

***"Bollywood and Beyond"***  
***Study Abroad India***



***Winter Session***  
***Salisbury University***

***Dr. Andrew Sharma***

## Preface

“India, it is often said, is not a country but a continent. From north to south and east to west, the people are different, the languages are different, the customs are different, the country is different. There are few countries on earth with the enormous variety that India has to offer. It’s a place that somehow gets into your blood. Love it or hate it, you can never ignore India. It’s not an easy country to handle, and more than a few visitors are only too happy to finally get on an aircraft and fly away. Yet a year later they’ll be hankering to get back. It all comes back to that amazing variety. India is as vast as it is crowded, as luxurious as it is squalid. The plains are as flat as the Himalaya are high and spectacular, the food as terrible as it can be magnificent, the transport as exhilarating as it can be boring and uncomfortable. Nothing is ever quite the way you expect it to be. India is far from the easiest country in the world to travel around. It can be hard going, the poverty will get you down, Indian bureaucracy would try the patience of even a Hindu saint, and the most experienced travelers find themselves at the end of their tempers at some point. Yet it is all worth it. ... Basically, India is what you make of it and what you want it to be ... India is not a place that you simply and clinically “see,” it’s a total experience, an assault on the senses, a place you’ll never forget.” From the 6<sup>th</sup> edition, *Lonely Planet Guide to India*

“The subcontinent is home to more than a billion people, and its eclectic mélange of ethnic groups translates into an intoxicating cultural cocktail for the traveler. For those on a spiritual quest, India has oodles of sacrosanct sites and stirring philosophies, while history buffs will discover gems from the past almost everywhere – from grand vestiges of the British Raj peering over frenetic city streets, to battle scarred forts rising from forlorn country fields. Meanwhile, lovers of the great outdoors can paddle in the shimmering waters of one of many palm fringed beaches, scout for big jungle cats on an adrenaline pumping wildlife safari, or simply breathe in the scent of wildflowers on a rejuvenating forest walk. And then there’s the food! From squidgy south Indian idlis (rice dumplings) to zesty north Indian curries, travelers are treated to a positively seductive smorgasbord of subcontinental specialties. Demystifying India is a perpetual work in progress and for many travelers that’s precisely what makes her so deeply addictive. Ultimately it’s all about surrendering yourself to the unknown: this is the India that nothing can quite prepare you for because its very essence – its elusive soul – lies in its mystery. Love it or loathe it – and most visitors seesaw between the two – India will jostle your entire being and no matter where you go or what you do, it’s a place you’ll never forget.” From the 12<sup>th</sup> edition, *Lonely Planet Guide to India*

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# ***CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE WINTER SESSION IN INDIA***



*St. Xavier's College, Mumbai*

# *Introduction to the Study Abroad Program in India*

Welcome to the Study Abroad in India trip! There are few places in the world – perhaps none – with the diversity and complexity of India. This study abroad trip will hopefully be the first of many visits to India for you – but even if this is your only visit, it will introduce you to a culture and a people that are enthralling. We will be spending the bulk of our time in Mumbai, a modern city with ancient roots, in the state of Maharashtra. Maharashtra is a large state sprawling through the center of India, reaching from Mumbai across the Deccan plateau, larger than Italy, New Zealand, or Great Britain. With a population of 97 million people, if Maharashtra were an independent country, it would be the twelfth most populous in the world. The dominant language is Marathi, with Hindi and English as common second and third languages (almost all Indians, even if illiterate, speak multiple languages). More people in the world speak Marathi as their first language than Italian (or Polish or Dutch, for that matter).

Maharashtra is renowned as a center of the Indian independence movement in the twentieth century, and before that, was a meeting ground of rival empires and kingdoms (as we will see on some of our field trips). Most renowned of the Marathi rulers was Shivaji, a hero who established an empire and championed the Hindu cause against the Mughal invaders in the mid-1600s. He is still the popular subject of folk-tales and legends – history confirms some of his larger-than-life adventures. (If you want to know something about the Maharashtra George Washington figure, read up on Shivaji before our trip!)

This booklet contains information about our trip to India. Over the next week, please familiarize yourself with this booklet and share it with your family or friends. It also includes suggestions for packing, and for ways of thinking about cultural differences. The bulk of this booklet was prepared by the SU Center for International Education, to be used for all study abroad trips. Drs. Mike Lewis and Andrew Sharma also has contributed much and modified the book somewhat to focus upon India –the general materials here about travel and cultural exchange comes from SUCIE.

In addition to these materials and in addition to the orientation sessions prior and during the study abroad experience, it is very important that you take the initiative to prepare yourself well. Make the most of this once-in-a-lifetime experience – mentally, physically, and emotionally. ***Open your mind and heart.***

We suggest that between now and departure time, you and your family read this book very carefully. **Bring it with you on the airplane and continue to try to follow the various instructions and advice that it contains.** They represent the experience of many people and are the result of a great deal of thought. We will also be using this book as a guideline for discussion sessions in India. Please bring this with you to India.

Every attempt has been made to assure the completeness and accuracy of the information. However, study abroad is an extremely personal experience and what applies to another person may not apply to you. Attempts have been made to reflect a variety of viewpoints. Take advantage of opportunities you have to speak to others who have traveled to India or have participated in other study abroad programs but remember that the experience you are about to have will be unique to you.

Solid preparation for travel abroad is critical before we board the plane to India. It is not simply traveling and exploring that allows you to learn; it is processing, reflecting, and applying the experience to other situations that provide a world-mindedness and an intercultural perspective. In addition, ask questions, learn some practical tips and get to know your travel companions prior to departure.

## *Passport, Visas, and US State Department*

You must have a valid up-to-date passport and visa to enter India. **You will need to use your passport each time we check into a hotel in India, so you MUST carry it with you on all of our trips.**

If your passport is lost or stolen abroad, report the loss immediately both to the program staff and to the nearest embassy or consulate and to the local police. If you can provide the consular officer with the information contained in the passport, he or she will usually be able to issue you a new passport promptly. For this reason, keep a

photocopy of the data page of your passport separate from your money. Also leave a photocopy with a relative or friend at home and give another to the Program Director before you leave for India.

Before coming to India you MUST register with the U.S. embassy in India. Registering has two main advantages:

- 1) In case of any national emergency, the U.S. embassy is then responsible for notifying you and providing assistance.
- 2) If you lose your passport, your embassy registration facilitates passport replacement.

To register, go to this website: <https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/>

## ***Program Personnel***

Please take note of the names and of several key program personnel here to help you on your trip. We welcome your calls and look forward to working with you. Please note that we are not narrow specialists; all of us are prepared to advise you, answer your questions and help you. Help us help you - keep us informed.

### **Salisbury University Staff**

Dr. Andrew Sharma, SU “Bollywood and Beyond” in India Program Director, CMAT

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How to call India from the USA/Canada:  
dial 011 + 91 + area code + phone number

To call Dr. Sharma, dial 011 + 91 + 96 + 19199223

Dr. Brian Stiegler, Director of International Education

[bnstiegler@salisbury.edu](mailto:bnstiegler@salisbury.edu)

Work Phone 410-334-3495

### **Contacting you in India:**

**We are staying at YMCA International House in Mumbai**

#### **Contact Address :**

18, Y.M.C.A. Road,  
Mumbai Central,  
Mumbai 400 008.  
INDIA

#### **Phone :**

+ 91 22 307 0601 / 309 1262.

**India is ten and a half hours ahead of Maryland. If it is noon in Maryland, it is 10:30 pm in India.** The easiest way for your family and friends to contact you while you are in India will be via e-mail. There will be Internet cafes where you will be able to access the e-mail account that you regularly use. There will also be phone cafes where you can call home. It is possible for some US cell phones to work in India, but you would need to call your provider ahead of time, see if they have any agreements with Indian providers, and activate whatever is necessary. Note that this option is very expensive. It will be cheaper to use Skype, Facetime, GoogleVoice or other such wifi options.

# ***CHAPTER TWO***

## ***RULES AND REGULATIONS***



*Highway Travel in Mumbai*

## ***Your conduct while in India...***

Do remember that while in India, you remain a student of SU and continue to be subject to its rules and regulations. Most of the rules and regulations governing student conduct are stated in the Student Handbook. Please familiarize yourself with them prior to departure. For your convenience, we have listed here some particularly pertinent excerpts from the Student Handbook.

### **Immunization Policy**

Salisbury University requires all currently enrolled students to be immunized for rubeola, rubella, mumps, diphtheria-tetanus, polio and to have tuberculosis screening and documentation of these immunizations on file in the student health center. If a student was born before 1957, documentation for rubeola and rubella is not necessary. If students do not have immunization records on file in the Student Health Center by advanced registration for the following semester, they are prohibited from re-registering until records are complete at the Student Health Center.

### **Student Academic Responsibility**

You (the student) are responsible for planning your academic program and for meeting the requirements of the University and of departments. It is your responsibility to obtain, retain, and consult regularly the sections for the applicable catalog that govern your graduation requirements. Academic regulations and procedures other than degree requirements, may change during the period of your enrollment. It is your responsibility to be aware of, and follow the academic regulations and procedures currently in effect. Changes are published in the current catalog and schedule booklet. Your advisor's role is to assist you. It is your responsibility to request and use this advice wisely. It is also your responsibility to promptly declare or change your major so that an appropriate advisor can be assigned. The full statement of Student Academic Responsibility can be found in the current undergraduate catalog and in the schedule booklet.

### **Class Attendance in India**

Each faculty member sets his / her own policy on class attendance. Be aware that your faculty members in India will have different cultural expectations of you and their behavior. In the US, attendance policies are indicated to the student in writing in the course syllabus at the beginning of the semester and should not be changed during the semester. This may not be the case in India. It is the responsibility of the student to understand clearly the attendance policy of each instructor and to act accordingly. The student is responsible for explaining the reason for any absence to the instructor. If at all possible, the student should contact the instructor prior to the absence. No administrative officer of the University issues class absence excuses for any reasons. In general, attendance at ALL classes is required in India. If you are at all uncertain or confused, first ask the professor, and if that is not successful, then contact the program director who will work with you and the India faculty member.

### **Attendance and Religious Holidays**

It is the policy of Salisbury University that the academic programs and services of the University shall be available to all qualified students who have been admitted to its programs, regardless of their religious beliefs. Students shall not be penalized because of observances of their religious holidays and shall be given an opportunity to make up, within a reasonable time period, any academic assignment that is missed due to individual participation in religious observances. It is the responsibility of the student to notify his / her instructor of conflicts between religious observances and scheduled activities.

### **Sexual Harassment Policy**

The Salisbury University community is committed to maintaining a working and learning environment in which student, faculty and staff can develop intellectually, professionally, personally and socially. Sexual harassment is inconsistent with maintaining such an environment and is a form of discrimination prohibited by federal and state

law. The position of this university is that sexual harassment within the campus community will not be tolerated. By law, sexual advances, requests or sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:

- Submission to such conduct is made explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's educational or career advancement;
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for decisions affecting such individual's career or educational advancement; or
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive employment or educational environment.

Sexual harassment includes a variety of behaviors and may occur within a variety of relationships, including relationships between persons of the same or different genders or persons of equal or unequal power. For example, sexual harassment may be undisguised as a direct solicitation of sexual favors or solicitation accompanied by overt threats. Harassment may also be implied by unwelcome physical contact; sexual remarks about a person's clothing, body or sexual relations; conversation or jokes and stories of a sexual nature; or the display in the work place or use of sexually explicit materials which are inappropriate or without sexual harassment. In assessing whether a particular act constitutes sexual harassment forbidden under this policy, the rules of common sense and reason shall prevail. The standard university community with personal knowledge of incidents of harassment is encouraged and university employees are required to report such knowledge to the Director of Affirmative Action/Equal Employment Opportunity (AA/EEO).

All allegations of sexual harassment will be expeditiously, thoroughly and confidentially investigated following the Office of AA/EEO Allegations of Discrimination/Harassment Procedures. The rights of both the alleged offender and the offended will be protected, including protection from retaliation. Frivolous or false reports of sexual harassment will be treated as seriously as the offense itself. Sanctions for sexual harassment may vary from reprimand to termination of employment or dismissal from the University. In addition, an individual may be criminally prosecuted for sexual harassment.

The University's commitment to maintaining a learning environment in which the intellectual, professional, personal and social development of members of the campus community is assured requires that all members of the community adhere to ethical and professional standards of conduct, as well as to legal standards. Therefore, consenting romantic or sexual relationships between faculty or staff member and student or between supervisor and employee, while not expressly forbidden, are generally deemed very unwise. Power differences between faculty and students or between supervisors and supervisees make the subordinate's voluntary consent to even an apparently consensual relationship questionable. Sexual relationships between a professor or supervisor and a subordinate may result in conflicts of interest or raise questions of favoritism. Wherever power differential exists between persons who are romantically or sexually involved, the parties must realize that if a charge of sexual harassment is subsequently lodged, mutual consent will not be necessarily be accepted as a reasonable defense.

## **Management of Psychological Crises and Behavioral Disturbances Policy**

When an individual is determined to be in clear and present danger to self or others, the Office of the Vice President of Student Affairs will take one or more of the following steps in order to reduce that danger:

1. Notification of parents or other responsible related adult;
2. Notification of police;
3. Request of a psychiatric evaluation of the student;
4. Requirement that the student be placed in protective custody of police, parents, or hospital.
5. Requirement that the student be withdrawn from the University for medical or disciplinary reasons.

## **Implementation**

Determination will be based upon verification of physical act, verbal statements and/or a demonstrated lack of the individual's ability to be responsible for his/her behavior. Because of the educational philosophy of the institution

and constraints of living in a residence hall community, university official will act in the best interests of the resident community as well as the individual. Similar action may also become necessary when there is repeated documentation of behavior which indicates that a student is unable to be responsible for his/her behavior to the extent that the behavior significantly interferes with the ability of other students and/or host family members to pursue an orderly course of living and study.

When student will not or cannot cooperate in taking specific steps to reduce danger to themselves or others and to reasonably prevent any future occurrences, the Office of the Vice President of Student Affairs or the Program Director in India reserves the right to contact parents, police, or medical and mental health professionals who can assume responsibility for the individual and reduce the danger. This action may further necessitate that the student be withdrawn from the University. Administrative decisions in this regard will not be considered to be judicial or punitive action where violation of University Standards of Personal and Group conduct involving others has not occurred.

The student and the student's parent(s) or a faculty or staff member of the student's choice will be given an opportunity to meet with the vice president and/or designee, and any staff member who has direct knowledge of the behavior in question. All pertinent information will be reviewed with the student and the student will have the opportunity to respond to all information discussed and may present additional information including an independent psychiatric or psychological evaluation.

Students who have been required to leave the campus or Winter Term community for psychological or medical intervention and treatment will be required to submit an evaluation by a psychiatrist or licensed mental health professional which addresses the appropriateness of their return to campus and their ability to function at a responsible level of behavior in that community. This evaluation will be reviewed by a consulting psychiatrist or a licensed psychologist of the university who will make a recommendation to the Vice President of Student Affairs regarding the mental status of the student. The vice president, in consultation with other appropriate university officials, will decide on the return and/or reinstatement of the student. A second behavioral occurrence necessitating the intervention procedures outlined in this policy will preclude the opportunity for the student's return or reinstatement.

## **Interpretation of Regulations**

Disciplinary regulations at the University are set forth in writing in order to give students general notice of prohibited conduct. The regulations should be read broadly and are not designed to define misconduct in exhaustive terms.

## **Inherent Authority**

The University reserves the right to take necessary and appropriate action to protect the safety and well-being of the campus community.

## **Search and Seizure**

Salisbury University has the authority to conduct a reasonable search of University property, including but not limited to residence hall rooms. A student's residence hall room, personal possessions or other university property will be searched by University officials only (1) when there is reasonable cause to believe that illegal or other detrimental use is being made of the property in violation of University policy and (2) under authorization given in writing by an administrator designated by the President. The authorization shall specify the reasons for the search and the objects or information sought. If possible, the student shall be present during the search. The right of reasonable search is based on the responsibility of the University to provide for the safety, health and welfare of the University community. Evidence found through inspection may lead to action by the University Judicial System and/or by the proper law enforcement agency.

Administrative search authorization is not required in emergencies, when the student conceded consents to the search, where the search is incident to a lawful arrest by a police officer, where the search is pursuant to a warrant by a law enforcement agency, or when a student's health or safety is in jeopardy.

## **Standards of Due Process**

The focus of inquiry in disciplinary proceedings shall be to determine whether or not the accused student has violated the University Standards of Personal and Group conduct. Formal rules of evidence shall not be applicable, nor shall deviations from prescribed procedures necessarily invalidate a decision or proceeding, unless significant prejudice to a student or the University may result.

### ***Violations of Law and Disciplinary Regulations***

Students shall be accountable to both civil authorities and to the University for acts that constitute violations of law and of this Code. Disciplinary action at the University will normally proceed while criminal proceedings are pending and will not be subject to challenge on the ground that criminal charges involving the same incident have been dismissed or reduced.

## ***Special Considerations for Behavior Overseas***

### **Your conduct while in India**

We repeat, even while abroad, you are still a student at SU and therefore subject to its rules and regulations. During our travels in India, we will consider you ambassadors of the United States and representatives of SU at all times. In other words, we expect you to be on your best behavior. Please do your part to disprove the common myth of the ugly American. You have the chance to shape the way foreigners are viewed. Your actions are a direct reflection not only on the University but also of how Indians will perceive the people of the United States.

### **Obeying Local and National Laws**

While you are visiting another country you are subject to the laws of that country. **LEGAL PROTECTION TAKEN FOR GRANTED IN THE UNITED STATES IS LEFT BEHIND WHEN YOU LEAVE.** The Embassies and Consulates of the United States are very limited in the assistance they can provide. For example, they can offer the names of competent attorneys and doctors, but not any financial assistance in paying for legal or medical services. Nor can they intervene on your behalf in the administration of justice as seen from the point of view of the host country. In India the laws of India apply.

Bail provisions as we know them in the United States are rare in many other countries and pretrial detention without bail is not uncommon. Prison conditions in some developing or even developed countries may often be deplorable, in comparison to conditions in the United States. That is most certainly the case in India. The principle of “innocent until proven guilty” is not necessarily a tenet of legal systems abroad. The best advice is of course to know the laws and obey them scrupulously. If you get in trouble, seek local legal assistance as quickly as possible and inform the Program Director. We will do what we can and we will inform your family.

### **Alcohol Policy**

Salisbury University encourages a positive philosophy about alcoholic beverages in which a consistent example of moderate use is presented and where alternative, non-alcoholic beverages are accorded equal status. The University fosters an environment where choosing not to drink is as socially acceptable as choosing to drink, where excessive drinking or drunkenness is not condoned, where intoxication is not an excuse for misconduct or infringing upon the rights of others, where alcohol use is not the primary focus of social activity, and where the moral implications of drinking are determined by the individual.

The University alcohol policy may be grounds for the Director of the Program to require that the students return home at their own expense. Everybody in the program will be expected to adapt to the social norms of India. Misconduct as a result of intoxication is not acceptable and will not be tolerated.

Frankly, the beer and liquor served in India is not that different from what is served in Maryland. So, if drinking is going to be an important way for you to socialize, you may well save yourself a lot of trouble and expense and stay home.

## **DRUGS - Policy for a Drug-Free campus**

The Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988 and the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act Amendment of 1989 require all federal contractors, federal grant recipients and recipients of any federal funds whatsoever to implement a comprehensive substance and alcohol abuse policy. Salisbury University complies with all provisions of these laws.

Salisbury University as well as all Maryland institutions of higher education is committed to maintaining a workplace and a learning environment free of illegal drugs or the unlawful use of alcohol. The University prohibits the possession, manufacture, distribution, dispensation or use of illegal drugs, and the lawful use, possession or distribution of alcohol or controlled substances on all university property, at any locations where employees and students are conducting university-related business and when using private vehicles on university business or in the conduct of university activities.

By extension, therefore, SU's regulations are applicable in India and other places where this institution is conducting its educational and cultural mission. Illegal drugs will be available in India. Don't be fooled into thinking it is acceptable or harmless to use them. Every year tourists are arrested in India and serve significant jail terms for participating in this drug culture. The US Embassy and SU cannot – and will not – help you if this happens to you.

## **Penalties**

Anyone convicted of an alcohol or drug-related offense is subject to a wide range of penal sanctions not only on the local, state, and federal levels, but also by the laws of India. These sanctions vary, depending on the severity of the offense on the prior record of the defendant, and on judicial discretion. Penalties may range from a fee and probation for minor violations such as public intoxication, to life imprisonment without parole for repeat offenders of felonious violations such as trafficking.

## **Cultural Note**

Though India has managed so far to escape the worst of the international drug trafficking that affects other countries, we can say, nonetheless, that drugs are available in India and that some Indians consume them. They may even be offered to you on the street or in touristy areas (often offered quietly, "Hashish?"). This, of course, is illegal.

Please keep in mind that laws will be applied much more harshly to foreigners. The police and the legal system will most likely treat a foreigner who used drugs as a trafficker. If you are at a place where drugs are being used and the police intervene, they will most likely apply the full force of the law against you, a foreigner, though they could be lenient with their nationals. If you see drugs or even suspect that there are drugs at a party or social gathering, leave immediately. You could become the fall guy.

Bottom line: any students, faculty or staff member caught using, dealing, or in the possession of any type of drug that the individual would not be permitted to purchase in the United States legally (illegal or legal in India) will be required to leave the country immediately and return to the United States prematurely at his/her own expense.

**If you know that someone in the group has used or is using illegal drugs inform the Program Director immediately – do not endanger us all for a misplaced sense of loyalty.**

## **Smoking Policy**

By state law and institutional regulation SU restricts smoking within the workplace, including academic areas; conference, seminar, and training rooms; open work areas; and other areas as specified in the Smoking Policy. Consideration shall be given to non-smokers whenever it is clear that they are being exposed involuntarily to smoke. The policy relies on the thoughtfulness, consideration, and cooperation of smokers and non-smokers for its success. It is the responsibility of all members of the University community to observe this Smoking Policy and to direct those who are smoking to designated areas. These principles will be applied in India even when local laws permit smoking. Cheap Indian cigarettes (bidis) do not have filters and are truly noxious to non-smokers, and are also more harmful to users. Complaints and concerns should be directed to the Program Director.

In order to assure the comfort of all travelers, smoking on the tour buses is prohibited. Also, if you are a smoker, please notify the SU program director so that if it is possible we may match you with a compatible hotel roommate during field trips.

# ***CHAPTER THREE***

## ***PREPARING AND PACKING FOR YOUR TRIP***



*Kailash Temple at Ellora*

# ***PREPARING FOR YOUR TRIP***

## **Documents**

Remember to pack and bring with you your passport, a photocopy of your passport (stored somewhere else), a print out of your airplane confirmation, your HTH health card (and make sure that you know how to use the insurance), your yellow immunization booklet (if you have one), a list of emergency contact information, this booklet, an ATM card, a credit card, traveler's checks if you prefer this means of carrying (budgeting) your money, a page that includes your credit card and ATM card information (stored in a separate location) so that you know the numbers to call if your cards are lost or stolen. If you have any prescriptions or special health instructions, bring them.

## **Pharmacy, Toiletries, and Sundries**

As in most places in the developing world, sewage pipes are sometimes too narrow to tolerate toilet paper. Further, traditional culture in India suggests using water and your left hand, not paper, so three key things, which are extremely important: **(1)** if you are not interested in adopting the Indian way and learning how to use water and your LEFT hand to wipe, you should ALWAYS have toilet paper or moist wipes with you. On several occasions in India you will encounter bathrooms without toilet paper. You can either carry a roll of paper (I recommend removing the cardboard tube for ease of packing) or buy packets of moist baby wipes that are reseal-able and quite compact (and they are large wipes – can be ripped into several useful pieces). You will be able to purchase toilet paper in India. The most commonly available variety is pink, and rather like crepe paper. **(2)** If the toilet did not come with toilet paper, your **Toilet paper should never be placed in the toilet, but rather in a trashcan next to the toilet instead.** However, traditional bathrooms may not include a trash can. If your bathroom has no trash can, the only courteous thing to do is to pack it out with you .... So always have an empty Ziploc to serve as an airtight “portable trash bag.” **(3)** It goes without saying: obviously, if the pipes can't take toilet paper, then feminine hygiene products, even more so.

If you are taking prescription medicine with you, try to take a copy of this prescription and a sufficient supply to last for the entire program. Contact lens wearers who need lens solution should take an adequate supply. If you wear contacts or glasses, you may want to take a copy of your lens prescription from your optometrist in case you need to replace them. You can find contact solution in India, but it will probably be a hassle. A few non-prescription medicines to bring with you: Immodium (for diarrhea), Pepto-tablets or an antacid like Pepcid, Ibuprofen or another fever medicine, and (for women) a yeast infection kit (inconvenient to track down when you need it). The Program Director will have a basic first aid kit for group-use items such as a thermometer, antibiotic cream, antifungal cream, hydrocortisone cream, band-aids, mole skin for blisters, small scissors, and a needle/tweezers.

You will be able to find whatever toiletry staples you need in India, however you might not find your favorite brand. If you insist on finding the quality or brand that you are used to, it will be expensive. Don't go crazy though, for it will add a lot of weight to your suitcase, and you can buy these things in India if you run out.

- \_\_\_ Toothpaste / toothbrush (**But remember, not for use with faucet water! Don't even keep it near your sink!**)
- \_\_\_ Razor / shaving cream
- \_\_\_ Deodorant
- \_\_\_ Feminine hygiene products (tampons may be very difficult to find, poor quality, and expensive)
- \_\_\_ Soap/shampoo/brush
- \_\_\_ Sunscreen and chapstick
- \_\_\_ Package of moist wipes, such as Wet Ones, and/or hand sanitizer
- \_\_\_ Medical kit with items as mentioned above, and those you know you use frequently
- \_\_\_ Any special medications or prescription eye wear (contact lenses/ glasses, solutions, prescriptions)
- \_\_\_ Copy of your lens prescription from your optometrist
- \_\_\_ Extra pair of eyeglasses or contact lenses in your carry-on luggage.
- \_\_\_ Insect repellent (recommended with DEET) (NO AEROSOLS on planes—get pump, liquid, gel, or solid, also DEET wipes are available at outdoor stores).

- \_\_\_ Enough prescription drug to last the duration of the trip or have your doctor write a prescription using the drug's generic name, because brand names vary from country to country. (\*Tip: Always carry prescription drugs in their original packaging to avoid problems with customs officials. Do not pack them in luggage that you plan to check, in case your bags go astray.)
  - \_\_\_ A couple of garbage bags (useful for dirty laundry)
  - \_\_\_ A few zip-locks
  - \_\_\_ A water bottle and a few iodine tablets just in case you can't get reliable water on a trip. (Pack water bottle EMPTY for airport security)
  - \_\_\_ Money belt (see below)
  - \_\_\_ Pens and paper/notebooks
  - \_\_\_ Watch, travel alarm clock
  - \_\_\_ Book(s)
  - \_\_\_ Plug adapter (110-220) or batteries, for anything you are bringing requiring them
- Also remember: any liquids or gels that are in your carry-on must be in a three-ounce or smaller container, and packed in a clear quart-sized Ziploc bag, due to airport security measures.*

## Photography

I would encourage everyone on this trip to bring a small digital camera. You will wish you had one a hundred times if you don't. Bring lots of memory cards! Do not bring an expensive camera unless it is covered under your homeowner's or travel insurance policy. Small cameras that fit inside of pockets are ideal, and also draw less attention to you. Check if your battery charger can handle 220 volts – you will also need a plug adapter to plug into the Indian plugs. If it can't accept 220 volts, you will need a CONVERTER, not just an adapter. These are commonly available in the US. If your camera uses AA or AAA batteries, I would recommend bringing a supply, as quality batteries can be expensive in India.

The ethics of photography in India are similar to what you would practice in the US: do not take photographs of people without their permission, unless it is a large group scene. Permission in cities is usually easy to get – even if your potential subject does not speak English, you can simply hold up your camera and raise your eyebrows – they'll get your drift, and you'll know quickly how they feel about it. Kids may actually ask you to take their picture, then follow that up with a request for baksheesh – a gift of a few rupees. It is culturally delicate as a tourist to take photographs of women in rural areas, and I would suggest that men not try. It is illegal in India to take photographs of trains, government buildings, and dams. If you pull out a camera, near these places, some official will quickly appear to enforce the rule. It is considered rude to take pictures of worshipers at temples, but photographs of temples are encouraged. Many temples do not allow photographs inside.

## Climate and Clothing

The average daytime temperature in Mumbai should reach the low 90s. Night-time temperatures can drop into the 80s. Though the days are usually sunny and warm, you should bring some long-sleeve shirts, and a sweater or sweatshirt/fleece to layer up. The sun can be particularly strong at times, so sunscreen and some sort of hat is a good idea particularly if you are sensitive to the sun. We might not see a drop of rain on our entire trip.

**Three general rules:** (1) Travel light! Only take as much as you can comfortably carry; (2) Dress modestly and to not draw attention to yourself (**this means no shorts, no mini-skirts**); (3) Don't bring clothes that you couldn't stand to see ruined, but also, do not dress in ragged clothes. ***Even the poorest Indian will try to dress neatly.***

Try to pack things that are washable, quick-drying, and need little or no ironing. Since you will be walking a lot and taking public transportation, consider how readily a garment shows grime. Bring clothing that will be suitable for both casual and social occasions. Dress in layers and bring mix and match items.

**You do NOT need to pack 30 days' worth of clothes!** (4-5 days' worth is more reasonable, allowing time for laundry to dry or be sent out to the dhobi-wallahs.) **When traveling internationally, it is acceptable to wear one outfit six or seven – or eight, or nine – times. Again, Pack light!!**

(\*Tip – Any clothes that you can leave behind at the end of the trip will leave more room in your suitcase to bring back presents and souvenirs.)

Here is a suggested list of the absolute essentials:

- \_\_ Underwear
- \_\_ Socks – remember that in any Indian home, temple, etc., you will be asked to take off your shoes, so the socks should not have holes!
- \_\_ Pants (khakis dry much quicker than blue jeans and are more versatile – but young Indians do wear jeans)
- \_\_ If you like skirts, make sure that they're long!
- \_\_ Sweater/fleece/sweatshirt for the evenings
- \_\_ Shirts (at least a couple that are not T-shirts)
- \_\_ Sun-hat, sun glasses
- \_\_ Comfortable shoes for walking (1-2 pairs) (The dirt, grit and grime on Indian streets will often make you choose your closed shoes with socks—even over your most comfortable walking sandals.)
- \_\_ Flip-flops for around the room and questionable showers

You might consider purchasing clothes in India. Clothes in India are beautiful and plentiful—cotton and silk fabrics are cheap and unique: prices can range from inexpensive to costly by US standards. Besides “ready-made” clothing, there will also be many talented and inexpensive tailors in India who could easily copy clothes that you bring in, (models), in a fabric of your choice, or make traditional clothing for you. But you might also consider how much time you want to spend shopping for clothes while in India.

## Valuables

Leave your jewelry and other valuable articles at home. Rule of thumb: if to lose an item would cause you even a bit of deep grief, don't bring it (this is your chance to practice Buddhist detachment from material possessions – anything you bring may not make it home!). You can bring your laptops if you wish, but the school will have computer labs and internet access. Bring your cell phones if you know they will work in India.

## Money

The easiest way to get money in India is through your **ATM card**. (No need to go to a bank teller or money-exchanger – the ATM will spit out rupees and deduct the equivalent in dollars automatically, usually at a very fair exchange rate.) **However, check with your bank to make sure that your card will work in India.** If you get there and your ATM card does not work, getting money from home is possible, but it can be very difficult and it is expensive (Cash advance on credit card, Western-Union wiring cash...).

Traveler's checks can be cashed at Indian banks, but are not as secure as your ATM card, nor as convenient. Also, while in transit traveling, **do not carry your passport or airline tickets in your luggage** but securely and safely on your person (see Money-Belts, below). Personal checks are practically worthless.

Well-known credit cards (Visa, Mastercard) are sometimes accepted at restaurants and tourist shops. Make sure that you notify your credit card company that you will be using the card in India – nowadays, many have automatic anti-fraud systems that detect geographical discrepancies and freeze accounts immediately. Call the customer service number on your card before leaving!!!

The amount of spending money you need in India is difficult to estimate because spending habits vary among individuals. Remember that you are responsible for (1) personal expenses; (2) recreational activities other than our planned large excursions, (3) souvenirs and gifts. Your basic housing, food and drink needs are taken care of by the program.

## Money Belts

It is strongly recommended that each participant purchase a soft money belt that is worn around the waist (or on a cord around the neck) and under the shirt / pants. These are available in travel sections of big stores, outdoor stores, online – look for **money belts** or **travel wallets**.

You should carry money, credit cards, and ATM card in a money belt where they are out of sight and reach. (Additionally the passport should fit in here too, for “travel days,” when you must carry your passport around in crowded or un-secure settings.) Once you are established in India, you will want to carry some loose money in your pocket or in a small shoulder bag. However, you should **NEVER** carry credit cards, ATM cards, passport, lots of cash, etc. in a backpack or purse. Those things should be in your money belt. Rule of thumb: don’t carry anything in a backpack or purse that you would be very inconvenienced or crushed if it were pick-pocketed.

During the flights to India and home you will need access to your passport and flight docs., so you will not need to hide them deep in your money belt.

You might like to bring a hip-sack in addition to a money-belt. This would replace a purse for women, and would be an easy way to carry a few extra supplies around with you that wouldn’t have to fit in your pockets (such as a water bottle, a camera, sunglasses, a journal, a pen ...)

## Packing Tips and Reminders

You may travel with **ONE** suitcase and **ONE** carry-on. If you can get by with less, then you will be more comfortable. Your checked bag must be less than 50 pounds. Make sure that you don’t put your passport, airline ticket and other documents in your checked luggage. Make sure that you do not put large bottles of liquids in your carry-on – remember, **one** quart-sized zip lock, with contents in containers **less** than 3 oz, is allowed for liquids/gels; full water bottles will be dumped/drinks will be thrown out by security.

It is highly recommended to carry small essential toiletry articles and an extra change of clothing in your carry-on in the event that your luggage gets delayed or lost. Make sure that all your checked liquids, lotions, pastes, creams, etc. are in zip-lock- plastic bags in your checked luggage. The luggage compartment is not pressurized and caps and covers can very easily come off.

Make sure you put your name and address clearly on luggage tags directly on your luggage. Assume that one time is not enough; tags can come off. You should also have identification on the inside. Also, it is helpful to put some kind of distinctive sticker on your bag to make it easier to spot on luggage conveyors.

Before leaving home, itemize your bag's contents and their worth in case they go astray, and leave the list at home. To minimize that risk, tag them inside and out with your name, address, and phone number.

Again, luggage is limited to one carry-on (a backpack) and one medium sized piece of luggage. You may have to carry your luggage a considerable distance in airports and on the campus.

## *Pre-Departure Checklist*

Before departure you should have done ALL the following:

### A. ADMINISTRATIVE THINGS:

- \_\_\_ Copy down all names, phone numbers, postal and e-mail addresses of people and offices with which you **MIGHT** need to have contact during your time away.
- \_\_\_ Make three photocopies of the picture page of your passport

- \_\_\_ Leave one photocopy of your passport with your parents or someone at home.
- \_\_\_ Give one photocopy of your passport to the Center for International Education.
- \_\_\_ Leave the list of contact numbers from the beginning of this book with someone at home.
- \_\_\_ Register with HTH Worldwide at [www.hthstudent.com](http://www.hthstudent.com) . Review your medical and evacuation coverage with your parents.
- \_\_\_ Register online with the U.S. Embassy.

## B. LOGISTICAL AND ECONOMIC THINGS:

- \_\_\_ Plan a budget. Bring spending money; bring your ATM card after checking with your bank that you will be able to use it in India; If you bring your credit card, contact your credit card and bank ahead of time, or they will probably deactivate your cards the first time you use them (anti-fraud computer-tracking systems). Otherwise, both ATM and credit cards will be useful in India, even more convenient than traveler's checks. Be aware of the international fee that your credit card/ATM may charge, however, for your usage.
- \_\_\_ Discuss health and safety and terrorism issues with your family, and think about emergency contact procedures. Share these with the Program Director, if you feel that it is appropriate.
- \_\_\_ Bring all medication, prescriptions, saline solutions, extra glasses or contacts, etc., and make sure that the Program Director is aware of any health concerns that you have.
- \_\_\_ Bring no more than two items of luggage: one checked bag plus one carry-on. A rolling suitcase or backpack would both work well for the checked bag—No trunk sized suitcases under any circumstance. You must be able to independently manage whatever luggage you bring.

## *Journal*

Keep a journal. Furthermore, we recommend that you start now - before you leave - and continue the journal for several months after your return. This will provide an opportunity to have the whole experience recorded. Think of the study abroad experience not just in terms of your time in another culture, but rather as a process of learning that does not have a specific entry point - it begins well before you get on the plane and extends beyond your return through customs.

Another way of looking at the value of a journal is that you should talk to your future self.

Before Leaving...

1. Why did I select the program I did?
2. Does it matter what country I am going to, or do I just want to go somewhere?
3. What do I want to get out of this experience?
4. Am I concerned about missing friends, family, significant others? How do I plan to stay in touch with them?
5. What is culture anyway? What is my culture? How would I draw "culture"?
6. How would I describe my home country? How would I describe myself as a member of this country - am I more like others from my country or different?
7. How would I respond to an Indian critic of (various aspects of) America? What would my emotional response be, my logical response? How would I *want* to respond?

While in the host country....

1. First, keep a record of your daily activities. You will appreciate this years from now – a simple calendar will go a long way in keeping your memories fresh and sorted.
2. What are my initial reactions? Are my reactions different from my traveling companions' reactions?? Are they different than what I would have expected?
3. If someone were sitting on my shoulder, what would they see? smell? feel?
4. What do I like the most about this culture? The least? Why?
5. How do people from the host culture greet others from the host culture? How do they greet me?
6. What am I doing to meet people from the host culture?
7. Am I being viewed as an individual, as a member of my home country, or as a foreigner?

- How does this make me feel about myself?
8. How does it feel to be a member of a racial minority? To not be able to blend into a crowd and be anonymous?
  9. What are my goals before leaving India? Have they changed?
  10. What can I do here that I cannot do at home? What can't I do here? How do I know this?

Upon returning....

1. What did I learn about the host culture? About myself?
2. How can I apply what I learned to my life now?
3. Who will listen to my stories? Who could I seek out – campus organizations, the study abroad office - to get more involved in international activities?
4. Do I think of my home country any differently now that I have returned? What do I like the most about my home culture? The least?
5. What advice would I give to those who are leaving for my host culture? How did I learn this?

Living in a foreign culture is like playing a game you've never played before and for which the rules haven't been explained very well. The challenge is to enjoy the game without missing too many plays, learning the rules and developing skills as you go along.

You will learn a great deal, though much of it will be intangible and difficult to define. In negotiating the unfamiliar and uncharted territory of another culture, change and growth occur at deep levels, leaving you more competent, more self-assured and more knowledgeable about yourself and about how the world works. A journal will allow you to cherish and remember how you felt and what you have learned and you can talk to your future self.

## ***Suggested Readings and Movies***

### ***To learn more about India...(that flight is long!!)***

A good Indian guide book is the *Lonely Planet Guide to India*. It is a massive book, however, with literally hundreds and hundreds of pages about places we will not visit. *The Rough Guide* is also beloved by many travelers in India. If you do purchase a large guidebook, don't be afraid to "do surgery" on the book and remove pertinent sections and leave others back home. The *Lonely Planet* is quite good on providing a summary of Indian history, cultural norms, and general travel information. There is also a Lonely Planet website with some of this same material. If you do not purchase a guidebook, at a minimum spend a few hours poking around this website over the next week.

When it comes to writing in English, India is undergoing a literary renaissance at the moment. A number of the most talented English-language writers in the world are writing in, and about, India. You can learn a lot in their fiction and essays. I list just a few below. You can go on Amazon, or in any bookstore, and thumb through these authors and see if any appeal to you, as well as many others.

V.S. Naipaul, Nobel Prize winner for literature, wrote an astoundingly good non-fiction account of India, *India: A Million Mutinies Now*. It is old, but still the best travel writing about India, I think. William Dalrymple has also done some great travel writing in India.

For a beautiful novel that would appeal to people interested in the Indian environment, *The Hungry Tide* by Amitav Ghosh, is wonderful.

A sometimes painful subject, but beautifully written and winner of the Booker Prize, *A God of Small Things* by Arundhati Roy is highly recommended.

Kiran Desai has written a number of novels; Her latest, *The Inheritance of Loss*, won the Booker Prize for English language literature. Also anything by Salman Rushdie, or the beautiful short stories of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, or *The Holder of the World* by Bharati Mukherjee.

For more of a political take written for generalists – *India: From Midnight to the Millennium*, by Shashi Tharoor – about ten years old, but good at summarizing India's first fifty years of independence.

For those who are more cinematically inclined, you might watch Indian films with your family over the holidays before our departure. *Monsoon Wedding* or *Bride and Prejudice* is an example of an Indian-directed Western style movie that would teach you something about India. Or you could watch the British *A Passage to India*, or especially *Gandhi*, which although a British film, is generally well done. *Slumdog Millionaire*, the recent Oscar winner is set in Mumbai, and *Udaan* was elected to compete in the Un Certain Regard (A Certain Glance) category at the 2010 Cannes Film Festival. On video, there is the acclaimed and depressing *Salaam Bombay*, or the *Earth, Water, Fire* trilogy. See the *Darjeeling Limited* after you come back from India.

For news, you can look at the on-line versions of the national English-language papers, *The Hindu*, *The Times of India*, or *The India Express*. You might enjoy looking at the news in preparation for our arrival in India.

### ***For information on the multicultural experience...as advised by SUCIE:***

Axtell, Roger E. **Do's and Taboos Around the World**. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1985.

Gochenour, Theodore, **Beyond Experience: The Experiential Approach to Cross-Cultural Education**. Intercultural Press Inc.: Yarmouth, 1993.

Gudykunst, William B. **Bridging Differences: Effective Intercultural Communication**. London: Sage Publications, 1991.

Kohls, L. Robert, **Survival Kit for Overseas Living**. Intercultural Press, Inc.: Yarmouth, 1984.

NAFSA: National Association of Foreign Student Advisors: **Travel Abroad Manual**. 1996.

# ***CHAPTER FOUR***

## ***HEALTH AND SAFETY***



*A Typical Street Scene in India*

# *Medical Matters*

## **Before you leave...**

### **Health, Medical Insurance and Emergency Evacuation**

Although at present no vaccinations are required to enter or leave India, you should consult with your family physician and/or a travel health service as you decide about health care precautions. You should also consult with the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta for the latest traveler's updates. The CDC has a web page at <http://www.cdc.gov/travel>.

For the specific inoculations you need for India, you should consult a physician. Passport Health is the recommended provider in Salisbury.

Inform the SU Program director of any health-related issues that you have before we leave for India.

Health care in India varies widely, from world-class facilities in large cities, to inadequate care in rural areas.

All students in India program have been enrolled in HTH Worldwide. You should have received materials explaining what your medical and emergency coverage is and how to use it. There is a wealth of information on health and safety in India, as well as your coverage with HTH Worldwide online at [www.hthstudents.com](http://www.hthstudents.com). Be very familiar with your HTH Worldwide coverage before you leave.

### **Staying Healthy In India ...**

You must be particularly careful in India to practice good hygiene. Drink only bottled, iodized, filtered or boiled water. Do not drink water while showering. Do not use faucet water while brushing your teeth. Avoid food cooked in areas where proper hygiene is not possible (like washing hands after using the bathroom), and **ALWAYS WASH YOUR HANDS BEFORE EATING**. Please do not eat any salad in India, and only eat fruit if you have peeled it yourself, or you've watched it being peeled. Otherwise, the only food you eat should have been cooked. **NEVER ACCEPT OR USE ICE.**

Street food will be tempting – and tasty. **Avoid it.**

Even with these precautions, it is just as likely that you will come down with a cold or a stomach upset over the term as you would if you were at home. We request that you notify the Program Director of any illness, be it only a slight cold, mild diarrhea, or rash.

If you suffer from asthma, allergies, or any other medical condition, you are expected to take responsibility for your own condition, and to keep the Program Director informed if you have any problem.

Many Indians self prescribe medication and if you are ill or indisposed well meaning Indians might give you medicine. Before you take any please contact the Program Director or a member of the staff.

**STAY AWAY FROM STRAY DOGS.** There will be a lot of them. They are called “pariah dogs” and are shunned by Indians. You should as well, as much as it breaks your heart. Do not feed them or pet them. They carry diseases other than rabies. If a dog bites you, there is a small chance that it could be rabid. The first thing you should do is get away from the dog. As soon as possible, wash the bite with both soap and water for several minutes (the stronger the disinfectant in the soap, the better). This reduces the chance of the transmission of rabies. If you can, observe the dog to see if it's acting strangely. Contact a doctor and the Program Director immediately after being bitten. If treated, rabies is curable. We can help you get the rabies shots that you might need.

India is now estimated to have the most cases of HIV of any country in the world. The actual numbers are unknown, but they are believed to be much higher than official government reports indicate.

**Any unprotected sex in India is EXTREMELY risky.**

## Tips for staying healthy in India ...

### Food/Drink:

- \_\_\_ Do not buy prepared food from street vendors.
- \_\_\_ Buy only fruit that you can peel.
- \_\_\_ Avoid eating salads
- \_\_\_ Drink only bottled water.
- \_\_\_ Drink A LOT of water. Dehydration is a common problem – it can make you feel quite sick.
- \_\_\_ Never use ice.

### Basic Hygiene/Health:

- \_\_\_ Most important: wash your hands as often as possible
- \_\_\_ DO NOT chew your nails.
- \_\_\_ Avoid touching your eyes and mouth.
- \_\_\_ Don't consume too much alcohol
- \_\_\_ Get plenty of rest
- \_\_\_ Beware of STD's

## *Safety Precautions*

During your trip maintain a healthy level of paranoia: keep your eyes on your bags at all times and be a little wary of strangers. In obvious "Foreigner hangouts" like the airport and hotels, be wary of anyone who approaches you.

Thieves often work in pairs. A recent tactic is to ask for directions, distracting your attention while the partner swiftly grabs one of your bags. We've even heard of cases where travelers were bumped into, had coffee or some other messy substance spilled on them, and then were "wiped clean."

Do not wear jewelry or an expensive watch. Do not take a wallet or a purse. If you can avoid it don't take a bag at all and be careful with your camera.

Most of the crime you're likely to come across in India is of the small-time variety, You can minimize the risk of this by being discreet, not flashing anything of value, and keeping a firm hand on your camera and bag.

**Create and carry an Emergency Assistance Abroad card with you at all times during the program.**  
**Important emergency numbers that you can call at any time day and night while we are in India:**

**Andrew Sharma, SU Program Director, 9619199223**

**HTH Worldwide Emergency Line (Call Collect) 001-610-254-8771**

Help each other. Watch out for each other

## **Safeguarding your Possessions**

Do not take irreplaceable items such as heirloom jewelry on your trip. Buy a cheap watch that actually looks cheap (do take a small alarm clock). Buy a small bag that straps around your waist, big enough for your passport, tickets and money. Keep this pouch turned towards the front of your body.

Again, a good rule of thumb is to take nothing with you whose loss would ruin your trip (engagement ring, sentimental items of value, etc.)

## Transportation and Travel

Be aware that public transportation is inherently risky, because common safety standards (working lights or brakes) and traffic rules are not always maintained. Students will have to judge each situation for themselves. If a rickshaw looks dilapidated, don't get in. If you get a bad feeling about a driver, don't get in. Auto rickshaws will be easily and commonly available. They will have meters – but make sure that you ask the driver to use it, or he will simply drive without the meter, then charge you whatever he thinks you will pay – and with no meter, you have no grounds for argument. The meters, however, do not show the exact cost you have to pay. There is a formula that you must use.

When walking, try always to walk with someone else. **ESPECIALLY DO NOT WALK ALONE AFTER DARK.** Remember that traffic in India is on the “wrong” side of the road – the opposite of what we are used to. Remember to look the opposite direction of what you are used to.

Traffic rules in general are seldom regarded and even less enforced. Traffic can be chaotic and confusing; it is not the least bit uncommon to encounter cars and motorcycles traveling without lights at night. Motorcyclists often dart in and out of traffic, sometimes against the traffic. There are often animals wandering on the road, and people. Do not drive while in India. You do not know the informal cultural rules of the road and most drivers are uninsured.

### Nightlife

**For safety, you should always go out in groups, and never leave anyone from your group alone.** Make sure that you look out for each other. Just like in the U.S., never leave your drink unattended and don't accept drinks from unknown people. Although the Mumbai culture may be a bit different, drinking in India is typically done at home. You buy your alcohol and walk it home sober. **Public drunken-ness is severely stigmatized.**

Enjoy yourself, but be cautious and smart.

### Demonstrations and Strikes

India has a vibrant political culture, including many varieties of different strikes and demonstrations (such as the sit down strike, or the work “slow down” where the workers alternate half hours of working with half hours of singing revolutionary songs or some such thing, to name just two). While public demonstrations are not uncommon in India, they are also rarely violent. The vast majority of protests are very calm and peaceful. It is, however, advisable to avoid protests for a number of reasons:

- Strikes, whether legal or illegal, typically involve a police and/or military presence.
- Water or tear gas may be used to disperse demonstrators.
- Even a peaceful demonstration can become violent in the wrong context.

Demonstrations may occur day or night and typically take place in public spaces such as the main plaza or primary streets in the city center.

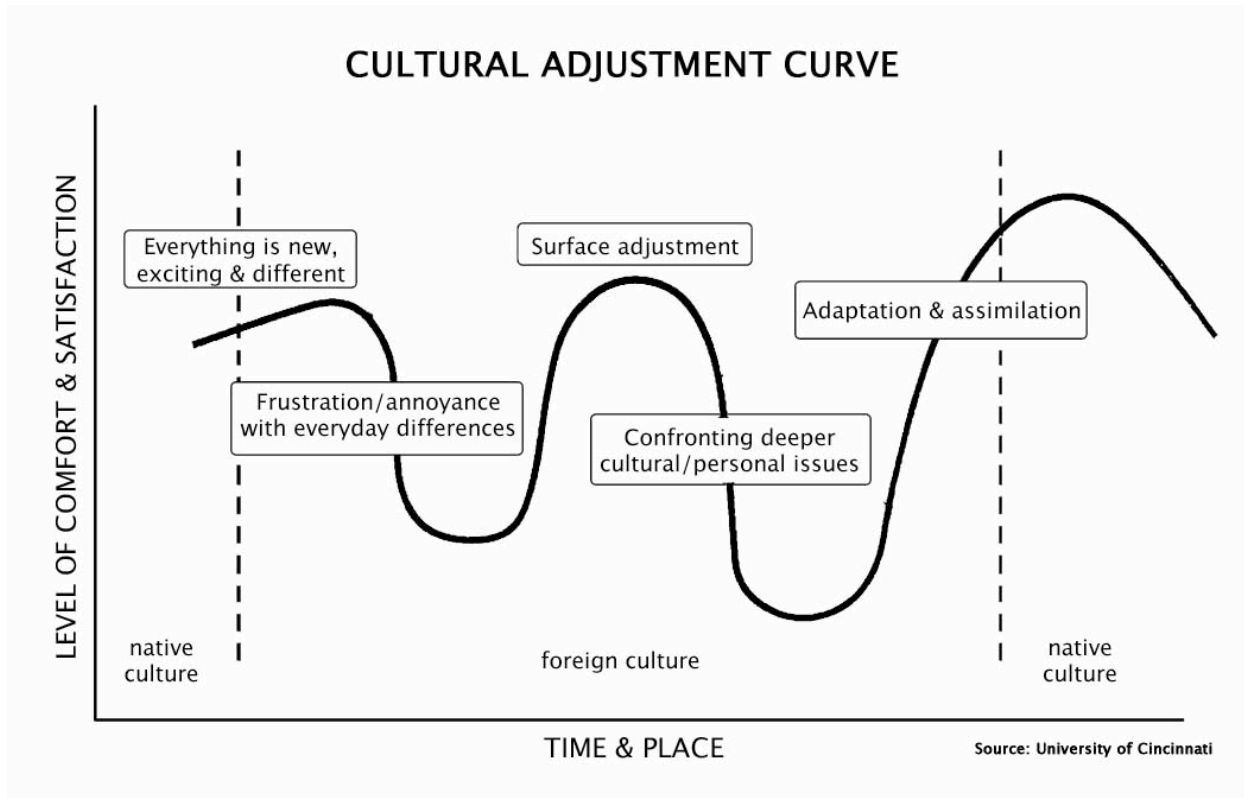
Finally, before you leave, make sure you read the US State Departments complete travel advisory for India, and its India background notes.

# ***CHAPTER FIVE: MANAGING CULTURAL DIFFERENCES***



# Cultural Transition

**Culture shock** is a term used to describe the psychological disorientation experienced when you leave your familiar surroundings and are immersed in a foreign culture. During this cultural transition, you may experience a plethora of emotions, as shown by the *Cultural Adjustment Curve*:



As this diagram indicates, you may fluctuate between feelings of excitement or euphoria and those of anxiety, anger, irritability, etc. Homesickness and reactive depression are also common symptoms. All these emotions are normal responses to the disorientation caused by the unfamiliar surroundings of your new environment, and they are part of adjusting to a foreign culture. Remember that everyone goes through these changes at a different pace.

## Easing your cultural transition:

Remember that **what you get out of your time in India is directly related to what you put in.**

Do not block feelings of anxiety and confusion. Instead, try to discover the underlying causes.

Keep an open mind: avoid making judgments about the way things are done (words such as “right” and “wrong” indicate judgment).

Refrain from making negative statements about people in the new culture, and avoid other participants who express such sentiments.

*Maintain a sense of humor about yourself and others. If the waiter gives you a strange look when you order a plate of ali gubi instead of alu gobi, just laugh at yourself and realize that everyone makes mistakes.*

Get involved: take an active role in learning about your new community and what it has to offer. Take advantage of your time here.

Talk with Indians on a personal and cultural level. Discuss your observations, confusion, etc, and listen to what they say about why things are done “that way.”

Have patience: you won't become fully adjusted overnight. In fact, know that it takes several weeks, or months, to reach the latter stages of adaptation and assimilation.

Escape into a comfortable world if you need to – keep a journal, watch a movie, talk with peers – this can help you process and ease into your environment.

## Adjusting to India: your new social setting

### Greetings

In India, you usually greet people with folded hands, a slight nod of the head, and “Namaste.” Some more Western people will shake your hand, but wait for them to make the first move. In general, you would not expect to hug or kiss someone upon greeting them, unless you were already quite close. Especially between men and women, touching is quite unusual. **For American men, the best policy is to not touch any Indian women first. For American women, the best policy is to avoid touching Indian men;** you do not want to be perceived as forward or sexually loose. Paradoxically, however, Indian men are more comfortable with physical contact with other men than American men are.

### Formality of Speech

Traditional Indian culture tends to fairly hierarchical. Some traditional men will feel uncomfortable addressing women directly. Hierarchies of rank and age are more respected than they are in the US. When you meet professors or students, watch carefully how they interact and follow their lead. In a university setting, some will be quite informal. Others will be much more formal than you are used to. **The key, as with almost all social interactions in India, is to react more than you initiate. Let the Indians with whom you interact take the lead. Smile a lot.**

You will quickly come into contact with the ubiquitous Indian head nod. In different contexts, it might mean yes, no, maybe, or I don't understand you but keep talking because I might figure out what you mean. Many Indians that you encounter in India will want to be able to help you, even if they do not know how. If you ask an Indian for something and they say “Yes,” it usually means, “I'll give it an honest effort.” It does not carry the same connotations of definiteness that it would in the US context.

### Personal Space

The concept of personal space is viewed very differently in India than it is in many of our home countries. You may notice this quickly. Many foreigners in India can feel uncomfortable in situations when someone is standing particularly close to you when speaking, or breathing over your shoulder when waiting in line behind you. People in India are more comfortable being in close proximity with strangers than most of us are.

**However, you are the best judge of what is right and what is not. Be aware of the way people here view personal space, but if you are uncomfortable and the alarm bells go off, don't chalk it up to cultural differences, make an effort to change the situation. This especially holds true if you are a woman and perceive an Indian man as encroaching on your space.**

You will also find that cultural prohibitions about asking “personal” questions are different in India. Do not be surprised if strangers ask you your “qualifications,” your salary at home in the US, how much your camera cost, if you use birth control, who you voted for, or other questions that American strangers often would hesitate to vocalize.

## Poverty and Begging

*Before you leave for India, think about how you will handle beggars. You will encounter beggars on the streets, at tourist areas, at temples. Some of them will be desperately elderly or small children. Some will be people with horrific injuries or birth defects. At some tourist locations, a bus-load of Western tourists will draw phenomenal crowds of people, asking for things, offering to be a guide, or trying to sell things to you. For many travelers, this is the hardest and most overwhelming part of a trip to India. Make no mistake, India has some of the poorest people in the world living in its cities and rural areas. Child labor is staggeringly common. How will you deal with this?*

Many Indian social workers beg tourists not to give money to beggars, but rather, if their heart strings are plucked, to give money to any of the dozens of worthwhile charitable organizations that work with the dispossessed and abandoned. Especially with children, giving begging children money makes their livelihood a profitable one, and it keeps them out of the available free schools. Often begging children are working for adults.

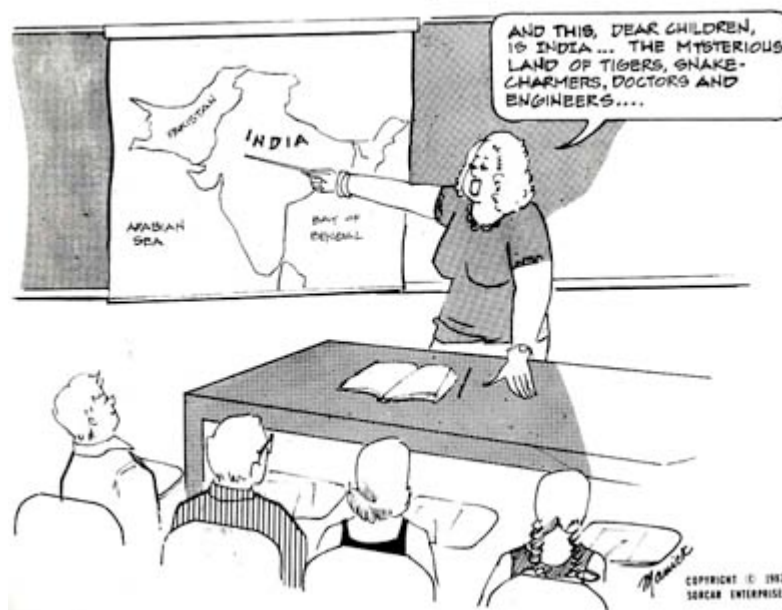
Crowds that swarm tourists also rely upon tourists' disinclination to ignore other people – it is difficult to walk by a person who is talking to you, and not acknowledge them. We so desperately do not want to ACT rude, rich, and callous. Consider how that basic human kindness can be abused, and whether you would be willing to ignore people in particular contexts. (Incidentally – we will be traveling with guides, who will help manage the onslaught when we are in a large group.)

## As you adjust to life in India remember:

You are not the first person to experience culture shock, especially in India. Everyone deals with culture shock differently and many people have gone through exactly what you are dealing with now. Talk to each other and your director, or even international students from elsewhere who are studying at India longer-term.

The beginning is always the hardest part. Be sure to give yourself time to adjust before giving up on cultural differences. You'll be amazed how differently you may feel about things after giving yourself some time to adjust.

## The India of Myth and Reality:



India is a land of phenomenal diversity – it is also a land that has captured the western imagination ever since Columbus set sail for the land of spices and thought he had discovered the Indians. The process of romanticizing

India – imagining that Indians are completely different people than the rest of us – reduces the complexity of Indian culture and society (as the cartoon above illustrates). Often romanticizing a land or people is part of the same process as more negative stereotypes. I would encourage you to make a list, perhaps in your journal, of the positive and negative stereotypes that pop into your head when you think of India. After doing this, consider the basis of those stereotypes: where do they come from? In what ways do they reduce the human agency of Indians? In what ways do they reflect the desires of Westerners more than Indian realities?

## ***Ethnocentrism***

### **What is it?**

Ethnocentrism is a state in which individuals perceive people who behave differently as wrong and inferior. It is an inability to perceive other ways of life as equally good and valid. It is also an inability to realize the effects of one's own culture upon oneself. Ethnocentric individuals will say that the way they do things is correct or "the right way" not realizing that there are other, equally right ways.

Just imagine how to Indians, smearing feces all around your body with dry tissue seems disgusting and unhygienic! You may have the same feeling about using a cup of water and your hand to wipe. This is a good example of cultural differences rooted in practicality, where cultural forms have led us to feel strongly about an issue that, with a little bit of work, we can understand carries no larger moral import.

However, there are attitudes or practices in India which will just strike you as unjust or just plain wrong, from a human rights point of view... treatment of the poor, some corruption, the caste system, the way some women are mistreated, various abuses you might come to be aware of, treatment of laborers on campus by elite Indian students. Stop yourself whenever you feel yourself having a strong reaction of a negative kind involving judgment. Analyze which of your responses are rooted in ethnocentrism, and which things you really do feel strongly about on a level of morality and justice. Is everything relative? Can some cultural practices simply be wrong? It is always good to go into a different culture being observant, being a listener, being cautious to pass judgment ... as short-term visitors to India, we have much more to learn than we have to teach. And even if you feel strong moral condemnation for a practice, be cautious in how you express yourself. You are a short-term outsider without a long reservoir of goodwill, or a long-term commitment to India, to draw upon. The other thing I would encourage you to do is to turn your moral outrage inward. If you could look at American society from the same outsider perspective, what would bother you? How could you change that American injustice, and how would Americans respond to foreign critics?

### **The Human Experience**

We are all ethnocentric from birth and from circumstance. We learn about ourselves and our environment and produce a picture of how we view the world. This idea of what the world is comes from interaction with our environment and our parents. When we are children and first go to someone else's house we may feel that how they do things is **WRONG** because they do not do things the way we do them in our own home. We do not realize that the way they do things is just as valid as the way our family does. It is a shock to realize that others may see the way we do things as **WRONG** and possibly **INFERIOR**.

Ethnocentrism is inevitable because, as human beings, we have to have some way to order our world and some way to filter all the information that is bombarding us incessantly. Our families, then our schools, then our work all contribute to our formation of our filters: our cultures. Our cultures tell us what to value and what not to value; what to pay attention to and what to ignore. Most of us internalize these cultural norms of behavior unconsciously and **DO NOT REALIZE** that we are conforming to cultural norms until we leave our cultures or we come into contact with someone from another culture. Then we begin to realize the two faces of ethnocentrism: the face that protects us and the face that make it difficult for us to see other ways of behaving and other points of view.

- Ethnocentrism is a major cause of communication failure. The ethnocentric individual is perceived as arrogant and, often, ignorant. Ethnocentric individuals expect everyone to behave the same way and when people don't behave as expected, the behavior is seen as a deliberate norm violation and the person is disconfirmed or rejected.

- Ethnocentrism can be a barrier to self-understanding and can, if the individual holds views contrary to the prevailing popular culture, be very destructive to the individual.
- Ethnocentrism is one of the reasons for non-acceptance or marginalization of minorities within a majority culture.

Here is a list of attitudes that occasionally are held when Americans travel overseas. A number are quite common and may not seem, at first glance, to be offensive. Others are only found in the extremely narrow-minded, or, indeed, in the bigot.

- Foreigners coming to live in the US should give up their foreign ways and adapt to America as quickly as possible.
- Much of the world's population remains "underdeveloped" because they don't take the initiative to develop themselves.
- English should be accepted as the universal language of the world (or of the US).
- Americans have been very generous in teaching other people how to do things the right way.
- Minority members of a population should conform to the customs and values of the majority.
- If everyone learned to do things the way we do, the world would be better off and people everywhere would understand each other better.
- Primitive people have not yet reached the higher stages of civilization.
- The fact that America was able to place a man on the moon proves America's technological superiority.

Bottom line: though there might be some things we admire in other cultures, we all believe in our heart of hearts that our race, our culture, **OUR** group is the most important, worthy, civilized, etc. in the world. There is little hope of ever being completely freed from these impulses because they are largely subconscious and they influence our attitudes and behaviors without our being aware. The worthiest, most noble and best educational reason for study abroad is to combat this narrow-mindedness and to see ourselves and our culture in a broader perspective. Even as we observe, we have to refrain from judging, and without negating or belittling our own culture, we must be humble.

Listed below are some of the most common stereotypes of Americans held by people in other countries. Which of the items listed below are positive and how many are negative?

- Outgoing, friendly
- Falsely open and friendly
- Informal
- Loud, rude boastful, immature
- Hard working
- Extravagant, wasteful
- Confident they have all the answers
- Lacking in class consciousness
- Disrespectful of authority
- Racially prejudiced
- Ignorant of other countries
- Wealthy
- Generous
- Always in a hurry

Remember: what we believe to be a positive stereotype may, in fact, be a negative one in the eyes of a person from another country and vice versa. Throughout the world there are many different ways of doing things, most of which are intrinsically neither better nor worse than our own. They are simply different.

Stereotypes are not always wrong. Some of them contain too much truth for comfort. The problem with stereotypes, really, is that they prevent us from getting to the richer reality which lies beyond them. At some point when you are overseas, you will encounter these stereotypes and there will be those who will hold you personally responsible for them particularly when national truisms are applied blindly to individuals.

Here are some tips on how to handle stereotyped questions such as "Why are Americans such racists? so rude? so rushed all the time?"

- Listen. Ask Questions.
- Resist becoming angry or defensive
- Avoid fitting the stereotype
- Persist in being your (sweet old) self

Anything you can do to help break the negative stereotypes people have of Americans will not only help contribute to your own pleasure overseas but also improve the American image abroad. India has many friendly, hospitable people ready and eager to welcome Americans into their society. The question now remains: What kinds of attitudes do we as a group have about them and their culture? Are we ever guilty of a little counterproductive stereotyping of our own?

## **DO:**

- Speak slowly
- Use a warm voice (for many people emotion indicates sincerity)
- Use formal language
- Use honorifics when you can.
- Listen for indirect questions and silences
- Be clear about closure and repeat next steps (ask them to repeat what will happen next so you can see if you left out anything).
- Assume the other person is trying to communicate even if they seem rude, or slow, or vague.

## **DO NOT:**

- Do not be alarmed when their idea of personal space conflicts with yours. Indians will stand much closer to you when they are talking to you. They will look you in the eye and (if same sex) they may touch you (a hand on your arm, an arm around your shoulder).
- Ask yes/no questions, such as: "Do you understand?" People will say "yes" but their intention is only to let you know they are listening.
- Stick regularly to a script: be flexible (You may need to use different words to explain something). Try to answer the questions they ask using different words and concrete examples.
- Be impatient if they talk too long or include irrelevant information
- Fill silences all the time (Many people are comfortable with silence and are processing the information you have given them)
- Assume people will have the same assumptions you have or behave like Americans
- Assume people understand terminology, regional expressions or research projects.

## **Rx from Experienced Travelers:**

There are things we can do to control our ethnocentrism, reduce the degree of culture shock we may experience and adjust to the "foreign" environment:

1. Know thy Host Country - Read about India before you go. Learn something of its history, geography, etc.
2. Begin to look for logical reasons behind everything in the host culture which seems strange, difficult, confusing or threatening. Even if your "reason" is wrong, it will reinforce the positive attitude that in fact there is a logical explanation behind the things you observe in the host culture.
3. Don't succumb to the temptation to disparage the host culture. Resist making jokes and comments ("Well what else would you expect from these people?") which are intended to illustrate the stupidity of the "natives" and don't hang around the Americans who do make them: it will only reinforce your unhappiness. Avoid these people like the plague!!!

4. Identify a host national (somebody from the country) who is sympathetic and understanding, and talk with that person about the specific situations and your feelings related to them. Talking with Americans can be helpful but only to a limited extent.
5. Above all, have faith - in yourself, in the essential good will of your hosts, and in the positive outcome of the experience.

*Information taken from L. Robert Kohls, Survival Kit for Overseas Living.*

## ***On Returning Home***

We all understand to one level or another “Culture shock.” Less understood, but perhaps more psychologically traumatic to you, is “Reverse Culture Shock”. That is, the experience and feeling you have when you return home. Its most important element is that when you return home from your study abroad experience and are bursting with desire to tell people back home about what you saw and did, they really are not that interested. Or you feel, probably accurately, that either you can’t possibly properly fully explain yourself or no one can possibly understand your experience or your feelings about the experience. In any case this “Reverse Cultural Shock” phenomenon can be extremely frustrating and even sad. There is not much you can do about it except to be aware that in most of life’s events our most important, most personal feelings and experiences are inexplicable.

There are a few things that you can do:

1. Seek out other participants of the program you participated in or even participants in other study abroad experiences to reminisce and to exchange ideas, feelings and memories.
2. Channel your desire to communicate through formal presentations (Spanish Club, a church group, an honor society).

## ***Let’s Play 50 questions***

There is only so much information that can be covered during our pre-departure orientation. In order to foster independent learning, please take time to brainstorm some possible answers to the questions that follow.

Here are fifty questions about your host country and culture. They are not intended to be an inclusive list. Many more will be suggested as you answer these. Nevertheless, when you have the answers to the following fifty, you may consider yourself well beyond the beginner stage.

### ***History***

1. Who are prominent people in your host country? In politics, in religion, in the arts, etc.?
2. Who are the country’s heroes and heroines?

### ***Politics***

3. What is the political structure of the country? How long has the structure been in place?
4. Is military training compulsory? For whom?
5. What is the history of the relationship between the country and the US?
6. How many people emigrated from this country to the US? When? Why?
7. How many people who are prominent in the affairs (politics, athletics, arts) of this country can you name?

### ***Religion***

8. What is the predominant religion of the country? Is it a state religion?
9. What are the most important religious observances and ceremonies?
10. How regularly do people participate in them?
11. What other religions are practiced in the country?
12. What is the attitude of the predominant religion towards other religions?

### ***Female / Male Relationships***

13. What are the norms of “romantic” relationships in this country? Do young people date? If they date, do they date in couples? Do they need a chaperone?
14. What is the norm regarding premarital sex?
15. Is it O.K. to hold hands, touch, kiss in public?
16. What are the rules/norms for male/female friendships? In what types of social activities do young women and men participate together?
17. What is the attitude toward divorce? extra-marital relations? plural marriage?
18. What are the special privileges of age and/or sex?

### ***Family***

19. What games do children play? Where do children congregate?
20. How are children disciplined at home?

### ***Education***

21. Who goes to the university?
22. What are the important universities of this country?
23. What is the university calendar?
24. What kinds of schools are considered best: public, private or parochial?
25. Is education free? compulsory?

### ***Social Etiquette***

26. What is the normal work schedule?
27. What is the attitude toward gambling?
28. What are the most common forms of marriage ceremonies and celebrations?
29. What things are taboo in this society?
30. On what occasions would you present or accept gifts?
31. What kind of gifts would you exchange?
32. How do people greet one another? shake hands? embrace or kiss?
33. How do they leave one another? What does any variation from the usual signify?

### ***On Being Foreign***

34. How will your financial position and living conditions compare with those of the majority of the people living in this country?
35. How do you retain your own identity while adapting to the new culture?

### ***Leisure***

36. What sports are popular?
37. What are the favorite leisure and recreational activities of adults? Of teenagers?

### ***Dress***

38. What is the usual dress for women? for men?
39. Are slacks or shorts worn? If so, on what occasions? What is the climate like where I will be?
40. Do teenagers wear jeans?
41. What is appropriate dress for you as a foreigner?
42. Are there special dress customs you should know about?
43. What types of clothing is taboo?

### ***Food and Drink***

44. What foods are most popular and how are they prepared?
45. If you are invited for dinner, should you arrive early? on time? late? If late, how late?

- 46. What is the attitude toward drinking?
- 47. What foods are popular?

### ***Language***

- 48. Are there other languages spoken besides the dominant language?
- 49. What are the socio-political implications of language usage?
- 50. What are 3 helpful phrases in Hindi or Marathi that I can easily learn and use?

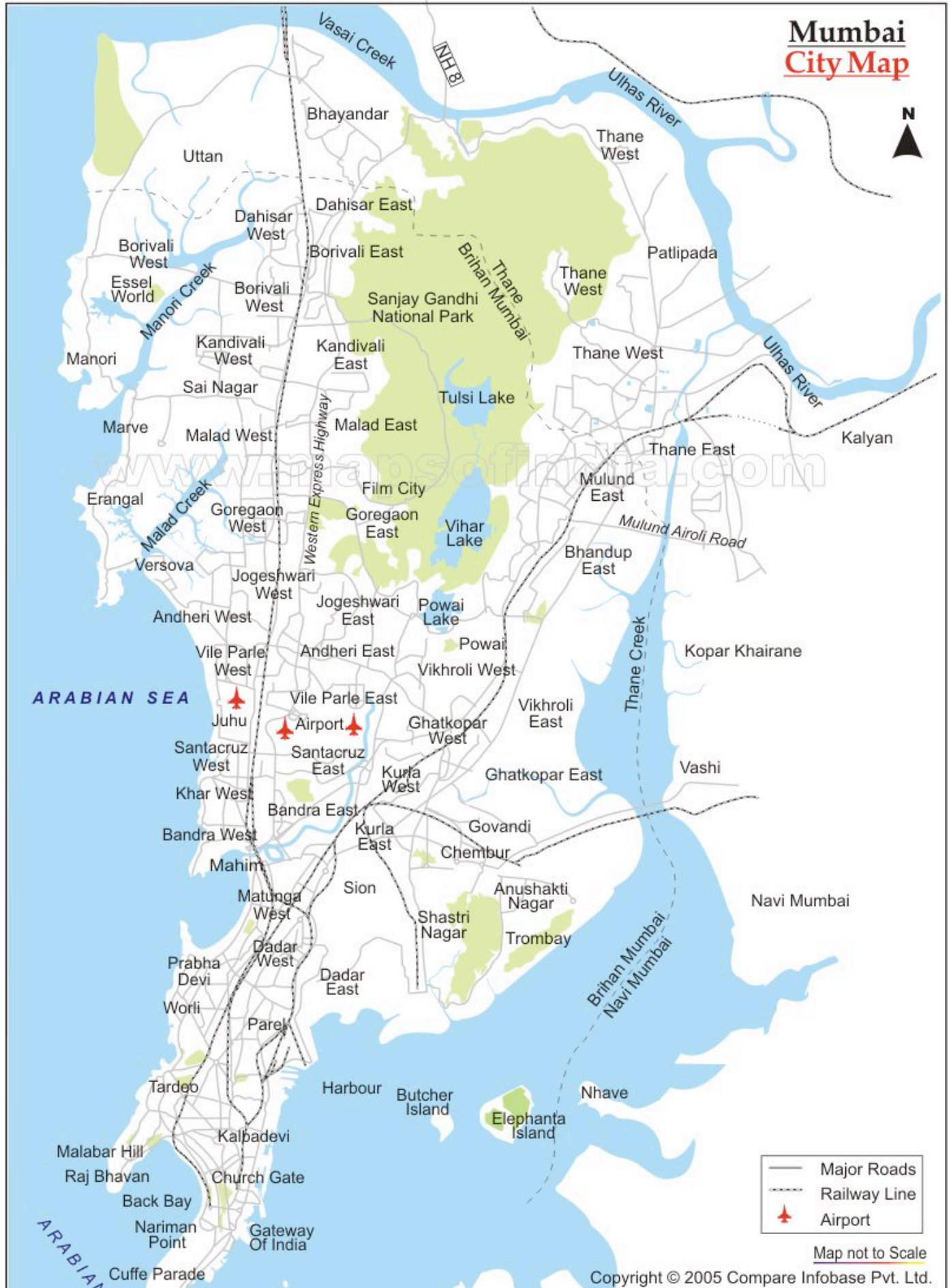
*Let's Play Fifty Questions* is adapted from L. Robert Kohls, Survival Kit for Overseas Living.

# ***APPENDIX: MAPS AND BASIC INDIA INFORMATION***



*A Street Vendor In India*

# Mumbai City Map



— Major Roads  
 - - - Railway Line  
 ▲ Airport

Map not to Scale

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Map of India: [http://www.jpkins.com/en/travels/india/pictures/India\\_map.jpg](http://www.jpkins.com/en/travels/india/pictures/India_map.jpg)

## BASIC INFORMATION ABOUT INDIA'S LAND, PEOPLE, ECONOMY, AND GOVERNMENT

From the US CIA Factbook, December, 2008

<b>Area - comparative:</b>	slightly more than one-third the size of the US, 7 <sup>TH</sup> largest in the world
<b>Land boundaries:</b>	<i>border countries:</i> Bangladesh, Bhutan, Burma, China, Nepal, Pakistan
<b>Coastline:</b>	7,000 km
<b>Climate:</b>	varies from tropical monsoon in south to temperate in north
<b>Terrain:</b>	upland plain (Deccan Plateau) in south, flat to rolling plain along the Ganges, deserts in west, Himalayas in north
<b>Elevation extremes:</b>	<i>lowest point:</i> Indian Ocean 0 m <i>highest point:</i> Kanchenjunga 8,598 m
<b>Natural resources:</b>	coal (fourth-largest reserves in the world), iron ore, manganese, mica, bauxite, titanium ore, chromite, natural gas, diamonds, petroleum, limestone, arable land
<b>Land use:</b>	<i>arable land:</i> 48.83% <i>permanent crops:</i> 2.8% <i>other:</i> 48.37% (2005)
<b>Irrigated land:</b>	558,080 sq km (2003)
<b>Total renewable water resources:</b>	1,907.8 cu km (1999)
<b>Freshwater withdrawal (domestic/industrial/agricultural):</b>	<i>total:</i> 645.84 cu km/yr (8%/5%/86%) <i>per capita:</i> 585 cu m/yr (2000)
<b>Natural hazards:</b>	droughts; flash floods, as well as widespread and destructive flooding from monsoonal rains; severe thunderstorms; earthquakes
<b>Environment - current issues:</b>	deforestation; soil erosion; overgrazing; desertification; air pollution from industrial effluents and vehicle emissions; water pollution from raw sewage and runoff of agricultural pesticides; tap water is not potable throughout the country; huge and growing population is overstraining natural resources
<b>Environment - international agreements:</b>	<i>party to:</i> Antarctic-Environmental Protocol, Antarctic-Marine Living Resources, Antarctic Treaty, Biodiversity, Climate Change, Climate Change-Kyoto Protocol, Desertification, Endangered Species, Environmental Modification, Hazardous Wastes, Law of the Sea, Ozone Layer Protection, Ship Pollution, Tropical Timber 83, Tropical Timber 94, Wetlands, Whaling
<b>Geography - note:</b>	dominates South Asian subcontinent; near important Indian Ocean trade routes; Kanchenjunga, third tallest mountain in the world, lies on the border with Nepal

People	India
<b>Population:</b>	1,147,995,904 (July 2008 est.)
<b>Age structure:</b>	<i>0-14 years:</i> 31.5% (male 189,238,487/female 172,168,306) <i>15-64 years:</i> 63.3% (male 374,157,581/female 352,868,003) <i>65 years and over:</i> 5.2% (male 28,285,796/female 31,277,725) (2008 est.)
<b>Median age:</b>	<i>total:</i> 25.1 years <i>male:</i> 24.7 years <i>female:</i> 25.5 years (2008 est.)
<b>Population growth rate:</b>	1.578% (2008 est.)
<b>Birth rate:</b>	22.22 births/1,000 population (2008 est.)
<b>Death rate:</b>	6.4 deaths/1,000 population (2008 est.)
<b>Net migration rate:</b>	-0.05 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2008 est.)
<b>Sex ratio:</b>	<i>at birth:</i> 1.12 male(s)/female <i>under 15 years:</i> 1.1 male(s)/female <i>15-64 years:</i> 1.06 male(s)/female <i>65 years and over:</i> 0.9 male(s)/female <i>total population:</i> 1.06 male(s)/female (2008 est.)
<b>Infant mortality rate:</b>	<i>total:</i> 32.31 deaths/1,000 live births <i>male:</i> 36.94 deaths/1,000 live births <i>female:</i> 27.12 deaths/1,000 live births (2008 est.)
<b>Life expectancy at birth:</b>	<i>total population:</i> 69.25 years <i>male:</i> 66.87 years <i>female:</i> 71.9 years (2008 est.)
<b>Total fertility rate:</b>	2.76 children born/woman (2008 est.)
<b>HIV/AIDS - adult prevalence rate:</b>	0.9% (2001 est.)
<b>HIV/AIDS - people living with HIV/AIDS:</b>	5.1 million (2001 est.)
<b>HIV/AIDS - deaths:</b>	310,000 (2001 est.)

**Major infectious diseases:** *degree of risk:* high  
*food or waterborne diseases:* bacterial diarrhea, hepatitis A and E, and typhoid fever  
*vectorborne diseases:* chikungunya, dengue fever, Japanese encephalitis, and malaria  
*animal contact disease:* rabies  
*note:* highly pathogenic H5N1 avian influenza has been identified in this country; it poses a negligible risk with extremely rare cases possible among US citizens who have close contact with birds (2008)

**Nationality:** *noun:* Indian(s)  
*adjective:* Indian

**Ethnic groups:** Indo-Aryan 72%, Dravidian 25%, Mongoloid and other 3% (2000)

**Religions:** Hindu 80.5%, Muslim 13.4%, Christian 2.3%, Sikh 1.9%, other 1.8%, unspecified 0.1% (2001 census)

**Languages:** Hindi 41%, Bengali 8.1%, Telugu 7.2%, Marathi 7%, Tamil 5.9%, Urdu 5%, Gujarati 4.5%, Kannada 3.7%, Malayalam 3.2%, Oriya 3.2%, Punjabi 2.8%, Assamese 1.3%, Maithili 1.2%, other 5.9%  
*note:* English enjoys associate status but is the most important language for national, political, and commercial communication; Hindi is the national language and primary tongue of 41% of the people; there are 14 other official languages: Bengali, Telugu, Marathi, Tamil, Urdu, Gujarati, Malayalam, Kannada, Oriya, Punjabi, Assamese, Kashmiri, Sindhi, and Sanskrit; Hindustani is a popular variant of Hindi/Urdu spoken widely throughout northern India but is not an official language (2001 census)

**Literacy:** *definition:* age 15 and over can read and write  
*total population:* 61%  
*male:* 73.4%  
*female:* 47.8% (2001 census)

**School life expectancy (primary to tertiary education):** *total:* 10 years  
*male:* 11 years  
*female:* 9 years (2005)

**Education expenditures:** 3.2% of GDP (2005)

Government	India
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**Country name:** *conventional long form:* Republic of India  
*conventional short form:* India  
*local long form:* Republic of India/Bharatiya Ganarajya  
*local short form:* India/Bharat

**Government type:** federal republic

**Capital:** *name:* New Delhi  
*time difference:* UTC+5.5 (10.5 hours ahead of Washington, DC during Standard Time)

<b>Administrative divisions:</b>	28 states and 7 union territories*; Andaman and Nicobar Islands*, Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Chandigarh*, Chhattisgarh, Dadra and Nagar Haveli*, Daman and Diu*, Delhi*, Goa, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Lakshadweep*, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Orissa, Puducherry*, Punjab, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, West Bengal
<b>Independence:</b>	15 August 1947 (from UK)
<b>National holiday:</b>	Republic Day, 26 January (1950)
<b>Constitution:</b>	26 January 1950; amended many times
<b>Legal system:</b>	based on English common law; judicial review of legislative acts; accepts compulsory ICJ jurisdiction with reservations; separate personal law codes apply to Muslims, Christians, and Hindus
<b>Suffrage:</b>	18 years of age; universal
<b>Executive branch:</b>	<p><i>chief of state:</i> President Pratibha PATIL (since 25 July 2007); Vice President Hamid ANSARI (since 11 August 2007)</p> <p><i>head of government:</i> Prime Minister Manmohan SINGH (since 22 May 2004)</p> <p><i>cabinet:</i> Cabinet appointed by the president on the recommendation of the prime minister</p> <p><i>elections:</i> president elected by an electoral college consisting of elected members of both houses of Parliament and the legislatures of the states for a five-year term (no term limits); election last held 21 July 2007 (next to be held in July 2012); vice president elected by both houses of Parliament for a five-year term; election last held 12 August 2002 (next to be held August 2007); prime minister chosen by parliamentary members of the majority party following legislative elections; election last held April - May 2004 (next to be held May 2009)</p> <p><i>election results:</i> Pratibha PATIL elected president; percent of vote - 65.8%; Bhairon Singh SHEKHAWAT - 34.2%</p>
<b>Legislative branch:</b>	<p>bicameral Parliament or Sansad consists of the Council of States or Rajya Sabha (a body consisting of not more than 250 members up to 12 of whom are appointed by the president, the remainder are chosen by the elected members of the state and territorial assemblies; members serve six-year terms) and the People's Assembly or Lok Sabha (545 seats; 543 elected by popular vote, 2 appointed by the president; members serve five-year terms)</p> <p><i>elections:</i> People's Assembly - last held 20 April through 10 May 2004 (next must be held by May 2009)</p> <p><i>election results:</i> People's Assembly - percent of vote by party - NA; seats by party - INC 147, BJP 129, CPI (M) 43, SP 38, RJD 23, DMK 16, BSP 15, SS 12, BJD 11, CPI 10, NCP 10, JD (U) 8, SAD 8, PMK 6, JMM 5, LJSP 4, MDMK 4, TDP 4, TRS 4, independent 6, other 29, vacant 13; note - seats by party as of December 2006</p>
<b>Judicial branch:</b>	Supreme Court (one chief justice and 25 associate justices are appointed by the president and remain in office until they reach the age of 65 or are removed for "proved misbehavior")
<b>Political parties and leaders:</b>	Bahujan Samaj Party or BSP [MAYAWATI]; Bharatiya Janata Party or BJP [Rajnath SINGH]; Biju Janata Dal or BJD [Naveen PATNAIK]; Communist Party of India or CPI [Ardhendu Bhushan BARDHAN]; Communist Party of India-Marxist or CPI-M [Prakash KARAT]; Dravida Munnetra Kazagham or DMK [M.

KARUNANIDHI]; Indian National Congress or INC [Sonia GANDHI]; Janata Dal (United) or JD(U) [Sharad YADAV]; Jharkhand Mukti Morcha or JMM [Shibu SOREN]; Left Front (an alliance of Indian leftist parties); Lok Jan Shakti Party or LJSP [Ram Vilas PASWAN]; Marumalarchi Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam or MDMK [V. Gopalswamy VAIKO]; Nationalist Congress Party or NCP [Sharad PAWAR]; Pattali Makkal Katchi or PMK [S. RAMADOSS]; Rashtriya Janata Dal or RJD [Laloo Prasad YADAV]; Samajwadi Party or SP [Mulayam Singh YADAV]; Shiromani Akali Dal or SAD [Parkash Singh BADAL]; Shiv Sena or SS [Bal THACKERAY]; Telangana Rashtriya Samithi or TRS [K. Chandrashekhara RAO]; Telugu Desam Party or TDP [Chandrababu NAIDU]; United Progressive Alliance or UPA [Sonia GANDHI] (India's ruling party coalition of 12 political parties); note - India has dozens of national and regional political parties; only parties or coalitions with four or more seats in the People's Assembly are listed

**Political pressure groups and leaders:** All Parties Hurriyat Conference in the Kashmir Valley (separatist group); Bajrang Dal (religious organization); National Socialist Council of Nagaland in the northeast (separatist group); Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (religious organization); Vishwa Hindu Parishad (religious organization) *other:* numerous religious or militant/chauvinistic organizations; various separatist groups seeking greater communal and/or regional autonomy

**Diplomatic representation in the US:** *chief of mission:* Ambassador Ranendra SEN  
*chancery:* 2107 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20008; note - Consular Wing located at 2536 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20008  
*telephone:* [1] (202) 939-7000  
*FAX:* [1] (202) 265-4351  
*consulate(s) general:* Chicago, Houston, New York, San Francisco

**Diplomatic representation from the US:** *chief of mission:* Ambassador David C. MULFORD  
*embassy:* Shantipath, Chanakyapuri, New Delhi 110021  
*mailing address:* use embassy street address  
*telephone:* [91] (011) 2419-8000  
*FAX:* [91] (11) 2419-0017  
*consulate(s) general:* Chennai (Madras), Kolkata (Calcutta), Mumbai (Bombay)

**Flag description:** three equal horizontal bands of saffron (subdued orange) (top), white, and green with a blue chakra (24-spoked wheel) centered in the white band; similar to the flag of Niger, which has a small orange disk centered in the white band

Economy	India
<b>Economy - overview:</b>	India's diverse economy encompasses traditional village farming, modern agriculture, handicrafts, a wide range of modern industries, and a multitude of services. Services are the major source of economic growth, accounting for more than half of India's output with less than one third of its labor force. About three-fifths of the work force is in agriculture, leading the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government to articulate an economic reform program that includes developing basic infrastructure to improve the lives of the rural poor and boost economic performance. The government has reduced controls on foreign trade and investment. Higher limits on foreign direct investment were permitted in a few key sectors, such as telecommunications. However, tariff spikes in sensitive categories, including agriculture, and incremental progress on economic reforms still hinder foreign access to India's vast and growing market. Privatization of government-

owned industries remains stalled and continues to generate political debate; populist pressure from within the UPA government and from its Left Front allies continues to restrain needed initiatives. The economy has posted an average growth rate of more than 7% in the decade since 1997, reducing poverty by about 10 percentage points. India achieved 8.5% GDP growth in 2006, and again in 2007, significantly expanding production of manufactures. India is capitalizing on its large numbers of well-educated people skilled in the English language to become a major exporter of software services and software workers. Economic expansion has helped New Delhi continue to make progress in reducing its federal fiscal deficit. However, strong growth combined with easy consumer credit and a real estate boom fueled inflation concerns in 2006 and 2007, leading to a series of central bank interest rate hikes that have slowed credit growth and eased inflation concerns. The huge and growing population is the fundamental social, economic, and environmental problem.

<b>GDP (purchasing power parity):</b>	\$2.966 trillion (2007 est.)
<b>GDP (official exchange rate):</b>	\$1.099 trillion (2007 est.)
<b>GDP - real growth rate:</b>	9% (2007 est.)
<b>GDP - per capita (PPP):</b>	\$2,600 (2007 est.)
<b>GDP - composition by sector:</b>	<i>agriculture:</i> 17.8% <i>industry:</i> 29.4% <i>services:</i> 52.8% (2007 est.)
<b>Labor force:</b>	516.4 million (2007 est.)
<b>Labor force - by occupation:</b>	<i>agriculture:</i> 60% <i>industry:</i> 12% <i>services:</i> 28% (2003)
<b>Unemployment rate:</b>	7.2% (2007 est.)
<b>Population below poverty line:</b>	25% (2007 est.)
<b>Household income or consumption by percentage share:</b>	<i>lowest 10%:</i> 3.6% <i>highest 10%:</i> 31.1% (2004)
<b>Distribution of family income - Gini index:</b>	36.8 (2004)
<b>Investment (gross fixed):</b>	33.9% of GDP (2007 est.)
<b>Budget:</b>	<i>revenues:</i> \$141.2 billion <i>expenditures:</i> \$172.6 billion (2007 est.)

<b>Fiscal year:</b>	1 April - 31 March
<b>Public debt:</b>	58.2% of GDP (federal and state debt combined) (2007 est.)
<b>Inflation rate (consumer prices):</b>	6.4% (2007 est.)
<b>Central bank discount rate:</b>	6% (31 December 2007)
<b>Commercial bank prime lending rate:</b>	13.02% (31 December 2007)
<b>Stock of money:</b>	\$250.9 billion (31 December 2007)
<b>Stock of quasi money:</b>	\$647.3 billion (31 December 2007)
<b>Stock of domestic credit:</b>	\$769.3 billion (31 December 2007)
<b>Agriculture - products:</b>	rice, wheat, oilseed, cotton, jute, tea, sugarcane, potatoes; cattle, water buffalo, sheep, goats, poultry; fish
<b>Industries:</b>	textiles, chemicals, food processing, steel, transportation equipment, cement, mining, petroleum, machinery, software
<b>Industrial production growth rate:</b>	8.5% (2007 est.)
<b>Electricity - production:</b>	661.6 billion kWh (2005)
<b>Electricity - consumption:</b>	488.5 billion kWh (2005)
<b>Electricity - exports:</b>	67 million kWh (2005)
<b>Electricity - imports:</b>	1.764 billion kWh (2005)
<b>Electricity - production by source:</b>	<i>fossil fuel:</i> 81.7% <i>hydro:</i> 14.5% <i>nuclear:</i> 3.4% <i>other:</i> 0.3% (2001)
<b>Oil - production:</b>	810,000 bbl/day (2007 est.)
<b>Oil - consumption:</b>	2.438 million bbl/day (2005 est.)
<b>Oil - exports:</b>	350,000 bbl/day (2005 est.)
<b>Oil - imports:</b>	2.098 million bbl/day (2004 est.)

<b>Oil - proved reserves:</b>	5.7 billion bbl (1 January 2007 est.)
<b>Natural gas - production:</b>	28.68 billion cu m (2005 est.)
<b>Natural gas - consumption:</b>	34.47 billion cu m (2005 est.)
<b>Natural gas - exports:</b>	0 cu m (2005 est.)
<b>Natural gas - imports:</b>	5.793 billion cu m (2005)
<b>Natural gas - proved reserves:</b>	1.056 trillion cu m (1 January 2006 est.)
<b>Current account balance:</b>	-\$12.11 billion (2007 est.)
<b>Exports:</b>	\$151.3 billion f.o.b. (2007 est.)
<b>Exports - commodities:</b>	petroleum products, textile goods, gems and jewelry, engineering goods, chemicals, leather manufactures
<b>Exports - partners:</b>	US 15%, China 8.7%, UAE 8.7%, UK 4.4% (2007)
<b>Imports:</b>	\$230.5 billion f.o.b. (2007 est.)
<b>Imports - commodities:</b>	crude oil, machinery, gems, fertilizer, chemicals
<b>Imports - partners:</b>	China 10.6%, US 7.8%, Germany 4.4%, Singapore 4.4% (2007)
<b>Economic aid - recipient:</b>	\$1.724 billion (2005)
<b>Reserves of foreign exchange and gold:</b>	\$275 billion (31 December 2007 est.)
<b>Debt - external:</b>	\$149.2 billion (31 December 2007)
<b>Stock of direct foreign investment - at home:</b>	\$95.96 billion (2007 est.)
<b>Stock of direct foreign investment - abroad:</b>	\$37.5 billion (2007 est.)
<b>Market value of publicly traded shares:</b>	\$818.9 billion (2006)

**Currency (code):** Indian rupee (INR)

**Currency code:** INR

**Exchange rates:** Indian rupees (INR) per US dollar - 41.487 (2007), 45.3 (2006), 44.101 (2005), 45.317 (2004), 46.583 (2003)

## Communications India

**Telephones - main lines in use:** 38.76 million (2008)

**Telephones - mobile cellular:** 296.08 million (2008)

**Telephone system:** *general assessment:* recent deregulation and liberalization of telecommunications laws and policies have prompted rapid growth; local and long distance service provided throughout all regions of the country, with services primarily concentrated in the urban areas; steady improvement is taking place with the recent admission of private and private-public investors, but combined fixed and mobile telephone density remains low at about 30 for each 100 persons nationwide and much lower for persons in rural areas; rapid growth in cellular service with modest declines in fixed lines  
*domestic:* mobile cellular service introduced in 1994 and organized nationwide into four metropolitan areas and 19 telecom circles each with about three private service providers and one state-owned service provider; in recent years significant trunk capacity added in the form of fiber-optic cable and one of the world's largest domestic satellite systems, the Indian National Satellite system (INSAT), with 6 satellites supporting 33,000 very small aperture terminals (VSAT)  
*international:* country code - 91; a number of major international submarine cable systems, including Sea-Me-We-3 with landing sites at Cochin and Mumbai (Bombay), Sea-Me-We-4 with a landing site at Chennai, Fiber-Optic Link Around the Globe (FLAG) with a landing site at Mumbai (Bombay), South Africa - Far East (SAFE) with a landing site at Cochin, the i2i cable network linking to Singapore with landing sites at Mumbai (Bombay) and Chennai (Madras), and Tata Indicom linking Singapore and Chennai (Madras), provide a significant increase in the bandwidth available for both voice and data traffic; satellite earth stations - 8 Intelsat (Indian Ocean) and 1 Inmarsat (Indian Ocean region); 9 gateway exchanges operating from Mumbai (Bombay), New Delhi, Kolkata (Calcutta), Chennai (Madras), Jalandhar, Kanpur, Gandhinagar, Hyderabad, and Ernakulam (2008)

**Radio broadcast stations:** AM 153, FM 91, shortwave 68 (1998)

**Radios:** 116 million (1997)

**Television broadcast stations:** 562 (1997)

**Televisions:** 63 million (1997)

**Internet country code:** .in

**Internet hosts:** 2.707 million (2008)

**Internet Service Providers (ISPs):** 43 (2000)

**Internet users:** 80 million (2007)

## Transportation India

**Airports:** 346 (2007)

**Airports - with paved runways:** *total: 250*  
*over 3,047 m: 18*  
*2,438 to 3,047 m: 52*  
*1,524 to 2,437 m: 75*  
*914 to 1,523 m: 84*  
*under 914 m: 21 (2007)*

**Airports - with unpaved runways:** *total: 96*  
*over 3,047 m: 1*  
*2,438 to 3,047 m: 1*  
*1,524 to 2,437 m: 7*  
*914 to 1,523 m: 40*  
*under 914 m: 47 (2007)*

**Heliports:** 30 (2007)

**Pipelines:** condensate/gas 9 km; gas 7,488 km; liquid petroleum gas 1,861 km; oil 7,883 km; refined products 6,422 km (2007)

**Railways:** *total: 63,221 km*  
*broad gauge: 46,807 km 1.676-m gauge (17,343 km electrified)*  
*narrow gauge: 13,290 km 1.000-m gauge (165 km electrified); 3,124 km 0.762-m gauge and 0.610-m gauge (2006)*

**Roadways:** *total: 3,316,452 km (includes 200 km of expressways) (2006)*

**Waterways:** 14,500 km  
*note: 5,200 km on major rivers and 485 km on canals suitable for mechanized vessels (2006)*

**Merchant marine:** *total: 501*  
*by type: bulk carrier 102, cargo 241, carrier 1, chemical tanker 19, container 13, liquefied gas 18, passenger 3, passenger/cargo 11, petroleum tanker 92, roll on/roll off 1*  
*foreign-owned: 12 (China 1, Germany 2, Hong Kong 1, UAE 6, UK 2)*  
*registered in other countries: 61 (Barbados 1, Comoros 2, Cyprus 2, Dominica 2, Liberia 2, Malta 2, Marshall Islands 1, Panama 27, Saint Kitts and Nevis 1, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines 7, Singapore 13, unknown 1) (2008)*

**Ports and terminals:** Chennai, Haldia, Jawaharal Nehru, Kandla, Kolkata (Calcutta), Mormugao, Mumbai (Bombay), New Mangalore, Vishakhapatnam

## Military India

**Military branches:** Army, Navy (includes naval air arm), Air Force (Bharatiya Vayu Sena), Coast Guard (2008)

**Military service age and obligation:** 16 years of age for voluntary military service; no conscription; women officers allowed in noncombat roles only (2008)

**Manpower available for military service:** *males age 16-49:* 301,094,084  
*females age 16-49:* 283,047,141 (2008 est.)

**Manpower fit for military service:** *males age 16-49:* 231,161,111  
*females age 16-49:* 236,633,962 (2008 est.)

**Manpower reaching militarily significant age annually:** *male:* 11,592,516  
*female:* 10,636,857 (2008 est.)

**Military expenditures:** 2.5% of GDP (2006)

Transnational Issues	India
<b>Disputes - international:</b>	<p>since China and India launched a security and foreign policy dialogue in 2005, consolidated discussions related to the dispute over most of their rugged, militarized boundary, regional nuclear proliferation, Indian claims that China transferred missiles to Pakistan, and other matters continue; various talks and confidence-building measures have cautiously begun to defuse tensions over Kashmir, particularly since the October 2005 earthquake in the region; Kashmir nevertheless remains the site of the world's largest and most militarized territorial dispute with portions under the de facto administration of China (Aksai Chin), India (Jammu and Kashmir), and Pakistan (Azad Kashmir and Northern Areas); India and Pakistan have maintained the 2004 cease fire in Kashmir and initiated discussions on defusing the armed stand-off in the Siachen glacier region; Pakistan protests India's fencing the highly militarized Line of Control and construction of the Baglihar Dam on the Chenab River in Jammu and Kashmir, which is part of the larger dispute on water sharing of the Indus River and its tributaries; UN Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) has maintained a small group of peacekeepers since 1949; India does not recognize Pakistan's ceding historic Kashmir lands to China in 1964; to defuse tensions and prepare for discussions on a maritime boundary, India and Pakistan seek technical resolution of the disputed boundary in Sir Creek estuary at the mouth of the Rann of Kutch in the Arabian Sea; Pakistani maps continue to show its Junagadh claim in Indian Gujarat State; discussions with Bangladesh remain stalled to delimit a small section of river boundary, to exchange territory for 51 Bangladeshi exclaves in India and 111 Indian exclaves in Bangladesh, to allocate divided villages, and to stop illegal cross-border trade, migration, violence, and transit of terrorists through the porous border; Bangladesh protests India's attempts to fence off high-traffic sections of the border; dispute with Bangladesh over New Moore/South Talpatty/Purbasha Island in the Bay of Bengal deters maritime boundary delimitation; India seeks cooperation from Bhutan and Burma to keep Indian Nagaland and Assam separatists from hiding in remote areas along the borders; Joint Border Committee with Nepal continues to examine contested boundary sections, including the 400 square kilometer dispute over the source of the Kalapani River; India maintains a strict border regime to keep out Maoist insurgents and control illegal cross-border activities from Nepal</p>

**Refugees and internally displaced persons:** *refugees (country of origin):* 77,200 (Tibet/China); 69,609 (Sri Lanka); 9,472 (Afghanistan)  
*IDPs:* at least 600,000 (about half are Kashmiri Pandits from Jammu and Kashmir) (2007)

**Trafficking in persons:** *current situation:* India is a source, destination, and transit country for men, women, and children trafficked for the purposes of forced labor and commercial sexual exploitation; internal forced labor may constitute India's largest trafficking problem; men, women, and children are held in debt bondage and face forced labor working in brick kilns, rice mills, agriculture, and embroidery factories; women and girls are trafficked within the country for the purposes of commercial sexual exploitation and forced marriage; children are subjected to forced labor as factory workers, domestic servants, beggars, and agriculture workers, and have been used as armed combatants by some terrorist and insurgent groups; India is also a destination for women and girls from Nepal and Bangladesh trafficked for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation; Indian women are trafficked to the Middle East for commercial sexual exploitation; men and women from Bangladesh and Nepal are trafficked through India for forced labor and commercial sexual exploitation in the Middle East  
*tier rating:* Tier 2 Watch List - India is on the Tier 2 Watch List for a fifth consecutive year for its failure to provide evidence of increasing efforts to combat human trafficking in 2007; despite the reported extent of the trafficking crisis in India, government authorities made uneven efforts to prosecute traffickers and protect trafficking victims; government authorities continued to rescue victims of commercial sexual exploitation and forced child labor and child armed combatants, and began to show progress in law enforcement against these forms of trafficking; a critical challenge overall is the lack of punishment for traffickers, effectively resulting in impunity for acts of human trafficking; India has not ratified the 2000 UN TIP Protocol (2008)

**Illicit drugs:** world's largest producer of licit opium for the pharmaceutical trade, but an undetermined quantity of opium is diverted to illicit international drug markets; transit point for illicit narcotics produced in neighboring countries and throughout Southwest Asia; illicit producer of methaqualone; vulnerable to narcotics money laundering through the hawala system; licit ketamine and precursor production