



Planet India: How the Fastest Growing Democracy Is Transforming America and the World

Mira Kamdar

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Examines how India has become the world's fastest-growing center of technology, global economics, and democracy, outlining the challenges facing the country to enable rapid change in environmentally sustainable and politically viable ways.

Planet India: How the Fastest Growing Democracy Is Transforming America and the World Details

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Author : Mira Kamdar

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Faisal ElBeheiry says

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Matthew says

This is the first book in a long, long time that I quit reading. I got about halfway through, and I just couldn't do it anymore.

I know, understand, and agree that India is an important part of our global community. I get that it is important to understand a culture that is such an important player in the world today. But Mira Kamdar's book was written like an impossibly long article.

The introduction held all of the points that were to be discussed throughout the book, and they were concise. Meanwhile, every chapter that they were brought up again was filled with useless names, numbers, dates that just rolled right out of my brain and formed a goopy puddle by my feet.

I believe that I know Kamdar's thesis for Planet India, and I even think I agree with her. But I just could not waste my time with the last half of the book. I suggest that you pick this one up at the library, read that first chapter, and then promptly return the book to the library. You don't want to suffer overdue charges.

kenneth says

This book enumerated on India's current and growing role as an economic powerhouse, and as an important player in international security. However, the book did not do enough to elucidate India's cultural influence. In fact, the author spent more time explaining how America shapes India. It is a good read for a bit of trivia, but the book does nothing to shatter paradigms, and it certainly is not life changing.

Chade66 says

I really liked this book. Its is written from an southeast asian-centric view point and talks in depth about many economic and global realities that someone who is looking for a casual read about India might find daunting.

It has an interesting section towards the beginning of the book that talks about the media industry and bollywood, interesting timing considering the way that "Slumdog Millionaire" is sweeping the awards ceremonies for film right now.

Parts of it shocked me and some of it made me mad or frustrated, some of it is shockingly depressing, yet there were shining moments too.

It certainly made me think. One point that the author made very clearly is that if development nations grow their economies the way the United States has and consume at the same rate that the US does, we will strip

the planet dry in no time. Its time for everyone, especially the US to reconsider how it does business in the world and what values we as a society should embrace.

Janel C. says

I learned so much about India and U.S./Indian relations in this fascinating book. The author conducted hundreds of interviews all over India and gives anecdotal evidence to support her empirical claims about India's future.

Crossings says

With every Desi writer and their brother writing a tome about India's short and long term fate with the conclusions ranging from over the top optimistic to absolutely dire, the average reader (Desi and otherwise) must view the slew of books on this subject with some consternation not to mention confusion. All opinions, conjectures and projections are not equal and certainly not everyone has the same qualifications to be dispensing the wisdom, foresight and commentary on the future and fortunes of India that they do.

Mira Kamdar brings a whiff of fresh air into this over-crowded genre with her book Planet India. She tempers her enthusiasm for everything there is to be excited about in India with the right measures of sobriety and caution. She shows us the potential and opportunities that lay ahead of the country and its people but never fails to draw attention to the numerous impediments along the way or as this Businessweek article reports – we've already hit the wall.

Her writing is factual and objective ; the content well researched. There is a lot of fresh information and insights even for a native born Desi who has spend most of their adult life in India - a rarity for books in this segment that aim at aiding a "discovery" of modern India by non-Indians while insulting the understanding and awareness of its natives.

Unlike a lot of book-about-India writers, Kamdar does not come off as having recycled old news paper editorials and magazine articles in the name of yet another tome about India. But most importantly, she "gets" India and cares about what does or does not happen to this country. Having said that, it is commendable that she is able to remain detached from her subject matter yet present her case in such an engaging and compassionate tone.

I would highly recommend Kamdar's book to anyone who has enjoyed reading Suketu Mehta's Maximum City and Ronhinton Mistry's Fine Balance. Between the three we have viewed India through a composite lens of fact and fiction, dipped into the past, taken stock of the present and tried to glimpse into the future. I would love recommendations for books on a couple of themes that I have not read about yet – applying lessons learned from India's history to solve today's problems and to better prepared for the future; opportunities and challenges for India's rich spiritual heritage in a time when consumerism reigns supreme.

www.heartcrossings.blogspot.com

Merredith says

This was the August book club book for my office book club. It started out interesting, then just started repeating itself. When I found out I had a scheduling conflict with the book club meeting, I decided not to finish this book. The concept was good, I think it could be more succinct.

Shikha says

Overall, a good read and a decent overview of India's burgeoning status as a world power. However, if you are fairly in the know about India, much of the information is not especially new. Also, towards the end of the book, the reading became a little rushed through, as if Mira Kamdar was trying to meet her deadline. (I found it particularly odd that in the last paragraphs, as she's closing the book about India, she goes into a little blurb about the U.S.-China relations, which was very random.) But, for those of us involved with India on a personal and professional level, I will say that Planet India does create (or rather, fuel) the excitement, the anticipation, and the hope so many of us are experiencing in the current climate.

I.G. Frederick says

Dense and very well researched. Although a little dry in places, it's a fascinating study of what many Americans don't realize will soon be the most populous country in the world.

Incredibly helpful in my world-building research for The Lady & The Spyder series (as Korin I. Dushayl).

Lauren says

I'm really happy about this book so far. It's a survey of modern India and its indicativeness (not a word, I know) of global change, much of it positive.

Patty says

Ugh, this book was so boring; it took me forever to finish it. The genre of contemporary issues/political science/news articles-in-book format tends not to produce a lot of page-turners, but this one was particularly bad. It's another of those books (of which I have read many) that attempts to capture a picture of 'modern India', good and bad; *Planet India* leans very heavily to the 'good' side, probably due to the research all having taken place in 2005-6, pre-Global Recession. On the one hand, it focuses a great deal on India-US interactions, which I am interested in for obvious reason. Most books like this pay greater attention to India-UK connections, which of course makes sense, but I'm not above wanting to read about myself. On the other hand, I have now read enough statistics on the growth rates of India's agriculture in 1990 vs 2000, or imports vs exports, or that Reliance made \$5 billion in 2005, but is projected to make \$6 billion in 2006, etc, etc, than I have ever wanted to do. If you're interested in the topic, there are better books.

Heidi says

It seems that no matter how old, big, diverse or culturally rich a country is, it is still susceptible to Western influence (or contamination). India may soon surpass China as the most populous country in the world and is also developing quickly from a third world country, with which come all the challenges (problems) that have been plaguing the US and others already. Environmental problems such as pollution and lack of water, economic, health and social problems. Some see India as the test case for the way the rest of the world will face these challenges and how successful it will ultimately be.

India is poised on the precipice. It can leverage the immense creative resources it possesses and take a revolutionary approach to these issues, as several local movers and shakers interviewed by the author describe--adhering to the "Triple Bottom Line," environmental, social and financial--or choose to ignore the lessons demonstrated by the way the Western world has already done things and run into the same pitfalls.

Some corporations in India already operate under a different philosophy than being governed strictly by the financial bottom line. They seek to do business in a sustainable way that benefits not only the company, but also helps the Indian people, by providing employment or fair compensation for their goods and services and does no harm to the environment. This is truly admirable.

However, because a lot of the successful executives were educated and have worked in the West and the enormous profit potential such a populous country provides, Western companies have already infiltrated and influenced India's corporate culture. What remains to be seen is whether they will overpower the more benevolent forces that are also already in action.

The author did a great job of explaining how the stage is set for this struggle to play out and so I for one, will keep an eye on India as they move forward into the future to see which path they follow and how they, in turn, influence the rest of us.

Karim Sayani says

I really liked this book because it gave me the other side of my home country. It showed me the different unseen issues and dealings of India. I never thought that India had that much information to show to people while speaking economically and politically. India has potential within its people except there are always obstacles for people to express their best. The deficiency of a good running system in the market and government doesn't do any good in improving India. The talking of making things better doesn't result in any benefit to the poor. I understand how the words to give hope and there is prosperity in some part of India yet the overall goal has not been achieved yet. The author did do an excellent job in showing the urban and rural side of India. I can look at my family being a victim of the poverty back in the day around the years of my birth and having the dream of moving forward in life. There is a lot of evidence shown to prove the points and the demonstration of various points of views helps give the range of different endpoints of ideas. This definitely gives me something to look forward to when it comes to seeing the improvement in economy and standard of living for people. It is thrilling to see the goals being achieved and the happiness it can bring to the people of a country that haven't reached that level yet. There are obstacles except there is hope in some form or other depending on the extent of the destination.

Cathy says

All things India.....Planet India provides the reader with a vast array of knowledge and information about the emerging powerhouse country of Asia, and it's expanding recognition in all global areas.

Mira Kamdar satisfies the readers with a passion for India, while at the same time providing much research and an informed knowledge base to placate all serious students and readers on this topic. As a strong, populous democracy with many serious challenges before it India is revealed through various topics including economy, job growth, urban development, agricultural issues, education, AIDS and healthcare, and every other pertinent topic that affects India today. All the information is interesting and informative.

The reader is left with an appreciation of all the accomplishments India has made since it's independence along with what is on the horizon to come. The author portrays a comprehensive representation of a cultural revival where Indians look with hope and confidence to their future.
