

Country Information Sheet
for Return and Reintegration Counsellors



Republic of India





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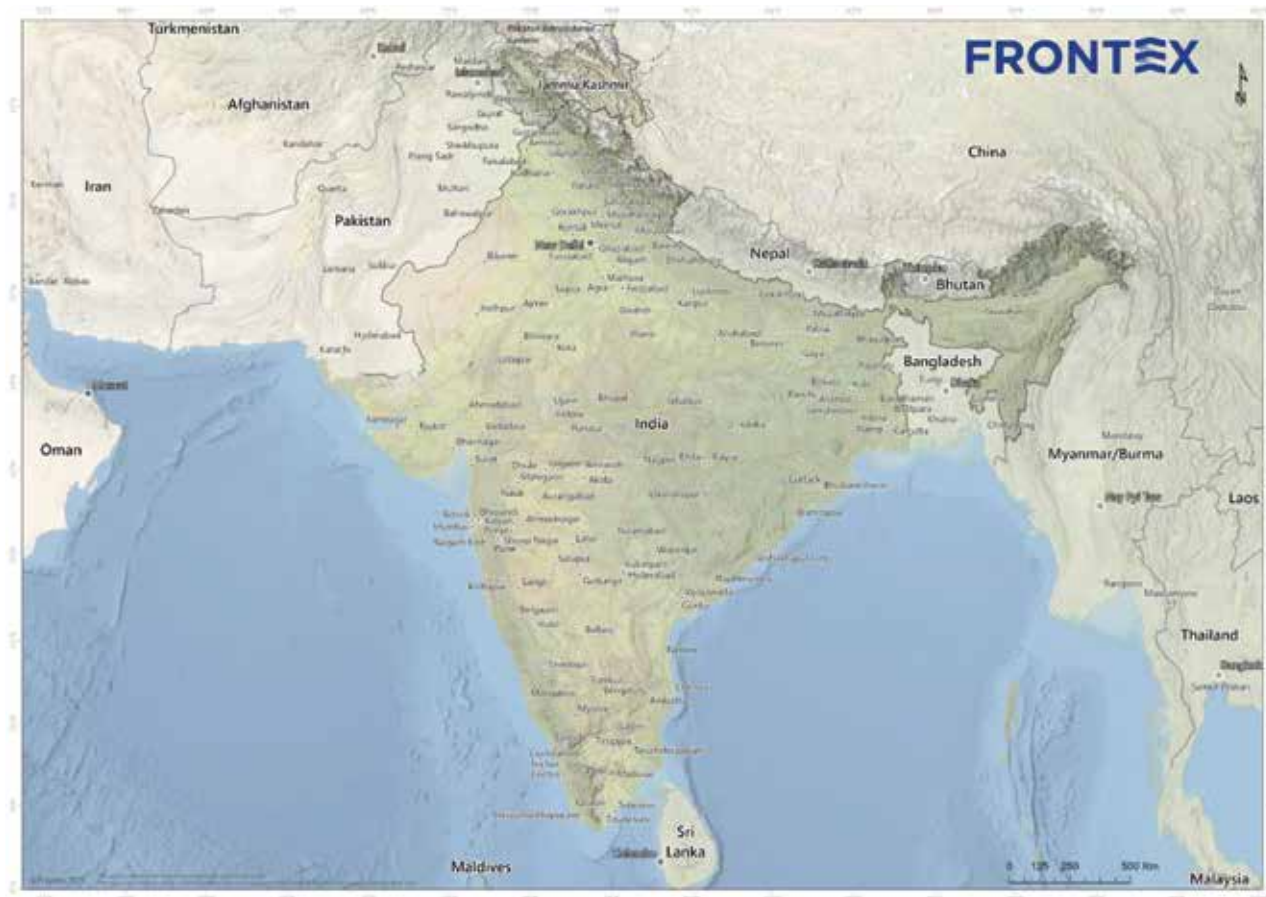
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1. General information



Population

total: 1.4 billion
male: 725.8 million
female: 683.3 million

Ethnic groups

Indo-Aryan 72%, Dravidian 25%, other 3%

Languages

Hindi 43,6%, Bengali 8%, Marathi 6,9%,
Telugu 6,7%, Tamil 5,7%, Gujarati 4,6%,
Urdu 4,2%, Kannada 3,6%, Odia 3,1%,
Malayalam 2,9%, Punjabi 2,7%, Assamese 1,3%,
Maithili 1,1%, other 5,6%; note - English enjoys
the status of subsidiary official language but
is the most important language for national,
political, and commercial communication;
there are 22 other officially recognized

languages: Assamese, Bengali, Bodo, Dogri,
Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Kashmiri, Konkani,
Maithili, Malayalam, Manipuri, Marathi, Nepali,
Odia, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Santali, Sindhi, Tamil,
Telugu, Urdu; Hindustani is a popular variant
of Hindi/Urdu spoken widely throughout
northern India but is not an official language.

Religions

Hindu 79,8%, Muslim 14,2%, Christian 2,3%,
Sikh 1,7%, other and unspecified 2%

Population growth rate

0,89%

Government type

federal parliamentary republic

Capital name

New Delhi

Telephone code

+91

2. Reintegration partner

To implement reintegration assistance, Frontex has concluded a partnership with IRARA, in India, to assure the delivery of a high level of support.

IRARA has been delivering expert reintegration services in India for several years and provides quality, tailored reintegration activities focused on enhancing the lives of those returning to India and the communities in which they live.



The Development and Justice Initiative,
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Monday-Friday 10am-6pm (local time)



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Jalandhar, Punjab - 144001



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www.irara.org



reintegration@irara.org

3. Travel documents

3.1 Types, procedure and required documents

Under the Passports Act 1967, the Government of India may issue different types of passports and travel documents such as Ordinary Passport, Diplomatic

Passport, Official Passport, Emergency Certificate and Certificate of Identity for the purpose.

Emergency certificate

An EC is a one-way travel document valid only for the return to India and can be obtained through an online application from an Embassy of India website. An EC

is issued to citizens of India to whom a new passport cannot be issued.

1. Apply online

- Go to an Embassy of India website and register for an account.
- Log in and fill out the EC application form online.
- Submit the form online and then print a copy.

2. Gather documents

- Application form: Printed and signed online-submitted form.
- Police report: In case of a lost or stolen passport, an official police report (is original and copy) that includes the applicant's name and the details of the loss.
- Proof of emergency: Provide a document explaining the reason for the emergency.
- Passport photos: Three recent passport-sized photographs.
- Proof of Indian nationality: A copy of your Indian passport (if available) and a completed Nationality Verification Form.
- Travel plans: Provide a copy of the confirmed airline ticket to India.

3. Submit all the required documents in person and pay the applicable fee at the time of submission.

- An appointment with the local Indian embassy or consulate is needed.¹

Biometric passport

To obtain an Indian passport from abroad, individuals must apply through the nearest Indian embassy, High Commission, or their authorized service provider, typically VFS Global.

The applicant must first complete an online application form via the [Passport Seva at Indian Embassies and Consulates portal](#), selecting either a passport re-issue or an EC depending on their situation.

Subsequently, the person must gather necessary documentation, including their old passport, visa/residence permit copies, photographs, and the printed application form.

The physical application is submitted either in person by appointment or by post to the authorized service provider or the mission itself, along with the required fees. The process for a standard passport usually takes several weeks.

¹ [Passport Seva at Indian Embassies](#)

4. Fees

Fees vary by country and include the consular fee, an Indian community Welfare Fund fee and potentially,

an external service provider fee and range between 17-34 euros.

5. Transport

Main airports

- Chatrapati Shivaji International Airport of Mumbai (BOM)
- Kempegowda International Airport- Bengaluru (BLR)
- Chennai International Airport (MAA)
- Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose International Airport (CCU)

Public transportation

BY TRAIN

The state-run **Indian Railways** (IR) operates one of the largest and busiest rail networks in the world, managing both long-distance and suburban rail systems. It is the primary mode of transport for most citizens.

Express Trains: Rajdhani Express, Shatabdi Express, Duronto Express, Vande Bharat Express, and Amrit Bharat Express offer varying levels of speed and comfort for inter-city travel.

BY BUS

Buses are vital for both intra-city and inter-state travel, serving as the most flexible and widely available mode of transport.

Booking Sites: Online platforms consolidate bookings for many private and some government buses. Major sites/apps include redBus, AbhiBus, and MakeMyTrip.

Suburban Rail: Found in major metropolitan areas like Mumbai and Kolkata, these "local trains" are crucial for daily commutes.

Booking Site: The primary website for train ticket booking is the IRCTC (Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation) Next Generation eTicketing System.

Taxis and auto-rickshaws (three-wheelers) are widely spread and used for local transport in cities. Traditional metered taxis exist alongside app-based services (Uber, Ola Cabs) that have grown immensely in popularity for convenience and fixed pricing.

6. Emergency contacts

- Ambulance: 102
- Fire: 101
- Police: 100, 103 (traffic accident)

7. Health-care

7.1 Overview

The Indian healthcare system is a complex and diverse network made up of the public and private sectors, which offer a range of medical services and infrastructure to the 1.4 billion inhabitants.

It has undergone significant transformations over the years but still faces several challenges.²

The public sector includes primary, secondary, and tertiary care facilities managed by the central and state governments. Primary healthcare services are the individual's first point of contact and are provided through primary health centres, community health centres, and sub-centres.

7.2 Health insurance

The National Health Mission (NHM) was launched in 2013 and comprises the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) and the National Urban Health Mission (NUHM). The NHM aims to strengthen primary healthcare infrastructure and services by upgrading existing facilities, building new ones, and improving the availability of medical equipment and supplies.

This initiative also seeks to enhance human resources for health by training and recruiting more doctors, nurses, and paramedical staff, especially in rural areas. The NHM also aims to improve maternal, neonatal, and child health by expanding access to essential services such as antenatal care, skilled birth attendance, and immunization programs.

Ayushman Bharat is another flagship healthcare initiative launched in 2018. This scheme provides financial protection and health coverage to India's vulnerable populations through Health and Wellness Centres (HWCs) and the Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY). As of December 2022, there were about 117 thousand Ayushman Bharat Health and Wellness Centres (AB-HWCs) across India.

Secondary care focuses on acute and specialist services provided by district hospitals. Tertiary care refers to advanced medical services, including specialty and super-specialty services provided by medical colleges. The private sector consists of individual practitioners, nursing homes, clinics, and corporate hospitals.

The Indian government has initiated multiple programs to improve the healthcare system. The National Health Mission improves the availability of medical equipment and supplies. This also promotes community participation and engagement in healthcare decision-making and service delivery. The Ayushman Bharat scheme is a health insurance program that provides coverage of up to INR 5 lakhs per family per year for secondary and tertiary care hospitalization.³

AB-HWCs provide free essential medicine, diagnostic services, and teleconsultation. The HWCs aim to provide comprehensive primary healthcare services to rural and urban populations, including preventive, promotive, and curative care.

The HWCs focus on maternal and child health, non-communicable diseases, communicable diseases, and palliative care while providing essential drugs and diagnostic services. The PMJAY is a health insurance scheme that provides coverage of up to INR 5 lakhs per family per year for secondary and tertiary care hospitalization.

This initiative targets approximately 100 million economically disadvantaged families, covering around 500 million beneficiaries, and covers a range of medical procedures and treatments at empanelled hospitals. PMJAY aims to reduce out-of-pocket expenses and improve access to quality healthcare for India's poorest and most vulnerable populations. Over 217 thousand public health facilities were reported in India as of the financial year 2022.

² <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10292032/>

³ [The Transformation of The Indian Healthcare System - PMC](#)

8. Education

8.1 Overview

Features of New Education Policy 2024

- Ministry of Human Resource Management renamed as Ministry of Education
- Universalisation of education under National Education Policy (excluding medical and law studies)
- New education pattern of 5+3+3+4 (12 years of schooling and 3 years of pre-schooling)
- Vocational testing internship to start from class VI
- Education up to class V to be taught in the mother tongue, or regional language
- No science, commerce, or art streams – students can choose any subject

- Students taught coding from class VI
- All schools to be digitally equipped
- E-content to be translated into regional language
- Development of virtual labs.

The 5+3+3+4 structure seems to transform and adapt the traditional learning system to better suit the evolving needs of learners. It emphasizes foundational learning, middle schooling, secondary education, and high school stages.⁴

8.2 Education system structure

Foundational Stage (Ages 3-8)

The first segment, spanning five years, comprises the initial years of a child's education. It includes:

- 3 years of pre-primary education, focusing on playful and activity-based interactive learning.
- The subsequent 2 years include grades 1 and 2, emphasising foundational literacy and numeracy.

Preparatory Stage (Ages 8-11)

This 3-year phase encompasses grades 3 to 5. A multi-faceted teaching approach integrates subjects for a comprehensive learning experience. At this stage:

- Greater emphasis is placed on discovery and exploration.

Middle Stage (Ages 11-14)

- This segment, consisting of grades 6 to 8, delves deeper into subject matter:
- Subjects are explored in greater detail, encouraging students to think critically.

- The curriculum introduces complex concepts, moving away from rote learning to promote understanding and application.

- Project-based learning is introduced, ensuring that students gain hands-on experience.

⁴ [https://indianapublications.com/articles/IJAL_6\(7\)_9-12_688bb1170ff462.33272341.pdf](https://indianapublications.com/articles/IJAL_6(7)_9-12_688bb1170ff462.33272341.pdf)

Secondary Stage (Ages 14-18)

The final segment, comprising grades 9 to 12, prepares students for their future endeavours, be it higher education or vocational paths. During these 4 years:

- Students have the flexibility to choose subjects of interest.
- Holistic development is emphasized, with a focus on real-world skills and competencies.⁵

8.3 Enrolment procedure for public education

Admission documents:

1. Child's passport size photograph (colour).

- The photograph must be recent, preferably not older than 6 months.
- The background should be white.

2. Parents'/ Guardian's passport size photograph (colour).

- The photograph must be recent, preferably not older than 2 years.
- The background should be white.

3. Family photographs, including grandparents if the child is living with them.

- The photograph must be recent, preferably not older than 3 months.
- All family members must be in a single photo.
- The background should be white.
- A family photograph is mostly required by schools in Tier-1 cities such as Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, and Pune.

4. Aadhar Card of the child (both sides).

5. Aadhar Card of both parents (both sides).

6. Birth Certificate of the child duly issued by the Municipal Corporation and countersigned by the Registrar of Birth.

7. Medical fitness certificate of the child, including the vaccination card.

- The medical fitness certificate can be issued by any registered medical practitioner.
- The certificate should bear the child's name, date of birth, and other medical information (such as height, weight, blood group, any allergies, any disease, etc.) with the name and signature of the registered medical practitioner and his/her registration number.

⁵ [Understand the New National Education Policy \(NEP\) 2024 \(vakilsearch.com\)](https://www.vakilsearch.com/blog/understand-the-new-national-education-policy-nep-2024/)

8. Proof of residence at the address on the admission form (any of the following):

- Voter ID Card (both sides)
- Ration card issued in the name of either parent bearing the child's name as well
- Passport in the name of any parent (both sides)
- Electricity, telephone or water bill in the name of either parent
- Aadhar Card of any of the parents or the child.

Documents required for admission in Class 2nd to Class 9th and Class 11th:

In addition to all documents mentioned above, the examination certificate from the previous class is required

for admission in Class 2nd to Class 9th and Class 11th. School authorities may also ask for admission tests.

How to upload documents:

An online application form must be submitted along with scanned copies of all required documents. While uploading the scans, the following aspects should be taken into consideration:

- In the case of photographs, crop the image so that only the required photograph (face, shoulder, and half chest) is visible.

- In the case of documents, crop the image so that only the required area of the document is visible.

It is mandatory to have a birth certificate and an Aadhar card for admission to any school in India.⁶

⁶ [Knowledge Center: Trending Topics for Students in India \(indiastudychannel.com\)](https://www.indiastudychannel.com)

9. Economy

In 2025, India became a \$4 trillion economy. As per IMF Data, India is the 4th largest economy in the world on par with Japan. Today, India's leading economic

contributors are traditional and modern agriculture, technology services, the handicraft industry, and business outsourcing.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC INDICATORS:

- Unemployment rate: 5,2%
- Youth unemployment Rate: 14,6%
- Average monthly nominal earnings: increased to INR 21.103/month in the second quarter of 2024
- GDP growth in 2025: 6,2%
- Inflation rate: For the full financial year 2025-26, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) projects inflation rate of 2,6%
- Currency: Indian Rupee (INR)



More information on India economic landscape: [Press Note Details: Press Information Bureau](#)

10. Labour market

10.1 Overview

India's employment landscape is swiftly evolving, as highlighted in a recent study by the World Economic Forum, which predicts a 22% transformation in the job market by 2027. This indicates a shift where jobs that were once popular are either diminishing in demand or being automated.⁷

The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship has launched the **Aatmanirbhar Skilled Employees Employer Mapping (ASEEM)** portal, a directory of skilled workers.

The objective is to provide a platform that matches the supply of skilled workforce with market demand, facilitating better livelihood opportunities for youth and availability of skilled labour to employers. The ASEEM portal is managed by National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) under the aegis of the Ministry.

The ASEEM portal includes directly registered candidates and candidates registered on Skill India Portal (SIP).

At present, there is around 10 lakh migrant's data/profile are available on ASEEM.⁸

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA):

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is an Indian law that provides a legal guarantee of 100 days of unskilled wage employment each financial year to rural households. The act aims to create job opportunities, social security, and the right to work for the rural people. The act covers all districts of India except those with 100% urban population.

Vulnerable groups (e.g. disabled people, and those living below the poverty line) are entitled, based on their type of vulnerability to various benefits under government schemes. This includes preferences for in government jobs, subsidised health care facilities and subsidized food. Further information on government schemes may be available from the office of the respective district magistrate.

The legal minimum wage:

India boasts the most competitive labour costs in Asia, with a national-level minimum daily wage of approximately INR 178 (equivalent to USD2.13). The baseline wage is subject to adjustments based on factors, such as geographical location and specific criteria.

Geographically, the minimum wage can range from INR 160 (USD1.92) per day in Bihar to INR 423 (USD5.07) per day in Delhi. Specifically, the Kerala region stands out with the highest minimum daily rates for non-labourers, while other parts of the country maintain relatively uniform minimum wage levels for such workers.⁹

⁷ <https://www.weforum.org/stories/2025/04/the-future-of-jobs-in-india-employers-seek-to-boost-tech-talent-to-drive-ai-and-digital-technology-growth/>

⁸

⁹ [A Guide to Minimum Wage in India - India Briefing News \(india-briefing.com\)](#)

Unemployment safeguards

India does not have a single, universal unemployment allowance, several schemes offer financial assistance and employment support to qualifying individuals, with many programs operating at the state level.

Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP): This scheme assists unemployed youth in setting up new self-employment ventures in both rural

and urban areas by offering a margin money subsidy on bank loans.

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA): This program guarantees 100 days of wage employment in a financial year to adult members of rural households who volunteer for unskilled manual work.

State-level schemes

Many states offer their own financial support for the unemployed, often targeting educated youth. Eligibility criteria and benefits vary by state.

Chhattisgarh Unemployment Allowance Scheme: Provides a monthly allowance to educated unemployed youth.

Haryana's Saksham Yuva Yojana: Offers both unemployment allowance and work experience to educated unemployed youth.

Tamil Nadu Unemployment Assistance Scheme: Offers monthly assistance to youth registered with the District Employment and Career Guidance Centre for a minimum period.

Uttar Pradesh Berojgari Bhatta Yojna: Supports educated unemployed individuals with monthly financial assistance.

In addition to direct financial aid, several national initiatives focus on skill development and job matching to address unemployment.

National Career Service (NCS): A portal that acts as a one-stop-shop for career-related services, including job search, career counseling, and vocational guidance.

Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY): Provides free skill training to youth across various sectors to improve their employability.

Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY): Focuses on skill development for poor and unemployed rural youth to help them secure jobs or start micro-enterprises.

Recruitment agencies, platforms:

- [Job Alerts: Latest Employment News, Free Job Alerts For Govt, Bank, Railway&Other Jobs - Careerindia](#)
- [CareerNet Consulting](#)
- [ABC Consultants](#)
- [www.naurki.com](#)
- [www.monsterindia.com](#)

- [www.timesjob.com](#)
- [www.placementindia.com](#)
- [www.jobsadhead.com](#)
- [ManpowerGroup India](#)
- <https://www.indeed.co.in/>

11. Housing

India's housing situation is a mix of rapid urban expansion, affordability challenges, and government-led initiatives to improve accessibility.

India faces a housing shortage of around 19 million units, mainly in urban areas and a significant portion of the urban population (about 35%) lives in slums or informal settlements due to high real estate costs.

Property prices in major cities like Mumbai, Delhi, and Bengaluru have surged, making homeownership difficult for middle- and lower-income groups. Rentals have also increased, especially in metro cities, due to high demand.

In rural areas, housing shortages persist, but land availability makes homeownership easier.

The cost of renting accommodation in India varies based on the city, location, and type of housing:

1. Metro Cities (Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Chennai, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Pune):

Budget Housing

- INR 7,000 - 20,000 per month (suburban areas)
- INR 15,000 - 35,000 per month (prime city locations)

Mid-Range Housing (2-3 BHK Apartments)

- INR 25,000 - 60,000 per month (good localities)

2. Small Towns & Rural Areas:

- Basic houses: INR 3,000 - 8,000 per month

- Decent 2 BHK apartments: INR 7,000 - 15,000 per month

Additional Costs:

- Security Deposit: Typically 2-10 months' rent, depending on the city (higher in metros like Bengaluru and Mumbai).
- Maintenance Charges: INR 1,000 - 10,000 per month, depending on the building.
- Utilities: Electricity, water, and internet can cost an additional INR 2,000 - 10,000/month.

12. Security situation

According to the 2025 Global Peace Index (GPI) published by the Institute for Economics and Peace, India is ranked 115th out of 163 countries globally, indicating a medium level of peace.

Due to the volatility of local conditions, you are strongly advised to consult regularly updated sources as [USDOS advisories](#) and [UK FCDO travel advice](#) and to verify current conditions directly with the relevant Ministry of Foreign Affairs or embassy websites.

13. List of official representations in Europe



[List of India Embassies and Consulates in Europe](#)

14. Operational details

When dealing with cases in their initial stage, DAJI's approach is to analyse the case with the information provided by the MS, looking for key indicators as vulnerabilities, Post Arrival Packages (which may or may not include direct needs upon arrival) and relevant information regarding the returnee, gathered during the Pre-departure counselling sessions, that will help them prepare and elaborate a reintegration plan that meets the applicants' needs.

The Partner emphasizes the importance of Pre-departure Counselling, as it sets the stage for the success of the reintegration programme.

The applicant needs to have a functioning bank account to which the EURP assistance can be sent. Where the applicant does not have a personal bank account, they may use the verified bank account of a nominated relative. In this case, a transfer-of-funds agreement must be signed by the returnee and the chosen relative, which requires the local partner to meet with all parties involved to get the signatures.

If Post Arrival support is provided, the Local Partner make arrangements to ensure it is delivered to the returnee's bank account or to a third-party custodian, and that all documentation is ready to be submitted in time.

When the Partner is not able to contact the returnee upon arrival, they try to find alternate ways of reaching them if other information is available. Reaching out to possible neighbours, friends or relatives has proven useful in some cases.

DAJI uses their local partnerships to support returnees in the following aspects:

- healthcare providers – for urgent and planned medical exams or treatments;
- notaries – to validate rental agreements for housing;
- local suppliers – for plans involving house renovations and household goods.

15. Cultural tips



A simple “Namaste” (with hands joined) or a handshake (more common among men) can create a welcoming atmosphere.



Respect age and authority: Addressing elders and authority figures with formal titles like “Sir,” “Madam,” or using suffixes like “ji” (e.g., Ramesh-ji) is a sign of respect.



Consider gender dynamics: In more traditional settings, direct eye contact or overly assertive communication with the opposite gender may be perceived as inappropriate.



Avoid overly direct or blunt statements: Indians may find diplomatic or indirect communication more respectful.



India is diverse: There are vast cultural differences between North and South India, urban and rural areas, and various religious groups. Be mindful of different traditions and customs.





FRONT_{EX}



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