

Indicators Assessment – Non-Unitary States

India

Gurpreet Mahajan

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This Indicators Assessment report offers a country assessment of 4 composite indicators: (1) state-religious institutions relations, (2) status of religious minority groups, (3) religious radicalisation level, and (4) radicalisation prevention measures. It is part of a series covering 23 countries (listed below) on four continents. This assessment report was produced by GREASE, an EU-funded research project investigating religious diversity, secularism and religiously inspired radicalisation.

Countries covered in this series:

Albania, Australia, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Egypt, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Lebanon, Lithuania, Malaysia, Morocco, Russia, Slovakia, Spain, Tunisia, Turkey and the United Kingdom.

<https://www.grease.eu.eu>



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The EU-Funded GREASE project looks to Asia for insights on governing religious diversity and preventing radicalisation.

Involving researchers from Europe, North Africa, the Middle East, Asia and Oceania, GREASE is investigating how religious diversity is governed in over 20 countries. Our work focuses on comparing norms, laws and practices that may (or may not) prove useful in preventing religious radicalisation. Our research also sheds light on how different societies cope with the challenge of integrating religious minorities and migrants. The aim is to deepen our understanding of how religious diversity can be governed successfully, with an emphasis on countering radicalisation trends.

While exploring religious governance models in other parts of the world, GREASE also attempts to unravel the European paradox of religious radicalisation despite growing secularisation. We consider the claim that migrant integration in Europe has failed because second generation youth have become marginalised and radicalised, with some turning to jihadist terrorism networks. The researchers aim to deliver innovative academic thinking on secularisation and radicalisation while offering insights for governance of religious diversity.

The project is being coordinated by Professor Anna Triandafyllidou from The European University Institute (EUI) in Italy. Other consortium members include Professor Tariq Modood from The University of Bristol (UK); Dr. H. A. Hellyer from the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) (UK); Dr. Mila Mancheva from The Centre for the Study of Democracy (Bulgaria); Dr. Egdunas Raciunas from Vytautas Magnus University (Lithuania); Mr. Terry Martin from the research communications agency SPIA (Germany); Professor Mehdi Lahlou from Mohammed V University of Rabat (Morocco); Professor Haldun Gulalp of The Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation (Turkey); Professor Pradana Boy of Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang (Indonesia); Professor Zawawi Ibrahim of The Strategic Information and Research Development Centre (Malaysia); Professor Gurpreet Mahajan of Jawaharlal Nehru University (India); and Professor Michele Grossman of Deakin University (Melbourne, Australia). GREASE is scheduled for completion in 2022.

For further information about the GREASE project please contact: Professor Anna Triandafyllidou, anna.triandafyllidou@eui.eu

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GREASE - Radicalisation, Secularism and the Governance of Religion: Bringing Together European and Asian Perspectives

Country Assessment Report

Name of Country Assessed: India

I. Composite Indicator 1: State-Religious Institutions Relations

Overall Assessment:

The Preamble of the Constitution identifies India as a secular democracy. Although the term 'secular' was added in 1976 through the 42rd Amendment, the Supreme Court considers it a part of the "basic structure" of the Indian Constitution. The [Constitution](#) granted all persons the right to profess, propagate and practice one's religion (Article 25). It recognized community personal laws but allowed the state to intervene in the "secular" affairs of religious institutions and legislate to promote social welfare. Religious minorities could "establish and administer educational institutions of their choice" (Article 30) and receive financial assistance from the state.

This framework yielded a complex relationship between state and religion. While the state had no official religion, it could, and often did, intervene to regulate aspects of religious institutions. Religious identities have a prominent political presence, and this has become more pronounced since 2000. Even though the constitutional structure remains the same, the BJP, currently the ruling party at the centre, associated the past practice of secularism with "appeasement" of minorities and neglect of the majority community. It identified policies, such as, subsidy given for Haj, allowing *namaaz* in public parks and outside monuments, as a form of minority partiality. In 2018, the Haj subsidy was removed with the explanation that the money would instead be used for education of Muslim girls. The same year, in the state of Uttar Pradesh, sacrificing an animal in the "open" and taking "selfies" with it were disallowed on the occasion of Bakr-Eid.

In the last few years, state intervened in religious institutions and practices of both Hindus and Muslims on issues relating to women's equality. As the judiciary held that denying women entry into a place of worship violated constitutional principles, the state governments had to implement this verdict, in the face of stiff resistance from the community members. In 2019, the government legislated to make the practice of *Triple Talaq* (instant divorce in Muslim Personal Law) illegal and punishable by law.

India has a large network of minority educational institutions. Against the backdrop of terrorism, funding and functioning of *madrassas*, particularly those run by the community without state aid, have come under greater scrutiny in some regions. Conversions have always been a contentious issue and since 2000, missions engaged in propagation of their religion and conversion of Hindus have also been subject to closer inspection.

In December 2019, the Indian government passed the [Citizenship Amendment Act](#) (CAA) to fast track Indian citizenship for 'persecuted religious minorities' (Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Parsis, Buddhists, Jains and Christians) who came to India before 2015 from the neighbouring states of Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh. The Act has been challenged in the Supreme Court and some state governments (federal units) have opposed it for linking religion with assessment of citizenship claims.

Religion dominates public discourse and media networks. India has several religious/ "devotional" television channels, mostly privately owned or linked to a spiritual *guru*.

On community initiative, some entertainment stations also broadcast recitation of prayers regularly, and news channels routinely cover religious festivals.

1. State autonomy from religion	Score	YEAR (Most Recent)
(1a) Legal dimension: The Constitution/Basic law defines the state as secular	Very High	2019
(1b) UNIT 1: Practical Dimension: Actual level of state political autonomy/independence from religion.	Medium	2019
(1b) UNIT 2: Practical Dimension: Actual level of state political autonomy/ independence from religion	Low	2019
2. Participation of religious institutions and religious groups in political decision-making and policy-making.	Score	YEAR (Most Recent)
(2a) Legal Dimension: The Constitution/Basic law or other more relevant legislation forbids formal participation of religious institutions and religious groups in formal political decision-making.	Not applicable	2019
(2b) UNIT 1: Practical Dimension: In practice, religious institutions and religious groups lack formal participation in political decision-making.	Not applicable	2019
(2b) UNIT 2: Practical Dimension: In practice, religious institutions and religious groups lack formal participation in political decision-making.	Not applicable	2019
3. Religiously-based political parties in political life.	Score	YEAR (Most Recent)
(3a) Legal Dimension: The Constitution/Basic law or other more relevant legislation forbids participation of religiously-based political parties in political life.	Not applicable	2019
(3b) UNIT 1: Practical Dimension: In practice, religiously-based political parties lack participation in political life.	Low	2019
(3b) UNIT 2: Practical Dimension: In practice, religiously-based political parties lack participation in political life.	Low	2019
4. State non-interference in the regulation of religious matters of religious institutions and religious communities (including regulation of religious courts, councils, religious family laws, etc.).	Score	YEAR (Most Recent)
(4a) Legal Dimension: The Constitution/Basic law or other more relevant legislation enforces state non-interference in the regulation of religious matters of religious institutions and religious communities.	Medium	2019
(4b) UNIT 1: Practical Dimension: In practice, there is no state interference in the regulation of religious affairs of religious institutions and religious communities.	Medium	2019
(4b) UNIT 2: Practical Dimension: In practice, there is no state interference in the regulation of religious affairs of religious institutions and religious communities.	Medium	2019

5. State non-interference in the regulation of the administrative matters of religious institutions and religious communities (including personnel and funds).	Score	YEAR (Most Recent)
(5a) Legal dimension: The Constitution/Basic law or other more relevant legislation enforces state non-interference in the regulation of the administrative matters of religious institutions and religious communities.	Medium	2019
(5b) UNIT 1: Practical Dimension: In practice, there is no state interference in the regulation of the administrative affairs of religious institutions and religious communities.	Medium	2019
(5b) UNIT 2: Practical Dimension: In practice, there is no state interference in the regulation of the administrative affairs of religious institutions and religious communities.	Medium	2019
6. State recognition of freedom of religion.	Score	YEAR (Most Recent)
(6a) Legal Dimension: The Constitution/Basic law or other more relevant legislation allows freedom of religion.	High	2019
(6b) UNIT 1: Practical Dimension: In practice, religious groups/communities enjoy freedom of religion.	High	2019
(6b) UNIT 2: Practical Dimension: In practice, religious groups/communities enjoy freedom of religion.	Medium	2019
7. Freedom for religious groups/communities to set up and manage educational institutions.	Score	YEAR (Most Recent)
(7a) Legal dimension: The Constitution/Basic law or other more relevant religious legislation allows religious groups/communities to set up and manage educational institutions.	Very High	2019
(7b) UNIT 1: Practical Dimension: Religious groups/communities set up and manage educational institutions.	High	2019
(7b) UNIT 2: Practical Dimension: Religious groups/communities set up and manage educational institutions.	High	2019
8. Autonomy of religious media	Score	YEAR (Most Recent)
(8a) Legal dimension: The Constitution/Basic law or other more relevant legislation recognises and allows religious media.	Insufficient Information	2019
(8b) UNIT 1: Practical Dimension: In practice, religious media practice their activity.	High	2019
(8b) UNIT 2: Practical Dimension: In practice, religious media practice their activity.	High	2019

II. Composite Indicator 2: Status of Religious Minority Groups

Overall Assessment:

The Constitution recognized religious diversity. Even though minorities were not formally listed, recognition came in the form of rights given to minorities and acceptance of community personal laws. Since 1992, India has a statutory body – National Commission for Minorities – to monitor and safeguard the interests of minorities. Since 2014, six communities are recognized as minorities and represented in the Commission - Muslims, Sikhs, Parsis, Christians, Buddhists and Jains. The state governments have similar bodies at the regional level. There is also a separate Department of Minority Affairs in the central government to look into the welfare of minorities.

The Constitution did not give any formal representation to religious communities – the majority or the minorities. Treating them all as equal, it gave them access to public spaces and the right to establish, administer and maintain their places of worship. As a secular state it was assumed that the funds or taxes collected by the state would not be spent for the promotion of any religion.

In practice the right to religious practice entailed state support (and, at times, indirect spending), for ensuring the observance of these practices. Till 2018 the State provided haj subsidy, and till 2015 different governments hosted Iftar party to celebrate Eid. Yet, cultural practices of religious minorities are widely accommodated - be it Personal Laws, food habits or dress codes. At least one gazetted holiday is given for a religious festival/celebration of every minority. Until recently, the State was reluctant to intervene in the Personal Laws of minorities even if it raised serious concerns about women's equality. In 2019, the central government passed a Bill declaring the practice of triple talaq (instant divorce within the Muslim personal Law) illegal.

Although the Constitution did not give formal representation to religious minorities in decision making bodies, most governments try to include some members from all communities in their Cabinet. Representation is not always in proportion to their size in the population, and since the last decade the number of Muslims elected to the Central parliament has decreased. Nevertheless there is active participation of all religious groups in public life. They mobilize, present demands and protest to have their voice counted. Some minorities have political leaders, who claim to speak for them, and a few even have political parties, albeit at the level of regional states. What varies is the extent to which governments accept their culture/religion-related demands.

Minorities own, administer and manage their places of worship and their property. Minority educational institutions can receive state funds and many of them are substantially supported by the State. The State also has special welfare-related schemes (for educational and economic empowerment) for minorities. Minorities are very visible in the public domain and participate actively in the public domain.

1. Legal status of religious minority groups.	Score	YEAR (Most Recent)
(1a) Legal dimension: The Constitution/Basic law or other more relevant religious legislation recognises religious minority groups.	Very High	2019

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(1b) UNIT 1: Practical Dimension: In practice, religious minority groups enjoy legal registration status recognised by the government.		High	2019
(1b) UNIT 2: Practical Dimension: In practice, religious minority groups enjoy legal registration status recognised by the government.		High	2019
2. Religious minority group participation in political life.		Score	YEAR (Most Recent)
(2a) Legal Dimension: Constitution/Basic law or other more relevant religious legislation grants religious minority groups rights to participate in the political life of the state.		Very high	2019
(2b) UNIT 1: Practical Dimension: Religious minority groups participate in political life.		Very High	2019
(2b) UNIT 2: Practical Dimension: Religious minority groups participate in political life.		High	2019
3. Special social security status of religious minority groups.		Score	YEAR (Most Recent)
(3a) Legal Dimension: The Constitution/Basic law or other more relevant religious legislation grants religious minority groups rights to special social security benefits.		Not applicable	2019
(3b) UNIT 1: Practical Dimension: In practice, religious minority groups have special access to social security benefits.		Insufficient Information	2019
(3b) UNIT 2: Practical Dimension: In practice, religious minority groups have special access to social security benefits.		Insufficient Information	2019
4. Access of religious minority groups to public spaces.		Score	YEAR (Most Recent)
(4a) Legal Dimension: The Constitution/Basic law or other more relevant religious legislation grants religious minority groups right of access to public spaces.		Very High	2019
(4b) UNIT 1: Practical Dimension: Religious minority groups enjoy access to public spaces.		High	2019
(4b) UNIT 2: Practical Dimension: Religious minority groups enjoy access to public spaces.		High	2019
5. Access to public funds for initiatives/activities of religious minority groups.		Score	YEAR (Most Recent)
(5a) Legal dimension: The Constitution/Basic law or other more relevant religious legislation grants religious minority groups right of access to public funds for their own initiatives/activities.		High	2019
(5b) UNIT 1: Practical Dimension: Religious minority groups have access to public funds for their own initiatives/activities.		High	2019
(5b) UNIT 2: Practical Dimension: Religious minority groups have access to public funds for their own initiatives/activities.		High	2019

6. Public accommodation of cultural practices specific to religious minority groups.	Score	YEAR (Most Recent)
(6a) Legal Dimension: The Constitution/Basic law or other more relevant religious legislation allows public accommodation of cultural practices specific to religious minority groups.	Very High	2019
(6b) UNIT 1: Practical Dimension: Religious minority groups express their cultural practices publicly.	High	2019
(6b) UNIT 2: Practical Dimension: Religious minority groups express their cultural practices publicly.	High	2019
7. Ownership of houses of worship.	Score	YEAR (Most Recent)
(7a) Legal dimension: The Constitution/Basic law or other more relevant religious legislation grants religious minority groups rights to own their houses of worship.	Very High	2019
(7b) UNIT 1: Practical Dimension: Religious minority groups own houses of worship.	Very High	2019
(7b) UNIT 2: Practical Dimension: Religious minority groups own houses of worship.	Very High	2019

III. Composite Indicator 3: Radicalisation Levels

Overall assessment:

For the period 2005-2019, Freedom in the World Index has ranked India as a Free country, with Freedom rating 3. In Democracy Index's Global Ranking 2019, India slipped 10 places to position 51: its score of 7.23 in 2018 fell to 6.90 in 2019. Nevertheless India's score on Rule of Law index has not dipped and its performance on the Human Rights index has improved since 2010. Compared to many other democracies, the State continues to enjoy a high degree of legitimacy – higher than the global average.

The areas which were, and continue to be, of grave concern are - social hostility, governmental restrictions, group grievances, corruption, civil justice and order and security. Over the last decade India had a high on GRI and SHI score, and this has increased further: in 2015 its SHI score was 8.7 and in 2016 it rose to 9.7. In 2010, the GG score was 7.8; in 2017 and 2018 it rose to 8.3; 2019 however shows a marginal improvement. In 2019, with a score of 74 India has been placed in the category of yellow/orange category (warning) on the Fragile State Index. FSI in 2019, shows a change of -1.9 over the previous year; -2.5 over the last 5 years and -3.4 over the last ten years.

Economic inequalities have been increasing since the 2000. According to Oxfam International, top 10% of the Indian population holds 77% of the total national wealth. 73% of the wealth generated in 2017 went to the richest 1%, while 67 million Indians (the poorest half of the population) saw only a 1% increase in their wealth. But India has had some success in dealing with uneven economic development and its score has, in this regard, improved. Yet, economic issues remain an important concern.

Although systematic quantitative data is not available on issues relating to diversity, discrimination and degree of distrust in institutions, limited observations can be made. PEW Research Centre data shows that 44% of the people feel that diversity has increased over the last decade and 36% favour this trend.

A survey conducted by [CSDS](#) reveals that in 2013 Army and the Supreme Court remained the most trusted institutions. Trust in the Parliament rose between 2015 and 2013 and most support democracy and give greater weightage to freedom to participate in protests and demonstrations. In 2013 trust in Police remained relatively low with Muslims showing greater mistrust of this institution.

Official data on total number of "hate crimes" is not available but government figures show that in 2015 there were 751 incidents of communal violence and 97 persons died; in 2017, there were 822 incidents of such conflict and 111 persons lost their lives.

Terrorism remains a major concern, particularly cross-border terrorism and influence through online propaganda that is coming from external sites. The counter terrorism cell has also identified a few extremist networks internally but they have, by and large, a limited presence and influence.

1. Structural factors/environment	Score/Level/Percentage	YEAR (Most Recent)
(1a) Level of Freedom	Level: Free Freedom score: 71	2019
(1b) Level of adherence to rule of law	Overall rank: 68 Overall score: 0.51	2019
(1c) Level of religious-related government restrictions	Score: 5.4 Level: High	2019
(1d) Level of state legitimacy	Moderate (4.1)	2019
(1e) Level of protection of human rights	Moderate (5.6)	2019
(1f) Level of group grievances	High (8)	2019
(1g) Uneven economic development	Moderate (6.4)	2019
(1h) Wealth disparity (top 10% possessing above average percentage of the total income share)	Percentage: 77%	2018

2. Perception-based indicators (social grievances)	Percentage (%)	YEAR (Most Recent)
(2a) Distrust in national institutions	Parliament: NA Government: 22% Other: NA	2018

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(2b) Political discontent	Dissatisfaction with country direction: 33% Dissatisfaction with overall situation: NA Dissatisfaction with democracy/government performance: 15% Other: NA	2018
(2c) Economic discontent	Dissatisfaction own financial situation: NA Dissatisfaction national economy: NA Economic situation is the most serious problem: 32 % identifying unemployment as “biggest concern” and 10% saw economic slowdown as a whole as “chief concern” Other: NA	2018
(2d) Discrimination	Discrimination is widespread: NA Opposing diversity: 31 % Discomfort with minorities: NA Dislike neighbors from minority groups: NA Experienced discrimination: Other: NA	2018
(2e) Views on violent extremism	VE is a serious problem/threat: 66% Endorsement of VE actions/ actors: NA Other: NA	2017

3. Incidence-based indicators (religious violence and conflict)	Score/Level/Number	YEAR (Most Recent)
(3a) State-based armed conflict	Yes/No: Yes	2018
(3b) Level of social hostilities involving religion	Very High (9.7)	2016
(3c) Incidence and impact of terrorism	GTI -7.5 Number of Incidents: NA	2019
(3d) Violent extremist incidents	Not applicable	2020
(3e) Significant violent extremist actors/networks	Insufficient Information	2020

IV. Composite Indicator 4: Radicalisation Prevention Measures

Overall assessment:

To address the specific nature of threat it faces, India has devised its own strategy and institutional structure to deal with threat of terrorism. After the 26/11 Mumbai attacks intelligence, military and security infrastructure was strengthened. A nodal agency in the form of National Investigation Agency (NIA) was set up; National Security Guard (NSG) deployment was decentralised with four NSG hubs in different parts of the country. Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) was amended in 2012 to give new powers to the security agencies.

For India terrorism remains primarily an 'external' issue, and it is "cross-border terrorism" that remains the focal point. The Intelligence agencies have identified some radicalised groups within India, and recognized the increasing influence of online propaganda, terrorism is seen essentially as a 'security' issue. However, in 2017, a Counter Radicalisation Division was added to the Counter Terrorism Cell for the purpose of devising programmes to curb the influence of extremist ideologies and prevent radicalisation. The primary intention of the evolving programme is to involve intelligence agencies, state governments and communities to create a "counter-narrative" to the extremist ideology that circulates on the social media; and to involve Islamic organisations and religious leaders to reach out to communities and individuals, and reinforce the syncretic nature of Islam and India. In some regions, particularly Kerala and Maharashtra, programmes of this nature have had some success.

India has been appealing for collective global action against terror funding. At home, a Terror Funding and Fake Currency (TFFC) Cell has been constituted in National Investigation Agency (NIA) to conduct focused investigation of terror funding and fake currency cases. Training programmes are regularly conducted for the State Police personnel on issues relating to combating terrorist financing.

To deal with security issues and advise the Prime Minister, the National Security Council was formed in 1998. It acts as a nodal agency, bringing together members from government – Home Affairs, Finance, External Affairs – Defence services, security experts and other specialists.

There are relatively few 'foreign fighters' who have gone from India. One reason for this is the presence of several localized efforts, civil society and community initiatives that emphasise the syncretic tradition, religious harmony and pluralism.

Since 2000 India has faced several terror attacks. Since 2008, there is a Central Scheme for Assistance to Civilians Victims/Family of Victims of terrorist, Communal and Naxal Violence. It is difficult to say how many individuals have received compensation due to them and after how much time. Implementation issues have led some victims to approach the Courts and National Human Rights Commission.

1. Comprehensive strategic approach	Score	YEAR (Most Recent)
(1a) Legislative foundation for adoption of PVE action plan	Insufficient information	2020
(1b) Existence of PVE strategy and a national action plan	Yes	2019

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(1c)	Presence of comprehensive monitoring mechanisms of strategy / action plan implementation	Insufficient information	2020
(1d)	Presence of dedicated body tasked with PVE strategy development and coordination	Yes	2019
(1e)	Compliance of strategy and action plan with human rights standards and the principles of rule of law	Insufficient information	2020
(1f)	Participation of a wide range of government actors in development and implementation of PVE strategy and action plan	Insufficient information	2020
(1g)	Participation of non-government actors in development and implementation of PVE strategy and action plan	Insufficient information	2020
(1h)	Reference to FTFs and related measures in PVE strategy/action plan	Insufficient information	2020
(1i)	Reference to terrorism financing and related measures in PVE strategy and action plan	Yes	2019
(1j)	Reference to communication counter- or alternative narrative campaigns in PVE strategy/action plan	Yes	2018

2. Comprehensiveness of measures - areas of action, actors and projects		Score	YEAR (Most Recent)
(2a)	Development and implementation of programmes for support of victims of terrorism and violent extremism	Yes	2019
(2b)	Training for frontline practitioners	Insufficient information	2020
(2c)	Initiatives to improve the preparedness of security forces, law enforcement and justice institutions to deal with radicalisation.	Yes	2019
(2d)	Development and implementation of P/CVE-specific education initiatives for youth	Yes	2019
(2e)	Development and implementation of P/CVE education initiatives and projects for women	Insufficient information	2020
(2f)	Platforms for intra and interfaith dialogue between the state and religious leaders	Insufficient information	2020
(2g)	Networks for civil society, religious leaders, youth and women's organisations for dialogue, cooperation and best practices.	Insufficient information	2020
(2h)	Grassroots initiatives by civil society actors focussed on prevention	High level	2015
(2i)	Counter- and alternative- narrative campaigns	Yes	2019
(2j)	Multi-agency cooperation and/or referral mechanisms at local level identifying and supporting at-risk persons	Insufficient information	2020
(2k)	State-commissioned research on religiously-inspired radicalisation and violent extremism	Insufficient information	2020
(2l)	programs and measures to prevent radicalisation into violent extremism in prison and probation settings	Insufficient information	2020

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Project Coordinator: Professor Anna Triandafyllidou

Contact: anna.triandafyllidou@eui.eu

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