

Social Hostilities Index (SHI)

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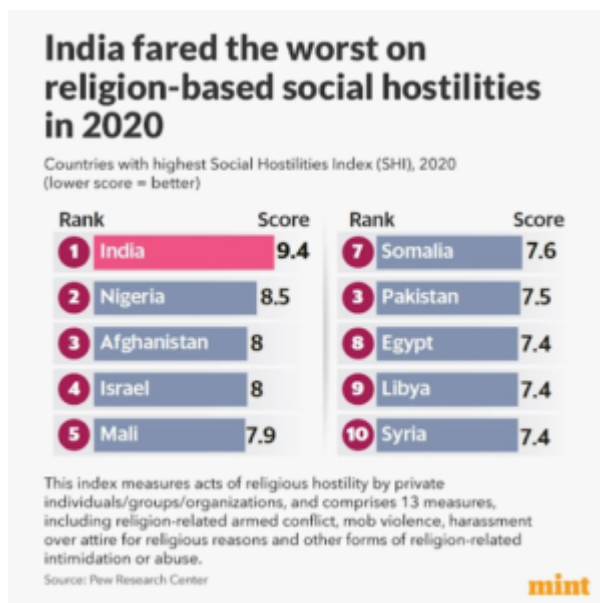
In news— The US think-tank Pew Research Center has published the SHI recently.

Key findings of the index-

- **The SHI measures acts of religious hostility by private individuals, organizations or groups.**
- **The index comprises 13 metrics, including religion-related armed conflict or terrorism and mob or sectarian violence.**
- **According to the report, among the most populous countries, India, Nigeria, Pakistan, Egypt and Bangladesh had “very high” social hostilities involving religion.**
- **As per the index India was among a handful of countries that saw religious hostilities in the early stages of the covid-19 pandemic in 2020.**
- **Overall, the country had the highest rate of social tensions along religious lines globally in 2020, the report showed.**
- **At 9.4 out of a maximum possible score of 10, India’s Social Hostilities Index (SHI) in 2020 was worse than neighbouring Pakistan and Afghanistan, and a further increase in its own index value for 2019. A higher score is worse. The report covered 198 countries.**
- **India fared much better on a second index: the Government Restrictions Index (GRI). This index looks at laws, policies and state actions restricting religious beliefs and practices.**
- **China ranked the worst in GRI, with a score of 9.3. India’s 34th rank was enough to categorize it among countries with “high” levels of such government**

restrictions.

- **The GRI comprises 20 measures, including efforts by governments to ban particular faiths, prohibit conversion, limit preaching or give preferential treatment to one or more religious groups.**
- **The report also looked at the impact of the covid-19 pandemic on religious persecution in 2020.**
- India was one of just four countries in the world that saw pandemic-related social hostilities against religious groups involving physical violence or vandalism by private individuals or organizations. Argentina, Italy and the US were the others.
- It said that India was also among the countries in which **private individuals or organizations linked the spread of the coronavirus to religious groups.**



Official Data-

- By India's own official crime statistics, the picture is more mixed.
- **According to police data, religious riots for which cases were filed rose substantially in 2020, and declined again in 2021.**
- But there have been significant variations over time, and the numbers are too low as a share of overall

rioting incidents to indicate a definitive trend.

- Moreover, the home ministry no longer provides data on “communal incidents”, and the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) now only publishes data on religious “riots”.
- Even within available data, there are large gaps between the data provided by the NCRB and the home ministry.