

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	534
Land:	Indien
Kilde:	Freedom House
Titel:	Freedom in the World 2024 – India
Udgivet:	2024
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	24. maj 2024



Document #2105032

Freedom House (Author)

Freedom in the World 2024 - India

PARTLY FREE

66

/ 100

[Political Rights](#) 33 / 40

[Civil Liberties](#) 33 / 60

LAST YEAR'S SCORE & STATUS

66 / 100 Partly Free

Global freedom statuses are calculated on a weighted scale. [See the methodology.](#)

Note

The numerical scores and status listed above do not reflect conditions in Indian Kashmir, which is examined in a separate report. *Freedom in the World* reports assess the level of political rights and civil liberties in a given geographical area, regardless of whether they are affected by the state, nonstate actors, or foreign powers. Disputed territories are sometimes assessed separately if they meet certain criteria, including boundaries that are sufficiently stable to allow year-on-year comparisons. For more information, see the report [methodology](#) and [FAQ](#).

Overview

While India is a multiparty democracy, the government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has presided over discriminatory policies and a rise in persecution affecting Muslims. The constitution guarantees civil liberties including freedom of expression and freedom of religion, but harassment of journalists, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and other government critics has increased significantly under Modi. The BJP has increasingly used government institutions to target political opponents.

Muslims, scheduled castes (Dalits), and scheduled tribes (Adivasis) remain economically and socially marginalized.

Key Developments in 2023

- In January, the central government used emergency powers to restrict access to a British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) documentary that examined whether Prime Minister Modi sufficiently endeavored to stop interreligious clashes in the state of Gujarat in 2002, when he was its chief minister. In February, tax officials raided two of the BBC's India offices and questioned staff members.
- In March, opposition leader Rahul Gandhi was disqualified from his seat in Parliament and received a two-year prison term for defaming Prime Minister Modi and others with the same surname. The Supreme Court suspended that conviction in August, allowing Gandhi to return to his seat.
- Hindu and Christian residents of the state of Manipur engaged in clashes beginning in May after Christians protested a Hindu ethnic group gaining scheduled-tribe status. As many as 40,000 people were internally displaced as of late June, while 160 had died as of mid-August.
- September saw the passage of the landmark Women's Reservation Bill, which will reserve one-third of seats in the lower house of Parliament and state assemblies for women; the bill also mandates gender quotas for seats reserved for scheduled castes. Implementation, which relies on a census and redistricting cycle, is likely years away.

Political Rights

A Electoral Process

A1 0-4 pts

Was the current head of government or other chief national authority elected through free and fair elections? 4 / 4

Executive elections and selection procedures are generally regarded as free and fair. Executive power is vested in a prime minister, typically the leader of the majority party in the Lok Sabha (House of the People), and a cabinet of ministers nominated by the prime minister. They are appointed by the president and responsible to the Lok Sabha. Narendra Modi secured a second term as prime minister after the BJP's victory in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections.

The president, who plays a largely symbolic role, is chosen for a five-year term by state and national lawmakers. In July 2022, lawmakers elected Droupadi Murmu, the BJP-backed candidate and former governor of Jharkhand, president. Murmu, who took office later that month, is the first member of one of India's marginalized tribal communities to hold the position.

A2 0-4 pts

Were the current national legislative representatives elected 4 / through free and fair elections? 4

Members of the 543-seat Lok Sabha, the lower house of Parliament, are directly elected in single-member constituencies for five-year terms save for 2 who may be presidentially appointed to represent the Anglo Indian community. Most members of the less powerful 245-seat upper house, the Rajya Sabha (Council of States), are elected by state legislatures via proportional representation to serve staggered six-year terms; the president appoints up to 12 members.

In the April-May 2019 Lok Sabha elections, the ruling BJP won 303 seats, giving its National Democratic Alliance coalition a total of 353 seats. The Indian National Congress (INC) party placed a distant second with 52 seats, for a total of 92 seats with its partners in the United Progressive Alliance. Smaller parties and independents took the remainder. Voter turnout was 67 percent. The elections were considered generally free and fair, though some violations of campaign rules were reported.

Voters took part in several contests to decide state assemblies in 2023. In February, the BJP was reelected in Tripura. In Nagaland, the BJP and a local partner retained a combined majority. In Meghalaya, the incumbent National People's Party formed another government with the BJP. In May, the INC won in Karnataka, defeating its BJP government. In elections held in November, the BJP won in Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, and Rajasthan; the INC won in Telangana; and the Zoram People's Movement won a majority in Mizoram.

A3 0-4 pts

Are the electoral laws and framework fair, and are they 4 / implemented impartially by the relevant election management 4 bodies?

Elections for the central and state governments are overseen by the Election Commission of India (ECI). The commission is generally respected and had been thought to function without undue political interference. In recent years, however, its impartiality and competence have been called into question.

In December 2023, Parliament passed legislation that gives the prime minister more powers in selecting the ECI's leadership. The ECI's commissioners will be chosen by a committee including the prime

minister, another minister selected by the premier, and the opposition leader in the Lok Sabha. Commissioners serve one six-year term.

B Political Pluralism and Participation

B1 0-4 pts

Do the people have the right to organize in different political parties or other competitive political groupings of their choice, 3 / and is the system free of undue obstacles to the rise and fall of 4 these competing parties or groupings?

Political parties are generally able to form without interference, and a wide variety of parties representing a range of views and interests compete in practice. However, the ruling BJP has used various tools to limit campaigning by opposition parties.

The opaque financing of political parties remains a serious source of concern. A system of electoral bonds, introduced in 2017, allows donor identities to be known to the State Bank of India but obscured from the public. It has contributed to major fundraising advantages for the BJP. In October 2023, the Supreme Court's chief justice referred a case challenging the bonds' legality to a five-person bench. No decision was reached by year's end.

The government, through the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and Enforcement Directorate, has selectively pursued anticorruption investigations against opposition politicians while overlooking allegations against political allies. In April 2023, the Supreme Court voiced disapproval of a petition by opposition parties to impose stricter constraints on those agencies, and the parties withdrew it.

B2 0-4 pts

Is there a realistic opportunity for the opposition to increase its 4 / support or gain power through elections? 4

Different parties regularly succeed one another in government at the state and national levels. The BJP took power after the 2014 elections, ending 10 years of INC-led government, and was reelected by a wide margin in 2019. The BJP, INC, and local parties won various state-assembly elections in 2023.

In March 2023, a court disqualified opposition leader Rahul Gandhi from the Lok Sabha and sentenced him to two years' imprisonment for defaming Indians named Modi; Gandhi had commented that "all thieves have Modi as (a) common surname" in a 2019 campaign speech. The Supreme Court later stayed the conviction in August and Gandhi returned to his seat.

B3 0-4 pts

Are the people's political choices free from domination by forces that are external to the political sphere, or by political forces that employ extrapolitical means? 3 / 4

Political participation, while generally free, is hampered by insurgent violence in certain areas. Separately, some political actors have sought to inflame communal tensions with the goal of energizing their own supporters while potentially intimidating opponents.

B4 0-4 pts

Do various segments of the population (including ethnic, racial, religious, gender, LGBT+, and other relevant groups) have full political rights and electoral opportunities? 2 / 4

Women and members of religious and ethnic minorities vote in large numbers and have opportunities to gain political representation. In 2019, for the first time, the rate of women's voting in national elections equaled that of men. Droupadi Murmu became India's second-ever female president in 2022. Female representation in the Lok Sabha, however, is low. Women held 14.7 percent of its seats as of December 2023. Existing quotas ensure that 84 and 47 Lok Sabha seats are reserved for scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, respectively. State assemblies and local bodies feature similar quotas for these historically disadvantaged groups, as well as for women representatives.

Under the Women's Reservation Bill, which was passed in September 2023, one-third of seats in the Lok Sabha and state assemblies will eventually be reserved for women. Gender quotas will also be introduced for parliamentary and state-level seats reserved for scheduled castes. However, the exact timeline for implementation is uncertain; a redistricting cycle, which relies on a census that has been indefinitely delayed, must first be completed.

Marginalized segments of the population still face practical obstacles to full political representation. Muslim candidates notably won 27 Lok Sabha seats in 2019, up from 22 previously. However, this amounted to just 5 percent of the lower house's seats, whereas Muslims made up some 14.2 percent of the population according to the 2011 census. By the end of 2023, no national legislator belonging to the BJP identified as Muslim.

The Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) of 2019 grants special access to Indian citizenship to non-Muslim immigrants and refugees from neighboring Muslim-majority states. At the same time, the government moved forward with plans for the creation of a national register of citizens, which observers believe is meant to disenfranchise Muslim voters by effectively classifying them as illegal immigrants; Muslims disproportionately lack documentation attesting to their place of birth. Undocumented non-Muslims, meanwhile, are eligible for citizenship through a fast-track process under the CAA. In November 2023, a minister

said that parliamentary committees would draft rules for the CAA's implementation in 2024.

The citizenship status of 1.9 million residents of Assam, which is home to a significant Muslim population, remains in doubt after a citizens' register was finalized in the northeastern state in 2019.

C Functioning of Government

C1 0-4 pts

Do the freely elected head of government and national legislative representatives determine the policies of the government? 4 / 4

India's elected leaders have the authority to set government policies, draft and enact legislation, and govern the country's territory in practice.

C2 0-4 pts

Are safeguards against official corruption strong and effective? 2 / 4

Large-scale political corruption scandals have repeatedly exposed bribery and other malfeasance, but a great deal of corruption is thought to go unreported and unpunished, and the authorities have been accused of selective, partisan enforcement.

The Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act of 2013 created independent national and state bodies tasked with receiving complaints of corruption against public servants or politicians, investigating claims, and pursuing convictions through the courts. However, state-level Lokayuktas frequently operate with few staff members, key vacancies go unfilled for long periods, and Lokayuktas hear few complaints.

C3 0-4 pts

Does the government operate with openness and transparency? 3 / 4

The public has some access to information about government activity, but the legal framework meant to ensure transparency has been eroded in recent years. The 2014 Whistleblowers Protection Act was regarded as limited in scope.

Millions of requests are made annually under the 2005 Right to Information (RTI) Act, and responses have been used to improve transparency and expose corrupt activities. However, most requesters do not receive the information sought, including those seeking information about core government policies, and noncompliant officials generally go unpunished. Dozens of right-to-information users and activists have been murdered since the RTI Act's introduction, and hundreds have been assaulted or harassed. National and state-level information commissions are hampered by staff vacancies.

The government has used the RTI Act for political purposes or has otherwise weakened the legislation in recent years. In 2019, Parliament

amended the RTI Act to place the salaries and tenures of the central and state-level information commissioners under the control of the central government. The Digital Personal Data Protection Act (DPDPA), which Parliament passed in August 2023, exempts “personal information” from the RTI Act’s purview. In November, the government exempted the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team from complying with the RTI Act.

Civil Liberties

D Freedom of Expression and Belief

D1 0-4 pts

Are there free and independent media? 2 / 4

The private media are somewhat vigorous and diverse, and investigations and scrutiny of politicians do occur. However, attacks on press freedom have escalated dramatically under the Modi government, and reporting has become significantly less ambitious in recent years. Hindu nationalist campaigns aimed at discouraging forms of expression deemed “antinational” have exacerbated self-censorship. Online disinformation from inauthentic sources is ubiquitous ahead of elections. Separately, revelations of close relationships between politicians, business executives, and lobbyists on one hand, and leading media personalities and owners of media outlets on the other, have dented public confidence in the press. Journalists risk harassment, death threats, and physical violence in the course of their work. Such attacks are rarely punished, and some have taken place with the complicity or active participation of police.

Authorities have used security, defamation, sedition, hate-speech laws, and contempt-of-court charges to quiet critical voices in the media. In January 2023, the government effectively banned the dissemination of a BBC documentary examining whether Modi sufficiently endeavored to stop interreligious clashes in Gujarat in 2002, when he was that state’s chief minister. The government used emergency powers provided under the IT Rules to restrict access.

Raids on independent outlets have become common. In February 2023, tax officials raided the BBC’s Delhi and Mumbai offices, a month after the government moved to stop the dissemination of its documentary on Modi. They searched the offices for three days and subjected staff to “lengthy questioning” before leaving. Police raided the offices of NewsClick, a New Delhi-based news site, in October. Its founder Prabir Purkayastha was arrested over accusations of accepting foreign funding to publish pro-Chinese stories.

D2 0-4 pts

Are individuals free to practice and express their religious faith or nonbelief in public and private? 2 / 4

While Hindus make up about 80 percent of the population, the Indian state is formally secular, and freedom of religion is constitutionally guaranteed. However, a number of Hindu nationalist organizations and some media outlets promote anti-Muslim views, a practice that the Modi government has been accused of encouraging. Attacks against Muslims and others in connection with the alleged slaughter or mistreatment of cows, which are held to be sacred by Hindus, continued in 2023. The BJP has faced criticism for failing to mount an adequate response to cow-related violence.

Legislation in several states criminalizes religious conversions that take place as a result of “force” or “allurement,” which can be broadly interpreted to prosecute proselytizers. Some states require government permission for conversion.

Communal rioting between Hindus and Muslims occurred in multiple states. Such riots have been sparked by provocative processions during Hindu festivals that are apparently planned to aggravate religious tensions. In April 2023, rioting occurred in several states as Hindus participated in the Ram Navami festival.

Members of the predominately Hindu Meitei and the largely Christian Kuki communities clashed in Manipur beginning in May 2023, after Kuki residents objected to a court order granting scheduled-tribe status to the majority Meitei. As many as 40,000 people were internally displaced as of late June. The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights reported that 160 people had died as of mid-August, most of them Kuki residents.

D3 0-4 pts

**Is there academic freedom, and is the educational system free 2 /
from extensive political indoctrination? 4**

Academic freedom has significantly weakened in recent years, as professors, students, and institutions have faced intimidation over political and religious issues. Members of the student wing of the National Volunteer Association—a Hindu nationalist organization from which the ruling BJP is widely regarded to have grown—have engaged in violence on campuses across the country, including attacks on students and professors. University administrators and faculty have been investigated, disciplined, or compelled to step down owing to their perceived political views. Academics are pressured to avoid topics deemed sensitive by the BJP government, particularly India’s relations with Pakistan and conditions in Indian Kashmir. The heads of prestigious academic institutions are increasingly selected for their loyalty to the ruling party.

In August 2023, Sabyasachi Das, an economist at Ashoka University, was pressured into resigning from his position after he said that the BJP

engaged in electoral manipulation in the 2019 elections in a research paper. Another professor then resigned, citing an “environment of fear.”

D4 0-4 pts

Are individuals free to express their personal views on political or 3 / other sensitive topics without fear of surveillance or retribution? 4

Personal expression and private discussion in India had long been open and free. However, colonial-era and other laws are often invoked in order to penalize perceived criticism of the government by ordinary citizens. Activists, Muslims, and members of other marginalized communities are routinely charged with sedition for criticizing the government and its policies. In 2022, the Supreme Court put the colonial-era sedition law under review. That review was ongoing as of the end of 2023. In August, the BJP government proposed a new antisedition law, which critics said was effectively the same as the colonial-era law. In September, the Supreme Court rejected the government’s request to defer hearings on the greater matter.

Online “troll armies” associated with the BJP routinely harass individuals—notably Muslims—and organizations for voicing criticism of the government and for engaging in behavior that supposedly deviates from Hindu orthodoxy.

The government has imposed rules that increase social media companies’ liability for material posted on their platforms and effectively encourage aggressive content restrictions. In August 2023, Parliament passed the DPDPA, which regulates the collection and storage of individuals’ personal data, allows the government to more easily engage in surveillance, and gives broad latitude to the state in terms of implementation.

A nationwide Central Monitoring System is meant to enable authorities to intercept digital communications in real time without judicial oversight. In 2021, a collaborative investigation by news organizations revealed that the government had likely planted Pegasus spyware on the mobile devices of more than 300 prominent individuals. In October 2023, Apple informed a group of prominent Indian users, including parliamentarians, that state actors had tried to hack into their mobile phones. In November, the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project said that a device belonging to an associated Indian journalist was likely compromised by Pegasus earlier in the year.

E Associational and Organizational Rights

E1 0-4 pts

Is there freedom of assembly? 2 / 4

There are legal restrictions on freedom of assembly, including a provision of the criminal procedure code that empowers authorities to restrict

public gatherings and impose curfews whenever “immediate prevention or speedy remedy” is required.

While peaceful demonstrations regularly take place, the national government and some state governments are known to employ assembly bans, internet disruptions, and force to quell protests, while protesters have faced harsh treatment and have been denied access to legal counsel.

E2 0-4 pts

Is there freedom for nongovernmental organizations, particularly those that are engaged in human rights- and governance-related work? 2 / 4

A wide variety of NGOs operate, but some, particularly those involved in the investigation of human rights abuses, continue to face threats, legal harassment, excessive police force, and occasionally lethal violence.

Under certain circumstances, the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA) of 2010 permits the national government to deny NGOs access to foreign funding. Authorities have been accused of using this power selectively against perceived political opponents. In 2022, the government said it had cancelled the FCRA registrations of 6,677 NGOs between 2017 and 2021. In February 2023, the government suspended the FCRA registration of the Centre for Policy Research, saying that the organization did not use funds for stated educational aims. In April, the CBI began investigating Oxfam India for allegedly pressuring the central government on its FCRA license renewal and for circumventing the law. In June, the government suspended CARE India’s license over alleged funding improprieties.

E3 0-4 pts

Is there freedom for trade unions and similar professional or labor organizations? 3 / 4

Although workers in the formal economy regularly exercise their rights to bargain collectively and strike, laws including the Essential Services Maintenance Act have enabled the government to ban certain strikes. Public employees have more limited organizing rights, and private employers are not legally obliged to recognize unions or engage in bargaining.

F Rule of Law

F1 0-4 pts

Is there an independent judiciary? 2 / 4

The judiciary is formally independent of the political branches of government. Judges, particularly in the Supreme Court, have traditionally displayed autonomy and activism in response to public-interest litigation. However, lower levels of the judiciary suffer from corruption, and the courts have shown signs of increasing politicization. The government has

also made judicial appointments that observers consider political in nature.

Several key Supreme Court rulings in recent years have been favorable to the BJP, including the 2019 decision allowing the construction of a Hindu temple on the site of a historic mosque and a 2020 decision to deny bail to a scholar and prominent critic of Prime Minister Modi who was charged with supporting a banned Maoist group. In December 2023, the Supreme Court upheld the government's 2019 decision to revoke the autonomous status of the Muslim-majority state of Jammu and Kashmir and split that state into two union territories.

F2 0-4 pts

Does due process prevail in civil and criminal matters? 2 / 4

Due process rights are not consistently upheld. Citizens face substantial obstacles in the pursuit of justice, including demands for bribes and difficulty getting the police to file a First Information Report, which is necessary to trigger an investigation of an alleged crime. Corruption within the police force remains a problem. The justice system is severely backlogged and understaffed, leading to lengthy pretrial detention for suspects, many of whom remain in jail longer than the duration of any sentence they might receive if convicted.

A number of security laws allow detention without charge or based on vaguely defined offenses. The Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) has been used extensively in recent years to hold individuals for long periods without trial or specific evidence of guilt. Only 2.2 percent of cases filed under the UAPA led to a conviction between 2016 and 2019.

F3 0-4 pts

Is there protection from the illegitimate use of physical force and freedom from war and insurgencies? 2 / 4

Torture, abuse, and rape by law enforcement and security officials have been reported. A bill intended to prevent torture remains pending. Abuses by prison staff against people in custody, particularly those belonging to marginalized groups, are common. The National Human Rights Commission counted 1,799 deaths in police or judicial custody in the first nine months of 2023.

Security forces battling regional insurgencies have been implicated in extrajudicial killings, rape, torture, kidnappings, and destruction of homes. In September 2023, for example, authorities in Chhattisgarh were accused of extrajudicially killing two suspected Maoist insurgents. While the criminal procedure code requires that the government approve the prosecution of security personnel, approval is rarely granted, leading to impunity.

The Maoist insurgency in the east-central hills region of India continues, though the annual number of casualties linked with it has decreased significantly since peaking in 2010. Among other abuses, the rebels have allegedly imposed illegal taxes, seized food and places of shelter, and engaged in abduction and forced recruitment of children and adults. Local civilians and journalists who are perceived to be progovernment have been attacked. Tens of thousands of civilians have been displaced by the violence and live in government-run camps.

Separately, in India's seven northeastern states, more than 40 insurgent factions—seeking either greater autonomy or complete independence for their ethnic or tribal groups—continue to attack security forces and engage in intertribal violence. Such fighters have been implicated in bombings, killings, abductions, and rapes of civilians, and they operate extensive extortion networks.

F4 0-4 pts

Do laws, policies, and practices guarantee equal treatment of 2 / various segments of the population? 4

The constitution bars caste-based discrimination, and laws impose quotas in education and government jobs for historically underprivileged scheduled tribes, Dalits, and groups categorized by the government as "other backward classes" and "Economically Weaker Sections." However, members of these populations face routine discrimination and violence, and the criminal justice system fails to provide equal protection to marginalized groups.

In parts of the country, particularly in rural areas, informal community councils issue edicts concerning social customs. Their decisions sometimes result in violence or persecution aimed at those perceived to have transgressed social norms, especially women and members of scheduled castes. Other forms of discrimination faced by women include workplace bias and sexual harassment. Indian participation in the international #MeToo movement against sexual harassment and assault has raised awareness of the problem, but women have also endured reprisals after reporting cases and the movement's reach has largely been limited to the urban middle class.

In 2018, the Supreme Court ruled that the use of Section 377 of the penal code to ban same-sex intercourse was unconstitutional, and courts have since pressed state and national authorities to combat discrimination against LGBT+ people. Such discrimination continues, however, sometimes including violence and harassment.

G Personal Autonomy and Individual Rights

G1 0-4 pts

Do individuals enjoy freedom of movement, including the ability to change their place of residence, employment, or education? 3 / 4

The constitution grants citizens the right to reside and settle in any part of the territory of India. However, freedom of movement is hampered in some areas by insurgent violence or communal tensions. Several states require companies to reserve jobs for locals, limiting opportunities for interstate migration, although enforcement of the quotas is reportedly limited.

G2 0-4 pts

Are individuals able to exercise the right to own property and establish private businesses without undue interference from state or nonstate actors? 2 / 4

Although the legal framework generally supports the right to own property and engage in private business activity, property rights are somewhat tenuous for tribal groups and other marginalized communities. Members of these groups are often denied adequate resettlement opportunities and compensation when their lands are seized for development projects. While many states have laws to prevent transfers of tribal land to nontribal groups, the practice is reportedly widespread, particularly with respect to the mining and timber industries. Muslim personal-status laws and traditional Hindu practices discriminate against women in terms of property rights and inheritance.

Muslim-owned properties were demolished by authorities in the state of Haryana in August 2023, with authorities claiming that some were used to attack a Hindu procession. The Punjab and Haryana High Court stayed demolitions in early August, criticizing authorities for working without demolition orders and questioning whether the demolition drive amounted to “ethnic cleansing.” Some 1,200 structures were demolished as of August 10.

G3 0-4 pts

Do individuals enjoy personal social freedoms, including choice of marriage partner and size of family, protection from domestic violence, and control over appearance? 2 / 4

Rape and other sexual abuse are serious problems, and scheduled-caste and tribal women are especially vulnerable. Mass demonstrations after the fatal gang rape of a woman on a Delhi bus in 2012 prompted significant legal reforms, but egregious rape cases continue to surface. In May 2023, for example, two Kuki women in Manipur were reportedly gang raped by Meitei assailants, but arrests were not made until late July. The criminal justice system and prominent politicians have been repeatedly faulted for their poor handling of such matters.

Though the practice is criminalized, dowry demands surrounding marriage persist, sometimes resulting in violence. A 2006 law banned

dowry-related harassment, widened the definition of domestic violence to include emotional or verbal abuse, and criminalized spousal sexual violence, but enforcement is reportedly poor.

In 2022, the Supreme Court expanded the official definition of the family to include same-sex parents and other households that had been deemed “atypical.” In October 2023, however, the Supreme Court refused to legalize same-sex marriage, declaring that the matter was the prerogative of Parliament.

Several states have passed or proposed laws meant to stem the alleged practice of “love jihad”—a baseless conspiracy theory according to which Muslims marry Hindu women with the goal of converting them to Islam. The legislation effectively created obstacles to interfaith marriages and raised the risk of legal penalties, harassment, and violence for interfaith couples.

Muslim personal status laws and traditional Hindu practices feature gender discrimination on matters such as marriage, divorce, and child custody. A Muslim divorce custom allowing a man to unilaterally divorce his wife was criminalized in 2019. The malign neglect of female children after birth remains a concern, as does the banned use of prenatal sex-determination tests to selectively abort female fetuses.

G4 0-4 pts

Do individuals enjoy equality of opportunity and freedom from 2 / economic exploitation? 4

The constitution bans human trafficking, and bonded labor is illegal, but estimates of the number of workers still affected by the practice range from 20 to 50 million.

A 2016 law allows children below the age of 14 to engage in “home-based work,” as well as other occupations between the ages of 14 and 18. Children are not permitted to work in potentially hazardous industries, though the rule is routinely flouted. In the 2022 edition of its *Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor*, the US Labor Department noted that children still perform hazardous work at garment factories and quarries and that the prosecution of child-labor cases is impacted by corruption.

There have been reports of complicity by law enforcement officials in human trafficking.

ecoi.net description:

Annual report on political rights and civil liberties in 2023

Country:

India

Source:

Freedom House (Author)

Original link:

<https://freedomhouse.org/country/india/freedom-world/2024>

Document type:

Periodical Report

Language:

English

Published:

2024

Available on ecoi.net since:

29 February 2024

Document ID:

2105032

Austrian Red Cross
Austrian Centre for
Country of Origin and
Asylum Research and
Documentation
(ACCORD)

Wiedner Hauptstraße
32, 1041 Wien
T +43 1 589 00 583
F +43 1 589 00 589
info@ecoi.net

Contact
Imprint & Disclaimer
F.A.Q.
Data Protection Notice

ecoi.net is run by the Austrian Red Cross (department ACCORD) in cooperation with Informationsverbund Asyl & Migration. ecoi.net is funded by the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, the Austrian Ministry of the Interior and Caritas Austria. ecoi.net is supported by ECRE & UNHCR.

