



HOW INDIANS VIEW INDIA AND THE WORLD

A Report Based on a CPR – CVoter Survey on the
75th year of Partition and Independence

September 2022

How Indians View India and the World

A Report Based on a CPR – CVoter Survey on
the 75th year of Partition and Independence

SEPTEMBER 2022

For limited circulation, not for sale

© CPR, 2022

How Indians View India and the World:

**A Report Based on a CPR – CVoter Survey on the 75th year of
Partition and Independence**

Published in September 2022 by Centre for Policy Research, New Delhi

Photograph Copyrights

Cover photograph: Margaret Bourke-White/Time Life Pictures, via Getty Images

Table of Contents photograph: Newyorker

Way Forward photograph: Reuters and Agence France Presse

Disclaimer: The material in this publication is copyrighted. No part of this report can be reproduced either on paper or electronic media without permission in writing from CPR or CVoter. Request for permission to reproduce any part of the report may be sent to CPR or CVoter.

Usage of information: Forwarding/copy/using in publications without approval from CPR or CVoter will be considered as an infringement of intellectual property rights.

Printed by:

Elegant Enterprises

198/41-B, Ramesh Market, East of Kailash, New Delhi-110065, India

E-mail: infoelegant@yahoo.co.in; anilselegant@gmail.com

Mobile: +91-8860127811, 9810803375

ABOUT

The Centre for Policy Research (CPR)

The Centre for Policy Research (CPR) has been one of India's leading public policy think tanks since 1973. The Centre is a non-profit, non-partisan independent institution dedicated to ethical and high-quality scholarship on all aspects and processes that shape life in India. Through different verticals of research, the Centre engages in questions of economic policy, state capacity and governance, law and state regulation and domestic and international politics.

The Politics Initiative, set up in 2019, focuses its research on the changing competitive political party system, political and legislative institutions, ideological worldview and preferences of political actors, voting behaviour, and incentive structures and choices that shape policy decisions. In engaging with questions, the initiative aims to become a pre-eminent hub of empirically rigorous, theoretically rich, historically-informed political research that shapes the discussions on key policy issues in the country.

Rahul Verma, Fellow

Nishant Ranjan, Research Associate

Satyam Shukla, Research Associate

Vaibhav Parik, Research Associate

Shamik Vatsa, Research Associate

Melvin Kunjumon, Research Assistant

Advaita Singh, Research Intern

The CVoter Foundation

The Centre for Voting Opinion & Trends in Election Research (CVoter) is a pre-eminent polling organisation within South Asia and carries a formidable reputation across the globe for now more than 25 years. Backed by state-of-the-art data management and analysis software and a group of highly motivated analysts, the CVoter has successfully forayed into print and electronic media, social research, market research, and consultancy services. The aim of the CVoter foundation is to generate rigorous scholarship.

Yashwant Deshmukh, Founder-Editor

Sutanu Guru, Executive Director

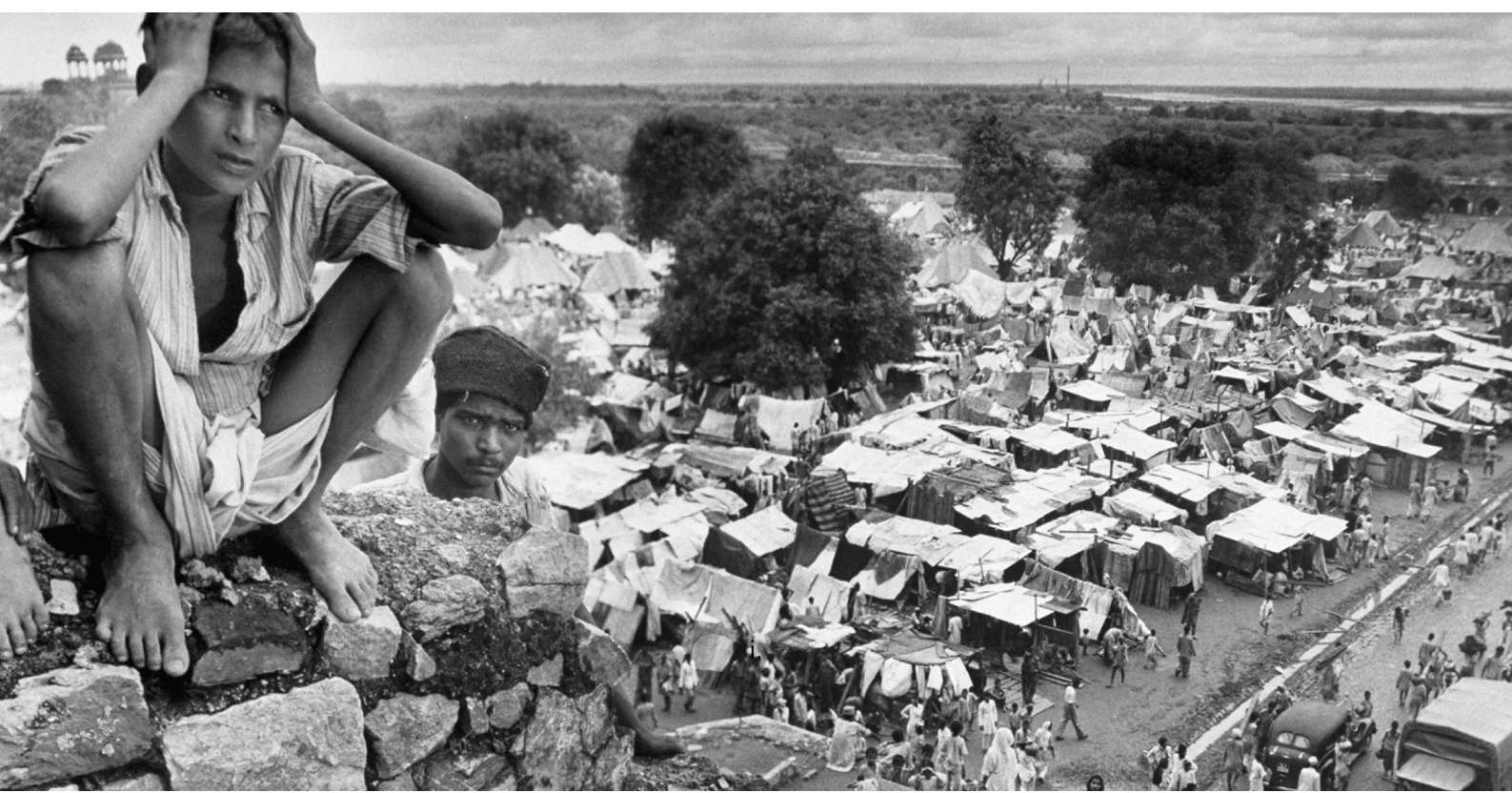
Gaura Shukla, Director of Research

Rahul Sharma, General Manager

Aakansha Bariar, Editor Input

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES.....	III
LIST OF TABLES.....	IV
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	1
METHODS NOTE.....	3
SECTION A: THE HITS AND MISSES IN 75 YEARS.....	5
SECTION B: INDIA, ITS NEIGHBOURS AND THE WORLD.....	8
SECTION C: ECONOMIC PROGRESS	13
SECTION D: IMPEDIMENTS TO SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CHANGE	19
SECTION E: INDIA'S POLITICAL PARADOXES	23
SECTION F: STATE OF INDIAN DEMOCRACY.....	27
SECTION G: MAKERS OF MODERN INDIA	31
SECTION H: RELIGION AND LANGUAGE -THE TIES THAT BIND.....	34
THE WAY FORWARD	37
REFERENCES.....	38



LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Progress Made Over Last 75 Years

Figure 2: The Biggest Concerns of Indians

Figure 3: Impediments to India's Progress

Figure 4: Partition of India-Pakistan

Figure 5: Reversal of India-Pakistan Partition?

Figure 6: Partition of Pakistan-Bangladesh

Figure 7: Reversal of Pakistan-Bangladesh Partition?

Figure 8: How do Indians View the Progress of Bangladesh and Pakistan?

Figure 9: Which Countries do Indians Trust?

Figure 10: Most Influential Country in Asia

Figure 11: Satisfaction with Progress on Infrastructure

Figure 12: Condition of Roads

Figure 13: Access to Electricity (in Hours)

Figure 14: Availability of Quality Drinking Water

Figure 15: Distance to Nearest Health Facility (in KM)

Figure 16: India's Economic Prospects

Figure 17: Is Preference for Government Jobs on Decline?

Figure 18: India's Strict Gender Norms

Figure 19: Poor Indians Vote More

Figure 20: Modest Political Participation

Figure 21: Who Wants to Join Politics?

Figure 22: Low Support for Dynasticism

Figure 23: Indian Democracy in Decline?

Figure 24: High Vote Efficacy in India

Figure 25: Was India's Last Election Free and Fair?

Figure 26: Mahatma Gandhi – The Greatest South Asian?

Figure 27: India's Most Popular Prime Minister since Independence

Figure 28: Modi's Popularity Across Groups

Figure 29: Closeness Based on Linguistic Identity or Religion

Figure 30: How Safe do the Following Groups Feel?

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Statewise Sample Breakdown for Survey

Table 2: Survey Response Rate Across Waves

Table 3: Demographic Indicators From Overall Sample

Table 4: Increasing Influence in Politics

Table 5: Freedom of Choice in Wearing Clothes

Table 6: Who Eats First in the Family

Table 7: Reasons for not Joining Politics

Table 8: Free and fair Elections

Table 9: Progress of Country by Vote Preference

Table 10: Satisfaction with PM Modi

Table 11: Religiosity in India

Table 12: Approval for Ban on Books and Movies that Hurt Sentiments

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Rarely in history does a nation go through directly contradictory impulses and emotions at the same time: exultation and horror; celebration and mourning. That sums up what happened with India 75 years ago when it won freedom from British rule but was also partitioned on religious lines as two nations- India and Pakistan (Bangladesh becoming another nation in 1971). It is time to take stock after 75 years; to reflect, introspect and look ahead even while revisiting the past. The Centre for Policy Research (CPR) and CVoter Foundation spearheaded a unique survey-based research project where citizens of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh were asked to give their opinions on a series of questions that dealt with the political, economic, social, and religious issues of the past, present and future. CVoter conducted this pioneering survey across the three countries in 15 languages between May and September 2022.

The first report released through this collaborative effort reveals the responses of Indian citizens. Some broad stroke conclusions can be summarized as:

- Most Indians think that the country has performed better than expected over several parameters. More than two out of every three Indians think the country has done better than expected in science and technology, national security and infrastructure. The percentage drops significantly to 54 and 51 respectively for the status of minorities and economic growth. The survey shows that most Indians consider corruption (59 per cent) and poverty (56 per cent) as serious challenges to the Indian polity, with 45 per cent picking dynasticism in politics as an area of serious concern. Increasing religious polarization is another important challenge.
- The ghosts of Partition, a series of wars, and frequent terror attacks have hardened the opinion of most Indians when it comes to Pakistan. Two-thirds of the respondents during the survey saw no scope for any improvement in relations between the two countries in this decade. Besides, just 17 per cent of Indians think Pakistan has performed better than expected. Very few Indians trust Pakistan. The survey shows just 14 per cent think our estranged neighbour can be trusted. In sharp contrast, 60 per cent of Indians think our other neighbour, Bangladesh, can be trusted. Besides, one-third of Indians think Bangladesh has performed better than expected, and 38 per cent feel it can emerge as the most prosperous south Asian country.
- A clear majority of Indians seem convinced that the economic prospects of the country are brighter, albeit with some major differences across categories. More than 50 per cent of upper-caste Hindus, scheduled tribes, and other backward castes are confident of better economic prospects for India in the next few years. The optimism drops somewhat to 45 per cent in the case of scheduled castes. It turns to pessimism in the case of Muslims with 53 per cent saying economic prospects for the country will be worse. But there is a seeming contradiction when it comes to the economic prospects of their families. Large proportions of Muslims (43 per cent) are confident their family's economic prospects in the next few years will be better. This could be an interesting issue to be examined in more detail.

- Contemporary media is often awash with reports of how more than a million Indians have applied for 100 class C or D government jobs. It has become almost a norm for politicians to promise a surfeit of government jobs during election campaigns. In a country marked with high unemployment and underemployment, the obsession with a government job and the income security it guarantees is to be expected. Yet, the survey reveals many more Indians seem to prefer starting their own business or being self-employed than opting for a government job. The only category of Indians with a higher preference for government jobs are the ones with higher education. This is a surprising result that needs deeper study.
- The survey reinforces long-held inferences by scholars and commentators that India remains a deeply conservative and patriarchal society. Women in India still do not enjoy the full range of freedoms that their male counterparts do. The survey reveals that 62 per cent of Indians think women need permission from male members to take up a job. Similarly, 64 per cent need permission from male members of the family to attend a political meeting or rally. More than 50 per cent need male approval to go out shopping and take household savings decisions. Even when it comes to wearing clothes, one-third need male approval. The percentage of women needing male approval goes down as one goes up the education ladder. Nevertheless, Indian women show aspirational tendencies as far as the political arena is concerned. India remains patriarchal, and true gender equality remains a goal.
- Respondents were questioned to find out the level and extent of trust they have in various institutions. Predictably, the armed forces emerge as the most trusted institution with 93 per cent of Indians thinking so. Perhaps equally predictably, bureaucracy emerges as the least trusted institution with 53 per cent of the respondents backing it. Surprisingly, the media emerges as the second-least trusted institution with 59 per cent of the respondents saying they trust it. That is even less than the 60 per cent score for the police. Perhaps it is also time for some introspection for the fourth pillar of democracy as the level of trust in media institutions remains modest. On the positive side, Indians display far more trust in institutions than their peers in most other countries.

METHOD NOTE

This study is a collaborative effort between the Centre for Policy Research (CPR) and the CVoter Foundation with the aim of taking a deep dive into the views of ordinary citizens in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. It uses the historical canvas of the Partition to paint a picture of what citizens of the once-same socio-political geography, but now independent nations, think and feel today about their country's past, present, and future.

This report is based on a survey administered in three waves, with 5,815 completed responses being received from Indian citizens. A structured and close-ended questionnaire, focusing on the themes of India's overall progress in 75 years, trust in institutions, views on Partition, economic prospects, impediments to socioeconomic progress, views on politics and gender norms, religious tolerance, and popularity of leaders among other themes, was administered to the respondents. Each respondent was given 75 items or questions. There were 45 items (including 15 demographic indicators) that were common across all three waves, and each wave also had 30 additional items. The survey was administered in 12 languages including Hindi, Punjabi, Gujarati, Marathi, Kannada, Malayalam, Tamil, Telugu, Odia, Bangla, Assamese and English, keeping in mind the ease of the respondents with specific languages, and on average, it took 20 minutes to complete.

CVoter undertook a national representative survey on computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) using a probability-based random digit dialling sampling framework. The CATI framework was used because it ensures better outreach to the population in a more cost-effective way in comparison to in-person surveys. Web-based surveys, another alternative, fall short in ensuring sample representativeness of a national survey and hence were not considered.

The initial phase of the study (March–April 2022) comprised the finalization of the questionnaire and translation into the required languages followed by standard training in the CATI framework. The pilot of the

the survey instrument was conducted in May 2022 and necessary changes were then made in the final questionnaire. The data collection process began on 3 June 2022 and ended on 11 July 2022, a period of 30 working days with approximately 200 calls daily.

The sample universe for this study comprised all the respondents with mobile phones using all the service providers in a given area. Further, the predictive dialer randomly picked the number to be dialled.

The respondents were randomly selected through a batch of numbers from all telecom circles in each area. Each number in the selected batch was called, even if the target sample was achieved. If the number of completed responses was lower than the required sample, a smaller batch of newer numbers was selected. Table 1 shows the number of final samples in the study from each state. The data presented in table 2 indicates the distribution of attempted calls in each wave of this study along with the number of completed interviews.

Table 1: Statewise Sample Breakdown for Survey

States	Census %	Sample %	Final Sample
Andhra Pradesh	4.3	3.8	222
Assam	2.3	2.8	160
Bihar	7.6	9.1	530
Chhattisgarh	2.2	1.8	105
Delhi	1.5	1.5	85
Goa	0.1	0.6	33
Gujarat	4.9	4.9	287
Haryana	1.9	2.1	120
Himachal Pradesh	0.6	1.1	64
Jammu & Kashmir	0.9	1	59
Jharkhand	2.4	2.3	136
Karnataka	5.5	5.1	294
Kerala	2.9	2.6	152
Madhya Pradesh	5.7	6	348
Maharashtra	9.8	9	521
North East India	1.1	0.8	46
Odisha	3.5	3.5	201
Punjab	2.4	2	116
Rajasthan	5.2	5.8	339
Tamil Nadu	6.6	5.9	341
Union Territories	0.3	0.8	44
Uttar Pradesh	16.5	16.4	952
Uttarakhand	0.8	1.1	62
West Bengal	7.7	7.1	413
Telangana	3.3	3.2	185
All India	100	100	5,815

Source: CPR-CVoter Survey • Created with Datawrapper

Table 2: Survey Response Rate Across Waves

Survey Wave	Total Valid Connects	Refusals	Incomplete Responses	Completed Responses
Wave 1	17,155	14,748	373	2,034
Wave 2	18,530	16,138	385	2,007
Wave 3	15,339	13,239	326	1,774
Total	51,024	44,125	1,084	5,815

Source: CPR-CVoter Survey • Created with Datawrapper

Extreme care was taken to achieve a demographically representative sample. Table 3 compares the sample proportions with census estimates across key demographics. It has been noted in previous research that female respondents are less likely to participate in such sample surveys. To overcome the gender skewness in our final sample, we not only included more female researchers on the team but also provided special training to these researchers. Further, afternoon slots were picked to conduct the survey as women are more likely to respond during this time of the day.

In addition, to ensure a fair representation of the female sample in our survey, a booster sample was created based on a similar random probability design, and statistical weights were used to correct for any remaining skewness in the final data. A multi-dimensional weighting method was followed and created statistical weights using six variables (gender, age group, education, income, social group and location).

To calculate the weights, information from the Census of India 2011, National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) 2012 to estimate the OBC population, and the Electoral Rolls for an updated number of the adult population (above 18) were used. The quality checks conducted subsequently found the weight quality to be robust in both the raw data file as well the weighted data file.

Finally, given the challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic in terms of social distancing and the spread of the disease, serious precautions were taken to ensure the safety of the researchers engaged in this study. As most researchers were conducting the calls from home, there was a need to make modifications in the workflow and develop a decentralized CATI process, which involved a few additional layers.

Table 3: Demographic Indicators From Overall Sample

Category	Census %	Sample %	Final Sample
Gender			
Male	52	56	3,249
Female	48	44	2,566
Age Group			
18-24 years	22	21	1,237
25-34 years	26	24	1,382
35-44 years	21	24	1,368
45-54 years	14	18	1,051
55+ years	17	13	777
Education			
Lower Education	55	51	2,958
Middle Education	37	36	2,087
Higher Education	8	13	770
Income			
Low Income Group	50	54	3,152
Middle Income Group	35	39	2,257
High Income Group	15	7	406
Social Group			
Upper Castes	24	28	1,614
Other Backward Classes	32	34	1,960
Scheduled Castes	16	15	864
Scheduled Tribes	8	5	293
Muslims	14	12	670
Others	6	7	414
Location			
Urban	30	33	1,924
Rural	70	67	3,891
All India	100	100	5,815

Source: CPR-CVoter Survey • Created with Datawrapper

We are extremely thankful for all the hard work put in by these researchers at CVoter and all the respondents who graciously shared their time and opinion, to ensure the timely completion of the data collection process.

SECTION A: THE HITS AND MISSES IN 75 YEARS

Independence and Partition are both watershed moments in the history of the subcontinent, marking the transformation of millions of people from the status of colonial subjects to that of equal citizens with sovereign rights and dignity. But years of colonial exploitation and the ensuing communal maleficence left behind trauma and impoverishment. The people of India, guided by their new leaders, embarked upon a democratic journey with hopes and aspirations of glory and progress for all. However, the path of democracy that the citizens of the new nation had chosen was not an easy one; they endured multiple challenges but continued the journey with unwavering zeal and commitment, and this is what made the Indian democracy unique today.

Today, Indians have one of the largest economies in the world in terms of gross domestic product. Yet, their nation faces stark income and wealth inequalities. The progress of the nation, it is often alleged, has not reached the lower strata of society because of its internal societal contradictions. Provided, the early decades of the Indian growth story are reduced to the constant Hindu rate of growth, it is evident that feelings of pessimism are said to have permeated the minds of Indians with respect to the progress the nation has achieved. Thus, it is imperative to take note of these concerns and engage with Indians and understand their perceptions, hopes and vexations.

In this section, we take stock of the last 75 years of the process of nation building, as perceived by average Indians, seeking their opinion on the strengths and failures of the country, its greatest achievements and areas of improvement. As we attempt to paint a picture of modern South Asia, we look back and ask what are the moments that have defined us as a nation – the events that make us swell with pride, the times that make us feel ashamed, the things we wish were better, and the outcomes that turned out to be better than we had imagined.

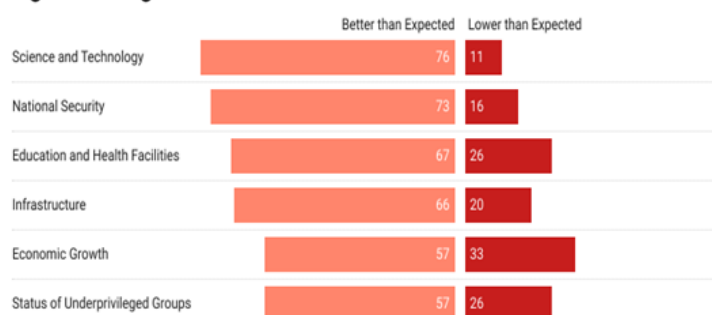
Our main findings indicate that, on average, people believe that the progress made on multiple fronts – education, health, infrastructure, science and technology, economic growth, and national security – is better than expected. However, poverty and corruption continue to be the biggest problems plaguing our society.

Biggest Achievements and Failures

When participants were asked to name the greatest achievements India has made since independence, a larger section of the cohort talked about the improvements in the fields of education and national security (both at six per cent). In terms of the greatest failures, 15 per cent view the poor state of unemployment as the greatest failure, followed by a lack of control on corruption, and inflation (both at nine per cent). It would be important to note here that these two questions were asked in an open-ended format.

We also asked respondents to rate India's overall progress in the last 75 years. Almost four out of five respondents thought that the overall progress was better than their expectations, and this positive evaluation is found across socio-economic groups.

Figure 1: Progress Made Over Last 75 Years



*Note: The row total doesn't add to 100. Remaining respondents chose No Opinion/Don't know/Can't say.
Question: Do you think taking all things into account, on each of the above parameters our country has progressed better than your expectation or lower than your expectation?*

Source: CPR-CVoter Survey • Created with Datawrapper

Pride and Shame

Indians are proud to be citizens of their country and show a deep sense of patriotism. They would not want to hold citizenship in any other country. This trend is consistent across all social and religious groups as well. More than 85 per cent of the respondents feel that a strong sense of patriotism was needed to keep the country united. The supporters of the current ruling regime affirm this desirability of patriotic feeling in all citizens including those who align themselves with an opposition party.

However, Indians are not shy about expressing anguish over the things that worry them about their country. We asked respondents if there are things about the country today that made them feel ashamed. Of the total respondents, 58 per cent felt there were things that made them ashamed. Approximately 32 per cent had a negative response to this question, and 10 per cent expressed no opinion. While this does not indicate a lack of patriotic sentiment, it is, however, a testament to people's ability to critique and acknowledge the worst aspects of their nation. There are variations across social groups, with more Muslims (63 per cent), and other backward castes (OBCs) (50 per cent) feeling ashamed as compared to only 54 per cent of upper-caste Hindus.

Similarly, a large portion of Indians also seemed to think that the influence of several institutions and segments had increased in politics (Table 4). They believed that the influence of big businesses (67 per cent) had increased followed most closely by the influence of religious leaders (66 per cent). Bureaucrats and the judiciary (as an institution) were seen as the least likely to intervene in politics.

Table 4: Increasing influence in politics (In %)

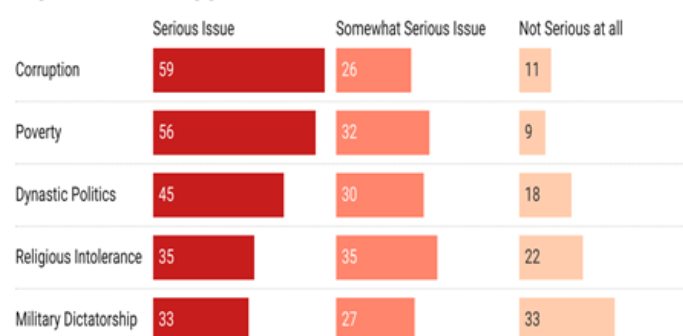
Big Businesses	67
Religious Leaders	66
Military	54
Bureaucrats	52
Judiciary	50

Note: Separate questions were asked on each of these entities as to if their influence has increased in politics. We have clubbed two options- increased a lot and increased a little
Question: Do you think the interference by the following in the politics of our Country has increased or decreased?
Source: CPR-CVoter Survey • Created with Datawrapper

Respondents were asked how serious they thought the issues of military dictatorship, corruption, dynastic politics, religious intolerance, and poverty were (Figure 2). A large majority of the respondents identified corruption (59 per cent) and poverty (56 per cent) as serious issues, whereas 26 per cent and 32 per cent of the respondents respectively found corruption and poverty to be somewhat serious issues.

Of the respondents, 45 per cent were of the opinion that dynastic politics is a serious issue, while 30 per cent of them said it was a somewhat serious issue. When it came to religious intolerance, those who found it a serious issue and somewhat of an issue had an equal share. Around 33 per cent of the respondents found military dictatorship to be a serious issue, and 27 per cent of the respondents found it to be somewhat of an issue.

Figure 2: The Biggest Concerns of Indians



Note: The row total doesn't add to 100. Remaining respondents chose No Opinion/Don't know/Can't say.
Question: How big of an issue is the following?

Source: CPR-CVoter Survey • Created with Datawrapper

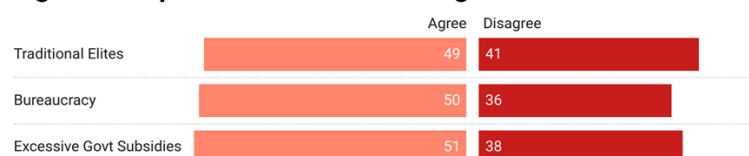
Who Do Indians Think Is Blocking Their Progress?

Participants were also asked who or what blocked the progress of people like them in the country (Figure 3). Of the respondents, 50 per cent thought that bureaucrats blocked their progress; 49 per cent pointed to the traditional elites, and 51 per cent pointed out government subsidies as the major constraint to progress.

There is a clear division among various social groups on who is blocking their progress. Fifty-five per cent of respondents from both the scheduled castes (SCs) and scheduled tribes (STs) believed it was traditional elites who blocked their progress. People from these marginalized sections, despite affirmative actions, still are victims of the oppressive caste

system which perpetuates graded inequality. The privileged still dominate the existing arrangements of politics, economy, and society. This cohort also viewed government interventions to mitigate economic backwardness posing as a constraint to their progress as well.

Figure 3: Impediments to India's Progress



*Note: The row total doesn't add to 100. Remaining respondents chose No Opinion/Don't know/Can't say.
Question: The question reads a statement on these items separately and asks the respondents if they agree or disagree.*

Source: CPR-CVoter Survey • Created with Datawrapper

Conclusion

The assessment of India's big wins and losses presents where the hopes of its citizens lie. A sense of achievement in the domains of science and technology, national security and infrastructure is consistent with the image that India is getting ahead in the race to become a global power. Despite the powers that be chasing the image of the growth story, respondents remained perceptive on who and what is lagging behind. Economic progress and the rights of the minorities and underprivileged are two areas in which Indians opined that the country had not made much progress.

The positive indication we drew from the survey was that citizens across the country were more united in identifying governmental failures since independence rather than the big wins. More respondents considered poverty and the high prevalence of unemployment two such areas of concern.

This section highlights that respondents believe that government subsidies, bureaucrats, and traditional elites had blocked the nation's progress. This was also consistent with the fact that corruption is one of the most serious issues in India. In the next section, we will look at how Indians the progress of their neighbours – Pakistan and Bangladesh – and other major nations as well as how they view the traumatic event of Partition and the idea of reversing it.

SECTION B: INDIA, ITS NEIGHBOURS AND THE WORLD

August 1947 stands out as one of the most crucial months in the history of South Asia. It signalled not only the end of the region's status as a British colony but also bore witness to the bifurcation of Punjab and Bengal, especially along religious lines (Hindus, Sikhs, and Muslims), to form Pakistan (and eventually modern-day Bangladesh). These are arguably the most significant events and developments of the previous century for people and scholars of the Indian subcontinent.

When Pakistan was created by carving apart British India, 10–20 million people were uprooted (as many as Europeans over the entirety of World War II), and between 0.5 to 2 million people lost their lives. Pakistan was 'partitioned' once more in 1971 when the eastern portion became Bangladesh (though this time, not along religious lines). As a result, the events of Partition have had a lasting impact on the political, economic and social climate of the three countries.

India, Pakistan and Bangladesh set out on a unique developmental journey after becoming independent nation-states. Each grappling with the consequences of a divided identity and dealing with the governance challenges of a new country. This report aims to leverage this historical backdrop and attempt a realistic portrait of what people in the formerly united, but now three sovereign states, feel about themselves, their country, and neighbours. In short, this report is a modest attempt to understand the past, the present, and the future of modern south Asia through its citizens.

In the seven-and-a-half decades after Partition, two facts have emerged: there is a strong national identity among the citizens of these countries, and the memory of Partition has been crystallized. Since then, India and Pakistan have followed two distinct trajectories. India aspires to be recognised as a modern superpower through its nuclear power status and growing economy.

Pakistan on the other hand continues to struggle. Despite the differences in the political reality of the two nations, citizens continue to feel the same way about issues such as high-income inequality, low per capita income, higher incidence of malnutrition, and poor health infrastructure, among others.

This section explicitly focuses on India's side of the story. How does its population see the Partition? How does it see India's place in the world? Given a chance, would they prefer to alter the trajectory India has followed since Partition?

The current generation of Indians has witnessed among other things a stable democracy, a dynamic economy, a powerful military, technological advancement, and a place of prominence in the global order. Would this generation mind merging borders with our closest neighbours with whom we share historical and cultural ties? Indians are divided, across age and social groups, on whether they support or oppose Partition but showed more homogeneity when asked to assess their neighbour's performance since that time.

Violence, as experienced during and in the aftermath of the Partition, was not experienced uniformly all over India. Even in the north, Punjab saw the worst of the violence, whereas West Bengal remained quiet. Regional variations on the questions of whether they support the decision to divide the country and whether they would want to see it reversed are quite stark, with the southern and eastern regions showing more support for the decision and the western region coming out strongly in favour of reversing the Partition.

We also found variations in the opinions of different age groups: older generations were less in support of the Partition and would prefer it was reversed as against the age group comprising millennials, who mostly think the Partition was right and should not be reversed.

What India Thinks of Partition (and Re-unification)?

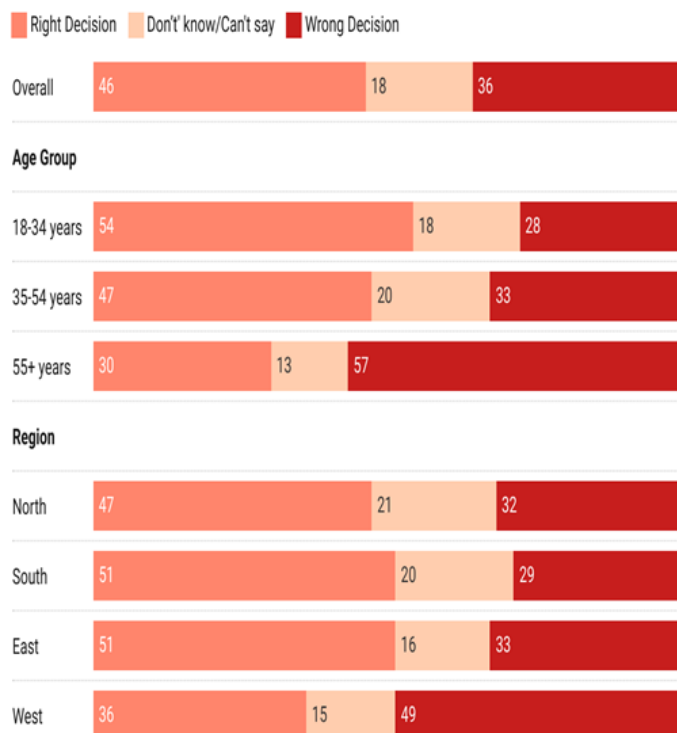
The reasons for the partition of India and Pakistan, and later of Pakistan and Bangladesh, are often cited as being rooted in the political and sociological backdrop of the time. They have long been the subjects of debate, provoking us to ask if it was the right decision. We asked the respondents this question, and in the case of India and Pakistan, about 46 per cent of Indian respondents believed that Partition was the right decision at that time (Figure 4). A similar trend was observed for the question of the partition of Pakistan and Bangladesh, where 44 per cent of the Indian respondents supported it (Figure 6). Indian respondents shared similar views on the partition of India–Pakistan as well as Pakistan–Bangladesh. However, there was some variation across regions except in the west. The western region, comprising the states of Gujarat, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Goa, remained the most critical of the India-Pakistan Partition (Figure 4). The region was also most supportive of any efforts of reunification (Figure 5).

The western region had the least opinion on the Partition of Pakistan-Bangladesh (Figure 6). On the other hand, a majority of respondents in the eastern region of India said Pakistan-Bangladesh Partition was the right decision. The eastern region along with the northern region is most opposed to the reversal of the Pakistan-Bangladesh Partition (Figure 7).

Partition is a distinct reality for different age groups. Thus one expects varied responses to the question on support for Partition as well as possible reunification. The generation that witnessed the India-Pakistan Partition or their immediate families were directly affected are more likely to say that the decision to Partition was wrong. Only 30 per cent of the age group older than 55 years supported the decision of the India–Pakistan partition against the 57 per cent who thought it was wrong for the two nations to be divided (Figure 4). Naturally, this age group is also more likely to support any efforts at reunification (Figure 5).

This older generation has the least opinion on whether the Partition of Pakistan-Bangladesh was a right or a wrong decision (Figure 6). However, this group still showed more support for any attempts at reunification of Pakistan-Bangladesh than any other age group (Figure 7).

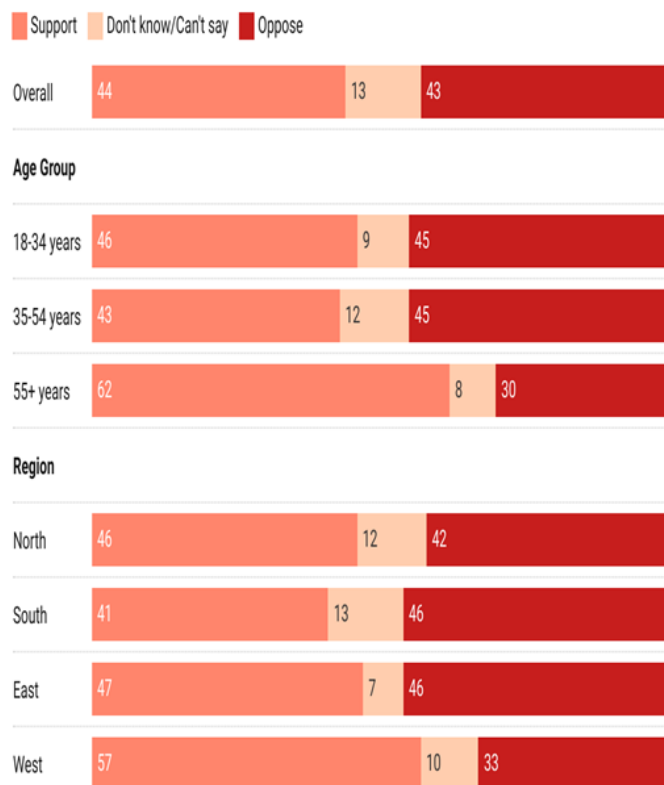
Figure 4: Partition of India-Pakistan



Question: Do you think the partition of India-Pakistan was the right decision?

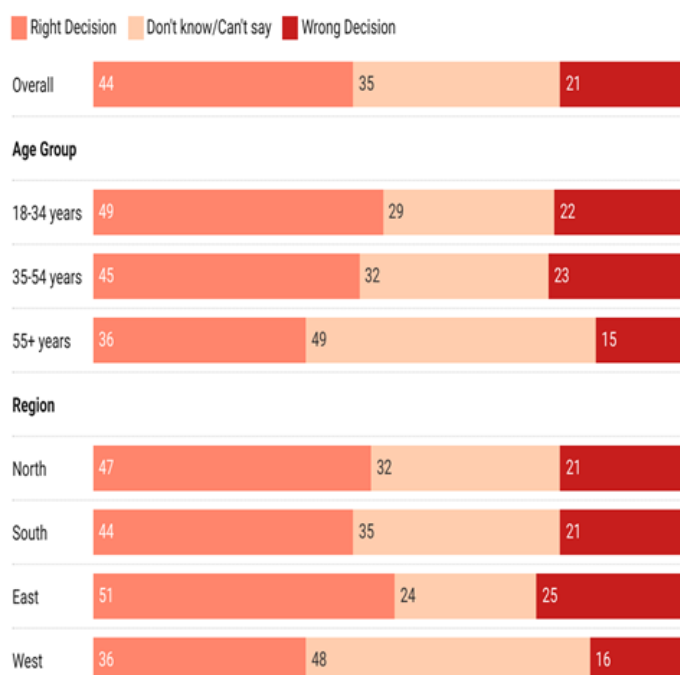
Source: CPR-CVoter Survey • Created with Datawrapper

Figure 5: Reversal of India-Pakistan Partition?



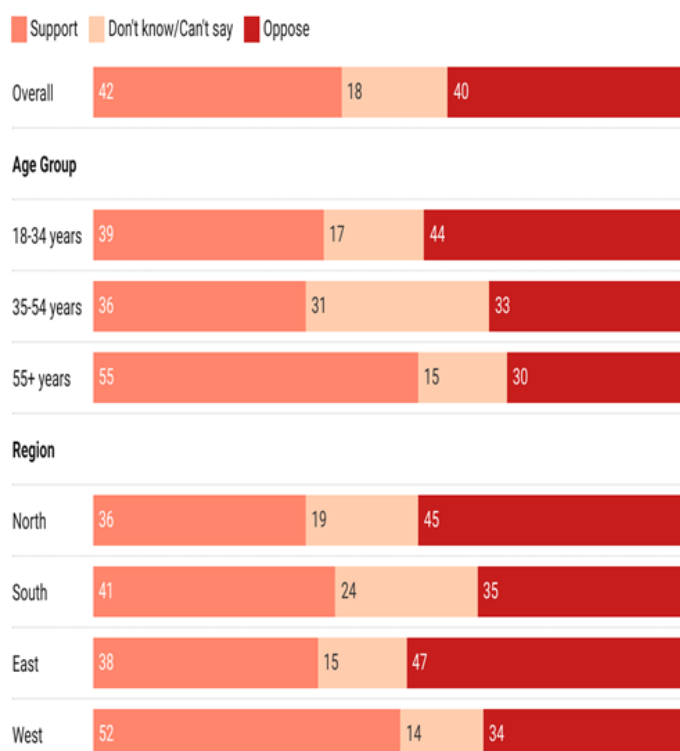
Question: Do you support the reversal of the India-Pakistan partition?

Source: CPR-CVoter Survey • Created with Datawrapper

Figure 6: Partition of Pakistan-Bangladesh

Question: Do you think the partition of Pakistan-Bangladesh was the right decision?

Source: CPR-CVoter Survey • Created with Datawrapper

Figure 7: Reversal of Pakistan-Bangladesh Partition?

Question: Do you support the reversal of the Pakistan-Bangladesh partition?

Source: CPR-CVoter Survey • Created with Datawrapper

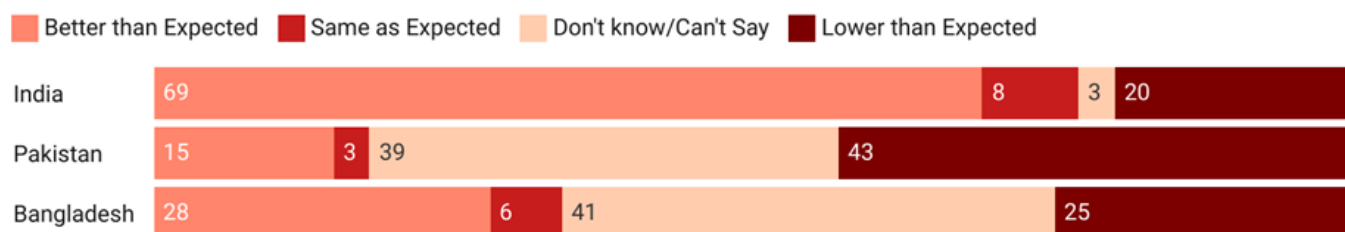
What India Thinks of its Neighbours

India and Pakistan have had four confrontations since the partition, and Kashmir remains one of the many contentious issues that are far from being resolved. Over time, India and Pakistan have tried to engage in different forums, both bilaterally and multilaterally, to reduce their differences and bring peace to the region. Still, Indians believe there is very little chance of improvement in the relationship between the two countries in the current decade. Near 62 per cent of the respondents said that there was no likelihood of such a thing. Rather, Indians have shown optimism toward Bangladesh's democracy and emergence as the most prosperous country in the region. Around 41 per cent of the respondents believed Bangladesh will emerge as the most prosperous country in the region, and almost an equal number of people thought that the country was becoming more secular democracy like India.

With regard to the political situation of Pakistan, Indians showed a mix of pessimism and optimism. On Pakistan's military acquiring a greater role in determining which party wins national elections, 55 per cent of the respondents were of opinion that it is an unlikely scenario. Almost 45 per cent thought that Pakistan's army would bow to political leadership like India. Respondents were also critical of the state of democracy in India, with 40 per cent believing India would slip into autocratic rule. In judging the overall progress made by the country, around 70 per cent of Indian respondents believed their country has progressed better than expected. The judgment was more critical with regard to the overall progress among neighbours. Around 28 per cent believed Bangladesh had performed better than expected, whereas only 15 per cent thought that Pakistan had progressed better than expected.

The divided opinion on Pakistan and Bangladesh is also a reflection of the opinion of how Indians imagine these two countries (Figure 8). In terms of economic progress in the region, and the growth of secular democracy, Bangladesh was perceived more positively by the Indians than Pakistan. If we look at perceptions of Bangladesh's overall progress by regions of India, 42 per cent of the respondents from the east of the country believed it had progressed better than expected. In the case of Pakistan, we did not find any significant regional patterns among Indians in evaluating their progress.

Figure 8: How Indians View the Progress of Bangladesh and Pakistan?



Question: Separate questions were asked on the overall progress of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh since their Partition.

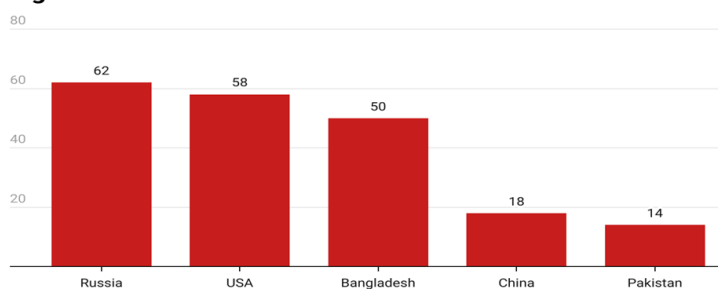
Source: CPR-CVoter Survey • Created with Datawrapper

What India Thinks of the World

We asked the respondents which country they trust more. Indians were more comfortable trusting global superpowers like the USA and Russia over their immediate neighbours (Figure 9). Around 62 per cent of the respondents showed high trust in Russia, followed by the USA (58 per cent). Bangladesh (50 per cent) was the most trusted country in the region. It is no surprise that Indians do not trust China (18 per cent) and Pakistan (14 per cent). The recent skirmishes on India's borders with China seem to be playing heavily on the minds of Indians. The survey also points out that 47 per cent of the respondents reported that China's interference in India would only increase in the future.

Similarly, we also asked the respondents about which country has the most influence in Asia. It is no surprise that Indians think their country is the most influential. One in every three Indians says that their country is the most influential in shaping Asia's political economy. The two global superpowers, USA and China, are rated equally, followed by Russia (Figure 10). Interestingly, despite a large migration of Indians to the Gulf, these countries do not figure prominently in the list. Almost one in every five Indians express no opinion on this question.

Figure 9: Which Countries do Indians Trust?

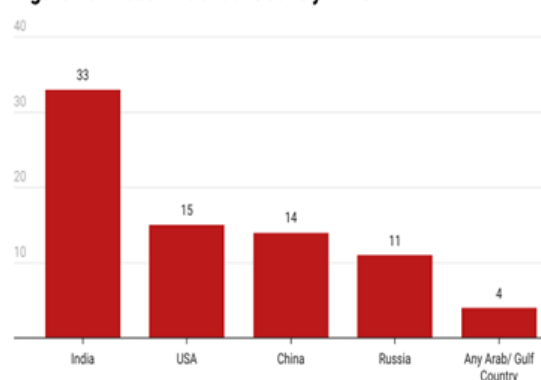


Note: Separate questions were asked for all the countries listed in the graph. Trust a lot and trust a little were clubbed together and the remaining respondents chose Don't trust at all or Don't know/ Can't say.

Question: How much do you trust this country?

Source: CPR-CVoter Survey • Created with Datawrapper

Figure 10: Most Influential Country in Asia



Note: The total doesn't add to 100. Remaining respondents chose No Opinion/Don't know/Can't say.

Question: Which Country Has the Most Influence in Asia?

Source: CPR-CVoter Survey • Created with Datawrapper

Conclusions

India's views about the Partition and its reversal remained divided with the respondent's age and the region they came from being the primary factors. As the survey showed, the partition of India, and later of Pakistan and Bangladesh, was a permanent reality for many Indians, and the others remained either hopeful of reunification or were confused. Older generations of Indians remained more critical of the decision to bifurcate the countries and showed more willingness to support the idea of reunification of the two countries than the younger generation.

This section dealt with a reflection on the past and opinions on the present and future of the region, Indians were hopeful about their eastern neighbour's prospect of growth and evolving into a more secular democracy. In the case of Pakistan, most of our respondents were critical of their domestic political scenario and expressed less trust and hope for cooperation and dialogue in the near future. The survey indicated that Indians saw a greater role in India's influence in Asian affairs than the USA or China. There was also a higher optimism regarding India's growth trajectory about the overall progress of the country, and respondents indicated higher satisfaction with India's achievements followed by Bangladesh's.

In the next section, we will see whether this high optimism is corroborated by their assessment of the progress of the economy in the last 75 years.

SECTION C: ECONOMIC PROGRESS

For developing nations like India, economic growth is important in meeting the aspirational needs of its citizens. Over the years, the Indian subcontinent has become an economic force to be reckoned with, achieving high growth rates, hosting the youngest workforce, and getting international recognition. While economic growth in recent years has oscillated, it is difficult to ascertain economic progress.

In the wake of independence, the Indian economy was fragile yet full of promise. Despite the extractive practices of the British, the subcontinent had rich natural resources, a robust agricultural system and a large workforce. However, arduous challenges lay ahead, with a poverty rate of around 80 per cent, high social and economic inequality, poor developmental outcomes and a rising population (Kohli 1989).

Under the stewardship of India's first prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru, the young democracy envisaged a centrally planned economic system with a robust public sector paving the path to economic progress. Inspired by the model of the USSR, the Planning Commission made and released five-year plans that presented schemes for resource allocation and development. Since then, with a more market-based economy, the Indian economy has transformed. Absolute poverty has greatly declined, educational and health outcomes have improved, and the country has pivoted from an agrarian society to an emerging, service industry-driven nation.

To understand the idea of progress and its associated sentiments better, we asked respondents to rate progress in the last 75 years in the areas of infrastructure, health and education facilities, and economic growth. Given that such perceptions are influenced by multiple factors, such as social networks and interactions, education, region and political biases, we looked for heterogeneity across demographics. Static economic outcomes can be hard to estimate accurately since that would require extensive empirical study, but changes in economic conditions can be sensed at a micro-level.

For instance, estimating price levels is a technical exercise but inflation, to a great extent, is felt by the public. Hence, in this section, we deal with the perceptions of economic progress, change and development. How people perceive future economic conditions not only guides their actions in the present but also influences the very outcomes they predict. In general, economic optimism is associated with greater spending, risk-taking and investment. Hence, getting a sense of what people anticipate is key to explaining macroeconomic trends and decision-making.

To capture India's developmental journey, this section presents data on what people perceive of the country's progress so far, their expectations for the future, and their current economic condition. The results presented here can be used to contextualize the economic actions and conditions of people, their preferences for policies and their political leanings. On a larger scale, it can also be used to identify areas with further scope for development and what could potentially become a pertinent electoral issue.

Broadly, our results have shown that economic progress and development have exceeded the expectations of most people. Improvements in science and technology were the most well-received, while infrastructure remained a key area of improvement. Religious minorities were less satisfied than other social groups with the country's progress, suggesting that perhaps the distribution of gains had been unequal or that cultural factors were at play. Variations by education levels could be due to a correlation with income and class or could be attributed to information asymmetry.

Economic Growth

Economic growth is a measure of the increase in the domestic production of goods and services, typically estimated using the gross domestic product as the measurement. When adjusted for population and inflation, the growth rate reflects the average living standard of a country, a marker of wealth and progress.

We asked people to rate the progress of India's economic growth. A little over half expressed positive assessment, 28 per cent much better than expected, and 23 per cent somewhat better. Similarly, one-third of respondents gave a negative evaluation, 18 per cent considered it much worse than expected, and 15 per cent said that it was somewhat worse than expected.

Different social groups also contrastively evaluated economic progress. The upper castes were the most positive in their review, with 60 per cent of responses being better than expected. Similarly, 53 per cent among OBCs, 45 per cent among STs and 39 per cent among Muslims economic growth was better than expected.

There was variation across income levels as well, with low-income earners being more satisfied with economic growth. For around 31 per cent of these respondents, economic growth was beyond expectations compared to only 24 per cent of middle- and high-income earners. This difference can be attributed to the gradual eradication of the poverty that primarily ravaged those who earned little.

Infrastructure and Living Conditions

The purpose of this section is to understand of the progress in infrastructure contextualized by the present state of living conditions. We broadly cover an individual-level assessment of overall infrastructure, roads, water quality and employment. An important distinction is that when we discuss infrastructure, we refer to the larger, physical structures that would enable and aid development, like energy, water, transportation, etc.

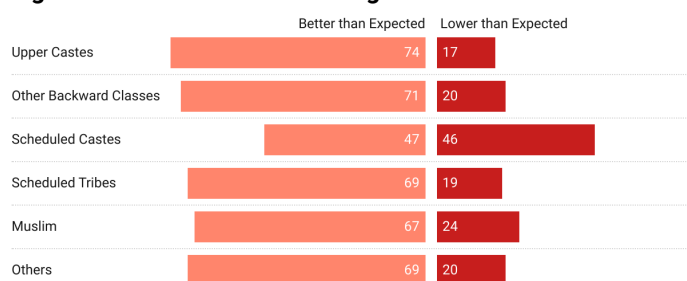
A large number of respondents (79 per cent) found progress on infrastructure to be better than expected and around 19 per cent considered the progress to be lower than expected. These figures are lower than they are for overall progress, suggesting that the leaps made in infrastructure are not the primary driver of satisfaction with economic development.

There was some regional variation, with only 28 per cent of respondents in south India considering progress to be much better than expected. In the east and north of India, the

response was more enthusiastic with 53 per cent and 51 per cent respectively sharing this view. Around 43 per cent of respondents from the western region were also of the opinion that progress in infrastructure is much better than expected.

Across social groups, upper-caste Hindus, STs and OBCs were more satisfied with the progress in the infrastructure of the country (Figure 11). Meanwhile, religious minorities (roughly three in five respondents) and SCs (47 per cent) have found infrastructure development to be lower than expected.

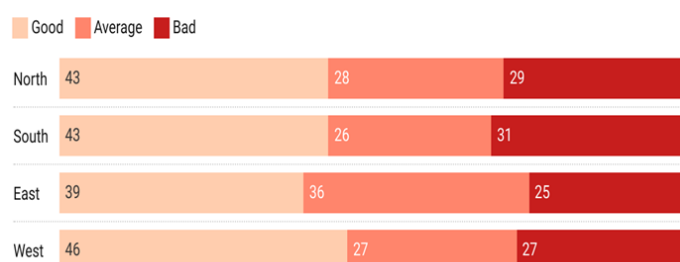
Figure 11: Satisfaction with Progress on Infrastructure



Note: The row total does not add to 100. Remaining respondents chose No Opinion/ Don't know/ Can't say. We have clubbed way better than my expectation and somewhat better than my expectation; and way lower than expectations and somewhat lower than my expectations.
Question: Keeping all your answers in mind that you just mentioned, how do you rate the overall progress of India in the last 75 years?

Source: CPR-CVoter Survey • Created with Datawrapper

Improving road networks has been a part of the industrialization and infrastructural focus since the early years of India's nationhood, but it only gained prominence in the Fifth Five Year Plan, when the Indian national highway system was introduced. Even recently, the Modi government announced its intention to further expand the highway network to enhance road safety and improve connectivity. We asked respondents to rate the condition of the roads in their locality. Around 28 per cent gave a negative assessment of the roads, while 42 per cent reported them to be good or very good. Respondents from western India were most pleased with the condition of their roads; however, this figure was still lower than 50 per cent, suggesting a broad level of dissatisfaction and much scope for improvement (Figure 12). In contrast, respondents indicate that the roads in south India are the worst.

Figure 12: Condition of Roads

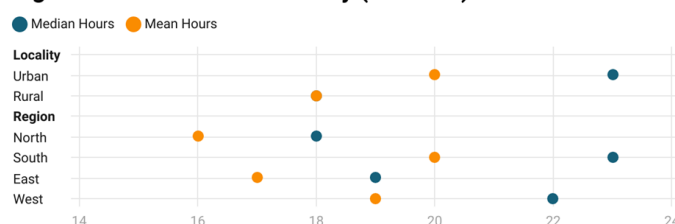
Question: Tell us about the condition of roads in your district.

Source: CPR-CVoter Survey • Created with Datawrapper

Income levels can greatly determine choices of settlement and hence, the surrounding infrastructure. As expected, low-income respondents reported the worst condition of roads in their surroundings, with 31 per cent suggesting that they were bad. In contrast, high-income earners were also not satisfied with the condition of their roads, with only 40 per cent reporting them to be good.

Another important facet of development and infrastructure is access to electricity. We asked respondents to report the hours of electricity they receive in their homes every day. Our results indicated a significant rural-urban gap with the median urban households receiving electricity for 23 hours and rural families for 18 hours (Figure 13). This was despite the implementation of the 2017 *Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana—Saubhagya* scheme that sought to improve electrical connectivity, particularly in rural areas. Geographically, the southern and western states performed better with 23 and 22 median hours of electricity every day. Meanwhile, the eastern and northern states had only 19 and 18 median hours. As expected, the hours of electricity received were correlated with socioeconomic status.

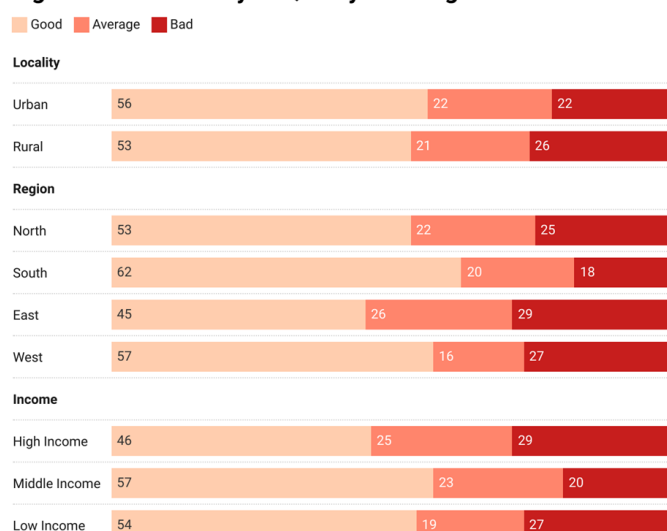
While the markers of transportation and electrical connectivity allude to the more industrial and urbanization goals of development, India is still struggling with providing access to basic amenities. Access to clean water has been placed on United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) for 2030 and has featured in India's developmental projects. A prominent program has been the National Rural Drinking Water Program (restructured as the *Jal Jeevan Mission*), which aims at providing functional household tap connections to all rural households by 2024. While access to clean water has improved, the issues of chemical contents, ease of procurement, and having to go long distances to access water still persist.

Figure 13: Access to Electricity (in Hours)

Question: How many hours of electricity do you get in your house every day? (in 24 hour clock)

Source: CPR-CVoter Survey • Created with Datawrapper

We asked respondents to rate the water quality in their locality. Around 54 per cent gave a positive review, while 25 per cent suggested that it was poor (Figure 14). The regional variation in reported water quality was consistent with the data reported in NITI Aayog's SDG Index Report for 2020–21. The eastern regions had lower water quality, with Assam being a poor performer. North India also lagged behind, with Punjab, Arunachal Pradesh and Delhi having poorer scores than other states. The same was reflected in our data as well. Much like the trends in road conditions, low-income households reported that the quality of water they got was bad. High-income respondents felt that their water quality was poor as well. Their assessment was more negative than that of low-income families as their complaints could potentially be due to greater information about pollutants and chemicals in the water.

Figure 14: Availability of Quality Drinking Water

Question: Tell us about the availability of drinking water in your district.

Source: CPR-CVoter Survey • Created with Datawrapper

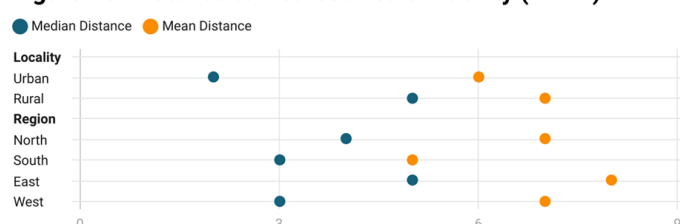
Education and Healthcare

Access to education was severely limited in the early years of independence, with the country recording a literacy rate of a mere 17 per cent in 1951. Health outcomes were not much better, with high infant mortality, maternal mortality and low life expectancy being prevalent. However, with years of growth and development, in 2015, the literacy rate was reported to be 72 per cent and life expectancy was close to 70 years in 2019.

When respondents were asked to rate the progress of India's educational and health facilities over the last 75 years, 40 per cent of the population found them to be much better than expected. Around 16 per cent thought they were much worse than expected, and 10 per cent considered them to be somewhat worse than expected. This evaluation is largely similar to the macro-assessment of overall progress. Satisfaction with the progress of education and health facilities was negatively correlated with the level of education. Hence, people who were more highly educated were more critical of the progress in these sectors. This could be due to a difference in expectations – highly educated individuals may realize the importance of good education and healthcare, thus judging the gains made so far more critically.

Looking at the outcomes in healthcare, however, as Figure 15 shows, there are definitely gaps in where this progress has most materialised. The divide between urban and rural households is significant given that the median distance for an urban household to a hospital is two kilometres, whereas this number goes up to five kilometres for rural areas, with the means being much greater for both. It is also clear that southern and western states have made somewhat more progress than the northern and eastern states, with the median distance being about three kilometres for the former two, but closer to five for the latter two.

Figure 15: Distance to Nearest Health Facility (in KM)



Question: How far is the nearest hospital/clinic/health centre from your house? (in KM)
Source: CPR-CVoter Survey • Created with Datawrapper

Science and Technology

Fostering a scientific environment is essential for the continued growth, innovation and development of a country. In 1945, the Indian National Congress wrote in their manifesto: "Scientific research is, therefore, a basic and essential activity of the state and should be organized and encouraged on the widest scale". Scientific pursuits, guided by the motivation to serve the nation, were encouraged early on with the establishment of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, the Tata Institute for Fundamental Research and the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) (Debashis 2010). The Second Five Year Plan particularly emphasized the need to promote and support scientific research, and over the years, in its scientific quest, the country has achieved new heights in space exploration, the development of nuclear technology, computer science, etc. We asked respondents to rate the progress in science and technology over the past 75 years. A resounding 52 per cent believed that the progress was much better than expected, and 20 per cent considered it somewhat better than expected. Only 6 per cent found it much lower than expected. This makes science and technology the area with the greatest progress.

This appreciation of scientific progress is directly correlated with education level. Around 79 per cent of the highly educated respondents rated scientific progress to be better than expected, while this was 69 per cent for those with lower education. This could be explained by greater awareness, and hence admiration, for scientific developments. Since the research itself is the result of higher education and intellectual investigation, another bias could be that those who received higher education are likely to be engaged in similar work and, hence, are more appreciative of it.

India's Economic Prospects

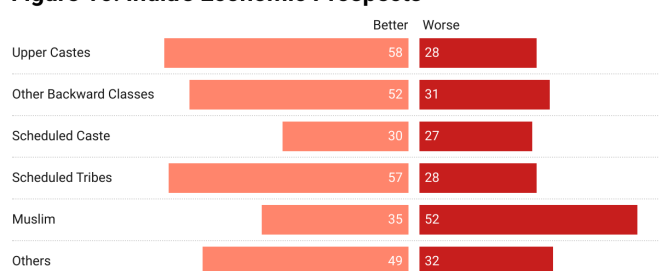
We asked respondents about their expectations of the country's economic prospects to gauge their level of optimism. Such opinions are shaped by an evaluation of past policies, current conditions and information about the plans of the administration. Hence, they are susceptible to being influenced by local progress and the opinions of close friends and family members.

This makes it crucial to explore differences in expectations across social groups, income levels and education.

The survey asked the respondents about the state of India's economic condition in a few years from now. On average, people were more optimistic than pessimistic; around 33 per cent of respondents believed that India's economic condition would be much better a few years from now, while only 26 per cent of people predicted it to be much worse. Only 7 per cent believed that the condition would remain the same.

The lowest variation in responses was seen across the education axis, suggesting that education might not be strongly correlated with optimism regarding economic performance. This is surprising because education should improve the understanding of economic trends and be correlated with better access to information. According to Converse (1972) "The educated citizen is attentive, knowledgeable, and participatory and the uneducated citizen is not." Hence, education shapes political attitudes and economic understanding by boosting civic and social engagement (Campbell 2006). The fact that there was not much variation here across education levels could mean that either citizens are not using economic trends as a guide for their optimism or that at some base level, everyone has a similar sense of economic performance. The greatest variation was seen across social groups with those identified as STs being the most optimistic (Figure 16). All three religious minorities – Muslims, Christians, and Sikhs – reported the greatest pessimism. Muslims were the most pessimistic in their outlook with 53 per cent of the respondents considering future economic conditions only to get worse. This stands in contrast to other social groups where only 30–35 per cent of the population echoed the same sentiment.

Figure 16: India's Economic Prospects



Note: The row total does not add to 100. Remaining respondents chose No Opinion/ Don't know/ Can't say. We have clubbed much better and a little better, and much worse and a little worse.

Question: What do you think will be India's economic condition a few years from now?

Source: CPR-CVoter Survey • Created with Datawrapper

The fact that religious minorities are more pessimistic is consistent with previous responses. Religious minorities such as Muslims, Christians and Sikhs have also been more muted in their evaluation of the overall progress of the country. If their perception of the past is relatively less positive, then it can reasonably justify their pessimism towards the future.

The stark variation in the opinions of different religious and social groups indicates that there are social and cultural factors at play. Some groups may be culturally (Heine, Steven et.al. 1995) more optimistic (Lee and Seligman 1997). On the other hand, different policies toward specific social groups can cause disparities in their view of the economy. Hence, groups that received government support may be more optimistic about their view of the economy.

Another explanation could be that the correlation between social category and occupation was driving a disparity in responses. Castes and religions dictate acceptable professions, which leads to members sticking to traditional occupations (Gang, Sen and Yun 2012); practitioners of varied occupations are likely to evaluate economic prospects differently.

Studies have shown that people perceive themselves differently from how others perceive them (Pronin 2008). Hence, a respondent's evaluation of their future could significantly differ from that of others and the country at large. Thus, we asked respondents what they thought the economic situation of their family will be like a few years from now. On average, people were optimistic about their prospects with only 16 per cent of respondents believing the future would be much worse and 7 per cent to be a little worse. In contrast, 32 per cent considered their prospects to be much better, and 23 per cent rated them to be a little better. Here too, social identity continued to be the axis with the greatest variance.

Studies have shown that people perceive themselves differently from how others perceive them (Pronin 2008). Hence, a respondent's evaluation of their future could significantly differ from that of others and the country at large. Thus, we asked respondents what they thought the economic situation of their family would be like a few years from now. The results of the same are presented in Table 5.

On average, people were optimistic about their prospects with only 16 per cent of respondents believing the future would be much worse and 7 per cent to be a little worse. In contrast, 32 per cent considered their prospects to be much better, and 23 per cent rated them to be a little better. Here too, social identity continued to be the axis with the greatest variance.

However, respondents' expectations of the economic condition of the country were worse than they were for their own households. Similar phenomena have been observed in other contexts, suggesting that people are less charitable/optimistic in their assessment of others than themselves (Bratton and Kimenyi 2008).

Table 5: Family's Economic Prospects

Social Group	Better	Same	Worse
Upper Caste	59	13	16
Other Backward Classes	54	13	21
Scheduled Caste	34	7	19
Scheduled Tribes	62	11	17
Muslim	43	11	34
Others	49	13	24

Note: The row total does not add up to 100. The remaining respondents chose Don't know/ Can't say.
Question: Expected economic condition of your family in a few years?
Source: CPR-CVoter Survey • Created with Datawrapper

Conclusion

This section highlighted that the perception of the Indian economy is robust, yet challenges on several fronts remain. The positive assessment of the economic progress among upper castes is not shared by lower castes and religious minorities. These groups display less hope for India's economic prospects in the next few years. However, there is a positive assessment of household economic prospects as compared to national prospects across social groups. This indicates a greater reliance on personal actions in bringing about positive outcomes economically.

Regional variations and urban-rural differences in assessing public goods and services were also visible in this section. The survey indicates that an Indian residing in the rural east dealt with bad quality roads and water, fewer hours of electricity, and had to travel further to get to a hospital than the rest of India. Despite the rising literacy rates, the quality of education remains a key concern. Educated Indians voiced critical opinions on progress made in this area of health and education.

To achieve and sustain economic growth, India has to address multiple challenges. In the next sections, we will highlight in detail what are impediments to India's social and economic progress.

SECTION D: IMPEDIMENTS TO SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CHANGE

The principles of equality, especially equality of opportunity, are cornerstones of any democracy. Despite the remarkable progress India has achieved on multiple fronts, the key promises of democracy are yet to be fully realized in our polity, economy and society. A large section of the individuals surveyed feel that pre-existing socio-economic conditions have hampered their progress. Access to public goods and basic amenities continues to be determined and shaped by structural factors, further curtailing the freedom and capabilities of many. Members of marginalized communities continue to face discrimination in the labour market. Women too are at the receiving end of discrimination at multiple levels, such as in the household, community, as well as labour market.

Income inequality and poverty are two major concerns for the prospects of any country. In that sense, Indians are no different in believing that poverty is a serious issue impeding the future of the country. Stable access to the labour market is one way in which people can escape the vicious cycle of poverty. Those from the lower strata of income groups preferred government jobs over the unorganized informal sector as the former provides them with a greater chance to achieve socio-economic mobility. Women find their access to the labour market constrained by societal attitudes and norms, and their autonomy continues to be constrained by societal attitudes and norms.

Poverty

We broadly understand poverty as a state of deprivation of money, food and other necessities that constitute a basic standard of living. According to the Global Multidimensional Poverty Index – which takes income, nutrition, education and other important indicators into account – India ranks 66 out of 109 countries, making it one of the poorer nations in the world. While extreme poverty levels in India have reduced, a substantial section of the Indian population is still multidimensionally poor (Sinha Roy and Van Der Weide 2022).

Around 55 per cent of all respondents believed that poverty was a very serious problem in our country today. Close to 32 per cent thought it was somewhat serious, while only 9 per cent deemed it to be not serious at all. Prima facie, the regional variation was consistent with the actual Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) values, with the southern states reporting poverty to be the least serious issue for them and the northern states the most serious. Given the psychological consequences of being poor – stress, change in risk-taking, lower morale, and greater fear – the assessment of poverty may be different across social groups, income levels and education levels (Haushofer and Fehr 2014).

There is a consensus on acknowledging poverty as a big issue in the country across income and social groups. While this result may seem counterintuitive at first, one may think of several reasons. It may injure those who are poor due to their circumstances, resulting in normalizing their state of deprivation. Similarly, those from higher-income levels may be more aware of their comparative affluence and hence, they overestimate the level and impact of poverty. We could also attribute this to the continued political narratives and policies launched to eradicate poverty since independence as well as to the general perception that it is poverty that has shackled the economic prosperity India tries to achieve.

Another factor for this view could be the high correlation between income and education; higher levels of income enable the pursuit of higher education. Our results indicate that those with higher education consider poverty to be a more serious problem than those with less education. Another explanation could be definitional issues: people with higher education levels may have a broader understanding of what constitutes poverty, while those with lower education might restrict themselves to basic material definitions. Since extreme poverty levels have fallen, this could explain why under a narrow understanding, poverty could seem less serious.

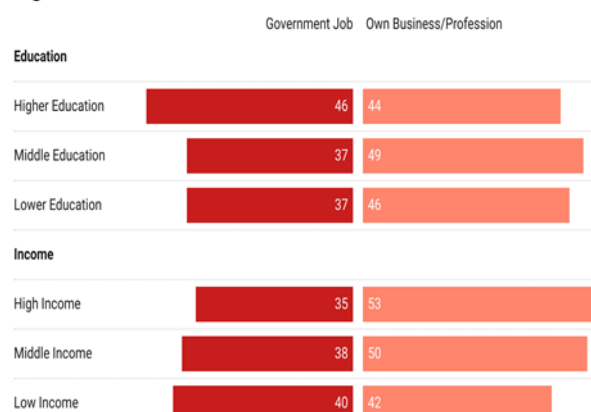
State of Employment

Employment preferences reveal a lot about the nature of a country's labour market and opportunities. Public sector jobs are often associated with greater job security, fringe benefits and social security benefits. Meanwhile, certain private sector jobs can be well-paid, enable a luxurious lifestyle and allow greater mobility in changing occupations. Self-employment is emerging as a promising option with the privilege of setting one's own rules and flexible working hours.

We asked respondents whether they would prefer a government job, a private job, or their own business. Around 39 per cent of respondents chose a government job while only 8 per cent preferred a private sector job. An overwhelming 47 per cent said that they would like to have their own business. This reflects multiple factors: the wages and benefits across the various types of jobs, the nature of the work and working conditions, labour laws and policies, risk appetite, and affirmative action, among others. In the survey, intuitively we can correlate levels of education with a lower preference for private jobs and self-employment and a higher preference for government jobs (Figure 17). We could attribute this to a better understanding of the benefits and job security associated with a public sector job. The desire for such a job can also be due to the fact that many public sector job opportunities are competitive, requiring aspirants to clear difficult examinations requiring a certain rigour.

A higher income is associated with a lower preference for government jobs and private sector jobs and an increased preference for self-employment. We could attribute this to the basic capital requirement needed to start a business – generational wealth or higher incomes can enable this, making self-employment not only more lucrative but also more accessible. If previous generations of a family were involved in establishing and running a successful proprietorship, it is likely that the reins of the business would be passed down to the family. In addition, the existence of a profitable business in previous generations would also imply higher incomes and condition a preference for the same.

Figure 17: Is Preference for Government Jobs on Decline?



Note: The row total does not add to 100. Remaining respondents chose No Opinion/ Don't know/ Can't say.
Question: If you had to choose from among the following what would have you chosen - a government job, a private job or own business.

Source: CPR-CVoter Survey • Created with Datawrapper

Gender Norms

As per the annual report of the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) released in 2022, the female labour force participation rate was a mere 33 per cent as compared to about 77 per cent for males (GoI 2022). With already low levels of participation, the opportunity for women to take up paid employment remains a looming problem. We asked the respondents whether the women in their household generally need to take permission to go to political meetings, take up jobs, wear clothes of their choice, or makeup decisions on household savings. In the case of decisions like accepting a job, 62 per cent of respondents said that women did need permission. The fact that more than half of the female population needed approval before taking up employment is indicative of the micro-level complexity that may be driving the low rates of female labour force participation as the decision is dictated by men and other senior members of the family. Various gender norms could lead to the persistence of such limitations; restricting access to the labour market and in a manner limiting financial independence.

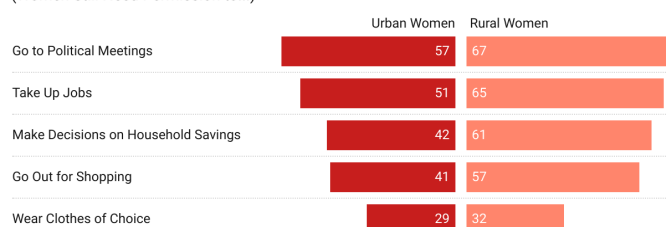
Similarly, around two-thirds of respondents said that women in their households needed permission to go to a political meeting, and approximately half of the respondents mentioned that women in the household should obtain permission before going out shopping. Interestingly, most women did not need permission to wear clothes they liked.

There seemed to be a regional divide when it came to whether women needed permission from their husbands or senior male family members. Women had greater autonomy in the western region while women in the southern region had the least. This portrays a different image than what is often claimed of the southern region, whose states are on top of the list of human development. Moreover, the number of respondents who said yes to questions decreased with education, suggesting that more educated households bestowed greater autonomy on women. Similar trends hold for income as well.

When we looked at the urban-rural divide from the perspective of women, a greater disparity was observed (Figure 18). Fifty-one per cent of the urban women respondents noted that they needed permission when it came to taking up a job, and this was 65 per cent in the case of rural women respondents. When it came to attending political meetings, 67 per cent of the rural women responded that they required permission, and this was true for 57 per cent of their urban counterparts. Responding to the question of whether permission needed to be sought to wear clothes of their choice, 29 per cent of the urban women responded yes, while 32 per cent of their rural counterparts responded yes. In the case of shopping, 41 per cent of the urban women said they needed permission, whereas 57 per cent of women from rural India said they had to seek permission. Finally, responding to the question of whether permission was required to make decisions on household savings 61 per cent of women in rural India responded they had to seek permission while only 42 per cent of their urban counterparts marked 'Yes' as an answer.

Figure 18: India's Strict Gender Norms

(Women Still Need Permission to...)



Question: Please tell me whether women in your family have to seek permission from their husbands or a senior family member to...

Source: CPR-CVoter Survey • Created with Datawrapper

Ironically, women seem to have the greatest freedom in what they can wear. We tried to explore this component in some detail. We found that there are variations within different regions of the country (Table 6). The most striking contrast can be seen within the eastern zone of the country. Overall, one-third of the respondents think that women should seek approval for their clothing choices.

Table 6: Freedom of Choice in Wearing Clothes (In %)

North	31
South	43
East	32
West	26

Question: Do women in your family need to seek permission from husbands/senior family members to wear clothes of their choice?

Source: CPR-CVoter Survey • Created with Datawrapper

Preferences on what to wear, what to eat, etc. are severely guided by a society's cultural norms. In a society like ours, women are generally conditioned to eat after the men of the household. Any positive change in this cultural paradigm is an indication of shifts in our attitudes towards gender norms and a corresponding move towards progressivism. Overall, we found that in most households in our country, both men and women eat together in a family, and in only 27 per cent of households do the men eat first. Although this pattern starts to break down when we look at households based on the level of education of our respondents. In households with higher education levels, 63 per cent said they eat together, but this drops to 54 per cent for middle education-level households and to 48 per cent for low education-level households.

Table 7: Who Eats First in the Family (In %)

Men Eat First	27
Everyone Eats Together	51
Each Eats According to their Convenience	14
Don't Know/ Can't Say	8

Question: Generally, do women in your household eat before men, after men, do all members of the household eat together or does everyone eat at their convenience?

Source: CPR-CVoter Survey • Created with Datawrapper

Conclusion

Even after 75 years of independence, poverty has remained a critical impediment to India's economic and social progress. Across income groups, people considered it an important issue. Higher-income group Indians considered it a more important issue than middle- and lower-income groups. While it is obvious that a workforce of around half a billion people, creating jobs is a challenging project for the Indian economy. Indians have shown a somewhat lower preference for government jobs and want to start their own businesses instead. As per the survey, higher- and middle-income groups are more likely to start businesses than lower-income ones, suggesting despite the government's efforts to provide incentives and loans to start businesses, family income remains a strong criterion for entrepreneurship.

This section highlights that the gender norms remain strict in Indian society, with more than half of the women in urban areas and two-thirds in rural India must ask permission from their family members or husbands to take up jobs. In other areas of life as well, rural women in India are expected to seek permission from their husbands or senior family members. The paucity of choices also varies across regions with the southern region following the most stringent gender norms and the western region the least.

SECTION E:

INDIA'S POLITICAL PARADOXES

Indian politics has seen multiple transitions since independence. Fifty-three political parties contested the first elections in 1952, and this number shot up to 673 parties in 2019. The larger number of political parties indicates greater electoral competition and more avenues for the voter to engage politically. Similarly, in the 1951 Lok Sabha elections, the voter turnout was 47.9 per cent which increased to 67.1 per cent in 2019, the largest ever since independence.

Political participation in India has consistently increased since independence. We can broadly define political participation as those actions of private citizens through which they seek to influence or support government and politics (Milbrath 1981). The interpretation of political participation has been expanded to include various other means by which people interact with governance and politics, which are essential to democracy. These include inter alia, protests, agitations, turning up to vote etc. In the 75th year of independence, we seek to understand to what extent Indians are politically involved.

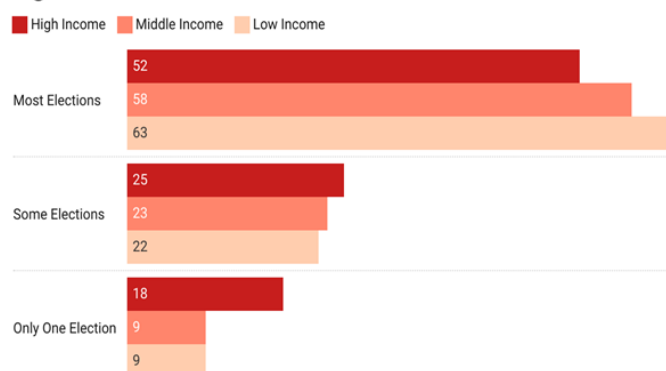
We have divided this section into four themes: voter turnout, participation in political activity, political ambition and views on dynastic politics. Our analysis shows the contradictions in Indian politics – despite higher party proliferation and turnouts, Indians still do not enthusiastically participate in political activities. Politics as a career remains a distant choice and there is a disdain for overall dynastic politics.

Voter Turnout

The history of independent India has not only witnessed the proliferation of political parties, but these parties have also brought hitherto unmobilised sections of Indian society. As Yogendra Yadav (1999) has noted in an influential paper that the 1990s in India witnessed a democratic upsurge in which the political participation of underprivileged communities increased significantly. The gender gap in turnout kept on decreasing with the 2019 elections marking a high point with no such gap.

The democratic upsurge thesis also informed us about increased participation from rural areas, poor and lower castes. We asked respondents how often have they voted in national or state elections. Of the total respondents, 60 per cent said that they had voted in most elections, and 23 per cent had voted in some elections. Only 6 per cent said they had never voted. Voter turnout is moderately high across social groups with slight dips for STs and Muslims. Voter turnout is negatively correlated with income with low-income earners more likely to vote in most elections than high earners (Figure 19).

Figure 19: Poor Indians Vote More



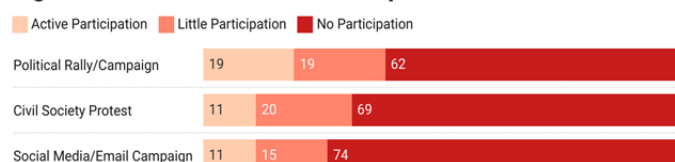
*Note: The row total does not add to 100. Remaining respondents either never voted or chose Don't know/ Can't say.
Question: How often have you voted in national or state elections since you became eligible to vote?
Source: CPR-CVoter Survey • Created with Datawrapper*

Political Participation

There is more to an electoral process than simply the day of voting and the ensuing counting of results. In the months leading up to the day of an election, candidates and parties organize rallies and campaign meetings to interact with voters, share their policy platforms and convince the electorate to vote for them. In turn, these events provide an opportunity for the electorate to meet politicians, ask them questions and make informed decisions. Therefore, participation in these events can be considered an essential extension of the act of voting. On some level, active attendance at such gatherings is a signal that the electorate is casting an educated vote rather than on a whim, which directly speaks to the quality of democracy in a country.

Respondents were asked if they had also taken part in a political rally or campaign in the past two years. Participation levels were low with 61 per cent reporting that they had never participated in a rally/campaign (Figure 20). Around 19 per cent said that they had been to such events once or a few times. Only 19 per cent responded that they had attended multiple such events.

Figure 20: Modest Political Participation



Question: In the last two years, have you ever taken part in the following activities?
Source: CPR-CVoter Survey • Created with Datawrapper

The survey also indicates that respondents with more education have been less active in political rallies and campaigns. This is contrary to existing research that suggests education should increase civic and social engagement (Campbell 2006). The same correlation is not mirrored in income levels as members of high-and low-income groups reported an equal level of participation, with low-income respondents being marginally more active. In social groups, Muslims, upper-caste Hindus and SCs have been the least active.

The right to express dissent is crucial to the spirit of democracy. It is a way to communicate the preferences and demands of a people to the administration. In India, the right to protest is guaranteed under the constitution in Article 19(1)(c) under the Fundamental Rights. Complemented by the right to freedom of speech and expression, the right to freedom of assembly allows Indians to form associations and unions that can be used for protests.

Over five years, from 2009 to 2014, there were 4,20,000 protests in the country. In recent years, the nation witnessed two major agitations: the anti-CAA protests of 2019 and the farmers' protest of 2020–21 (Singh 2016). We asked respondents if they had participated in a protest in the past two years, and 68 per cent said that they had never participated. Only 11 per cent had been to multiple protests in the given time period, while 12 per cent had been to a few.

Education and income had only a slight effect in terms of participation in any form of protest. Interestingly, religion was an important determinant in participation in the protest. Religious minorities have reported greater levels of participation. In contrast, upper-caste Hindus had the lowest active participation.

Men and women are equally likely to be participating in political activities, political rallies (32 per cent), civil society protests (33 per cent), and social media/e-mail campaigns (20 per cent).

Political Ambition

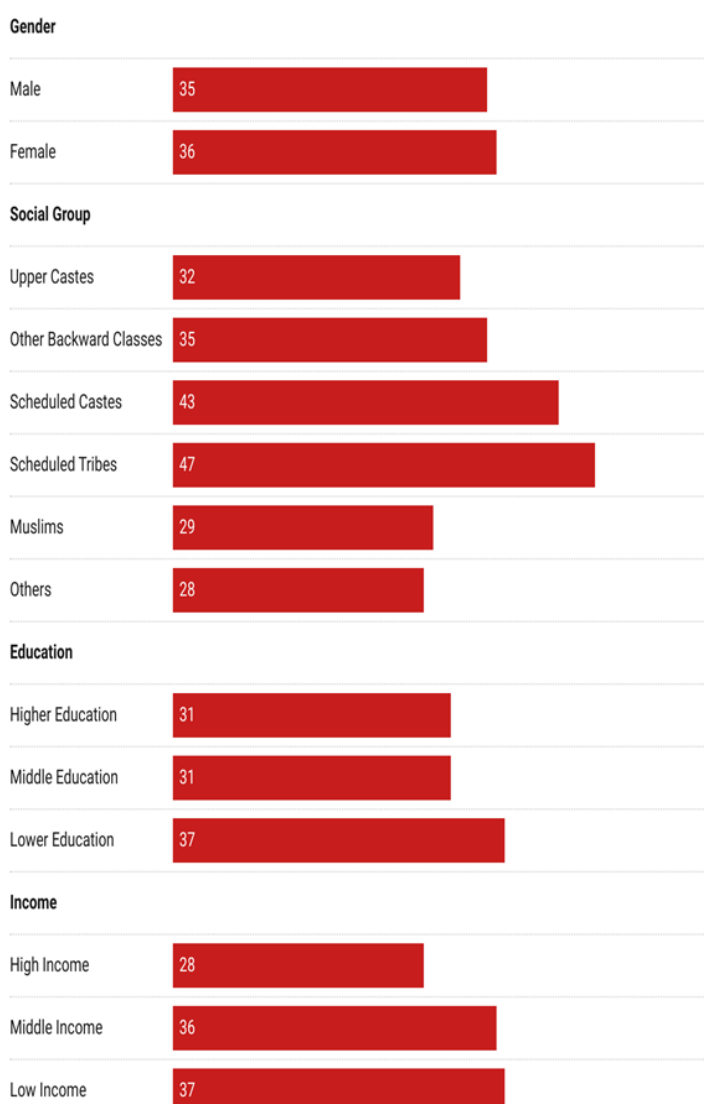
Open and free candidate entry is a hallmark of a successful democracy in order to ensure that power is not concentrated among a select few, that public officials are truly representative of the population, and that healthy competition is encouraged. However, in politics, there is a limited amount of positions that can be shared: the number of seats in parliament is fixed, and there are only so many ministries and positions of leadership. This makes politics an already competitive space with multiple barriers to entry. Elitism, discrimination, financial constraints and other factors may limit a person's ability to enter politics (Dal Bó et al. 2017). However, there might also be attributes of the political landscape that could dissuade people from wanting to join the arena, including, for instance, a high rate of corruption, political violence, and concerns over safety slandering, among others.

The Indian segment of our survey highlights that Indians remain distant from making politics an active career choice. Around 65 per cent of the respondents reported being not interested in politics as a career. The population with a lower education background shows a greater preference for making politics a choice. Around 37 per cent of the respondents with lower education showed a preference for politics against 31 per cent with middle and higher education backgrounds (Figure 21). Similarly, there were no discernible variations when asked the question with almost an equal proportion of both men (35 per cent) and women (36 per cent) saying they would join politics if given an opportunity.

Lower castes are more likely to join politics if given a chance; 43 per cent of SCs and 47 per cent of STs responded positively to the question of making a career in politics. This is significantly higher than the other groups where only 29–35 per cent of respondents chose the affirmative.

In our view, this can be because these historically oppressed communities might view politics as an opportunity to climb the social ladder, influence real change, and enhance their standard of living. Another reason for the high preference for political careers for people from these backgrounds may be that having witnessed the problems associated with poor education or low incomes, they might also be more passionate about development and bringing change through politics.

Figure 21: Who Wants to Join Politics?



Note: Only affirmative responses are included in the graph. Remaining respondents either chose No or Don't know/Can't say.

Question: Given an opportunity, will you make politics your career?

Source: CPR-CVoter Survey • Created with Datawrapper

We also asked respondents the reasons for not choosing politics as a career option - 36 per cent were not interested in politics, and 26 per cent were dissuaded as it is a corrupt business; only 14 per cent thought they didn't have the necessary skills (Table 8).

Table 8: Reasons for Not Joining Politics (In %)

Not Interested in Politics	36
Politics is a Corrupt Business	26
Don't Have the Skills to Succeed in Politics	14
Other Career Options or Interests	9
Don't Have Any Family or Personal Connection to Succeed in Politics	7
Don't Know/ Can't Say	8

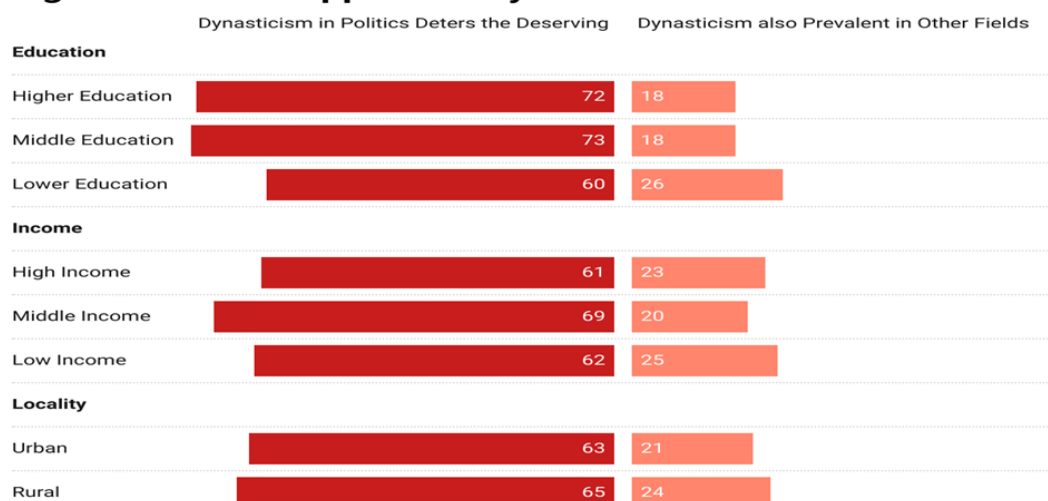
Note: This question was asked only to those who said that don't have any political ambitions.
Question: Why do you not want to join politics?

Source: CPR-CVoter Survey • Created with Datawrapper

Dynastic Politics in India

In the past few years, there has been an increasing concern about political families dominating India's electoral space. In fact, most political parties in India are now family-controlled. This phenomenon seems to be prevalent across south Asian countries. While the number of political families is on the rise, Indian citizens are not necessarily happy about it. They don't believe that simply because a doctor's children become doctors and an actor's children become actors, it should be okay for a politician's children to become politicians (Figure 22). Almost two in three respondents (65 per cent) believe that it is wrong for parties to give a politician's children tickets if more deserving candidates are left out, and only one in four (24 per cent) think that it is okay for politician's children to become politicians just because it is a practice in other professions.

The starkest variation on this is visible on partisan lines and how people of different income groups view this. While expectedly, National Democratic Alliance (NDA) supporters strongly opposed the induction of dynastic politicians, owing to the atmosphere against dynasticism under the current regime, opposition voters also rejected the idea but not as vehemently. In terms of income groups, while everybody rejected dynasticism, overall, people from lower income groups (40 per cent) were more likely to accept a dynastic politician than those from middle-income groups (27 per cent) and high-income groups (28 per cent).

Figure 22: Low Support for Dynasticism

Note: The row total does not add to 100. Remaining respondents chose the option Don't know/Can't say.

Question: Which statement do you agree with?

1. "If politicians' children are given tickets to contest, more deserving candidates are left out."

2. "Just as a doctor's child becomes a doctor and an actor's child becomes an actor, it is alright for a politician's child to become a politician."

Source: CPR-CVoter Survey • Created with Datawrapper

Despite unhappiness with increasing dynasticism, Indian voters also recognize that political families carry social capital and have resources that other candidates may not have. To probe this further, we asked our respondents a battery of ten items to compare how the two kinds of politicians are fair on certain indicators. Overall, dynast politicians seem to have easy access to public offices and resources. In comparison to non-dynastic politicians, dynasts were considered slightly sharper and better public speakers. Most importantly, there was a strong recognition of the social capital that dynastic politicians possessed – 55 per cent of the respondents thought that dynastic politicians have more influence over district officials as compared to 22 per cent of the non-dynasts. Surprisingly, this did not translate into their ability to get difficult work done where both dynasts and non-dynasts had a score of 36 per cent.

Non-dynastic politicians seem to be more receptive to what people want and provide a more interpersonal approach to everyday politics- 41 per cent of non-dynasts visit their constituency regularly compared to only 31 per cent of dynasts. Respondents preferred non-dynastic politicians for development-related work.

Conclusion

This section presents interesting paradoxes in Indian politics. On one hand, there is a surging number of political parties and higher voter turnouts across the country, and on the other hand, there is low participation in political activity by the Indians. Underprivileged communities have shown a greater preference to join politics, highlighting that politics remains an aspirational activity for them.

The strict gender norms underscored in the previous section do not resonate in the political arena as males and females showed somewhat equal preferences in participation in political activity or in politics as a career.

Corruption in politics acts as the second-highest deterrent after non-interest in politics for Indians to join politics as this might be the reason that education and high-skill candidates prefer to remain aloof from politics. The survey also shows high disapproval among Indians of dynastic politics. Higher educated and middle-income groups mostly argue that dynastic politics take the opportunity away from more deserving candidates.

SECTION F: STATE OF INDIAN DEMOCRACY

The Indian state and its people have shown remarkable resilience and confidence in the process of state-building and democracy, qualities that have been scarce in many post-colonial nation-states, putting India at par with many fully developed Western democracies. Leaders of the anti-colonial national movement were guided by the basic tenets of democracy, diversity, and development. Their commitments to these ideals are reflected in the Indian Constitution as well as the trajectory of the Indian state in the first few decades post-independence when the nation was still recuperating from the burdens of colonialism.

The journey of Indian democracy, despite its foundational principles, has had a complicated history. It has had several blots ranging from the imposition of a national Emergency in 1975 to several communal strifes that intermittently plagued both politics and society. A large section of Indian society is still yet to achieve adequate representation and is wary of the pervading corruption at all levels of governance. Despite this, research has consistently pointed out the remarkable trust the people of India have in the process of democracy and its institutions.

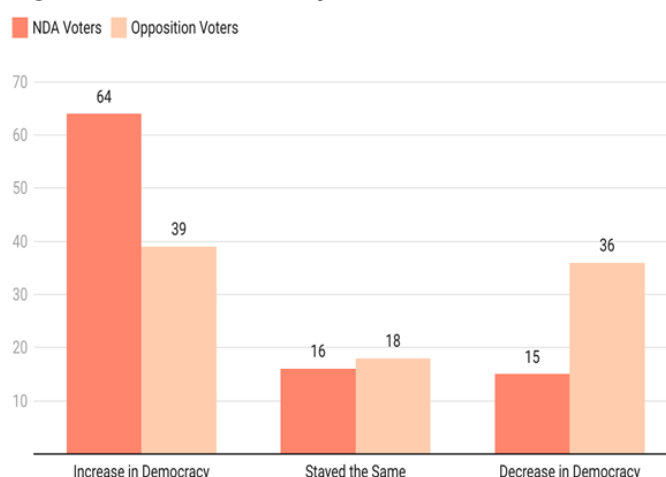
At present, Indian democracy is said to be in peril with the rise of a second dominant party system led by the Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP). Many international reports on democracy have put India in the category of 'flawed democracy' with regular instances of exacerbated demagoguery, religious intolerance, infringement of civil liberties and exclusionary narratives of nationalism (EIU 2021). What sentiments are held by a common Indian citizen on the country's democratic status? Do they feel that the nation has deviated from its founding principles or has the narrative of democracy evolved? This section will look at multiple aspects of politics vis-à-vis political actors, political systems and their impediments.

This section contextualizes those findings using data on the trust people have in various important institutions like the parliament, judiciary, media, and Election Commission, among others.

State of Democracy in India

A higher proportion of people (about 48 per cent) seemed to think that the state of democracy in India had increased in the past 10 years, and the remaining were divided between if it has declined (28 per cent) in the last 10 years or remained the same (17 per cent). What is rather surprising, however, is that even people who support non-NDA parties concurred with this view in almost the same intensity: 39 per cent of non-NDA supporters feel that democracy had only increased in the last 10 years as opposed to the 36 per cent who felt it had declined and 18 per cent who thought it had remained the same (Figure 23).

Figure 23: Indian Democracy in Decline?



Note: The total across categories does not add to 100. Remaining respondents chose the option Don't know/Can't say.

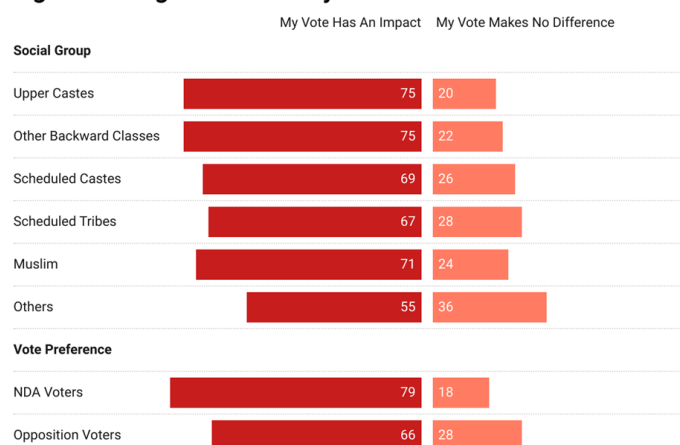
Question: Which of the following statements do you agree with the most?

Source: CPR-CVoter Survey • Created with Datawrapper

While Indians are celebratory about the country's democratic status, they are also concerned about the future trajectory of India's democracy. We further asked respondents about the prospect of India sliding into autocratic rule. About 39 per cent believed that India might slide into an autocratic, while a majority of 51 per cent disagreed with this, and 10 per cent didn't know if it might happen or not. There are clear partisan differences on this question with non-NDA voters more likely to believe that India's democratic norms are under constraints.

To contextualize these results, we asked respondents if they thought their vote made a difference in the way things were run in the country, and 72 per cent believed that their vote makes a difference, while only 24 per cent think that their vote makes no difference (Figure 24). Religious minorities, other than Muslims had lower vote efficacy in terms of whether they thought their vote has an effect (clubbed together as others in Figure 24).

Figure 24: High Vote Efficacy in India



Note: The row total does not add to 100. Remaining respondents chose the option Don't know/Can't say.
Question: Does your vote make a difference in the way things are run?
Source: CPR-CVoter Survey • Created with Datawrapper

We also asked respondents about how much voice they had in affairs of governance. The majority of respondents (57 per cent) agreed that people like them did not have a say in the government with only 32 per cent agreeing that they had a say in governance.

These varied responses to these two adjacent questions reflect a clear disparity in people's perception of politics and governance at the macro and micro levels. On the one hand, citizens are aware of the impact their participation in elections can have, and on the other, they are wary of institutional structures of governance leading them to believe they are overlooked by those in positions.

Fairness of Election Process

While the trust in the Election Commission of India remains remarkably high, there have been some concerns about the fairness of the election procedure itself in the last few years. We asked participants how free and fair the last national election was, and only 15 per cent of them thought that the last election was not fair and free, 44 per cent opined that the election was free and fair, and 35 per cent said that the national election was somewhat free and fair (Table 9).

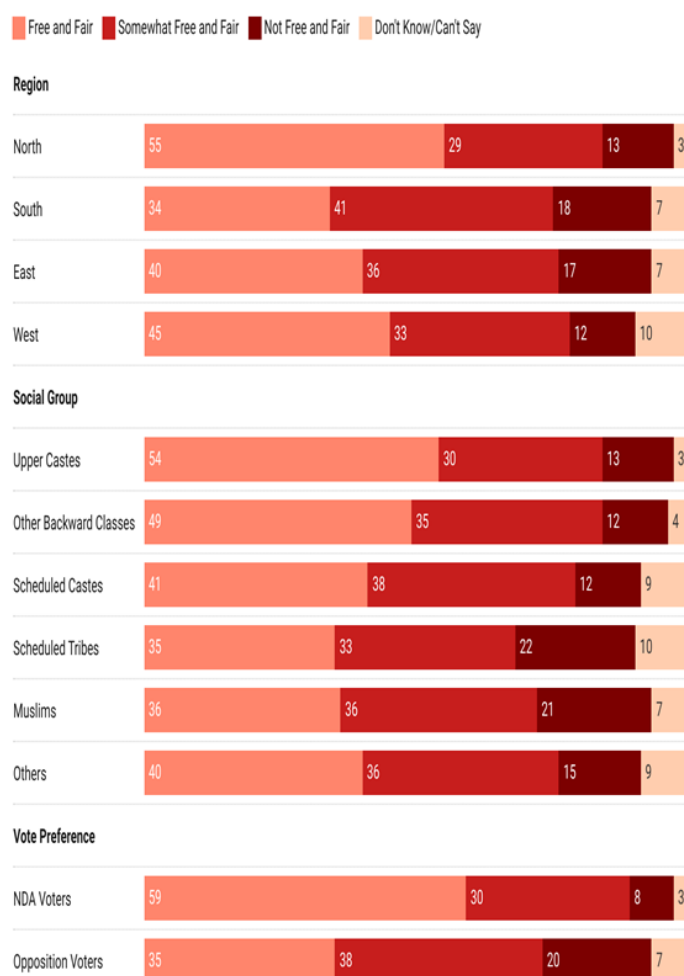
Table 9: Free and Fair Elections (In %)

Free and Fair	44
Somewhat Free and Fair	35
Not Free and Fair at all	15
Don't Know/ Can't Say	6

Question: Overall, how free and fair would you say the last national elections were?
Source: CPR-CVoter Survey • Created with Datawrapper

These numbers show that even when some people thought that democracy had slid back or that the nation was heading towards the autocratic rule, many did not associate that with unfair electoral practices, but rather saw it because of the political polarization of society. The concern regarding fairness of elections is higher among opposition voters, lower castes, religious minorities and southern states (Figure 25).

Figure 25: Was India's Last Election Free and Fair?



Question: On the whole, how free and fair would you say the last national election was?
Source: CPR-CVoter Survey • Created with Datawrapper

Party Identification and Partisan Attachment

While various international organizations and scholars have raised substantive questions about the status of Indian democracy, Indians seemed to be divided on this question around partisan lines. Around 64 per cent of NDA supporters claimed that democracy in India had increased in the last 10 years against 39 per cent of opposition voters. Opposition supporters took a more radical viewpoint of India's democracy, and 36 per cent of them claimed the contrary democracy has declined in the country against 15 per cent of NDA voters. Our survey results are consistent with the You Gov-CPR-Mint Millennial Survey of the September 2022 round, which shows incremental polarization in Indian politics (Verma and Shukla 2022).

We asked respondents if there was a political party they felt close to, and more than one in every three respondents agreed. There is a stark difference in party identification, with around 45 per cent of NDA voters feeling close to a political party in comparison to 30 per cent of opposition voters. Perhaps this difference could largely be attributed to NDA's status as an incumbent formation.

The existence of partisan allegiances is an important area of study and equally pertinent is the intensity of partisan emotion. We asked respondents three questions to better understand how closely respondents define themselves, i.e. their own identities, where they lie on the political axis, and the ideologies of their parties. Around 30 per cent of respondents who did feel close to a party always felt insulted when that party is criticized. Only 29 per cent never feel personally insulted while 39 per cent feel insulted sometimes or often.

Next, we asked if meeting another supporter of their preferred party makes the respondent feel connected with that person. This question is important because belonging to a group, even a political group, can induce feelings of brotherhood and fraternity. Around 43 per cent said that they always feel connected to a fellow supporter and only 16 per cent responded that they never feel connected. The last question was if the respondents stopped talking to friends and family who criticized their party. The answer to this question reflects a willingness to surround yourself only with like-minded people along political lines. This is extremely rare with 65 per cent of respondents stating that they never do this.

Interestingly, the intensity of the response is stronger for NDA voters as compared to opposition voters on all three questions.

Partisan Lens on Overall Progress

There was also an interesting variation across partisan lines on the overall progress of the country. Respondents who voted for the opposition party in 2019 were more critical of the overall progress with 26 per cent, saying it was lower than expected and 61 per cent saying it was better than expected. In contrast, 74 per cent of NDA voters believed that progress is better than expected and only 15 per cent found it to be lower than expected.

Since the Indian National Congress (INC) has ruled India for the most part since independence, it might be considered counter-intuitive that opposition voters are more disapproving of economic progress. However, there could be two explanations for this result, with the first one being an inherent difference in expectations. People who voted for the opposition might have higher expectations about economic performance which would be harder to meet. In contrast, NDA voters might have set a lower bar for the Indian economy, given its dominant and long-term stewardship in the hands of Congress, thereby being pleasantly surprised. The second explanation is of the assessment is biased more on recent performance rather than a true evaluation of the last 75 years. Behaviourally, there is a present bias with people assigning more value to periods that are closer than farther away (O'Donoghue and Rabin 1999). Since 2014, the NDA government has taken over the reins and has distinguished itself in its approach to economic policy. Hence, it is possible that NDA voters are more satisfied with the progress in the last 75 years with greater weightage on the last eight years.

Table 10: Progress of India by Vote Preference

	Better than Expected	Lower than Expected
NDA Voters	75	16
Opposition Voters	66	21

*Note: The total does not add up to 100 because the remaining respondents chose Can't say/ Don't know.
Question: Do you think taking all things into account, overall, India has progressed better than your expectation or lower than expected?*

Source: CPR-CVoter Survey • Created with Datawrapper

Conclusion

This section paints an interesting picture of Indian democracy. Indians largely believe their vote does make an impact and elections are free and fair. Conversely, these assessments are also driven by partisan attachments. India's opinion remained divided on questions related to democracy. A similar partisan division can be seen with respect to the evaluation of India's overall progress, and opposition supporters remained more critical of its progress. Though there is some variation regarding the fairness of the election process among certain segments, these groups also believe that their vote does make a difference indicating their deep faith in Indian democracy.

SECTION G: MAKERS OF MODERN INDIA

In taking stock of the last 75 years of independence, it would be wrong to discount the importance of India's distinguished leaders. During the independence movement, India witnessed some prominent leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Bhimrao Ambedkar, Vallabhbhai Patel, and many more. Some of these leaders followed a natural progression from freedom fighters to cabinet ministers, lawmakers and policymakers. Embodying a vision for modernization, India's first prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru emphasized secularism, scientific progress, republicanism and industrialisation (Balakrishnan 2007).

The next prime minister after Nehru to retain office for a significant period was his daughter Indira Gandhi, who served for 11 years. Through her populist political platforms, such as poverty eradication as she tapped into the low-income voter demographic. Some hallmark decisions during her term included the abolishment of privy purses, poverty eradication programmes, the green revolution and the nationalization of banks. However, her era was marked by several challenges on various fronts including, the rebellions within the Congress Party, the state of emergency of 1975, and Operation Blue Star, among others.

The flouting of constitutionally protected rights, censorship of media and press, and abuse of law and order during the emergency years brought opposition parties together. Despite defeating Indira Gandhi in 1977, the new alliance of the Janta Party was unable to survive for long. The government was eventually dissolving government the Congress party returned to the helm again. However, the Janta experiment had a lasting impact on Indian politics. Many leaders of this coalition would in the future occupy positions of power like Atal Bihari Vajpayee, as the prime minister in 1998. Similarly, several prominent politicians like Lalu Yadav, Nitish Kumar, Mulayam Singh Yadav, Karunanidhi, Deve Gowda, and Biju Patnaik among others, went on to play a crucial role in state and national politics thereafter. Vajpayee's tenure witnessed several cross-border skirmishes with Pakistan and he is well regarded for India's successful nuclear tests. In 2004, the Vajpayee-led NDA could not return to power, and a coalition of opposition parties led by Congress managed to form the government under the leadership of Manmohan Singh.

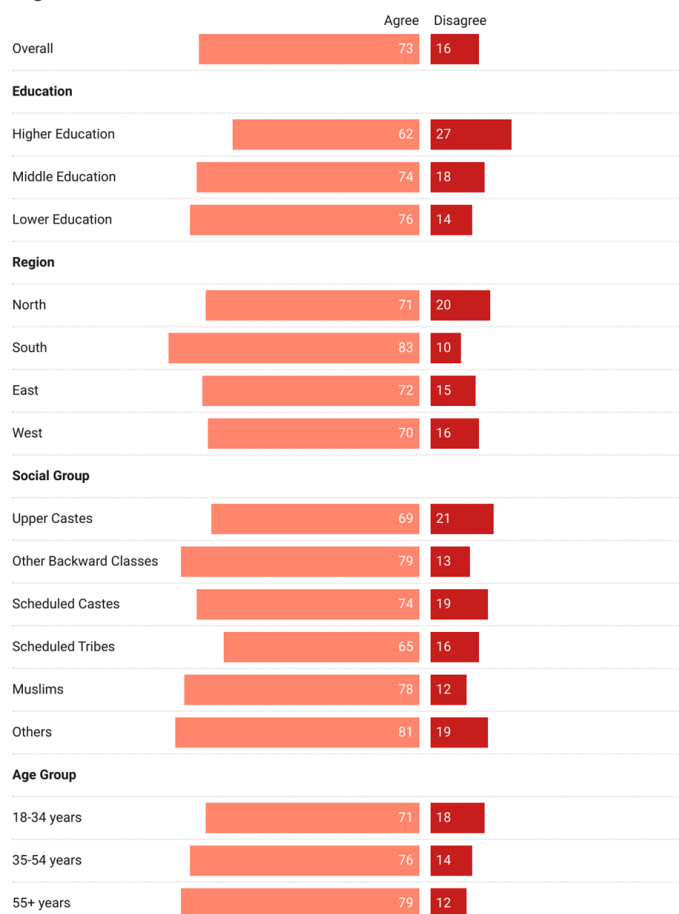
A decorated economist, Manmohan Singh made his mark as the finance minister by liberalizing the Indian economy and opening it up to international trade, ending the Nehruvian 'License Raj'. As prime minister, he focused on developmental and welfare goals through the national rural health mission, the national employment guarantee act, and the right to free and compulsory education act. In 2014, the BJP under Narendra Modi won a single-handed majority, and since then Indian politics has been witnessing several changes.

It is true that leaders are not only the makers of history, but they also shape the future. This section discusses India's perception of its towering leaders, both past and present. We begin our discussion with the role played by Mahatma Gandhi during the freedom movement and his contribution in shaping making of the modern Indian subcontinent.

Mahatma Gandhi: the Greatest South Asian

We asked the respondents if they think that Mahatma Gandhi was the greatest person to live in South Asia in the last century. Three in every four respondents agreed with the statement – 61 per cent strongly agree with the statement while 13 per cent somewhat agree. Around 10 per cent completely disagree, 6 per cent somewhat disagree and 3 per cent neither agree nor disagree.

Given Gandhi's role in the freedom movement, it is natural that his personality is intrinsically becomes intertwined with India's socio-economic divide. Upper-caste Hindus and SCs express greater disagreement with the statement asserting Gandhi's greatness (Figure 26). Meanwhile, Muslims are the most approving of the statement posed, implying greater support for Gandhi. The love and adoration for Gandhi seem to be decreasing with education and income level, with less educated respondents being more likely to agree with the statement. Similarly, older respondents are more likely to agree with the statement. Ironically, western and north Indian residents are less likely to agree that Gandhi was the greatest south Asian, whereas south Indian respondents are more likely to agree with this statement.

Figure 26: Mahatma Gandhi - The Greatest South Asian?

Note: The total does not add up to 100. Remaining respondents chose No option/ Don't know/Can't say.
 Question: Was Mahatma Gandhi the greatest person to live in South Asia in the last century?

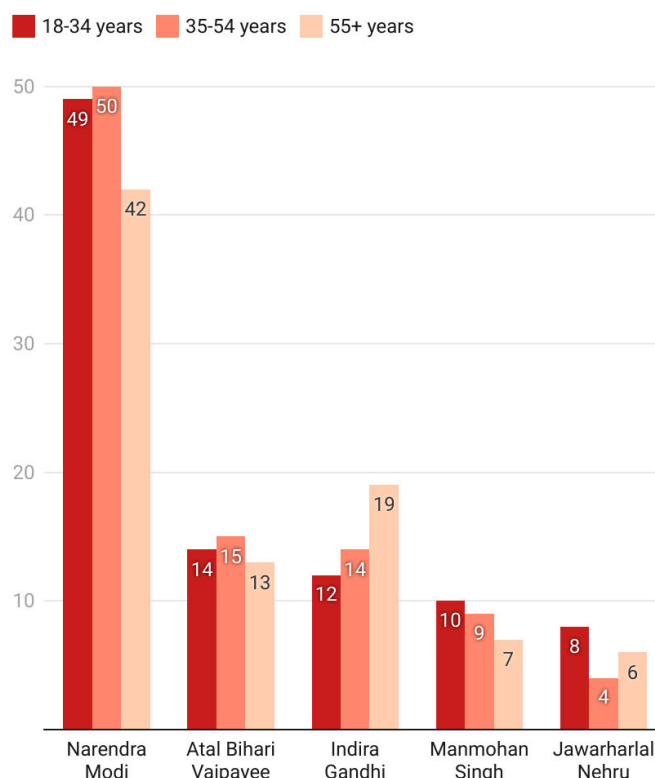
Source: CPR-CVoter Survey • Created with Datawrapper

India's Most Popular Prime Minister

In India's parliamentary system, several prime ministers had an outsized influence in shaping the polity of this country. we asked respondents who according to them has been the best prime minister of India since independence – Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Manmohan Singh, Narendra Modi, or any other. Narendra Modi was rated as the best Prime Minister since independence - 47 per cent of respondents chose him out of the given list. Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Indira Gandhi were second and third in the ranking with 14 per cent and 13 per cent of respondents considering them the best prime ministers of India. Around nine per cent chose Manmohan Singh while only six per cent chose Nehru. This is not surprising as research on public opinion polling suggests that there is always a recency effect while evaluating leadership popularity.

Nonetheless, given such high approval ratings for Prime Minister Modi across demographic divides, he certainly ranks above all (Figure 27).

Indira Gandhi's approval is higher among older generations, no such trend exists for the other PMs. The preference for different Prime Ministers is indeed driven by socio-economic identities and current political realities. Vajpayee and Modi collectively account for 74 per cent of total responses, and they are more preferred among the upper strata of the Indian society, whereas the prime ministers associated with the Congress are more likely to be preferred by the lower strata and religious minorities.

Figure 27: India's Most Popular Prime Minister since Independence

Note: The total for each age category does not add up to 100, given that the remaining respondents either chose other prime ministers or selected the option Don't know/Can't say.

Question: Who according to you has been the best prime minister of your country?

Source: CPR-CVoter Survey • Created with Datawrapper

Satisfaction with Prime Minister Modi

We also asked our respondents how satisfied they were with the performance of India's current prime minister. Around 54 per cent reported that they were very satisfied, while 25 per cent said that they are somewhat satisfied. Only 15 per cent of the respondents told us that they were very dissatisfied and five per cent were somewhat dissatisfied. However, there is a variation across social groups in satisfaction with prime minister Modi's leadership (Table 11). Upper-caste Hindus are the most satisfied whereas Scs and religious minorities seem to be the least satisfied.

Table 11: High Satisfaction with Modi's Performance

Social Group	Satisfied	Dissatisfied
Upper Caste	88	10
Other Backward Classes	83	16
Scheduled Caste	73	25
Scheduled Tribes	81	19
Muslim	62	34
Others	68	29

*Note: The total does not add up to 100 because the remaining respondents chose Can't say/ Don't know.
Question: How satisfied are you with the leadership of your current Prime Minister?*

Source: CPR-CVoter Survey • Created with Datawrapper

Conclusion

This section highlights that Indians still consider Mahatma Gandhi as the greatest South Asian. However, the popularity of Gandhi is more among respondents with lower educational backgrounds. Among India's Prime Ministers, Narendra Modi remains extremely popular across the demographic divide. This perception may be biased due to the recency effect, but the distance between him and the second most popular Prime Minister indicates that Modi is likely to have a lasting impact on Indian politics.

SECTION H: RELIGION AND LANGUAGE— THE TIES THAT BIND

Identities are primary social markers and as Amartya Sen reminded us long ago that an individual carries multiple identities. On one hand, such identities shape 'us' versus 'them' divisions, and on the other, they build broader collective relationships. The subcontinent is inherently heterogeneous and complex, where people possess multiple social and cultural identities. Over time, some social axes become more prominent and salient due to shifts in cultural undertones, historical events, politics, and literature. The partition of the subcontinent marked the flash point of nationalism emanating from religious and ethnic identities. Even 75 years after the Partition, these differences in identities stand crucial in formulating the public sphere and the interactions people have among themselves.

For most Indians, religion continues to be an important aspect of their everyday life. Secularisation, an important feature of modernity, has somewhat modest effects on the Indian subcontinent. Indians have multifarious identities and, in the presence of other ascriptive identities, religion does not take the dominant position that defines the lives of people.

This section will focus on religiosity and its impact on personal ties, religious intolerance, and the perceived safety of social groups in the nation.

The Salience of Religion and Language

When asked the question of whether they have become more religious or less religious compared to five years ago, only 15 per cent of the participants responded that they have become less religious while 33 per cent responded they became more religious; 43 per cent of the participants recording their response to be the same as before. What this could point us to is the increasing influence of religion in not just the public sphere but also the political sphere.

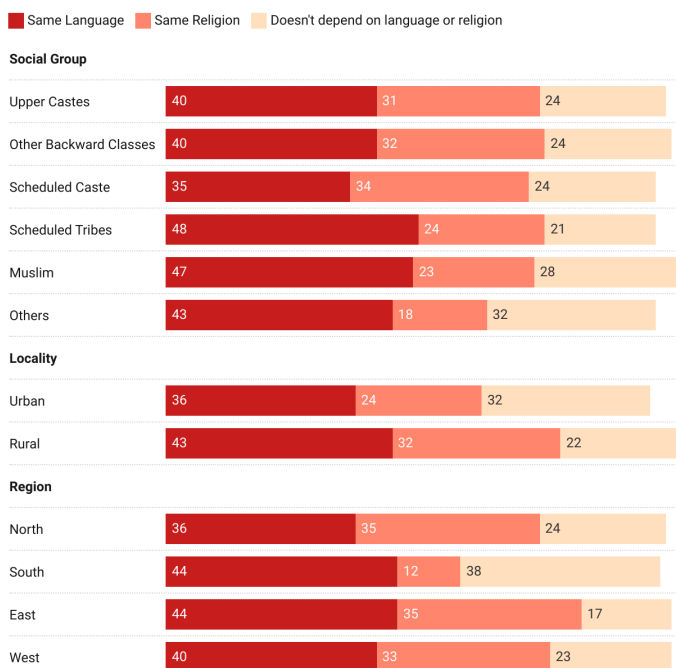
This particular finding concurs with the study by Pew Research Center that India is a highly religious society (PEW Research Center 2021).

We asked respondents if they feel closer to a person who speaks the same language or to a person who belongs to their religion. On average, people felt closer on linguistic lines rather than religious lines, with 41 per cent choosing the language and 29 per cent choosing a religion. Around 25 per cent also said that they did not feel closeness based on language and religion.

Indians across social groups felt more connected to others based on language than religion. Among the major social groups, religious minorities were the least likely to feel connected with someone from the same religion. Only 23 per cent of Muslims reported feeling close on the grounds of religion compared to 31 per cent of upper-caste Hindus and 34 per cent of SCs (Figure 29).

Geographically, language is a more prominent axis in the south and east. Meanwhile, religion is more salient in the north and east. Respondents from the south (44 per cent), east (44 per cent), and west (40 per cent) of India were more aligned to linguistic lines while participants from the north (35 per cent), East (35 per cent), and west (33 per cent) of the nation were more inclined toward religious lines. A greater number of participants from the south (38 per cent) expressed that language or religion did not matter.

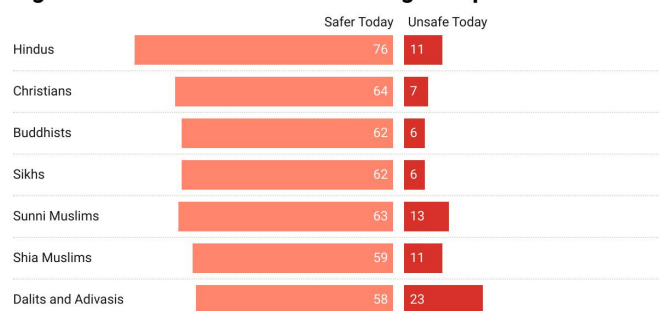
Respondents from rural areas were found to have a greater proclivity toward both linguistic and religious lines whereas their urban counterparts believed that linguistic and religious identity doesn't matter.

Figure 29: Closeness Based on Linguistic Identity or Religion

Note: The total does not add up to 100. Remaining respondents chose the option Don't know/Can't say.
Question: Do you feel close to another person based on religion or language?

Source: CPR-CVoter Survey • Created with Datawrapper

Among the SCs, only 55 per cent think Dalits and Adivasis are safer today and 60 per cent of the scheduled Tribe respondents were of the view that Dalits and Adivasis are safer. A little over half of the Muslim respondents think that Shia and Sunni Muslims are safer today. The perceived safety of marginalized sections and religious minorities is worrisome considering serious concerns over rising majoritarian sentiments.

Figure 30: How Safe do the Following Groups Feel?

Note: The total does not add up to 100. Remaining respondents either chose the option "Same as before, no change" or the option "Don't know/Can't say." The categories mentioned above were collapsed as follows -
1. The option Safer Today includes responses "Much safer today" and "somewhat safer today."
2. The option Unsafe Today includes responses "Much unsafe today" and "somewhat unsafe today."

Question: As compared to 10 years ago, how safe do you think the following groups feel in your country today?
Source: CPR-CVoter Survey • Created with Datawrapper

Religious Tolerance

India, being home to many religious groups, has since independence made sure to ensure the safety of religious minorities and due respect is given to all religions. The Indian version of secularism - *Sarva Dharma Sambhava* - is practised by the state keeping the nation's history and religious diversity in mind. Recently, there have been increasing concerns about the state of safety regarding religious minorities and marginalized sections in India.

We asked respondents about the level of safety various social groups enjoyed today in comparison to 10 years ago. A majority of Indians thought that most groups were safer today than they were 10 years ago. However, the gradation of this perceived safety was different for different groups. For instance, 76 per cent of the respondents feel Hindus are safer today than they were 10 years ago, while Sunni Muslims (63 per cent), Shia Muslims (59 per cent), Dalits and Adivasis (58 per cent) are safer today (Figure 30).

We further analysed how each social group viewed its level of safety today in comparison to 10 years ago. Among upper caste Hindus, 76 per cent think that they are safer today, and in contrast, only 13 per cent of the respondents think they are unsafe.

We also asked respondents about how serious a problem religious intolerance was in India. Around 70 per cent said that it was either a very serious or a somewhat serious problem. Only 22 per cent responded that it was not serious at all.

Despite considering religious intolerance as a serious issue, there was a high approval among Indians of banning books and movies that hurt religious sentiments. This approval cut across the religious and demographic divides. The only stark divide that can be seen is between the northern and the southern regions (Table 12).

Table 12: Approval for Ban on Books and Movies that Hurt Sentiments

North	83
South	64
East	78
West	67

Note: The table only mentions the responses in the affirmative.
Question: Do you approve that films/books that hurt religious sentiments or any community should be banned?
Source: CPR-CVoter Survey • Created with Datawrapper

Conclusion

Religion remains an integral aspect for Indians in their daily lives with its influence increasing in the past few years. However, Indians also give greater importance to their linguistic identities. The public opinion on the role of religion in politics is somewhat contradictory. While a large majority feel that religious intolerance is a serious issue, many are also of the opinion that religious leaders should have a say in politics as well. Simultaneously, there is a high approval for banning books and films that hurt religious sentiments.

THE WAY FORWARD

The report has presented the perceptions, aspirations and concerns that Indians hold. They acknowledge the achievements and failures their nation has endured since independence. They reflected on the Partition of India-Pakistan and Pakistan-Bangladesh, and also on the possible reunification. In this survey, Indians displayed deep feelings of patriotism and exhibited greater confidence in the state of democracy and public institutions. Indian citizens remain politically well-versed to be able to discern serious issues like poverty, corruption and dynasticism that hinder the progress of their nation.

Amidst these positive findings, there are many areas of concern. Marginalized social groups are disadvantaged in accessing public goods and basic amenities like electricity and healthcare. The restrictions imposed on women by parochial norms and mores arrest their freedom and progress on multiple fronts. The safety of religious minorities and marginalized communities is another matter of serious concern.

However, these groups also display aspirational notions in the political and economic arena. They actively participate in political life and show an inclination for public offices. They have high trust in institutions and also do not shy away from expressing areas of concern that Indian democracy is facing.

While Indian society is deeply religious, it also shows closeness to linguistic identities. Like any other nationality, Indians are proud citizens. They celebrate Indian democracy yet show concerns about the shortcomings.

This report captures the Indian side of the journey since the partition. In the subsequent reports in the series, we look forward to understanding how the citizens of Bangladesh and Pakistan see their nation and neighbours. We believe that a comparative picture of the subcontinent will give a glimpse of the hopes, aspirations and anxieties of people in these nations bounded by common history but separated by the boundaries of the nation-states.



REFERENCES

- Balakrishnan, Pulapre. "The recovery of India: Economic growth in the Nehru era." *Economic and Political Weekly* (2007): 52-66.
- Bates, Crispin. "The hidden story of partition and its legacies." *BBC history* 3 (2011).
- Bhattacharya, Shrayana. *Desperately Seeking Shah Rukh: India's Lonely Young Women and the Search for Intimacy and Independence*. New York: HarperCollins, 2021.
- Campbell, David E. "What is education's impact on civic and social engagement." In *Measuring the effects of education on health and civic engagement: Proceedings of the Copenhagen symposium*, pp. 25-126. 2006.
- Dal Bó, Ernesto, Frederico Finan, Olle Folke, Torsten Persson, and Johanna Rickne. "Who becomes a politician?." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 132, no. 4 (2017): 1877-1914.
- Dalrymple, William. "The great divide: The violent legacy of Indian partition." *The New Yorker* 29 (2015).
- Dantwala, M. L. "Economic Ideology of Jawaharlal Nehru." *Economic Weekly*, July (1964): 1209-1211.
- Datta, Antara. *Refugees and borders in South Asia: The great exodus of 1971*. Routledge, 2012.
- Fukuyama, Francis. "The end of history?." *The national interest* 16 (1989): 3-18.
- Gang, Ira N., Kunal Sen, and Myeong-Su Yun. "Is caste destiny? Occupational diversification among Dalits in rural India." *The European Journal of Development Research* 29, no. 2 (2017): 476-492.
- George, Siddharth Eapen, and Dominic Ponattu. "How do political dynasties affect economic development? Theory and Evidence from India." (2018).
- Government of India. "Periodic Labor Force Survey (PLFS) Annual Report (July 2018–June 2019)." (2020).
- Haushofer, J., and E. Fehr. 2014. "On the Psychology of Poverty." *Science* 344 (6186): 862–67.
- Heine, Steven J., and Darrin R. Lehman. "Cultural variation in unrealistic optimism: Does the West feel more vulnerable than the East?." *Journal of personality and social psychology* 68, no. 4 (1995): 595.
- Hodge, Joel. "The Catholic Church in Timor-Leste and the Indonesian occupation: A spirituality of suffering and resistance." *South East Asia Research* 21, no. 1 (2013): 151-170.
- "India National Multidimensional Poverty Index Baseline Report." Niti Aayog. https://www.niti.gov.in/sites/default/files/2021-11/National_MPI_India-11242021.pdf.
- Jeffrey, James. "Church and conflict in South Sudan." (2018).
- Kohli, Atul. *The State and Poverty in India*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.

REFERENCES

- Lee, Yueh-Ting, and Martin EP Seligman. "Are Americans more optimistic than the Chinese?." *Personality and social psychology bulletin* 23, no. 1 (1997): 32-40.
- Mandal, Debashis. "Nehru and the Development of Science in India" In *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, vol. 71, pp. 1168-1175. Indian History Congress, 2010.
- Milbrath, Lester W. "Political participation." In *The handbook of political behavior*, pp. 197-240. Springer, Boston, MA, 1981.
- Nanda, Meera. *The god market: How globalization is making India more Hindu*. NYU Press, 2011.
- Periodic Labor Force Survey (PLFS) — Quarterly Bulletin [January-March 2022], Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation
- Pew Research Center. "Religion in India: tolerance and segregation." In *Pew Forum*. 2021.
- Pronin, Emily. "How we see ourselves and how we see others." *Science* 320, no. 5880 (2008): 1177-1180.
- Singh, Prabhpreet. 2016. "Protests Rose by 55% in India from 2009 to 2014 – and the Literate States Led the Charge." *Scroll*. in. December 2, 2016. <https://scroll.in/article/822918/protests-rose-by-55-in-india-from-2009-to-2014-and-literate-states-led-the-charge>.
- Sinha Roy, S., & Van Der Weide, R. (2022). *Poverty in India has Declined over the Last Decade but not as Much as Previously Thought*.
- "The Level of Economic Optimism within a Country May Be a Key Factor in Determining Voter Turnout." 2014. EUROPP. November 2014. <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/euoppblog/2014/11/01/the-level-of-economic-optimism-within-a-country-may-be-a-key-factor-in-determining-voter-turnout/>
- Unit, Economist Intelligence. "Democracy Index 2019. A year of democratic setbacks and popular protest." (2020).
- Wyman, Mark. *DPs: Europe's Displaced Persons, 1945–51*. Cornell University Press, 1998.
- Verma, Rahul, and Satyam Shukla. "India@75 survey: Political divide rising, creating strain in relationships." *mint*, August 14, 2022. <https://www.livemint.com/politics/news/india75-survey-political-divide-rising-creating-strain-in-relationships-11660477190595.html>.
- Yadav, Yogendra. "Understanding the second democratic upsurge: Trends of Bahujan participation in electoral politics in the 1990s." *Transforming India: Social and political dynamics of democracy* 145 (2000).

