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (SC/ST) by the upper castes in India represent an extreme form of prejudice and discrimination. In this paper, we investigate the effect of convergence in material standard of living between the SC/ST and upper castes, as measured by expenditures, on hate crimes against SC/ST. Using district level crime data for the period 2001-10, we find an increase in the SC/ST expenditure relative to the upper caste expenditure is associated with an increase in caste-based crimes. Moreover, this effect seems to be driven by the upper castes’ aggravation due to changes in status quo. The results are robust to changes in specifications and modeling assumptions.