

Key concepts

- Some of the challenges facing Hinduism in the context of secularisation – the growth of rational and scientific thought and the challenges this poses to traditional Hindu beliefs. The growth of religious pluralism and the belief that competition reduces credibility. A serious challenge to Hinduism in India is the secularisation of the Indian state.
- Indian society would interpret the concept of secularisation to mean that anyone can follow their own pathway, meaning any religious practice is their own pathway. There is a western understanding of a secular state, which suggests that religion should be erased, but for Hindus it means that every religion is sacred.
- The concept of Hindutva gives Hindus a sense of identity, challenging what some see as its erosion in secular government policy. This is an exclusivist discourse which has led to the emergence of an aggressive Hindu nationalism. There is opposition and hostility directed at Western Imperialism characterised by multinational companies such as Coca Cola and competing religious ideologies. It is a desire to leave the modern confusion of cultures and return to the past, a time of Indian greatness.
- There have been many modern Orthodox Hindus who have adapted and accepted some ideas of secularisation, attempting to promote equality within Hinduism.
- Hinduism’s scientific richness is evident within the Vedas and Hindu practices, allowing science and religious ideas to intertwine within the faith. However, Hinduism goes beyond science, believing the material revelations from science direct them to the Ultimate Reality.
- Sankhya or (samkhya) yoga classifies matter into 8 elements.
- Rishis are seers or great sages who went into a deep Raja yoga (meditation), focusing on Brahman. As a result, Brahman revealed the truth of rta (cosmic order) and gave them the Vedas.
- From the wisdom of the Rishis, Hindu scientists and mathematicians such as Charaka and Aryabhata interpreted the Vedas and other Hindu scriptures, while also empirically observing the order of the universe, creating outstanding results.
- There are many scientific advancements that can be accepted by Hindus understanding of the material world and rta, but there is a diversity of views – fundamentalist and liberal.

Key quotes

- “We Hindus are bound together not only by the tie of the love we bear to a common fatherland and by the common blood that courses through our veins and keeps our hearts throbbing and our affections warm, but also by the tie of the common homage we pay to our great civilization - our Hindu culture.” Savarkar*
- “Hindutva exerts great power particularly within India political life.” Jamison, I. ‘Hinduism’, Philip Allan Updates, (2006), ISBN:1844894207.*
- “Many advances in the sciences that we consider today to have been made in Europe were in fact made in India centuries ago.” James Grant Duff - British historian 1789-1858.*
- “Early Hindu sciences, far from being just mechanistic, integrated spiritual knowledge and technique to promote self-realisation.” Rasamandala Das Das, R, ‘The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Hinduism’, Lorenz Books, (2012).*
- “They (the Vedas) were not composed by a human mind but contain transcendent knowledge, the Vedas are believed to be the most authoritative scriptures.” Smith J., ‘Edexcel AS Religious Studies’, Edexcel limited, (2006).*

Key words

Imperialism	pluralism	Hindutva	Charaka	exclusivist
liberal	secular state	Ultimate Reality	Aryabhata	fundamentalist
Orthodox	Vedas	Rishis	Brahman	secularisation

Issues for analysis and evaluation

Key arguments/debates

- Some would argue that science and Hinduism are completely compatible.
- Others would argue that belief in God and science can never be compatible.
- Some would argue that certain aspects are compatible.

Key questions

- How effective are the Hindu responses to the challenges of science?
- The extent to which the only effective response to secularisation is the Hindutva response.
- Are there any alternative explanations or conclusions to be drawn from the debate?