

## Narrative I

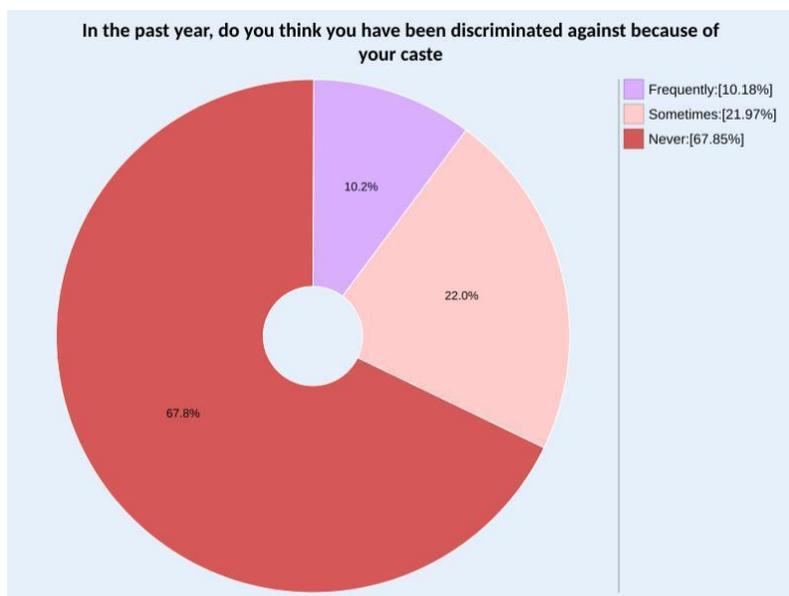
### Attitudes towards Community and Perceived Sense of Fraternity

One of three themes covered by the Lok Survey Project is attitude towards community, fraternity and the nature of solidarity (or lack thereof) across Indian society. This theme is reflected in Lok Surveys II and IV. Narrative I draws upon selected questions from surveys II and IV to provide a sense of the cleavages that continue to divide India's social fabric. These survey questions reveal the extent to which perceived discrimination and prejudice prevail across different communities, social strata, economic groups and distinct locations. Narrative I provides a flavor of these findings and points to areas for possible further research. For each question, attitudinal data trends are summarized, followed by an expanded narrative.

#### 1. Experiences of caste-based discrimination (survey II):

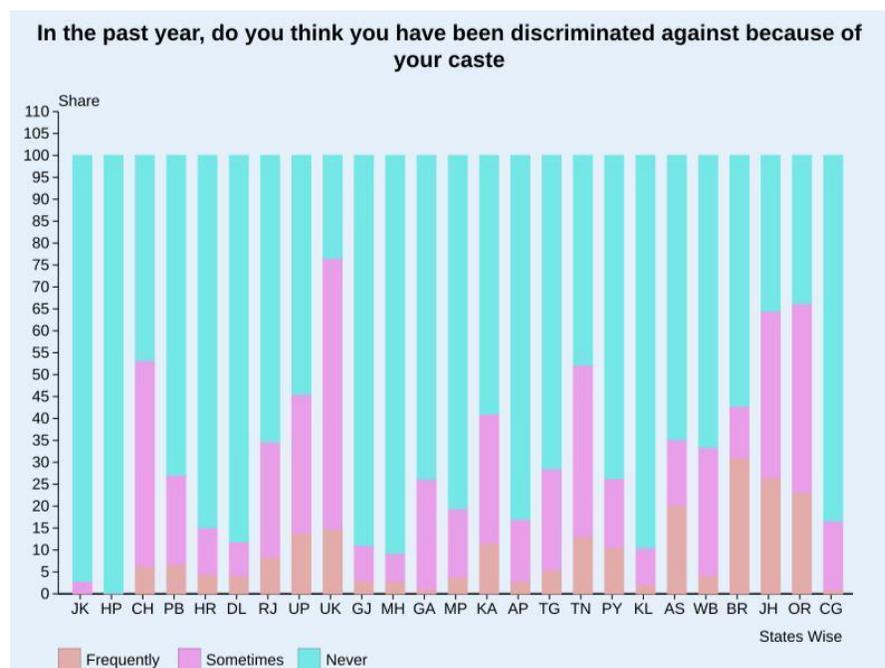
Surveyors asked respondents, "In the past year, do you think you were discriminated against because of your caste?" Responses to this question point to connections between people's experiences of caste-based discrimination and their status attributes (i.e. education level, gender etc.).

Across India, perceptions of caste-based discrimination and cleavages remain pervasive. Notably, **32.2%**<sup>1</sup> of respondents reported experiencing such treatment. A significant **10.2%** reported *frequent* instances of discrimination. Given the sensitivities associated with such experiences, these figures are particularly noteworthy. Findings therefore reveal the persistence of pervasive prejudice across the country.



<sup>1</sup> All percentages have been rounded up/ to the nearest decimal point.

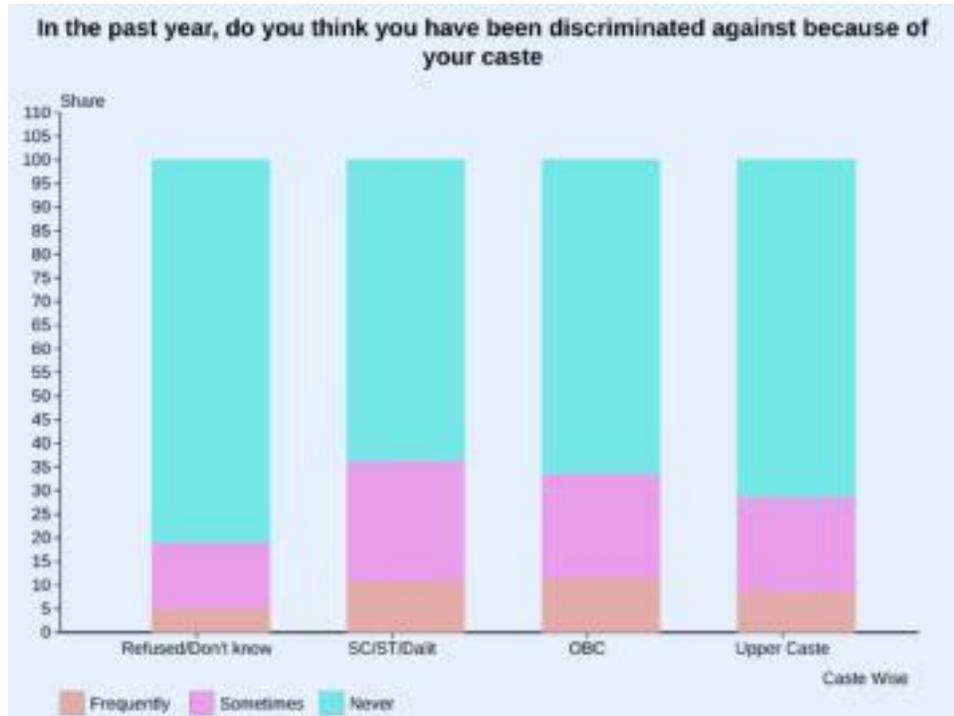
In 11 states<sup>2</sup> out of 25, respondents reported experiences of caste-based discrimination at levels higher than the national average. **Uttarakhand, Orissa and Jharkhand did so most visibly** -- 76.5%, 66.2% and 64.5% respectively -- compared to the national average of 32.15%. While Bihar and Assam report caste-based discrimination at relatively lower levels (42.9% and 35.2% respectively) together with Jharkhand and Orissa, they do stand out for reporting **frequent instances of caste-based discrimination that surpass the national average** (31%, 26.5%, 23.1% and 20.3% compared to 10.2% respectively).



Class – as measured by both income and education – matters. Poor and uneducated respondents were most likely to report instances of caste-based discrimination, frequently or otherwise. The poorest and wealthiest respectively experience this treatment the **most and the least** (36.5% and 21.8% respectively) Similarly, respondents who have the least and most education respectively experience caste-based discrimination at slightly **higher and lower levels than the average Indian** (34.5% and 29.7% respectively).

<sup>2</sup> These states include: Uttarakhand (76.5%), Orissa (66.2%), Jharkhand (64.5%), Chandigarh (53.1%), Tamil Nadu (52.2%), Uttar Pradesh (45.5%), Bihar (42.9%), Karnataka (41%), Assam (35.2%), Rajasthan (35.2%) and West Bengal (33.4%).

Upper caste respondents were least likely to experience caste-based discrimination, while the **opposite was true of their lower caste counterparts** (28.6% and 36.3% respectively). The latter were 4.3% more likely to report such experiences than the average Indian.



Gender does not have a material influence on the likelihood of experiencing caste-based discrimination. Men (34.3%) and women (30.3%) respectively report having these experiences at only 2% above and below the national average.

Caste-based discrimination is more prevalent in rural than urban India. 33.6% and 29.3% of respondents in each location respectively experience this treatment, with rural India aligning most closely to the national average.

39.9% of India's youth (under 20) report experiencing caste-based discrimination – this is more than any other group and the average Indian. In contrast, respondents over 50 experience caste-based discrimination at rates close to but just below the national average (31.4%).

Hindus were just as likely as the average Indian to report experiencing caste-based discrimination **more likely to do so than Muslims** (33.2% and 29.3% respectively).

*Expanded narrative*

Caste-based discrimination remains pervasive across the country. Unsurprisingly, therefore, only 28.6% of upper castes report experiencing discrimination of this kind. Equally intuitive is the fact that lower caste respondents are more likely to have such experiences than the average Indian. Interestingly, 11.4% of OBCs report experiencing caste-based discrimination *frequently* – more than any other caste group and the average Indian. This dynamic points to possible areas for future research at the state level. In Bihar, for instance, **OBCs were most likely to report experiencing caste-based discrimination frequently** (35.1% compared to 28.2% and 23.3% for upper castes and SC/ST/Dalits respectively). Could this be because of the political mobilisation of the Yadavs and Kurmis in this state? Further research is warranted to better understand this phenomenon.

The particularly high instances of caste-based discrimination – occurring both sometimes and frequently -- in Orissa and Jharkhand might reflect the significant concentration of Adivasi/tribal communities in these states. We invite further research that draws upon Lok data to explore these dynamics together with those emerging in some of the other 12 states where caste-based discrimination surpasses the national average. For instance, in Tamil Nadu, where over 50% of respondents report experiencing such treatment, caste-based DMK and AIDMK movements might have accentuated cleavages over time. Importantly, our findings demonstrate that caste-based prejudices are not geographically concentrated but rather span multiple regions of the country -- North, East, South and West (Rajasthan in the latter case).

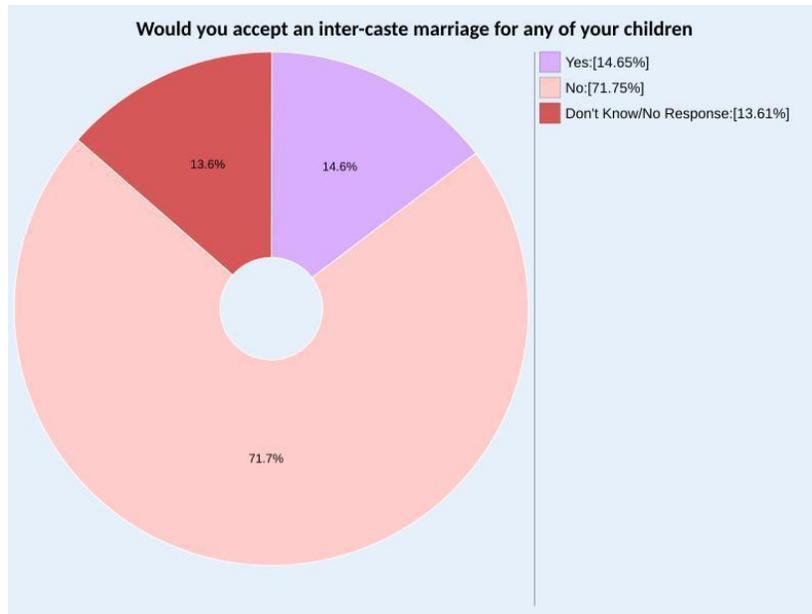
India's rural/urban divide is interestingly most pronounced amongst those experiencing **frequent discrimination** (11.4% and 7.8% respectively). Rural India surpasses the national average by just over 1% while urban India falls below it by 2.3%, suggesting caste identities are somewhat more divisive in rural parts of the country.

**With age, people across India are less likely to report experiencing caste-based discrimination.** This is true overall and for those reporting frequent discrimination. 72.1% of those 30 and below reported experiencing such treatment compared to 63.2% of those 31 and above. Our findings about class – both income and education measures – suggest financial and cultural (i.e. education) capital can protect against targeted caste-based discrimination.

While Hindus are more likely than Muslims to experience caste-based discrimination, as many as 29.3% Muslims reported experiencing this form of discrimination. This would suggest that caste identities continue to be important even amongst non-Hindu communities. Future research should explore in greater detail why this might be the case given the uniqueness of caste to Hinduism.

## 2. Attitudes towards inter-caste marriage (Survey IV):

Surveyors asked respondents, “Would you accept an inter-caste marriage for any of your children?” Responses to this question underscore persisting caste based prejudices at the country level, and via social group status and identity. The vast majority of respondents --- a notable **71.8%** -- would not accept inter-caste marriage for their children. Only **14.6%** would. This underscores entrenched prejudices and widespread intolerance across the country.



**Ten states<sup>3</sup>** surpass the national average in their tolerance for inter-caste marriage. The degree to which this is the case varies significantly. **Maharashtra is effectively as tolerant as India on average** (14.9% versus 14.6% respectively), while **Assam is significantly more tolerant** (63.1%).

Lower caste respondents are most accepting of inter-caste marriage for their children. 17.2% hold this position compared to the India average of only 14.6%.

Gender does not appear to have a material influence on attitudes towards inter-caste marriage. Men are only marginally less likely than women to accept this practice (a

<sup>3</sup> Assam (63.1%), Goa (47.3%), Jammu and Kashmir (43.6%), West Bengal (35.8%), Puducherry (29.7%), Jharkhand (22.4%), Rajasthan (20.7%), Bihar (17.7%), Uttarakhand (15.6%) and Maharashtra (14.9%).

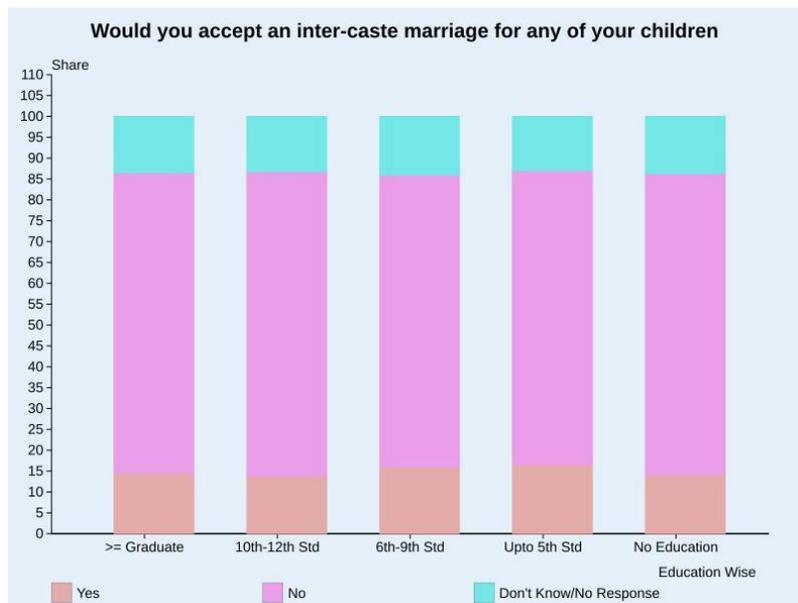
difference of 0.41%) For both men and women, figures closely **mirror the national average** (14.9 and 14.5% respectively).

Age does not have a material influence on attitudes towards inter-caste marriage. The share of older respondents willing to accept inter-caste marriage for their children is **not materially different from the India average** (14.5% and 14.4% for those 31-50 and above 50 respectively). **India's youth are more accepting than the average Indian, but only minimally so** (of those under twenty and aged 20-30, 15.6% and 15.1% respectively accept this practice).

Unsurprisingly Muslims are most accepting of inter-caste marriage for their children. Hindus are effectively as accepting as the average Indian, while Muslims are close to 3% more tolerant (19.4%).

Inter-caste marriage for one's own child/children is most acceptable in rural India -- slightly more than in India on average (15.4%). Conversely, urban India is slightly less tolerant (13.2%).

Class influences attitudes towards inter-caste marriage distinctly through income and education respectively. It appears to be an inverse relationship. 17% of poor respondents accept inter-caste marriage reflecting greater levels of tolerance than all other income groups and the average Indian, whereas 14.95% and 15.44% of higher middle income and rich respondents are tolerant of the practice. Education status on the other hand is not clearly linked to attitudes about inter-caste marriage. **Uneducated respondents are almost as tolerant as those most educated** (14.2% and 14.5% respectively).



### *Expanded Narrative*

The widespread intolerance towards inter-caste marriage across India reveals deep societal cleavages. The fact that inter-caste marriage is most accepted within lower-caste communities is likely a reflection of people's desire for upward mobility. Conversely, greater resistance within OBC and upper-caste communities might reflect an inclination to preserve the "purity" of their privileged caste status. **While both OBCs and upper castes are less tolerant than the average Indian, of the two, OBCs are less so** (13.1% and 14.6% respectively). This might reflect anxieties associated with occupying a precarious position within the caste system.

Amongst the ten states surpassing the national average, tolerance for inter-caste marriage varies notably. **Assam, Goa, Jammu Kashmir and West Bengal are particularly tolerant** (63.1%, 47.3%, 46.6% and 35.8% respectively). Conversely, **Puducherry (29.7%), Jharkhand (22.4%), Rajasthan (20.7%), Bihar (17.7%), Uttarakhand (15.6%) and Maharashtra (14.9%)** are less so. Further research is required to shed light on why these states are more tolerant than India on average and what accounts for the notable intra-state variations.

Overall, gender does not materially influence caste-based and religiously motivated discrimination. Further research is required to understand why this is the case. Similarly, why younger people are not materially more open to inter-caste marriage warrants further research.

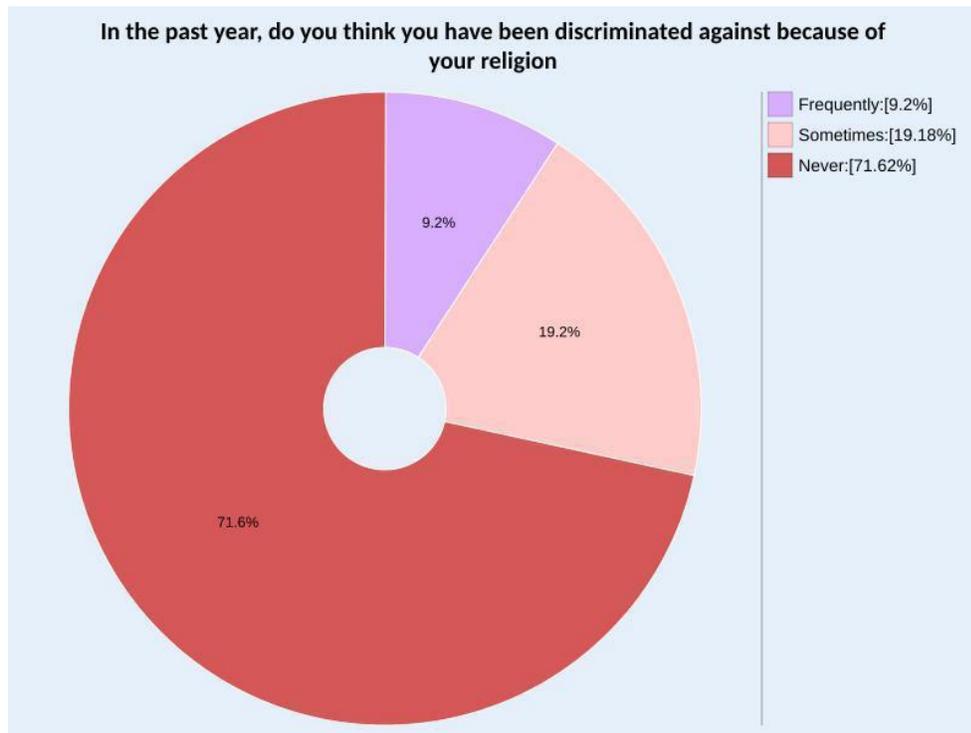
Given the historical importance of caste to Hinduism, it is unsurprising that Muslims are more accepting of inter-caste marriage. Yet a very large share of Muslim respondents too reported not being open to inter-caste marriage. A better understanding of how religion shapes and interacts with attitudes towards this practice therefore demands further research.

The data suggests the need for a deeper exploration of the rural and urban divide in attitudes towards inter-caste marriage. Although inter-caste marriage is most acceptable in urban India, caste is just as equally far from "dead" in these spaces. Further analysis on differing attitudes across rural and urban India might illuminate complex motivations for caste-based prejudices.

The role of class in shaping attitudes towards inter-caste marriage is another area for further research. Poorer respondents might be more tolerant of this practice, anticipating possibilities for upward mobility as caste boundaries are transcended. Wealthier respondents on the other hand might be less supportive of these practices. The role of education – as an indicator of class – is less clear and requires particular attention. Surprisingly, the Surveys suggest that attaining the highest level of education does not inevitably make Indians materially more accepting of inter-caste marriage.

### **3. Experiences of religiously motivated discrimination (survey II):**

Surveyors asked respondents, “In the past year, do you think you were discriminated against because of your religion?” Given the limited scope of this analysis, we consider only Hindus and Muslims.<sup>4</sup> Religiously motivated discrimination persists in India, with **28.4%** of respondents having experienced such treatment. These trends are summarized below followed by an expanded narrative.



Eleven states<sup>5</sup> surpass the national average in their reports of religiously motivated discrimination. There are significant variations amongst these states, with **Jharkhand, Orissa, Uttarakhand and Chandigarh reporting the highest incidences** (68.8%, 59.7%, 59.7% and 53.1%). **West Bengal and Rajasthan report the lowest** (32.7% and 31%).

Muslims report experiencing religiously motivated discrimination more than any other religious group, but **only by about 1% more than Hindus and the average Indian** (29.9% and 28.9%, respectively).

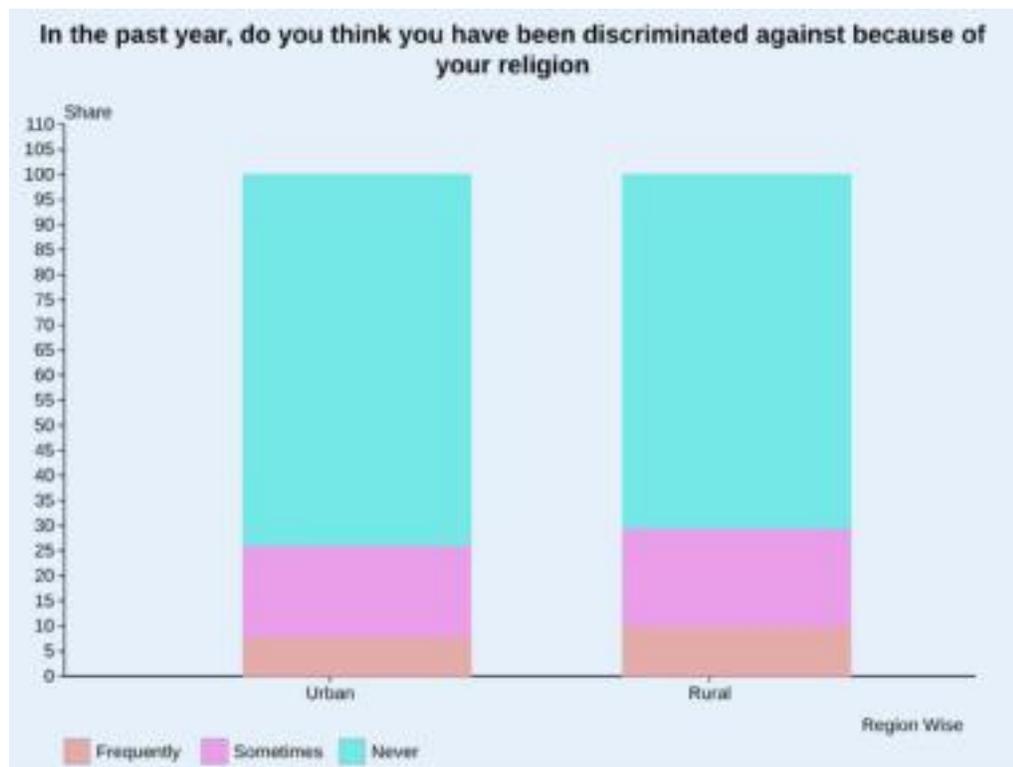
<sup>4</sup> Given the limited scope of this analysis we focus exclusively on Hindus and Muslims -- India's dominant religious community and largest religious minority respectively. Further analysis should utilize Lok data on other religious minorities.

<sup>5</sup> Jharkhand (68.8%), Orissa (59.7%), Uttarakhand (59.7%), Chandigarh (53.1%), Tamil Nadu (45%), Bihar (42%), Uttar Pradesh (38%), Karnataka (37.4%), Assam (33.1%), West Bengal (32.7%) and Rajasthan (31%). Punjab matches the national average.

**Men are more likely to report experiencing religiously motivated discrimination than women** (30.2% compared with 26.9%) and the average Indian.

Caste does not materially influence religiously motivated discrimination. 30.4%, 29.8% and 30.4% of upper castes, OBCs, and lower castes/tribals respectively experience this treatment. OBCs experience religiously motivated discrimination at levels closest to the average Indian.

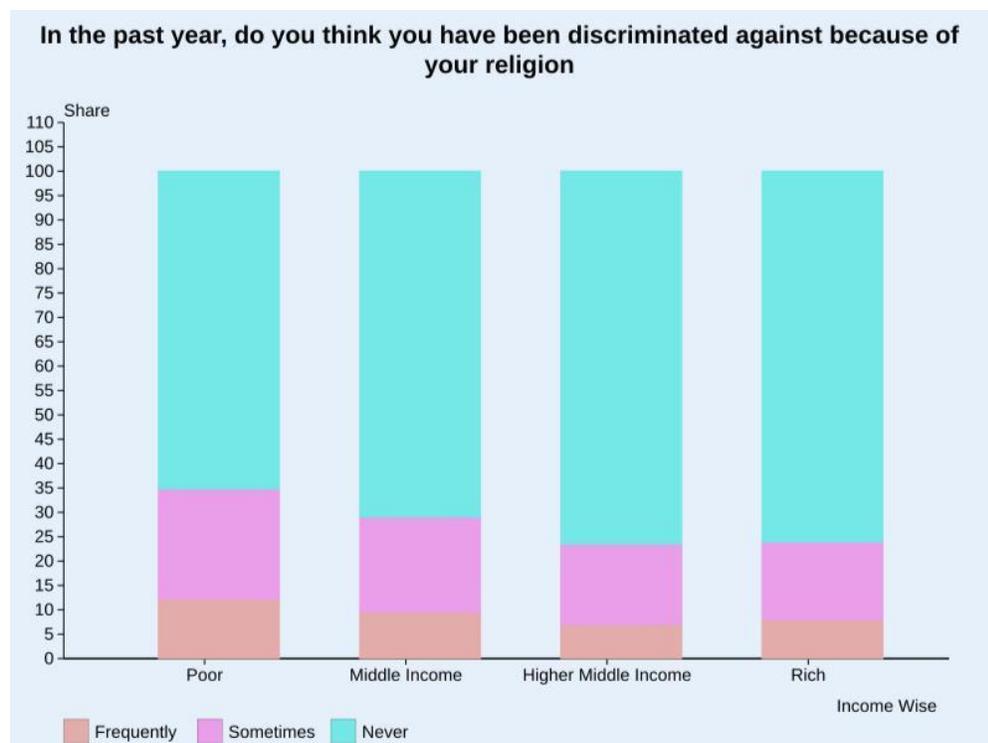
**Religiously motivated discrimination is most common in rural India** (29.5%, compared with 26.1% in urban India) and marginally more so than in India on average.



India's youth population (under 20) experiences religiously-motivated discrimination more than other groups (35.6%) and the average Indian.

Income and education measures of class shape experiences of religiously-motivated discrimination distinctly. When compared to all income groups and the average Indian, **the poor and rich are most and least likely to experience such treatment** (32.1% and 21.9% respectively). Education however reveals a more mixed pattern. Those with very little or no education reported experiencing religiously-motivated discrimination most often (29.9-30%). Although respondents educated beyond 5<sup>th</sup> grade were most protected

from such treatment, those with the highest levels of education (at least a graduate degree) did not receive the greatest protections.



### *Expanded narrative*

The eleven states that surpass India (on average) in their experiences of religiously-motivated discrimination vary widely in the degree to which they do so. We invite further research to unpack why such high levels of religious prejudice and variation exist. Exploring differences between Jharkhand and Orissa in the tribal belt, Uttarakhand and Chandigarh in the North and

Tamil Nadu and Karnataka<sup>6</sup> in the South for instance, would be particularly important.

Although **less than 10%** (9.20% precisely) of respondents at the country level reported being *frequently* discriminated against because of their religion – with the exception of Chandigarh, West Bengal, and Rajasthan -- the eleven states above reported higher equivalent incidences. Reports of frequent discrimination ranged from as high as 30.14%, 22.91% and 19.94% in the case of Bihar, Orissa and Jharkhand respectively, to **closer to the national average in the case of Assam, Uttar Pradesh and Karnataka** (9.95% 10.15% and 11.11% respectively). **Bihar in**

<sup>6</sup> The latter two – not mentioned earlier - report religiously motivated discrimination at 44.85% and 37.4% respectively.

**particular stands out – while the overall rate of religiously motivated discrimination in the state is not the highest, reports of frequent discrimination are higher than in any other state.**

Bihar requires further exploration not only in this regard but also in terms of the role caste plays in shaping experiences of religiously-motivated discrimination. Although beyond the scope of this narrative, Lok data reveals that in Bihar caste shapes religiously-motivated discrimination uniquely. While in India at large and in most of the Hindi Belt, SC/ST/Dalits are most likely to report experiencing such treatment, in Bihar this is true of OBCs. This trend mirrors question 1 in this analysis (i.e. on how caste identity shapes experiences of caste-based discrimination). Again, the Patidar agitation might account for some of these patterns and further research is warranted to better understand these dynamics. [visible through hyperlink after clicking on “state”].

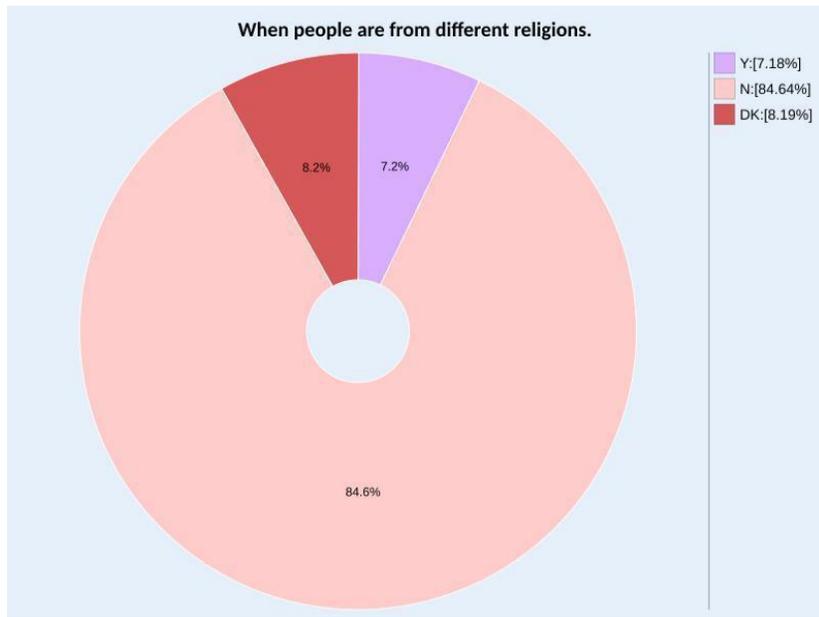
At the country level, gender does not materially influence experiences of religiously-motivated discrimination. However, Lok data points to some states where experiences of religiously-motivated discrimination appear more gendered – this is again an area for further analysis.

Although religious prejudices are concentrated in rural India, the contrast with urban India is not stark. We invite more detailed analysis using Lok data to explore variations across states. It will be particularly important to consider where such treatment is concentrated in urban India. Parallel research might also explore variations across age categories. While India’s youth (under 20) reports experiencing religiously-motivated discrimination more than any other age group, some states might diverge from this larger narrative.

The poor are most susceptible towards experiencing religiously motivated discrimination. However we find that once respondents have a minimum level of education (5<sup>th</sup> standard), further levels of education do not necessarily offer them greater protections. Deeper analysis might shed light on how these trends vary across states and geographical location. For instance, Chhattisgarh’s most educated respondents (none of whom attained the highest level of education/a graduate degree in our sample) report experiencing religiously motivated discrimination most frequently. Other states like Rajasthan reveal a more mixed reality -- one that deviates slightly from the national narrative. For example, those who are least and most educated respectively in Rajasthan are almost equally likely to experience religiously motivated discrimination.

#### **4. Attitudes towards inter-religious marriage (survey IV):**

Surveyors asked respondents, “Is inter-marriage acceptable if people are from different religions?” **84.6%** of respondents do not find this practice acceptable – a greater percentage than those opposed to inter-caste marriage for their own children. These findings point to the persistence of deep religiously rooted prejudices across the country. Broad trends are summarized below followed by an expanded narrative.



15 states are more intolerant of inter-religious marriage than India on average. In particular, in Himachal Pradesh, Haryana and Chandigarh 99.3%, 98.3% and 98.3% of respondents do not accept the practice. Of these 15 states, most are notably more intolerant than India on average. **Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Puducherry are exceptions that come close to the country average** (85.8%, 85.5% and 85.1% respectively).

**Gender does not materially influence attitudes toward inter-religious marriage. Men and women's attitudes fall just below and above the national average** (83.6% and 85.5% respectively).

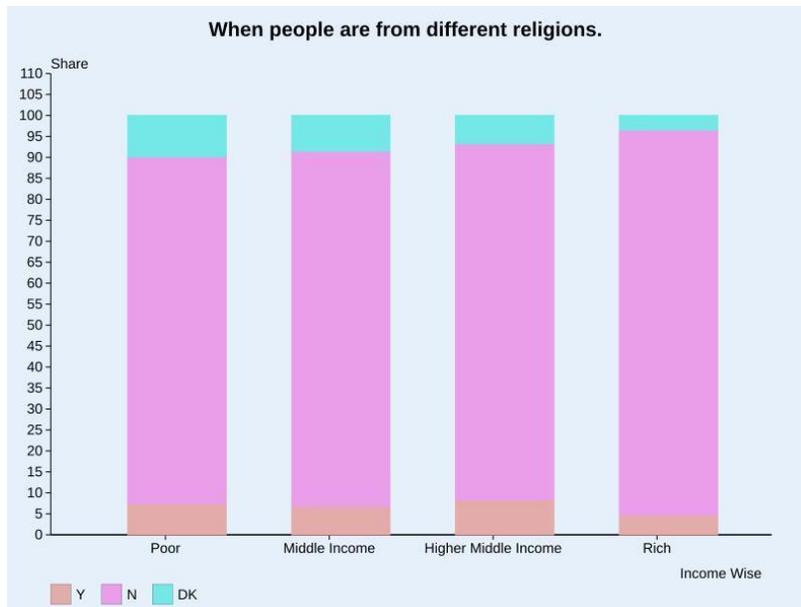
Age does not have a material influence on attitudes toward inter-religious marriage – all age groups fall less than a percentage point above or below the national average.

**Urban India is less accepting of inter-religious marriages than rural India** (86.8% as opposed to 83.53%) and the country on average.

Caste identity does not materially influence tolerance for inter-religious marriage – upper castes are less tolerant than both lower castes/tribal communities (85.6% and 84.3%) and the average Indian.

Religious identity does not materially influence tolerance for inter-religious marriage. In fact **Hindus and Muslims are effectively equally intolerant as one another** (84.4% and 84.9%) and the average Indian.

Only income measures of class appear to shape tolerance towards inter-religious marriage. While the poor are most tolerant of this practice compared to other income groups and the average Indian, **the rich are least accepting** (82.88% and 90.71% respectively). How education influences tolerance towards inter-religious marriage is less clear.



### *Expanded Narrative*

Perhaps most strikingly, country-level attitudes towards inter-religious marriage reveal that, irrespective of religion, caste, gender, age, rural/urban location, and educational status, all Indians are all roughly as (in)-tolerant of such marriages as each other and the average Indian. However, when measured by income level, things are quite different: the rich are noticeably least accepting of inter-religious marriages. This challenges the somewhat popular assumption that conservatism is most concentrated in poor communities, and demands further research.

Tolerance towards inter-religious marriage also varies notably across states. It is worth exploring further why some of the 15 states above the national average are more intolerant than others. Tamil Nadu and Rajasthan from the South and West of India respectively might be particularly interesting case studies given they also deviate from the national average on some of the issues highlighted by other questions above.

Research should also consider whether country-wide trends of (in)-tolerance towards inter-religious marriage vary noticeably at the state level. For instance, Hindus and Muslims do not differ notably in their views towards inter-religious marriage in India on average. However, some states clearly deviate from this national trend. **In Uttarakhand, for instance, more Hindus reject this practice when compared to Muslims (80.5% and 67.4%), while the opposite is true in Gujarat (88.6% and 94.0% respectively).** The particular history of communalism in Gujarat might explain this dynamic. Further research is required to corroborate this and understand the processes driving state based particularities.