



Topics for today (Thursday, June 18, 2009)

"Masala" Films

☞ The fantasy: "lovers cavorting outdoors in the lap of nature. . . "
Music lifts spirits, and is a reminder of the fantasies depicted. Notice the coincidences that happen. Contrast this with the realities of life in India (inserted periodically into Pico Iyer's text).

Themes in popular cinema:

☞ Glorification of the mother and depiction of other women (particularly as markers of change)

☞ Initially, foreign as threat but also something to be aspired. Today, it is the norm for the super-elite, and a desire of the poor. Why?

Selected Current Demographics of India

Area: slightly more than one-third the size of the US

total: 3,287,590 sq km; *land:* 2,973,190 sq km; *water:* 314,400 sq km

Land boundaries:

total: 14,103 km; *coastline:* 7,000 km

bordering countries: Bangladesh 4,053 km, Bhutan 605 km, Burma 1,463 km, China 3,380 km, Nepal 1,690 km, Pakistan 2,912 km

Terrain: upland plain (Deccan Plateau) in south, flat to rolling plain along the Ganges, deserts in west, Himalayas in north

Land use: *arable land:* 48.8% permanent crops: 2.8%; *other:* 48.4% (2005 est.)

Environment - current issues: deforestation; soil erosion; overgrazing; desertification; air pollution from industrial effluents and vehicle emissions; water pollution from raw sewage and runoff of agricultural pesticides; tap water is not potable throughout the country; huge and growing population is over-straining natural resources

Population: 1,147,995,904 (July 2008 est.)

Age structure: *0-14 years:* 31.5% (male 189,238,487/female 172,168,306) [down from 34% in 2000]

15-64 years: 63.3% (male 374,157,581/female 352,868,003)

65 years +: 5.2% (male 28,285,796/female 31,277,725) (2008 est.)

Population growth rate: 1.578% (2008 est.); **Birth rate:** 22.22 births/1,000 population (2008 est.) **Death rate:** 6.4 deaths/1,000 population (2008 est.)

Sex ratio: *at birth:* 1.12 male(s)/female; *under 15 years:* 1.1 m/f; *15-64 years:* 1.06 m/f; *65 years and over:* 0.9 m/f; total population: 1.06 male(s)/female (2008 est.)

Infant mortality rate: 32.31 deaths/1,000 live births [down from 56.29 deaths/1,000 in 2005]

Life expectancy at birth: *total population:* 69.25 years [up from 64.35 years in 2005]; *male:* 66.87 years; *female:* 71.9 years (2008 est.)

Total fertility rate: 2.76 children born/woman (2008 est.)

Religions: Hindu 80%, Muslim 14%, Christian 2.4%, Sikh 2%, Buddhist 0.7%, Jains 0.5%,

Literacy: *definition:* age 15 and over can read and write; *total population:* 61%; *male:* 73.4%; *female:* 47.8% (2001 census)

Administrative divisions: 28 states and 7 union territories

Executive branch: *Head of government:* Prime Minister Manmohan Singh (Congress Party; since May 2004)

Elections: prime minister elected by parliamentary members of the majority party following legislative elections; election just recently held

Legislative branch: bicameral Parliament (*Sansad*) consists of the Council of States (*Rajya Sabha*), no more than 250 members; and the People's Assembly (*Lok Sabha*) consisting of 545 seats

Judicial branch: Supreme Court, judges appointed by the president and remain until age 65

Economy: GDP: real growth rate 8.5% in 2006, 9.0% in 2007, and 7.3% in 2008

GDP: per capita, purchasing power parity - \$2,900 (2008 est.) [down from \$3,100 in 2004]

GDP - composition by sector: *agriculture:* 17.2%; *industry:* 29.1%; *services:* 53.7% (2008 est.)

Population below poverty line: 25% (2007 est.)

Household income or consumption by percentage share: *lowest 10%:* 3.6%; *highest 10%:* 31.1% (2004)

Labor force: 523.5 million; **by occupation:** agriculture 60%, industry 12%, services 28% (2003)

Television broadcast stations: 562; **Televisions:** 63 million (1997) {no updated info available!}

Telephones (landlines): 38.76 (2008) [down from 48.917 million in 2003]

Telephones (mobile cellular): 296.08 (2008) [up from 26,154,400 in 2003]

Internet users: 80 million (2007)

International Disputes:

Since China and India launched a security and foreign policy dialogue in 2005, consolidated discussions related to the dispute over most of their rugged, militarized boundary, regional nuclear proliferation, Indian claims that China transferred missiles to Pakistan, and other matters continue; various talks and confidence-building measures have cautiously begun to defuse tensions over Kashmir, particularly since the October 2005 earthquake in the region, but were again aggravated by the December 2008 bombing in Mumbai; Kashmir nevertheless remains the site of the world's largest and most militarized territorial dispute with portions under the de facto administration of China (Aksai Chin), India (Jammu and Kashmir), and Pakistan (Azad Kashmir and Northern Areas); India and Pakistan have maintained the 2004 cease fire in Kashmir and initiated discussions on defusing the armed stand-off in the Siachen glacier region; Pakistan protests India's fencing the highly militarized Line of Control and construction of the Baglihar Dam on the Chenab River in Jammu and Kashmir, which is part of the larger dispute on water sharing of the Indus River and its tributaries; India does not recognize Pakistan's ceding historic Kashmir lands to China in 1964; discussions with Bangladesh remain stalled to delimit a small section of river boundary, to exchange territory for 51 Bangladeshi exclaves in India and 111 Indian exclaves in Bangladesh, to allocate divided villages, and to stop illegal cross-border trade, migration, violence, and transit of terrorists through the porous border; India seeks cooperation from Bhutan and Burma to keep Indian Nagaland and Assam separatists from hiding in remote areas along the borders; Joint Border Committee with Nepal continues to examine contested boundary sections, including the 400 square kilometer dispute over the source of the Kalapani River; India maintains a strict border regime to control illegal cross-border activities from Nepal.