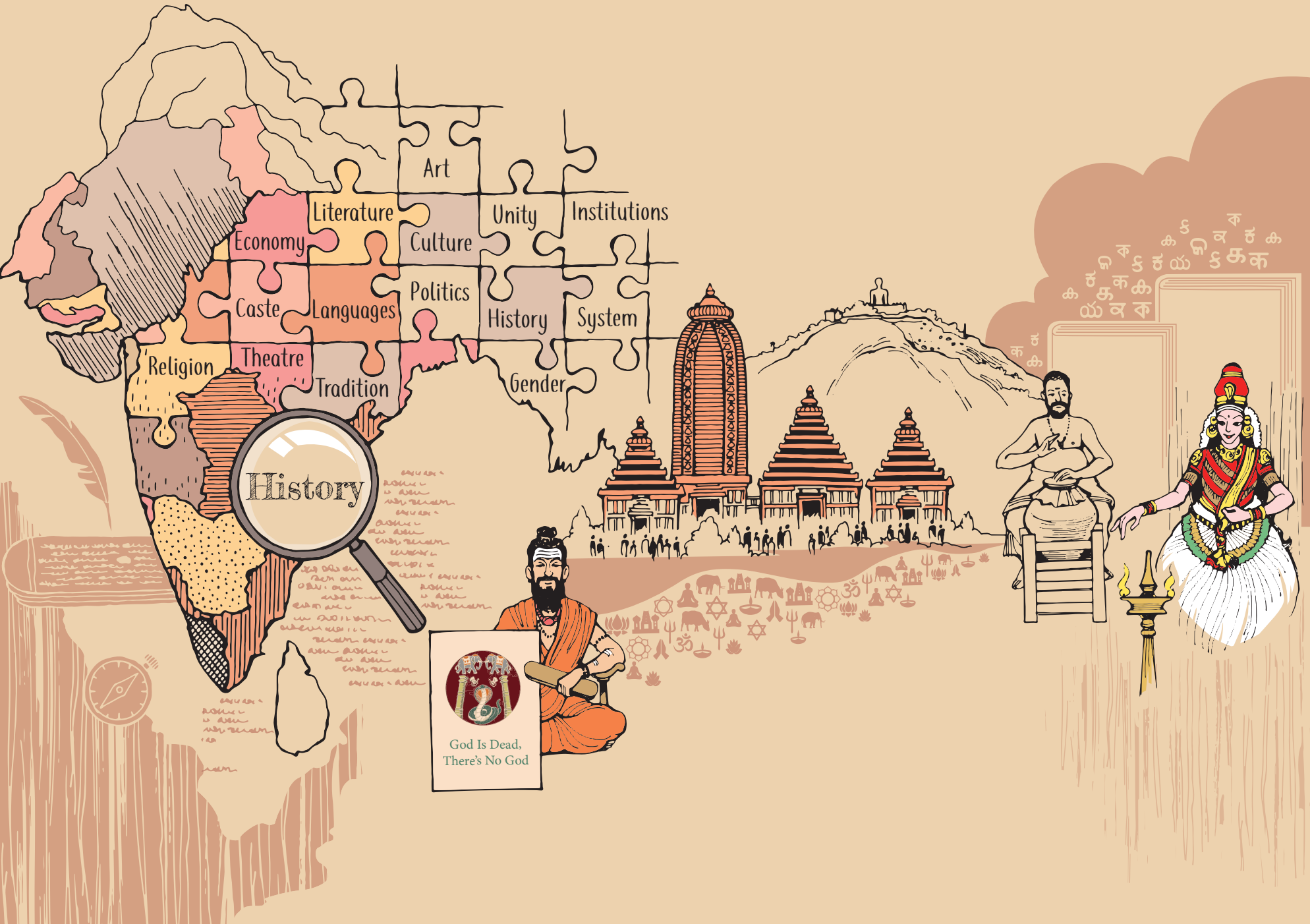


# HUMANITIES



## THE MAKING OF INDIA

The history of India has been a field of vibrant research for almost two centuries now. Over time new questions have been asked, new sources of information unearthed, and new avenues of understanding explored.

What is India? Is it a civilization, an idea, or a mere geographic mass? Why has India been a fertile ground and receptacle for numerous religions? How did languages and linguistic identities evolve here? Where did caste as an institution have its historical roots and what is its relationship with gender? How were territorial identities, pilgrimage centers, and political and sacred geographies formed? What were the structures of power in the Indian subcontinent? Are there ways of fruitfully embedding forms of art, literature and theatre into the larger narrative of Indian history? What assessments can we make of the history of intellectual life in India?

Dr. Manu V. Devadevan is a historian whose work addresses these fundamental questions in Indian history. He studies the evolution of institutions, ideas and identities in India across time to understand how they emerged, developed and underwent transformations. His work explores historical processes by placing them against the backdrop of the political economy to provide forceful economic explanations for non-economic facets of history.

Dr. Devadevan's book, *A Prehistory of Hinduism*, charts the course of evolution of the religious processes that would eventually be known as Hinduism from the early 19th century. The book covers the period from the 11th to the 19th centuries in the Deccan region, focusing on present-day Karnataka and parts of southern Maharashtra. It examines the processes in the light of economic factors such as the agrarian system, class structure, and relations of land, labor, property and production.

Dr. Devadevan has shed light on the rise of pilgrimage centers such as Puri in Odisha and Shravanabelagola in Karnataka. His reassessment of the *Kudiyattam* theatre of Kerala and his exploration of the aesthetics of kavya literature bring scholarship in these fields to new frontiers. Dr. Devadevan has done pioneering work on the origin of the caste system, the rise of vernacular languages, the making of territorial identities, and the structural foundations of statecraft. His reflections on the invention of zero is a major contribution to the history of science.