

## Country Profile: India

### General Information:

- India is located in South Asia.
- It is the seventh largest country in the world with the second largest population.
- The capital is New Delhi and the largest city is Mumbai.
- The official currency is the Indian rupee (INR).
- The official languages for India are Hindi and English, but there are 15 other regional languages. English is important for national, commercial, and political communication.
- The government type is a federal republic.
- In the west there is Pakistan, the northeast has China, Nepal, and Bhutan, to the east is Bangladesh and Myanmar.
- The body of water which surrounds India is the Indian Ocean in the south, Arabian Sea in the west, and the Bay of Bengal in the east.
- Natural resources for India consists of coal (the fourth largest reserve in the world), iron ore, limestone, chromites, natural gas, diamonds, manganese, mica, bauxite, petroleum, titanium ore, and arable land.
- The climate is temperate in the north, but it varies in the south from tropical to monsoon season.

### Economy:

India's economy is diverse; it incorporates traditional farming techniques, modern agriculture, manufacturing and a multitude of services. The agriculture products include rice, wheat, cotton, tea, sugarcane, and much more. The industrial sector includes chemical, food processing, steel, transportation equipment, mining, and others. India also exports petroleum goods, textile goods, engineering goods, and chemicals among other items. The service sector is comprised of the information technology, business process outsourcing, knowledge process outsourcing, telecommunication, retail and distribution.

India is considered a favorable country to conduct business because the language used to communicate with foreigners is English. In comparison to other parts of the world, India has the advantage of low employee cost. India has a substantial amount of skilled human resources.

### Culture Etiquette

#### Greetings:

Namaste is a common form of greeting among men and women, and it is also the common greeting used for formal and business meetings. A nod or slight bow is another form of greeting. In a formal or business meeting, the woman should initiate the contact, if at all. Indian women avoid contact with men in public situations. Hugs and kisses should be avoided. When greeting those with high status as in a religious leader or guru, one should touch the feet of the elder with the right hand, and then touch your chest. After this the palms are pressed together.

#### Communication Styles:

Indians prefer an indirect way of communicating. In order to be polite, Indians will tell you what you want to hear. Most Indians will never tell you "no." Beware of the head bobble which is a mixture between a shake and a nod. If they say "yes" to one of your questions while bobbling their head, then it mean "no".

*(Continued on Page 2)*

## Country Profile: India (cont'd)

### Personal Space, Touching, and Eye Contact:

In general, when speaking, the common distance between people is 3 or 3.5 feet. It is common to see men holding hands or arms around each other, which is a sign of friendship. Men and women do not show public display of affections. Touching among the opposite sex who is not related is considered flirting.

Continual eye contact is not the norm, especially a woman looking at a man. In a business meeting it is not unusual to keep eye contact, but it is odd to hold it intently for a while. Direct eye contact is becoming acceptable in cities, but not in all parts of the country. A foreigner visiting India should expect to be stared at, especially in rural areas.

### Time:

Indians have a relaxed view of time. It is considered to be eternal. Indians give up time freely. If there is an appointment, you should expect the party to arrive at least a half hour later. It is best to expect an hour delay, but you should be prompt within fifteen minutes.

### Taboos:

Lewd behavior and public displays of affection should be avoided. Do not touch people or objects with your shoes. Winking and whistling are frowned upon. Ears are considered sacred, so pulling or covering them is an insult.

## **Business Etiquette**

### Dress:

For men and women, the style of dressing is conservative. Men should wear conservative dark suits with shoes that are easy to slip on and off. Women should wear business suits, dresses, and blouses that are conservative. Dresses should be at an appropriate length, not showing too much skin. Short skirts, tight fitting clothes, and sleeveless shirts should be avoided. Casual attire is not appropriate for a first meeting.

### Titles and Business Cards:

When addressing someone use their professional title or Mister, Miss, or Mrs. and surname. One should wait and be invited to use someone's first name. Business cards are handed out after the handshake or initial greeting. When receiving or handing a business card, present it with the right hand.

### Meetings:

Arrive to meetings on time even though you might be kept waiting. A proposed agenda or other materials should be sent in advance. At the first meeting, business might not be discussed, but there will be plenty of small talk. Some topics that are safe to discuss include marital status, family, sports, education and personal background. Topics that should be avoided are religion, politics, the caste system, and the Kashmir region. When addressing someone in a meeting, defer to the most senior person.

### Negotiations:

Indians are non confrontational and value building relationships, so avoid confrontations, conflicts, and pressure tactics. Decisions are made by the senior person, and it takes time. Indians value indirect communication. They avoid using the word "no"; instead they would use, "maybe" or "it might be difficult".

### Gift Giving:

It is not necessary to present a gift on the first meeting, but if presented, it will be graciously accepted. Do not wrap gifts in black or white, but in red, green, or yellow. Avoid giving alcohol, leather, pigskin, or dog related gifts which can insult the host. Chocolates and flowers (not frangipani and white flowers) are safe gifts to give. Presents are not opened in front of the giver, but afterwards. If one decides to give money, make sure the amount is in odd numbers.

(Continued on Page 3)

## Country Profile: India (cont'd)

### Travel Information:

A person from a foreign country must receive a visa to enter India. It can either be a tourist visa or a business visa. The process to obtain a visa is done in the Consular's office, in the country of origin or current residence. If a tourist visa is granted, it is valid for either six months or up to ten years. The duration of the stay is limited to six months. The ten year tourist visa is available to United States citizens under a bilateral agreement. If a business visa is issued, it permits the visitor to engage in business related activities. Business visas are valid for six month or one or more years with multiple entries. The duration of the business visa is only for six months. Along with the application, a letter from the sponsoring company in India with information regarding the nature of the business, the duration of the stay, places and organizations that are going to be visited and a guarantee to meet maintenance expenses must also be submitted.

#### Sources:

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/in.html>

[http://www.hlbi.com/dbifiles/dbi\\_pdf/DBI%20India%20A4.pdf](http://www.hlbi.com/dbifiles/dbi_pdf/DBI%20India%20A4.pdf)

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