

***Dear Student,***

***Welcome to the “ Discover India” Program of Rai Foundation.***

*Rai Foundation is a philanthropic non-profit trust that address various socio-cultural concerns of India and its people. In the field of higher education, its mission is to provide practical, skill based and job oriented education to the youth. Its focus is on Excellence with Equity and Access to all those wanting a better life including providing massive scholarships and free education with lodging and boarding included to the underprivileged girls from across India and abroad. In the area of women empowerment, Rai Foundation takes up issues of women training and upliftment. In Public Policy it takes up key burning issues that affect public life and interest including advocacy. In Healthcare it supports research relating to hygiene and malnutrition. Rai Foundation and its associates have presence/educational institutions in over 40 cities in India and abroad.*

*Discover India Program is basically to appraise foreign students of what is happening in India on the economic front as well as help them understand our country culturally as they try to engage with India and the opportunities it offers to them. This is important as India integrates with the world and students would in one way or another in the professional careers come across dealing with India. The program has recieved accolades from the students of MIT, Stanford, Harvard, Yale and other universities . The program details are also given on our website [www.raifoundation.org](http://www.raifoundation.org). It can be custom designed to suit the needs of a particular visiting group.*

***This guide will provide you with some information about our country – history, culture, facts – as well as about our city, New Delhi. We hope it will act as a source of some interesting facets about india .***

***As you join the trip, we wish, you have a nice and profitable experience here in India, especially at Rai Foundation.***

***Yours,***

*Shilpa Sharma  
Sr.Manager – International Programs  
Rai Foundation  
India*

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## Part 1 - Our Country

### About India



**India**, officially the **Republic of India** is a country in South Asia. It is the seventh largest country by geographical area, the second most populous country, and the most populous democracy in the world. Bounded by the Indian Ocean on the south, the Arabian Sea on the west, and the Bay of Bengal on the east, India has a coastline of 7,517 kilometers (4,671 mi). It borders Pakistan to the west; China, Nepal, and Bhutan to the north-east; and Bangladesh and Burma to the east. India is in the vicinity of Sri Lanka, the Maldives, and Indonesia in the Indian Ocean.

Home to the Indus Valley Civilization and a region of historic trade routes and vast empires, the Indian subcontinent was identified with its commercial and cultural wealth for much of its long history. Four major world religions, Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism originated there, while Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam arrived in the first millennium common era and shaped the region's diverse culture. Gradually annexed by the British East India Company from the early eighteenth century and colonised by the United Kingdom from the mid-nineteenth century, India became a modern nation state in 1947 after a struggle for independence that was marked by widespread nonviolent resistance.

India is a parliamentary republic consisting of 28 states and 7 union territories. It has the world's twelfth largest economy at market exchange rates and the fourth largest in purchasing power. Economic reforms have transformed it into the second fastest growing large economy; however, it still suffers from high levels of poverty, illiteracy, and malnutrition. A pluralistic, multilingual, and multiethnic society, India is also home to a diversity of wildlife in a variety of protected habitats.



*Topographic map of India.*

### ***Geography***

India, the major portion of the Indian subcontinent, sits atop the Indian tectonic plate, a minor plate within the Indo-Australian Plate.

India's defining geological processes commenced seventy-five million years ago, when the Indian subcontinent, then part of the southern supercontinent Gondwana, began a northeastwards drift—lasting fifty million years—across the then unformed Indian Ocean. The subcontinent's subsequent collision with the Eurasian Plate and subduction under it, gave rise to the Himalayas, the planet's highest mountains, which now abut India in the north and the north-east. In the former seabed immediately south of the emerging Himalayas, plate movement created a vast trough, which, having gradually been filled with river-borne sediment, now forms the Indo-Gangetic Plain. To the west of this plain, and cut off from it by the Aravalli Range, lies the Thar Desert. The original Indian plate now survives as peninsular India, the oldest and geologically most stable part of India, and extending as far north as the Satpura and Vindhya ranges in central India. These parallel ranges run from the Arabian Sea coast in Gujarat in the west to the coal-rich Chota Nagpur Plateau in Jharkhand in the east. To their south, the remaining peninsular landmass, the Deccan Plateau, is flanked on the left and right by the coastal ranges, Western Ghats and Eastern Ghats respectively; the plateau contains the oldest rock formations in India, some over one billion years old. Constituted in such fashion, India lies to the north of the equator between 6°44' and 35°30' north latitude and 68°7' and 97°25' east longitude.

India's coast is 7,517 kilometers (4,671 mi) long; of this distance, 5,423 kilometers (3,370 mi) belong to peninsular India, and 2,094 kilometers (1,301 mi) to the Andaman, Nicobar, and Lakshadweep Islands. According to the Indian naval hydrographic charts,

the mainland coast consists of the following: 43% sandy beaches, 11% rocky coast including cliffs, and 46% mudflats or marshy coast.

Major Himalayan-origin rivers that substantially flow through India include the Ganges and the Brahmaputra, both of which drain into the Bay of Bengal. Important tributaries of the Ganges include the Yamuna and the Kosi, whose extremely low gradient causes disastrous floods every year. Major peninsular rivers whose steeper gradients prevent their waters from flooding include the Godavari, the Mahanadi, the Kaveri, and the Krishna, which also drain into the Bay of Bengal; and the Narmada and the Tapti, which drain into the Arabian Sea. Among notable coastal features of India are the marshy Rann of Kutch in western India, and the alluvial Sundarbans delta, which India shares with Bangladesh. India has two archipelagos: the Lakshadweep, coral atolls off India's south-western coast; and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, a volcanic chain in the Andaman Sea.

### *Climate*

India's climate is strongly influenced by the Himalayas and the Thar Desert, both of which drive the monsoons. The Himalayas prevent cold Central Asian katabatic winds from blowing in, keeping the bulk of the Indian subcontinent warmer than most locations at similar latitudes. The Thar Desert plays a crucial role in attracting the moisture-laden southwest summer monsoon winds that, between June and October, provide the majority of India's rainfall. Four major climatic groupings predominate in India: tropical wet, tropical dry, subtropical humid, and montane.

### *History*

Stone Age rock shelters with paintings at the Bhimbetka rock shelters in Madhya Pradesh are the earliest known traces of human life in India. The first known permanent settlements appeared over 9,000 years ago and gradually developed into the Indus Valley Civilization, dating back to 3300 BCE in western India. It was followed by the Vedic period, which laid the foundations of Hinduism and other cultural aspects of early Indian society, and ended in the 500s BCE. From around 550 BCE, many independent kingdoms and republics known as the Mahajanapadas were established across the country.



*Paintings at the Ajanta Caves in Aurangabad, Maharashtra, 6th century*

In the third century BCE, most of South Asia was united into the Maurya Empire by Chandragupta Maurya and flourished under Ashoka the Great. From the third century CE, the Gupta dynasty oversaw the period referred to as ancient India's Golden Age. Empires in Southern India included those of the Chalukyas, the Cholas and the Vijayanagara Empire. Science, engineering, art, literature, astronomy, and philosophy flourished under the patronage of these kings.

Following invasions from Central Asia between the tenth and twelfth centuries, much of North India came under the rule of the Delhi Sultanate, and later the Mughal Empire. Mughal emperors gradually expanded their empires to cover large parts of the subcontinent. However, in North-Eastern India, the dominant power was the Ahom kingdom of Assam, among the few kingdoms to have resisted Mughal subjugation.

From the sixteenth century, several European countries, including Portugal, the Netherlands, France, and the United Kingdom, started arriving as traders and later took advantage of the fractious nature of relations between the kingdoms to establish colonies in the country. By 1856, most of India was under the control of the British East India Company. A year later, a nationwide insurrection of rebelling military units and kingdoms, variously referred to as the India's First War of Independence or Sepoy Mutiny, seriously challenged the British Company's control but eventually failed. As a consequence, India came under the direct rule of the British Crown as a colony of the British Empire.



Mahatma Gandhi (right) with Jawaharlal Nehru 1937. Nehru would go on to become India's first prime minister in 1947.

During the first half of the twentieth century, a nationwide struggle for independence was launched by the Indian National Congress and other political organizations. In the 1920s and 1930, under a movement led by Mahatma Gandhi, characterized by the commitment to ahimsa, or non-violence, millions of protesters engaged in mass campaigns of civil disobedience. Finally, on 15 August 1947, India gained independence from British rule, but was partitioned with independent governments for the Dominion of India and the Dominion of Pakistan in accordance with the wishes of the Muslim League, to create a nation state along the lines of religion. Three years later, on 26 January 1950, India became a republic and a new constitution came into effect.

Since independence, India has suffered from religious violence, casteism and insurgencies in various parts, but has been able to control them through tolerance and constitutional reforms. Terrorism in India is also a major security problem, especially in

Jammu and Kashmir, North-east India and recently in major cities like Delhi and Mumbai, 2001 Indian Parliament attack being the most prominent one. India has unresolved territorial disputes with China, which in 1962 escalated into the Sino-Indian War; and with Pakistan, which resulted in wars in 1947, 1965, 1971, and 1999. India is a founding member of the Non-Aligned Movement and the United Nations (as part of British India). In 1974, India conducted an underground nuclear test. This was followed by five more tests in 1998, making India a nuclear state. Beginning in 1991, significant economic reforms have transformed India into one of the fastest-growing economies in the world, adding to its global and regional clout.



*The Bombay Stock Exchange, in Mumbai, is Asia's oldest and India's largest stock exchange.*

## **Economy**

For most of its post-independence history, India adhered to a quasi-socialist approach with strict government control over private sector participation, foreign trade, and foreign direct investment. However, since 1991, India has gradually opened up its markets through economic reforms and reduced government controls on foreign trade and investment. Foreign exchange reserves have risen from US\$5.8 billion in March 1991 to US\$308 billion on 4 July 2008, while federal and state budget deficits have decreased. Privatization of publicly-owned companies and the opening of certain sectors to private and foreign participation has continued amid political debate. India's GDP in terms of USD exchange-rate is US\$1.089 trillion. When measured in terms of purchasing power parity (PPP), India has the world's fourth largest GDP at US\$4.726 trillion. India's per capita income (nominal) is US\$977, while its per capita (PPP) is US\$2700.

With an average annual GDP growth rate of 5.5% for the past two decades, the economy is among the fastest growing in the world. India has the world's second largest labour force, with 516.3 million people, 60% of whom are employed in agriculture and related industries; 28% in services and related industries; and 12% in industry. Major agricultural crops include rice, wheat, oilseed, cotton, jute, tea, sugarcane, and potatoes. The agricultural sector accounts for 8% of GDP; the service and industrial sectors make up 54% and 18% respectively. Major industries include automobiles, cement, chemicals,

consumer electronics, food processing, machinery, mining, petroleum, pharmaceuticals, steel, transportation equipment, and textiles. Along with India's fast economic growth comes its growing demand for energy. According to the Energy Information Administration, India is the sixth largest consumer of oil and third largest consumer of coal.

Although the Indian economy has grown steadily over the last two decades; its growth has been uneven when comparing different social groups, economic groups, geographic regions, and rural and urban areas. Income inequality (in India is relatively small Gini coefficient: 36.8 in year 2004), though it has been increasing of late. Wealth distribution in India is fairly uneven, with the top 10% of income groups earning 33% of the income. Despite significant economic progress, a quarter of the nation's population earns less than the government-specified poverty threshold of \$0.40 per day. In 2004–2005, 27.5% of the population was living below the poverty line.

More recently, India has capitalised on its large pool of educated, English-speaking people, and trained professionals to become an important outsourcing destination for multinational corporations and a popular destination for medical tourism. India has also become a major exporter of software as well as financial, research, and technological services. Its natural resources include arable land, bauxite, chromite, coal, diamonds, iron ore, limestone, manganese, mica, natural gas, petroleum, and titanium ore.

In 2007, estimated exports stood at US\$140 billion and imports were around US\$224.9 billion. Textiles, jewellery, engineering goods and software are major export commodities. While crude oil, machineries, fertilizers, and chemicals are major imports. India's most important trading partners are the United States, the European Union, and China.

## ***CULTURE***

India's culture is marked by a high degree of syncretism and cultural pluralism. It has managed to preserve established traditions while absorbing new customs, traditions, and ideas from invaders and immigrants and spreading its cultural influence to other parts of Asia.



The Taj Mahal in Agra was built by Shah Jahan as memorial to wife Mumtaz Mahal. It is a UNESCO World Heritage Site considered to be of "outstanding universal value".

Indian architecture is one area that represents the diversity of Indian culture. Much of it, including notable monuments such as the Taj Mahal and other examples of Mughal architecture and South Indian architecture, comprises a blend of ancient and varied local traditions from several parts of the country and abroad. Vernacular architecture also displays notable regional variation.

Indian music covers a wide range of traditions and regional styles. Classical music largely encompasses the two genres – North Indian Hindustani, South Indian Carnatic traditions and their various offshoots in the form of regional folk music. Regionalised forms of popular music include filmi and folk music; the syncretic tradition of the bauls is a well-known form of the latter.

Indian dance too has diverse *folk* and *classical* forms. Among the well-known folk dances are the bhangra of the Punjab, the bihu of Assam, the chhau of West Bengal, Jharkhand and Orissa and the ghoomar of Rajasthan. Eight dance forms, many with narrative forms and mythological elements, have been accorded classical dance status by India's National Academy of Music, Dance, and Drama. These are: bharatanatyam of the state of Tamil Nadu, kathak of Uttar Pradesh, kathakali and mohiniyattam of Kerala, kuchipudi of Andhra Pradesh, manipuri of Manipur, odissi of Orissa and the sattriya of Assam.

Theatre in India often incorporates music, dance, and improvised or written dialogue. Often based on Hindu mythology, but also borrowing from medieval romances, and news of social and political events, Indian theatre includes the bhavai of state of Gujarat, the jatra of West Bengal, the nautanki and ramlila of North India, the tamasha of Maharashtra, the terukkuttu of Tamil Nadu, and the yakshagana of Karnataka.



The Mahabodhi Temple, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, at Bodhgaya in Bihar, is one of the four holy sites related to the life of the Lord Buddha, and particularly to the attainment of Enlightenment. The first temple was built by Emperor Asoka in the 3rd century BC, and the present temple dates from the 5th century BC or 6th centuries. It is one of the earliest Buddhist temples built entirely in brick, still standing in India, from the late Gupta period.

The Indian film industry is the largest in the world. Bollywood, based in Mumbai, makes commercial Hindi films and is the most prolific film industry in the world. Established traditions also exist in Bengali, Kannada, Malayalam, Marathi, Tamil, and Telugu language cinemas.

The earliest works of Indian literature were transmitted orally and only later written down. These included works of Sanskrit literature – such as the early Vedas, the epics Mahabharata and Ramayana, the drama Abhijñanasakuntalam (The Recognition of Sakuntala), and poetry such as the Mahakavya–T and the Tamil language Sangam literature. Among Indian writers of the modern era active in Indian languages or English, Rabindranath Tagore won the Nobel Prize in 1913.

Indian cuisine is characterized by a wide variety of regional styles and sophisticated use of herbs and spices. The staple foods in the region are rice (especially in the south and the east) and wheat (predominantly in the north). Spices originally native to the Indian subcontinent that are now consumed world wide include black pepper; in contrast, hot chili peppers, popular across India, were introduced by the Portuguese.

Traditional Indian dress varies across the regions in its colours and styles and depends on various factors, including climate. Popular styles of dress include draped garments such as sari for women and dhoti or lungi for men; in addition, stitched clothes such as salwar kameez for women and kurta-pyjama and European-style trousers and shirts for men, are also popular.

Many Indian festivals are religious in origin, although several are celebrated irrespective of caste and creed. Some popular festivals are Diwali, Thai Pongal, Holi, Onam, Vijayadasami, Durga Puja, Eid ul-Fitr, Bakr-Id, Christmas, Buddha Jayanti and Vaisakhi. India has three national holidays. Other sets of holidays, varying between nine and twelve, are officially observed in individual states. Religious practices are an integral part of everyday life and are a very public affair.

Traditional Indian family values are highly respected, although urban families now prefer the nuclear family structure due to the socio-economic constraints imposed by traditional joint family system.

## **Understanding Indians – Philosophy, Attitude & Etiquettes**

When McDonald's decided to try breaking into the Indian marketplace, they thoroughly studied the moral and culinary food preferences before coming into the market with clever strategies. In this vast country, where tastes and diets differ greatly from region to region, the company devised not only the vegetarian menus described earlier, but also menus suitable to the various Indian customer preferences: no beef for Hindus, no pork for Muslims, but traditional Big Macs in the parts of India where the majority of people eat beef. For vegetarians, the burgers aren't just meatless: they're prepared in "vegetarian only" kitchens with Indian flavors and eggless mayonnaise. McDonald's had recognized the essential truth: The Indian identity thrives on difference and multiplicity, defying homogeneity at every level. Travel as little as fifty miles and everything changes: religious and spiritual beliefs, languages, dialects, dressing styles, mannerisms, customs, food—everything. In other countries, even in parts of the United States, this kind of diversity can be a formula for suspicion, mistrust, prejudice, and the social ills that go along with those mind-sets. To some the diversity might be a warning that India is too complicated, confusing, or muddled—a place too layered even to think about trying to understand or do business with. In truth, though, this diversity has become one of the singular strengths of the country, glue holding the nation together, and an essential piece of the puzzle for any foreign visitor to understand.

### **A Rainbow of Contradictions**

Modern India takes pride in continuing its tradition of "unity in diversity." Every piece of paper currency, from the ten-rupee note to the thousand-rupee bill, has language printed on it in all (over a dozen) official scripts. Henry Higgins, Shaw's fictional linguist from *Pygmalion* and *My Fair Lady*, sharpened his skills in India, where the folks in neighboring towns speak different dialects, and an official tally puts the number of major dialects at more than fifteen hundred. Even minor restaurants serve up a range of cuisines from at least four regions of the country; women drape sumptuous six to nine-yard saris in no fewer than a dozen different ways; the variety of indigenous textiles, art, and crafts seems endless; and Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists, Jains, Sikhs, Parsees, Christians, and Jews can be seen offering prayers in their own unique, traditional manner. India thrives on contradictions like no place else; any visitor, tourist, or business representative can expect the unexpected. Relying on a trusted Indian friend to act as buffer and to protect one from culture shock is helpful in this sometimes highly confusing country. At your hotel, they may not serve beef because of the reverence Hindus hold for the cow. Yet you may hear the conversation of a Hindu man from Kerala seated at a nearby table telling his wife on a cell phone that he will return home tomorrow and would prefer a beefsteak for dinner. In the morning you might run into a purist who would not marry anyone related to him through any of the ten previous generations—a common requirement in north India. In the evening, you might meet another purist from the south of India who

would only marry his daughter to one of her uncles. In a temple, where you might expect more familiar rules and behavior, you could be truly shocked to witness a sadhu (a holy man who customarily wears orange) amble in nonchalantly, completely nude. However, your Indian guide will hardly see any cause for panic. Rather than calling the police, he may instead prostrate himself at the sadhu's feet.

Chances are your host will not even stop to justify or explain what you have seen; even if he's well educated, he will likely have consulted his horoscope before stepping out to face the day, and will later join the queue for the blessings of a holy man. And if you have an accident or fall ill, don't be surprised when the urbane doctor tells you to pray for health instead of giving you medicine. Historically, Indian identity arises out of a complex skein of many strands—Islamic invasions, British subjugation, Christian conversions, Hindu tolerance, Sikh orientation to service, Sufi inspiration, Buddhist dedication without ritual, and many more woven into a friendly and intelligent tapestry of culture. Somehow India itself, like the henna foliage that grows here in profusion, always comes out with better colors after each grinding—with the result of an unmatched blend of beauty, courage, resilience, tolerance, optimism, and an ever-readiness to adapt and change.

***“Every time I come to India,” says J. C. Carrière, the Indophile French writer, “I know before the plane lands that I am going to see something that I have never seen before—maybe a minor detail, sometimes the behavior of someone. A new place, a new concept. Which is not the case when I go to New York, for instance. I am not expecting to be surprised. I know the country and that everything follows certain rules. Here, it changes, all the time.”***

This is even true for me, though you would think nothing could surprise me in my own home country. But just the other day, I was visiting a palace-turned-hotel with a guest, and we saw three people atop a tree. They were bent over to examine the leaves. When asked what they were up to, they dutifully replied that they were “tree leaf cleaners.” In India, we care about our trees—but I had no idea the concern went that far. Still, that unexpected occupation fits the pattern. Everything in India seems to come in an almost limitless variety. Detailed treatises on love, duty, drama, music, economics, or even the art of stealing, list every possible aspect of their subjects. From creating millions of yogic postures to categorizing melodic scales to suit every hour, every season, every mood, the Indian mind is forever searching. In literature this search takes the form of the classic plot-within-a-plot strategy of the Indian epic; in the classical performance arts, the endless ways in which even fingers and eyeballs are made to dance. Years of colonial rule have left lasting imprints on Indian society. The waiter at a five-star hotel will serve the foreigner first and bestow a wider smile. The CEO's secretary will give you the earliest appointment while a poorer Indian cousin might have been waiting for weeks. Speaking fluent English gives instant status as “educated” and “elite.” Even sixty years after independence, “Queen's English” rules in administrative correspondence. Centuries of foreign rule have made Indians passive recipients of orders and edicts. For Americans, the passive patience of Indians can be quite baffling; some consider it a form of mystical Oriental fatalism. You will find Indians waiting patiently for hours to be attended to at a government office, a hospital, a bank, even a post office. Fortunately, the younger

generation is faring much better—working with greater confidence, overcoming the shackles of the British era to regain pride and poise once again. Indophile Dominique Lapierre remains convinced that it is “the Indian’s capacity to adjust and overcome [that] is driving its society forward.” When Mumbai was completely flooded like New Orleans, it took the city less than twentyfour hours to get the power on, albeit through short-circuiting many safety nets and practices. From beggars to billionaires, from saints to charlatans, from rickshaws to Jaguars, from cows to cafés, from shanties to palaces, from perfection-seeking yogis to mediocre consumerist yuppies, the profusion of contrasts in India is mind-boggling indeed. For companies interested in this market of a billion people, or any individual interested in grasping the complexities of this fascinating mix of cultures, here’s a short primer on the nature of the Indian character.

### **The Multitasking Indian**

As an undergraduate, I used to see the waiters at our Delhi University café—usually overcrowded with rushed, demanding students—relying on another amazing and amusing talent common among Indian workers, a talent I suspect grows out of cleverly overcoming the disadvantage of the millions who need to work but who cannot read or write. These waiters would take individual orders from ten or a dozen customers at one table, writing nothing down, then stop at other packed tables and take their orders as well, yet deliver every dish correctly. Unable to use pad and pencil, they have over generations developed memories that would put the rest of us to shame. (I think I have spotted one aspect of that memory talent that has become part of every Indian’s heritage. In the United States, phone numbers are written and spoken in small groups of digits that are easily remembered: 212-555-1927. In India, the phone numbers have eleven or twelve digits, but you see them on advertising posters all over the country written in a solid block: 1124184719, for example. I think Indians have developed the ability to see a number like that and almost instantly commit the entire string to memory, a talent we have somehow acquired from our illiterate brethren.) Another unexpected talent shared by many Indians frequently gives me a laugh: I love to watch the amazement of foreigners when they come across a worker such as a passenger agent at an Indian Airlines check-in counter. They see one lady dividing her attention among a flock of anxious, animated customers who crowd around her as she simultaneously juggles ticketing for one person at her computer while handing another’s over-baggage issue and responding accurately and helpfully to the queries of several of the others squeezing into the space in front of her counter. Standing patiently in line for your turn at the counter is virtually unheard of in India, because it’s unnecessary. These inherent abilities for multitasking, multiprocessing, and diverse thinking—reflections of our diverse multicultural environment—are strengths that contribute to making India a talent hub. The spiritual and cultural heritage of the Indian people empowers them with an innate sense of action to deal with all kinds of challenges and situations—ability greatly valued in the business world. This multitasking talent often evokes amusing reactions from others. I’ve sat in business negotiation meetings in Japan unaccompanied by any associates, where I would deal with one of the Japanese team on finance, another on manufacturing, others on marketing, technology, and machinery. For an Indian, this multitasking is an everyday ability. The Japanese, looking dumbfounded, would always

ask why I had not brought a team with me. These abilities have become genetically ingrained in all of us.

### **The Caste System**

The much-rallied-against caste system is not a part of Hinduism— even Muslims and Christians in India have it. Started as an Indian social system of harmoniously aligning different talents in society, the original plan was not to create hierarchy but to make room for all kinds of individual competencies: Brahmins (priests) doing their duty to guide the spiritual evolution of society through their example of following the righteous path; the warriors and kings doing their duty as protectors; the merchants and traders providing goods to all; and the laboring class providing services and support for society's functioning. This system provided equity for all and was not exploitive at any level. Over time, this well-functioning system was corrupted by a grab for power and privilege, especially by the priests and kings, leading over the years to the caste system of today— made even worse when politicians stir resentments with “caste-based politics.” Though the caste system was clearly to have been rendered illegal by the Indian constitution in 1950, it still survives. The caste system flourished for centuries, defining the religious and social fabric of Indian society. Later another category evolved: the “untouchables”— mainly relegated to work that involved cleaning up filth and excrement, leading to the attitude that for an upper-class individual to get anywhere near people of these castes would be contaminating or polluting.

In 1935, the British government prepared a list of all socially deprived classes, with the aim of increasing their representation in legislature and government jobs, referring to them in classic governmentese as “Scheduled Castes.” This label is still used in all government records. In the 1990s, many self-aware individuals from these castes began referring to themselves as Dalits (the oppressed), and the name has largely stuck in popular use. Another label for people at the bottom of the social hierarchy is “OBCs”— which, believe it or not, stands for “Other Backward Classes,” a leftover from the British Raj. The term actually refers to any group discriminated against in their own region of the country; in regions where they are in the minority, even Brahmins can be OBCs. Over the centuries, massive oppressions of the Scheduled Castes have forced many lower-caste Hindus to resort to converting to another religion—Christianity, Buddhism, or Islam—in hopes of escaping the prejudices and oppression of the “untouchable” tag. A recent trend shows thousands of lower-caste Dalits routinely attending mass ceremonies to convert. In one such ceremony in October 2006, Joseph D'Souza, president of the Dalit Freedom Network, told the BBC that “I think it's important to understand that this is a cry for human dignity, it's a cry for human worth.” In fact, D'Souza himself is a Christian convert. But even in such cases, experiences that have been made public have shown that after conversion, the Dalits' lot has not bettered substantially. While prejudices certainly remain, as they do against blacks in America, Dalits are by law given preference, with twenty to thirty percent of jobs reserved for them in government and educational institutions, and affirmative action in their favor being insisted upon even in the private sector. Today even at the lowest levels of society, people understand the law and are fighting back. In October 2006, in Chandan Nagar village in the northern border state of

Bihar, Dalit women launched a protest to reinstate their right to worship. Their anger was targeted at the local priest of the temple, who refused Dalits entry into the temple premises and threw away their offerings to God. In this case, thanks to the support of the local administration, these Dalit women were successful in removing the priest from his office, and a Dalit was appointed as the head of the temple committee. The example in Nagar demonstrates that the situation is improving with a political and social awakening, as the Dalits and OBCs are becoming aware of their human rights. Yet eradication of the tiered society of India is not going to happen rapidly; nearly sixty years after the caste system was legally abolished, it continues to define the lives of millions of Indians who are, incredibly, divided into more than a few thousand castes and subcastes. The caste system leaves India saddled with one of its many contradictions: a society surging ahead to take its place as one of the world's great economic powers, while stuck with a social system that is like something out of the dark ages.

### **The Dedication to Service**

India's growing stature globally as a service economy is no fluke. The ethos of service is firmly ingrained in the Indian way of life, inasmuch as service to others is considered a means to attain one's own salvation. It is not uncommon to see the well-to-do distributing cooked food, fruit, clothes, or money on festival days and even on special days of the week. The temples of the Sikhs—the community most known for its commitment to service—feed millions of poor Indians every day free of cost. The huge communal kitchens is kept up by generous donations from people in the local area. India is also the land of saints and mystics—gurus—who lead thousands of different spiritual organizations. The man I consider my own guide and guru, Sai Baba, runs a charitable organization funded by private donations. The organization has built colleges offering value-based education, and hospitals providing one-hundred-percent free services to poor people. It has even brought drinking water to the parched lands of the Anantpur District. Spiritual masters occupy a central place in every Indian household and community. This informal spiritual sector provides not just food but hope as well to the millions of poor, in a country that has never provided a state-run social security net. Whatever the motivation, service to society is seen as a means to serve the self by bettering one's own Karma and expanding one's own heart and consciousness. In fact, such is the pull of the ethic of service and charity that it is not surprising to find even beggars in India bidding to improve their next incarnation by giving away a sizable fraction of their "incomes." Temples here receive a greater percentage of funds from donations made by the people in remote rural villages than from those in the cities.

### **Why the Have-Not's of India Don't Envy the Haves**

Diversity in India has not given rise to the kind of multiculturalism espoused by the West. Whereas in the United States, policies upholding multiculturalism aim at the ideal of equality for all, in India the contention is not so much of equality among different cultural strands but rather acceptance of the other and the recognition of different social realities. When in India, you never need to be "politically correct"; you can voice your opinion freely. It is through this understanding of another person's reality that the haves and the have-nots deal with one another, in an unsentimental sort of a way: the empathetic CEO

might draw ambitious plans for affirmative action for the poor in his neighborhood but may not offer a penny to the roadside leper. Likewise the street kids may implore you one minute with pity-soliciting looks and in the next minute pluck out a flower from their on sale wares, offering it free in admiration for a pretty girl.

### **The Vedanta**

The Indian mind-set mirrors the complexity of India herself. An Indian can hardly be reduced to a single linguistic or national identity. Indians and Americans share a unifying spiritual heritage that espouses respect for diversity and peaceful coexistence through means of mutual respect, accommodation, flexibility, and adaptability. The Indian has remarkable composure when confronted with extremely different ways of praying and living; all contradictions are held together in the protective lap of parreligious tradition. The school of thought that Indians call “Vedanta” provides the strong glue that cements all levels and corners of the diverse Indian society into one, even as the modernizing currents of material growth take hold. Understanding the essence of what is meant by Vedanta is fundamental to understanding the Indian mind. The Vedanta is the world’s most ancient philosophy (though in some ways it can seem downright postmodern). It is utterly accepting of pluralism and multiplicity, minus any dogma whatsoever. Vedanta carries the essential teachings of the Vedas, the basis of Sanatan Dharma, now called Hinduism. The underlying beliefs of Vedanta are that every human is a reflection of Godhood, the supreme energy. Therefore, all religions, beliefs, and perspectives of Truth are equally valid. The Vedanta says that we humans—unlike animals that are on lower rung of consciousness— have the possibility, in this life and in next reincarnations, of either realizing our innate divinity or falling from the ladder of consciousness, through our own Karma. The energy of beings, Vedanta says, cannot be restricted to limited individual egos. Humans carry in them the infinite energy of the universe. Just as a drop of water shares the same reality as that of the ocean with which it merges, so, too, the human soul has only to realize its inherent divinity, by removing the veil of illusory existence— the day-to-day level of consciousness—through any of the various paths of yoga (which means “union” with the Ultimate). In the United States, yoga is largely accepted as a physical activity—with focus primarily on its challenging postures and weight reducing effects. But in India, yoga contains the entire menu of realization—its practice here must traverse the physical, emotional, and mental “sheaths” to ultimately bring out the realization of the hidden divine core within each of us. Seeking this core, this center point of balance—for our body, emotions, actions, and reflection—is the very aim of sustained yogic practice. This yogic realization is attained when the individual soul is plugged into the infinite source of energy and a connection is established. Only then are we liberated from dualistic perceptions of misery/happiness, mine/thine, life/death. Indians view death as a continuation of life: despite the demise of the physical body, the subtle life force, the soul, lives on. Just as we shed childhood to enter youth, and youth to enter old age, in this same way we shed old age to enter death, and step into rebirth once again, until ultimately the soul is “realized” and attains liberation by merging with the infinite Source of all creation. In Vedanta, your “realization” is the only Truth to seek: no otherworldly God to impress, no other Truth to attain beyond yourself. Vedanta, then, is not a religion at all. It is an all-embracing and emancipating view and way of life. The multiplicity of gods and deities often makes the foreigner think of the nontheistic

Hinduism as being polytheistic. Yet these images are nothing but man's way of getting the idea of divinity down to his level.

Swami Vivekananda (1863–1902), one of the most famous spiritual leaders of the philosophies of Vedanta, said, “If a person wants to drink milk, he uses a cup, as he cannot drink it directly from the source. Idols are nothing but symbols through which divinity can be comprehended. An idol helps undeveloped minds to grasp high spiritual truths.” Indians will sanctify anything—cattle or stone—if it helps them understand a higher truth. Anyone can be Vedantic, whether he worships a deity or not. He needs to realize his own higher nature—by walking any of the existing yogic paths, or even by inventing another one that suits his sensibility better. The diversity of religious faiths and yogic paths of India reflects this continuous search of Indians for truth through whatever route seems to work for the individual. Unlike the Christian concept of man as sinner, Hindus consider man divine. In contrast to the Islamic faith, nothing is pagan or blasphemous in the Indian sphere; the most daring of spiritual traditions are tried, tested and perfected here. If you travel from West Bengal to Tamil Nadu, it is like going to a totally different country. The people don't dress the same, eat the same, or speak the same language. But they all know the Mahabharata. Whereas if you go from France to Germany, there's nothing in common, not even an epic. In that sense, epics like the Mahabharata are the invisible cement that binds India into one. For us, it was a great surprise to see how cohesive this cement actually is. Even Muslims in India know the Mahabharata and refer to it. —J. C. Carrière, French writer/director

### **Dharma and Karma—the Twin Pillars**

In India you don't need to mind your Ps and Qs. Just mind your Ds and Ks: Dharma and Karma, the twin pillars of Vedanta.

#### **Dharma**

“Dharma” broadly means your spiritual duty to the Self in accordance with your nature, station, and situation in life. To follow your human Dharma means to be guided by your higher nature, given your circumstances. An older person's Dharma may be different from that of a younger man; a rich man's different from that of a beggar. Dharma can broadly be described as one's Purpose and Duty in Life—the search for one's unity with God through the practice of “right conduct” in day-to-day life, upholding the “larger good.” But right conduct, in the Vedantic sense, does not carry the dualistic sense of right conduct in contrast to wrong conduct. Rather, right conduct is characterized by listening to the inner voice of your conscience.

Dharma, for the Indian, means doing the “right” thing as one sees it—not necessarily in an absolute moral or ethical sense as is so often the case in the West. Importantly, one person's right action, arising from his Dharmic impulsion, may be different from another's, or even at cross-purposes with it, but that is precisely the point: in playing out our respective Dharma, dictated by our innate and inherited sense of duty and call of conscience, we all end up acting as the appropriate conduits for the Creative Force, God, to flow through us; in this way, we play out, with our respective roles, the larger plan of Life. If an Indian were to choose between right actions as espoused by law and as

dictated by his conscience, chances are he will choose the latter. This stance of allowing each person to act in accordance with his respective conscience is key, then, to the Indian acceptance of multiple realities. Nothing shocks, because there is no single ideal of Reality and Truth to uphold. In fact, for the Indian, Reality by definition implies the acceptance of Multiplicity and Relativism, of a diverse set of people, their circumstances, their conditions, their responses.

### **Karma**

“Karma” refers to your actions in this life and, for an Indian, actions in your previous lives. To follow one’s Karma means to engage in action for the sake of the action itself, without expectation of the result. It means a hundred percent involvement, with zero percent attachment. This balance means accepting that one cannot control results because results emerge only as the sum total of a lot of other influences—our Karma, someone else’s Karma, the land’s Karma, the earth’s Karma, our previous generation’s Karma. Take 9/11 or Katrina in New Orleans, for example: devastation wreaked havoc and suffering among innocent people through no fault of theirs. In India, we’d say they were meant to bear a Karmic debt. The universe, Indians consider, never retains anything or takes any energy, good or bad. It only gives back what we humans have given it from time to time in terms of positive or negative energy. As mentioned, the terms Dharma and Karma are understood and practiced by all—educated and the illiterate, of every faith. The Christian maidservant will wail about her earlier bad Karma if her alcoholic husband beats her every night; a Sikh woman will stoically endure the death of her young child in a road accident, taking her suffering to be a result of her previous bad Karma; and the rich Jain trader will thank his accumulated bank balance of good Karma over previous lives for present fortunes, and he’ll do good deeds—building hospitals or temples, offering free food—to keep intact his “bank balance” of good Karma. If Karma makes Indians accept all kinds of things, it also drives them to engage in action on their own, uncomplaining about lack of this or that. A European friend visiting Varanasi, the spiritual sanctuary of India, remarked to me that in India even the poorest of people are always busy doing something, not waiting for a miracle to just happen. So if the Vedanta, Dharma, and Karma are fundamental in the landscape of every Indian, how do they actually translate into attitudes of daily life?

## **Key Indian Attitudes**

### **Individualism: the Space for Community**

Belgian-born artist and writer Henri Michaux (1899–1984) observed with great insight in his Oriental-travel memoir, *A Barbarian in Asia*, that a “good” Hindu hardly worries about any other than his own salvation. The Indian ethos of the individual soul’s liberation from the endless cycle of birth and death does indeed create an extreme preoccupation with the development of the self, in a rather independent and at times extreme sort of way. Buddha left his wife for the jungles without whispering a word (the beautiful poem “Yashodhara,” by Maithili Sharan Gupta, captures the pain of the deserted wife’s plight). Yet the Indian brand of individualism lacks the rigid frontier between “me” and “him.” In the United States, for instance, a person alone at home would say, “I’m alone”; in India, “No one is home” would probably mean your uncles,

aunts, cousins, and grandparents are out for lunch, leaving you and your parents and your siblings unaccompanied and therefore “alone” (!). Similarly, while an American woman would meet her doctor even without her husband, her Indian counterpart would be accompanied by husband, brother, mother, and daughter, at the very least. Whatever would be considered “other” in the West—anyone other than oneself—are all assimilated in the Indian’s “relational individualism.” The Westerner considers the individual himself as the seat of identity; Indian individualism thrives on links with the family and the community. In the United States, where one would just call 911 upon witnessing a road accident, a similar event on Indian roads, no matter in which part of the country, will draw people to the site of the accident in no time. And by the time the police arrive, the patient will have been driven to the hospital by some Samaritans, who would have paid the admission fee, called up the relatives using the victim’s cell phone, and driven off to work. (See any Bollywood flick and you will notice that the police always arrive after the situation is well under control.) And Indians don’t just reach out in moments of crisis. If you’re passing a village in your Jeep and are looking for some water, in just a matter of minutes you will be offered what you need by a villager; though he may earn only twenty dollars a day he will miss work in order to provide you with a meal, even if it means using food his family needs, and will refuse any payment.

### **Joint Families: Daily Dose of Excitement**

An average Indian household will have at least three generations living in it. In rural areas, separate bedrooms for couples are uncommon. But the couples don’t seem to mind. They deal with this issue just as they might deal with any other. Of course, in some cases living together is the decision of a traditional family with close ties; in other cases it has more to do with the family members not being able to afford separate housing. (Or sometimes they’re waiting for a property title dispute to be settled by the courts—which could take a lifetime.) The Indian, conscious of tradition, is at all times ready to build a relationship with family, community, and society. Even if the relationships are a far cry from being perfect (mostly the case in today’s tormented times), the Indian will hardly feel torn over it: in the morning, he will bow to touch the feet of a senior business mentor who is “brother” to him, yet be seen battling out a vicious court case with the same man in the afternoon; he will enjoy a convivial dinner with his siblings, parents, nephews, and nieces, even exchange gifts at festivals, and yet prattle on among his friends about all his dislikes of and frictions with his family members.

### **Privacy in India**

A foreign author observes: “There is very little privacy in an Indian household, nor does it seem to be missed or much desired. Indians as a rule appear to have less developed privacy needs than do Americans, and usually miss the bustling human contact. . . .” If staying with an Indian host, know that at the end of the very warm visit—you have been fed to no end, asked details about your personal life, advised on the color of your tie—you, too, will have been assimilated into the family as a son, brother, or sister. Consider this a compliment; this means they like you and will keep their doors always open for you—just as they would for their family members.

And no need to thank your foster family; they're doing you no favors—they consider this as their least duty, their Dharma. That brings us to the itchy issue of privacy about personal matters. If you're coming to India to attend a friend's wedding, expect to be asked, "Are you married?" by graying grandmas, elegant ladies, little menaces, cousins of the bride and groom. I pose the same question to women candidates at job interviews, since a married woman is much more likely to quit because of family responsibilities, and no one stands on the right to privacy. Unlike Westerners, Indians have not inherited the idea of privacy as essential. This difference may explain why even elite Indians in swanky sedans roll down their windows to smilingly ask passersby for directions, even if they have a detailed city map in their hand. They need the reassurance of the "bustling human contact."

Many a foreigner has lamented the "typically Indian" disrespect for waiting in line and the obsessive predilection for descending like a nuclear cloud on any single window counter. An American friend visiting the Ranthambore Wildlife Sanctuary was at a loss for words when he discovered that the Indian drivers, instead of simply forming a line and smoothly driving in one at a time, would completely jam the entry gate with their taxis, advancing into the slightest space available between the bumper of the car in front and the headlights of the one behind.

But this problem was not just about the lack of queue temperament. What completely stumped our friend was the fact that this problem of hysterical clogging was not an exception: it occurred every single day, with the agency with the same set of seventeen drivers who had escorted tourists daily for God knows how many years. These drivers know each other like family: they play cards as they sit huddled under the shade of a tree, ogling in unison at the same short-skirted foreign woman, and yet drive out the next morning in their taxis and screech and bellow at one another at the entry gate. Indians seem, then, to be at home with mayhem. The crowd is their energy source. In public, the Indian is ever ready to forge an instant relationship without seeking the promise of its continuity—offering eye contact to the person next to them at the railway ticket counter, addressing a stranger as "sister" or "brother"—rickshaw puller, milkman, vegetable vendor, grocer, waiter, peon, and watchman are "brothers" to all. (This custom is particularly useful for a foreigner who has just been overcharged or cheated by a man who seemed to be trustworthy because his English was good enough to give him the air of being upper-class and prosperous: For help, call out to any illiterate, addressing him as "brother"—or even better, using the Hindi word, "bhaiya"—and you'll get back much more than you expected, resolving the problem with the man who cheated you, and perhaps even being provided lunch and practical tips for the culturally challenged.)

### **Indian Communication**

In many households it is not unusual to find under one roof a Punjabi father, a mother from Uttar Pradesh, a cook from Bihar, a maid from Kerala, and a daughter studying at a Christian convent school. Indians live and deal with diversity of languages, accents, rituals, and more from their first day on in the world. A Frenchman only needs to be able

to speak, read, write, and understand French; in England, only English. In India, however, there is nothing like a unifying “Indian language,” only a profusion of languages. Even couples from across cultures (a Malayalee married to a Punjabi, say) do not converse in their respective mother tongues, and their offspring often inherit English as their mother tongue. Adaptability and flexibility are built into the psyche from the very start. That’s the latitude of the Indian mind. Even a local postman (who may have finished only the equivalent of middle school) can decipher the most cryptic of clues hidden in among the mysterious accents, phonetics, and spellings of the letters he is in charge of delivering; one local letter carrier had an envelope in his stack addressed to “Science Tipon College, New Delhi.” But there is no such place. With little waste of time, he deduced that it was actually meant for a New Delhi college called St. Stephen’s. The flexible, problem solving Indian mind at work.

### **Are Indians Rude?**

Modern Mumbai was recently ranked the rudest city in the world, punching right in the solar plexus all claims to Indian “service orientation.” Upset Indians strongly challenged the survey’s findings and upheld the people of Mumbai (“Mumbaikars”) as friendly, polite, approachable, and helpful.

German Indologist Max Müller understood even back in the late 1800s what it is that Westerners see as rudeness. His research led him to conclude that what Hindus show is not rudeness but strength. The ancient Hindu’s emphasis on courteous speech springs from the Hindu’s view that rudeness of speech is a sign of bad breeding and lack of knowledge. Even today, Indians from all backgrounds value hospitality, generosity, service, altruism, and courtesy.

Television commercial producer Prahlad Kakkar, interviewed in an article for the BBC, explains this difference in opinion as due to the Western criteria used to assess politeness in India (or anywhere in Asia, for that matter). Included in the judging was whether people opened doors for others in public buildings, whether they helped pick up papers dropped on a busy street, and whether a shopkeeper said thank you when a purchase—big or small—was made. Kakkar rightly concludes that the reason for the poor score of Asian cities on the politeness scale is due to cultural differences. For instance, regarding the criterion of saying thank you after a purchase, Indians (and other Asians too) consider it an important part of a transaction, but their expression of it may be nonverbal, like smiling, nodding the head, bowing slightly, or making the gesture of Namaskar (hands folded in the prayer position). Another author points out, “When an Indian tells you, ‘Give your passport,’ or, ‘Stand there in that line,’ without the usual courtesy of ‘please,’ he or she isn’t being rude. Most Indian languages have no specific word for please; it is expressed in the verb itself when using the polite form of address, and the tone of the instruction often conveys an implied ‘please’ that might easily be missed by a Westerner but would be clear to any Indian.”

Australian Simon Hildebrand, who has been the country manager in India for an Australian warehousing and transportation company and is currently being posted to Korea, would also disagree with the survey’s findings; he says, “When I go [to Korea], I

would like to take some bits of [India] with me. I would like to take the openness, [the] willingness to learn and listen, with me. This is not something found in other cultures around the world. And that is what makes India, more specifically Mumbai, a pleasant place to live in.”

### **Doing Business in India: Tuning in to the Etiquette**

Professor Mary Munter, of the Tuck School, Dartmouth College, and author of the popular *Guide to Managerial Communication*, while delivering a guest lecture at our Media College in New Delhi, talked about the respective strengths of Indians and Americans. Indians, Munter said, are more skilled than Americans: they speak more languages; they tend to be more open-minded and accepting; and they carry the spiritual dimension. Americans, on the other hand, have mastered the balance between the extremes of aggressiveness and submissiveness, and are more organized and pragmatic. Another view comes from Ranjan ji Sinha, an Indian entrepreneur and a CEO of Summit HR Worldwide, an outsourcing company located in California’s Silicon Valley. “Americans have, unlike Indians, an effective way to think out of the box that I would like my Indian brothers to learn,” he says. “For too long we have been taught to do as we were told. It’s time to think in forward tense.” Indian-born professor Abhijit Banerjee, of MIT’s Sloan School of Management, who is also a personal friend of mine, observed that the strength of Americans lies in their being by and large straightforward and blunt, with little respect for formalities and rituals. He says wryly that Indians, who have centuries of Eastern customs and philosophies as their cultural and intellectual foundation, don’t understand that Americans don’t understand Indians at all. In his view, Americans don’t grasp why the whole world doesn’t see life and do business the way Americans do; their attitude is, “Why do foreigners have to be so complicated?”

So, given the gaps of communication a firsttime American businessman or businesswoman may be faced with when doing business in India, here is a ready reference:

### **A Short List of Practical Tips for Doing Business in India**

**Learn “Indian Standard Time.”** For North Americans, Europeans, and Japanese who are accustomed to following schedules by the clock and being punctual, the cavalier manner in which Indians treat time comes as a rude shock. An hour late for an important business meeting is no big deal, as Indians set their own time, giving Greenwich Mean Time a run for its money. One definition of Indian Standard Time is “an hour late, a day late, or never.”

**Have patience.** Even important business meetings in India will more often than not begin with a gush of small talk—including remarks on the weather and inquiries about the welfare of your family. You could also show similar respect for your Indian counterpart’s family to build a rapport. Relationships are important in the Indian context.

**Think twice before offering to shake hands with a woman.** Be careful about shaking hands when meeting an Indian female business colleague for the first time. Wait for the first move from her side. Although in modern business circles the trend is fast changing,

until lately, out of respect for women, most men would not expect to shake hands. Instead, the custom is to offer the Indian greeting “Namaste” (nuh-MAHS-tay).

**It’s not just about money.** Indians want to recognize the value in any business engagement, in addition to money, of course. Politeness, honesty, and sincerity will go a long way in paving the path for striking up a business deal.

**Be tactful.** Aggressive behavior in business dealings is frowned upon by Indians, who consider aggression in any form as a precursor to more arm-twisting in future. Smile and be polite always; adding the respectful title “ji” following the person’s name will be appreciated (Vinay ji, William ji). That’s a sure-shot way to win the confidence of pretty much any Indian businessman. And if you disagree with something, try not to say a straightforward no. Instead, convey the turn-down with some gentle nonverbal communication.

**Offering a gift.** If you take gifts for your counterparts at a meeting, make sure you offer them with both hands. A flower, an appropriate gift in the United States when going to a friend’s house for dinner, is in India appropriate with business associates as well. It’s a sign of respect. Oh—and take care that the gift wrapping is not black, nor white—both colors are supposed to be inauspicious.

**On the flexibility of deadlines.** The Indian mind also has some difficulty with the concept of deadlines, an attitude that can be very frustrating to foreigners. Fortunately, Westerners dealing with India’s high-tech, outsourcing, and biotechnology companies won’t run into this problem—though being a bit late for meetings is still considered acceptable.

**Address the person by their title.** Indians are sticklers for flaunting their degrees. It’s a status symbol for us. So do use titles such as Doctor or Professor wherever applicable. Otherwise, a simple Mr. or Ms. will do.

**Understand the Indian yes.** One might expound for pages on the misunderstandings that result from the Indian “waggle”—that wobbling of head that resembles an American shake of the head, but in this case only means “OK” or “I understand what you mean.” The average Indian you may meet on the road—whether Hindu or Muslim, rich or poor, man or woman—generously peppers traditional wisdom with pragmatic nuggets of insight drawn from his or her very own experience of India. Every Indian is a delightful philosopher who lives out a life consumed by an inexplicable passion for tradition while in most cases also embracing parts of the modern matrix. The Indian way of life cannot be called “religious”; it is driven by a common love for a set of values and ideals, which at best find different expression across the diverse cultures and religious paths. Finally, India may enchant, energize, or exhaust, but it never lacks in exuberance and effervescence. India lives forever on the frontier of change, constantly reinventing herself as she responds to imminent realities with the twin tools of her cultural tradition and spiritual wisdom.

**India at a Glance**  
***Bharat Ga? arajya***  
**Republic of India**



Flag



National Emblem

**Motto:** "*Satyameva Jayate*" (Sanskrit)  
"Truth Alone Triumphs"

**Anthem:** *Jana Gana Mana*  
Thou art the ruler of the minds of all people

**National Song**<sup>[4]</sup>  
*Vande Mataram*  
I bow to thee, Mother

**Capital**      New Delhi

**Largest city**      Mumbai

**Official languages:**      **Hindi, English**

<b><u>Demonym</u></b>	<u>Indian</u>
<b><u>Government</u></b>	<u>Federal republic</u> <u>Parliamentary democracy</u>
- <u>President</u>	<u>Pratibha Patil</u>
- <u>Prime Minister</u>	<u>Manmohan Singh</u>
- <u>Chief Justice</u>	<u>K. G. Balakrishnan</u>
<b><u>Independence</u></b>	from British colonial rule
- Declared	15 August 1947
- <u>Republic</u>	26 January 1950
<b><u>Area</u></b>	
- Total	<u>3,287,590<sup>†</sup> km<sup>2</sup> (7th)</u> <u>1,269,346 sq mi</u>
- <u>Water (%)</u>	9.56
	<b><u>Population</u></b>
- 2008 estimate	1,132,446,000
- 2001 census	1,027,015,248
- <u>Density</u>	329/km <sup>2</sup> 852/sq mi
<b><u>GDP (PPP)</u></b>	2007 estimate
- Total	<u>\$2.965 trillion</u>
- <u>Per capita</u>	<u>\$2700 (165th)</u>
<b><u>GDP (nominal)</u></b>	2007 estimate

- Total	<u>\$1.089 trillion</u>
- <u>Per capita</u>	<u>\$977</u>
<u>Currency</u>	<u>Indian rupee (? ) (INR)</u>
<u>Time zone</u>	<u>IST (UTC+5:30)</u>
- Summer ( <u>DST</u> )	not observed ( <u>UTC+5:30</u> )
<u>Internet TLD</u>	<u>.in</u>
<u>Calling code</u>	<u>+91</u>

## Part 2 – About our City – New Delhi

### City Facts

**Delhi** (sometimes referred to as *Dilli*) is the second largest metropolis of India, with a population of 17 million, and a federally-administered union territory officially known as the National Capital Territory of Delhi (NCT). Located on the banks of river Yamuna in northern India, archaeological evidence suggest that Delhi has been continuously inhabited since at least 6th century BC. After the rise of the Delhi Sultanate, Delhi emerged as a major political, cultural and commercial city along the trade routes between northwest India and the Indo-Gangetic plains. It is the site of many ancient and medieval monuments, archaeological sites and remains. In 1639, Mughal emperor Shahjahan built a new walled city in Delhi which served as the capital of the Mughal Empire from 1649 to 1857. After the British East India Company gained control of much of India during the 18th and 19th centuries, Calcutta became the capital both under Company rule and under the British Raj, until George V announced in 1911 that it was to move back to Delhi. A new capital city, New Delhi, was built during the 1920s. When India gained independence from British rule in 1947, New Delhi was declared its capital and seat of government. As such, New Delhi houses important offices of the federal government, including the Parliament of India. Owing to the immigration of people from across the country, Delhi has grown to be a cosmopolitan city. Its rapid development and urbanisation, coupled with the relatively high average income of its population, has transformed the city. Today, Delhi is a major cultural, political, and commercial center of India.

### History

Delhi, has seen the rise and fall of many empires which have left behind a plethora of monuments that the grandeur and glory of bygone ages. A city which traces its history to Mahabharata, the great epic tale of wars fought between estranged cousins, the Kauravas and the Pandavas for the city of Indraprastha. Mughals ruled Delhi in succession starting from Qutab-ud-din to Khiljis, Tughlaqs. The city of Delhi passed on to the hands of the British in 1803 AD. It was only in 1911, when the capital of British empire was shifted from Calcutta to Delhi, that Delhi got its present prestige. After independence also, a kind of autonomy was conferred on the capital but it largely remained a chief commissioners regime. In 1956 Delhi was converted into a Union territory and gradually the chief commissioner was replaced by a Lt. Governor. In 1991, the national capital territory Act was passed by the parliament and a system of diarchy was introduced under which, the elected Government was given wide powers; except law and order which remained with the central Government. The actual enforcement of the legislation came in 1993.

New Delhi, the capital of India, sprawled over the west bank of the river Yamuna is one of the fastest growing cities in India. It is surrounded on three sides by Haryana and to the east, across the river Yamuna by Uttar Pradesh. Historically, the city has long since been the foremost in political importance with successive dynasties choosing it as their seat of power, between the 13th and the 17th centuries. Remnants of the glorious past survive as important monuments in different parts of the city. The myriad faces of the city are

simply fascinating. In some places it remains a garden city, tree lined and with beautiful parks, but in some places it can also be crowded with heavy traffic. Turbaned Sikhs, colourfully dressed Rajasthani and Gujarati women working in offices, Muslim shopkeepers along Chandni Chowk in Old Delhi, Tibetans and Ladakhis in the street stalls along Janpath and Kashmiris in the handicraft emporia around Connaught Place, all add to the cosmopolitan feel of the city. Soaring skyscrapers, posh residential colonies and bustling commercial complexes can be seen along with the ancient historical monuments. Its boutiques and shopping arcades offer access to a wealth of traditional and contemporary crafts, from all over the country. Old Delhi which looks entirely different from New Delhi area, is about 6 Km north of the city center.

### **Economy**



***Barakhamba Road in Connaught Place, an important economic and cultural center. Delhi registered an economic growth rate of 16% in 2006-07***

With an estimated net State Domestic Product (FY 2007) of Rs. 1,182 billion (US\$24.5 billion) in nominal terms and Rs. 3,364 billion (US\$69.8 billion) in PPP terms, Delhi is the second largest commercial center in South Asia after Mumbai. In 2007, Delhi had a per capita income of Rs. 66,728 (US\$1,450) at current prices, the third highest in India after Chandigarh and Goa. The tertiary sector contributes 70.95% of Delhi's gross SDP followed by secondary and primary sectors with 25.2% and 3.85% contribution respectively.<sup>[51]</sup> Delhi's workforce constitutes 32.82% of the population showing an increase of 52.52% between 1991 and 2001. Delhi's unemployment rate decreased from 12.57% in 1999–2000 to 4.63% in 2003. In December 2004, 636,000 people were registered with various employment exchange programmes in Delhi.



*A business park in Gurgaon, a satellite city of Delhi. Gurgaon is one of India's largest outsourcing and information technology hubs<sup>1</sup>. In 2006, Gurgaon exported US\$1.7 billion worth software<sup>1491</sup>*

In 2001, the total workforce in all government (union and state) and quasi government sector was 620,000. In comparison, organised private sector employed 219,000. Delhi's service sector has expanded due in part to the large skilled Englishspeaking workforce that has attracted many multinational companies. Key service industries include information technology, telecommunications, hotels, banking, media and tourism. Delhi's manufacturing industry has also grown considerably as many consumer goods industries have established manufacturing units and headquarters in and around Delhi. Delhi's large consumer market, coupled with the easy availability of skilled labour, has attracted foreign investment in Delhi. In 2001, the manufacturing sector employed 1,440,000 workers while the number of industrial units was 129,000. Construction, power, telecommunications, health and community services, and real estate form integral parts of Delhi's economy. Delhi has India's largest and one of the fastest growing retail industries. As a result, land prices are booming and Delhi is currently ranked the 7th most expensive office hotspot in the world, with prices at \$145.16 per square foot. However, as in the rest of India, the fast growth of retail is expected to affect the traditionalunorganized retail trading system.

### **Tourist Points in Delhi**

**Location:** 220 kms From Agra, 259 kms From Jaipur

**Famous As:** The Capital Of India & It's Administrative Center

**Main Attractions:** Qutub Minar, Red Fort, Lotus Temple

**Best Time To Visit:** October To March

Delhi - the capital of India, is also its seat of power. One of India's fastest growing cities Delhi has spread far beyond the "seven cities" created between the 13th and the 17th centuries. It has sprawled over the west bank of the river Yamuna, straddling the river. Remnants of the glorious past survive cheek - by - jowl with soaring skyscrapers, posh residential colonies and bustling commercial complexes. Delhi has some of the finest museums in the country. Its boutiques and shopping arcades offer access to a wealth of traditional and contemporary crafts, from all over the country.



Delhi has specialty restaurants to please the gourmet, sprawling parks and gardens ablaze with flowers, and in the winter months, a variety of cultural events. The myriad faces of the city are simply tantalizing, and entice the curious traveller into a fascinating journey of discovery.

#### **1. Old Delhi And New Delhi**

Delhi is divided into two parts, Old and New Delhi. The Old city is settled within the remnants of a sturdy defensive wall and spread to the west of Red Fort built by Mughal emperor Shah Jahan. The planning of New Delhi began in 1911 under Edwin Lutyens, when the capital was moved from Kolkatta to Delhi under British rule. Meant to be an emphatic statement of the magnificence and permanence of British rule in India, the new city was inaugurated on 9th February, 1931.

#### **2. Cultural Heritage**

In Delhi the dominant religion is Hinduism, which is practiced by about 80% of the capital's population. Muslims also form a large group, constituting about 14% and other religious groups are Christians, Sikhs, and Jains. Delhi shares its borders with Haryana, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Punjab, which influence the lifestyles and language of the people. Migrations from various parts of India has led to pockets of diverse culture coming together in various parts of Delhi. The amalgamation of various cultures, traditions, religions has painted Delhi in colour which are brought from all over India.

## Places To See In Delhi

1 Qutub Minar



### Qutub Minar

Spearing its way proudly into the sky, Qutub Minar with a height of 72.5 mts commands a panoramic view of the green fields extending into a sprawling city. The Qutub Minar was built as a victory memorial by th Muslims who captured Delhi. Minar is the root of th English word "minaret" meaning "Little Minar" o pillar.



2 Jama Masjid

3 India Gate



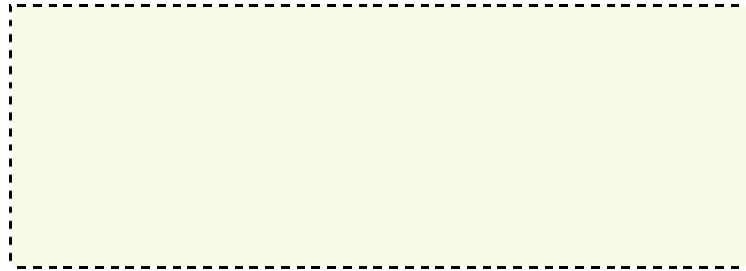
### India Gate

India Gate is a majestic high arch, 42 meters high, built as a memorial to the Indian soldiers killed in the World War I. Beneath it burns an eternal flame. From the base of the arch one can get a good view of the Rashtrapati Bhavan.



4 Birla Mandir

5 Museums



**Red Fort/Lal Qila**

Delhi's most magnificent monument, the Red Fort, was built by Emperor Shah Jehan, in 1638 A.D. Enclosed in this glorious Fort is Diwan-i-am, the hall meant for public audiences



6 Red Fort

7 Lotus Temple



**Multiplexes in close vicinity of the Residency**

***PVR Saket*** - The four screen PVR Saket is opened in June 1997. The seating capacity of all halls is 1000. which are Hall 1 - 368 seats - Hall 2 - 150 seats - Hall 3 - 150 seats - Hall 4 - 332 seats .

Community Centre, Saket  
New Delhi 110017  
Tel:+(91)-(11)4167-1787

***PVR Faridabad*** - Located at the popular Ansal Crown Plaza in Faridabad, this two-screen multiplex is the first of its kind in the area. Seating capacity of Ist screen is 273, & IInd screen is 207. Halls : 2

Crown Plaza, Sector - 15 A  
Faridabad

Tel:+(91)-(129)9632000787

[www.pvrcinemas.com](http://www.pvrcinemas.com)

**INOX Faridabad** - Located at the Crown Interiorz Mall on Delhi-Mathura Highway, Inox Faridabad has 4 screens and 1108 seats, making it the largest multiplex in Faridabad.

INOX Leisure Ltd

0129-4161001

[www.inoxmovies.com](http://www.inoxmovies.com)

### **SRS Cinemas, Faridabad at Pristine Mall**

Sec-31

Faridabad

Faridabad - 121001

Contact - 0129-4040095

### **Discotheques in Delhi**

Delhi is a fun place to be in. There is lots to do and lots to see. At one point of time, not too long ago, Delhi was considered to have no night life whatsoever. Not any more! There are pubs and bars opening up, so are night clubs and places where you can go and do some bowling perhaps.

So what does one categorize as entertainment to start with? We thought of some topics...which we list below. You can click on any of the links below and get to know more details about the topic. We have included what we thought must be categorized as entertainment.

#### **Annabelle's**

Inter Continental

Tel. 3320101, 9.30pm onwards

Charges: Rs. 500/couple, 7days a week.

Ladies' night: Wednesday & Friday

#### **Bouys 'n' Gulls**

Vasant Continental, Vasant Vihar

Tel. 6148800, 11.30am -11.30pm

Happy hours: noon-7pm

Their promotional campaign is on, so entry is free, DJ Simbol is creating waves with the kind of music that he churns out.

#### **CJ's**

Le Meridian, Windsor Place

Tel. 3710101, 10pm onwards, open 7 days a week. Friday, Saturday & Sunday, open during the day, noon-5pm

Charges: Rs. 500/couple.

Ladies' night: Thursday, Friday, Saturday & Sunday: 1pm -5pm

### [Djinns](#)

Hyatt Regency, Bhikaji Cama Place, Ring Road

Tel. 6791026, 6pm-midnight. A fun pub with live bands, pool & a dance floor.

Best days: Wednesday, Friday & Saturday.

### [Fireball](#)

32nd Milestone, Delhi-Jaipur Highway

Tel. 91-6322528

Wednesday: 1pm-5pm; Friday & Saturday: 1pm-5pm & 10pm-4am

Charges: Wednesday & Friday: Rs. 200/couple.

Great foot tapping music, an interesting mix of people and late closing hours make this one of the most happening places

### [Float](#)

Park Royal, Nehru Place

Tel. 6223344, 4.30pm-11pm

Entry is Free.. Boasts of the biggest dance floor in Delhi. Has a sound proof cigar chamber that serves cigars. The Newzealand band plays all evening with DJ Arjun doling out the perfect remixes.

### [Ghungroo](#)

Maurya Sheraton, Diplomatic Enclave

Tel. 6112233, 10.30pm onwards, 6 days a week ( except Sunday).

Charges: Monday, Friday Rs. 400/couple.

Ladies' night: Monday, Friday & Saturday

Charges: Rs. 500/couple

### [Mirage](#)

The Surya, New Friends Colony

Tel. 6835070, 9pm-4am

Charges: Sunday Rs. 300/couple, Friday Rs. 400/couple, Saturday Rs. 500/couple.

Ladies' night: Wednesday & Friday

### [My Kind Of Place](#)

Taj Palace, Sardar Patel Marg

Tel. 6110202, 9pm onwards

Charges: Wednesday, Thursday & Sunday Rs. 300/couple

Friday & Saturday Rs. 400/couple

### [O'Zone](#)

Radisson, NH-8

Tel. 6129191, 11am -midnight for bar & 11am-2pm for games.

Happy hours: 4pm-8pm

Along with a bowling alley, air hockey, pool and video game machines, they have a dance floor for all the non-sporty types.

### [Superstars](#)

Radisson, NH-8

Tel. 6129191, 4pm-midnight

Happy hours: 4pm-8pm, with a buy-1-get-1-free offer.

Unique decor and a number of outdoor games to play.

### **Part 3 - City Conditions - Climate of Delhi**

**Climate of Delhi** is semi-arid with high variation between summer and winter temperatures. Summers are long, from early April to October, with the monsoon season in between. During the summer season, the city faces extreme power and water shortages. Winter starts in November and peaks in January. Although winters are generally mild, Delhi's proximity to the Himalayas results in cold waves that regularly dip temperatures below freezing. Delhi is notorious for its heavy fog during the winter season. In December, reduced visibility leads to disruption of road, air and rail traffic. The city has a pleasant climate from February to March, and from September to November. Extreme temperatures have ranged from -0.6 °C (30.9 °F) to 47 °C (116.6 °F).<sup>[3]</sup> The average annual rainfall is approximately 714mm (28.1 inches), most of which is during the monsoons in July and August.<sup>[4]</sup> However, the annual rainfall is extremely variable, with the lowest recorded since 1864 being 261mm (10.27 inches) and the highest 1,583mm (62.3 inches). The average date of the advent of monsoon winds in Delhi is 29 June.<sup>[5]</sup>

#### **City Conditions – Telephone**

City Code – 11

Country code - 91

#### **Opening Hours of Key Attractions in Delhi**

##### **Lal Quila (Red Fort)**

The *Red Fort's* massive curtain wall and battlements dominate the skyline of Old Delhi. Inside the bastions (built, like the nearby Jama Masjid, by Shah Jehan) are an array of exquisite 17th-century Mughal buildings, which provided the living quarters for the Emperor, his courtiers and family. The flawless balance and proportion of these buildings, as well as the intricate decoration, is wonderful to behold and in complete contrast to the military might of the fort itself. Sadly, the water conduits that would once have cooled the dwellings and gardens are now dry. The Lahore Gate, on the west side of the fort, was a potent symbol in the fight for Independence and is still regarded as a shrine of the Republic.

**Opening hours: Tue-Sun - dawn-dusk.**

**Admission charge.**

##### **Jama Masjid**

*Jama Masjid* is India's largest mosque and is one of the masterpieces of the Mughal's greatest builder, Shah Jehan. A huge courtyard, bounded by an arcade and pierced with three gates, lies in front of the prayer hall, which achieves serenity and peace from the perfect harmony of its arches, domes and spaces. The courtyard, which can accommodate 25,000 worshippers, is dominated by two red-and-white-striped sandstone minarets, 70m (230ft) tall. The energetic visitors who climb the 122 narrow steps to the top will be

rewarded with a magnificent view of Delhi, smog and all. Shorts and shortsleeved shirts are not permitted, but wraps can be borrowed.

***Opening hours: Daily dawn-dusk; closed during prayer times.***

***Free admission for the mosque; there is a charge for the minaret.***

### **Qutb Minar**

The *Qutb Minar* is an immense tower, started at the end of the 12th century, to commemorate the Muslim conquest of Delhi. Standing 72.5m (238ft) tall, it is built of fluted red sandstone (now being restored) and decorated with calligraphy representing verses from the Koran. The top two levels are faced in white marble. The *Minar* rises above a site that is home to the oldest extant Islamic monuments in India. There is the *Ala-i-Darwaza*, complete with horseshoe-shaped arches, lotus-leaf squinches and elaborate geometric patterns. Next to that, stands the *Quwwat-ul-Islam*, the first mosque to be built in India. So anxious were the new rulers of Delhi to erect a mosque, they shamelessly pilfered 27 Hindu and Jain temples for building materials. Many of pillars that surround the courtyard are carved with Hindu iconography, which is curiously at odds with the Islamic calligraphy of the Muslim prayer screens. Incongruously, in the center of the mosque, stands the fourth-century *Iron Pillar*, bearing inscriptions from the Gupta period. Beyond the mosque is the intricately carved *Illutmish's Tomb*.

***Opening hours: Daily dawn-dusk.***

***Admission charge.***

### **Rashtrapati Bhavan and Rajpath**

*Rajpath* runs between the *Secretariat Buildings* and *India Arch*, the war memorial designed by Lutyens, in 1921. *Rajpath* is a formal conception, lined with trees, fountains and pools, intended by its architects, Lutyens and Baker, as the epicenter of British India. The *Secretariat Buildings* combine monumental classical and oriental detail and, while not beautiful, are certainly an imposing statement of colonial power. *Rashtrapati Bhavan* is an immense palace, supposedly larger than Versailles, which was built as the residence of the Viceroy and is now the official home of the President of India. Every Saturday morning (0935-1015), guards parade before the iron grille gates. While the apartments are private, the gardens are open to the public every year in February/March.

***Opening hours: By appointment; gardens open daily 0900-1600 (Feb-Mar).***

***Free admission.***

### **National Museum**

It takes a good few hours to get a decent overview of Indian culture at the *National Museum*, which is filled with exhibits covering over 5,000 years of history. Highlights include excavations from Indus Valley civilization sites, carved pillars and statues from the Maryan empire (250BC), Gupta terracottas dating from AD400, sandstone figures from Pallava temples, stone and bronze Buddhist statues, Tibetan manuscripts, Naga models and masks, silk paintings from Central Asia, a gallery of 300 musical instruments, and Mughal clothing, tapestries, ornaments and weapons.

***Opening hours: Tue-Sun 1000-1700. Admission charge.***

### **Chandni Chowk**

The bazaars that surround *Chandni Chowk*, in Old Delhi, offer a colorful, having and pungent slice of Delhi life, with shops and stalls displaying a spectacular array of goods, from fish and poultry to second-hand goods, gemstones and gold, garlands, turbans, tinsel and spare car parts. They are an unmissable part of any visit to the city. The covered *Gadodial Market* is the wholesale spice market with an incredible display of aniseed, turmeric, pomegranate, dried mangoes, ginger, saffron, reetha nuts, lotus seeds, pickles, sugars and chutneys. *Chawris Bazaar* is packed with shops specializing in copper and brass Buddhas, Vishnus and Krishnas.

***Opening hours: Daily, approximately 1000-1800; most shops closed on Sunday***

***Free admission.***

### **Humayun's Tomb**

Often seen merely as a forerunner of the Taj Mahal, *Humayun's Tomb* is, in its own right, a stunning example of the Mughal architectural style, combining dome, mausoleum and plinth in perfect proportion. The Tomb is set in a square garden designed along Persian lines, shaded and geometric, crisscrossed with waterways and paths. In the grounds, there are some other monuments, including the *Tomb of Isa Khan*. The gardens, in particular the watercourses and pools, have recently been magnificently restored, thanks to the generosity of the Aga Khan's Trust, and now the visitor will get a vivid impression of what the Tomb and its gardens would have looked like in their pomp.

***Opening hours: Daily dawn-dusk.***

***Admission charge.***

### **Baha'i Temple**

Otherwise known as the Lotus Temple, the modern *Baha'i Temple* has often been compared to the Sydney Opera House. Giant white petals of Rajasthanian Macrana marble open out from nine pools and walkways in the shape of an unfolding lotus, symbolising the nine spiritual paths of the Baha'i faith. The crouched yet upright stance and upturned, opening petals hint at the human form in ecstatic prayer. The temple is approached through an attractive formal garden. Inside, the central hall rises to a height of over 30m (98ft), without the visible support of any columns. Visitors should take their shoes off before entering.

***Opening hours: Tue-Sun 0900-1900 (summer); Tue-Sun 0930-1730 (winter), closed Monday.***

***Free admission.***

### **Purana Qila**

Humayun's 16th-century Delhi had at its center the fortress of *Purana Qila*, which reputedly stands on the site of Indraprastha, the city of the Pandavas in the Mahabharata. Of the buildings that survive today, the *Qila-i-Kuhna Masjid*, a successful fusion of the Islamic and Hindu styles, was constructed by Sher Shah in 1541. The *Sher Mandal* is an octagonal observatory and library. The north gate, *Talaqi-Darwaza*, has been partially rebuilt and gives an impression of how formidable the fortifications would have been in

their heyday. The *chattri* surmounting the west (entrance) gate commands a fine view of New Delhi. Purana Qila is undergoing restoration. There is a small museum just inside the south gate.

***Opening hours: Daily dawn-dusk (fortress); daily 0800-1830 (museum).***

***Admission charge.***

### **National Gallery of Modern Art**

The *National Gallery of Modern Art* contains a large collection of 20th-century Indian art. There are examples of the work of the painters of the Bengali Renaissance and of the poet and artist, Tagore. The highlight is the room devoted to the pictures Amrita Sher-Gil (1913-1941), whose portraits, more successful than her genre scenes, are painted with the confident bravura of the youthful Augustus John. The museum has embarked on an ambitious scheme of building, which will when complete, provide greatly increased gallery space for the collection. The museum is in Jaipur House (by any yardstick, a grandee's townhouse) formerly the Delhi residence of the Maharaja of Jaipur.

***Opening hours: Tue-Sun 1000-1700.***

***Admission charge.***

### **Tughluqabad**

The immense and brutal fortifications of *Tughluqabad* are an impressive monument to the militarism of the Tughluqs, an antidote to any idea that the Delhi Sultans were merely effete builders of mosques and palaces. Nowadays, the only living things that visitors are likely to see at the vast, barren, sun-scorched site are goats, donkeys and the occasional archaeologist, although in the 14th century, the citadel, the third city of Delhi, was the Sultan's capital. Below the walls is the forbidding tomb of Ghiyasud-din Tughluq, the builder of Tughluqabad. It is approached from a causeway that crosses a lake, now dry. From the high point of the citadel there is a sweeping panorama of southern Delhi.

***Opening hours: Daily dawn-dusk.***

***Admission charge.***

### **Lodhi Gardens**

An oasis of shaded calm, the *Lodhi Gardens* are a welcome refuge from the heat and clamour of Delhi. The extensive gardens boast a fine collection of tropical shrubs and trees. There are also a number of monuments of the Lodhi Sultanate (1451-1526), including the *Shish Gumbad*, the *Bara Gumbad* and the *Tomb of Mohammed Shah*.

***Opening hours: Daily dawn-dusk.***

***Free admission.***

### **National Rail Museum**

The principal glory of the *National Rail Museum* is the open-air display of old steam locomotives and rolling stock. Particularly interesting are the 'special' carriages belonging to British and Indian grandees, such as the Gaekwar of Baroda's Saloon, with its ornate gold and enamel ceiling.

***Opening hours: Tue-Sun 0930-1700 (Oct-Mar); 0930-1900 (Apr-Sep).***

***Admission charge.***

### **Birla House**

*Birla House* owes its historical resonance to the fact that Mahatma Gandhi was assassinated there by a Hindu extremist on 30th January 1948 while attending an evening prayer meeting. The house is now a shrine to the Mahatma. The exact spot in the garden where he met his death is marked.

**Opening hours: Tue-Sun 1000-1700, closed Monday.**

**Free admission.**

### **Safdarjang's Tomb**

The finest extant example of a late Mughal garden tomb, *Safdarjang's Tomb* was built by the Nawab of Avadh to commemorate his father. It may lack the perfect proportions and exhilarating simplicity of Humayun's Tomb (which is 200 years older) but it is, in its own over-elaborate, almost blowsy way, a splendid building.

**Opening hours: Daily dawn-dusk. Admission charge.**

### **Emergency Phones**

#### **In case of emergency**

If something happens, don't hesitate, and contact us as soon as possible. Here is a list with the contacts of some of Rai staff members.

***Ms. Shilpa Sharma, Sr. Manager – International Programs, Rai Foundation, e-mail : [shilpa.sharma@raifoundation.org](mailto:shilpa.sharma@raifoundation.org); Voice : 011 -91-9818687110***

***Jayasree - 09312956712***

***Mukesh Bhardwaj - 9891341323***

In case of extreme emergency, call these phones below:

100 – Police

102 – Ambulance

101 – Fire Service

10999 - Accident & Trauma

The calls are free and you can call by your telephone, or by any public phone.

## ***Part 4 – About Rai Foundation***

**While in India, you will be facilitated by Rai Foundation to discover new experiences in a dynamic and supportive environment.**

***Some initiatives taken by Rai Foundation:-***

### ***1. Discover India Program - Unfolding of the Indian Economic Juggernaut***

*Rai Foundation annually hosts in India a specified number of students from the International Partner University for a proposed period of 3 weeks during their winter break (can be for much larger periods if they do internships/projects). International Students would learn about Indian culture, politics, economy, arts, and importantly ways of doing business in the Indian environment. Rai Foundation will provide complete support to students of International Partner University to incubate collaborative projects, culminating in formation, if feasible, of their own start up companies. Initially the program is of 3 weeks and it can be reduced to 2 weeks depending upon the situation. It is applicable to both: an individual student of course sponsored by the University and also the University. The Discover India Program will be conducted in Rai Foundation , New Delhi*

*Discover India Program is basically to appraise foreign students about what is happening in India on the economic front as well as help them understand our country culturally. The program has been very successful with the students from MIT, Stanford, Harvard, Pittsburg State University, George Mason University and various other US Universities.*

**Some of the Essays penned down by the students of Pittsburg State University, USA about their experiences are as follows:-**

Essay 1

Perceptions of India:  
Culture and Economy  
by  
*Daniel Warlop*  
Pittsburg State University,  
[wapie\\_@hotmail.com](mailto:wapie_@hotmail.com)

This paper is meant to summarize my personal perceptions of Indian social structures, culture, and economy. I believe you cannot speak of one without alluding to another. The paper is exhaustive only of my personal experience and knowledge of the topics herein. I gathered insight and information from lecturers, teachers, staff, and students while staying in India. These borrowed perceptions, in tandem with my own introspection, have culminated into my current understanding and appreciation of India.

*As Mr. Rai told us, Indians continually seek to understand their country. This is not unlike a visitor to India; trying to piece together an understanding of a society so entwined, a culture so prevalent, and an economy so diverse. I certainly spent every second incorporating new sights, sounds, smells, information, and experiences into my ever-evolving understanding of the country. I was exposed to various individual perspectives and even presented with somewhat varying statistics, reflecting the rapidly changing and diverse aspects of the society, culture, and economy in India.*

### **Indian Culture**

*The Indian culture is rich with ago-old traditions, entrancing music, lively colored clothing, beautiful jewelry, sophisticated craftsmanship, prevalent religious philosophy, and increasing economic growth. This culture also bears inequality, poverty, poor health standards, and corruption. This is the dichotomy that defines Indian culture. In simple terms, I see it as being a more intense, exaggerated recreation of the culture found in the United States. It has a longer history with older traditions. It has a more well-defined and unique wealth of arts. India currently hosts tremendous economic growth and some of the most successful corporations in the world. Yet, there are more desperately poor citizens in India than in the entire United States. The corruption and social welfare are*

also troublesome on a scale much greater than the United States. The cultural equivalents are simple variations through evolution – similar, yet very different.

The Caste system in India is very interesting to me. It seems that, historically, an individual was born into a Caste and meant to follow the designated profession or lifestyle indicated by that Caste. Now, it seems, the Caste exists as a classification of wealth. This would be equivalent to the lower, middle, and upper classes in the United States. I believe there many similarities between the Indian Castes and the social stratification of the U.S. I think that as far as marriage is concerned, individuals in both countries would be most likely to marry someone from a similar class or caste. This would be a result of arranged marriages in India, and isolated social interactions in the U.S. Something I sought to understand was the outlook on life for the common Indian. Was there animosity towards the extremely wealthy; towards the government for the social crisis'; towards the powerful social norms of their society; or towards the United States? I asked this to almost every person that I engaged in conversation for more than a few seconds. My understanding is that there is little animosity, in any form. I felt like I harbored more animosity towards the U.S., for being so much more endowed with wealth and prosperities, than the average Indian. My own animosity towards America, for ideals such as materialism; wealth accumulation; and pompous standards of living, has breathed a new air of understanding. I have fostered a new appreciation for people around the world who do not seek those ideals or use them as a foundation for happiness in life. However, I've come to understand that an individual living in a slum might use destiny or religion to find justification for their situation. I do not believe that they, or their society, should rest upon this justification which allows the malnourished, illiterate, and socially abused to be content in life. There's a middle ground which I believe most Indians have achieved.

The average Indian also seems very genuine in their compassion. This may be a result of their active religion. The formality of personal space is replaced with a more intimate connection – even in casual conversation. I really enjoyed leisurely conversing with staff at students from the Rai Business School. I felt as though I had known them for much longer than I had. Our interaction was equivalent to that of two close friends, in the U.S., that were very comfortable and inviting to one another. I will definitely carry that ambiance with me as I continue in life and share it with those I meet. I also enjoyed interacting with other students while staying at Meadows. It was a wonderful experience, in its own right, to be able to share and learn with other students from different backgrounds.

Religion in India is powerful, discretionary, and deeply rooted. There is a greater amount of active worship in the Hindu and Muslim religions, that is to say, in India, than in the United States. Christianity and Catholicism are very faith based and worship of these religions does not commonly occur in public. The culture in India is saturated with the Hindu religion – or philosophy, as some might know it. Even an occasion such as a Muslim wedding in India will differ greatly from its Middle-Eastern counterpart. I would consider many Indian traditions synonymous with Hindu traditions. This is probably because India is so religiously homogenous and, at the same time, very understanding and accepting of diversity in religion. In this way, Hindu celebrations or events such as the Lohri celebration I participated in, which is a regional Punjabi festival, are celebrated by many people of varying region or religion.

*I was really captivated by the Lohri celebration on the Meadows campus. The celebration was simple, primitive, and indescribably fun. I've always found sanctity and serenity in fire, and spent countless hours around a fire with friends and family in our own traditions. It was an amazing experience to celebrate, in a traditional Indian way, around a large fire. The students created a wonderful atmosphere and were very accommodating towards our group. In general, the celebration seemed very genuine and beautiful. This is somewhat unlike my experiences with school celebrations in the United States. I was impressed with the two drummers providing the sole musical accompaniment for the dancing. It was very different to have such powerful music.*

*Women in Indian society are bestowed with great respect. They are also treated unfairly and unequally. This is the disparity that women seem to face in India. Philosophically, women are the head of the household. They control the family through cooking and caring for them. They are gods and they are beautiful. This translates poorly to reality however. Women have been seen as a burden to parents. Their education and well-being ignored; their burden left for a future husband to carry. They are teased, intimidated, and their autonomy is left in the hands of their family to dictate. The social constructs that are in place to help women seem to be working slowly and only for those families that choose to let them. I would like to understand more about how Indian women fit into society and the gender roles they are prescribed. This was an area I recall getting mixed insight into; different people with different perceptions of past and present. Obviously though, women are experiencing greater equality and respect than in the past. I am fascinated with the fact that India's President is a woman. This lets me know that my perception of women India is definitely not well developed yet. It's very nice to see a woman in that authoritative position though. I think I speak a great deal about the maturity of the Indian society.*

*I was fascinated with Indian clothing long before I traveled to India. I knew what the styles were and couldn't find them anywhere in the U.S. The craftsmanship in weaving, embroidering, and sewing is amazing. India has beautiful artistic traditions; much different from the United States. The colors of fabrics and materials are wonderful as well. The pashmina shawls and bright silk saris are unique to India and a strong part of modern Indian fashion. I was so taken by the beautiful styles and designs that I purchased the suit (sherwani) I plan to wear on my wedding day.*

*Being an active student of music, and specifically a percussionist, visiting India was like a pilgrimage. I regard Indian classical percussionists as rhythm masters; taking their study in different directions and to different levels than traditional western percussionists. The classical music of India is a well-refined and unique occurrence in the world. I plan to continue studying Indian music and the fusion of that music with other world music. I had the wonderful opportunity to meet with a professional musician in Delhi. He accommodated an extremely insightful interview and demonstrated his art and knowledge. I'm excited to bring the cultural energy I absorbed in India back to the campus of Pittsburg State University and share it with others.*

**Indian Economy** - *My impression of the Indian economy is that it genuinely deserves the world's attention. It seems there is an indisputable amount of growth. Since India entered the global market in the early 1990's it has grown immensely and appears to retain that momentum. I understand that the political and legal risk associated with investment in India is high. The corruption and developing legal system are pitfalls that*

*only time can remedy. These, in combination with poor infrastructure, mark the most obvious of my concerns for investment in India. I think it is essential for a potential investor to become a friend of India; to be able to walk and talk as the Indian businessmen do. There is money to be made in India – I do not question that in the least. However, in the midst of these risks and my current understanding, I would not feel comfortable advocating or condemning investment in India – obviously I would need to gain a better understanding of the economic atmosphere in its full context.*

*While learning about the Indian economy, my personal reference was to the construction industry. I come from a family owned small -business that contracts commercial/industrial construction projects. I have been interested in, and actively learning about, engineered concrete products in the future of our industry. I am very interested in the role that innovative, engineered construction materials will play in India's future development. My understanding is that concrete-based products will bear the high costs of concrete that are indigenous to India. This could act as a hindrance to these specific materials – but what are the other possibilities? This is a question that I will not let fall by the wayside. India has sparked an interest in me. I will always have India in mind when considering financial, industrial, or market opportunities.*

*I understand that there is a rising middle class in India. This growing sector is reflected in the growing demand for higher priced goods and services. This is creating market opportunities that should have our mouths watering. While this class of Indians is poised to consume, I think that the lower classes have a great consumer demand that is being unfulfilled as well. I would like to learn more about the opportunities that exist for ambitious innovative thinkers and entrepreneurs; such as, I consider, myself.*

*My experience in India has done a lot for me. The knowledge I have acquired will permeate every part of my soul and is still blossoming within me. I will take what I have gained and use it selfishly to try and fulfill what might be my own purpose in life – my own happiness. I will also share it communally as best I know how, injecting my experiences into those around me and filling them with the interest and appreciation of India that I have come to know. Also, I very much appreciate and respect the sacrifices made to create this opportunity. The Rai Foundation and Mr. Rai have been extraordinarily accommodating, as well as the teachers, lecturers, and staff both at PSU and RBS.*

## **Essay2**

### **Strangers Like Me**

**Theresa Oliver**

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**Pittsburg, KS**

*Abstract: Strangers Like Me*

*This paper details my experiences in India through the Pittsburg State University and Rai University's Discovery India Program. It is a personal account from the perspective of a college student of the differences between India and America. Although differences are highlighted similarities are also acknowledged. Along with my personal observations the paper also contains a brief comparison of my experiences to the Phil*

Collins song “Strangers Like Me” hence the title. The paper delves into aspects of Indian culture from sight seeing to family life (thanks to my best friend’s families’ hospitality).

### *Strangers Like Me*

Care freely nodding off on the fifth teen hour flight to New Delhi I was blissfully unaware of the wonders that awaited me. In fact throughout the entire trip I could feel a void of where the excitement and anticipation should be. However instead the journey felt no different than any other it was if I was traveling to a place I’d been numerous times before. Perhaps the fact that I’d been acquainted with the Hindu way of life through my Kashmiri best friend made the trip less eventful especially since she was with me.

Once in Delhi this ‘overconfidence’ or lack of excitement still prevailed. All the new sights, sounds, and smells went unnoticed as I nonchalantly chatted and teased my friend on the ride to the International Guest House at Rai University.

Actually the first thing I found shocking was the New Delhi traffic. Suddenly a whole new world emerged before me as organized chaos took to the streets. Now with the sun up a plethora of vibrant colors were everywhere – even the backs of trucks were painted in festive colors. Watching my friend’s bhaiya drive was one of the most entertaining and humorous events because he would throw up his arms and sigh, “As usual it’s India and nobody follows the rules!” while he would be the only car that actually stopped for a red light. Often times he’d jokingly ask us if we would like to drive to which she and I would always respond with a quick, stern “NO!” as we shook our heads ‘no’ as well to fully illustrate the point that we had no desire to try our hand at it. In fact one of my earliest observations was his three favorite words for fellow drivers: *bugger*, *buddy*, and *bastard* (ironically all beginning with ‘b’). Looking back on everything now it seems as though the entire time I was in India my world was in fast forward. I began to meet new people and wonder what other people life had in store for me to meet on my journey.

Along with the art of driving (India style), the art of bargaining was also a new concept I became acquainted with. Luckily my friend’s bhaiyas were experts at this art. No matter how low the initial price the rule was to bargain for half of the first offer. Acting disinterested in products and walking away was also a favorite tactic for getting what we wanted. It was interesting to see how much the price would drop as the window of opportunity shrunk, for example; when we would arrive at a sight and get off the bus we would be surrounded by people selling their goods at various prices not always willing to negotiate but whenever we were leaving on the bus the prices would drop dramatically due to the sense of urgency that soon the entire selling opportunity would be gone. This was an entirely new experience for me and I enjoyed bargain shopping the most out of all the places we shopped. It was fun to see the mall and get a glimpse of another more industrialized India; however I felt the real heart of India was in the marketplaces whereas malls I’d seen and will see hundreds of times back home. Another interesting observation was how the overwhelming poverty, the growing middle class, and the lustrous elite all coexist however; this fact shouldn’t be too alarming as Hindus have been practicing coexistence forever. Diversity and variety are just a part of life in India.

Upon arriving in India, Rai foundation made sure to lecture us about the disparity and affluent sides of India. The lecture was more of a tell-all as they highlighted everything from the prosperous, expanding economy to the problems of education, poverty, and transportation. They even informed us that India had been ranked the rudest country. After getting out and about it was easy to see how they could be labeled as rude to an outsider looking in. Numerous times we were told by our guides and even my friend's family not to give money to the poor. Her Mamaji warned us to never give money to a child or a woman with a child and only to give money to the elderly if we could tell that they really needed it. So, of course, often times we would see our guides and other Indians shoo away children. However, this behavior was more of a cautionary act than a rude one as my friend informed me that the reason they didn't give to the poor was you never knew who the money was actually going to and what you may be funding. Actually there was only one time I thought to myself, "How rude" during my stay in India. My friend and I were shopping at a store and I noticed a mother and her young daughter exit the store. The little girl made it to the door first opened it and left leaving her mother to open the door for herself and catch up to her. I felt it was odd she didn't hold the door for her own mother. But, on the other hand, I was also pleasantly surprised by random acts of kindness from strangers and my friend's families' hospitality to me - someone they had just met. One instance of random kindness came as my friend and I were browsing along a marketplace and noticed a young man drawing henna on a woman's arm while her husband stood close by. Excited my friend approached him and asked in Hindi, "How much?" To which the young man replied, "Fifty rupees per hand." "Fifty rupees per hand?!?!?" she exclaimed. Suddenly the wife, who was getting her henna done, turned up towards us and said, "It is 25 rupees per hand." Her husband continued, "He just raised the price when he saw you guys coming over." So, thanks to our spectating friends, the man agreed to do our henna for 25 rupees a hand. This wasn't an isolated event of kindness as later my friend and I were disputing with an auto driver over the charges. The problem was he had taken us to the wrong location and was going to charge us for going there and also getting back to where we started from. As my friend and him argued over what would be fair. A young man approached him and talked to both him and us to reach a fair compromise. Then without asking for anything in return he went on his way. Even at the guest house I experienced tremendous amounts of kindness from the employees. The service I received was comparable to having my own assistant. They would come to our room and inform us of lectures that were starting or that a meal was being served. Anytime we were just sitting around lounging they would offer us chai or coffee. And of course coming in every night to a bed already made was amazing. I actually began to wonder if Indians believed in taking a break because they were always willing to help. It wasn't just the hospitality of strangers I was honored with but also of my friend's family as they took me in as one of their own. The most fun I had was at one of her bhैया's birthday parties. It was a new and different experience as I watched him cut a piece of cake and hold it out to me. Uncertain of if I was suppose to take it or just take a bite from it (because of the way he was holding it) I shook my head 'no'. He then proceeded to let everyone take a small piece of the first piece of cake and eat. I'd never seen this before but it prepared me for the other birthday parties to come. After the cake we all celebrated by cranking out some dance moves to both Hindi and English songs. As the guest I was treated kindly everywhere I went. In fact I was

embarrassed thinking back on the times my friend had been to my home and all we offered her was something to drink. Here no matter what time you go to someone's house they don't just offer a snack or drink but an entire meal, and it's impossible to say no. Indians can be very, very persistent but also very generous. Whenever we went out with her bhaiyas they insisted that they pay for everything. In fact the only way we could treat her bhaiya to anything was by sneakily taking his wallet by asking to see his driver's license. Pranks were a big part of our fun in India; in fact I'm almost certain that pranks must have originated there. Probably the funniest one was when my friend, her two bhaiyas, and I went to see a movie at a mall. As we were leaving Anil Bhaiya got into the elevator to go down, as soon as he stepped inside Bablo Bhaiya grabbed us by our arms and we made a dash for the stairs. When Anil got out at the bottom, he immediately made his way to Bablo calling him a pest. "No you're the pest and I'm your pesticide!" Bablo argued. "Rickshaw driver!" Anil hurled back! "Beggar!" Bablo said instinctively. Watching them "argue" was the most humorous part of the trip. Earlier on, back at the house, the families were teasing them about still being single. Both of them are on matrimonial sites and one girl had sent messages to both of them. Teasingly Anil says to Bablo, "She is the perfect girl for you!" "No! I can't be with her... she is like my sister!" Bablo quickly responds. "Yeah, well she is like my mother!" Anil answered back. I have more than memories to remember the kindness and fun I had while with her family. Before leaving her Mamaji and Aunt gave me a blanket which is my favorite thing from India and an excellent reminder of their hospitality. So, from my opinion, if India is the rudest country in the world than we must live on an extremely kind earth!

A part from the wonderful people India also contained wonderful sights. Three of the sights I enjoyed the most were the Lotus Temple, the Taj Mahal, and the Amber Fort. The Lotus Temple was beautiful and an excellent picture of India's tolerance and co-existence as all religions and nationalities are welcome to go and pray. The Taj Mahal was a thing of beauty; even in the pictures I took it looks fake because it is just too beautiful to be real. I felt as though I was walking back in time as I walked up the stairs and stood in front of the doorway. Lovely caressing the marble outside as I walked alongside this amazing work of art I couldn't help but wonder who else had touched these same pieces of marble or had taken the same steps I was taking. Looking out across the courtyard I wondered if it had always looked that way. Throughout all these centuries what all had changed? To me it all appeared frozen in time as though it must have always looked this way and it always will. Of course I will also remember the Taj Mahal as well for the sudden popularity I acquired while walking around there. As my friend and I walked around several people would ask to take a picture with me. At first I thought they were asking me to take their pictures so I was shocked when they wouldn't give me their camera. After my friend explained to me they wanted a picture with me, not wanting to be rude, I'd agree. At one point however a line of people was beginning to form and I was growing impatient with the thought of being in so many photos I would never see. So my friend told them in Hindi that the show was over. Later on we joked about how we could have charged ten rupees a picture and made some money. Finally, lastly was the Amber Fort which was amazing. The weather was perfect that day to be outdoors. I felt the sun warmly against my face and I could see its glow on everything it touched - the ground even looked like a deeper shade of red and it felt as though we were going on an adventurous hike where we had stumbled upon a great fort. Standing out

above everything and taking in a deep breath to enjoy the view made me feel invincible. Although I was merely just taking in sights I felt empowered. Looking out across the fort I wondered if they'd every thought of calling it the Great Wall of India as it seemed to spiral across the mountain forever. Overall I enjoyed all of the sight seeing however these ones were my favorite of all the historical sites.

While there my eyes were slowly opening to the excitement and unique way of life that surrounded me. Ironically, through my stay in India I was also beginning to realize how different and unique my own American culture was as well. I always felt that America was boring as opposed to other places. Suddenly I was beginning to see how everything is different and yet the same. My home never seemed interesting to me because it's what I'm use to but now I can see it through a new perspective. The more time I spent out and about the more everything seemed reminiscent of the Phil Collins song "Strangers Like Me." This song was continuously playing in my head from Agra to Delhi to Jaipur.

Honestly, I felt as though this song was written specifically for my trip to India. The words fit perfectly into what I was experiencing and feeling. Quite simply the song couldn't have said it better. India was a whole new world full of strangers.... who were just like me: people just living life to the fullest. It's funny how a two week long breathtaking adventure can be summed up in a song. Now I have a deep desire to return to India although I don't know when or how I do know that whatever the cost it'll be worth it! And so the journey home was also lacking in excitement and anticipation as all I could think about was the people and places I was leaving behind.

More essays by students can be found on our website:

<http://www.raifoundation.org/essay.html>

2. **Industry Projects** – 5 Projects being run by Rai Foundation are :-

1. **The Gifted Girl & Girl Child Genius Project**

The Gifted Girl & Girl Genius Scholarship is one of the pioneering socio-educational initiatives undertaken by Rai Foundation which seeks to provide underprivileged girl students from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds full scholarship - including tuition, lodging and boarding - to study for Bachelors and Masters degree programs at our Behror Campus which is exclusively designed for these girls.

For the underprivileged girls from deep interiors of India, from villages and slums, who wish to pursue their higher education at Rai Foundation College at our Behror (NCR) campus, we offer totally free education including cost of tuition, boarding and lodging. We already have over 600 such girls including from Nepal, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Mauritius and Tibet (Dharmasala) . We recognize that girls from underprivileged background, given an equal opportunity, can match or better their city counterparts. We would appreciate if you could help us nominate such needy girls.

*The Team of Experimental India Lab Students from MIT, Yunnan & Lingnan University from China along with MBA students of Rai Foundation have worked on this project and did the behavioral analysis of these Girls coming from varied backgrounds under the current circumstances of the opportunities and facilities which have been offered to them, their future goals and aspirations. Also what they in return intend to give back to the society.*

***MIT+ RF Students working on-site on Girl-Child Project under MIT-India Lab***



2. **Country Inn Resorts**
3. **Espire Infolabs**
4. **Espire Infrastructure**

**Accommodation Details**

**Nestled within the 23 acres of enchanting lush greenery of Meadows - the Rai Foundation Affiliate College & Hostel Campus on the Delhi-Mathura Road - the University Residency promotes quality life style & sustains it every step of the way.** The University Residency offers guests a four-star experience that is committed to make their stay as comfortable as possible. It is located approximately three kilometers from the Rai Foundation College campus on the Delhi Mathura Road, amidst a plush, secure residential facility, named Meadows. Meadows is spread over -acres of visual delight, tastefully landscaped with plenty of tree-lined walking trails, lawns and quiet corners. The University Residency is well serviced by Rai Foundation's own fleet of buses and other modes of transport.

**An interactive dinner** with students of Rai Foundation staying at Meadows will be organized so as to have the better bonding and for a benefiting cultural exchange between the students of the both the countries. Meadows houses around 1000 students.

### **Facilities**

The ultra modern facilities are among the best of all. Some of the other facilities offered at the University Residency are:

#### **Tuck Shop / STD Facility**

Minor items of immediate use can be purchased from the tuck shop. A STD booth and round-the-clock cash card telephone facility is also available in the premises for the convenience of the residents.

#### **Cyber Café**

The University Residency provides state of the art modern cyber café, functional as per the timings promulgated by the authorities. (08:30 Hrs- 21:00 Hrs)

#### **Gymnasium**

The hostel gym provides modern exercising equipments at minimal cost to the residents on request only.

#### **Outdoor Games**

There is facility for outdoor games such as football, cricket, basketball, volleyball and badminton. Table Tennis is also available inside the recreation room.

#### **Beauty Saloon (only for women)**

The Beauty Saloon in the campus is open from 9:30 Hrs to 20:00 Hrs. The Saloon is closed on Tuesdays.

#### **Security**

The residency is secured, round the clock, by professional security services. We have around 40 Security Guards deputed at the residency 24\*7. In case of medical emergency, we have a tie up with one of the best hospitals of the country, Apollo, which is just few kilometers away from the residency.

#### ***Points to Remember while at Meadows***

- 1. Alcohol / Smoking etc. is not allowed in the campus, but ONLY INSIDE RESIDENCY.**
- 2. Always move in groups when traveling (especially girls).**
- 3. If wanting to go alone to meet a friend or a relative, please ensure that you are**

back by 21:00 hrs

4. If staying out at a friend or relative's house, information should be with team leader who informs the residency staff.
5. A friend or relative can visit but not stay. He/She would need to pay for food.
6. While using the residency premises, especially the lounge area, it is important to maintain the decorum and cleanliness. Please do not move the furniture or litter in the main lounge or the rooms.
7. Though the Residency has security round the clock, anything lost or stolen will not be the responsibility of the Residency. Therefore it is suggested to keep money etc under lock and key.
8. Please make sure you pay immediately for any services that you avail in the campus like using cyber café, the beauty saloon or STD/ ISD phone booth.
9. Laundry service is available. Please leave your soiled clothes in the laundry bag and inform the service boy so that he can send it to the launderers.

**Trip to Agra & Jaipur** – Rai Foundation will felicitate day trips to Agra & Jaipur

***Agra*** is a city on the banks of the [Yamuna River](#) in the northern [state](#) of [Uttar Pradesh, India](#). It finds mention in the epic Mahabharata when it was called Agrabana, or Paradise. [Ptolemy](#), the famous 2nd century geographer, marked it on his map of the world as Agra. Tradition and legend ascribe the present city of Raja Badal Singh (around 1475) whose Fort, Badalgarh, stood on or near the site of the present Fort. However, the 12th century Persian poet Salman writes of a desperate assault on the fortress of Agra, then held by one King Jaipal, by Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni. It was ruled by Sultan [Sikandar Lodi](#) in the year 1506. It achieved fame as the capital of the [Mughal](#) emperors from 1526 to 1658 and remains a major tourist destination because of its many splendid Mughal-era buildings, most notably the [Taj Mahal, Agra Fort and Fatehpur Sikri](#), all three of which are [UNESCO World Heritage Sites](#).

## Place of Interest

### Taj Mahal



Agra's [Taj Mahal](#) is one of the most famous buildings in the world, the mausoleum of Shah Jahan's favorite wife, [Mumtaz Mahal](#). It is one of the [New 7 Wonders](#) of the world, and one of three [World Heritage Sites](#) in Agra, the others being Agra Fort and Fatehpur Sikri. Completed in 1653 CE., the Taj Mahal is believed to have been built by the Mughal Badshah (king) Shah Jahan as the final resting place for his beloved wife, Mumtaz. Finished in marble, it is perhaps India's most fascinating and beautiful monument. This perfectly symmetrical monument took 22 years (1630-1652) of hard labour and 20,000 workers, masons and jewellers to build and is set amidst landscaped gardens. Built by the Persian architect, Ustad Isa, the Taj Mahal is on the bank of the Yamuna River. It can be observed like a mirage from the Agra Fort from where Emperor Shah Jahan stared at it, for the last eight years his life as a prisoner of his son Aurangzeb. It is a masterpiece of symmetry, seeming to be floating in the air from a distance, and each revealed as an illusion experienced as one enters through the main gate. Verses of the Holy [Koran](#) are inscribed on it and at the top of gate 22 small domes, signifying the number of years the monument took to build. The Taj Mahal was built on a marble platform that stands above a sandstone one. The most elegant dome of the Taj, with a diameter of 60 feet (18 m), rises 80 feet (24 m) over the building and directly under the dome is the tomb of Mumtaz Mahal. Shah Jahan's tomb was erected next to hers by his son Aurangzeb. Fantastic inlay works using semi-precious stones decorate the interiors.

Opening Times: 6 A.M. to 7.30 P.M. (closed Fridays)

**Jaipur**, also popularly known as the *Pink City*, is the capital of [Rajasthan state](#), [India](#). Historically rendered as **Jeypore**, Jaipur is the former capital of the [princely state](#) of [Jaipur](#). Founded in 1727 by Maharaja Sawai Jai Singh, the ruler of [Amber](#), the city today has a population of more than 5 million residents. Built of pink stucco in imitation of sandstone, the city is remarkable among pre-modern Indian cities for the width and regularity of its streets which are laid out into six sectors separated by broad streets 111 ft

(34 m) wide. The urban quarters are further divided by networks of gridded streets. Five quarters wrap around the east, south, and west sides of a central palace quarter, with a sixth quarter immediately to the east. The Palace quarter encloses a sprawling palace complex (the [Hawa Mahal](#), or palace of winds), formal gardens, and a small lake. [Nahargarh Fort](#) crowns the hill in the northwest corner of the old city. Another noteworthy building is Sawai Jai Singh's observatory, [Jantar Mantar](#).

## Places of Interest

### Hawa Mahal



*Hawa Mahal is a major landmark and a famous tourist attraction of Jaipur. The Palace offers a beautiful sight to behold. The splendid Rajputana architecture of Hawa Mahal, still speaks the glory of the royal family. However, one can also find a glimpse of Mughal architecture, which is blended perfectly to make it different from others. The literal meaning of Hawa Mahal is Palace of Winds. Hawa Mahal was built by Maharaja Sawai Pratap Singh in 1799. Hawa Mahal is a pyramid-shaped facade with five stories. It has 953 small windows decorated with tiny lattice work. These pink sandstone windows commonly known as "Jharokhas" are constructed in such a style, that it looks like a giant honeycomb. The air circulation through windows represents the marvelous touch of Mughal designing, which keeps the Palace always cool. The small screened balconies and arched roofs with hanging cornices enhance the beauty of the Palace. The Pyramidal outline and replication of pattern makes it more attractive in appearance. As a matter of fact, Hawa Mahal is believed to build for the women of the Royal Families, since they had to observe strict "purdah" (cover). The small windows and screened balconies serve the women to watch processions and different activities taking place on the streets. In this manner, the women could enjoy a sense of freedom without showing themselves*

### City Palace Jaipur



*City Palace forms one of the most famous tourist attractions and a major landmark in Jaipur. The beautiful palace was built by Maharaja Sawai Jai Singh during his reign. Among the various forts and palaces of Jaipur, City Palace stands apart, with its outstanding art and architecture. City Palace complex covers a huge area, which is divided into a series*

*of gardens, courtyards and buildings. Initially, Raja Jai Singh built the outer wall occupying a huge area. The additional grand buildings were constructed later by the succeeding rulers.*

*A part of the exquisite Palace still makes home for the former Maharaja/ King. The premises consists several buildings like Chandra Mahal, Mubarak Mahal, Mukut Mahal, Maharani's Palace, Shri Govind Dev Temple and the City Palace Museum. One would come across the Mubarak Mahal, as one enters the first square. Mubarak Mahal was built by Sawai Madho Singh in the 19th century to entertain his guests. Today, it has converted into a costume gallery, which displays royal tiaras of the Kings.*

*After crossing the first square, a beautiful gateway welcomes to Diwan-I-Khas, a hall meant for private audience. It has two sterling silver vessels on display and they are acclaimed to be the world's largest silver vessel. These vessels were made for Maharaja Sawai Madho Singh II to carry water from River Ganga to drink on his trip to England. Diwan-I-Aam, which was meant for public audience, forms the other attraction of this courtyard. At present, it makes an art gallery showcasing enthralling painted ceilings and rare ancient handwritten original manuscripts of Hindu scriptures. In the series, Maharani's Palace, which was meant for royal queens, has been converted into a museum, showcasing weapons dated back to 15th century. Chandra Mahal is essentially regarded as the best part, out of the whole tour to City Palace. It has seven stories and each story is known by a different name. The topmost story is known as Mukut Mahal. The wonderful architecture of this Palace with delicate paintings, mirror work on walls and floral decorations, makes it a "must-see" for every visitor. In the present day, this palace serves as the residence of ex-ruler.*

*Badal Mahal stands opposite to Chandra Mahal and while crossing the path, one would find Govind Dev Ji Temple between them. Above all these, the Palace also offers delicacies in its multi cuisine restaurant. To sum up, the City Palace is a structure of historical importance and a souvenir of the regal past. The palace, with its royal grace stands as a symbol of magnificence. All these features of City Palace leave the tourists with no other option, but to visit it.*

## ***Part 5. Additional Information***

**Insurance** - You MUST have life/accident insurance while you are in India. Please make the proper arrangements before leaving your country. If your company will provide you the insurance, let us know as soon as possible. Moreover, please, send us the insurance statement before your arrival.

### **Arrival note**

In order to provide you with a nice reception, you are suggested to send us, before your arrival, an arrival note which should include:

- how you will arrive (by plane, bus, helicopter, ship or any other mean of transportation)
- the day and time you will arrive