Effects of Hinduism on Environmental Attitudes: An Exploration in Modern Hindu Culture in Pune, India

Kelsey Gorman

This study explores the connectivity between the traditions and outlooks of Hinduism and the relationship between humanity and nature. Namely, this study seeks to find the ways and extent to which Hindus in India feel they think differently about the environment because of their spirituality. In order to establish a baseline, this study begins with a perusal of ancient Hindu culture, focusing on symbolism placed within plants and animals. From there the study moves into the present day and looks at Hinduism and environmental attitudes in Pune, India. This second stage is to reassess to Hinduism of today and to see if and how Hindus in modern-day Pune feel their religiosity has given them a particular attitude towards the environment. This study’s significance lies in the search for a root cause of environmental practices; identifying the reasons for the ways people relate to nature can help to understand how to approach environmental issues. Overall, this study finds that an adapted, modern Hinduism exists that places less emphasis on reverence towards nature, and that other factors, such as an urban lifestyle, have hindered the level of environmentalism in the interviewed individuals.