

59% TN MLAs facing criminal charges, 25% of them serious offences: Report

CHENNAI: A report by the Association of Democratic Reforms (ADR) has revealed alarming trends in Tamil Nadu's political landscape, including significant wealth accumulation by legislators combined with an appalling number of criminal charges against them.

The study, which analysed various parameters from the affidavits submitted during the 2021 elections, raises serious concerns

about transparency and calls for immediate and serious reforms in the state's model of governance.

According to the report, out of the 224 elected legislators analysed, as many as 132 (59%) have declared criminal cases against them. This marks a steep rise from 2016, when only 34% of winning candidates had reported such cases.

Fifty-seven MLAs (25%) in the state legislative assembly are facing serious criminal charges, including murder, attempted murder, and crimes against women,

according to the report.

Two MLAs have declared cases related to murder registered against them and 13 legislators face charges of attempted murder. Three MLAs are facing cases related to crimes against women, including allegations of rape, the report states.

The ADR report also highlights the gender divide in the state assembly. Only 5% of MLAs in Tamil Nadu are women, the national average is 10%.

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58% rise in criminal cases among TN MLAs, women representation less than nat'l average

CHENNAI: A damning report by the Association of Democratic Reforms (ADR) has revealed alarming trends in the State political landscape, which has flagged a nearly doubling of criminal cases against MLAs elected in the 2021 polls for the Tamil Nadu Assembly, when compared to the affidavits of legislators elected in the 2016 elections.

ADR has also exposed significant rise in wealth accumulation by legislators combined, which looks bad with an equally appalling number of criminal charges against them.

The study, which analysed various parameters from the affidavits submitted during the 2021 elections, throws light on the rise in the number of legislators with criminal charges and an increasing concentration of wealth among them.

While the findings have raised serious concerns about the transparency in the political landscape of Tamil Nadu, it has called for immediate and serious reforms in the State's model of governance.

Jump in criminal cases among State's legislators

According to the report, out of 224 elected legislators who were analysed, as many as 134 (59 per cent) have criminal cases against them. This marks a steep rise from 2016, when only 34 per cent of winning candidates had reported such cases. Almost doubling of elected representatives with criminal cases is raising concerns.

Similarly, 57 MLAs (25 per cent) are facing serious criminal charges, including serious offences such as murder, attempted murder, and crimes against women. As per the report, two MLAs have declared cases related to murder registered against them, and 13 legislators face charges of attempted murder. Three MLAs are facing cases related to crimes against women, including allegations of rape.

The statistics point to an increasing trend in criminal behaviour within the State's political system which leads to a question of integrity and transparency. The report also clearly notes that the criminal cases against legislators are not just confined to one party but is prevalent across multiple political groups. The ruling DMK has 98 MLAs (74 per cent) with criminal cases, including 42 accused of serious offences. The Indian National Congress has 6 out of 16 MLAs facing serious criminal charges. Similarly, 3 out of 5 PMK legislators have serious charges against them.

Wealth accumulation among MLAs on the rise

Along with the increase in criminal cases, the ADR report also highlights an appalling concentration of wealth among legislators. The report reveals that a majority of winning candidates in the 2021 elections are individuals with assets worth several crores.

192 out of 224 winning candidates have declared assets exceeding Rs 1 crore. The average asset value per MLA has increased from Rs 8.21 crores in 2016 to Rs 12.27 crores in 2021, pointing to a nearly 50 per cent jump in just five years.

At 5% women MLAs, TN fares worse than national average

The ADR report has highlighted another important concern in the State political arena. Tamil Nadu, which is very vocal about a progressive outlook and feminism, does not offer the much-needed space for women in the Assembly. While only 5 per cent of MLAs in Tamil Nadu are women, the national average is 10 per cent.

Electoral reforms need of the hour, says report

The growing wealth and gender gap has raised concerns about the accessibility and approachability of politicians to ordinary people. It also enables politicians to hoard manpower to indulge in unlawful activities that are a threat to transparent governance. Subsequently, the increasing number of criminal cases against electoral candidates throw light on the lack of accountability and a weakening democracy in the state.

The findings of the ADR report have sparked discussions on the need for electoral reforms to ensure a more transparent and accountable political system. There have also been growing demands to prevent individuals with serious criminal cases from contesting elections as well.

Apart from this, activists have also called for more stringent rules to be introduced to ensure that candidates fully disclose their assets and sources of income.

ADR FLAGS CASES, ASSETS & SKEWED REPRESENTATION



134

out of 224 legislators elected in the 2021 State Assembly polls had pending criminal cases



59%

of sitting MLAs of TN have criminal cases, as per a study of their affidavits submitted for the 2021 polls



34%

of winning candidates had reported pending criminal cases in their 2016 TN Assembly elections affidavit

57 sitting MLAs (25 per cent) are facing serious criminal charges such as murder, attempted murder, and crimes against women



13

legislators face charges of attempted murder

3

out of 5 PMK legislators face serious charges

98

DMK legislators (74 per cent) have criminal cases

42

of them are accused of serious offences

3 MLAs are facing cases related to crimes against women, including allegations of rape



6 out of 16 Congress legislators face serious criminal charges



192 out of 224 winning candidates have declared assets exceeding Rs 1 crore

₹12.27 cr is the average asset value per MLA in 2021

₹8.21 cr

was the average asset value reported by MLAs in 2016



50%

jump in asset value was found among MLAs, when compared with the wealth of legislators between the 2016 and 2021 elections

4,092

out of 4,123 MLAs were under ADR's scanner across 28 states and three Union Territories. The study was based on the affidavits submitted by the candidates



5%

of MLAs in Tamil Nadu are women, less than the national average of 10 per cent

1,861

MLAs (45 per cent) across the country have declared criminal cases

1,205 (29%)

are facing serious charges such as murder, attempted murder, kidnapping, and crimes against women