

Human personal Freedom Index 2020

December 28, 2020

In news

India ranks 111 in the personal freedom index

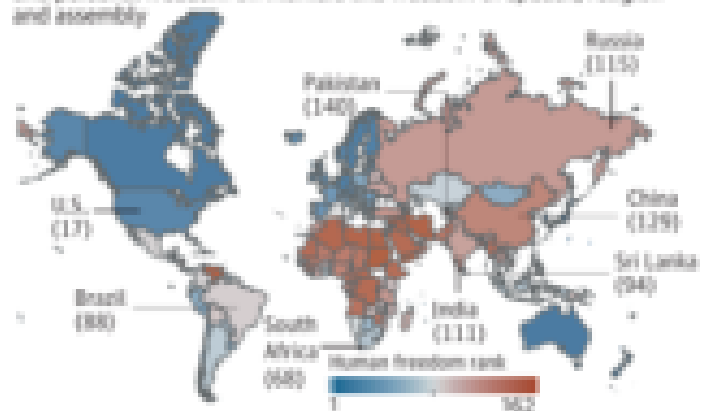
Global perspective

- It noted a decrease in personal freedoms since 2008 globally.
- The index covered 76 indicators of personal, civic and economic freedom
- New Zealand was ranked one in the index, followed by Switzerland and Hong Kong.
- The three least-free countries in descending order are Venezuela, Sudan, and Syria,
- The Human Freedom Index 2020 uses data from 2008 to 2018
- It was released by the Cato Institute in the United States and Fraser Institute in Canada
- The countries that ranked in the top 10 are New Zealand, Switzerland, Hong Kong, Denmark, Australia, Canada, Ireland, Estonia, and Germany and Sweden (with the last two tied in the 9th place).
- Japan ranked 11th, the UK and the US were tied in the 17th place.
- While Syria was ranked the worst, followed by Sudan, Venezuela, Yemen and Iran.
- The index is calculated using 76 distinct indicators of personal and economic freedom in areas such as rule of law, security and safety, religion, legal system and property rights, and access to sound money.

Clipped wings

The recently released Human Freedom Index report placed India at the 111th spot among 162 nations for the year 2018, a fall of 17 places since 2017. The index measures personal and economic freedom in countries using as many as 76 indicators. India's worst falls since 2008 were recorded under indicators measuring freedom of religion and the freedom to associate, assemble and to form or join political/commercial organisations. Overall, compared to 2008, the score measuring individual freedom deteriorated in the country in 2018, while that for economic freedom improved. **By Nareesh Singaravelu and Sumant Sen**

MAPPING FREEDOM | The map depicts the 2018 ranking of countries under the Human Freedom Index (HFI). The darker the red, the lower the ranking, and the darker the blue, the higher. The HFI measures economic freedom with indicators like freedom to trade, and personal freedom on markers like freedom of speech, religion and assembly.



PERSONAL AND ECONOMIC FREEDOM | The tables list India's rank in 2018 (in brackets) and ratings on a scale of 0 to 10, where 10 represents more freedom under select indicators of personal freedom and economic freedom in 2008 and 2018, and the corresponding Z-scores. The Z-score is a measure of how many standard deviations away from the mean score a country's rating is for a particular indicator. The higher the Z-score, the better the country fared in that indicator. For instance, India had a positive Z-score under media freedom in 2008, indicating an above-average rating. In 2018, it dropped below zero.

Personal freedom indicator	2008 score	2018 score	2008 Z-score	2018 Z-score
Personal freedom (116)	6.55	6.43	+0.37	+0.49
Rule of law (102)	4.30	4.13	-0.85	-0.45
Safety and security (88)	7.60	8.06	-0.45	-0.08
Religious freedom (115)	6.67	5.04	-0.52	-1.34
Association, assembly and civil society (111)	7.63	6.30	0.93	-0.32
Media freedom (85)	6.21	5.00	0.71	-0.14

India's rating dropped across various indicators for personal freedom, such as safety from physical aggression and freedom to practice a religion of one's choosing. Though the overall Z-score here increased marginally, it still remains under zero. Besides, since 2008, India's ranking dropped 14 places under personal freedom.

Economic freedom indicator	2008 score	2018 score	2008 Z-score	2018 Z-score
Economic freedom (100)	6.40	6.56	-0.44	-0.71
Size of government (34)	7.32	7.16	0.47	0.44
Legal system and property rights (77)	5.78	5.07	0.31	-0.13
Sound money (88)	6.69	8.34	-0.78	0.04
Freedom to trade internationally (119)	5.85	5.71	-0.90	-0.94
Regulation (122)	6.74	6.53	-0.58	-0.55

Though India improved marginally overall, the Z-score worsened for indicators such as size of government (which measures taxation and govt. spending), legal system and property rights, and freedom to trade internationally. The country's score improved significantly for the "sound money" indicator, which measures inflation and freedom to own foreign currency.

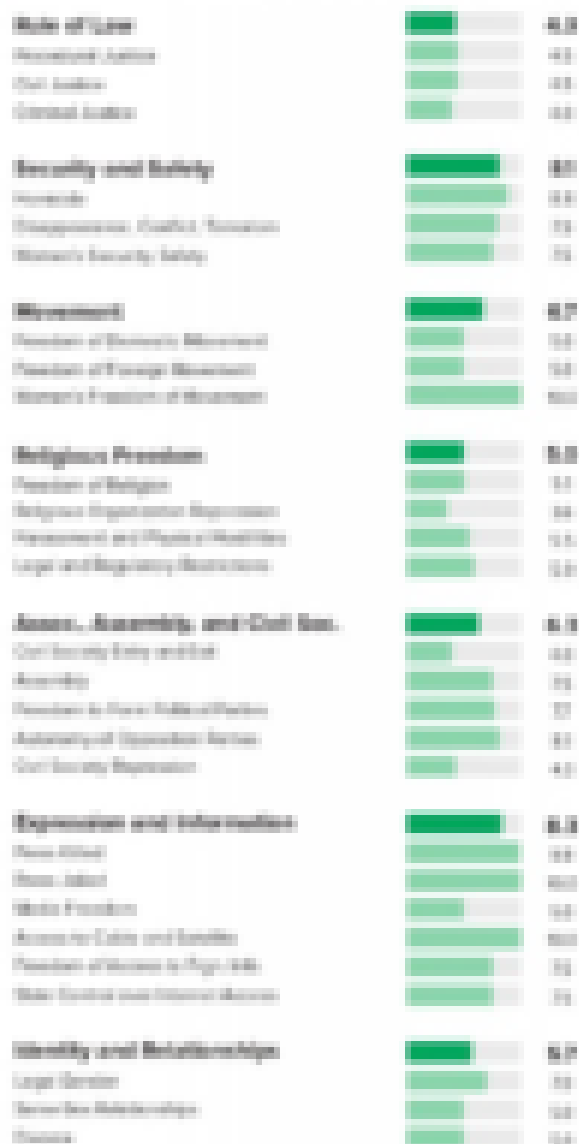
India's status

- The global ranking covers personal, civil and economic freedom, it placed India at 111 out of 162 countries
- It ranks India's neighbouring countries such as China-129, Bangladesh-139 and Pakistan at 140

Personal Freedom

100/162 Ranking

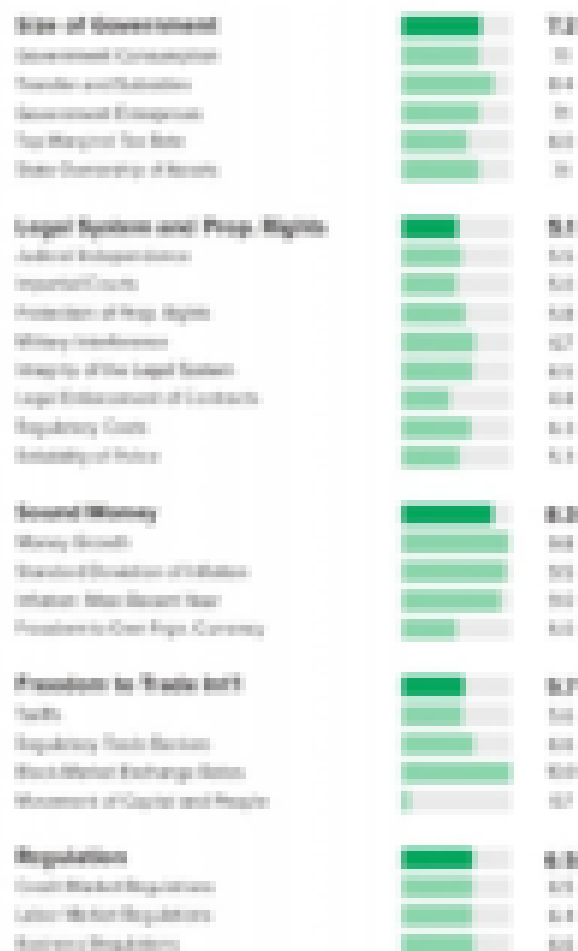
Score 6.30



Economic Freedom

105/162 Ranking

Score 6.56



Human Freedom

Score over Time



Ranking over Time

