

Returning to India

Country Profile

India is the largest democracy and second most populated country in the world with a population of 1.241 billion people.

It has a fast-growing economy and a large skilled workforce yet it is still tackling major economic and social issues and there remains severe poverty across the country.

The country has a growing urban middle-class and one of its major industries is information technology.



There have been three wars between India and Pakistan since 1947, two of them over the disputed territory of Kashmir. A third war between the two countries in 1971 resulted in East Pakistan becoming the separate nation of Bangladesh.

India has a federal system of government. The current Prime Minister is Manmohan Singh. 344m people voted in 2009 election.

Religions: Hindu 80%, Muslim 14%, Christian 2%, Sikh 2%, Buddhist 1%, Jains 1%
Main languages spoken include Hindi, Bengali, Telugu, Marathi, Tamil, Urdu, Gujarati, Malayalam, Kannada, Oriya, Punjabi, Assamese, Kashmiri, Sindhi, Sanskrit and English.

English is the second language taught in schools.

Ethnic Divisions: Indo-Aryan: 72%, Dravidian: 25%, Mongoliad and Other: 3%

Capital: New Delhi

Currency: Indian Rupee (£1 = 90.60 Rupees)

To call from the UK you require the international dialling code 00 + 91 followed by the City code.

Recent History

India was made independent from British rule in 1947 and there was a partition into Hindu-majority India and Muslim-majority Pakistan.

Since 1947 there have been three wars between India and Pakistan, two of them over the disputed territory of Kashmir.

In 1971 a third war resulted in East Pakistan becoming the separate nation of Bangladesh.

In 1987, India sent troops for a peacekeeping operation in Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict, and withdrew three years later in 1990. In 1991, an economic reform programme was launched by Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao.

In 1992, Hindu extremists demolish a mosque in Ayodhya, causing violence between Hindus and Muslims across the country. In 1999, a cyclone devastated the eastern state of Orissa, leaving 10,000 dead.

In 2000, the US president Bill Clinton visits India seeking to improve relations. From 2001 tensions rise in Kashmir between India and Pakistan.

In 2004, thousands are killed by a tsunami devastating many coastal communities in India.

In 2007, the Indian government announce its strongest economic growth figures for 20 years. India is now one of the fastest growing economies in the world with a large skilled workforce. However, India's economic growth is hindered by inadequate infrastructure and bureaucracy and about 60% of the population is still living close to, or below, the poverty line.

National Documentation

Aadhaar or Unique Identification (UID)

In 2004, the Indian government launched a scheme which sought to provide an official identification card for the entire Indian population, called Aadhaar or Unique Identification (UID). This is becoming a mandatory documentation for opening a bank account, applying for a passport, booking air and train tickets, receiving pensions, and applying for home utilities such as gas connections. Issued by the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI).

Pan Card

This is currently equivalent to the Aadhaar and its main purpose is for tracking tax payments. It is also valid for applying for bank loans, buying or selling a property or

vehicle and for bank deposits. Issued by the Ministry of Finance.

Driving License

Certifies that you are suitably qualified to drive a motor vehicle and can in some circumstances provide proof of nationality and address. Issued by Regional Transport Offices.

Passport

A passport is required for travelling abroad. In India a passport also functions as proof of residence for opening a bank account, gaining a telephone connection and anything else which requires proof of nationality. Issued by the Ministry of External Affairs.

Voter's ID Card

Makes you eligible to vote during elections and can be obtained from 19 years of age. You may also use it to open a bank account, gain a phone connection and a driving license. Issued by the Election Commission.

Ration Card

For purchasing essential items from fair price shops, and also functions as proof of ID. Issued by the state governments to those Above Poverty Line, Below Poverty Line and Antyodaya families. (Antyodaya is an Indian government sponsored scheme for India's poorest families, launched in 2000).

Travelling to India

Besides a passport, there are a number of alternative acceptable travel documents which you may use when you return to India. This includes your birth certificate, an Indian I.D card, or it may be possible to use one of the above national documentations. It is also possible to travel using an expired passport if you have notified the Indian Embassy before you travel. You may request your birth certificate from the Indian Embassy if you do not have it with you.

Upon Arrival

Many returning to India have highlighted the importance of family and friends in providing support with the transition, including providing accommodation and assistance in settling in. Therefore it is recommended that before your return, you make contact with any relatives or friends that may be able to assist you.

International Organization for Migration in India

Before you travel, you should make contact with the International Organization for Migration in India who will be able to offer assistance in organising airport pick-up, assistance in finding accommodation and other services in assisting your reintegration.

If you arrive in India without a place to stay, the following places may be able to offer you short-term accommodation, either free of charge or for a small fee. If they are unable to provide accommodation directly, they may also be able to offer support in finding alternative accommodation.

Temporary Accommodation

CITY	ORGANISATION	CONTACT
MUMBAI	Church Mission House Grant Road Mumbai - 400 007	Tel: (0091) 22 2387 1782
	Centre for Social Action Eucharistic Congress Building No.III, 5 Convent Street, Mumbai - 400 001	Tel: (0091) 22 2202 1509 / (0091) 22 2202 2987
	Women's Temporary Emergency Shelter YWCA Mumbai Asha Kiran 53 J.P Road Andheri West Mumbai 400 058	Tel: (0091) 22 2670 2831
NEW DELHI	Chetanalaya Bhai Vir Singh Marg, Gole Market New Delhi, DL 110001	Tel: (0091) 8800 487174
	International Organization for Migration (IOM) F-5 Kailash Colony Greater Kailash New Delhi - 110048	Tel: (0091) 11 4053 2401/03
TAMIL NADU	Madurai Social Service Society MMSSS, Sancta Maria, By-Pass Road, Chockalinkanagar	Tel: (0091) 452-2382250 Email: sec@mmsss.org

	Thanjavur Social Service Society 2851/50, Trichy Road, Maris Corner, Post Box No.- 77, Thanjavur - 613001 Areas of operation: Thanjavur, Thiruvarur, Nagapattinam, Pudukkottai and Cuddalore districts of State of Tamil Nadu	Tel: (0091) 4362 230977 Email: tajmsss1@yahoo.co.in / tajmsss@rediffmail.com
	Florence Home Foundation No. 6, Muthukumaran Street, Pudupalayam, Cuddalore - 607001, Tamil Nadu	Tel: (0091) 4142 293614 E-mail: fhfloveandcare@yahoo.com
CALCUTTA (AKA KOLKATA)	Salvation Army Guest House 2 Sudder Street, Kolkata	Tel: (0091) 33 228 61659

Housing

There isn't a formal state welfare system in India which provides housing therefore access to social housing services exist mainly through local NGOs and charitable organisations (see the directory at the end of this document). If you are looking for more permanent housing, there are various common ways that people use to find accommodation in India.

It may be helpful to note that housing in India is extremely varied and whilst there are increasing numbers of modern houses and luxury apartments, many still live in slums, dilapidated housing blocks or on pavements. You will notice this contrast, particularly in big cities such as Mumbai and Delhi. Also, less than half of rural households have access to electricity and even in cities there are relatively frequent power cuts and limited water supplies.

In a bid to tackle the significant shortage of affordable housing in India, the government launched a number of new building schemes and there has been a rising number of private developers in India providing affordable homes for low-income workers. However there remains an extreme shortage of housing in India's urban areas and as a result, cities have experienced a rising number of unauthorised housing settlements scattered in and around the cities. Around 50% of the population

of Mumbai continue to live in slums or on pavements.

Many buildings in the city are in poor conditions, as the introduction of rent control has contributed to poor maintenance and repair of housing units. Most urban workers in India live in slums, or illegally on public land with communal toilet facilities.

Renting a property

Word of Mouth

In India one of the main ways of finding available accommodation to rent is through word of mouth, therefore try to make contact with friends or family in the country before you leave the UK to inform them that you are looking for accommodation.

Newspapers

Most national and local Indian newspapers will feature a list of accommodation available.

Times of India: India's major national newspaper

Accommodation Times: India's fortnightly newspaper on Real Estate and Property
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Local newspapers (i.e Mumbai Times, Bangalore Times etc.)

Online

Below are a few popular websites featuring available accommodation which you can access once you have arrived in India.

www.swagatamindia.com

www.realestatemumbai.com

Buying property

Micro-housing lenders are able to provide loans which can be set up to be paid back over a long term basis for buying a property in India.

Transport

Since the 1990s, there have been significant improvements to India's roads. Despite this, many people still do not own their own cars and public transport remains the primary mode of transport.

Cycle rickshaw

Introduced in India in the 1940s, cycle rickshaws are the cheapest way to travel around. Most of the big cities have banned the cycle rickshaw, but they are still the main means of local transport in many smaller towns. Fares must be agreed upon in advance.

Auto Rickshaw

A three-wheeled vehicle commonly known as an 'auto' or 'rick', commonly found in cities. These vehicles have regulated meters prohibiting over-charging and a recent law prohibits drivers from refusing to go to particular locations. In Mumbai and Kolkata they are prohibited from entering certain parts of the city. As with taxis and cycle rickshaws, fares must be agreed upon in advance.

Bus

Buses are a cheap way to get around India, though most prefer trains for long distance journeys due to the dangerous driving often encountered on buses. Buses run by the state government bus companies are usually the safest and most reliable option. Expect to pay Rs 40 to Rs 60 for a three-hour daytime journey and Rs 200 to Rs 300 for an all-day or overnight trip. Deluxe buses can usually be booked in advance at the bus stand or local travel agents. Reservations are rarely possible on 'ordinary' buses.

At many bus stations there is a separate women's queue, and women have an unspoken right to push to the front of any queue in India.

Taxi

There are always a vast number of taxis driving around India's major cities and to travel your driver uses the meter or confirm a price before-hand to avoid over charging.

Railway

The train is one of the best ways to travel in India, particularly when travelling long distances, as the network is extensive and it is reasonably priced. However particularly in major cities such as Mumbai and Delhi, trains are severely congested. You will often find separate carriages for women passengers.

For long distance travel you can book tickets by visiting the train station and tickets can usually be booked up to one month in advance. Fares are calculated by distance and class of travel.

Metro

India's first metro train line was built in 1984, with metro systems now running in Bangalore, Chennai, Delhi and Kolkata, with further lines under construction in other major cities including Mumbai and Hyderabad.

Health Care

Government-funded healthcare is available across India through hospitals and health centres. However many Indian citizens rely on private healthcare due to the relatively poor quality of care, long waiting times and inconvenient hours of operation in public hospitals.

The healthcare system functions as a 3-tier system; primary; secondary and tertiary level health care.

Primary Healthcare

Primary Healthcare refers to the first level of contact between individuals and families within the healthcare system and is provided through Health posts and Family Welfare Centres. This includes family planning; immunisation; treatment of common diseases or injuries; and provision of food and nutrition.

In the last couple of years, public health institutions in rural areas have undergone some significant developments under the National Rural Health Mission (2011).

Secondary Healthcare

Secondary Healthcare refers to the level of healthcare in which patients are referred to from primary healthcare. In India, the health centres for secondary health care include District hospitals and Community Health Centres. District hospitals provide all basic speciality services.

Tertiary Health Care

This refers to the care provided on referral from primary and secondary medical care. Specialised Intensive Care Units, advanced diagnostic support services and specialised medical personnel are the key features of tertiary health care. In India, this services is provided by medical colleges and advanced medical research institutes.

Hospitals and health clinics in India's major cities

City	Hospital
Mumbai	The Prince Aly Khan Hospital Aga Hall Nesbit Road, Mazagaon Mumbai-400 010

City	Hospital
	Lilavati Hospital A-791, Bandra Reclamation, Bandra West, 400 050 Tel: (022) 26568000. Ext. No 8248 / 8283
	Clinical Diagnostic Centre, South Mumbai A-2 Ben Nevis, Bhulabhai Desai Road, Next To Tata Gar- den, Mumbai 400 036 Tel: (022) 61196200/ 23684764/ 65
	Clinical Diagnostic Centre, North Mumbai A403 Floral Deck Plaza, C Cross Road, Midc, Opp. Seepz Near Rolta Bhavan, Andheri (East), Delhi Mumbai-400093
Delhi	RML Hospital Baba Kharak Singh Marg Connaught Place, New Delhi, DL 110001, India.
	Max Medcentre N-110, Panchsheel Park New Delhi 110 021
	Sadhu Vaswani Mission Medical Centre 4/27, Shanti Niketan New Delhi 110 021
Pune	Ruby Hall Clinic 40, Sassoon Road, 411 001 Pune Tel: (020) 6645 5242 / 6645 5286 / 2616 3391
	Elbit Medical Diagnostic Ltd 1 & 1/2 Indian Express Building Queens Road, Bangalore -560 001 Tel: (080) 40570000 / 4113246

City	Hospital
	Fortis Hospital Opp Iim-B Bangalore -560076
Chennai	The Apollo Heart Centre 156 Greams Road, Chennai 600006
Calcutta / Kolkata	Apollo Gleneagles Hospital Ltd 58 Canal Circular Road, Kolkata 700054 Tel: (033) 23202122 / 23202040
	Pulse Diagnostics Pty Ltd 75 Sarat Bose Road, Kolkata 700019 Tel: (033) 24546142 / 21492603
Useful Numbers for Emergency Services	Police Services: 100 Fire: 101 Ambulance Services: 102 Accident and Trauma Service: 1099

Education for Children

A high value is placed on education in India. Since the 2009 Right to Education Act, schooling is free and compulsory for all children from the ages of six to fourteen years old. However, disadvantaged groups still often do not have adequate access to education.

Most schools have a strong focus on academic subjects, with less focus on creative lessons and with few extra-curricular activities. Traditional schooling methods tend to emphasise rote learning and memorisation, rather than encouraging independent or creative thinking. There is a strong focus on examination from an early age, which makes the atmosphere at school relatively competitive.

Education structure:

Pre-school: Education at this level is not compulsory.

Private play schools: Children between the ages of 18 months and three

Kindergarten: This is divided into lower kindergarten (for three- to four-year-olds) and upper kindergarten (for four- to five- year-olds)

Primary school: First to fifth grade (for six- to ten-year-olds)

Middle school: Fifth to eighth grade (for 11- to 14-year-olds)

Secondary school: Ninth and tenth grade (for 14- to 16-year-olds)

Higher secondary or pre-university: 11th and 12th grade (for 16- to 17-year-olds). This is when students choose an academic area on which to focus.

Types of Schools

Public/government schools: Most schools in India are funded and run by the government. However, the public education system faces serious challenges including a lack of adequate infrastructure, insufficient funding, a shortage of staff and scarce facilities. Since many government schools do not provide adequate education, Indian parents aspire to send their children to a private school. There are also international schools in all major cities which are attended both by expat and Indian children. In addition, national open schools provide education up to the higher secondary level for children whose schooling has been interrupted and have been unable to complete formal education. Special-needs schools provide non-formal education and vocational training to children with disabilities.

Enrolling your child into a school

In India, enrolment is mainly done face-to-face, through visiting the school and arranging a meeting with the headteacher.

Banking and Finance

To open a bank account in India, you will need a number of important documents. Note that nationalised banks are very strict about which documents they require, whereas private banks are more lenient. To open a standard current account in India you will need to have the following;

- Proof of address (rental agreement or similar)
- An Aadhaar (UID) card or Voter's ID card or similar identification proof
- Name, contact details and signature of a person already holding an account from that particular bank. Three passport-sized photographs

Cost of Living

The cost of living has risen especially in the last decade, but it is reasonable compared to costs in the UK. Below is a rough guide for various common items, though prices can vary between different cities and also in rural areas, prices are generally lower.

Item	Cost in Rupees
Milk (1 litre)	35.00
Loaf of bread	20.00
Rice (1 kg)	42.00

Item	Cost in Rupees
Bottle of water (1.5 Litre)	20.00
Pack of Marlboro cigarettes	100.00
Meal for one in inexpensive restaurant	100.00
One-way ticket (local transport)	13.00
Monthly pass (regular price)	600.00
Taxi 1km (normal tariff)	30.00 Rs (start) + 15.00

Employment & Training Opportunities

India is now one of the fastest growing economies in the world, with a large skilled workforce. The country has a growing urban middle-class and one of its major industries is information technology (I.T); it has opened up significantly for I.T professionals to bring their expertise in recent years.

It is also relatively simple to start up a small business in India and there are various organisations that can support you through this process.

Finding work in India

In India there is a significant distinction between employment in the formal and informal sector. There are a number of local charitable organisations which can assist you in finding work, gaining skills, or setting up a business (see charity directory).

If seeking work in the formal sector you will need to demonstrate;

- You are certified as an Indian citizen: (Passport; Aadhaar/UID Card; driving license; birth certificate)
- Proof of address: (Rental agreement or contract)
- Educational qualifications: (Education papers such as high school examination papers, or equivalent)

Driving in India

Under the provisions of the Motor Vehicles Act 1988 in India, no person can drive a motor vehicle in any public place unless he holds a valid Driving License. In India, two kinds of Driving Licenses are issued: Learner's License and Permanent License.

A Learner's License is valid only for six months and a Permanent License can only be used for one month after the expiry of the Learner's License.

Learner's License: To obtain a Learner's License, you will need to apply in the prescribed forms to the Local Transport Office in your region, along with two passport-sized photographs, proof of your age and residence, declaration of medical

fitness and the required fee. After verification of your documents, you will have to go through the Learner's Test. Usually a handbook of traffic rules, signs and regulations is provided with the application form. On passing the Learner's Test, you will be issued a Learner's License. If you fail the test, you will be given a chance to take the test again.

Permanent License: To obtain a Permanent License, you must have a valid Learner's License, and must apply after 30 days and within 180 days of issue of the Learner's License. You should have some knowledge about the vehicle, driving, traffic rules and regulations. Note that you must bring a vehicle with you. On passing the test, you will be issued a Permanent Driving License.

Law, Customs and Celebrations

With its many languages, cultures and religions, India is highly diverse. The country is made up of 28 states and seven territories, each with at least one official language. India is known as the birthplace of Hinduism with four main sects (Shakteya; Shaiva; Smarta and Vaishnava) and the Hindu religion influences much of its culture.

Law

Drugs are illegal in India. There is a minimum sentence of 6 months for possession of small amounts deemed for personal consumption and 10 year sentence for possessions of other amounts applies.

In 2009, adult consensual homosexual relations were decriminalised in the Indian Penal Code. This ruling by the Delhi High Court is seen as a landmark in the Indian gay rights movement. According to Indian law, homosexual relations are legal only between consenting adults over the age of 18. Despite the law, homophobic attitudes persist in Indian society, however there is more openness towards homosexuality in urban areas.

Customs

Most women in India will dress in the typical Salwa Kameez or sari, though there has been a distinct western influence on dress code in recent years, with increasing numbers of women choosing to wear more western-styled clothing.

In India, eating with your hands is a tradition, yet it is customary to eat only using the right hand as the left hand is considered unclean. The left hand is customarily used for cleaning oneself after defecation, so Indian people never eat, shake hands, or pass on anything, such as money or a gift, with their left hands.

Caste System

In line with India's other developments, the ancient Hindu caste system, which assigns each person a place in the social hierarchy, is becoming increasingly less important. Discrimination on the basis of caste is now illegal and various measures have been

introduced to empower disadvantaged groups. Also, with the opportunities provided mainly through education, many have been able to rise above the circumstances of their birth and background.

Despite this, mainly when it comes to marriage, many still uphold the caste system and though inter-caste marriages are on the rise, this remains relatively uncommon. Also, rural areas continue to be heavily influenced by the caste system.

In descending order, the four main castes include;

Brahmana (or Brahmin): Those engaged in religious education and teaching

Kshatriya: Those involved in public service, including law and order and

administration Vaishya: Those engaged in agriculture, trade or business

Shudra: Unskilled and semi-skilled laborers

Celebrations

There are also a number of Hindu festivals which are celebrated across the country, the most important being Diwali, a five day festival which begins between September and October and ends between October and November every year. India also marks the following important occasions;

Republic Day: 26th January Independence Day: 15th August Mahatma Gandhi's

Birthday: 2nd October

Region	Organisation	Services
Mumbai	Indian Red Cross Society Maharashtra State Branch 141 Shahid Bhagat Singh Road Town Hall Compound Tel: (0091) 22221 50766	
	Alcoholics Anonymous Christ Church School Hall, Clare Road, BYCULLA Mumbai – 400 008. Tel: (0091) 22 2309 5526	Counselling for alcoholics
	Centre for Social Action Tel: (0091) 222202 2987 / (0091) 976927 9681	Counselling, general support and advice
	Crossroads Prison Ministries D/7 Minoo Minar Bldg. Veera Desai Road Andheri (W), Mumbai – 400 058. Tel: (0091) 22 2632 3974 / 2696 3298	Prison and rehabilitation ministries, legal aid, counselling, correction and care

Region	Organisation	Services
	Prison Ministry India (Mumbai Unit) Centre for Peace Trust St Pius College Aarey Road Goregaon Mumbai 400063 Contact Juliet, Rosebel or Allwyn Tel: (0091) 22 29270953; 29270523	Counselling, job opportunities, general support
	OASIS India Mumbai office: Tel: (0091) 2225 03 3335 Bangalore office: Tel: (0091) 8025 484 879 / 8041 253 505 Chennai office: Tel: (0091) 4442 744325 London Office: Tel: (0044) (0) 207 921 4200	
New Delhi	Caritas Caritas India, CBCI Centre, Ashok Place, Opposite to Gole Dakkhana New Delhi 11 00 01, Tel: (0091) 112 336 3390 / 2374 2339 / 2336 2735	Assists those being returned to India providing employment advice and counselling.
	Indian Red Cross Society 1, Red Cross Road New Delhi 110001	
	Chetanalaya 9-10 Bhai Vir Singh Marg New Delhi - 110001 Tel: (0091) 8800 487174	Support with finding employment and housing, and has special programme for those returning to India.
	Human Rights Law Network Socio-Legal Information Centre 576, Masjid Road, Jungpura New Delhi - 110014 Tel: (0091) 11-24374501 / 11- 24379855	Low-cost and pro-bono legal aid to those who would otherwise not have access to the Indian justice system due to socio-economic barriers.
Pune	Gandhi Memorial Society Aga Khan Palace Nagar Road Pune - 411006 Maharashtra	Provides education, vocational training courses, counseling, rehabilitation and other developmental activities.

Region	Organisation	Services
	Najeevan Charitable Society Tel: (0091) 9814 617697	
Bangalore	Prison Ministry India, Providence Home, No.52, Near IVY Rossa Resort, Thomas Lay out, Sarjapur Road, Carmelaram, Bangalore -35	
	Sangama 82/A, 'Anugraha' 2nd Main, 2nd Cross Ashwathanagar RMV 2nd Stage Bangalore -560094 Hotline: 099 4560 1651/52 / 099 4560 165	Human rights organisation providing information and support for India's sexual minorities. They also have a 24-hour helpline for dealing with issues of harassment.

Sources:

www.countrywatch.com/country_profile

www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-12557384

www.globalurban.org http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2007-06-09/delhi/27984451_1_cycle-rickshaws-chandni-chowk-church-mission-road <http://www.railway-technology.com/projects/delhi-metro/>

<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/india/transport/getting-around> http://www.arthapedia.in/index.php?title=Primary,_Secondary_and_Tertiary_HealthCare

<http://www.biharonline.gov.in/Site/Content/General/General.aspx?u=9&AspxAutoDetectCookieSupport=1> <http://www.numbeo.com/cost-of-living>

<http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/>

<http://www.iom.int/cms/en/sites/iom/home/where-we-work/asia-and-the-pacific/india.html>