

India – Summary Report 2025

In 2025, the Human Rights Measurement Initiative (HRMI) conducted its fourth annual human rights expert survey in India. Through the survey, local experts and practitioners in India shared their insights on the human rights landscape in the country in 2024. The cumulative expert responses allowed HRMI to produce a comprehensive human rights dataset for India, available freely on HRMI's [Rights Tracker](#).¹ This includes scores for nine civil and political rights, five economic and social rights, and additional contextual information about people groups who were at risk of violations or restrictions of these rights.

Civil and political rights²

Safety from the State / Physical Integrity Rights

HRMI's 2025 data show that violations of civil and political rights continue to be a pressing issue in India. Out of the two categories of civil and political rights, India's summary score for the five **physical integrity rights** is **4.7 out of 10**. The lowest score in this category is for right to freedom from arbitrary arrest, which is 3.7 out of 10. This is followed by 4.0 out of 10 for freedom from torture and ill-treatment and 5.1 out of 10 for freedom from extrajudicial execution. These scores fall in the 'bad' performance range. The score for freedom from forced disappearance is 6.1 out of 10. India scores a 10 out of 10 on freedom from death penalty indicating that no person was formally executed in the country in 2024.

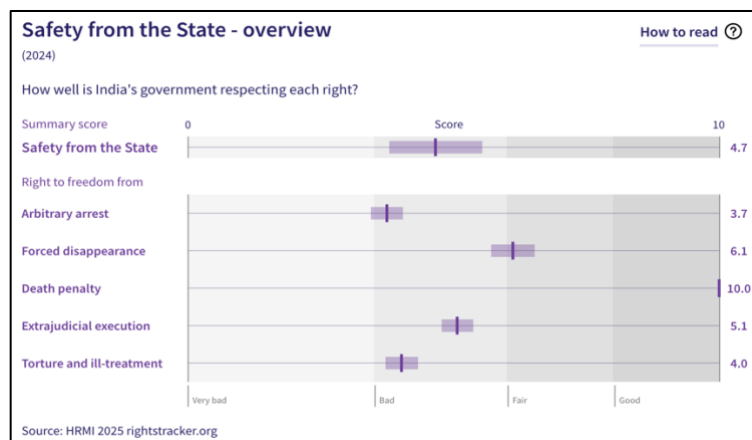


Image 1

People at risk

Human rights experts who took the survey identified **human rights advocates, people from religious minorities and faiths, people from oppressed castes, protestors, people from tribal communities, people of particular ethnicities, journalists, people from certain geographic locations, and people suspected of terrorism**, among others, as being at risk of violations of these rights.

From a range of contextual, qualitative information,³ some responses noted the following:

- Adivasi peoples from the Central Belt; people from Denotified and Nomadic Tribes (DNTs); and people from tribal communities from the North-Eastern States, especially from Manipur — particularly human rights defenders (HRDs) and activists from these communities were at risk.
- Muslims, especially in conflict-affected areas were reported to be at risk. In the disaggregated data on religious communities at risk, expert respondents overwhelmingly identified Muslims, followed by Christians and Sikhs as being at risk for violations of these physical integrity rights.

1 All the data are freely available on the [HRMI Rights Tracker](#), and more information can be found on the [HRMI website](#).

2 Civil and political rights scores are measured based on the responses received from human rights practitioners from the country through HRMI's annual human rights expert survey. HRMI's methodology for constructing CPR scores can be found here: <https://humanrightsmmeasurement.org/methodology/#cpr>.

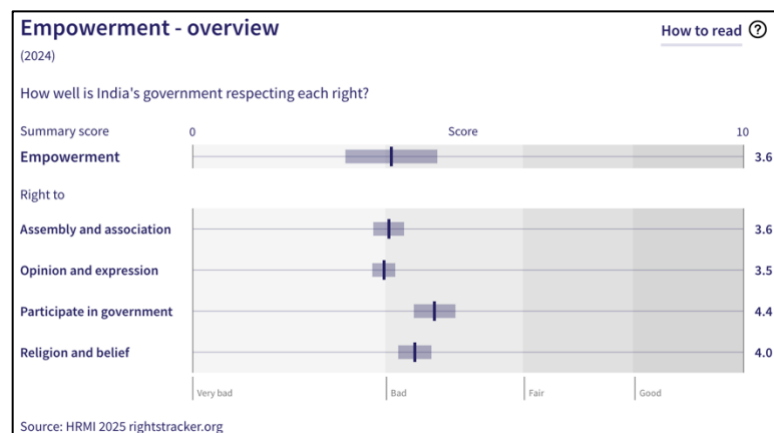
3 You can explore the rich qualitative information from expert survey responses by clicking 'Show more information' under the 'People at risk' word clouds for each right. All these data are collectively available in the 'People at risk' tab for India: <https://rightstracker.org/country/IND?tab=atrisk>.

- People from Dalit and Bahujan communities, especially journalists, activists, HRDs, and political leaders were at risk. Dalit Christians were also identified as being at risk of being arbitrarily arrested.
- Human rights advocates were among the most identified group for violations of these rights, especially those advocating for the rights of tribal and Dalit communities or religious minorities; environmental rights defenders; and journalists reporting on human rights issues.

The contextual information provided by human rights experts highlighted some other systemic trends and contexts that make certain groups more vulnerable to violations of these rights. HRMI's Rights Tracker now also shows disaggregated information on caste-based groups, Indigenous communities, and religious communities at risk of violations in India as identified by human rights experts.⁴

Empowerment Rights

India's summary score for the four **empowerment rights** is **3.6 out of 10**, which indicates that, in 2024, many people were restricted from enjoying their civil liberties and democratic freedoms. The lowest score in this category of rights is a 3.5 out of 10 for the right to freedom of opinion and expression, which is also the lowest score across all civil and political rights we measure for India. This is closely followed by scores of 3.6 out of 10 for freedom of assembly and association, 4.0 out of 10 for freedom of religion and belief, and 4.4 out of 10 for freedom of political participation.



People at risk

Experts most commonly identified the following groups to be vulnerable to restrictions of these rights: **people from particular religious beliefs and practices, human rights advocates, people from particular castes, people from tribal communities, protestors, journalists, students, and political opponents**, among others.

Image 2

- Contextual information under freedom of religion and belief laid out a range of restrictions faced by religious minorities—particularly Muslims, Christians, and Sikhs— together with marginalisations of gender and caste, including hate speech, hateful rhetoric, legal and physical attacks, discriminatory laws, punitive property demolitions, curbs on religious gatherings, vigilante violence, among others — imposed by the State as well as abuses by non-State actors.
- In the context of freedom of assembly and association, responses referred to use of repressive laws such as the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) license revocations, tax raids, and legal intimidation against think tanks, civil society, and media outlets, and instances of protests being criminalised or protestors being subject to excessive force.

4 The disaggregated information about which specific people within the abovementioned three categories of marginalised communities were identified to be at risk by experts can be found under the qualitative information for each of these rights (please click 'Show more information' under the 'People at risk' word clouds for each right). All these data are collectively available in the 'People at risk' tab for India: <https://rightstracker.org/country/IND?tab=atrisk>.

- Freedom of expression was reported to be restricted through internet shutdowns, online censorship, and vague new laws targeting dissent. Journalists and activists (especially women and those from Dalit, Adivasi, and Muslim communities) and critics—both domestic and foreign—faced harassment, legal action, funding restrictions, visa revocations, and denial of entry into the country.
- Political opponents and opposition parties were reportedly targeted in a range of ways including arrests, frozen bank accounts, or alleged misuse of investigative agencies against them.⁵

Overtime graph for civil and political rights



Image 3

Looking at the trend for the level of respect of each of these civil and political rights in India from 2020 to 2024 (please see the Image 3), we can see that the scores have largely plateaued. However, there appears a marginal improvement on some scores compared to the last two years. **The only score that has continued to decline steadily over the years is that for freedom of political participation.** The qualitative information given by experts provides an insight into the possible reasons for this decline, including lack of meaningful representation, crackdown on political opponents by the government, and other structural barriers.

Economic and social rights⁶

On the five **economic and social rights**—education, food, health, housing, and work— India has an overall **‘income adjusted’ summary score of 70.8%.** As an ‘income adjusted’ 100% is attainable for a country even at its current income levels (GDP per capita), this score indicates that the government can do much better to fulfil these rights of its people and improve their lives. This score means that the government is currently doing 70.8% of what it is actually capable of doing within its existing income or resources to ensure that the people in the country are able to enjoy their economic and social rights.

⁵ See footnotes 3 and 4.

⁶ Economic and social rights scores are measured using the SERF Index. HRMI’s methodology for constructing ESR scores can be found here: <https://humanrightsmasurement.org/methodology/measuring-economic-social-rights/>.

In this category, India scores the lowest on the rights to work (57.7%) and food (61.0%), while it does comparatively better on the right to health (88.2%). The score for the right to housing is 74.7% and that for the right to education is 75.9%. Barring the score on the right to health, the other four scores fall in the 'bad' or 'very bad' performance ranges.

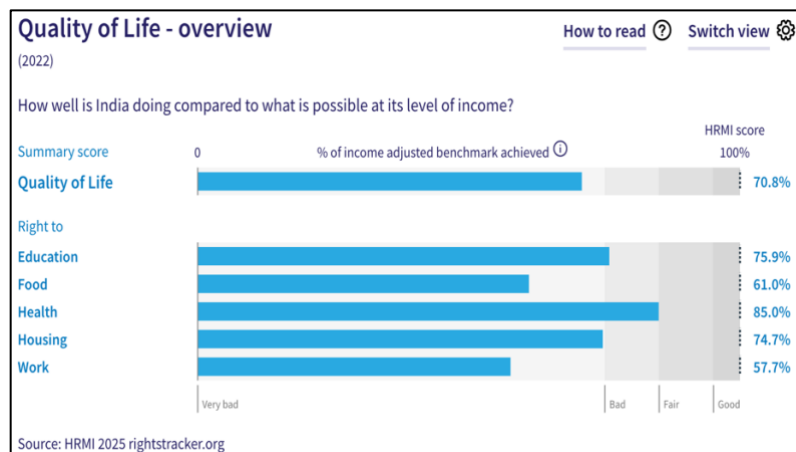


Image 4

People at risk

Human rights experts most commonly identified **people from Dalit, Adivasi, and other tribal communities; people from weaker socio-economic background; homeless people, especially children; migrants; LGBTQIA+ people; women and girls; and people from religious minorities**, among others, to be at risk of being unable to enjoy these rights.

Some responses noted how women and girls, especially those from Dalit, Bahujan, and Adivasi communities, as well as those from other marginalised backgrounds, those living in rural or remote areas, and those from conservative backgrounds, are particularly unlikely to enjoy these rights. Their access to education and health is also negatively affected by harmful socio-cultural practices and beliefs.

Dalit, Bahujan, Adivasi communities, and other tribal communities such as the Denotified Tribes (DNTs) are identified to be particularly unlikely to enjoy any of their economic and social rights. Some responses also noted that people from Dalit and Bahujan communities are forced to engage in discriminatory caste-based work, such as manual scavenging or cleaning sewage and septic tanks, that may cause health issues, or sometimes even death, despite legal prohibitions on these practices.

There were also responses indicating that Muslims are more likely to face discrimination in housing, and are also disproportionately vulnerable to forced evictions as well as their homes being demolished as a form of extrajudicial punishment.

The responses also highlighted certain structural barriers, systemic and social issues, and limitations of accessibility and infrastructure impeding the fulfilment of these rights of certain groups of people.

The overtime graph for most of these rights shows gradual progress, especially a steady positive trend on the right to housing (access to water and sanitation). However, as these are 'income adjusted' scores, they highlight a significant scope for improvement in India on all of these rights.

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