

REFLECTIONS

Sweden and ME



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Fun Quiz

Check your knowledge by taking the Quiz with interesting facts related to Sweden and India. (right answers on pg. 30)

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Editor's note

Concept:

Hindu
Swayamsevak
Sangh, Sweden

We, the Team of Yuva Sweden are glad to present to you the first edition of Reflections magazine. Yuva Sweden is a project undertaken by Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh, Sweden to provide a platform for young minds of Bharatiya as well as Hindu origin. At Yuva Sweden, we believe that the inclusive & universal values of Hindu Dharma will lead and show the path of sustainable, peaceful lifestyle which will lead to prosperous & progressive society.

Yuva team:

Arushi Barwal
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We are growing up in Sweden yet always find ourselves connected to the roots in Bharath. The creativity presented in this edition reflects our thinking. We are sure you would appreciate them and support us wholeheartedly.

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We would also like to take this opportunity to thank [Shri. Vipul Surve](#) and [Shri. Sanket Whaval](#) to take time and read through and share valuable inputs. We are also grateful to our friend and team members [Yajat Chaturvedi](#) and [Prakrite Singh](#) for the beautiful cover and back page. We are also thankful to [Vedant Patel](#) for the quiz.

Back page:

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We also greatly appreciate the efforts made by all the digital creators, because of whom we could publish this first edition. Please feel free to circulate the magazine in your network as it is.

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We are sure that many of you would like to share your thoughts with us in future and contribute to Reflections and other interesting activities conducted by Yuva, Sweden. Please feel free to reach out to us on yuvaweden@gmail.com.

Thanking you all once again!!

Yuva Sweden is a project by Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh, Sweden

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Culinary Diversity: A Taste of Sweden and India

Aashi Prabhu (Age -15 Years)

Food is an integral part of any culture, reflecting the history, traditions, and values of a society. Sweden and India, two culturally diverse countries located on opposite sides of the globe, offer a fascinating exploration of culinary traditions that showcase the rich tapestry of flavors and ingredients. This essay delves into the diverse world of food in Sweden and India, highlighting the key differences and similarities between the two nations.

1. Which Bollywood movie was partly shot in Sweden?

A) Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge

B) Yeh Jawaani Hai Deewani

C) 1920: Evil Returns

D) Chennai Express

Sweden, known for its minimalist design and abundant natural beauty, embraces a culinary tradition that embodies simplicity, elegance, and a deep connection with the surrounding environment. Swedish cuisine is characterized by a strong emphasis on seasonal and locally sourced ingredients. Traditional Swedish dishes often include seafood, such as herring, salmon, and haddock, as well as meats like moose and reindeer. The concept of "lagom" is central to Swedish culture, signifying the idea of balance and moderation, which is reflected in the way meals are prepared and enjoyed.

One typical Swedish dish is "Swedish Meatballs" (köttbullar), and are often served with lingonberry sauce, mashed potatoes, and creamy gravy, creating a harmonious blend of flavors and textures. Similarly, "gravlax," a type of cured salmon, showcases the Swedish affinity for seafood. It is often served with dill and mustard sauce, which adds a zesty kick to the delicate fish.

Contrastingly, India, known for its diverse culture, languages, and geography, boasts a cuisine as varied as the country itself. Indian cuisine is marked by its use of spices, herbs, and ingredients that vary from region to region. The cuisine is divided into numerous regional styles, each offering unique experiences.

One typical Swedish dish is "Swedish Meatballs" (köttbullar), and are often served with lingonberry sauce, mashed potatoes, and creamy gravy, creating a harmonious blend of flavors and textures.

A thali is a traditional Indian meal that consists of a selection of various dishes served on a single platter. It offers a balanced and complete meal experience, typically including a variety of curries, rice, bread (such as naan or roti), pickles, chutneys, and often yogurt or raita. The dishes on a thali can vary based on regional

preferences and have both vegetarian and non-vegetarian options. Thalies are often served in different regions of India and allow diners to savor a wide array of flavors and textures in one sitting.

In Sweden, the traditional dining experience is often a relaxed and leisurely affair. Meals are typically enjoyed in a minimalist setting. Swedish cuisine reflects the Scandinavian appreciation for simplicity, and this is evident in their "fika" tradition. "Fika" is the Swedish concept of taking a break, enjoying a cup of coffee, and indulging in a pastry or a sandwich. It is a cherished social activity, providing an opportunity for friends and colleagues to bond over a cup of coffee and a sweet treat, like a cinnamon bun.



On the other hand, India is known for its bustling street food culture. The Indian dining experience can range from fine dining in upscale restaurants to savoring spicy street snacks from roadside vendors. Street food in India offers a vivid and bustling atmosphere where a wide array of snacks and dishes, such as "chaat" (a combination of crispy fried dough, boiled potatoes, and chutneys), "samosas" (deep-fried pastries filled with spiced potatoes or meat), and "pani puri" (hollow semolina shells filled with spicy tamarind water and various toppings), can be enjoyed amidst the vibrant street life.

Both Sweden and India have unique approaches to vegetarian cuisine. In Sweden, vegetarian options have gained popularity in recent years, with an emphasis on fresh vegetables and innovative plant-based alternatives. Indian vegetarian cuisine, on the other hand, has a rich history, with many dishes that cater to those who don't consume meat. Dishes like "palak paneer" (paneer cheese in a creamy spinach sauce) and "aloo gobi" (potatoes and cauliflower curry) showcase the depth of flavors that can be achieved without meat.

In conclusion, exploring the diverse culinary traditions of Sweden and India offers a fascinating journey into the world of food. While Swedish cuisine emphasizes simplicity, balance, and local ingredients, Indian cuisine is a kaleidoscope of flavors, spices, and regional diversity. Whether you savor Swedish meatballs in a cozy café or indulge in spicy street food in India, the world of food offers an endless array of tastes, textures, and experiences to discover.

I wanted to create something that would show both the Swedish and Indian Culture."

Culinary Diversity: Indian food vs Swedish food

Joel Perries (Age - 17 Years)

2. In which year did India establish diplomatic relations with Sweden?

- A) 1947
- B) 1953
- C) 1949
- D) 1975





Sweden (in my eyes)

Utsavi Tiwari (Age – 14 Years)

This glorious land we live on is ours to keep and ours to protect
It started off with just a piece of barren land
But then came the great kings and ruled this land
Made it the way it is now, beautiful and sweet

After the king passed away, we became one
Weren't ruled by anyone but by ourselves
Worked together to make it happen

Now we live with peace and happiness, with no discrimination
All the fighting is left behind in the past
Buried deep down with the kings of glory

The weather dancing around like a tiny ballerina
The celebrations so grand and beautiful
The weird food combinations like codenames

This orphic land was gifted to us by the universe
A latibule that makes all your empty voids full again
An arcane place full of untold folklores

This place is my cynefin, a place no one can take away
The landscape as beautiful as a starry night
This glorious land we live on is ours to keep and ours to protect
And I will, always and forever

3. Which field of collaboration is highlighted in the India-Sweden Innovation Partnership?

A) Renewable Energy

B) Space Exploration

C) Healthcare

D) Education

Unraveling the cultural tapestry: growing up in Sweden vs India

Isha Shrotri (Age – 14 Years)

A young teenage girl sits at her desk by the candlelight, drinking a cup of coffee, taking in the serene landscape of Sweden outside her window. Meanwhile, halfway across the world, a boy is eating dinner with his family in the vibrant and rich tapestry that is India. It seems as if both the children are living in their own bubbles, their own secluded worlds. At least that's how it used to be. Today, however, we rarely need to leave our home to experience different cultures. With the inventions of Google, AI, and VR, it has become infinitely easier to get to know contrasting ways of life, different experiences, and glimpses into the worlds of others. In this article, we will delve into the contrasting cultural tapestries of Sweden and India, exploring how these unique and opposite environments shape the upbringing of children and leave lasting impressions on their lives.

One of Sweden's defining characteristics is its dreamy landscape. The peaceful lakes, enchanting archipelago, and lush forests can be experienced across the country. The topography is fairly flat for hundreds of kilometers without any defining peaks; much unlike India. In India, one can witness multiple different expanses at any given time of year, ranging from pristine beaches and awe-inspiring mountains to vast deserts and ethereal forests teeming with wildlife. Apart from these natural wonders, India also offers national parks that span hundreds of kilometers. This adds to India's extensive cultural heritage; including culinary diversity as well as the clothing options being abundant and varied. Growing up in Sweden, the weather determined a large part of what activities I could and couldn't do. In India however, the weather is seldom a problem and secondly, the education system in Sweden is known to be slightly more lenient and forgiving as compared to India's notoriously difficult approach to learning. In India, test writing is a large part of how students' capabilities are assessed, with many aspects of learning revolving around memorization. In Sweden, however, students are assessed in multiple ways, including essays, presentations, and speeches, with tests only making up a small percentage. In India, schools are highly competitive, largely due to the massive amounts of students applying for schools and universities. In Sweden however, schools are not seen as extremely competitive, but rather as an opportunity for everyone to grow and learn as an individual in a conducive and supportive environment.

Growing up in two such varied environments teach a child not only the content; or what, but also how to think and learn. It is the environment and experiences we have as children that play a major role in shaping our lives as they are today.

Sweden gives children access to the necessary resources and infrastructure for a child's development, whether physical or mental. Libraries, gyms, and therapy centers are almost always open, helping to ensure that a child's upbringing does not lack in any area. In short, Sweden is an extremely child-oriented society. The only difference is that India offers the same exposure and opportunities for children to be able to showcase their abilities, but it is intensely competitive.

In India, however, one can meet with family and friends, something which is difficult to do while living halfway across the world. When living in Sweden, the only way we can see our friends and family is through calls. It is then up to the parents if their child

4. *In which year during the Swedish Presidency, did India join the Arctic Council as an observer at the Kiruna Ministerial Meeting?*

- A) 2013
- B) 2012
- C) 2014
- D) 2011



gets enough exposure to their culture or not, including language, food, and clothing. When one lives in their own country, one always has exposure to the culture and ways of life and one needn't think so hard about cultural exposure. Here, parents have to take extra precautions and efforts to make sure that the culture gets passed down to their children and the future generations, a challenging feat.

No matter where we are, the ways we express ourselves don't necessarily change. One such way is music. It allows us to break language barriers and connect with others from different cultural backgrounds; and my own experience with music is testimony to this. I started learning the western flute in the fourth grade; an opportunity that I will forever be grateful for and cherish with all my heart. It is truly a unique experience, as the western flute is not commonly available in India, but I still get to learn it and collaborate with like-minded peers. Recently, I have started exploring the wonders of the Indian bamboo flute. It is vastly different from the western flute, both in terms of technique and the musical system.

5. Who is the current reigning monarch of Sweden?

- A) King Carl XVI Gustaf*
- B) Queen Margrethe II*
- C) King Harald V*
- D) King Felipe VI*

Children growing up in India are multilingual and learn three to four languages on average: the state language, Hindi, English, and sometimes even Sanskrit. In Sweden, apart from English and Swedish, students get the opportunity to learn a third language, usually Spanish, French, or German. Learning Indian languages helps expats living in Sweden to forge a deeper connection and establish relationships with their family back home. On the other hand, we must also make extra efforts to assimilate into Swedish culture and society.

While neither country is a bad place to grow up in, it is important to respect different cultures and ways of life. Teaching children to appreciate and respect cultural diversity is an important educational perspective that should be considered, no matter where in the world you live. It is an international quality that allows us to bond, connect, and grow. Neither perspective is wrong, but neither is wholly right, but being a part of both allows us to take the best of both worlds to create our own, both for ourselves and for a global community.

Swedish Public Transportation

Shubham Bapat (Age -12 Years)

The Swedish public transportation system (SL) is helpful but can be troublesome. With



delays and communication issues and the most frequent problems, SL never fails to live up to its name. Even though the people go through the disappointment and frustration of being late to work/school because of the public transport, they still go back for more. But

6. Which is the fourth largest city in Sweden?

- A) Luleå
- B) Uppsala
- C) Lund
- D) Gothenburg

why? It is because of the affordable and convenient transportation that gets them wherever they want to go, no matter what the time or place is. On the occasion where the mode of transportation is early, (instead of on-time) the people get to their destination earlier than they expect.

The SL is the best way to reach your destination quickly and without any effort. A normal winter morning in Stockholm can be stressful especially if you are late, or if it has snowed which often delays the trains or causes communication problems. SL helps you get to your destination even when there is a lot of traffic. What's more, you are even helping the environment by using fossil - free buses, trams and trains.

Though it really saves you in some situations like traffic, it still has some disadvantages that usually come and go, these are usually caused by the seasons. When it snows there are a lot of delays or when it rains a lot, then there are communication problems that usually cause delays. Sometimes it is inconvenient to go by public transport, the most common inconvenience is that it takes too long to reach a destination, or you are tired of walking to the train/bus station. Still, if you do not have a car, then public transport is your way to go.

The public transportation is accessible for everyone, may it be the handicapped, the old, etc. With elevators at every exit and a website that is always updated for delays, early buses and trains, even which elevator at which station is undergoing maintenance or which escalator is not working, the Swedish transportation system is definitely one of the best in the world. Of course, there are negatives, but the positives far out match the negatives. So, the next time you catch a train, bus or tram, make sure you take notice of these points.



Poem

Shohil Balaji (Age -17 Years)

In Chennai's vibrant heat, I once did dwell,
A place where culture and tradition swell.
But four years past, I made a daring leap,
To Stockholm's land, where differences run deep.

From bustling streets to cobblestone-lined ways,
I felt the change in those early days.
Chennai's warmth, Stockholm's chill embrace,
A teen's journey in a foreign place.

The sun-kissed shores of Marina, so wide,
Now replaced by fjords, and an endless tide.
No coconut water stalls, but coffee, strong and dark,
A taste of culture's shift, a noticeable mark.

In Chennai, spices danced in every dish,
But Stockholm's fare was quite a different wish.
Herring and meatballs, flavors strange and new,
A culinary adventure, a palate debut.

The languages changed, a different tongue I heard,
From Tamil's cadence to Swedish, every word.
But learning, adapting, I forged ahead,
In a world of Swedish, I found my thread.

The seasons, too, brought shifts beyond compare,
Chennai's monsoons to Stockholm's icy air.
From scorching heat to snowflakes gently falling,
My teenage years in two worlds, enthralling.

In Chennai and Stockholm, I've found my home,
Through all the changes, no need to roam.
But neither wholly Swedish, nor fully Indian's trace,
I'm a blend of both worlds, in this unique space.

7. How many lakes are there in Sweden?
(Approx)

- A) 500
- B) 20000
- C) 60000
- D) 100000

From: India, To: Sweden / From: Sweden, To: India

Shambhavi Singh (Age – 17 Years)

If someone had told me six years ago, that today I would be writing about my perspective of India and how my experiences have been in Sweden, I would have been skeptical. Yet, here I am. And believe it or not, it is somewhat a mixture of nostalgia and happiness.

Six years ago, when my parents revealed to me that we were moving to Stockholm, I was surprised, anxious, excited, and in disbelief. To envision how my life would be after moving, I researched some facts, history, and traditions about the country. I learned about the winters, snow, advent calendars, and Santa Lucia. I learned about the summers, the midnight sun, and Midsommar Fika. I was intrigued about the possibility of seeing the cherry blossoms in springs and orange scenery painted during autumn. I remembered all the Bollywood movies where the heroes and heroines would sing for each other on mountains covered with snow. I felt thrilled to be in the same places they were, and compared to the hot and humid climate I was so used to, the snow thrilled me even more!

Is it possible that my view of the new world of Sweden changed? Yes. Now that I have spent some years in Stockholm, the new world has become the one I am very well acquainted with.

Is it possible that my view of the native world of India changed? Yes, my connections, attitude, and outlook on my heritage have changed tremendously.

Being in the capital of Sweden, I had the opportunity to meet multiple people of different cultures. Stockholm is not only a popular destination for work, studies, etc., but also a place where people are encouraged to explore and show off the unique aspects of their identities, such as their heritage. This has made me more knowledgeable and appreciative of other cultural histories. This also urged me to reflect more on my own cultural identity and history. I found that my Indian heritage is a larger part of my identity, which changed how I see India.

India is a big country with a huge population, with diverse traditions, rituals, languages, arts, etc. Over the past six years, the Indian community that I have interacted with in Stockholm is representative of that diversity. I met many friends from different states of India which improved my understanding of India's states, and regional nuances, and made me more culturally aware. My understanding of Garba, Durga Puja, Chhatt, etc., has gained more depth. I noticed piqued curiosity and genuine interest in my culture, religion, and country, pushing me to further explore them. Becoming more culturally aware allowed me to connect with more people, and to recognize India's multicultural and diverse history.

But if I see India as such a dreamy landscape, do others who are like me see it that way too? How do Swedish people, who do not have much knowledge of India, perceive it?

Is it possible that my view of the new world of Sweden changed? Yes. Now that I have spent some years in Stockholm, the new world has become the one I am very well acquainted with.

8. How many official national minorities are there in Sweden?

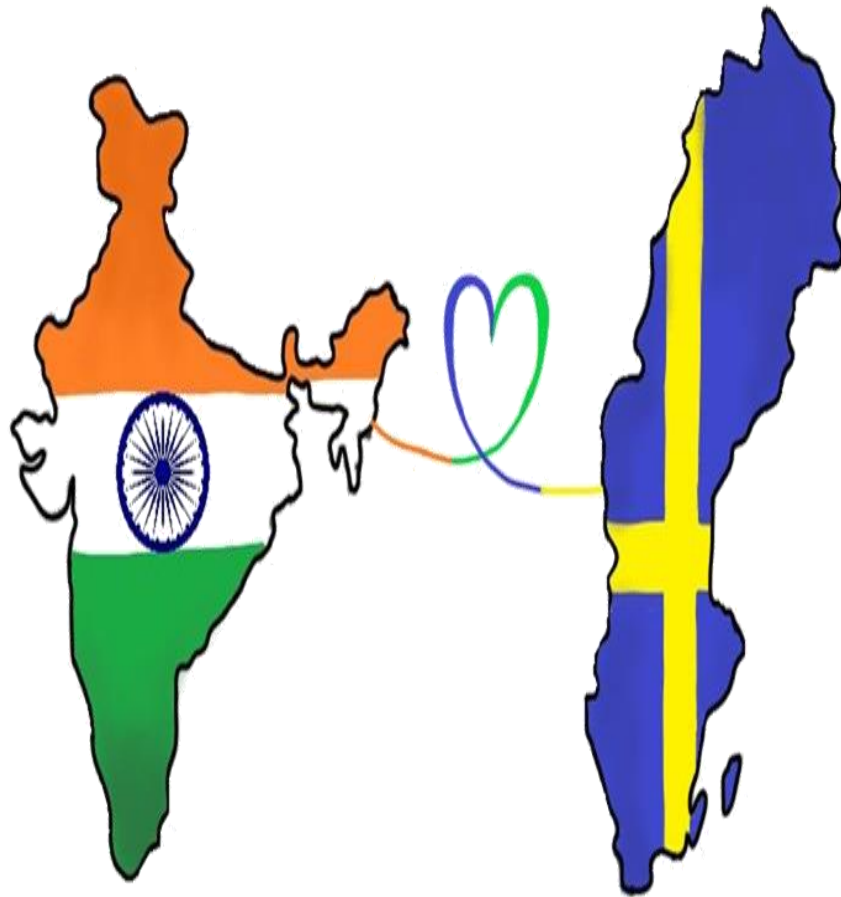
- A) 0
- B) 1
- C) 5
- D) 3

After discussing with other people, I realized that those who were born and/or lived in India appreciated India for the same reasons that I did, whereas Swedish people, who have not personally experienced India, have been fascinated by other aspects. Whether it is the spectacular taste of food, or grand celebrations and weddings, Swedish people have liked those aspects. The Namaste Stockholm event is the perfect example of this when Swedish people and others can experience Indian food, watch performances from Indian classical to Bollywood dance and connect with other Indian people. Now, six years later, if someone asks me whether I am happy with my parents' decision to move to Stockholm, I would say yes. At the same time, if someone asks me whether at least a part of me misses living in India, I would also say yes. However, the most important thing I gained through moving to Sweden is an outside perspective of India and an inside perspective of Europe, Sweden in particular.

Drawing by Aashi Prabhu (Age - 15 Years)

9. What date is the National Day of Sweden celebrated?

- A) 6th of October
- B) 6th of June
- C) 6th of May
- D) 6th of July



My Cultural Journey from India to Sweden

Inay Ritesh (Age – 15 Years)

What is cultural connect? According to Google, **‘Cultural connection’ refers to the bond or relationship that individuals or groups have with a particular culture or cultural elements.** In my opinion, cultural connection is when a community forms because of similar cultures and decides to expand its community by integrating its culture. As a 15-year-old who has spent most of his life in Sweden, I believe I have some experience when it comes to cultural connection. This connection as well has given me a sense of belonging and identity. In this article, I want to talk about my life experience, how society has integrated cultures, and what the difference feels for me between India and Sweden.

10. How much of Sweden's total area is covered by trees?

- A) 1/3
- B) 1/4
- C) 1/5
- D) 2/3

I moved to Sweden when I was around 7 and a half back in 2016. I thought that it would be a place where I would have to start over my life from being an Indian to a Swede. But to my surprise, I didn't have to. As a 7-year-old back in 2016, I had no idea what Sweden was and a country as such even existed. I had never even travelled to a country out of South Asia so getting to know that I was moving here was quite frightening. I was scared that I would not be accepted as a person because I would be the odd one out in every group due to the fact that everyone was Swedish, and I would be the only Indian person. But I was surprised when I joined my class in 2nd grade here. Almost everyone in, not only my class, but the entire school was Indian. It was an amusing sight because, as I mentioned above, I had never heard of a place called Sweden and I expected to be surrounded by a bunch of Swedes my whole life. After time passed ever since I moved to Sweden, I realized that the country had so many Indians. I was relieved by this because I felt like I found people I could connect with out of India in the country where I would have to grow up in.

On the note of Sweden and India, there are a lot of cultural differences between both. One of the biggest differences is religion. Sweden believes in Christianity while India believes in multiple religions: Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, etc. When it comes to food there is also a big difference in the taste. India has more festivals such as Diwali and Holi while Sweden has Easter and Christmas. But I think ever since I have come to Sweden, I've seen a lot of integration between the two cultures. I have seen Swedes celebrating a lot of Indian festivals and many Indians celebrate Christmas as well. To follow the traditions of India in Sweden, Indians have created their own communities and they help express their culture by hosting festivals that are not only based on the religion but also festivals such as Namaste Stockholm, which takes place in the centre of Stockholm in public where you can see a mix of South Asians and Swedes. My point being that Sweden and India have been quite successful when it comes to integrating cultures.

So, what is cultural connection? Cultural connection in my opinion is when a community forms because of similar cultures and decides to expand its community by integrating its culture.



So, what is cultural connection? Cultural connection in my opinion is when a community forms because of similar cultures and decides to expand its community by integrating its culture. I think that moving to Sweden actually made me have stronger bonds with other Indians as being in Sweden, finding Indians and making a community is more unique than if I was in India as everyone has similar culture while in Sweden everyone has different culture and finding people of the same culture and creating communities' stronger bonds.

Taking Care of the Environment in Sweden vs. India

Arushi Barwal (Age – 17 Years)

The majority of countries around the world have pursued to reach the sustainability goals finalized by the United Nations. A couple of these goals are related towards environmental sustainability and preserving nature's ecosystems, since over the decades we have caused great damage towards the earth's environment, where some of the damage is almost irreversible to fix. Each country has their own different ways of reaching these goals, such as Sweden and India. Although they have similar goals, both countries have different approaches as to how they will achieve environmental sustainability.

Sweden has long been known for its successful progressive stance on environmental issues. The country has been encouraging the people to choose renewable energy sources which do not cause too much of an impact towards the environment compared to non-renewable energy sources. Some of their top renewable sources come from hydropower, wind power, nuclear power, and other green technologies that do not damage the environment as much and are still planning to even further lower their fossil fuel consumption as soon as possible.

One of the cornerstones of Sweden's environmental achievements is its waste management systems. They have formed a circular economy which priorities minimising and recycling waste. Citizens actively participate in sorting and recycling efforts by selling or buying secondhand, or using recyclable materials to make new items, thus contributing to Sweden's rising recycling rates.

Moreover, Sweden has invested in eco-friendly transportation solutions. They are making efforts to expand public transportation, help

construct ways for proper recycling, and advocate for electric vehicles which help in reducing carbon emissions. The integration of sustainable practices into daily life represents Sweden and their willpower to environmental preservation.

In contrast, there are multiple factors that make it difficult for India to reach these sustainability goals as fast as Sweden, due to their population and its diverse economic landscape. Rapid urbanization, industrialization, and agriculture practices have led to large-scale environmental issues, including air and water pollution, deforestation and improper waste management.

Despite these challenges, India has been actively working on multiple fronts to address these environmental concerns. The government of India has implemented policies aimed at promoting renewable energy, with a focus on solar and wind power projects. Initiatives such as the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) demonstrate a commitment to improving air quality, especially in densely populated urban areas.

Waste management remains a pressing issue in India, but there are efforts to enhance recycling policies and reduce single use plastics. Organisations and individuals are driving awareness campaigns and are encouraging communities to maintain

11. How many European countries have a larger area than Sweden?

- A) 4
- B) 2
- C) 6
- D) 3

India's journey for environmental sustainability is also shaped by its rich culture. Traditional practices of conservation and devotion for nature are being attempted to integrate into modern environmental efforts.



sustainable habits. The Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (Clean India Mission) is an example of an organisation rallying citizens to maintain cleanliness and proper waste disposal.

India's journey for environmental sustainability is also shaped by its rich culture. Traditional practices of conservation and devotion for nature are being attempted to integrate into modern environmental efforts. This shows that India is actively finding a way to have the modern and traditional approaches of environmental conservation coexist with each other.

In comparing Sweden and India, it is evident that both countries must tailor different strategies to approach and solve major environmental challenges that are in their country, while maintaining these habits to keep the earth in a healthy shape. Sweden planning and systematic implementation showcase the effectiveness of a well-established infrastructure. On the other hand, India's journey is marked by adaptability, resilience, and a blend of traditional and modern strategies.

With the use of these strengths from Sweden and India, we can collaborate along with other countries around the world to help share knowledge and solutions to heal, restore and preserve our beautiful environments, help animal populations flourish and hope to see that the future generations will be proud to be able to live in a thriving society.

Cultural differences between India and Sweden

Avani Raje (Age- 13 Years)

India and Sweden are two countries that are vastly different in terms of culture and tradition. Despite sharing a few similarities in terms of their inclination towards social welfare and progressive policies, the two nations have a stark contrast in their cultural outlook. In this article, I will be explaining some differences from my experiences.

12. From north to south Sweden is?

A) 1907 kilometres long

B) 1572 kilometres long

C) 1250 kilometres long

D) 1021 kilometres long

India and Sweden, two countries situated on different sides of the world, have stark cultural differences. Despite being poles apart, both countries have their own uniqueness, which is fascinating to explore.

Religion plays a significant part in Indian culture. Hinduism is the dominant religion and has a substantial influence on the Indian way of living. There are also several other religions, such as Islam, Christianity, Sikhism, and Buddhism that coexist in India.

On the other hand, Sweden is a predominantly Christian country, with about 70% of the population belonging to various branches of Christianity. While religion plays a vital role in shaping Indian culture and customs, Sweden is relatively secular and has more liberty in matters of faith and beliefs.

The family structure is extremely important in Indian culture. Family bonds are strong, and families usually live together in a joint family system. Respect for elders and authority figures is highly valued in Indian culture.

In contrast, Sweden follows a nuclear family system, where the parents and their children form a family unit. They are independent and self-reliant, and individualism is prominent in Swedish culture.

Gender roles in India and Sweden display significant differences. In India, traditional gender roles are still prevalent, and most women are homemakers. Women's participation in the workforce has increased in the last few decades, but it is still not as widespread as in Sweden.

In Sweden, men and women have equal opportunities in education, employment, and decision-making. Women are encouraged to participate in all aspects of life, including politics and business. Sweden is also known for its progressive policies towards gender equality, such as parental leave for both mothers and fathers.

In contrast, Sweden follows a nuclear family system, where the parents and their children form a family unit.

Dining etiquette is an integral part of Indian culture. Traditional Indian meals are usually eaten with hands. It is customary to wash one's hands before and after a meal. Guests are treated with utmost respect and often urged to eat more as a sign of hospitality and regard.

In Sweden, dining etiquettes are based on Western customs and are largely influenced by European dining styles. Eating with hands is considered impolite, and most meals are eaten



using cutlery. Swedes also follow a social custom called 'Fika,' where people pause and enjoy a cup of coffee or tea with a pastry.

Communication styles in India and Sweden are different, with Indian culture being more indirect and passive-aggressive. It is considered impolite to say no outright and to disagree openly. Instead, people often communicate their disagreement through subtleties, expressions, and body language.

In contrast, Swedish communication styles are direct, straightforward, and more focused on the task at hand. Swedes give importance to clear, concise communication and express their disagreement openly without much hesitation.

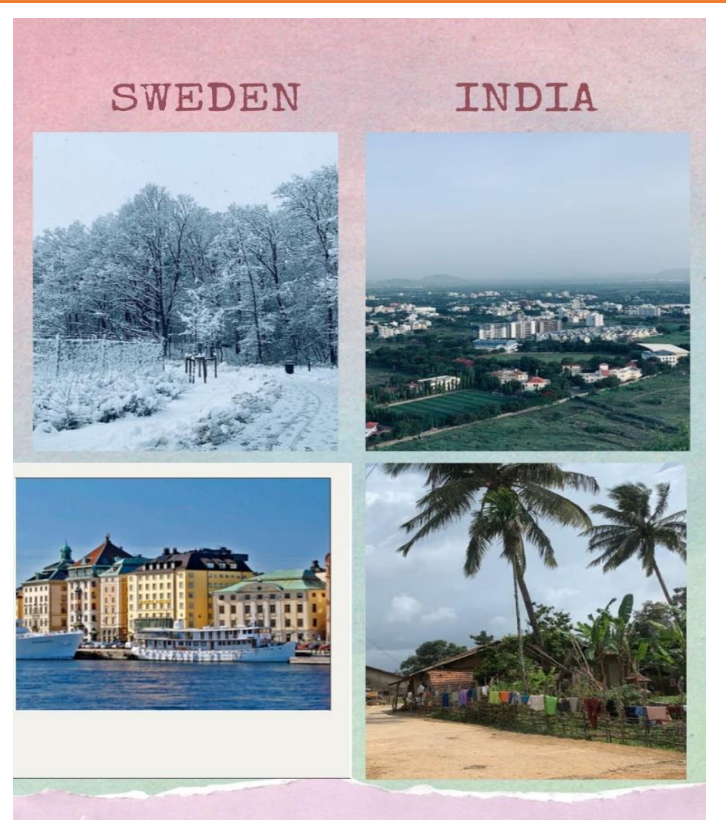
There are many festivals in both India and Sweden. In Sweden, there are 4 main festivals, like midsummer, christmas, easter and kräftskriva, Whilst India has 2 to 3 main festivals, which are Diwali, Holi and ganesh chaturthi (Depending on where from india you are from).

But of course, there are many more festivals, but these are the main ones.

In conclusion, the cultural differences between India and Sweden are numerous. While there are differences in religion, family values, gender roles, dining etiquette, and communication styles, both countries have their unique charm. If you plan to visit either of these fantastic countries, it is crucial to understand and respect the local culture to appreciate it thoroughly.

13. What is the national animal of Sweden?

- A) Moose*
- B) Deer*
- C) Fox*
- D) Bear*



Sweden and India: not what has defined my life, but what my life has defined for me.

Yajat Chaturvedi (Age – 14 Years)

Who am I?

Let's begin where it all began. I was born in India, specifically in the Simgrauli district, on the border of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. I moved to Sweden at the age of 3 years and 11 months, where I was swiftly put into a Swedish kindergarten and thereafter a Swedish school.

14. Population of Sweden? (approx.)

- A) 10.5 million
- B) 8.2 million
- C) 5.7 million
- D) 7.2 million

Although I greatly appreciate the Swedish education system, it has also given birth to an inferiority I feel in accordance with intelligence. Simply put, I feel much dumber than all Indians who attended school in India. Yet, I am eternally grateful for being raised in Sweden, it has, in very cliché words, made me who I am. Sweden and India have given to me more than I can return, notably my perspective and my interests.

Why am I here?

I am an exception in most groups I am a part of. In simpler words, it can also be summarized as being weird, but I don't see it that way. I prefer to be called unique or special rather than weird. Although, I must say, I have interests which are unheard of even for myself. I blame them all on being raised in an uncommon yet fascinating environment. My parents haven't spoken the smallest amount of Swedish or English during my upbringing. My father was very staunch when it came to teaching me Hindi and Hindu culture. Therefore, I learned Hindi as my first language, something I am ever so thankful for. I also learned Swedish and English, due to my surroundings requiring me to do so. At an early age, I was relatively fluent in three languages, but moreover, being good at languages also lit a fire inside me. Suddenly I was ever more interested in speech, languages and phonology. In sixth grade, I had started studying Spanish as a mandatory subject. For that one subject, and that one subject only, I started studying my heart out. I quickly developed in Spanish, quickly enough where it was no longer a necessity to continue. I realised that I was losing my interest in the language, so instead I picked up Japanese. Yet, one unique interest wasn't enough for me. I had begun realising how illiterate I was about my own religion, something I am greatly ashamed of. I knew nothing, or rather, I had forgotten everything I knew. Slowly, I started trying to learn again. I started asking my father questions about my own religion, to which I am a stranger, day in and day out. I have realised I am not mature enough to understand a lot of what is explained, and the rabbit hole simply is too long to cover through conversation. Thus, I have a new goal, one more ambitious than any that have preceded it. I wish to read the greatest texts on Hinduism, Sanatana dharma, in the most accurate language they are written in, Sanskritam.

What is my relation with Sweden and India?

In my eyes, my life in Sweden has made me a foreigner to India. Not knowing the ABCs of my own culture has made me interested and determined to learn it. I can



only imagine that if I were raised in India, my culture would be so bland and common for me, I wouldn't have fallen into this rabbit hole, I wouldn't have experienced my greatest interest sitting right under my nose. The amazing, beautiful India that I recognize isn't just the physical land and awe-inspiring temples built on it, but the culture it gave root to, the complete vastness of sanātana dharma. Yet, being a foreigner to one land doesn't mean I belong to the other. Living in Sweden has been full of ups-and-downs, a rollercoaster if you will. Many small things, such as how I'm at a loss for words when it comes to my own culture, to larger ones, such as having an obsession with my Swedish pronunciation, so as to not seem foreign when I speak.

15. How many states in India?

- A) 25
- B) 28
- C) 26
- D) 27

What more?

Now, I will simply continue. I will continue doing what I value, and I will continue to learn about anything that catches my eye. Frankly, having written everything I have, I feel inept. I have written everything I felt as I felt it, still it lacks in many things. But I am glad that I wrote this. Partly because I enjoy writing even though I'm bad at it, and partly because I wanted to show my interest for the Hindu culture, to share my beliefs and summarize for myself what I believe. The title of an Indian in Sweden is not what has defined my life, rather my life has defined what that title means for me.

School In Sweden

Joel Perries (Age - 17 Years)

When I was 10 years old my father got a job in Sweden which meant my parents, sister and I had to move to Stockholm. For a little ten-year-old me that meant moving to a country that I had never heard of except in a GI Joe Comic book. So, with no prior knowledge of the language spoken there, me and my family to Stockholm. Up until then I had only been to Sweden once before to visit my father who had traveled before us for his work. My parents decided to enroll me and my sister in a Swedish school. Which came with its own set of challenges, since neither me nor my sister spoke a single word of Swedish.

16. What is India's smallest state by area?

- A) Goa
- B) Kerala
- C) Uttar Pradesh
- D) Pondicherry

I distinctly remember being excited for my first day of school. The idea of starting in a new school in a foreign country where everything was different from what I was used to almost seemed like a dream. I was completely and utterly prepared to have the best time of my life. That was when I first came into contact with the Language barrier. The Language barrier, as you might have guessed, is when two or more people speaking different languages come into contact. In my case I had been told in advance that most Swedes spoke two languages. The first and foremost being Swedish and the second English. Since I spoke English, I assumed that there would be no communication problem. However, I was sorely mistaken. I realized then and there that Swedes unlike Indians would never do something that they are uncomfortable with.

Even though most of them could speak fluent English they prefer not to. For fear of doing something that they might not be good at. This became obvious in the recess before the first lesson. While trying to talk with my classmates most of them either ignored me while slouching on their phones or just straight up saying they could not talk English. One boy even said to me, and I quote "No speak English". We became good friends a year later once I managed to learn Swedish.

The Indian schooling system places more value in the amount of knowledge in contrast to how well you are able to use that knowledge.

Ironically enough the first lesson we had that day was English. In which every single child in that classroom suddenly started to speak perfect English. I learnt soon enough that it would be easier to wrestle with an elephant than to get Swedes to do something that they were uncomfortable with. Luckily, I was still able to make some friends who helped me fit in, for which I am eternally grateful for.

While it might sound like it is difficult for an English speaker to fit in a Swedish school, there are some aspects that I really enjoyed. One of which being the schooling system. The Indian schooling system places more value in the amount of knowledge in contrast to how well you are able to use that knowledge. As such you are often forced to memorize massive amounts of topics without having a chance to properly understand it. Sweden takes an opposite approach. The Swedish system values how well you use what you have learnt. As such Swedish students have much longer time to work with topics than Indian students. Personally, I can't remember what I learnt in India since most of the time I spent cramming weeks before the test. And I think a lot of Indian students will be able to relate. In Sweden we were given so much time that by the time



the test came around most students had forgotten what they had learnt in the first place. Me included.

In the end, school in Sweden though it might not have been all sunshine and rainbows that the 10-year-old me once thought. It has certainly become that which I have come to love. Despite all the difficulties and language problems there is no other place I would rather be.

17. Who was the first Indian citizen to go into space?

A) Sunita Williams

B) Rakesh Sharma

C) Kalpana Chawla

D) Ravish Malhotra

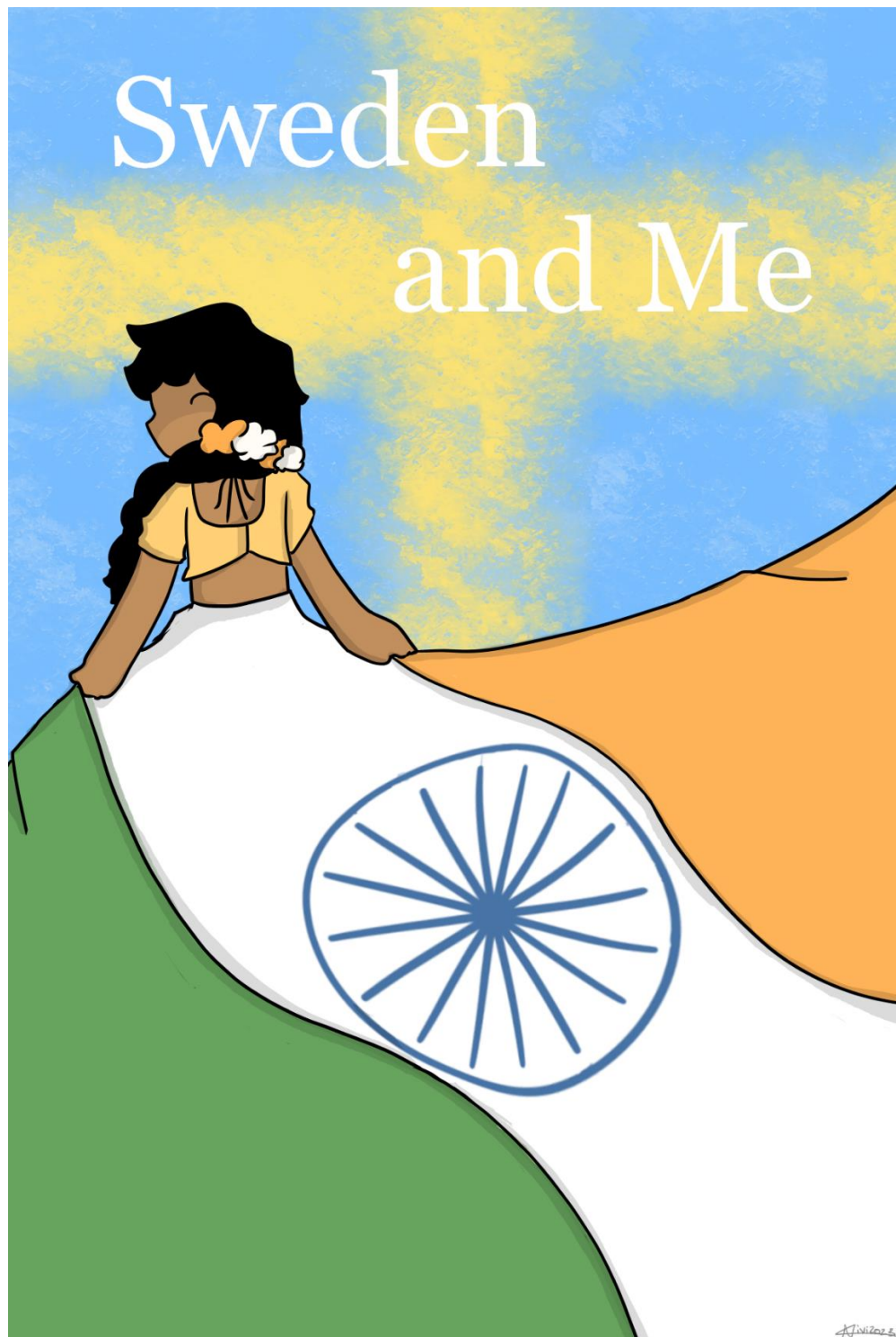
Sweden and me

Nivriti Pilla (Age - 16 Years)

I wanted to create something which represented and showed the feeling of culturally being Indian whilst still living in Sweden.

18. Which is the national tree of India?

- A) Peepal
- B) Mango
- C) Banyan
- D) Neem



Swedish and Indian education systems

Jainam Seth (Age – 17 Years)

Education is very crucial in today's society. It helps people learn and get ready for their future. But how do different countries approach this vital task? In this exploration, I draw upon my personal experiences of studying in both Sweden and India to provide a compelling comparison between their education systems. Sweden and India offer vastly contrasting educational systems, each with its strengths and unique characteristics. Having witnessed both systems firsthand, I'll shed light on the key features that distinguish them, their implications for students, and the broader lessons we can draw from their approaches to learning and teaching.

19. Which Indian city is known as the Silicon Valley of India?

- A) Bengaluru
- B) New Delhi
- C) Mumbai
- D) Hyderabad

Swedish Education System:

The Swedish education system is known for its innovative and child-centered approach. It places a strong emphasis on student independence, creativity, and critical thinking. The following are some key features I witnessed that are present:

1. In Sweden, education starts early. Children as young as one year old can attend preschools, and it's largely focused on play, social development, and creativity. Formal academics begin at the age of six.
2. Swedish schools encourage students to take an active role in their education. Teachers often act as facilitators, guiding students in their learning journey rather than being the sole source of knowledge.
3. In most cases, students often receive detailed feedback about their strengths and areas for improvement in the specific subjects every month. This promotes a deeper understanding of their performance.
4. In Sweden, many students take vocational education after 9th grade or even in universities that are highly regarded and encompass a broad spectrum of fields. It includes traditional trades like carpentry, electrical work, and plumbing, as well as modern professions such as information technology and healthcare. Additionally, unique vocational courses like barbering become accessible after 9th grade.
5. Sweden has a less homework policy. It has a relatively low emphasis on homework. Instead, students are encouraged to focus on extracurricular activities, hobbies, and spending time with family and friends after school.
6. Sweden places a strong emphasis on equal opportunities for all students. There is a comprehensive system of student support, ensuring that each child gets the assistance they need.

Indian Education System:

1. The Indian education system is quite diverse and has a strong focus on academic excellence. It has a long history of traditional methods, but it's also evolving to meet the demands of the modern world. From my perspective, here are some key points that I have witnessed:
2. In India, education often feels like a race. The students face high academic expectations from an early age. The competitive nature of the system can lead to stress and pressure to perform well on exams.
3. In India, a majority of students are typically required to make a significant choice early in their high school years, opting for one of the traditional academic



streams: Science, Commerce, or Arts. This choice significantly influences their future career. In contrast, students in Sweden can choose vocational education discussed previously.

4. Memorization is a common practice in India. Students often memorize vast amounts of information to do well in the exams.

To conclude, Sweden and India have different educational systems. Both countries have different ways of teaching. Sweden wants students to be creative and have less homework. They want everyone to have an equal chance. In India, students study hard for exams and memorize a lot. It has a strong focus on academic excellence. Each system has its purpose and approach. Every student is a unique individual, and what works for one might not work for another. The effectiveness of these systems depends on individual needs, values, and the broader cultural context. Education is about helping people become their best selves, and the world is big enough for different ways of doing it.

20. How many countries border India?

- A) 5*
- B) 7*
- C) 8*
- D) 6*

Two worlds, One me

Shalaka Tengali (Age – 17 Years)

Two worlds, but only one me.

Two different versions of one person is what you see.
In Sweden, we say “Hej!”,
Yet in India, we always welcome people with “Namaste!”
During the winter here, I wear layers of clothes in order to not freeze,
Yet I long for the holidays in India when I can wear cultural suits with short sleeves.
The above are just a few mere comparisons on the outside,
But there are many times where my two worlds collide.

Two worlds, but only one me.

Where can I really feel free?
Not here, not there.
Pieces of me are everywhere,
My friends and family in Sweden is where I feel most at home,
Yet, I have a whole other family that loves me unconditionally through a different time zone.
I can speak Marathi and Hindi just as I can speak English and Swedish,
But feeling fully at home in either world is still nothing more than a wish.

Two worlds, but only one me.

Daily struggles are normal, it seems to be!
When I was younger, I preferred not to take a lunch box to school,
Maybe because I wanted to be cool, or maybe because I was simply a fool.
I realize now that the food I grew up with at home is really my comfort,
Now all the comments on my “smelly” food no longer hurt.
Finally, I recognize that my life here is a privilege,
While many back “home” struggle daily and live on the edge.

Two worlds, but only one me.

“Home”, I say with a lot of uncertainty...
As said before, not here, not there,
I wonder how it was for my parents to move here, was it a nightmare?
Sweden might be where I feel the most at home,
But it certainly isn't for my parents, at least not when they had to move here, all alone.
Many of us children, we recognize the sacrifices made,
For our parents, all of it was worth it for our future and our sake.

Two worlds, but only one me.

Many feel as though their background is something to be ashamed of, something to hide,
But today, I am happy to say that I take part in both my cultures with immense pride.

QUIZ ANSWERS

1. Answer: C) 1920: Evil Returns
2. Answer: C) 1949
3. Answer: A) Renewable Energy
4. Answer: A) 2013
5. Answer: A) King Carl XVI Gustaf
6. Answer: B) Uppsala
7. Answer: D) 100000
8. Answer: C) 5
9. Answer: B) 6th of June
10. Answer: D) 2/3
11. Answer: A) 4
12. Answer: B) 1572 kilometres long
13. Answer: A) Moose
14. Answer: A) 10.5 million
15. Answer: B) 28
16. Answer: A) Goa
17. Answer: B) Rakesh Sharma
18. Answer: C) Banyan
19. Answer: A) Bengaluru
20. Answer: B) 7



Swedish tradition Walpurgis (Valborg) is very similar to Bhartiya festival Holika Dahan where the bonfire is lit. Though the stories differ, the common thing is the way they it is celebrated and timing (March/April). Walpurgis and Holi indicate a cultural connection between Sweden and Bharat!

You can find more information about Swedish tradition Walpurgis(Valborg) on this [link](#).