



# India

## Family Life



Joint family systems are still common in most cities, however there is a nuclear family system in some cities. It is also common for friends or relatives to show up unannounced at each other's homes. 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. While mothers may be home makers or working professionals, fathers are considered financially responsible for the family as the majority of families in India are male-dominated. 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. 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. Generally, mothers do most of the housework, while students focus on their studies. Most Indian families have dinner together. In joint families, males and children are served first, while women eat 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 solely focus on their studies. In most families, students rely on their parents for all of their financial needs. Students will likely not be aware of what expenses will need to be covered by their stipend each month. Sons are generally pampered and spoiled, and most are not asked to do house chores. However, in modern, urban families, girls and boys are treated equally and have the same privileges and sometimes even boys are expected to help at home. Boys usually help their parents getting groceries (outdoor chores), whereas girls are expected to help with household chores, such as cleaning and cooking.

**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 cafes, therefore most parents do not monitor much of their children'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. Generally, students are very dependent on their parents, especially boys. 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.

## School



**Classes:** The Indian education system majorly focuses on theoretical studies. Students study for long hours during the day to score a good rank amongst their peers. Students are evaluated mainly on their quarterly and annual exam performance. You may notice that competition is very tough amongst students to get higher grades. Students in India take five main subjects and usually two optional subjects; all students in the same grade study the same main subjects. Generally, there are 25 students per class. Exams follow various formats, such as essays, short answers, and/or multiple choice questions. Co-ed education is not widely prevalent; either 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 either "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 extracurricular activities, parents are equally as involved as they are with the student's studies.

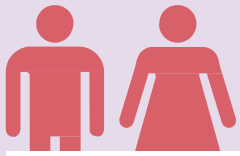
**School Rules and Attire:** Many Indian high schools have a "zero tolerance" policy regarding cell phone usage and fighting. These activities are generally not allowed at all in school and the penalties for engaging in them are often severe. Students attend classes regularly due to strict attendance rules. Additionally, every student is required to wear their school's uniform. Uniforms vary in print and color from school to school, and often schools have different uniforms for winter and summer. Students are not allowed to accessorize or use nail polish, make-up, or wear fancy shoes, and non-compliance with the dress code is punishable.

**Returning from Exchange:** When students depart for the U.S., they are required to inform their Indian high school and obtain a school letter indicating that the school is aware that the student will be participating in the YES program. On completion of the program, the student should request copies of their transcripts, attendance sheets, courses, and syllabi from their host school; these documents will be used by the student's Indian high school in deciding the academic grade placement of the student upon their return. Alumni also peak to students to give them tips on re-integrating into the Indian school system.

# Personal Interactions



New Delhi



Population  
1,398,346,496



Square Miles  
1,269,346



Currency  
Indian Rupee



Literacy rate  
75.3%

Literacy rate  
53.7%

## Language

Hindi 43.63%  
English 0.02%  
Bengali 8.03%  
Marathi 6.86%  
Telugu 6.70%  
Tamil 5.70%  
Gujarati 4.58%  
Urdu 4.19%  
Kannada 3.61%  
Odia 3.10%  
Malayalam 2.88%  
Punjabi 2.74%  
Assamese 1.26%

## Religion

Hindus 80.5%  
Muslims 13.4%  
Christians 2.3%  
Sikhs 1.9%  
Buddhists 0.8%  
Jains 0.4%  
Others 0.6%

**Mixed Gender Socializing:** The social acceptability of one-on-one relationships with the opposite gender varies by city, state, and 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 who they don't know.

**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 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, 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.

# Food and Culture



Teenagers give friends and family members gifts for personal events, such as birthdays or anniversaries. During festivals or major holidays, gift giving is only done by elder family members for children. Cooking is a very extensive affair and everything is prepared from scratch.

**Guest Culture:** A guest is treated like God, even in the poorest of families. It is generally considered impolite or rude to say "no" directly or to decline an invitation, even if you know you cannot accept the invitation. In cultures that are more straightforward this can lead to confusion. On the other hand, it is also considered impolite to appear greedy or desirous of something; when offered a cup of tea or a spontaneous gift, normally an Indian will say: "oh no thank you!" The formality of offering is usually repeated at least three times before a person will say yes, if at all. Often the tea is simply served.

**Lunch and Diets:** In most of the cases, the student's lunch is packed by their mother, however it differs on case to case bases. Indian lunch boxes have huge varieties, which include sandwiches, Indian breads and pickles, pastas and noodles, poha, dosa and idlis, and fruits to name a few. It may not be necessarily complimented with any drink. Some children even receive lunch money from their parents to buy a hot school lunch. Vending machines in schools are not common and are only available in high end schools in large cities. In India, halal food is readily available for Muslims.

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

**Holidays and Festivals:** India is a culturally rich and diverse country and celebrates various holidays and festivals. There are three national holidays in India observed in all states and union territories: Independence Day on 15 August, Mahatma Gandhi's birthday on 2 October, and Republic Day on 26 January. Indians celebrate a number of festivals all through the year. Ramadan and Eid al-Fitr are celebrated in almost all parts of India, and Eid al-Fitr is a public holiday. The majority of non-Muslim people do not celebrate Eid, but they know when it is celebrated. The major Hindu festivals celebrated in India are: Diwali, Holi, Rakshabandhan.

# Personal Hygiene



In India, it is normal to bathe once per day. In the summer, students sometimes bathe twice per day. Students are expected to keep bathrooms clean, but drying the bathroom is not common due to the fact that most bathrooms have drains in the floor. Each person within the family 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.