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Upgrading Wikipedia's Hindu Content

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GONE ARE THE DAYS WHEN ONE NEEDED to consult a hefty encyclopedia to research a topic. Today the world's best encyclopedia is available anywhere, anytime, for free: Wikipedia. It includes vast amounts of information—most good, some bad, but generally better and certainly more current than its printed predecessors. A significant contributing factor to its high standards is WikiProjects. There are currently about 2,000 of these projects ranging from architecture to opera, beekeeping to Superman comic books. Each project is the task of a group of volunteer editors working as a team to improve all articles within their subject area.

“WikiProject: Hinduism” has about 60 active editors. They coordinate efforts on research and writing and act as a peer review board for each new Hindu-related article or edit. The overall topic of Hinduism is further divided into subprojects, such as Vaishnavism, Saivism, mythology or philosophy, each handled by specific work groups. The project aims to increase the number of Hindu-related articles while expanding and improving already-existing articles. The ideal is to insure that all articles are easily found and kept accurate and up to date.

Articles are rated for quality and importance. Any member of WikiProject: Hinduism is free to add to or change the rating of an article, and anyone who writes an article may request a rating. The assessed articles of any given category are organized by a bot program that creates an updated list of articles. A table (bottom) shows their ratings from top to bottom: Feature Article, Good Article, B, C, Start and Stub. It also charts the importance of the subject: Top, High, Middle, Low. This allows editors to easily obtain an overview, and see which articles merit attention first, according to their importance. There are to date 5,031 articles in WikiProject: Hinduism.

Assessment						
Hinduism articles by quality and importance						
Quality	Importance					Total
	Top	High	Mid	Low	NA	
FA	1	2	2	5		10
GA	8	20	25	8		61
B	34	56	68	31	16	205
C	36	48	100	46	10	240
Start	46	256	621	421	491	1,835
Stub	4	103	366	797	719	1,989
List	1	8	15	23	45	92
NA		2	1	3	571	577
Assessed	130	495	1,198	1,334	571	1,281
Unassessed					1	21
Total	130	495	1,198	1,335	571	1,302



Dr. Avishkar Tyagi of San Diego, California, is an active participant who has been contributing to Wikipedia for seven years. His deep interest in religion led him to write and edit articles on Hinduism. He observes, “The biggest challenge has been bridging the gap between East and West.”

It would be hard for most casual browsers to grasp the amount of effort that collaborators put into maintaining the quality and relevance of the various pages, and their level of enthusiasm for this unpaid work. Dr. Tyagi shared, “When I was a young boy, my parents took me to see stone workers in Agra. I was fascinated to see the beautiful tiny statuettes of Divinity form under their calloused hands. The process of watching an article form is like seeing a sculpture form from stone, or a pot from clay, made by many hands. Working on an article alone is an internal meditation.” When asked what he enjoys most about the WikiProject, Dr. Tyagi replied that he appreciates how much he learns from working with other like-minded individuals who see the process of collaboration as something

inherently spiritual.



Number one: An article about Lord Ganesha is Wikiproject: Hinduism’s highest rated and most important.

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For comparison, Biography is the largest WikiProject, encompassing over one million articles about notable figures throughout history. John Carter, an editor of that project, points out, “The subject area is in general much more clear-cut than many other articles” and therefore easy to edit. In contrast, Hindu subjects are often open to dispute and varied interpretations.

If you are interested in joining WikiProject: Hinduism, contributing and learning from other experts and enthusiasts, you may inquire on the project’s Talk Page ([en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia_talk: WikiProject_Hinduism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia_talk:WikiProject_Hinduism)). You may also sign up for the project on the Participant’s list (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:WikiProject_Hinduism/Participants).