



## The Idea of India in the 21st Century

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### Abstract

No Abstract.

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### References

1. See also Sunil Khilnani, *The Idea of India*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux Paperbacks June 1999 ISBN 13: 978-0-374-52591-0, ISBN 10: 0-374-52591-9, written 50 years after Independence.
2. See the delightful accounts in Jawaharlal Nehru's *Glimpses of World History: Being Further Letters to His Daughter Written in Prison and Containing a Rambling Account of History for Young People*. Penguin Books India. ISBN 0-670-05818-1. And his *Discovery of India*, Oxford University Press, 1946, ISBN 978-0195623598.
3. For example, see [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Madhav\\_Sadashiv\\_Golwalkar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Madhav_Sadashiv_Golwalkar). The Rashtriya Swyamsevak Sangh and the Vishwa Hindu Parishad champion this viewpoint.
4. Rather than keeping away from religion, in India the state gave equal respect to all religions.
5. Anyone who as read Alexandre Dumas *The Three Musketeers* will recall the power of the Church in Cardinal Richelieu.
6. This can be seen in the Fremen culture in Frank Herbert's classic novel, *Dune*.
7. In monist tradition, which I discuss below, Brahman is everywhere - in the tree.
8. See <http://koenraadest.bharatvani.org/books/wiah/ch3.htm>. I do not think passing these laws means India is a hindu state, as some believe.
9. <http://www.legalserviceindia.com/articles/sabano.htm>.
10. See for example, <http://ojls.oxfordjournals.org/content/24/4/671.abstract>.
11. Amartya Sen in his many writings describes the Muslims of this part of the world, as a distinct group referred to as, hindva muslims. Here in Brazil, I find my Brazilian friends introducing me as a, Hindi friend - the reference is to the country I come from, not religion.
12. In Indian law, a hindu is defined by exclusion - not a Christian, Muslim... This is a recognition of the fact that it is not a religion in the sense the others are. It is a way of life. See <http://www.religioustolerance.org/hinduism.htm> for one discussion.
13. Also called, Akhand Bharat, a concept akin to eretz Israel.
14. The most famous is B.R. Ambedkar's argument against a federal dominion, but it must be remembered that he objected to a specific proposal, not to a general federal form of government.
15. Ramachandra Guha, *India After Gandhi; The History of the World's Largest Democracy*, HarperCollins, 2007.
16. Contrast this with the treaty between India and Pakistan on the sharing of the water from the Indus basin, which as stood the test of time.
17. People are born into a caste. The term caste refers to the varna, or four fold classification of society - the Brahmins [keepers of tradition and ritual with a monopoly on Vedanta], Kshatriyas or soldiers, from among whom the kings are chosen, and banias or traders who keep the economy going. These three are the high castes. The fourth, shudras, consists of those whose occupations involve manual labour, like farming. Within this is a range of occupations, jatis, which runs into thousands.

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Beyond these four are those with, polluting work like leather tanning and are outcastes - also called untouchables, harijans etc, who now have constitutional protection through a Schedule in the constitution and so are called, Scheduled Castes. In the forested regions of the country there are indigenous people who are forest dwellers, who also enjoy constitutional protection as, Scheduled Tribes.

18. Indonesia too has many languages, but they have resolved this issue. By choosing the language of the smallest group, Malay, and making it the national language, everyone communicates with it while retaining their language at home.
19. Sanskrit and Pali are also the mother languages from which Thai, Malay etc. are derived. And in India, Tamil has little to do with Sanskrit; it is Dravidian. Tamil is also a national language in Malaysia and Singapore.
20. Other countries too share these epics, for example Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia. This is because of age old relationships that go beyond today's boundaries.
21. I recently came across a book by Zaid Ibrahim, in Kuala Lumpur, on this question of identity, titled, I too am Malay.
22. Mariana Alves has cautioned me - there are indigenous languages in Brazil. My wonder, though, remains.
23. Interestingly, these holy places are all in Asia. I do not know if this has any specific meaning.
24. For an erudite exposition see Outlines Of Indian Philosophy by M Hiriyanna, 2000, Motilal Banarsidass Pvt. Ltd.
25. A common quip is that India's contribution to mathematics is 0 - the concept of shunya or nothingness.
26. What can we do if the people we elect to office are corrupt? There is nothing we can do till the next election, and even then the new ones may be corrupt.
27. [http://www.thestatesman.net/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=365607:special-article&catid=38:editorial&from\\_page=search](http://www.thestatesman.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=365607:special-article&catid=38:editorial&from_page=search).
28. In 1993, the 73<sup>rd</sup> amendment to the Constitution brought in democratically elected local governments. Since the word, panchayat was used for them, in many minds the democratic nature of these new institutions got mixed up with the traditional caste structures. This is an interesting example of how the past and present interact in India, and how the Idea of India has to cope with old mindsets.
29. Samskruta is culture, and this is a process of adopting the culture of those higher in the caste hierarchy. It should not be confused with Sanskrit, the language. I mention this as it is sometimes spelled sanskritisation in English.
30. For a clear description see The Last Brahmin, Rani Sivasankara Sastry, Orient Blackswan, Hyderabad, 2009.
31. See the interesting new book by Branko Milanovic, The Haves and the Have-Nots, and the interesting chart on inequality. <http://economix.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/01/31/thehaves-and-the-have-nots/>.
32. The other Great Traditions have also evolved in India as a result of this interaction. Hindva Muslims differ from those elsewhere. Christianity too has imbued local practices. Hindu gods have a childhood - Balaganapathy or Balasaraswathy. In Bangalore we have the Infant Jesus church.
33. For an excellent discussion of these forces and energies, see V.S. Naipaul, India: A Million Mutinies Now, 1990. See also for a contemporary account from Bangalore of what young women are doing: <http://epaper.timesofindia.com/Repository/ml.asp?Ref=VE9JQkcvMjAxMS8wMy8wNyNBcjAwNDAw>.
34. An interesting suggestion to fight corruption is to treat small bribe giving as legal, to encourage people to complain without fear of punishment. See [http://finmin.nic.in/WorkingPaper/Act\\_Giving\\_Bribe\\_Legal.pdf](http://finmin.nic.in/WorkingPaper/Act_Giving_Bribe_Legal.pdf).
35. Rani Sivasankara Sarma, The Last Brahmin, op cit, for a lucid explanation.
36. Between 2001 and 2011, the population grew by 181 millions. This is believe, is the current population of Brazil.
37. For a start, see my 'Brazil's 'Fome Zero' Strategy: Can India Implement Cash Transfers' Economic and Political Weekly, August 2010.
38. For details, see <http://www.1421.tv/>.

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## Refbacks

There are currently no refbacks.

Entitled *A New Era: India-Russia Ties in the 21st Century*, the book is an attempt to critically reflect on the current state of Russia-India relations, and give practical advice on how to improve the relationship between the two countries. Printing and distribution of the book in India will be handled by the Times of India Group, a partner of Rossiyskaya Gazeta and Russia Beyond the Headlines. The book serves as an invitation to a discussion about what the relations between Russia and India in the 21st century will be – how to maximise the accumulated potential and make it the basis for joint