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Annual Seminar "The One Asia Community in Cross-Cultural Dialogue with Europe"

India:
Tradition & Modernity

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India: physical map

OECD Economic Surveys: India 2017

Basic statistics of India, 2015 or latest year available

(Numbers in parentheses refer to the OECD average)[1]

LAND, PEOPLE AND ELECTORAL CYCLE

Population (million)	1 283		Population density per km²	431,5	(36,6)
Under 15 (%)	28,8	(18,3)	Life expectancy (years)	68,0	(80,5)
Over 65 (%)	5,6	(13,6)	Men	66,6	(77,8)
Latest 5-year average growth (%)	1,6	(0,6)	Women	69,5	(83,1)
			Latest general election	May	2014

ECONOMY

Gross domestic product (GDP)			Value added shares (%)		
In current prices (billion USD)	7 454		Primary sector (2014)	17,6	(2,5)
In current prices (billion INR)	132 549		Industry including construction (2014)	29,7	(26,4)
Latest 5-year average real growth (%)	6,8	(1,7)	Services (2014)	51,6	(71,1)
Per capita (000 USD PPP)	5,9	(39,2)			

SOCIETY

Absolute poverty rate (2011, %)	21,9		Public and private spending (% of GDP)		
Ratio of incomes of the top 10% vs. bottom 10% (2011)[2]	8,4	(11,2)	Health care, current expenditure, 2014	4,7	(9,2)
Ratio of incomes of the top 10% vs. bottom 10% (2011)[2]	8,4	(9,6)	Pensions	0,7	(8,7)
Share of women in parliament (%)	12,0	(28,6)	Total government spending in education, 2014	3,8	(5,2)

OECD Economic Surveys: India 2017

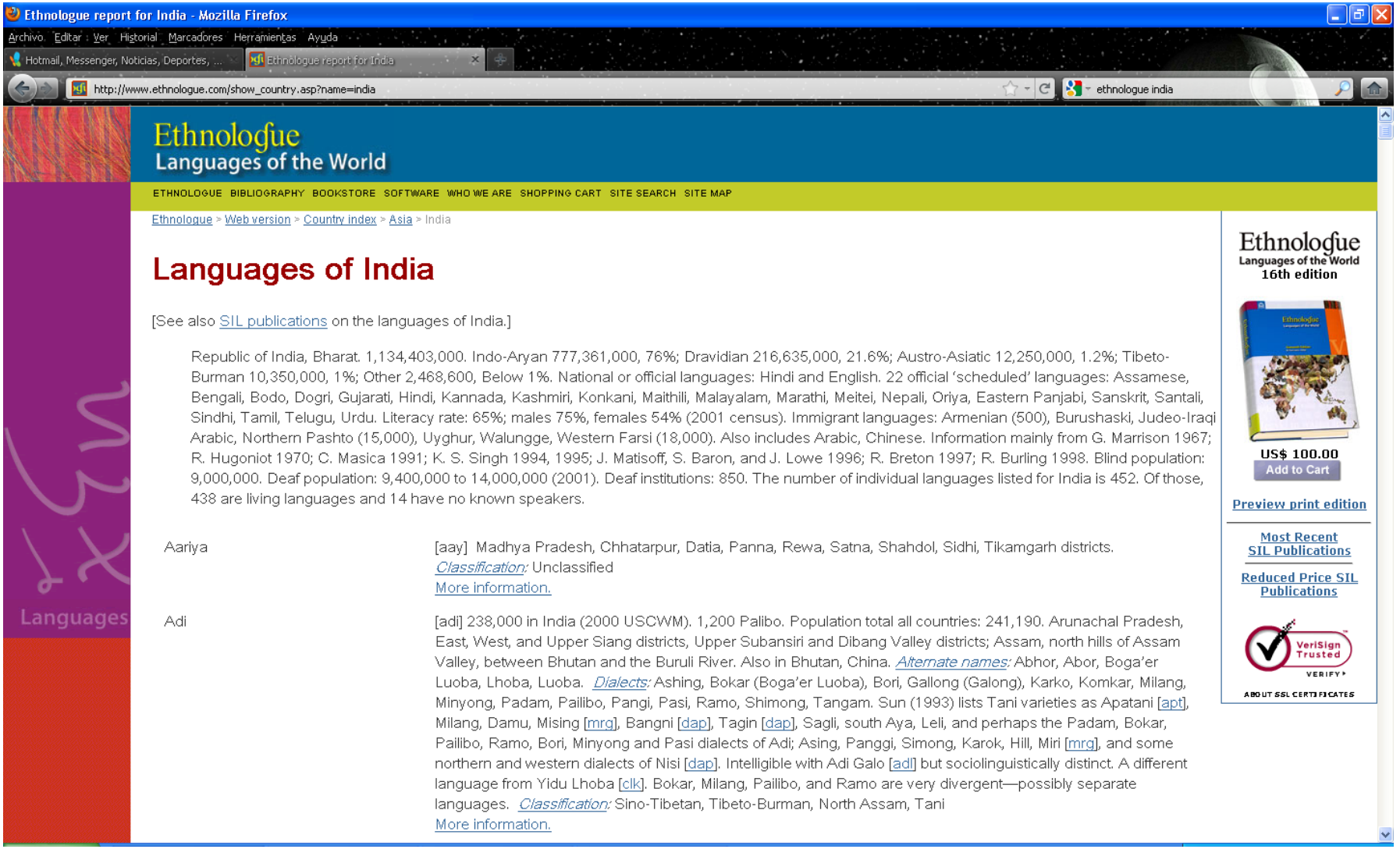
India: States and Union Territories

Why culture?

Culture is **‘inherited ethical habit’**, a compound of images, habits, and social opinions that are arational, and **‘incapable of being systematized into universal laws’**.

(F. Fukuyama, *Trust: The Social Virtues and the Creation of Prosperity*, New York 1995)

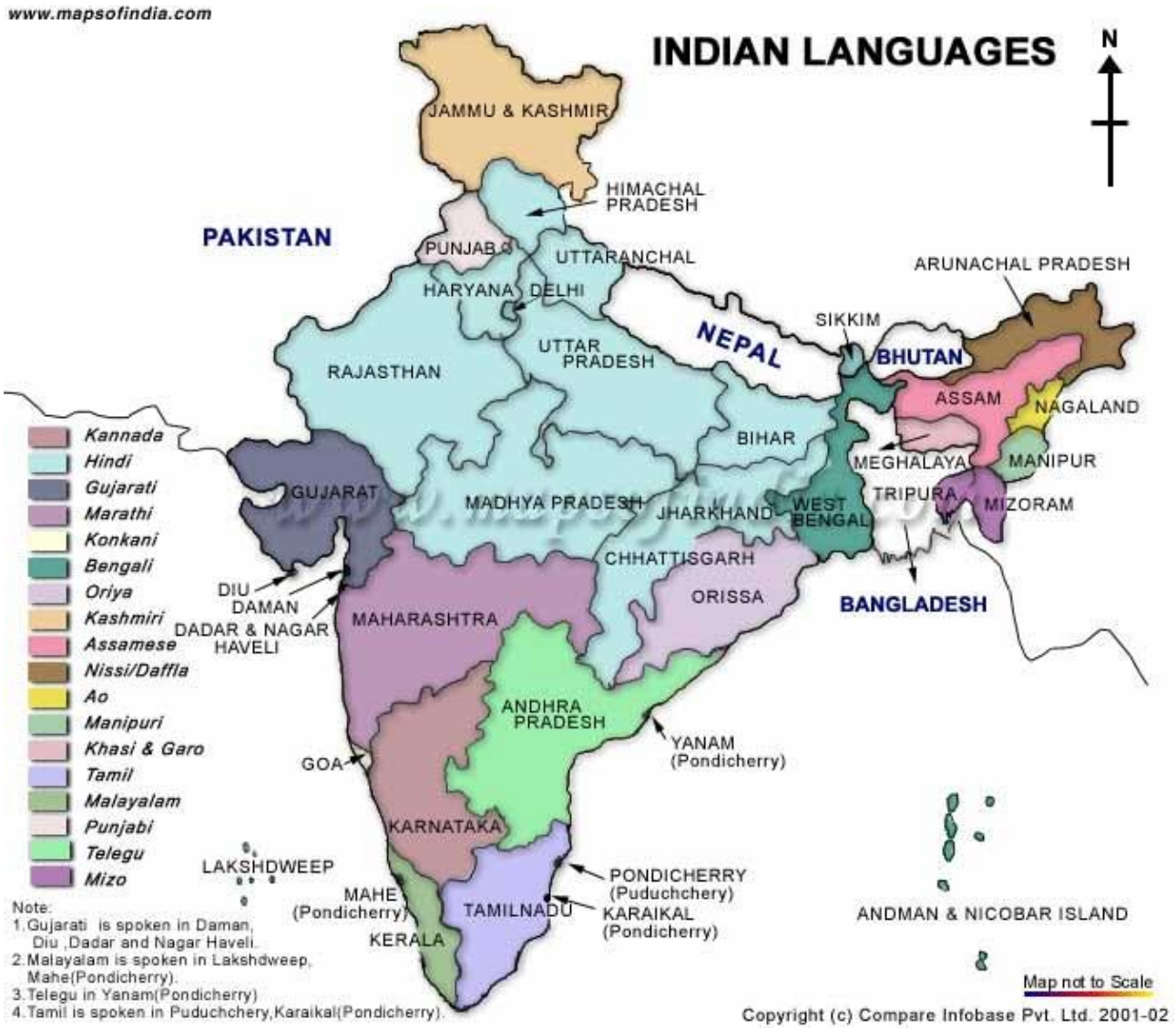
Languages of India



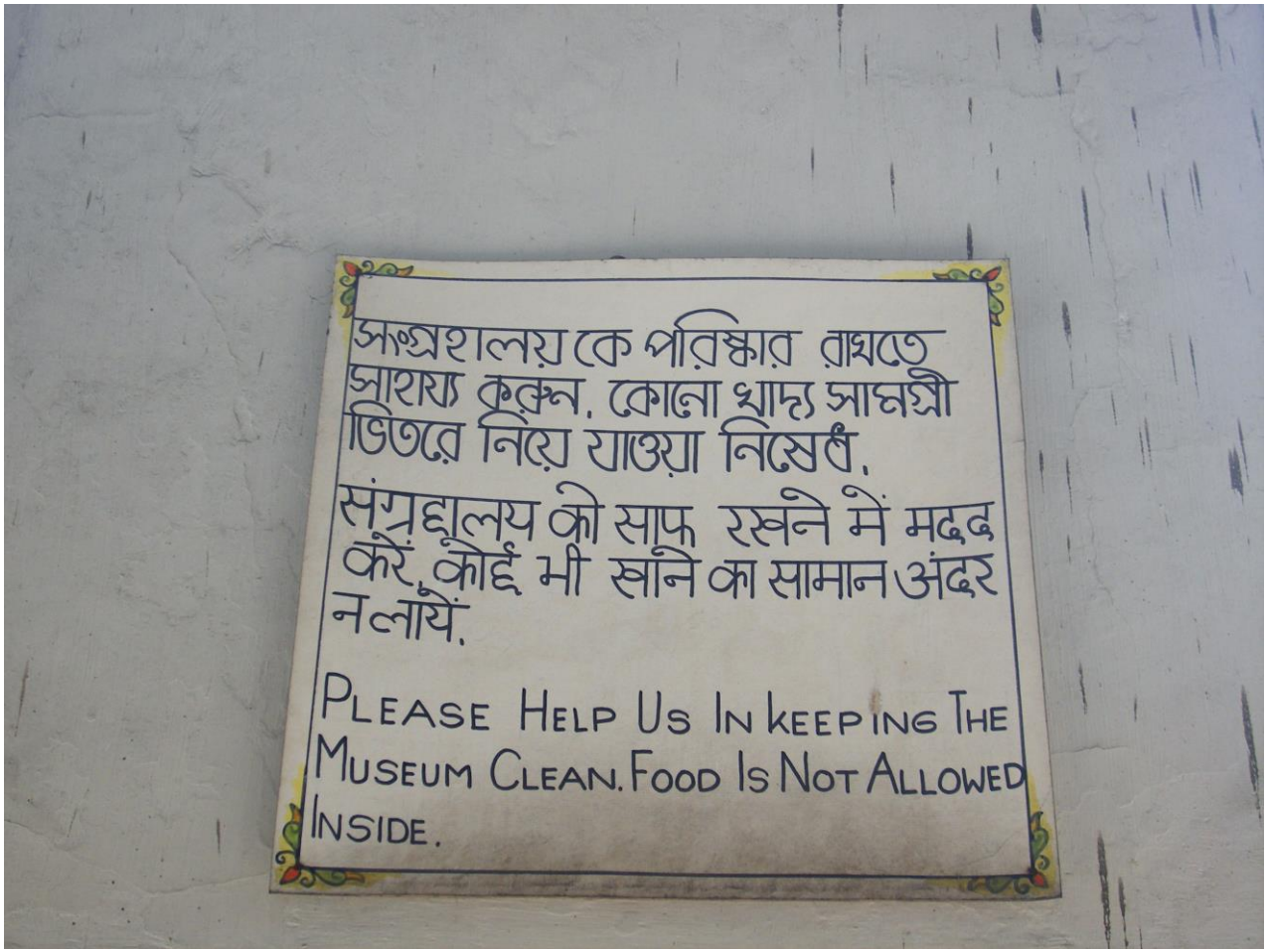
www.ethnologue.com

Families of languages of India and neighbouring countries

Languages of India



Writing in India



National Museum, Kolkata

Writing in India

Konak

Writing in India

Sign at Ajanta

Census of India: Religions

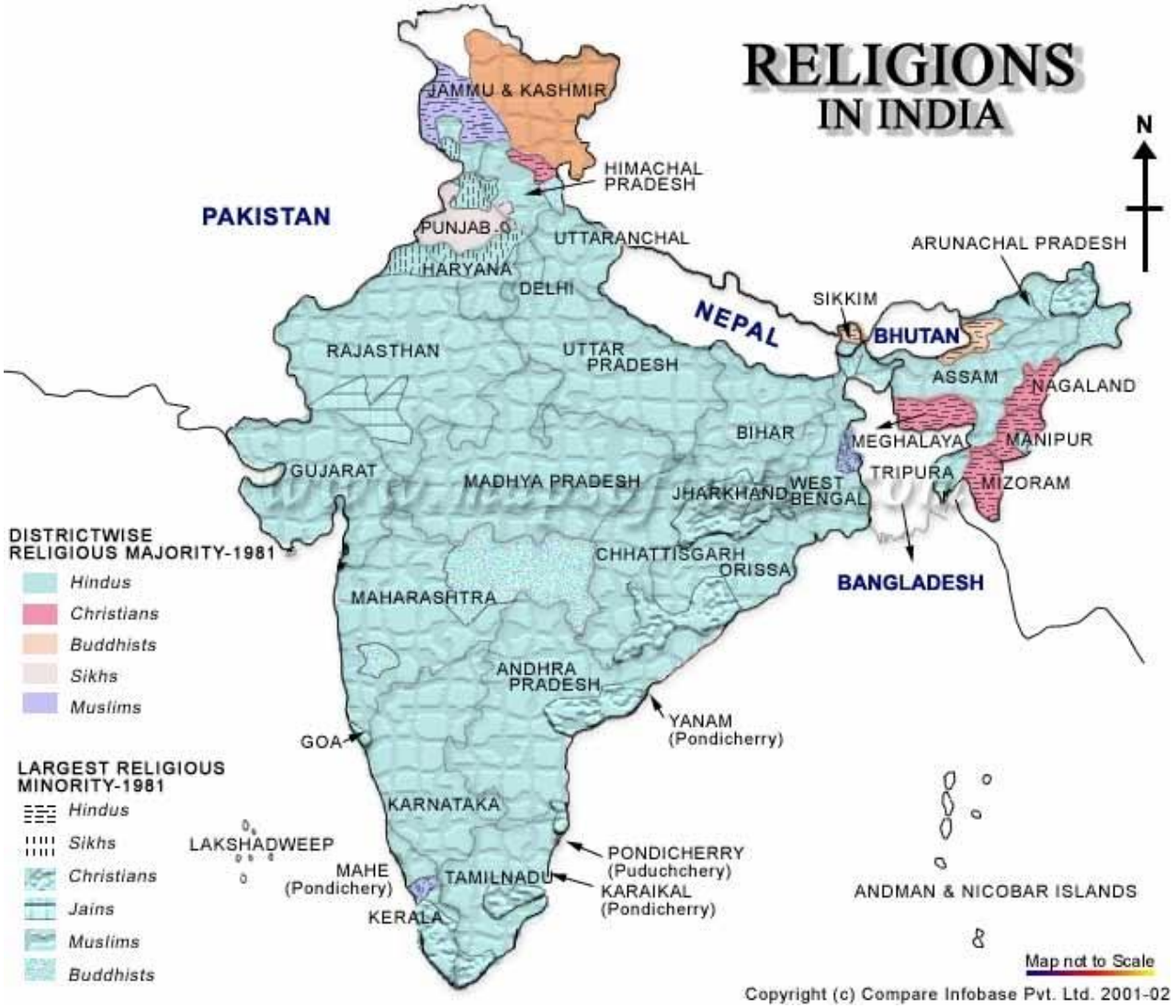
http://censusindia.gov.in/Census_And_You/religion.aspx

TABLE 21: DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION BY RELIGION

Religion	Number	%
All religious communities	1,028,610,328	100.0
Hindus	827,578,868	80.5
Muslims	138,188,240	13.4
Christians	24,080,016	2.3
Sikhs	19,215,730	1.9
Buddhists	7,955,207	0.8
Jains	4,225,053	0.4
Others	6,639,626	0.6
Religion not stated	727,588	0.1

Source : Religion, Census of India 2001

Religions in India



Jainism

Sikhs

Sikh temple at Delhi

Religions in India

Ayodhya (Uttar Pradesh)

Key concepts in Hinduism since the *Upaniṣads*

- *duḥkha* ‘existential suffering’
- The world is change: *jagat* ‘what moves’, *prakṛti* ‘transformation’
- A key question: is there a universal ‘true/reality’ (*satya*)?
- How to define *brahman*: *tad* ‘that’, *tad ekam* ‘the one’, *tad anantam* ‘the unlimited’, *nirguṇa* ‘lacking any quality’…
- *saṃsāra* ‘cycle of rebirth’
- *mokṣa* ‘liberation from the cycle of rebirth’
- *ātman* ‘the part of *brahman* that is in each human being’

The three ways to liberation since the *Bhagavadgītā*

- *jñānayoga* ‘yoga of knowledge’,
- *karmayoga* ‘yoga of (unselfish) action’,
- *bhaktiyoga* ‘yoga of devotion’.

The four *aśramas* (stages of life)

- ***brahmacārin*** ‘student’,
- ***gṛhastha*** ‘householder’,
- ***vanaprastha*** ‘hermit’,
- ***saṃnyāsin*** ‘ascet’

The four *purusharthas* (fundamental goals of life)

- ***moksha*** *'delivrance'*,
- ***dharma*** *'duty'*,
- ***artha*** *'wealth'*,
- ***kama*** *'love'*

Some key concepts of Hinduism

- *Dharma* 'religious duty':

svadharma (conduct that is right for one's *jati* or station)

ashramadharma (conduct that is right for his stage of life)

*kuladharma (*conduct that is right for his own family)

appadharma (conduct that is right in moment of crisis)

Castes in India: religious basis

Puruṣasūkta (*RV* 10.90) [transl. by R. Griffith]:

11 When they divided Puruṣa how many portions did they make? What do they call his mouth, his arms? What do they call his thighs and feet?

12 The Brahman was his mouth, of both his arms was the Rājanya made.His thighs became the Vaiśya, from his feet the Śūdra was produced.

Castes in India: religious basis

Bhagavadgītā 41-44 (trasl. by J. Mascaró):

[41] The works of Brahmins, Kṣatriyas, Vaishyas, and Shudras are different, in harmony with the three powers of their born nature.

[42] The works of a Brahmin are peace; self-harmony, austerity, and purity; loving-forgiveness and righteousness; vision and wisdom and faith.

[43] These are the works of a Kṣatriya: a heroic mind, inner fire, constancy, resourcefulness, courage in battle, generosity and noble leadership.

[44] Trade, agriculture and the rearing of cattle is the work of a Vaishya. And the work of the Shudra is service.

Castes in India: religious basis

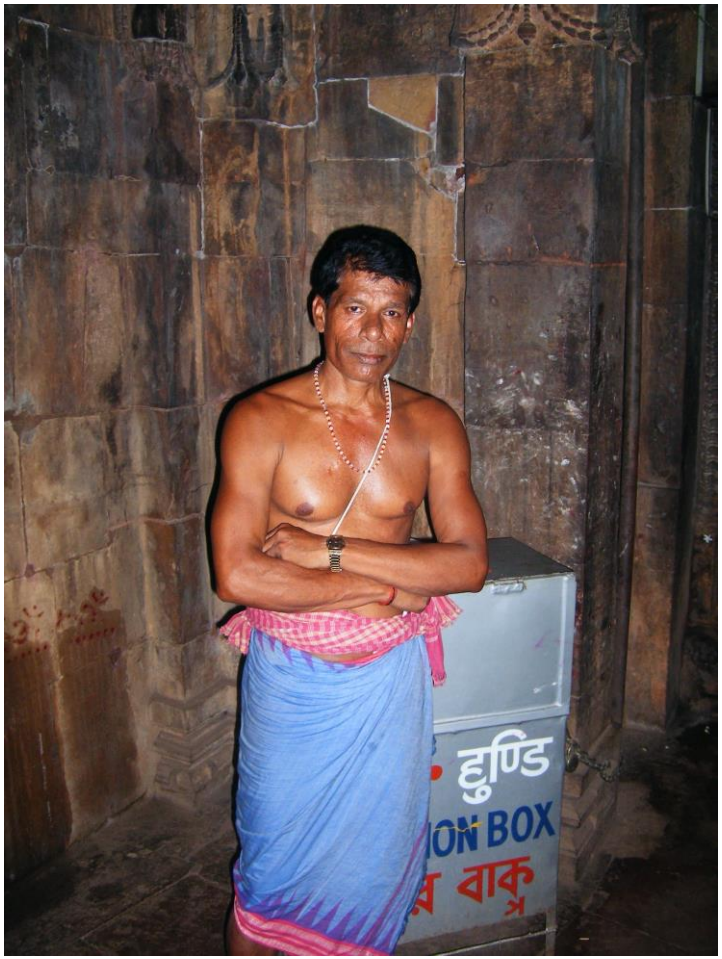
Law Code of Manu [transl. by G. Buhler]

2.155. The seniority of Brahmanas is from (sacred) knowledge, that of Kshatriyas from valour, that of Vaisyas from wealth in grain (and other goods), but that of Sudras alone from age.

Castes in India

Upper castes (*dvija* ‘twice born’)	*brahmans* priests
	kṣatriyas ‘warriors’
	vaiśyas ‘merchants, cattle-herders and artisans’
Low caste	*śūdras* ‘servants’
No caste	*dalits*

Brahmans



Temple at Bubhaneshwar

Indian constitution and castes

15. (1) The State shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them.

(2) No citizen shall, on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them, be subject to any disability, liability, restriction or condition with regard to—

- access to shops, public restaurants, hotels and places of public entertainment; or
- the use of wells, tanks, bathing ghats, roads and places of public resort maintained wholly or partly out of State funds or dedicated to the use of the general public.

Hierarchy and status

HT Matrimonials

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ARORA

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The importance of hierarchy

"[F]or an Indian, superior and subordinate relationships have the character of eternal verity and moral imperative – (and the) automatic reverence for superiors is a nearly universal psycho-social fact."

(S. Kakar, *The Indian Pysche*, New Delhi 1996)

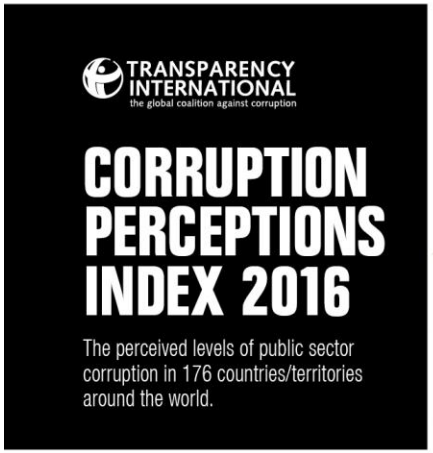
The importance of hierarchy

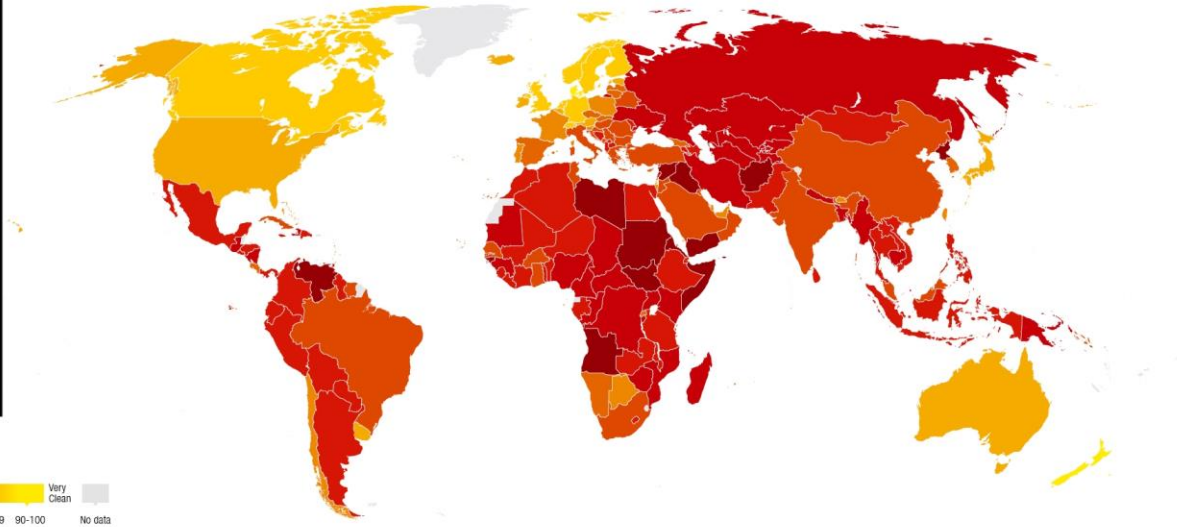
Apni aukat mat bhulo ‘Don’t forget your status’

Jugaad

Creative improvisation, a tool to somehow find a solution, ingenuity, refusal to accept defeat, inniative, cunning, resolve…

Corruption (Corruption Perception Index, Transparency International 2016)





RANK	COUNTRY/TERRITORY	SCORE
1	Denmark	90
1	New Zealand	90
3	Finland	89
4	Sweden	88
5	Switzerland	86
6	Norway	85
7	Singapore	84
8	Netherlands	83
9	Canada	82
10	Germany	81
10	Luxembourg	81
10	United Kingdom	81
13	Australia	79
14	Iceland	78
15	Belgium	77
15	Hong Kong	77
17	Austria	75
18	United States	74
19	Ireland	73
20	Japan	72
21	Uruguay	71
22	Estonia	70
23	France	69
24	Bahamas	66
24	Chile	66
24	United Arab Emirates	66
27	Bhutan	65
28	Israel	64
29	Poland	62
29	Portugal	62
31	Barbados	61
31	Qatar	61
31	Slovenia	61
31	Taiwan	61
35	Botswana	60
35	Saint Lucia	60
35	Saint Vincent and The Grenadines	60
38	Cape Verde	59
38	Dominica	59
38	Lithuania	59
41	Brunei	58
41	Costa Rica	58
41	Spain	58
44	Georgia	57
44	Latvia	57
46	Grenada	56
47	Cyprus	55
47	Czech Republic	55
47	Malta	55
50	Mauritius	54
50	Rwanda	54
52	Korea (South)	53
53	Namibia	52
54	Slovakia	51
55	Croatia	49
55	Malaysia	49
57	Hungary	48
57	Jordan	48
57	Romania	48
60	Cuba	47
60	Italy	47
62	Sao Tome	[illegible]
62	[illegible]	[illegible]
64	Montenegro	45
64	Oman	45
64	Senegal	45
64	South Africa	45
64	Suriname	45
69	Greece	44
70	Bahrain	43
70	Ghana	43
72	Burkina Faso	42
72	Serbia	42
72	Solomon Islands	42
75	Bulgaria	41
75	Kuwait	41
75	Tunisia	41
75	Turkey	41
79	Belarus	40
79	Brazil	40
79	China	40
79	India	40
83	Albania	39
83	Bosnia and Herzegovina	39
83	Jamaica	39
83	Lesotho	39
87	Mongolia	38
87	Panama	38
87	Zambia	38
90	Colombia	37
90	Indonesia	37
90	Liberia	37
90	Morocco	37
90	The FYR of Macedonia	37
95	Argentina	36
95	Benin	36
95	El Salvador	36
95	Kosovo	36
95	Maldives	36
95	Sri Lanka	36
101	Gabon	35
101	Niger	35
101	Peru	35
101	Philippines	35
101	Thailand	35
101	Timor-Leste	35
101	Trinidad and Tobago	35
108	Algeria	34
108	Côte d'Ivoire	34
108	Egypt	34
108	Ethiopia	34
108	Guyana	34
113	Armenia	33
113	Bolivia	33
113	Vietnam	33
116	Mali	32
116	Pakistan	32
116	Tanzania	32
116	Togo	32
120	Dominican Republic	31
120	Ecuador	31
120	Malawi	31
123	Azerbaijan	30
123	Djibouti	30
123	Honduras	30
123	Laos	30
123	Mexico	30
123	Moldova	30
123	Paraguay	30
123	Sierra Leone	30
131	Iran	29
131	Kazakhstan	29
131	Nepal	29
131	Russia	29
131	Ukraine	29
136	Guatemala	28
136	Kyrgyzstan	28
136	Lebanon	28
136	Myanmar	28
136	Nigeria	28
136	Papua New Guinea	28
142	Guinea	27
142	Mauritania	27
142	Mozambique	27
145	Bangladesh	26
145	Cameroon	26
145	Gambia	26
145	Kenya	26
145	Madagascar	26
145	Nicaragua	26
151	Tajikistan	25
151	Uganda	25
153	Comoros	24
154	Turkmenistan	22
154	Zimbabwe	22
156	Cambodia	21
156	Democratic Republic of Congo	21
156	Uzbekistan	21
159	Burundi	20
159	Central African Republic	20
159	Chad	20
159	Haiti	20
159	Republic of Congo	20
164	Angola	18
164	Eritrea	18
166	Iraq	17
166	Venezuela	17
168	Guinea-Bissau	16
169	Afghanistan	15
170	Libya	14
170	Sudan	14
170	Yemen	14
173	Syria	13
174	Korea (North)	12
175	South Sudan	11
176	Somalia	10

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An example of Indian entrepreneurship: Mumbai's dabbawallas

Tradition *vs*. innovation

Street market at Kolkata

Tradition *vs*. innovation

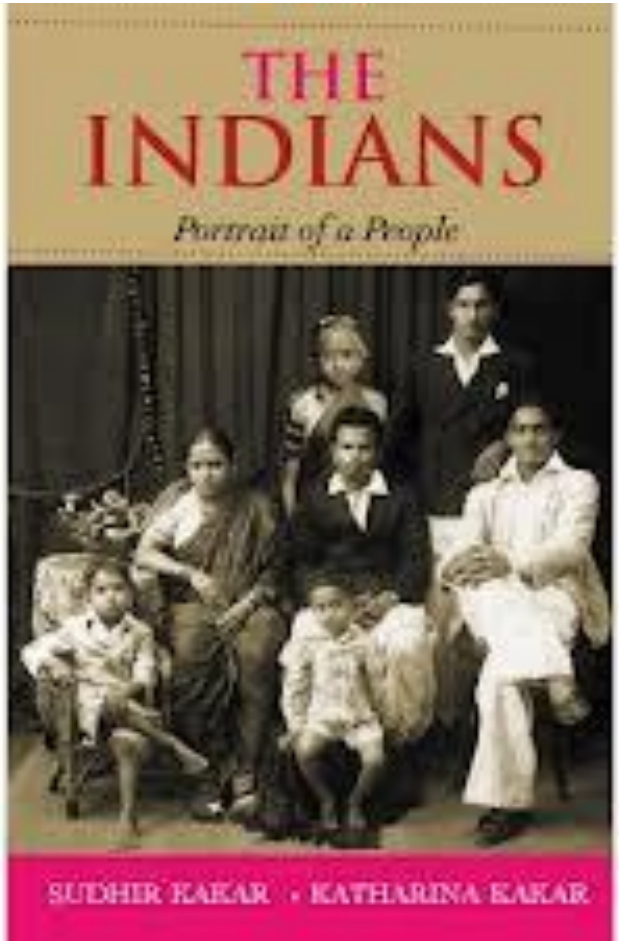
Selling fish at Bubaneshwar

Tradition *vs*. innovation

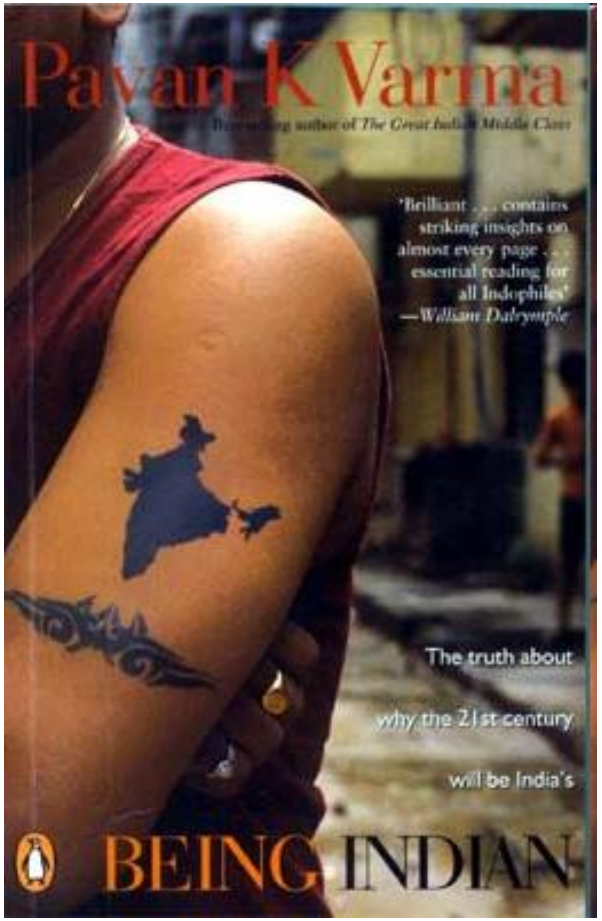
Societies change, but there are limits to change. Certain traits, which are the products of centuries of conditioning, do not change, and it it these that provide the distinct cultural label to a people. Others can be diluted or modified. Some new ones can, perhaps, be added, but they are mostly ‘adds-on’, scaffolding on a largely unalterable edifice. **It is this combination of (mostly) the old, and something of the new, that people carry as their cultural bagage in the journey towards the future.**

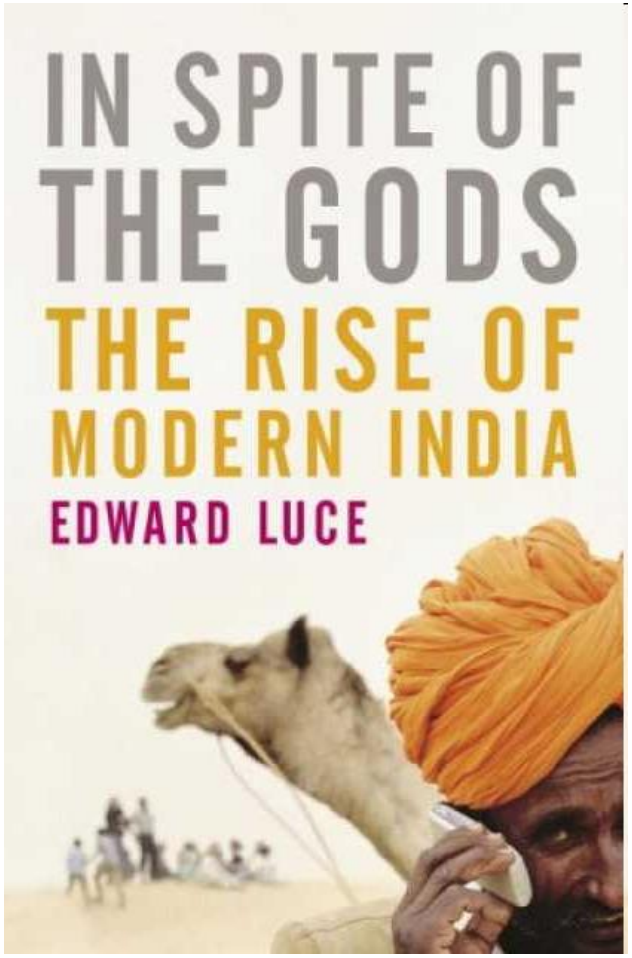
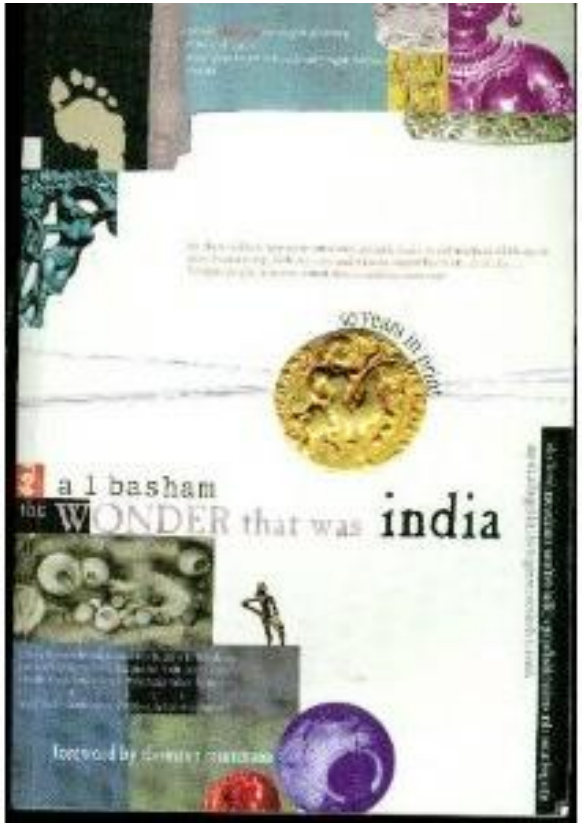
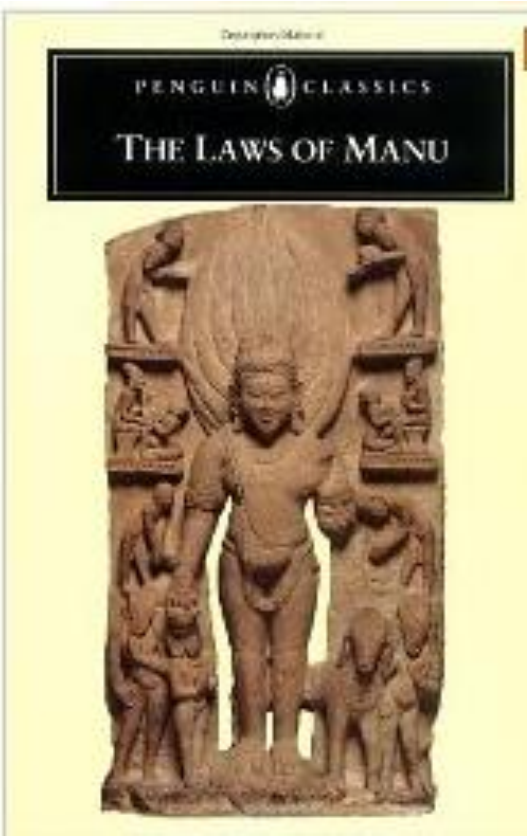
(P. K. Varma, *Being Indian*, New Delhi 2004)

Recommended readings (I)



Recommended readings (II)

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