

India



COUNTRY FACTS:

Capital: New Delhi

Population: 1,173,108,018

Area, sq. mi.: 1,269,219

Real GDP per capita: 3,200

Adult literacy rate: 82% (male);
65% (female)

Ethnic make-up: Indo-Aryan
72%, Dravidian 25%, Mongoloid
and other 3%

Religion: Hindu 80.5%, Muslim
13.4%, Christian 2.3%, Sikh 1.9%,
other 1.8%, unspecified 0.1%

School Classes

Students in India have five main subjects and usually two optional subjects. Students are evaluated mainly on performance in quarterly and annual exams. All students in each grade study the same subjects. Indian high school classes generally have around 25 students. Co-ed education is not prevalent everywhere and all boy or all girl schools are more common. Students are career conscious and often receive additional tutoring outside of school for more competitive educational tracks.

School Relationships

Students are formal in their interaction with teachers and call them Sir or Madam.

Extracurricular Activities

Usually students are more focused on studies and rarely participate extensively in extracurricular activities. Indian parents encourage their children to focus on their studies rather than any out of school activities. However, if students are participating in extracurriculars, parents are equally as involved as they are with the student's studies.

School Rules

Many Indian high schools have a "zero tolerance" policy regarding cell phone usage and fighting. These activities are generally not allowed at all in school and the penalties for engaging in them are often severe. Students attend classes regularly due to schools' strict attendance rules.

Family Life

There is a nuclear family system in some cities however, joint family systems are still very common in most cities. Visiting friends or relatives unannounced is very common in India. It is rare for family members in India to spend time alone or with individual pursuits in the home when other family members are present.

In India, the mother may be a home maker or a working professional. The father is considered financially responsible for the family. In nuclear families, both parents may expect to be seen equally as authority figures in all household decisions. In joint families, however, the head of the family makes decisions unilaterally. The majority of families in India are male dominated. Initially, students coming to the U.S. may tend to listen to the host mother with casual disregard.

In India, hiring a housekeeper depends on the financial situation of families. Mothers do most of the housework and students focus on their studies. Most Indian families have dinner together. In joint families, males and children are served first and women have their meals last. The mothers of the family do all of the cooking and in rural and small communities, girls are expected to cook as well.

Teen Life

The concept of sharing is very common in India, especially amongst siblings. Siblings and close friends will share clothes, shoes, watches, perfume and other personal items often without express permission.

Responsibilities

In India, children are supposed to focus on studies only and they are not supposed to work. In most families, students rely on their parents for all of their financial needs. They will likely not be aware of what expenses will need to be covered by their stipend each month.

Parental Involvement

In India, most parents are not computer savvy and families do not have computers at home. Students will often use the internet while at internet cafés. Parents do not monitor much of the student's internet usage. Parents in India are in direct contact with their children's school and are kept aware of their academic progress, however in small cities parents take less interest in attending such meetings. In India, students are very dependent on their parents, especially boys who are doted upon. The student will likely ask for advice and direction from his or her host parents often, and may take that advice as their final decision.

Pets

Pets are not very common in the home in India. However, if a family does have pets, they treat them with love and care.

Personal Interactions

Mixed Gender Socializing

The social acceptability in India of one-on-one relationships with the opposite gender varies by city or state or whether a student is from a large city or small town. Teens do have friends of the opposite gender from time to time, but it is often not considered good social practice.

Friendships

Most friends are made in school and around the neighborhood. Friendships are generally very casual with no serious commitments. Many teenagers are more invested in family time and relationships. In India, people do not greet people whom they don't know. With the people whom they do greet, they tend to go into conversation mode with each meeting.

Communication Styles

In India, teenagers have a formal and indirect form of communication with their elders and family members. Students and family members will discuss matters related to education and study, but not those related to finance. Students may need to be asked repeatedly about certain subjects at first, before they will open up. Indian teenagers aren't comfortable expressing negative emotions to their friends and family.

Eye Contact

Teenagers in India are supposed to look down as a mark of respect when talking with elders.

Cultural Norms

In India it is accepted that males will do the hard and physical tasks and that females will do gentle tasks and household chores. Even in the families where both parents are working, the woman of the house does the cooking, and looks after the children. Males have more financial responsibilities. Children or house maids are expected to help with household chores. In India, the concept of personal space does not exist. Indians are very family oriented and people share rooms and beds. Indians are time conscious, but being 10 or 15 minutes late is considered normal.

Personal Hygiene

In India one bath per day is normal and in the summer, they will bathe twice per day. Students are expected to keep bathrooms clean, but drying the bathroom is not common in India due to the different type of bathroom. There are drains in the bathroom floor in most bathrooms in India, so leaving water around or spilling water onto the floor is not considered a problem. In Indian family each individual has their own towel. The same towel is used to dry their body, hair and face. Wearing the same clothes two days in a row or twice without washing them is generally thought to be unclean.

Food and Culture

Diet

In India, halal food is readily available. Cooking is a very extensive affair and everything is prepared from scratch.

Gifts

In India, teenagers give friends gifts for personal events like birthdays. Many also give family members gifts for anniversaries and birthdays, but gift giving on festivals or holidays is done only from elder family members to the youth.

Religion

In India, attending religious services is often a family event, and the social aspect of attending the services, being part of the community, is often just as important as the religious aspect. In India there is a general tolerance and acceptance of a variety of religions.

Holidays

Ramadan and Eid al-Fitr are celebrated in almost all parts of India. Eid is observed as a public holiday. The majority of non-Muslim people do not celebrate Eid, but they know when it is celebrated.

In India, different regions celebrate different festivals (most major festivals are celebrated during Sep-Nov). Major festivals are Diwali, Holi (Celebrated in March), Pongal, Ganesh, Chaturthi, and more.