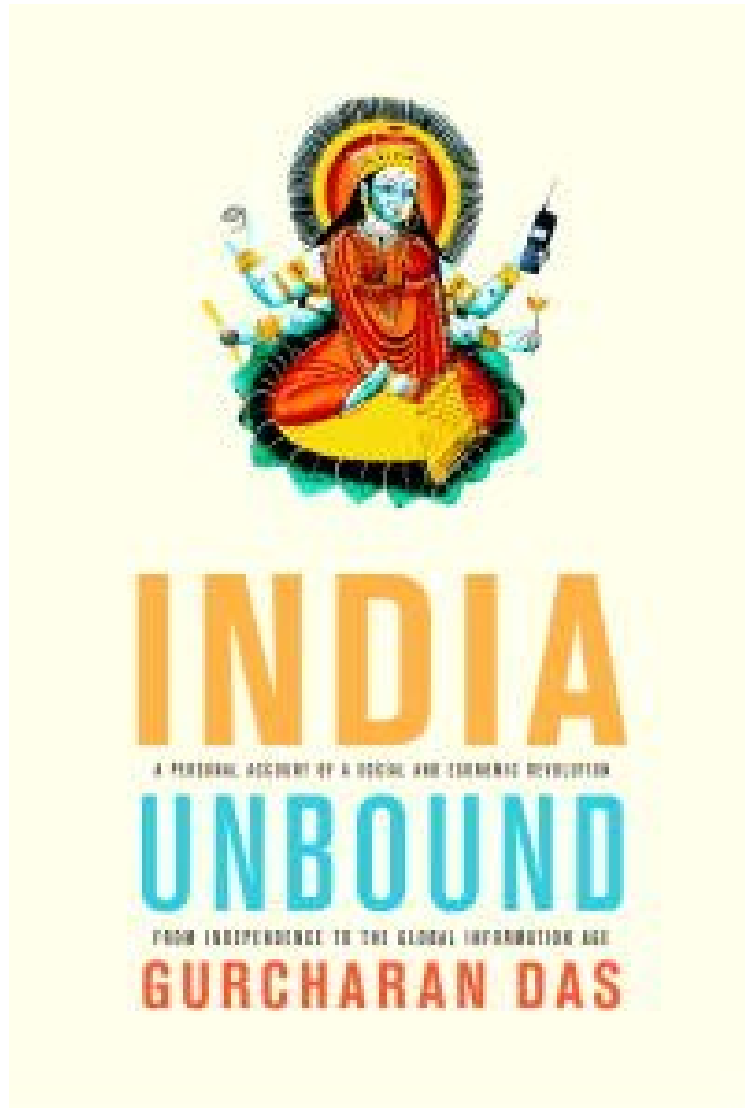


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India Unbound

Gurcharan Das

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Gurcharan Das : India Unbound before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised India Unbound:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Book details the business challenges in 1947-2000 India. By MeterManja India Unbound is a perspective of a businessman in dealing with the government and civil servants in India. The author has done a service for the younger generation in chronicling the almost insane difficulties posed by a misdirected sense of right on the part of the governments from 1947-1991. The liberalisation of 91, its effects and the progress made in further liberalising the economy till 2000 are listed. For the less patient younger generation, this book should serve as a record of what held India and Indians back for an entire generation. The author rights has a

chapter called "The lost generation" that speaks specifically about this. There is a parallel story, almost an auto biography, of the author which talks of various experiences of the author during his life. The anecdotes are fascinating felt like taking a peep into a history book. However, the treatment of some very intricate aspects of Indian society such as the varna and jati system are distinctly shoddy and superficial. The constant disdain and abuse heaped on "Hindu nationalism" distracts the reader from the main point being made. With a poor understanding of Swadeshi, the author goes on to point out its evils. The chapter "Rise and Rise of a middle class" has some erroneous classification of middle class as old and new. May I humbly submit that there are very very large number of people belonging to the so called old middle class who are now employed gainfully in the private sector or have started companies of their own? This distinction of old and new middle class is flawed. This particular chapter has many such conceptual mistakes. The chapter "Modern vs Western" calls the Swadeshi movement a waste of energies and calls it "pepsi bashing". This is definitely the language of a business man. Nothing wrong with that, but the reader should be sensitive to the other view points out there. I believe that the author is not qualified enough to comment on sociological aspects of Indian society and the chapters that deal with those aspects should be taken with a pinch of salt. He also concedes this disconnect by describing his generation as "Macaulay's children" and not "Manus children". Overall, I agree with the central thesis of this book that Indian economic liberalisation has begun in earnest and has unshackled the people to strive for a better life. The author has very painstakingly collected anecdotes and several data points that make the book quite a delight to read. The author also makes some astute observations about the direction of Indian business. He has been proven right in saying that the software industry would recover from the dot com bust and forge ahead. Definitely read this book for a business perspective of India that I have not found elsewhere. PS - I would suggest that the reader also read the book "The beautiful tree" by Dharampal to understand the economic environment in India prior to the British and that impact that the British rule had on entrepreneurship in India.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. THE CHANGING INDIA BY VIVEK SHIVDASANIA reasonably good book about our dismal showing as a nation during the first 45 years of independence. The chains that shackled us have largely been struck off. However new problems have surfaced like traffic jams, fiscal deficits, power shortages, environmental degradation over population etc etc. This book describes how stifling life was in post independent INDIA. The author shows how India made some really bad decisions in the past like licence raj, inspector raj, socialism and mistreatment of the business class who really are the unsung heroes of independent INDIA. I mean just compare Gujarat and Bangalore with West Bengal. The latter is now just a cesspool of communist decay.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Eastern India from Western POV By Customer This book serves multiple purposes. It can be referenced as a personal account of a tumultuous period and its effects on a well established upper middle-class native family who thought apart from the norms of society at time. It can also be read as a starting point to debate the way India can transform itself as referenced by change agents within the country across enumerable sectors. It can also be a useful starting point for a any non-native-Indian seeking to understand the nature of globalization as it has effected the dominant world-supplier of late, India. Finally, it can inspire a young generation of Indians who have not read about the historic journey their land has experienced in the last 50 years, post colonialism. I am sure there are more uses, as it is overall, an entertaining, insightful and well composed memoir. India stands within a small group of countries that has established a democratic nationalism organically, however flawed that system might be. This is indeed a historic achievement, though paradoxically, the leadership in India sought to discipline the country on a socialist path of centralized control. While we can understand the difficulties of rapidly assuming control and then maintaining order across a wide geography, an expansive and diverse population, however, this path has unfortunately had generational consequences with many casualties. One of the key realizations that I personally gained from this account is the belief that one can gauge the progress of a nation by the currency of its generations. In other words, while India sought to achieve self-sufficiency by turning inward, it fell behind generationally by comparison to Southeast Asia who by contrast turned outward to an open market based economy. The juxtaposition to Japan for instance is indicated in this book and worthy of reflection. So while the year might be 2008, the society may in fact be living out the 1920's by comparison to say the United States (an example, don't quote me on it). Das does not use this book to lambaste India, and draws on a personal zeal to encourage an advancing India by way of his experience in the international arena, having seen the many sides of India i.e. political, cultural, economic etc. In this regard, I think the book stands as unique. This is a personal view, not meant to serve as a text book treatise on the subject, so we must allow for some personal biases which thankfully carry forward both the frustrations and the optimism of the author. Altogether a very vivid and well argued book in favor of advancing the world's largest democracy by applying the lessons from a lifetime of successful experience.

India today is a vibrant free-market democracy, a nation well on its way to overcoming decades of widespread poverty. The nation's rise is one of the great international stories of the late twentieth century, and in India Unbound the acclaimed columnist Gurcharan Das offers a sweeping economic history of India from independence to the new millennium. Das shows how India's policies after 1947 condemned the nation to a hobbled economy until 1991, when the government instituted sweeping reforms that paved the way for extraordinary growth. Das traces

these developments and tells the stories of the major players from Nehru through today. As the former CEO of Procter Gamble India, Das offers a unique insider's perspective and he deftly interweaves memoir with history, creating a book that is at once vigorously analytical and vividly written. Impassioned, erudite, and eminently readable, *India Unbound* is a must for anyone interested in the global economy and its future. From the Trade Paperback edition.