



Hate Crimes in India

For Prelims: Hate Crimes, Article 14, IPC Sections (153A 153B, 295A).

For Mains: Indian Laws Against Hate Crimes, Major Factors Responsible for Hate Crime, Possible Ways to Deal with Hate Crimes in India.

Why in News?

Recently, the [Supreme Court](#) (SC) observed that there is a **growing consensus around hate speech** and stressed there is **no scope for hate crimes on the basis of religion** in a **secular country like India**. **And, it is the primary duty of the State to protect citizens from hate crimes.**

What are Hate Crimes?

▪ About:

- **Hate crimes** refer to **violent or abusive acts committed against individuals or groups** based on their **religion, caste, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or other identities**.
 - These crimes often involve **acts of violence, intimidation, or threats**, and they target individuals or groups who are perceived as being different or marginalized.
- The **Indian Constitution** guarantees equality and prohibits discrimination on the grounds of **religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth**, ([Article 14](#)) but despite this, hate crimes remain a persistent problem in the country.

▪ Indian Laws Against Hate Crimes:

- Hate crime is **neither well defined in the Indian legal framework nor can it be easily reduced to a standard definition** due to the myriad forms it can take.
 - However, **Hate speeches** are dealt under [IPC under Sections 153A, 153B, 295A, 298, 505\(1\) and 505\(2\)](#) that declares that **word, spoken or written, that promotes disharmony, hatred, or insults** on basis of **religion, ethnicity, culture, language, region, caste, community, race** etc., is punishable under law.

▪ Major Factors Responsible for Hate Crime:

- **Religious and Ethnic Tensions:** India is a diverse country with a multitude of different religious and ethnic groups. These **tensions often lead to violence and hate crimes**.
- **Caste-based Discrimination:** India has a long history of caste-based discrimination, which has **contributed to the marginalization of certain groups** and the perpetration of hate crimes against them.
- **Lack of Political Will:** Despite the presence of laws and regulations to address hate crimes, the **lack of political will to enforce them** effectively has created a permissive environment for such crimes to occur.
- **Social Media and Misinformation:** The spread of hate speech and [misinformation on social media](#) can further **fuel tensions and contribute to the perpetration of hate crimes**.

What are Possible Ways to Deal with Hate Crimes in India?

- **Awareness Campaigns:** The first step in addressing hate crime is to **raise awareness about its harmful effects** on individuals and society as a whole.
 - **Mass media campaigns and community outreach programs** can be used to educate people about the consequences of hate crime and encourage them to report such incidents.
- **Community Engagement:** Communities can play an important role in addressing hate crime. This can be done by **creating spaces where people can come together and have open and honest discussions** about the issues that divide them.
 - This can also help to **build bridges between different communities** and foster greater understanding and respect.
- **Use of Technology:** Technology can be used to improve reporting and tracking of hate crimes. This can include **developing online reporting systems and using data analytics** to identify trends and **hotspots for hate crime**.
- **Restorative Justice Programs:** [Restorative justice programs](#) aim to repair harm and build relationships between victims, offenders and the community.
 - These programs can be used in cases of **hate crime to promote healing and reconciliation between affected communities**.
- **Stiffer Penalties:** Another way to deal with hate crime is to **impose stiffer penalties** on those who engage in such behaviour. This can serve as a **deterrent to others** who may be considering committing hate crimes.

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