

## Indian Baby Names - Blending The Modern, Traditional And Religious

As you can expect from one of the most populated (over 1billion) countries in the world and the one with fastest growing population, there are literally thousands of Indian baby names to choose from. This must create a few headaches for the new Indian parent. Well...probably not, because, as a country which is still deeply rooted in history and tradition, choosing names for new babies is often a religion or family-specific event.

Large numbers of Indian names have their origins in Sanskrit meanings. These tend to be Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist and Jain names. However, despite the western association of India with Hindus and the high-profile Sikh population, the religious makeup of the Indian population is actually quite surprising:

The 2001 Census reveals the religious make-up of the Indian population as follows:

- 80.5% Hindu,
- 13.4% Muslim,
- 2.3% Christian,
- 1.9% Sikh,
- 0.8% Buddhist,
- 0.4% Jain,
- 0.01% Zoroastrian,
- 1.3% other (2001)

As you can see, the second largest section of the population is Muslim and, even more surprisingly, the third largest is Christian. This means that Indian baby name choice covers an extremely wide range from very traditional Muslim, through to biblical names.

Wherever you live in the world, selecting a name for a newborn child has always been a complex, fascinating and sometimes quite stressful process. In India, for thousands of years, baby name selection for the majority Hindu population was performed according to a traditional system, one that eliminated personal bias and reflected, according to astrological principles, the best qualities that the child was supposed to grow up with.

The name was usually chosen after calculations involving the horoscope, the exact time and place of birth, as well as the traditional textual links between numbers so derived and letters of the Sanskrit alphabet. This was an extremely complex process, requiring a very deep knowledge of the ancient texts as well as their applicability in normal or special circumstances. Specialized training was required as well as a thorough grounding in the methodologies and processes of the Rites and Rituals dimension of the Hindu Religion, known as the Karma Kanda. Whew!! Not quite the same as opening up a book of Indian baby names...

Modern-day India is a real melting pot of different religions, with different baby-naming rituals, however the religious connections and connotations remain as strong as ever. The meanings of names are very important in Indian culture. With literally thousands of gods and goddesses to choose from, as well as the deeply-rooted traditions of honoring ancestors, the Indian baby naming process remains a fascinating and spiritual one.

However, with the rapid growth of the Indian economy and its accelerating adoption of western culture, Indian parents are also beginning to turn to more modern methods of finding names for their children - as well as more modern names. For example, there are many Internet sites, full of excellent lists of Indian baby names, together with their roots and meanings. These are great sources of ideas for names.

But - as with any baby name, the process of choosing a more modern or stylish Indian baby name can lead to major problems, created when a child is given a name with a bad meaning. In more secular societies, this may not be much of an issue, but in Indian society this could be disastrous for the future of the child.

So, if you are a modern Indian parent-to-be, searching for a name for your new baby, think for a while and make use of the extensive baby name resources on the Internet and elsewhere. The blend of the modern, traditional and religious is not an easy one - in fact the difficulties of naming an Indian child are a real reflection of India's own struggles to balance its traditions with its hunger to be a modern, 21st century country.

Source: <http://www.articlecircle.com>

About the Author

Michael Barrows' website has great advice for choosing baby names and lots of great baby name lists and baby resources. Get your free ebook packed with baby tips for new parents, visit <http://www.all-about-baby-names.com>.