Work in India
A Guide by Knowledge Must

Provided by Our Division:
Knowledge Must, Germany and India.

www.knowledge-must.com

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Foreword

“There are some parts of the world that, once visited, get into your heart and won’t go. For me, India is such a place. When I first visited, I was stunned by the richness of the land, by its lush beauty and exotic architecture, by its ability to overload the senses with the pure, concentrated intensity of its colours, smells, tastes, and sounds. It was as if all my life I had been seeing the world in black and white and, when brought face-to-face with India, experienced everything re-rendered in brilliant Technicolor.”

- Keith Bellows

Welcome to this guide book for students, graduates, and professionals who are interested in working in India. With this publication Knowledge Must offers a complete resource on India’s challenging job market for foreigners. In addition to answering the most pressing questions, the guide features valuable insights ranging from logistics such as visa procedures and accommodation arrangements to cultural background information and inspiration for how to spend one’s leisure time.

In today’s world, globalisation affects everybody. Whether you are working for an international organisation, opening your company’s branch office in Mumbai, planning the acquisition of a plant in Shanghai, or travelling internationally for business, the ability to navigate successfully across cultures is imperative to your success. Since most international ventures fail due to cultural differences, intercultural expertise is now increasingly being recognised as a critical element in succeeding on the global stage.

To gather life experience and further their career, more and more people all over the world decide to learn other languages, study or work in other countries, and travel abroad. People from all over the world are continuously looking for new geographical directions to seek new opportunities. What many people find astonishing, however, is that more and more young foreign students and professionals come to India to find career fulfilment.

This publication “Work in India – A Guide by Knowledge Must” is part of a series of guide books we publish to assist people from all over the world crossing their cultural boundaries. We publish this guide book in electronic as well as in print form. The eBook can be downloaded for free from www.knowledge-must.com/guidebooks (together with the many other free guide books we publish). However, you might like to read this guide while waiting for your visa application to go through or even while sitting on your plane to India. That is why we also offer a print version of it – of course, also under a Creative Commons license so that you can copy and share it with others. The print version
can be obtained from Knowledge Must directly or ordered from Internet-based retailers, such as Amazon.com.

We have structured this guide book using an FAQ format. FAQ stands for Frequently Asked Questions, which implies that we focus on questions people actually frequently ask us and others in the intercultural field today. That is why we constantly strive to update our information in order to keep on satisfying all the information requirements people really have. Please directly get in touch with us if you have additional questions in mind that are of general interest for people coming to India. We will consider all feedback we receive when publishing the next edition of this guide book.

The advantage of our FAQ approach to the topic of crossing successfully into Indian culture is that the most common problems are identified and that the solutions to deal with these problems are offered in a direct fashion. We have ordered the FAQs according to importance and timeline. Questions concerning your decision making process stand at the beginning. Those regarding issues you face when you already are in India can be found towards the end. We hope that you will find our guide book useful and will share it with others in your network!

This guide is presented to you by Knowledge Must, a leading intercultural solutions provider that assists students, professionals, and organisations to successfully cross cultural boundaries, mainly between East Asia, South Asia, and the Western world. Combining the specific service areas of our five divisions, Career Must, Language Must, Training Must, Travel Must, and Culture Must, we at Knowledge Must are able to deliver truly comprehensive solutions for individuals to experience a new professional and private environment. With our division Career Must, we at Knowledge Must assist students and professionals to build an international career.

The unique chance to immerse yourself in the daily routine of another culture opens totally new professional and personal perspectives, and helps you to pursue your goals in life. At Career Must, we provide a great opportunity for applicants to identify and secure the best job opportunities all over India. We also can organise all of the logistics involved with working in India, such as visa support, arranging housing, and transportation.

With our bases in India, Europe, and China, we specialise in customising intercultural solutions for our diverse clients. Please visit our website www.knowledge-must.com for more information and contact us to learn how we can be of help to you.
1. India – An Overview

India, bordering the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal, between Burma and Pakistan, dominates the entire South Asian subcontinent with its total area size of 3,287,263 square kilometres. From the major Indian Ocean trade routes to the passes of the high Himalayas up to Kanchenjunga, the third tallest mountain in the world, the geography of India is incredibly varied. India holds a special place in our globalising world. Culturally the country might very well be the most diverse place in the world. It is a vivid kaleidoscope of landscapes, magnificent historical sites and royal cities, misty mountain retreats, colourful people, rich cultures, and festivities. Luxurious and destitute, hot and cold, chaotic and tranquil, ancient and modern – India’s extremes rarely fail to leave a lasting impression.

The country clearly has emerged as one of the cultural and economic hotspots of the 21st century. Businesses, international exchange, and intercultural collaborations are expanding at a mind-staggering pace. The country offers opportunities in virtually all major fields. Be it the institutional, corporate, science, media or cultural sector, India welcomes talented career seekers that speak European languages, bring along new knowledge, and are equipped with vocational skills the country at this stage is still lacking in sufficient numbers. Despite the bright prospects in India, foreigners often face various problems and obstacles, such as the complexities of Indian society and culture.

The number of foreigners coming long term to India is increasing from year to year, with a large number of students, professionals and businessmen coming in. In the global economy, India was long...
considered a “hardship” posting, generally with a fat salary being the bait. Nowadays, a quickly growing number of foreigners are moving to India for work by their own choice and are falling in love with Indian culture, weather, food, or maybe even someone special.

The biggest drivers for this migration are the experience of working in one of the fastest growing economies in the world and seeking an opportunity to explore the extremely diverse country that is India. In fact, going to India has become quite a fashionable thing to do. Indian movies, music, clothes, etc. have become the rage virtually all over the world.

2. Demographic Composition

India is a very young country, with a median age of 24. Around 40% of its population falls in the range of 20-44 years. Compared to the older generation, this younger generation is more confident, has more liberal and consumerist values, and is more ambitious. This is a quite recent change in the country’s demographics, and has implications for changes in cultural values.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population</th>
<th>1,173,108,018</th>
<th>July 2010 estimate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population growth rate</td>
<td>1.376%</td>
<td>2010 estimate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age structure</td>
<td>0-14 years: 30.5% 15-64 years: 64.3% 65 years and over: 5.2%</td>
<td>2010 estimate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median age</td>
<td>25.9 years (as compared to Germany, for instance, with its median age of 44.3 years)</td>
<td>2010 estimate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: CIA World Factbook, 2010

There is a wide urban-rural divide in India. Indian society is primarily agrarian. More than 70% of India’s population lives in villages and subsists on agriculture. However, the contribution of agriculture to GDP is only 23%.
More than 80% of Indians are Hindu. Hinduism, however, is far from a homogeneous religion. It consists of a multiplicity of faiths and sects. Other major religious communities are Muslims accounting for about 13%, Christians and Sikhs with about 2% each, and Buddhists and Jains both with somewhat less than 1%.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religions</th>
<th>Hindu 80.5%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Muslim 13.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Christian 2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sikh 1.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Buddhist 0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jain 0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Remainder: tribal religions, Bahais, Jews, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source: 2001 Census</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Given the large size of the population, even small proportional representation actually implies rather large absolute numbers. For example, though only 13% of the total, there are close to 150 million Muslims in India, which also has contributed immensely to India’s diverse cultural traditions. Next to neighbouring Bangladesh and Pakistan, India has one of the four largest Muslim communities in the world. Similarly, though each representing less than a percent, there are millions of Buddhists and Jains in India.

Since different religions are concentrated in different parts of the country, the cultural values and norms also differ widely. To give you some examples, Muslims are a majority in Kashmir, Sikhs are concentrated in Punjab, there are large Christian communities in certain states of North-Eastern India, and so on. Though India has a secular political structure, religion plays an important role in the personal lives of people, and often influences relationships and business dealings.

3. The Indian Economy

The economy of India is the eleventh largest economy in the world by nominal GDP and the fourth largest by purchasing power parity (PPP). Economic growth has averaged more than 7% per year since 1997. India is gradually developing into an open-market economy, yet traces of its past autarkic policies remain.
India’s diverse economy encompasses traditional village farming as well as modern agriculture, handicrafts as well as hi-tech industrial goods, and a multitude of services, an increasing number of which is IT enabled. Major industries in India are telecommunications, textiles, chemicals, food processing, steel, transportation equipment, cement, mining, petroleum, machinery, information technology, hospitality, health services, and pharmaceuticals.

More than half of India’s work force is employed in agriculture, which, however, only accounts for about one-fifth of India’s GDP. Major agricultural products include rice, wheat, coarse grains, oilseed, cotton, jute, tea, sugarcane, potatoes, cattle, water buffalo, sheep, goats, poultry, and fish. However, it is services that are the major source of economic growth, accounting for more than half of India’s output utilising only one-third of its labour force.
India already has emerged as a global player in a plethora of industries, as can be seen from the following examples:

- India has become world famous for its IT services and software development
- The country has emerged as a key destination for Business Process Outsourcing
- The Indian pharmaceutical industry ranks 4th in the world in terms of volume
- India is one of the few countries that develop their own satellite-launch technology
- With about 1,000 movies a year, India is the largest movie producer in the world
- India together with China is the largest producer of tea and the most important centre for diamond cutting and polishing in the world
- The Indian automotive industry has emerged as a sourcing hub for most globally-operating automobile producers

India is an emerging economic power with a very large pool of human and natural resources, and a growing large pool of skilled professionals. Economists predict that India, capitalising on its large numbers of well-educated people skilled in the English language, will soon be a leading economy of the world.
India already has one of the largest populations of technically qualified manpower, comprising around 15 million doctors, engineers, and scientists. Experts say that many new industry segments are coming up, which leads to a high demand for qualified labour. As such, lots of young people are taking jobs in these segments in order to build themselves a promising career. At the same time, the literacy rate in the country is still just over 60%.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Literacy (as defined by the percentage of people age 15 and over who can read and write)</th>
<th>Total population: 61%</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>Census</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male: 73.4%</td>
<td>Female: 47.8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: CIA World Factbook, 2010

India’s long term challenges include widespread poverty, inadequate physical and social infrastructure, and insufficient access to education and health care. In the coming years, India’s growing population and changing demographics will result in many new social, economic, and environmental challenges.

4. The Indian Labour Market

India’s labour force exhibits extremes ranging from large numbers of illiterate workers unaccustomed to machinery or routine, to a sizable pool of highly educated scientists, technicians, and engineers, capable of working anywhere in the world. A substantial number of skilled people have left India to work abroad; the country has suffered a brain drain since independence.

Nonetheless, many remain in India working alongside a trained industrial and commercial work force. Administrative, managing, and technical skills, particularly those necessary in larger projects, are in short supply, however. In the mid-1990s, salaries for top administrators and technical staff rose sharply, partly in response to the arrival of foreign companies in India.

In 2006, there were an estimated 496.4 million workers in the Indian economy. Only seven percent of the work force is in the formal, organised sector. Growth in this sector remains sluggish. Employer organisations attribute this to the presence of labour laws that restrict downsizing. To circumvent such laws, private sector companies continue hiring workers on a contract basis. The informal sector, where the workforce generally does not enjoy legal protection, has witnessed more growth.
Many working in the urban unorganised sector are self-employed labourers, street vendors, petty traders, and other providers of services who receive little income. Along with the unemployed, they have no unemployment insurance or other benefits. Unemployment in India currently exceeds 10% (the CIA World Factbook 2010 estimated it at 10.7% in 2009). Regulations and other obstacles have discouraged the emergence of formal businesses and jobs. Almost 30% of workers are casual workers who work only when they are able to get jobs and remain unpaid for the rest of the time.

Unemployment in India is characterised by chronic or disguised unemployment. Government schemes that target eradication of both poverty and unemployment (which in recent decades has sent millions of poor and unskilled people into urban areas in search of livelihoods) attempt to solve the problem, by providing financial assistance for setting up businesses, skill honing, setting up public sector enterprises, reservations in governments, etc.

Child labour is a complex problem that is basically rooted in poverty. The Indian government is implementing the world’s largest child labour elimination programme, with the additional support of numerous non-governmental and voluntary organisations. Special investigation cells have been set up in states to enforce existing laws banning employment of children (under 14) in hazardous industries.
FAQ Decision-Making Process

1. Why should I work, study or volunteer abroad?

Whether you are starting your career, you want to add a key differentiator in your curriculum, or you are simply looking for a radical change, working, studying, and volunteering among people of other cultures can offer you the opportunities that you are looking for. As a result of your immersion in the daily routine of another culture, you will be able to interface effectively with people of diverse backgrounds. Work, study, and volunteer experiences abroad awaken a tremendous potential in you!

What makes working, studying and volunteering abroad so exciting? It offers dynamic challenges and compelling rewards, such as:

- Developing skills for living in a culturally diverse and interdependent world
- Learning languages by immersion
- Gaining new personal insights
- Expanding your creativity and cultivating different approaches to problems
- Understanding developments taking place in other corners of the world
- Experiencing other cultures (and their architecture, art, history, music, etc.)
- Developing friendships for a lifetime
- Confronting you with different conceptions of life
- Gaining a unique and new appreciation for your native culture
- Getting a change of scenery from home
- Satisfying your desire for adventure, exploration, and fun
- Finding career fulfilment
- Living a fuller life


Besides, work, study, and volunteer experiences abroad not only broaden your personal experience. They also open avenues for cultural exchange and make a contribution to the peaceful globalisation of humanity.

2. Why should I work in India?

Working in India among people of other cultures is a once in a lifetime opportunity. The unique chance to immerse yourself in the daily routine of another culture’s work environment opens totally new professional and personal perspectives. Today India has become one of the most dynamic economies in the world. Globalisation has played an important role in the generation of employment in India. Since the economic liberalisation policies of the 1990s, the employment scenario in the country has significantly improved. India’s booming economy urgently requires foreign knowledge and skills. More and more people have worked in different nations around the world, but India is still an emerging country and therefore coming to India means to be a pioneer.

While working in India, you will develop skills for living in a culturally diverse and interdependent world, improve existing language skills or learn new languages, give your CV a boost, and develop lifelong friendships. Your work experience in the Indian environment indicates that you are adventurous, unbiased, and ambitious.

“If I were asked under what sky the human mind has most fully developed some of its choicest gifts, has most deeply pondered on the greatest problems of life, and has found solutions, I should point to India.”

- Max Mueller

While you build a career in India, your work experience will also lead to personal growth. Difficult situations in everyday life or at work can be challenging but you will learn how to manage them and gain confidence in yourself. What Frank Sinatra sang about New York is even truer for India: “If I can make it there, I’ll make it anywhere!”
One major advantage in comparison to most job positions elsewhere is that in India right from the start you are usually given the chance to take on high responsibilities and to be involved in important projects. Additionally, your efforts will be appreciated a lot by your co-workers. Further, it is very easy to extend your professional network among other foreigners as well as Indians, from which you will certainly profit in terms of your future career.

Another plus is that life in India is very affordable. For example, food and clothes are, for the most part, comparatively inexpensive. Due to the cheap travelling expenses, India is also a wonderful country to combine study, work, and travel experiences. There is really an unlimited amount of places to see and explore, from the majestic Himalayas in the north to the picturesque beaches with their powdery golden sand in the south of India. Watch people while they are praying on the banks of the Ganges River or go to an Indian wedding and dive into the colourful and exciting culture.

Some of the many good arguments that may apply to you:

- India is becoming more important around the world, whether in terms of economics or politics
- Fascination for the unique and diverse Indian cultures
- Work at a higher level of responsibility than your peers back home
- For the sheer adventure of it, enjoying the sights and sounds of India
- Obtain a clear distinguishing factor in your CV – if you are successful in India, it shows that you are adaptive and hard-working
- You can get by with English at many places and in many industries in India, something that cannot easily be done in France or Spain, for instance
- Favourable income / living costs ratio

3. What kind of jobs do foreigners mostly do in India?

India’s fast growing economy coupled with its growing shortage of people across industries ensures manifold job opportunities. While many foreigners working in India are in leading positions with multinational organisations, now an increasing number of Indian companies are also turning to foreign leadership. Jet Airways, Ranbaxy, and Taj Hotels are among the prominent Indian companies who turned to foreigners for their top management.

After the first wave of foreign experts, now mid-level foreign professionals are discovering India – and their reasons for coming to India are as varied as themselves. To cite some examples, BPO companies like Delhi-based Technovate eSolutions draw a considerably share of their employees from
all over Europe (mainly tapping their language skills). Leading IT companies such as Infosys and Wipro are also employing hundreds of foreigners by now.

The term “expat” originally referred to those people with diplomatic passports or to senior foreign executives of multinational companies, for whom India generally was a “hardship posting”, sweetened by fat pay checks and fabulous perks. While these expatriate positions continue to exist, more and more foreigners come to India by themselves to work for local salaries.

Today, the young expats you see sipping lattes at cafes or pumping iron at the gyms might even be working in coffee bars or in gyms themselves. Many of those work long hours and make hardly 500 USD per month. Nevertheless, they often get their airfare to India paid by their new employer, live for free in a company flat, and receive free transportation to the office, while they are able to enjoy a new work experience and the excitement of India. Still, one has to keep in mind that the bulk of foreign workers in India actually come from Bangladesh and Nepal, many of whom are employed in the hospitality and textile industries.

4. Where do foreign employees in India mostly come from?

Most foreigners working in India are either from Bangladesh or Nepal. But nationals of these two countries are usually analysed separately in statistics. In fact, no one knows exactly how many foreigners are working in India today. However, one thing is certain: their numbers are growing rapidly.

Additionally, thousands of people of Indian origin from all over the world return to India every year, mainly due to:

- High growth potential in India with many new job openings
- Slowdown in many other economies
- Cultural affinity
- Existing personal and professional networks
- Wanting to be part of India’s growth story
- Reasons why many left India in the first place (such as lack of well-paying jobs) are “vaporising" gradually
Putting South Asians aside, another at least 50,000 foreigners are working in India. According to the registrar’s office in New Delhi about 50,000 are supposed to work alone in the IT and outsourcing industries. Whereas most foreigners working in these industries were ethnic Indians in the past, now many people from all over the world join the Indian success story.

5. What employment opportunities are most promising for foreigners in India?

India might very well be the most complex, multidimensional country in the world. This inherently implies that employment opportunities are extremely varied, too. Much of India is still "undiscovered" – at least by international professionals. There is the unique opportunity to get work experience, lay the foundation for a successful career related to India, and find a niche in which you can be tremendously successful professionally.

Many reputed Indian companies are hiring foreigners in large numbers, both for projects within and outside the country. Prominent examples here are Larsen and Toubro and Reliance Industries Limited. Correspondingly, more and more companies from all over the world follow their clients into India and need foreigners to bridge the cultural, linguistic, and skill gaps between their operations. Some international companies with a presence in India are even recruiting student interns and backpackers to help bridge this gap between their offices in India and abroad.

India is among the most dynamic economies in the world, so it is only natural that business opportunities are plenty. Among the many happening sectors of the Indian economy that offer employment opportunities for foreigners are infrastructure, hospitality, retail, insurance, consumer goods, financial services, pharmaceuticals, education, IT, and BPO. Also in sectors as varied as fashion, health care, and biotechnology, India is turning to specialist knowledge from abroad.
According to the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, severe labour shortages exist in many sectors of the economy, such as:

- Biotechnology sector: shortfall of scientists
- Pharma sector: shortage of scientists
- Health sector: shortage of nurses and doctors – in particular anaesthetists, radiologists, gynaecologists, and surgeons
- Aviation sector: shortage of pilots
- Food processing sector: shortfall of refrigeration mechanics, electricians, and food safety personnel
- Financial sector: shortage of qualified personnel
- IT sector: shortage of engineers
- Education sector: shortage of faculty

With a growing economy that promises a vastly improved lifestyle, India is increasingly emerging as a destination of choice for many international professionals who are coming not only for a short stint of a few months, but rather to pursue a long-term career. By far the biggest draw for recent arrivals has been the information technology and BPO industry, but an increasing number of foreigners also join the hospitality and media industries, for instance.

The trend to employ foreigners is also being fuelled by the changing customer base of India’s outsourcing operations. Traditionally, they focused on serving companies with customers in the U.S. and Britain. But by now they are looking to boost their business from continental Europe. Consequently, languages like French and German have become highly sought after qualifications for employment in India’s burgeoning IT and BPO industries, for example, for jobs involving the collection of information, working on non-English documents, voice-based services, and transaction processes.

As it is very difficult to train Indians to speak the kind of colloquial English, French, Spanish, German, or Dutch that customers want, jobs in call centres, for instance, are widely available in India. Even English-speaking language skills are in short supply. Only a minor share of the two million English-speaking graduates per year turned out by Indian universities actually have good enough English to seamlessly work with their international counterparts.

As demand for offshore services increases from European countries, tens of thousands of foreigners would currently be needed to plug India’s language skills gap. The most sought after foreign workers are those with Dutch, French, German, Italian, Russian, or Spanish language skills and business or technical degrees.
A living can also be made in the traveller scenes, such as Goa, Manali, and Pushkar, by providing some kind of tourist-oriented service, such as teaching adventure sports, tattooing, or offering holistic therapies. There also exist opportunities with travel agents and tour operators, such as working as a tourist guide.

The NGO and development sectors are becoming increasingly competitive and extend to include many hybrid forms of not-for-profit businesses and organisations, which in turn leads to more efficiency. For example, you will find grassroots organisations all over the country, some of which are run by marginalised minorities such as Dalits and Muslims, which are very successful in their realm and would also offer unique work opportunities for foreigners looking to engage themselves in meaningful work.

Besides, at Knowledge Must we also know about many great opportunities for foreigners coming to work in India. Just get in touch with us to profit from our expertise.

6. What about employment opportunities as an artist coming to India?

Gone are the days when Indian art aficionados had to see the work of international artists only from afar. By now, many international artists visit India on a regular basis, as can be witnessed by following event announcements and “Page 3” in Indian newspapers. As the arts industry is maturing in India with newer and better equipped venues as well as a greater interest by the rapidly growing Indian middle class, opportunities for international artists are growing correspondingly. However, the Indian arts scene is often unpredictable and unorganised, so working via a local specialist partner is often advisable.

Our organisation’s division Culture Must provides a platform for artists to exchange their ideas, styles, and influences, while motivating them to present their creative talents. We enjoy excellent relations with representatives of businesses, cultural organisations, foundations, associations, sponsors,
philanthropists, and friends of the arts in India. These relationships ensure that Culture Must can provide artists with a breadth of continuous opportunities.

Artists of all cultural background are invited to get in touch with us (artists@culture-must.com) and learn how we can assist them in their intercultural endeavours, extend their network, find cooperation possibilities, secure sponsorships, set up tours, handle the media, and so on. As a direct result of their cooperation with Culture Must, many international artists have become frequent guests or even reside permanently in India.

7. What about working independently or founding my own company?

India used to be a closed control-and-command economy until the early 1990s. Since then it has opened its economy and allows foreign investments in most industries except a few strategic ones. India is a rapidly developing country with the world’s second largest labour force and unlimited business opportunities. No wonder that investment analysts consider India to be one of the best places for businesses to invest in the world.

“I know the price of success: dedication, hard work, and an unremitting devotion to the things you want to see happen.”

- Frank Lloyd Wright

At the same time, India is also notorious for the bureaucratic and legal hurdles an entrepreneur must overcome to incorporate and register a new firm. Other factors that inhibit an otherwise “business-friendly” environment include India’s vast and still largely inadequate regulatory environment and various forms of social tension (some manifested violently) in a huge and extremely diverse population, much of which suffers from poverty.

However, the situation has improved considerably over recent years, not least due to the increasing utilisation of electronic platforms in the process. Obviously, like in any other country starting a company in India requires a lot of planning and preparation before you can successfully establish yourself in the market.
Generally speaking, you have five options in India if you want to establish your own business entity:

1. Private Limited Company
2. Public Limited Company
3. Unlimited Company
4. Partnership
5. Sole Proprietorship

You can start the process by handing Form No. 1A with four optional names for your organisation (which should be indicative of its purpose) to the Registrar of Companies (ROC), mentioning the address of the Registered Office of your organisation along with the signature of one of the promoters. Then you will have to draft the Memorandum of Association (MOA) and the Articles of Association (AOA) of your organisation. Another round of forms to be handed in follows after that.

Please learn more about the exact requirements and procedures from the website of the Ministry of Corporate Affairs: http://www.mca.gov.in/. With Knowledge Must you have a partner on your side that will help you to avoid many frustrations and delays. We also have many great business ideas for foreigners coming to India to establish their own company. Just get in touch with us to profit from our ideas.
1. How do I apply for a job position in India?

This, of course, heavily depends on where you apply for a job, for example, in terms of location, type of organisation, professional level, or specific industry. However, there are some things to be said in general about applying for job positions in India.

Job requirements are generally less clearly defined as in Western countries, for instance, but this also means that there is more flexibility. Since many Indian organisations have little experience in employing foreigners, you often have to virtually carve out your own job position where none has existed before, which also requires much resilience in the process.

Open vacancies face heavy competition where most applicants are already sorted out due to their inferior application documents; information about a small but very innovative local company might not always be readily available; and the geography is so vast that is difficult to decide where to start.

In India most NGOs, companies, institutions, and other forms of organisations do not have updated websites that announce open vacancies or mention job application procedures. Those who have tried to apply online often never even receive a reply. It is also hard to find out about living costs in the quickly developing urban areas, places to stay, sources for financial support, and other logistical requirements. India is not suitable for those who like it overly comfortable; it is rather for those who take the challenge and invest all their energy. It takes a lot of initiative to reach one’s private and professional goals.

Obviously, a well conceived CV is a must for sticking out from the high numbers of people applying at prestigious organisations. You should consider your CV as the entry ticket to the second round of the selection process. Application documents need to be free of mistakes and adjusted to the particular profile of the organisation. To enlist the help of professional career counsellors aware of the specifics
of internship or job placements in India should be seriously considered, especially when taking into account the importance and great potential top-notch application documents hold.

Often internships can be the perfect entry ticket to paid employment in an organisation. This holds even more true in India, not least due to the concerns Indian organisations have in employing foreigners (such as high salary demands, culture gaps, limited experience in managing foreigners, and so on). An alternative for mid-level professionals could be to collaborate on a project with the organisation of your choice as an independent, thus creating a great chance to get to know each other and explore further cooperation potential.

Everybody interested in exploring longer term career opportunities in India, should come here, experience it, immerse themselves, stay focused, and job opportunities will emerge naturally. Whatever your specific field of interest might be, you will definitely need patience, as things often take longer than expected, and resilience, since there might be major setbacks along the route.

2. Which online job platforms are interesting for me in India?

Though moving to India may involve a long flight, the actual process of locating interesting job positions is easier than ever. Companies post job listings online, so anyone can send a resume to prospective employers with a click of a button. The following online job platforms are popular in India and worth registering with:

- www.naukri.com
- www.monsterindia.com
- www.jobsdb.com
- www.timesjobs.com

Knowledge Must also maintains a large human resource database specialising on intercultural skills. We try to bridge the gap between employers who want culturally fluent staff and individuals with outstanding intercultural capabilities who seek to apply and deepen their skills. Everybody with outstanding intercultural skills is invited to join our talent pool. Whether you are a student with specific language skills or a seasoned expert in intercultural facilitation, you will benefit from borderless career opportunities. In order to join our Career Platform just send your CV to platform@career-must.com. We will contact you once a relevant opportunity arises.
3. In what kind of organisations should I apply for a job?

Take a deep breath and think about where you see yourself in some years from now; be it in a certain profession, sector, or country. Ask yourself what skills you miss in your CV and what skills you can obtain in India. Make sure that you get the most out of it and evaluate the various options different employers in India hold for you.

Surveys show that about half of Indian companies surveyed are willing to hire staff from outside the country, with a clearly rising tendency. To a good extent this development mirrors the growing global footprint of Indian organisations.

A large part of Indian businesses are family-owned or owned by members of different social communities. Among these, Parsi, Marwari, Gujarati, and Chettiar communities are the prominent ones, and have controlling interests in some of the largest Indian business houses. Though many of these business houses are quite modern in their operations, it is useful to understand their specific community culture.

As far as possible, you might want to excuse yourself from many of the smaller family businesses and firms. These firms often work on old-fashioned concepts that believe in all work and no play, where the boss is the master and employees mere minions. While getting away with paying a pittance, these firms encourage daily overtime without extra pay. You may even be asked to show up on Sundays and other public holidays without adequate compensation. Employee bonding, constructive criticism, training programmes, refreshers, and motivational meetings are unheard of. The approach is strictly authoritative and inter-personal interaction between colleagues may even be frowned at. Training is a luxury that these firms do not normally provide.

In addition, there are differences between the government-owned public sector companies, which are more often bureaucratic and hierarchical, compared to many of their private sector counterparts, especially organisations participating in the “New Economy”, such as in IT or telecommunications, which tend to be far more egalitarian and flexible compared to the traditional manufacturing sector.

To select the right employer also keep in mind that life is not only about your job. India offers endless choices to get engaged in voluntary work, do workshops and seminars on topics of your personal interest, celebrate religious festivals, and have yoga classes in the early mornings.
4. How can I position myself in the Indian labour market?

The skills required for working in India obviously depend largely on the specific kind of work you would like to pursue. Generally speaking, however, enthusiasm to work hand in hand with the locals, curiosity to acquire new skills, keenness to learn from a different culture, and flexibility to adjust to different environments are key requirements – almost above anything else.

Having only a degree from a reputed university might not be enough to get the best jobs in India, not least due to the highly competitive nature of the Indian labour market and other foreign graduates who increasingly come to India, too.

The specific skills asked for by employers in India differ according to sector, but there are also some almost universal factors:

- Languages are very important. Fluency in English is a must but good knowledge of Hindi or other regional Indian languages are increasingly important, too.
- Affection for India, since one has to make many compromises in India’s often challenging environment.
- Intercultural competence is of utmost importance, especially since Indians have a generally high cultural awareness, e.g. regarding what is culturally appropriate and what is not.
- And, of course, there are the soft skills such as team work, the ability to work independently, IT literacy, and so on.

There are endless cooperation opportunities, and people looking for a career in India should think about what their skills are, and how they could contribute to Indian organisations. Notably, Hindi-speakers (or speakers of other Indian languages) can rather easily convince employers in India to consider taking them on because it is a highly sought after skill, and shows strong commitment from the applicant’s side.

You should learn what your unique selling point is. You need to find your niche, since you have to run against competition from increasingly well educated Indians and other foreigners.

Niches could for example be:

- The cultural bridge function with regards to helping Indians to communicate across their cultural boundaries, for instance.
- There exist much sought after specialisations, whether it be in social business or water management or something entirely different.
Another niche could be to build upon your well-rounded knowledge base as compared to Indian applicants.

Finally, and often most importantly, your linguistic abilities.

5. How can I prepare myself for the Indian labour market?

Indians are generally very welcoming of foreigners and like to work with them. But at the same time, India is also an extremely challenging country for foreigners to work in, and many Indians tell about their experiences with foreigners who have faced many difficulties while being there. These concerns make Indian organisations often rather cautious about taking on the responsibility of employing foreigners in their organisations.

“The only place where success comes before work is in the dictionary.”

- Donald Kendall

What is more, due to the increasing globalisation and interconnectedness everything tends to become more competitive, and so international professionals interested to work in India have to compete with an increasing number of excellently educated Indians.

Some of the preparations beneficial for working in India are:

- **Language:** The single most important component will be being able to communicate with the locals, for which Hindustani/Hindi/Urdu will be the language of choice for most foreigners coming to India.
- **Experience:** Gather experience in working with Indians and get familiar with their habits.
- **Flexibility:** Learn to adjust to situations that you cannot control and train your improvisation skills.
- **Skills:** Build up the skills that distinguish you from others and develop your core strengths.
- **Experiment:** Start with an exploratory trip to learn about Indian culture and get a feel for the place.

Bureaucratic hassles might very well be the number one irritant for foreigners working in India. Virtually everybody has a story or two to share about spending days at offices to get themselves registered or
their visa extended. Just the same, often the very same people will share stories about how smooth and flexible sometimes overcoming bureaucratic hurdles can be. Your patience and resilience are the key qualities demanded here.

6. Where should I work in India?

The two largest cities in India are the main draw for foreigners coming to India for work: New Delhi, the political capital, and Mumbai, the financial capital. Both cities have to close to 20 million inhabitants and count among the largest metropolises in the world. In terms of convenience, accessibility, availability of interesting jobs, and existing expatriate networks these two cities are hard to beat.

Another prominent destination for foreigners is Bangalore, the capital of Karnataka state. It is especially Bangalore's reputation as India's IT hub that has made it a popular destination for expatriates. Presently, an estimated 10,000 to 15,000 foreigners live in Bangalore. Many foreigners living in Bangalore appreciate the weather, which does not get extremely hot or cold, unlike many other cities in the country.

Other cities of choice for foreigners include Hyderabad, Kolkata, Pune, Jaipur, and Chandigarh. Also the state of Goa with its many idyllic towns and villages attracts an enormous amount of resident and semi-resident foreigners. Others yet run foreign-tourist oriented guesthouses and cafes in tourist hot spots such as Manali and Pushkar.

Also the rural areas of India offer unique job opportunities. Whether working for a local microfinance institution or an organic farm, the unique charm of rural India is eulogised among all Indians. Also the income to cost of living ratio will be far more favourable for you. But it will often be your profession that somehow delineates the places of work interesting for you in India.
**Dilli or Dili?**
by Gülcan Durak

Perhaps “dili” (= from the heart, cordial, close, intimate) is a good expression to describe Delhi [“dilli” in local language] but there are probably a hundred things I love more. For example a delicious chocolate fudge brownie, which tastes so good that you even wish you could reincarnate as one. What else...

Ok, wait, maybe there aren’t a hundred things. Actually, I don’t think I can name anything else, because there is simply nothing more. But let me start with some hard facts about this incredible city. Delhi, locally known as Dilli, is a city with approximately 15 million inhabitants and is India’s most populous city after Mumbai. It consists of Delhi, Delhi Cantonment, and New Delhi, the last one being the capital of India. About 82% of the population in Dilli are Hindus. The second largest religious community are Muslims with 12%, Sikhs are 4%, and Jains and Christians are around 1% each. The main languages spoken here are Hindi and English (the official languages of India), as well as Punjabi and Urdu.

On an interesting note, the average number of days with fog in the winter months in Delhi is 18.6 days per month. But what is hidden behind the fog and smog of this mysterious city? First of all, Dilli has a fascinating past. Dilli’s Muslim rulers, like Qutubuddin Aibak, Humayun, and Shah Jahan, to name a few, influenced the city in terms of culture and architecture. Today, lots of historical monuments are located in Dilli, for example, the Qutub Minar (with 72.5m world’s tallest brick minaret), Humayun’s Tomb, and the Jama Masjid (India’s largest mosque), as well as recent monuments like the Akshardham Temple (among the world’s largest Hindu temples). Especially in places of worship like the Bahai Temple (which looks like a gigantic lotus flower) in South Dilli, one can easily escape from the daily hustle and bustle and just enjoy the peaceful atmosphere there.

Another reason why Dilli is the place to be is the green cover. The list of parks in Dilli is endless and surely makes other cities like Mumbai turn green with envy. There is simply no better way to spend a sunny day than sitting in the Lodi Gardens to explore the area and have a picnic in the midst of the stunning historical monuments. The next reason is the delicious street food you get in almost every alley you set foot in. A huge variety, from Samosas (a famous snack with spicy boiled potato stuffing inside a crispy flour dough served with spicy chutney) over Pav Bhaji (dry buns topped with a cube of butter, combined with a mish-mash of hot cooked vegetables) to the typical Dilli Kulfi (milk ice-cream, flavoured with saffron, cardamom, and nuts), is offered in the streets. This unlimited access to “dillicious” food everywhere and nearly at every time of the day is truly priceless!
I could list many more reasons but I will stop right here and mention one last thing (all male readers are now requested to skip this part for their own good). Dilli is a paradise for everyone who loves to go shopping. Sarojini Nagar, Connaught Place, Lajpat Nagar, Dilli Haat, Pahar Ganj are just a few places to go if you want to buy things you absolutely, urgently, and really necessarily need, like new clothes, bags, shoes, and jewellery. Regardless of whether you go to a traditional bazaar or a modern shopping complex, whether you have a small or a large budget, the variety of opportunities never fails to impress.

In general, life here is very unpredictable, chaotic, and loud. You never know what will happen next. Imagine you are on the way to work, sitting in a rickshaw, and right on top of a flyover elephants and camels pass by. I love the chaos, the constant noise and even the honking. Not always, but 99.9 % of the time. When you walk down the streets of the numerous bazaars and then suddenly hear the sound of just the perfect song for that situation, something along the lines of: “Yeh Dilli hai mere yaar, bas ishq, mohabbat, pyaar” [“This is Dilli my friend, only love, love, love…”] coming from one of the small shops – these are the moments I am talking about! I always have such moments, when I just as much as think about this city.

Maybe the things that make Dilli so special and lovable for me can also be found in other cities. But the unique experiences I had, they didn’t happened in Mumbai, Kolkata, or Chennai. They happened right here. More than anything else, it is the people you meet, the experiences you make, and the changes you undergo which make everything so special and memorable. Dilli is therefore not only just a nice setting, but it is a very ‘dili’ one.

7. Why pay for job placements?

Paying for job placements has many obvious and less obvious advantages. However, you might wonder, where exactly is your placement fee flowing to? The placement organisation acts as a middleman for employees and employers, providing the former with administrative and logistical support, while providing the latter with capable and motivated bodies and brains. These organisations cover their costs by the placement fees they charge foreign applicants.

Of course you can also organise your own job experience in India and take care of all the logistics by yourself. Independently going to India to build a career will be an option for those experienced of living and working among people of other cultures and seasoned international travellers. To independently
find a job in India, do some research on reputed employers in your field of interest and optimally visit them to get a feel for whether they are suitable or not.

But keep in mind that without a partner, you have to independently locate suitable organisations, apply to the relevant authorities, arrange housing and transportation, etc. This often takes more time, energy, and in some cases money, than coming to India with the support of a placement organisation. Placement organisations provide a wide range of support to applicants including pre-departure support such as visa facilitation and on-site support. This support is what gives both you and your family peace of mind that your health and safety are ensured.

Knowledge Must’s division Career Must provides you with a total employment resource no matter where you are in your career. We not only help you find quality job opportunities, we also provide you with comprehensive assistance throughout the process, from legal and logistical requirements up to instilling the skills required for your new endeavour. Please get in touch with us to learn more about our career solutions.
FAQ Logistics

1. What visa do I need for working in India?

All foreign nationals planning to visit India should have a valid passport and an appropriate visa. All passengers arriving in India are subject to immigration checks on their arrival into and departure from the country. Barring a few exceptions there are no provisions for visas upon arrival. Those arriving in India without a visa bearing the correct validity dates and number of entries are subject to immediate deportation.

In India, there are many different types of visa, for example, for tourists, businessmen, journalists, and researchers. Foreigners coming to India for work generally require an Employment Visa. Please note that an Employment Visa is generally to be issued only from your country of origin.

Recommended documents to be handed in when applying for an Employment Visa:
- Visa Application Form
- Two passport photographs
- Passport with a validity exceeding 6 months beyond the duration of the Employment Visa
- Detailed Appointment Letter from employer addressed to the Indian Embassy (arguing why a qualified Indian was not found that could fill in this particular position and stipulating the exact salary in Indian Rupees)
- Tax Liability Letter (which must certify that the employer is liable and takes responsibility for paying taxes on behalf of the applicant)
- Employee’s CV
- Education- and work-related certificates (optimally at least include school and university)
- Employment Contract
- Certificate of Incorporation of the employing organisation
- Applicants must submit a Proof of Address, i.e. a photocopy with proof of address that matches the address on the visa application, such as a state issued ID (e.g. driver’s license) or a major utility bill (water, gas, electricity, etc)
- Apart from these documents, individual cases may require other information or documentation in support of the application

If everything goes smooth you should get back your passport with the Employment Visa after only a few days. However, in rare cases applications can sometimes take up to several months. Please note
that change of employer by a foreigner who has come to India on an Employment Visa is generally not allowed on the same visa. You will be required to go back to your own country and come to India again on a fresh Employment Visa. However, a registered foreigner working in India can apply for a visa extension.

Other visa types that might be relevant for people coming to India for work are Journalist Visa, Project Visa, Business Visa, and Entry Visa. The Journalist Visa (J Visa) is meant for professional journalists and photographers coming to India. The Project Visa (P Visa) is required for foreign nationals going to India for execution of projects in the power and steel sectors.

A Business Visa is required by persons visiting India on business. It is necessary to provide a letter from the applicant’s overseas employer stating the exact purpose of the visit, and the expected duration with the application. A letter of invitation from an Indian company should also be provided. Business visas are normally Multiple Entry and are mostly granted for one year. Additional requirements are that the applicant is a person of “Assured Financial Standing” and with experience in the respective field of business. Further, the application needs to be done in the country of origin of the applicant or, if a long-term residence in another country can be proven, in the country of residence of the applicant.

Legitimate reasons for applying for a Business Visa:

- Visits regarding setting up of industrial or business ventures
- Visits of Partners and/or Directors in organisations with offices in India
- Visits related to participating “General Meetings” of organisations
- Visits related to exploring business opportunities (especially when sourcing from Indian organisations)

All references to “projects”, “work”, “technical support”, “consulting”, and related terminology in the application documents are likely to lead to a rejection of Business Visa applications. In that case, you will have to hand in a new visa application for an Employment Visa.

An Entry Visa (X Visa) is granted to those persons who wish to visit India for long-term or permanent residence but do not belong to any of the above categories. Foreign nationals coming to India on an Employment Visa may obtain an X Visa for their spouses before coming to India. In the event, such spouse decides to take up any employment in India, then the spouse will be required to go back to their country and apply for an Employment Visa.
Before applying for any kind of visa, make sure that your passport is valid for a minimum of six months beyond the date of intended departure from India. Applicants who are not citizens in their country but residents must send a copy of their residence permit with the application. It is always advisable to consult the respective embassy or visa-handling agency in your country, for example, the Indian Embassy in Spain, Germany, Italy, etc. There you will find most of the information concerning your visa.

Employment and Business Visa regulations in India have been in a constant flux in recent years. In mid-2010, India relaxed Employment Visa rules for foreigners by removing the ceiling on the number of foreigners a company can hire as well as the minimum stipulated salary. Several months later, however, the Indian Government affirmed its earlier minimum annual salary regulation of 25,000 USD for foreigners. Visa policies in India are always shrouded in some cloud of mystery. Visa application procedures highly depend on which country you apply from, your nationality, the particular officer handling your application, etc.

Please also take note that with the change in Tourist Visa regulations there needs to be a gap of at least 2 months between two visits to the country on a Tourist Visa. In case you want to re-enter the country within two months, permission should be sought from the Head of Mission concerned indicating the specific reasons for another visit within a short period. In such cases registration would be required within 14 days of arrival.

2. Will I be granted permission to work in India?

During the last couple of years, the Indian Government has taken steps to facilitate the free mobility of international labour, be it from an exchange control or social security or visa perspective. Indian law does not place restrictions on the number of foreign nationals that can work or do business in India, but the entry, stay, movements, and departure of foreign nationals into India are regulated by various Indian acts and rules framed by the Indian Government.
A person can come to India on an Employment Visa which is valid for a period of one year or till the end of the contract for which the visa is being obtained. The only restriction for foreigners to engage in any job in India is to hold a valid Employment Visa. Indian firms and organisations can engage foreign nationals on short-term assignments without prior approval from regulatory authorities.

However, bearing in mind the abundant labour resources available in the country, the Government of India has imposed various eligibility criteria for granting Business and Employment Visas with the intention of restricting the entry of foreign nationals for performing unskilled or semi-skilled work. In fact, Employment Visas shall not be granted for jobs for which qualified Indians are available and in general for any routine, ordinary, secretarial, or clerical jobs.

In 2010, a Ukrainian national approached the Bombay High Court and successfully challenged the original policy of the Indian Government that prescribed a minimum salary limit of 25,000 USD per annum as a mandatory criterion to obtain an Employment Visa. However, several months later the policy was reintroduced and the government made it clear that citizens of other countries will be taken only for highly-skilled assignments in India and should draw an annual salary of over USD 25,000. This minimum income regulation does not apply, however, to ethnic cooks, language teachers (other than English), and staff working for diplomatic representations in India.

### 3. What if I am a Person of Indian Origin or married to one?

Foreign nationals who have obtained Persons of Indian Origin (PIO) cards or are registered as Overseas Citizens of India, which are granted to certain foreign nationals of Indian origin or their spouses, are exempt from certain visa requirements. A foreign national, who can prove his or her Indian origin up to three previous generations (or the spouse of a citizen of India or Person of Indian Origin), is eligible for a PIO card, which is valid for fifteen years from the date of issue.

The card gives the holder visa-free entry into India for fifteen years and exemption from registration with an FRRO if the period of stay in India does not exceed 180 days. In addition, PIO card holders enjoy parity with Non-Resident Indians in economic, financial, and educational fields, and can acquire, hold, transfer, or dispose of immovable properties in India (except agricultural or plantation properties), open Indian Rupee (INR) bank accounts, lend INRs to Indian residents, and make investments in India.
4. What about taxes in India?

The Indian tax system is justifiably criticised by Indian tax specialists for its lack of consistency and efficiency. Just to cite you an example, not all Indian states have introduced value added tax by now. Most relevant for you working in India will be income tax. The government of India imposes a progressive income tax with three slabs on taxable income of individuals. Remarkably, only about 10 per cent of the population meets the minimum threshold of taxable income.

The rate of taxes is prescribed every year by the Parliament in the Finance Act, popularly called the Budget. Hence, income tax rates are changing constantly. Just to give you an idea, for the Assessment Year 2011-12 the taxable income slab on annual income is:

- Up to 200,000 INR (for resident individuals of age below 65 years): 0%
- Up to 250,000 INR (for resident individuals of 65 years or above): 0%
- 200,001 INR to 500,000 INR: 10%
- 500,001 INR to 800,000 INR: 20%
- Above 800,000 INR: 30%

The total income of an individual is determined on the basis of his residential status in India. An individual is treated as resident in a year if present in India for 182 days during the year OR for 60 days during the year and 365 days during the preceding four years. Everybody else is treated as non-residents. Residents have to pay taxes on their worldwide income, while non-residents only have to pay tax on the part of their income that was received in India. Foreign nationals may remit up to 100% of their net salary out of India. Everybody who is earning income in India needs a Permanent Account Number (PAN), however.

Foreigners in India are entitled to certain special tax concessions, depending on the nature of their terms of employment as well as the specific area of work. As tax policies in India are highly complicated, frequently change, have many loopholes, and often leave room for interpretation, expert guidance on this topic is highly recommended. To cite some examples, tax exemptions exist on income generated by foreigners in connection with the filming of motion pictures by non-resident producers and by visiting foreign professors who teach in any university or educational institution in India and whose contract of service is approved by the government. The latter, for instance, are exempt from tax on remuneration received during the first 36 months from the date of arrival in India, provided they were not resident in India in any of the four financial years immediately preceding the year of arrival in India.
5. What is the Permanent Account Number (PAN)?

The Permanent Account Number (generally simply referred to as PAN in India) is a unique alphanumeric combination issued to all juristic entities identifiable under the Indian Income Tax Act 1961. PANs are issued by the Indian Income Tax Department and are almost equivalent to a national identification number. They also serve as an important ID proof all over India.

A PAN is mandatory for most financial transactions such as opening bank accounts, receiving taxable salary or professional fees, as well as sale or purchase of assets above specified limits. A PAN is unique, national, and permanent. You keep the same PAN even if you change your address. The PAN can be compared to social security numbers issued in the United States, for instance.

Hence, if you work for money in India, you will definitely have to apply for a PAN. But no worries, PAN applications can even be made via the Internet nowadays and the time it takes is reasonably short. For more detailed information just visit: [http://www.incometaxindia.gov.in/pan/overview.asp](http://www.incometaxindia.gov.in/pan/overview.asp).

By the way, your PAN card and residency permit allow you to get Indian prices, for instance, for entrance fees at important tourist sights, for instance. This does not work everywhere (e.g. at the famed Taj Mahal) and often needs some convincing. Just stay firm and do not forget to mention that you pay Indian taxes, so you should be treated just like Indians!

6. What are typical salaries in India?

Indian salaries are rising quickly, although they vary widely among different types of jobs. The following table gives you some rough guidelines of possible monthly salaries in India:
Please take this data just as a general guideline as pay varies drastically from place to place for the same kind of jobs. The difference could be as much as three times for certain types of jobs. There are even huge differences in income for maids or drivers just in the same town. Average salaries in India are only a fraction of Western salaries, for instance. However, they are rising at rates between 5 and 20 percent each year, depending on locality and type of work. In a few select sectors such as advanced electronics, cutting-edge healthcare, aerospace, and the nuclear energy sector, salaries can already reach Western levels.

**7. How much can I expect to earn?**

Expatriates usually earn significantly higher salaries than Indians, though this depends on whether they were sent to India by their company or not. In case you are appointed to India by your company from overseas, your income will mostly be comparable to what you make at home and you will also receive additional benefits to “sweeten” your international posting (such as special allowances for housing, paid vacations, healthcare coverage, air tickets, and so on).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job Position</th>
<th>Monthly Salary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maid</td>
<td>3,000 INR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assembly worker</td>
<td>4,000 INR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Driver</td>
<td>5,000 INR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policeman</td>
<td>6,000 INR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior doctor in a government clinic</td>
<td>8,000 INR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior call centre staff</td>
<td>8,000 INR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school teacher</td>
<td>10,000 INR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entry-level software programmer</td>
<td>15,000 INR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive in call centre</td>
<td>30,000 INR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-level software engineer</td>
<td>40,000 INR</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
If you find a job in India by yourself (often referred to as “local contracts”), the situation is totally different. Your salary will mostly be comparable to your Indian counterparts and you will not receive many special benefits. Even though you might still earn more than most of your Indian colleagues, you will generally earn considerably less than back home. Please be aware that for most jobs foreigners stand in direct competition to affordable yet highly skilled Indian staff.

Generally speaking, you should cut down on your salary expectations. If you understand a huge salary to be the key ingredient for your career fulfilment, you might very well consider going to another country.

8. How much do I spend on living?

It is recommended that you bring money in the form of debit cards or maybe even travellers’ cheques rather than cash, and carry a credit card (VISA, American Express, and MasterCard are the most commonly accepted) for emergency situations. ATMs are also available in all large cities and even most smaller towns in India (but check for applicable transaction fees).

The official currency in India is the Indian Rupee (INR). The exchange rate fluctuates mostly between 55 and 70 INR to 1 Euro. You can find out the exchange rate any time at www.xe.com. Make sure to retain your receipts whenever you exchange any currency or traveller’s cheque to Indian Rupees or withdraw any money from the ATM. You will be asked to show this receipt when you want to exchange Indian currency back to any other currency upon your departure.

Of course, you will need a place to stay for your time in India. There is a big range of prices, depending on the location and interior. You get a very simple room in a shared flat for around 7,000 INR per month (about 120 Euro) but also a more luxurious, spacious shared-flat room for around 20,000 INR (about 330 Euro). A modern, fully furnished appartment in a fancy area of Delhi or Mumbai could easily cost in excess of 60,000 INR (1,000 Euro). But keep in mind that these prices can only be considered as broad guidelines, because prices differ immensely from region to region.
On the other hand, many items can be purchased in India for a lower rate than in most other countries. For example, to furnish your flat, you can cheaply purchase beautiful sheets, furniture, plants, posters, lamps, and many other items that will make your living environment comfortable and cozy. Prices within India for the same item or service can also vary heavily. For example, you can visit a local cinema for as little as 20 INR or pay 400 INR for a luxurious seat in one of the many new multiplex cinemas.

9. What about insurance?

As a foreigner living in India you can get coverage from many types of insurances. Most important might very well be medical insurance for you. There are, of course, insurance policies that you can book already in your home country. Some of them might give you additional coverage in case you are visiting home during your time employed in India. However, these insurance policies can often be very pricy, especially when compared to Indian medical insurance policies.

Private insurance companies in India offer a wide range of possible medical insurance packages (please note that India does not have government-sponsored health insurance plans such as those offered by many European countries, for instance). Anyone who can pay the premiums is eligible to purchase medical insurance in India from one of the many insurance companies.

While the cost of quality medical care in India is reasonably cheap compared to most countries, you should still make it a point to have proper coverage for major medical emergencies. Notably, most of the companies offering medical insurance in India have linkages to foreign insurance companies. It is of paramount importance that you thoroughly compare the plans as they often appear similar on the surface but differ massively when you check the fine print. One factor to keep in mind is looking for “cash-free” insurance for major medical expenses that partner with the particular hospitals that you consider for treatment in the place you stay. Else you will have to pay up front and only get reimbursed later, which in case of medical expenses might be a problem.
10. What if I get ill?

Medical care in India in general has lower standards than, for example, in Western Europe but it depends largely on the specific geographical area. If you get ill, your first choice should be a modern hospital, which you can nowadays find in every major city in India (for instance, Max Hospitals and Apollo Hospitals). Usually any hotel or landlord will know the safest and best clinic in case of need. The healthcare sector has witnessed an enormous growth and due to this, some Indian hospitals have very high international standards and so you should generally be in good hands there.

You will have to pay for the medical treatment in advance: A consultation is about 200 to 600 INR (about 3 to 10 Euro) but laboratory tests, with an amount of 500 to 3,000 INR (about 8 to 50 Euro) as well as staying in a hospital can be more expensive. Carrying sufficient funds is therefore absolutely essential, as your expenses for medical treatment are usually refunded by your insurance company only at the time you are back home. To avoid delays or trouble with being refunded, make sure you receive a receipt from the doctor who treated you, along with an exact diagnosis.

Next to modern medicine, India is a treasure trove for systems of traditional medicine. Ayurveda (“science of life”) is the most famous of these, but also Siddha and Unani are very popular. These medical systems are based on thousands of years of experiential observation and for many ailments locals will rather employ a traditional remedy – they might also well work for you.

11. What kind of healthcare do I need?

Again it depends on multiple factors like your state of health, duration, and area of stay. In any case it is recommended to buy travel insurance, get immunised, and take along a medical kit. Which items might be necessary for a personal medical kit, you can find out by asking a chemist or doctor in your town. Please note that even if you currently have insurance, it most likely does not cover travel outside your homeland’s borders – no reason to despair as short- and long-term travel insurance is readily available and mostly very affordable.

Travellers to India mostly experience medical problems like upset stomachs and diarrhea. If these persist, you should seek medical advice. We suggest that you pay any costs up-front and then file a claim with your insurance company to get your medical expenses reimbursed once you are back home. For larger expenses, it is also possible to arrange for your insurance company to pay the
hospital or medical provider directly, but this often takes a considerable amount of time and many phone calls.

You may feel that you need to purchase all medicines at home to bring with you such as Paracetamol, Immodium, and other emergency products. This is not really a necessity as all the basic remedies you could possibly need are available at local pharmacies at a fraction of the cost. Medicine is very cheap in India but please have in mind that some medicines which might be essential for you are not easily available in more remote places.

These basic vaccinations for travellers to India are recommendable: diphtheria, tetanus, hepatitis A and B, polio, and typhoid. Rabies and Japanese B Encephalitis immunisations are recommended for long-term travellers. In any case it is important to seek medical advice. Before leaving for India, another way of getting more information on immunisation is to go to an institute for tropical medicine in your area.
FAQ Travelling to India

1. What to bring to India?

Light cotton clothes are advisable in the dry and wet period; for the cool season one has to keep in mind that it can get really cold in the northern regions of India. By and large, one is well advised to take just the most necessary pieces of clothing to India because clothing is very inexpensive. From tailor-made clothes to most international brands, if you want to take advantage of the almost infinite shopping opportunities, you should have enough space in your bags.

All kinds of cosmetics and toiletries are available in supermarkets and malls. Sun protection is not common and comparatively expensive. Insect repellent is always available and very necessary depending on place and season. Tampons are generally easy to buy in the cities. Generally, cosmetics and toiletry items are about the same price as they are in a Western country. Hygiene is important when you come to India. Therefore you may like to bring some disinfectant spray or disinfectant cleansing tissues, since bathrooms are not always clean or available. However, do not be too paranoid about falling sick. Psychology plays a central role in your staying healthy.

Electricity in India is 50 cycles (Hz) and 230-240 V and the outlets are two- or three-pronged. Some appliances you bring from home may need adaptors for the plugs, which are available in most supermarkets and hardware stores. Other essential items are: that book you really wanted to read, nail scissors, camera and all the cords, as well as cables and chargers you need for your electric devices. Since power cuts are common (especially in the hot period), bring a torch although you can as well buy one once you arrive.

Also do not forget to bring: engagement, curiosity, love for adventure, and – most importantly – patience. Spend a week before you leave building it up and hold it in reserve for those frequent times when you will have to wait for a train running late or when you bargain a shirt of 250 INR (4 Euro) down to 100 INR (1.50 Euro), which sometimes takes long but thus can be even more fun. And don’t
worry too much about forgetting to bring something. Most items can be purchased locally and often at cheaper rates than back home. However, please make sure that you pack all your key documents and papers – passport, copy of passport, transport tickets, credit/ATM cards, and optimally one additional form of ID.

2. What about food in India?

Indian culinary traditions are extremely diverse and justifiably famous throughout the world. You very likely will have tasted Indian food in your country, but this will only be a tiny part of India’s extraordinary range of foods. Indian cuisine is famed for its spicy edge. Even food items people do not mostly associate with spiciness are often richly flavoured with spices in India. To the uninitiated it makes sense to start slowly and gradually build up your capacity to stomach the heavy spice combinations, but for those who have an affinity to spicy concoctions, it usually is love at first taste!

You will get tasty Samosas, a famous Indian snack with spicy boiled potato stuffing inside a crispy flour dough served with spicy chutney, at almost every corner (around 5 INR each, 0.08 Euro) or you can go to a restaurant and try the immense variety of Indian cuisine’s dishes. Indian food is famous for the use of numerous spices to create flavour and aroma. Pay 50 to 400 INR (0.7 to 5.7 Euro) for a sumptuous meal, which will appeal to all your senses.

Each region and each state has its own unique food. Among the popular dishes in North India are Mutter Paneer (a curry made with cottage cheese and peas), Pulao (fried rice), Daal (lentils), Dahi Gosht (lamb in yoghurt sauce), Butter Chicken, and, of course, Samosas. In South India you will not get around Idlis (steamed cakes made from rice batter), Dosas or Uttapams (pancakes made from a batter of rice and lentil flour). These are just a few examples, because fully covering the huge variety of Indian food probably would take hundreds of pages. So while in India, take every chance you get to sample and savour local food and specialties. Do not hesitate to also try out the street food stalls to spend some time with the locals.

Food safety is an important issue during your stay in India, as many foreigners fall sick due to polluted food or beverages. If you cannot resist the tempting treats of street vendors and their food variety (which most people cannot), we suggest you to look for places that are very popular with local people and foods that are freshly prepared in front of your eyes. Poor food preparation, cooking, and storage are fairly widespread, so please take extra care.
Vegetables and fruits in general are available at every bazaar for a very small amount of money. Imported products such as chocolates are usually considerably more expensive as they are at home. You may like to try to cook Indian food (or maybe just Spaghetti), but you can as well go out for dinner every day, which might be even cheaper. If you do not feel like going out, you can as well order at almost every restaurant or fast-food-wallah and they will usually deliver it for free.

Please also note that tap water in India is generally not safe to drink. We recommend that you purchase bottled water for your consumption (but make sure that the seal is not broken). You can also request your hosts to boil water for you to consume or request filtered water in hotels and restaurants.

Alcoholic drinks are always comparatively expensive. A bottle of local beer costs 20 to 65 INR (0.30 to 1 Euro) in the shop but restaurants, bars, and clubs will charge you between 120 to 350 INR or even more. So going out (in the sense of Western nightlife) costs in India about the same as back home (although you mostly do not pay entrance fees). Clubbing usually is for higher income groups only. Nevertheless, it is affordable for a growing number of people. Besides, there are plenty of other cultural events, mostly for free.

3. Is India dangerous?

India in general is a very safe country. Indians are very helpful and hospitable people. India is a democracy and the rule of law is mostly respected (even though the courts are often painfully slow in administering it). You can move freely around the country. That being said, for all countries there will always be some places where it is very safe and some where it is not. As in every other country in the world, savvy and caution are the best weapons against theft or worse.
The role of women is different in Indian culture than it is, for example, in Western Europe. To avoid provoking the unnecessary, women should not wear revealing clothes like short skirts and tight tank tops and should keep in mind that an Indian man may understand certain behaviours or gestures differently than for example a man in their own country. Wearing local clothes will decrease the amount of attention you receive.

But please do not jump to early conclusions. India is generally safe for women; just make yourself aware of the cultural differences. Larger cities tend to be more modern and people are more used to seeing tourists and expats, so there is more flexibility in terms of what kinds of clothes are acceptable. Further, it is needless to say that you have to be careful of pickpockets in crowded places. Hygiene is a very important topic in India as well and diseases can be a serious danger to your health. But when you follow some simple hygienic rules you can reduce risks to a low level. Malaria and dengue can be a danger in certain areas but there are effective ways to protect yourself from mosquito bites and reduce the risk of an infection to a minimum. Ask your family doctor or a medical institute in your area for detailed information.

Foreigners in India often attract the attention of beggars, frauds, and touts. Beggars will often go as far as touching you and following you around. In what might be counterintuitive to you, we recommend that you do not show any emotions or even say out loud “No”. The best response is to look unconcerned and ignore their behaviour. The more attention you pay, the longer they will follow you hoping for a payback. It will test your patience, but this strategy generally is the most effective. If you want to help the needy in India, rather choose to give a generous donation to one of the many excellent NGOs trying to make a difference in the country.

Never carry your passport/visa, credit cards, traveller’s schedules or other travel documents in your shoulder bag or backpack – try to always carry them on your person or store them safely away in your hotel or home. Do not show off your wallet or valuable goods in public. Be particularly cautious about your possessions in crowded areas such as local festivals, markets, tourist sites, railways, bus stations, or on trains and buses.

Only keep enough money for your immediate needs in your pocket and hide the rest on your body or store it at a safe place. Ensure that you are aware of the values and appearances of different local banknotes to avoid being short-changed or handed counterfeit money.
As a final note, try to stay clear of conflict areas. It is advisable to consult reliable sources of information such as your embassy or Knowledge Must to request information about the latest political developments. Ask for advice before heading to Kashmir or certain areas in northeast India, as both areas have long-running insurgencies. But there is very little physical violence affecting foreigners in India, even in conflict zones. The most likely danger to your physical well-being in India definitely comes from the crazy traffic that almost borders on the insane. So keep your guard when crossing the street!

4. How do I get from the airport into town?

Your employer may arrange an airport-pickup for you. If you will be staying in a hotel, you can ask there to be picked up as well or you can tell us to make arrangements for you. In case you want to try it on your own, the safest and most convenient way is to hire a prepaid taxi. You can find prepaid taxi booths at the airport. They are operated under the direct supervision of the traffic police. It helps to avert over-charging, refusal, misbehaviour or harassment by the drivers. You simply go there, tell where you want to go, and then a duly signed receipt indicating the taxi number, destination, service charges, and the fare will be given to you.

5. How do I find an accommodation?

Hospitality is a long running tradition in India. From the majestic Himalayas and the stark deserts of Rajasthan, over beautiful beaches and lush tropical forests, to idyllic villages and bustling cities, India offers unique opportunities for every individual preference – whether for one night or for one year.

In recent years, accommodation options throughout India have become extremely diverse, from cosy homestays and tribal huts to stunning heritage mansions and maharaja palaces. From Kashmir to Kanyakumari, from Gujarat to Assam, there are different cultures, languages, life styles, and cuisines.
This variety is increasingly reflected by the many forms of accommodation available in India, ranging from the simplicity of local guest houses and government bungalows to the opulent luxury of royal palaces and five star deluxe hotel suites.

There is also an increasingly wide choice of unconventional accommodation options. In India religious centres, ashrams, and monasteries are among the popular alternatives to classic choices of accommodation. Given the cleanliness and hygiene of these accommodations, besides their unique cultural content, this segment offers huge potential. Organisations such as the Krishnamurti Foundation, Bharat Sevshram Sangha, Ramakrishna Mission, ISKCON, and Aurobindo Ashram are among the religious institutions that offer accommodation options across India.

If you are looking for something more independent or permanent, you might be interested in sharing a flat or renting an accommodation on your own. In general there are several ways to find an accommodation in India. A first step could be to search the Web. There are multiple Internet forums you can check out, where different people exchange their experiences and useful advice. Other websites such as craigslist also feature interesting classifieds. Some embassies are also providing lists of people or agents who offer a place or at least assistance with finding an appropriate accommodation.

Knowledge Must can also assist you in finding a shared flat or an individual flat for yourself. Due to our large network it is also possible to arrange a stay with an Indian family, which could help you to adapt more readily to an unfamiliar set of values, habits of thought, and patterns of behaviour. We help you to find accommodation that meets your requirements. Please get in touch with us via our website www.knowledge-must.com.
6. What about Internet access, phone and postal services?

When you move into a shared flat, you usually will find an Internet connection there. In case you move into a flat that has no Internet, it could be most convenient to buy a wireless broadband solution (usually a small USB device) for fast and simple Internet access from providers like Airtel, Reliance or Tata Indicom. Besides, you will not have problems to find an Internet cafe in urban areas. If you have Internet access probably the best and cheapest way to call family and friends at home is software that allows users to make voice calls over the Internet such as Skype. Calls to other users of the service are free, while calls to landlines and mobile phones can be made for a fee, after buying some credit.

If you want to bring your mobile from your home country, you will want to contact your provider to make sure that your phone will work while you are in India. There is nothing complicated about it – if it is not locked to your home network or home provider (net/simlock). However, roaming charges will apply if you continue to use your home SIM and these are generally highly expensive. To avoid them, we advise you to buy a local SIM card to use with your cell, even if you plan to come to India only for a few weeks. Simply take your GSM phone with you or purchase a new one in India. Mobile phone services are provided by major players including Airtel, Reliance, Vodafone, Idea Cellular, and BSNL. Choose one of the providers (depending on their charges and coverage in your particular destination) and get a prepaid SIM card, which is widely available in every mobile (accessory) shop across the country and which is also quite inexpensive, about 150 to 300 INR (2.50 to 5 Euro). You automatically get an Indian number with the card. The call and SMS charges are very low. In Delhi you can get a prepaid card right in the arrival area at the airport. Just bring two passport photos and your passport along for your application.

Please note that due to increased security concerns in India, some foreigners report difficulties in obtaining a SIM card or applying for their personal Internet connection. Showing a registration proof with the local FRO will usually be sufficient. In case you are not registered, you can also always ask for the support of an Indian friend or colleague.
International Direct Dialing from India is available in the cities. Phone cards are also widely available and calls can be made from post offices, hotels, and phone booths on the streets. Besides, using the regular landline phone services is reasonably cheap in India.

Contrary to what you might have heard or read before, the postal service in India is fairly reliable. For example, letters to and from Europe or the United States might take about 5 to 10 days. However, please be aware that packages sent to India from abroad are frequently opened for checking before they reach their destination and sometimes get stuck in customs.

Immersed – Leave a Message
by Benjamin R. Weiss

In those days, I still thought I could keep my shoes clean—a fool’s errand, I quickly realized, and a concern that, like many others, I’ve put to bed since setting down roots in Delhi two months ago. I was standing with my new pair of spotless blue Nikes on the dusty, crumbling asphalt outside a mobile phone shop in Delhi’s bustling Lajpat Nagar Central Market. Leaning against the cold concrete frame of a vacant storefront, I tapped the keys on my new mobile phone, sampling a dozen or so ragas and Bollywood-inflected tunes in search of a fitting ringtone.

I had arrived in India the night before. The ride from the airport was dark and mostly uneventful—I found the traffic patterns curious, to be sure, but there were only a few cars on the road at the late hour. It wasn’t until the next morning that I really started to experience the quirks of India.

I had been told—warned, I should say—that there was nothing that could prepare me for life here, that it would take a few days, maybe weeks, to adjust. And that was certainly the case.

But the richness of life here has really grown on me. And as I’ve tried to soak it all up, I’ve found it crucial to try to understand exactly where the nuances of personal interaction—the gestures, the habits, the slang—were born.

Many of the influences are clear enough: vibrant religious and cultural traditions, unrivalled geographic and human diversity, the great experiment with democracy, the legacy of colonialism. Each of these features, and countless others, contribute idiosyncrasies to everyday life that make India such a fascinating place to live, travel and explore.

Which brings me back to my cell phone.
After settling on a ringtone—"Morning Raga"—I thumbed around trying to find my voice mail settings. And I clicked. And fumbled. And clicked some more.

Nothing.

So I quickly punched in the Customer Service number. "Hi, I was wondering how to set up my voicemail," I told the friendly service representative, assuming she’d chuckle and give me some basic advice. "Umm, I’m sorry sir. I’ll have to transfer you to my manager."

Not the response I expected. Nor could I foresee the subsequent confusion on the other end, as I shared my conundrum with helpdesk agent after helpdesk agent. The inquiry ended with apologies. "We’re sorry sir, we can’t help you with that."

Perhaps the hotel staff could? Well, it turned out that, no, they couldn’t either. But for one very simple reason: voice mail is virtually nonexistent in India.

That revelation, in tandem with the explosion of mobile phone use in the country, has had a profound impact, I believe, on the daily habits of people in India.

Quick call-backs seem to be the norm, often accompanied with the greeting, “Hi, I just received a call from this number." Many have taken to using the “Missed Call” feature to send various messages—"I’ve arrived," for example, or “I don’t have credit to make a call, so please call me”—and SMS messaging is naturally very popular.

The lack of voicemail often means that callers will try to reach you repeatedly—I once received four missed calls from the same number in the span of a half hour from someone who, I’m pretty sure, knew I was in an office and likely unable to get to my phone. And many pick up their phones at intriguing moments—in a business meeting, at the dinner table, behind the wheel of a rickshaw—contributing to a norm of interruption that, like much else here, takes some getting used to.

In all, it’s clear that the lack of voice mail has a profound impact on the way personal communications are carried out. And my guess is that those effects spill over into other realms of social interaction like business, politics, familial relations and, perhaps, religious practice.

Or maybe I’ve got it backwards, and the lack of voice mail hasn’t spawned new behaviours and merely represents the latest iteration of age-old traditions and habits.
What do you think? If you’ve spent time here in India, have you observed the same phenomenon? And where do you think it all leads? As I continue to adapt to my new home, I’m eager to hear your thoughts—so please leave me a message.

And by the way, in case you were wondering, I haven’t dusted off my kicks in weeks.

The opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of Knowledge Must.

7. How do I register with the Indian authorities?

Registration of visa is required for all foreigners visiting India on a long-term (more than 180 days) Student Visa, Research Visa, Employment Visa, Medical Visa, Medical Attendant Visa, and Missionary Visa. These visa types will be required to be registered with the concerned Registration Officer within 14 days of arrival in the country, irrespective of the actual duration of stay.

Foreigners visiting India on other categories of long-term visa, including Business Visa and Entry (X) Visa, do not require registration if the duration of stay does not exceed 180 days on a single visit. In case you intend to stay for more than 180 days on a single visit, you should get yourself registered well before the expiry of the 180 days.

In India, the Foreigner Registration Office is the primary agency to regulate the registration, movement, stay, departure, and extension of stay of foreigners. In cities like New Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, and Chennai you can find a Foreigner Registration Office. In other places, the Superintendents of Police (SP) of the Districts act as registration officers for foreigners.
For the process of registration the following documents are required:

- Original passport including visa (only for verification purposes)
- Photocopy of the passport and initial visa
- Four passport photographs (in India you will frequently require passport photographs, so try to make it a habit to carry spare ones with you)
- Details of residence in India
  - If you stay on your own: rental agreement
  - If you stay with relatives or friends: copy of the telephone or electricity bill of that premises or a copy of passport of the relative or friend with the same address AND a letter of introduction from the relative or friend
  - If you stay in a hotel: a letter from the hotel management or a receipt issued by the hotel as proof of stay
- HIV test report from one of the WHO recognised institutions (for people in the age group of 16 to 60 years that are visiting India on a visa for more than one year – foreign nationals who fail the test are liable to be deported to their country of origin)
- Photocopy of your official appointment letter
- Photocopy of your employment contract
- An undertaking from your employer that in case you have to repatriated back to your country of residence, the cost of travel would be borne by the employer
  - Should state: “We take full responsibility for the activities and conduct of Mr/Mrs NAME, national of COUNTRY, during his/her stay in India. If anything adverse comes to notice during this period, we undertake to repatriate him/her on our cost. Date: …, Signature of competent authority: …, Seal: …”
  - One of the following documents of the authorised signatory on this undertaking also needs to be handed in as a photocopy: Indian Passport OR Voters Identity Card OR PAN Card OR Extract of Bank Pass Book
- Copy of the marriage certificate in case of those seeking extension of stay on grounds of being married to an Indian national
- Accreditation certificate from the Press Information Bureau in case of Journalist Visa
- Approval of the Department of Company Affairs in the case of board level appointees in Public limited companies
- Two copies of the approval of Government of India in case of a joint venture or a collaboration
- Apart from the above documents additional supportive documents are sometimes asked for
The process for your permit to be approved can take anything between several days and many months. Once the FRRO has completed your registration, you are able to pick up your “Certificate of Registration”. This paper is very important, as it proves that you are an Indian Resident and will allow you to enter tourist sites for the much lower Indian entrance fees. It also is proof that you are in India legally.

Registration is required to be done only once within the stipulated period, even though you may go out of India on multiple entry facility during the validity of the visa. Only if you enter India on a new visa will you be required to register again. Upon completion of your stay in India you should surrender your Certificate of Registration to the officer of the place where you are registered or of the place where you intend to depart or to the immigration officer at the port of exit from India.

Also note that the Indian organisation engaging you for employment will be responsible for your conduct during your stay in India. The same organisation is also responsible for your departure from India upon expiry of your Employment Visa. Your Employment Visa is valid only while you continue working for the same employer for which the visa was granted. Your employer has to notify the government of the termination of your employment, which essentially revokes your visa. However, FRRO often gives you a grace period during which you can go travelling or pack up your things before you have to leave the country. This grace period can be anything from a few days to a few months.

8. How can I change or extend my visa?

Visa extensions up to 15 days on any type of visa is generally granted if you cite reasons such as illness, death in the family, non-availability of flights, etc. Generally, specific powers of visa extensions beyond 15 days and conversion of visa for foreigners residing in India, vests with the Ministry of Home Affairs in New Delhi.

According to the rules currently in force, change of category of visa is not permitted. You can however apply for an extension of visa duration. For those who are already in India working and want to seek an extension in their Employment Visa can get them extended in Delhi from the Ministry of Home Affairs. The application is to be made to the Ministry of Home Affairs through the concerned FRRO/Office of the Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP).
The following documents are required to be submitted to the FRRO/SSP for getting the visa extension:

- Formal request for the visa extension
- Multiple Entry Form (if required)
- Undertaking from the Indian organisation
- Employment agreement
- Registration book and passport in original
- Extension form duly filled in
- Passport size photographs of the applicant

While first-time visa extensions have to go via the Ministry of Home Affairs, subsequent extensions can be granted by the respective FRRO. Strikingly, some foreigners prefer not to extend their existing visas and rather choose to go to their home countries to apply for fresh visas every time, as they consider this process to be less cumbersome.
FAQ On the Job

1. What about the conditions of employment?

The Factories Act (1948) mandates an 8-hour workday and 48-hour workweek, as well as minimum working conditions. Workers are to be paid twice their regular wage rate for working overtime. State government laws set minimum wages, hours of work, and safety and health standards. These standards are generally enforced and accepted in the modern industrial sector, but are not observed in less economically stable industries. Also occupational safety and health remains a problem area in India. Industrial accidents, in the chemical sector for instance, continue to occur far too frequently due to lack of proper enforcement.

In India there is no particular requirement under the centrally enacted labour laws to have written employment contracts. However, state-specific statutes generally require the employer to issue an appointment order featuring the name and address of the establishment and the employer, name of the employee and the employee’s postal and permanent address, father’s/husband’s name, date of birth, date of entry into employment, designation, nature of work entrusted to the employee, serial number in the register of employment, and the rates of wages payable.

You should, however, insist on a clearly outlined employment contract, which should detail the key terms and conditions of your employment, such as the number of holidays, responsibilities on the job, and remuneration.

2. What about work culture in India?

The Indian work culture is immensely diverse. There are major differences depending on whether you work for small, local companies, for big Indian corporations or for international organisations. Business practices also vary heavily between the regions.
Right from a very young age Indians are taught to respect figures of authority, which carries on into their professional life. So senior managers expect to be treated in a certain way by their subordinates, who generally act submissively. The behaviour of superiors towards other employees may seem often rude to you. Nonetheless, even though that might make you feel uncomfortable at first, you need to somewhat adapt to this as otherwise employees of lower hierarchy levels might take advantage of your kindness.

The explosion of jobs, technology, and the advent of multinationals has revolutionised the work culture in India. Many IT companies, for instance, have recognised that a happy employee is a productive employee. These organisations often provide training programmes, recreational centres, subsidised cafeterias, and allow for constructive criticism. Interaction between colleagues is encouraged, the dress code is relaxed, the language “hip”, and bosses are addressed by their first names.

Indian work culture tends to be people driven rather than process driven. Since processes are not as clearly defined as you might be used from elsewhere, you are not likely to find a manual or process document in place. Tap into the brains of your colleagues by asking lots of questions and double check to make sure that you have got it right. On the positive side this focus on people allows for greater flexibility.

In many organisations, the “lunch-hour” is the key platform for socialising among colleagues. Colleagues might be clustered in groups sharing their lunch-boxes and chatting – about everything from the price of vegetables to the latest Bollywood busters. The “tiffin system” wherein stay-at-home moms prepare food, package it, and send it to the workplace is also very popular. This system allows you to savour home-cooked delicacies for reasonable money.

3. What is the social safety net like in India?

India lacks a comprehensive social security system. In the informal sector, which employs the vast majority (93 percent) of Indian workers, there is no social security protection for unemployed or retired workers. Up to the present day, it is the wider family which still lies at the heart of the Indian social safety net.

The Employees’ State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) only provides social protection to workers (and their dependents) in the organised sector in case of sickness, maternity, and death or disablement due
to an employment injury or occupational hazard. In most states, employees in the following classes of establishments are eligible for coverage: non-seasonal factories using power and employing 10 or more persons; non-seasonal and non-power using factories, shops, hotels, restaurants, cinemas, preview theatres, motor transport undertakings, and newspaper establishments employing 20 or more persons.

4. What are common forms of discrimination found in the Indian labour world?

India might very well be the most diverse country in the world. This, however, also implies many cultural fault lines running through the country. The traditional caste system, as well as differences of gender, ethnicity, religion, and language, deeply divide the society.

The Indian Constitution clearly prohibits discrimination on the basis of a person’s race, gender, religion, place of birth, or social status. Government authorities work to enforce these provisions with varying degrees of success. For example, the Indian Government uses a system of “reservations” (somewhat similar to affirmative action programs in the U.S.) to decrease employment-based discrimination towards scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. Despite laws designed to prevent discrimination and longstanding efforts by the authorities, social and cultural practices still have a profound discriminatory impact, and discrimination against women, persons with disabilities, indigenous people, homosexuals, and national, racial, and ethnic minorities is often a problem.

5. What about gender issues and working in India?

The Equal Remuneration Act, 1976 (ERA), provides for equal remuneration to male and female employees. The ERA also states that no employer shall, while recruiting for the same work, discriminate against women except where the employment of women in such work is prohibited or restricted by or under any law.

However, it is still common in India to have discrimination against women, as seen for instance by the generally slower rate of promotion of women to managerial positions within businesses. The participation of women in the formal labour force is much lower than that of males (33 percent vs. 67 percent). In both rural and urban areas, women are paid less than men are for the same job.
Women experience economic discrimination in access to employment and credit, which acts as an impediment to women owning businesses. In a positive development, state-supported microcredit programmes for women have begun to have an impact in many rural districts. Besides, sexual harassment at the workplace is fairly common, with a vast majority of cases going unreported to authorities. A 2004 report by the National Commission for Women (NCW) and the Press Institute of India found that a majority of women experienced gender discrimination at their workplaces.

6. What are the guidelines for business dress in India?

It is very difficult to generalise about the most appropriate way to dress for business purposes that will be valid all over India. However, some generalisations can be made that will often hold true. Office-goers in India generally dress in semi-formals, shirts and trousers for men and Western or Indian attire for women.

As in the Western world, normal business dress for men is a suit and tie, but often just a full-sleeved shirt with or without a tie is also acceptable. The weather conditions in most of India do not permit the use of heavy suits and blazers most of the year. Linen and cotton are preferred materials. Colours used tend to be on the neutral side and rather conservative.

Alternatively, there are also other forms of dresses acceptable for men in business settings, such as kurta-pyjama (traditional dress for men), a Nehru shirt (also known as Chinese collar shirt), or even a safari dress. In fact, foreigners wearing local Indian dress are often complimented for their style.

For women, conservative pant-suits or long skirts are acceptable to wear. The neckline of the blouse or the top should be high. Otherwise the ubiquitous shalwar qameez or the sari are standard formal business dress for women.

In most companies, particularly in the IT sector, however, the dress code is much more casual. It is not unusual to find people wearing T-shirts and jeans with sneakers. On a general note, as a visitor, conservative, though not formal, dress is advisable. Please keep in mind that shorts are not appropriate in India.
7. What about Indian office hours?

Normal office hours in India are often from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Lunch time is mostly for half an hour to one hour. However, in some cities such as in Mumbai, some companies start earlier in order to avoid congested traffic during rush hour. More and more organisations are also keeping their employees longer at work, so that many people with office jobs only manage to leave work at 7 p.m. or 8 p.m. In many industries overtime is the norm and most local companies do not compensate their workers for it.

Official and business work in India is run on the “Western” calendar, with the date writing convention following the system dd/mm/yy(yy), e.g. 24/12/10 for Christmas Eve 2010. Regarding the work week in India, there is no clear convention. While most businesses and government offices run from Monday to Friday or Saturday (with Saturday often being only half a day), others, such as many Islamic businesses often follow their traditional calendar.

8. What about holidays in India?

India has a long list of holidays. Some of these, such as Republic Day (January 26th), Independence Day (August 15th), Gandhi Jayanti (October 2nd), and Christmas (December 25th), are observed according to the Western calendar. The others, which are mostly Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, or Muslim festivals, such as Holi, Dussehra, Diwali, Muharram, and Id, follow the lunar calendar. The dates for the latter holidays are not the same in terms of the Western calendar, and therefore, you can check with the local Indian Embassy or google to find out the latest holiday list.

Since India is culturally an extremely diverse country, different parts of the country all have their own unique regional festivals. Thus, each state also has its own list of holidays. You can get this list from the Tourism Departments of the particular states, for instance.
To give you an example, in Delhi 15 public holidays plus two flexible ones are given by government offices. Other employers need to give at least 10 holidays, from the list given out by the Labour officer of the respective state. In addition, Indian employers need to give their employees a minimum of 12 days paid vacation. Expatriates are usually entitled to 15 to 30 days of paid vacation a year, depending on the organisation that they work for. Make sure that these regulations about extra vacation days are explicitly stated in your employment contract.

9. What do I have to know about Indian business life?

Compared to most places, business in India takes place in a much more relaxed and informal way. Still try to be punctual even if traffic in India is heavy and unpredictable. It is also advisable to confirm your appointments to make sure they were not cancelled at the last minute. Doing business in India involves building relationships. Indians like to establish social relationships first, so don’t dive immediately into business conversation. Critique has to be uttered very carefully and only in privacy, because otherwise your behaviour will be seen as disrespectful.

Willingness to compromise is also among the most important requirements, e.g. Westerners often find the hierarchical organisation and idolisation of some of the top-level executives very difficult to deal with. One popular concept is that of “jugaad”, a colloquial Hindi word that can mean an innovative fix or a resource that can be used as such. This concept is used as much for enterprising street mechanics as for political fixers. Essentially, it is a tribute to local genius and lateral thinking.

Indians usually do not express their disagreements openly and directly; doing so would be considered discourteous. People from Western cultures, for example, are often found to be too direct when it comes to business. Instead, when differences arise, they may circumvent them by making indirect statements such as “we will discuss this later” or “I will have to check about this”. In most cases you might follow local customs and avoid expressing direct disagreement. A direct refusal to an invitation is likely to be seen as impolite or even arrogant. If you have to decline an invitation, it is more acceptable to give a somewhat vague and open-ended answer such as “I will definitely try”.

Bargaining for the right price or additional concessions is an integral part of doing business in India. Indian negotiators expect and value flexibility in negotiation. A straightforward offer may be simply perceived as a rigid stand. It is always advisable to build some buffers in one’s initial offer, which gives you leeway for later adjustments.
10. How is business conducted in India?

More than anything else, doing business in India involves building relationships and continuously nurturing them. Indians prefer to conduct business with those they know and trust – often at the expense of seemingly more lucrative deals. It is vital that you develop a good personal relationship with people that are important for your business. Trustworthiness, honour, and a general feeling of being comfortable with each other are central issues to build upon.

Women executives, in senior positions, are a relatively new phenomenon in the Indian business environment. If you are a woman, you will normally find people respectful and courteous, but not very comfortable in working with you on business deals. You may have to make extra efforts to get them to discuss business with you.

If your business dealings in India involve negotiations, always bear in mind that they can be slow. If trust has not yet been established, then concentrate efforts on building a rapport. Decisions are always made at the highest level. If the owner or Director of the company is not present, the chances are these are early stage negotiations. Try to get your first appointment with the person who is high in authority in the concerned organisation. It is likely that this person later directs you to meet someone lower in the hierarchy, who would be actually relevant for your business. However, coming through the superior person is likely to help when it comes to the implementation of decisions.

Please note that most tips on Indian business values, etiquette, customs and protocol should be taken with a pinch of salt. Most guide books offer advice without taking into account the massive diversity of Indian cultures. What is true in one environment or region often does not hold true somewhere else. Stereotypes anywhere are often counterproductive – but especially so in India with its unparalleled diversity and high flexibility in behaviour. To learn more about etiquette in the Indian context you might have a look at the comparatively comprehensive “Culture Shock! India: A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette”, by Gitanjali Kolonad (published by Marshall Cavendish Corporation in September 2008), or get directly in touch with us.
11. Is English the language of business in India?

English is the common language for conducting business in many industries. Moreover, while doing business in India’s biggest cities such as Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, Bangalore, and Hyderabad most foreigners will do so with a particular socio-economic class that widely uses English. India has a clear edge in business over much of its international competition due its long association with English language, the use of English in administration, and the fact that English is the main foreign language taught in schools, even used as the medium of instruction in many of them.

At the same time, the importance of regional languages in business is increasing all over India. By far the most important language is Hindustani (Hindi-Urdu), which increasingly functions as a lingua franca over most of India’s varied geography. But even if you conduct your business solely in English language while you are in India, you have to build up your listening skills to understand the words behind the many different accents (due to the many different native local languages of people you will meet) and learn the many local variations of English language present in India, which are often summed up under the term “Hinglish”.

**Hinglish – A ‘Pakka’ Way to Speak?**
by Gülcan Durak

Hindi, Urdu, Tamil, Bengali....this is just a small selection of languages spoken in India. With over 400 languages and thousands of dialects, it is difficult to keep track of them. It is therefore not surprising that people in India are growing up in a multilingual surrounding. Something not necessarily resulting out of this, but becoming more and more common, are the phenomena called ‘Code Switching’ (switching from one language to another) and ‘Code Mixing’ (mixing of two or more languages), which have become normal for many Indians. Hinglish, which is a combination of Hindi and English, is probably the most established example for ‘Code Mixing’ in India. It is not only widely spoken there, but also in the U.S. and in Great Britain, which is not surprising regarding the large numbers of Indians living in these countries.

There are two variants of Hinglish; either you reshape the English syntax with Hindi words or simply the other way round. Doing this you get unique phrases like: «I’m going to have my khaana, yaar», which basically means I’m going to have food buddy. Or imagine yourself buying some delicious Indian snacks from one of the numerous food stalls along the streets: you might be asked: «Pack karna?» – do you want your food packed – easy, right? This way of mixing Hindi and English is common especially amongst young people. For some it might be only a habit, for others it is an opportunity to
express themselves best possible by using English words like computer, cinema, phone etc. For these kinds of words Hindi equivalents do exist, but they are hardly used by the native speakers.

Hinglish does not only mean to mix the languages, there are also several new neologisms, some very useful and some just really amusing. A frequently used expression in the English language is, for example, “to postpone something”. Indians have more options, they cannot only postpone, they can even “prepone”. There really is an abundance of such examples. Also the advertising industry makes heavy use of Hinglish. The famous Indian brand Amul, which is well known for its dairy products, has posters hanging in cities all over the whole country with sentences like: «Nano ya na maano» with the subtitle «Taste drive it». This refers to the small yellow Indian car, built by Tata Motors and gained fame as the world’s cheapest car. The actual Hindi idiom is «Maano ya na maano!» and means believe it or not!. With this ad Amul has taken a topical issue and put it in an amusing context to sell their own products.

Many companies in India promote their products using a mixture of Hindi and English to reach a larger number of potential customers. Though Hindi is (together with English) one of the two official languages of India, it is the mother tongue of only about one in five Indians. That is why English continues to play an important role as an additional lingua franca among the Indians. A Sikh from Punjab can communicate with a Tamil from South India using English. A conclusion could be that Hinglish as a combination seems to be the easiest way to strike a balance between the two languages. So in future we will keep on hearing phrases like: «Wow, lagtaa hai ki* mom brought us a lot of stuff from Walmart, bhaiyya ke liye* new laptop...great, that means I get to have his!»

With the huge explosion in the popularity of Bollywood movies around the world, Hinglish has yet the potential to become a major world language. Some of the Hinglish expressions used might very well enter the popular mainstream. Just imagine the Royal British Guards chatting in Hinglish during their breaks – even the Queen would certainly be amused this time. In this sense all left to say is: «Hinglish zindaabaad!*»

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* [pakka = good, appropriate, ripe, decided; lagta hai ki = it seems like; bhaiyya ke lie = for my brother; zindaabaad = long live]
12. What about business protocols and hierarchies?

Indians tend to add formal titles when addressing somebody, even if they are well acquainted with that person – Professor, Doctor, Mr., Ms., or if they are not sure about any applicable formal titles, then Sir or Madam, and also by adding the honorific suffix “ji” to the name, thereby expressing their respect. In general, people are addressed simply by their name only by close acquaintances, family members, or by someone who is older or superior in authority.

Seniority, age, and authority are respected in India, both in business and in public life. Of all the cultural influences that most impact Indian business culture, hierarchy plays a key role. With its roots in Hinduism and the caste system, Indian society operates within a framework of strict hierarchy that defines people’s roles, status, and social order. For example, within companies manual labour will only be carried out by the “peon”. It is not uncommon for the moving of a desk to take hours. This is because no employee in the office will carry out the task but the “peon”, who, if otherwise engaged can not do so.

Presenting and exchanging business cards are a necessary part of doing business in India. You must bring plenty since people tend to exchange business cards even in non-business situations at their first meeting. Receive and give business cards respectfully with your right hand and store them carefully.

13. What should I know about business meetings in India?

The concept of time in India is a hotly debated topic. Among foreigners it is anecdotal knowledge that Indians are rather casual about keeping their time commitments. There is even a joke that India runs on Indian Standard Time (IST) or mockingly sometimes referred to as “Indian Stretchable Time”, which means that anything is running 15 minutes to 2 hours behind schedule.

One important piece of advise is to reconfirm any meeting you might have, even or especially if it has been scheduled months in advance. You should prepare yourself mentally and logistically for last minute rescheduling. While you should try to be on time, also keep in mind that rarely people expect you to come earlier than the appointed time. Due to traffic congestion and the often confusing naming of Indian addresses you might very well arrive late anyway.
On the other hand, the pace of work and business is mostly relaxed, with a relatively stress-free and calm environment. Indians do not directly jump into business negotiations; in fact, that may be seen as rude. Building a relationship is often considered a prerequisite to doing business, since credibility and trustworthiness are central to enter business relationships. Meetings often start with small talk about non-work-related topics, such as whether your journey was comfortable, before people engage in business discussions. You should not be surprised if you are asked rather “personal” questions about your family life right at the beginning.

People take themselves more time to invest in developing and nurturing personal relationships. It is not uncommon to find business deals made over a cup of afternoon tea, government offices that close while their employees go home for lunch, and shops that do not open until 11 a.m. Another issue worth keeping in mind is that dinner appointments are mostly meant for pure socialisation purposes and rarely are considered business dinners as in the Western world, for instance. Business lunches are preferable to dinners for focused business talks in India.

14. How should I behave at the work place?

"si fueris Romae, Romano vivito more; si fueris alibi, vivito sicut ibi"
("if you were in Rome, live in the Roman way; if you are elsewhere, live as they do there")
- Attributed to St. Ambrose

Some advice so that you may enjoy good professional relationships at your work place in India:

- Infuse a few words of Hindi or any other relevant local language into your speech
- Develop some tolerance for distorted time-schedules
- Most people in India are highly family-oriented, so make it a point to inquire about your colleagues’ families
- Do not take too much offence at seemingly too personal questions and comments – your colleagues will probably only try to make conversation and break the ice
• Communicate unpleasant issues in a more indirect or gentle manner, for example, saying there is “scope for improvement” instead of “this will not work”
• Lunchtime is a great platform to get to know your colleagues better

15. Where can I find more detailed information about work regulations and the labour market in India?

As a starting point you can visit the websites of relevant organisations in India as listed below. You are also most welcome to get in touch with Knowledge Must in case you require more specific information or need additional support.

**Ministry of Labour and Employment**
http://labour.nic.in/

**Labour Bureau**
http://labourbureau.nic.in/

**Census of India**
http://www.censusindia.net/

**Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry**
http://www.ficci.com/

**Employers’ Federation of India (EFI)**
http://www.efionline.in/

**International Labour Organization (ILO) - Subregional Office for South Asia**
1. What about socialising in India?

India has a great tradition of accommodating people of other origins and tolerating their different culture, lifestyle, habits, and religion. In Indian culture stories abound of hosts who lovingly cook up the best foods available to them for their guests beyond what they can afford, rather going themselves hungry than not being able to satisfy their guests. This element of Indian culture is based on the philosophy of “Atithi Devo Bhava”, meaning “the guest is god” in Sanskrit language. From this stems the Indian generosity towards guests whether at home or elsewhere. A foreigner visiting India is likely to receive social invitations from even minor acquaintances.

The way of greeting properly in India heavily depends on the particular religious community you are interacting with. While “Namaste” or “Namaskar” are Hindu ways of greeting, Muslims generally use “Salaam Aleikum” (with the reply “Waleikum Salaam”). Similarly, Sikhs traditionally greet each other by saying “Sat Shri Akal-ji”.

Gift giving is customary in India and is seen as a token of friendship. If you are invited to an Indian home for dinner or for a festival, you might choose to carry a box of dry fruits, chocolates, or sweets. Indians also do appreciate a gift which is representative of your home culture. As drinking alcohol is conventionally not accepted among most communities and in most parts of India, you need to be careful about gifting alcohol. However, if your host drinks and keeps drinks at home, a bottle of Scotch whisky or wine will be appreciated. Be cautious in giving a leather item as a gift. Since many Hindus are vegetarians, they may not appreciate items made of leather.

The words “please” and “thank you” are rarely heard in India at all. These sentiments are mostly expressed via other forms of communication. In fact, saying “please” and “thank you” often will result in funny looks and sometimes even heavy protests. For example, saying “thank you” at the end of a meal is mostly considered as an inappropriate and impersonal gesture. Instead, invite your hosts for the next dinner. This will showcase that you value your relationship much beyond simple words of thanks.

Conversation in India is as much an exchange of views as it is a mode of building and strengthening relationships. Consequently, complimenting and showing appreciation are heavily emphasised by Indians. Most Indians enjoy good conversation on a variety of topics. Even in business meetings, it is
common and normal to start discussions with “small talk” on other unrelated issues. In fact, this is seen as a way of building rapport and trust.

In general, Indians are open and friendly, and compared to many countries in the West, have a lesser sense of privacy. It is not unusual for a stranger to start up a conversation with you on a flight or a train journey. Sometimes, Indians ask questions which can be seen as too personal and intrusive. However, one must remember that discussing one’s family and personal life is normal among Indians. In fact, often enquiring about the other person’s family is seen as a sign of friendliness.

Indian society is very conservative about relationships and physical contact between the sexes, such as hugs and kisses. Nevertheless, physical distance maintained during interactions is much closer in India than in many other countries. Due to the crowded conditions in public places (in queues, public transport, and so on), people often are as close as to physically touch each other all the time.

While there are many topics of conversation which Indians find engaging, there are a few which are quite popular. It is important to appreciate that India is an ancient and rich civilization, and most Indians are proud of their heritage. They normally enjoy discussing Indian traditions and history, especially with a foreigner. Otherwise, politics, cricket, and films are always popular topics of discussions.

Notably, foreigners are often surprised at the level of political awareness of Indian people. India, however, has an extremely diverse political scene and many topics will be regional in nature – it might be advisable to get involved only if you know about those.

Cricket, of course, is India’s national pastime. India has produced many world-class cricketers who are heavily idolised. Also the movie industry is an obvious choice of conversation as India produces the largest number of films annually in the world (about 1,000 of them). Like the cricket players, film stars are considered as national icons. The popularity of film stars also leads to another Indian phenomenon: many enter politics and get elected to prestigious political offices.

2. What do I need to be careful about dietary habits, the consumption of alcohol, and smoking in India?

Eating and drinking are intimately tied to Indian customs and religions. In planning any invitation, a knowledge and sensitivity to these customs are very important. For the vast majority of Indians some form or the other of religious taboos for certain foods exist. For example, eating meat is a religious
taboo for most Hindus. When preparing or ordering food for Indian guests, it is advisable to ask if they are vegetarians or non-vegetarians. It is also important to keep the vegetarian and meat dishes clearly separated from each other.

Non-vegetarian Hindus do not eat beef, and Muslims do not eat pork. Muslims eat meat which is ‘halal’ or ritually slaughtered. In preparing or ordering non-vegetarian dishes, chicken, lamb, or fish are safe options in India. Jains, for example, eat cereals and lentils, but do not eat meat, honey, and vegetables coming from below the ground, such as potatoes.

Indians are very particular about cleanliness. It is essential to wash both of your hands before and after meals. Traditional Indian dishes are eaten with the hands. When it is necessary to use your hands, use only your right hand, as the left hand is considered unclean. Offering food from your plate to another person is not culturally acceptable, since this practice is also considered to be unclean.

Drinking alcohol is prohibited among Muslims, Sikhs, and in many other Indian communities. However, in these rapidly changing times, and especially so among urban middle- and upper-class Indians, this is less strictly observed. When preparing or ordering beverages, ask ‘What would you like to drink?’ rather than refer to alcoholic beverages. Even regular alcohol consumers will often not drink on certain occasions such as religious festivals or if there is a highly respected person present. Traditional Indian women in most regions of India, regardless of their religion, do not smoke or drink, at least not in public. Among urban elite Indians, however, some women do drink wine or beer, and also smoke.

Be aware that cigarette smoking and alcohol consumption can sometimes create problems for you in India. In many parts of India, alcoholism is a main contributor to social evils and injustices and, as such, is viewed with extreme distaste. If you choose to engage in these activities, be sensitive to who is around you. Be aware that the consumption of alcohol in certain situations and among particular communities can damage your reputation, especially in case you are a woman.

3. How do I get to know other people?

Getting to know other people in India will probably be the easiest part of your stay. Either by sharing a flat, socialising with colleagues at work, clubbing, cultural events or, for example, a movie-evening at an embassy, you will get to know a lot of interesting, open-minded people from almost all over the world – and especially from India – in a really short time. In India it is astonishingly easy to meet
“important” people and to broaden your network. In any case, you will live in an Indian neighbourhood and will have plenty of opportunities to get to know people.

“The cure for boredom is curiosity. There is no cure for curiosity.”

- Dorothy Parker

Based on experience it is possible to say that you will meet new people nearly every day. Therefore make sure that you have enough space in your pocket for the dozens of business cards you will get from them. In addition, hospitality is a mantra for most people in India. The Sanskrit saying, “Atithi Devo Bhava”, which means “the guest is god”, underlines this priority very well, so it can happen very easily that you drive around with the auto-rickshaw and end up being invited by the rickshaw-wallah to his house where his wife serves you a cup of hot masala chai and the most delicious Indian food.

4. Do I have to speak any local language?

Many different languages are spoken in India. In fact, there are a few thousands of them, with 22 languages having an official status. The most important are Hindi and Urdu that together form the language continuum known as Hindustani, which is widely spoken all over north India as well as in many regions in the western, eastern, and central ranges of the country. This language acquired its current form over many centuries and numerous dialectical variations exist. Hindi is based on the Khariboli dialect of the Delhi region and differs from Urdu (national language of
Pakistan and an officially recognised regional language of India) only in that it is usually written in the indigenous Devanagari script of India and exhibits less Persian influence than Urdu, employing a more sanskritised vocabulary.

“Rashtrabhasha ke bina rashtra goonga hai.”
(“A nation is dumb without a national language.”)
- Mahatma Gandhi

Although English is popularly assumed to be a widely spoken and understood language in India, it is still far from sufficient for understanding Indian culture. Basic knowledge of a local language is a reasonably small task to achieve and should be included in anybody’s preparations. Learning a selection of key words or expressions specific to your sector or profession enables you to reach out and find or provide meaning in conversations.

Language Must, a division of Knowledge Must, offers you exactly this opportunity. You will get to know the Indian culture from a totally different perspective, widen your career choices, and express your thoughts more clearly. With our enjoyable and result-oriented language training programmes you will develop practical language skills. The innovative range of individual and group trainings teaches you the expressions for your chosen destination and soon you will realise that learning the local language means gaining access to the life world of the locals. Please visit www.language-must.com to learn more about our language offerings.

5. Why should I learn Hindustani?

For most of India, learning Hindustani language will be an excellent investment of your time, as it functions as the lingua franca and will allow you to communicate with the maximum amount of people in the country across most of India’s varied geography.

Hindustani, also known as “Hindi-Urdu”, is a term covering several closely related dialects in Pakistan and India, especially the vernacular form of the two national languages, Standard Hindi and Urdu. Hindi and Urdu can be seen as a single linguistic entity, the key difference being that Urdu is supplemented with a Perso-Arabic vocabulary and Hindi with a Sanskritic vocabulary, especially in their more literary forms. Besides, the difference is also sociolinguistic. When people speak Hindustani, Muslims will usually say that they are speaking Urdu and Hindus will typically refer to themselves speaking Hindi, even though they are speaking essentially the same language.
Why study Hindustani?

- Depending on definition, Hindustani/Hindi/Urdu is the second or third most widely spoken language in the world, after Standard Chinese and maybe English. If second-language speakers are included, the combined number of Hindustani speakers rises to about 800 million.

- With its rapidly growing economy, India has opened the doors for many opportunities. There are many professionals wishing to connect to India and work there. Knowledge of Hindustani will pave the way to success.

- Since not many outsiders have yet mastered Hindustani, early movers command outstanding employment opportunities.

- In India almost every state has its own distinct cultural background, dances and music, prayers, rituals, languages and dialects. With the help of Hindustani you will be able to unravel this diversity in major parts of the country.

- Accessing India via English only will give you a heavily distorted picture. For instance, the picture of India depicted by the English-language media is incomplete and needs to be supplemented.

- India is also the birthplace of several great religions such as Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, and Sikhism, and other religions such as Islam and Christianity have found an important new home there. Via Hindustani you will get a simultaneous exposure to this diverse range of religious traditions.

- Hindustani is an increasingly international language that is widely spoken in other South Asian countries (Pakistan, Nepal, and Bhutan) and also in other countries outside Asia (Mauritius, Trinidad, Fiji, Surinam, Guyana, and South Africa). Hindustani language also allows one to communicate with the growing South Asian diaspora all over the world.
Work Guide India

- Studying Hindustani will not only increase your knowledge of South Asian culture, but will also open new horizons for you. Whether you want to enjoy some of the about 1,000 Hindustani/Hindi/Urdu films produced each year or study Hindustani to be able to conduct original research in India, Language Must will accompany you on your way to fluency. Whatever your particular objectives, as citizens of a rapidly globalising world you will undoubtedly benefit from studying Hindustani.

Hindustani can provide the key to successful cultural immersion, since it is the true lingua franca of India. In order to grasp India, Hindustani is a must!

6. What should I DO/DON'T do?

- DO be patient when things take more time than you are used to.
- DO get in touch with the locals to learn more about India.
- DO show an interest in the people around you.
- DO make it a point to wear Indian clothes for occasions like weddings and other traditional festivities.
- DO act carefully with tourist touts and other intermediaries working on a commission basis for hotels, shops, and travel agencies.
- DO act firmly if the rickshaw driver wants to take you to a different destination from where you want to go and insist to be dropped where you really want to reach.
- DO consider buying a pair of cheap, comfortable sandals for your trip. Footwear is generally forbidden in places of worship, and some museums or historic monuments also require you to remove footwear. It is good to wear a cheap pair of sandals or slippers, since they are less
likely to go missing in the hustle and bustle of those places (while also saving you considerable time).

- **DO** carefully wash your hands before eating and keep your fingernails short as many of the Indian dishes are savoured by directly by hand.
- **DO** use your right hand while eating and receiving food. The left hand is considered unclean.
- **DO** be aware that physical contact between men and women can be a taboo in India. Men and women will usually not shake hands.
- **DO** put up a token friendly argument when it comes to who pays for purchases or bills at restaurants. This is considered good etiquette in India.
- **DO** be on time. Although Indians may not be punctual, they will probably expect a foreign guest to be on time.
- **DO** keep in mind that Indian hospitality obliges hosts to go out of their way to fulfil your requests, even if this means a strong inconvenience to them. It is your reciprocal obligation as a guest to take care of not being too heavy of a burden.
- **DO** respect the diverse customs of local ethnic groups (often vastly different from the Indian mainstream).

- **DON’T** show frustration or anger in public.
- **DON’T** shy away from approaching or talking to people when you have a question.
- **DON’T** give money to children as they will mostly have to give it to an intermediary who they are working for.
- **DON’T** drink alcohol in public.
- **DON’T** drive home at night time with people you don’t know or you just recently met especially if you are a woman.
- **DON’T** take pictures at ports or in the metro. It is not allowed.
- **DON’T** use your left hand to pass items, especially food.
• DON’T shake someone’s hand unless they extend their hand first.
• DON’T touch children on the head, because the head is considered a sacred part of the body.
• DON’T point your feet at a person. Feet are considered unclean.
• DON’T voice any opinions publicly that are contrary to India’s laws and code of ethics and morals.

7. How to blend in when visiting India?

Whether you backpack through rural areas or journey in royal style, blending in when visiting India is key to make the most out of your experience, be it in terms of enjoyment or learning. Local people generally are highly appreciative of visitors who take a genuine interest in their culture. Make an effort to reach out to them. Take a few lessons from the locals and feel yourself at home!

• Do research on your destination (background info on the culture as well as what is currently going on)
• Read up on the history of your destination (understand where the things you will see are coming from and how they came about)
• Talk to anyone in your personal network who travelled there (learn about the best and worst experiences and develop a feel for your destination)
• Learn key phrases in the language of your destination (make yourself understood and connect to the people)
• Absorb the culture using all five senses (listen to the symphony of sounds, watch the kaleidoscope of colours, feel the fabrics, smell the spices, and taste the delicacies)
• Observe carefully how locals eat, talk, move, and work (copy their behaviour and experiment with gestures)
• Dress according to local standards (respect sensibilities and show your cultural sensitivity)
• Buy local products (handy tools as well as works of artisanship)
• Explore local delicacies (home grown produce and regional flavours)
• Choose local lodgings (be it an ashram, a traditional inn, or an old palace)
• Take local transportation (such as subways in modern cities or bullock carts in the ancient villages)
• Have the courage to get lost (follow your instincts and travel beyond the trodden paths)
• Learn from insiders (eccentric taxi drivers or hipsters in stylish coffee houses, all can be great sources of information)
• Find the places popular with locals (might be a hole-in-the-wall food joint or a fancy lounge cafe)
• Make local friends (delve right into the local community and profit from expert tips)
• Stay away from what you know from home (multinational restaurant chains as well as big brands)
• Dare yourself to try things you have never done before (be prepared to embark on a journey to the unknown, immerse yourself, and broaden your horizons)

8. Why immerse yourself in Indian culture?

"Culture is the widening of the mind and of the spirit."
- Jawaharlal Nehru

Immersing yourself in another culture is arguably one of the most rewarding efforts a human can undertake. Imagine yourself being a child again – comparably steep is the learning curve. By immersing yourself in another culture, you multiply your opportunities. By successfully functioning in a strange environment and under a different set of ground rules from those found in your own culture you tremendously expand your experience. It is for those individuals who have the courage and energy to make the most out of it.

• Opportunity to broaden your professional experience:
  o Build up a powerful CV
  o Gain exposure to different work streams
  o Prepare for global developments
  o Make more money
  o Great way to network
  o Endless career opportunities
• Experience a life in a different culture:
  o Fulfil your personal interests in another culture
  o Satisfy your curiosity and sense of adventure
  o Look for new challenges or simply a change

• Discover yourself:
  o Deeper awareness of your own strengths and weaknesses
  o Increased self-confidence
  o Train your resilience

• See things from another point of view:
  o Opportunity to increase cultural knowledge
  o Develop your own intercultural competencies for operating internationally
  o Heightened knowledge of effective approaches to other human beings
  o Broaden global perspectives
  o Acquire a new vision

9. What are the obstacles to cultural immersion?

“Problems become opportunities if the right people come together”

– Robert South

An alien cultural setting can be extremely demanding. You will have to communicate in a new language while finding new, culturally appropriate strategies to seek out interactions. What is common to one culture may seem strange, counterintuitive, or appalling to another. Language barriers and cultural differences will move you beyond your comfort zone and might result in feeling isolated and frustrated. However, by overcoming the following obstacles you will create borderless opportunities for yourself.

• Fear of:
  o The “other”
  o The “unknown”
  o Physical safety
  o Diseases
  o Nutrition problems
o Being alone
o Making mistakes
o Loss of face
o Leaving behind family, friends, job, and security
o Loss of identity
o Not being able to settle back to one’s own culture

• Hardships:
  o Stress, frustration, and anxiety
  o Unwillingness to change
  o Lethargy
  o Inconvenience

• Constraints:
  o Bureaucratic hurdles
  o Finances
  o Limited time

10. What is required to immerse yourself successfully?

“Opportunity is missed by most people because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work.”
- Thomas Edison

Success comes naturally when you realise your opportunities. In fact, your opportunities start to multiply as you seize them. To be able to pursue your desire and reach out to other cultures, tenacity and resilience are indispensable. If you bring along courage and flexibility, then you can prepare yourself for this challenge. Your fear will start to melt as soon as you take action towards a goal you really want.
• Motivation:
  o Determination to pursue your particular goals
  o Awareness of the unique chance
  o Eagermess to learn
  o Curiosity to engage on a journey of knowledge discovery
  o Will to go beyond your comfort zone
  o Resoluteness to keep striving to immerse yourself further and further
  o Courage
  o Audacity to experiment
  o Resilience to deal with inevitable setbacks

• Respect:
  o Willing to engage other cultures and participate in them
  o Acceptance of other customs and traditions
  o Critical reflection on your own culture
  o Communicative awareness
  o Willingness to question yourself, make compromises, adapt, and integrate
  o Behavioural flexibility
  o Tolerance of ambiguity
  o Ability to deal with ambiguous situations constructively
  o Appreciation for otherness
  o Empathy
11. How to deal with culture shock?

Cultures entail differences in perspectives. They can be perceived as the personal baggage one brings into any situation. Since culture constitutes the cornerstone of our identities, that is who we think we are, the ways we make meaning, what is important to us and how, it is also a key source of conflicts between people. One of the detrimental outcomes is culture shock. It can profoundly affect a person, especially when they are living in another country for a long period of time, which is also referred to as “culture stress”.

Culture shock and stress often result when an individual tries to work and live outside of their regular cultural context. Symptoms, including low self-esteem, ineffective work, and depression, are often denied or attributed to different causes. Ultimately only cultural immersion alleviates these symptoms, but this can be difficult to achieve without adequate study, training, exposure, and application.

A little cultural knowledge goes a long way. This truism however does not imply that a few tips here and anecdotes there, and a couple of pleasant exercises thrown in, do provide an effective method to learn about other cultures. Precise and relevant knowledge is needed to adapt and learn quickly when working in or with the target culture. Cultural immersion as simply being amongst people of another culture, with knowledge of local culture and language following naturally, appears rather naive. To successfully immerse yourself in another culture you need to develop cultural fluency, i.e. not only knowing, but doing the right things at the right time.
In fact, virtually all foreigners visiting India have to deal with some form of culture shock one time or another. It is of utmost importance for you to learn to deal with it. How to deal with culture shock on a practical level is very individualistic – there are no cookbook recipes.

However, you might try some of the following pragmatic strategies:

- Learn to differentiate between people. Rather than just perceiving them as “Indians” distinguish according to their specific origin, gender, age, behavioural patterns, dress, and so on.
- Find a safe-haven, which could be a coffee shop or a place with a beautiful view that gets you away from the crowds.
- Find places where you feel comfortable.
- Talk about your experiences. This will help you to deal with all the crazy things that will happen to you!
- Exchange your experiences with other international visitors in India. This will make you learn from other people’s experiences and helps you to let off steam.
- Finally, maybe the most important advise: try to take things with humour! In fact, once you make the most out of it, the prevalent diversity in India will keep you entertained!

Never lose your respect towards the locals in general – however weird you might perceive their behaviour. But this does not mean that you should tolerate everything. In fact, never scare away from acting firmly. If you feel your privacy invaded, then get your point across. Try to experiment what strategies work best for you.

Ancient scholars already highlighted the importance of experiential education. For example, the Chinese sage Confucius is often quoted as: “I hear and I forget; I see and I remember; I do and I understand”. Only personal experience through all senses results in a sustainable understanding of other cultures. Learning by doing is the ultimate in intercultural learning!

12. What are specific gender issues I should pay attention to?

India is a very traditional country and some foreign habits are perceived as dishonourable for women in Indian society. For example, Indian women do not smoke in public. A woman who smokes cigarettes or drinks alcoholic beverages in India is associated with loose moral character. Outside of the larger cities, it is unusual for people of the opposite sex to touch each other in public. This includes even married couples, who refrain from any public displays of affection.
Though the norm is slowly changing in the big cities of India, gender relations are still highly conservative and restrictive. In the smaller cities and rural areas, you will not find men and women mixing and talking freely, or moving around together much. In fact, dating in India is more of an urban phenomenon, and even there it is kept very much in secrecy. If you are from a culture where gender relations are more relaxed, adjusting to life in India might be very challenging. Observing and adjusting to the local environment will also lessen the amount of unwanted attention that you may receive as a female.

Many Indian festivals are devoid of women but filled with crowds of inebriated men partying. Participating women can be subjected to groping and sexually aggressive behaviour from these crowds, so extra care and discreetness are advised. In most Indian buses a few seats are reserved for women. Men occupying these seats are expected to vacate the place when a female expresses her intention to sit there.

Please be also aware that your behaviour is interpreted in a very different way in India. Prolonged eye contact and smiles can all connote an interest in Indian men that may not exist on your part. Friendly conversation with men is often misinterpreted by them as an invitation for flirting. This often results in unexpected sexual advances and very awkward, sometimes dangerous situations. To avoid uncomfortable situations try to mimic the behaviour of other local Indian women and err on the side of caution. Befriending Indian women, however, is a wonderful experience for female travellers. As many Indian women are shy you might try to initiate conversation and build up their confidence.

Foreign women can be the target of sexual harassment due to misperceptions that often stem from the portrayal of women in foreign movies, among other reasons. Though the increased attention by Indian men is often harmless, know that it will also affect how the local community perceives you. We strongly suggest girls who are travelling alone in India to take utmost care. Please try to travel with colleagues or friends.

You should not worry to appear as disrespectful if you tell an eager man that you do not want to talk to him, and if his behaviour makes you uncomfortable, say so firmly (but without getting agitated). If the man in question continues to trouble you, draw immediate attention to it. Public embarrassment is
often the quickest way to stop harassment. Hence, do not be afraid to assert yourself and speak up – chances are that everyone around you will get your point beyond all linguistic boundaries.

Maybe the most important advice for foreign women in India is to dress in traditional Indian clothes, such as the comfortable shalwar qameez. Dressing according to Indian traditions will gain foreign women more respect in the eyes of locals. Respect for the traditional Indian way of life will make most men treat you more like a ‘lady’ than an object. Shorts, short skirts (knee-length or above), sleeveless shirts, and tank tops are not considered to be appropriate pieces of clothing in Indian society. Whatever you choose to wear, you should try to cover as much skin as possible, including your shoulders. Also try to wear baggy clothes that less emphasise your contours.

It is important to keep in mind that India is an extremely diverse country and that in analogy the status of women in society differs from community to community and from place to place. Make it a point to closely observe the local scenario at all places you visit and adjust accordingly. While Indian society in general is highly dominated by men, there are also exceptions to this rule, for instance, in Northeast India, among tribal communities, or among urban elites.

Women in India often refrain from contact with men outside of their families. A foreign man approaching an Indian woman for something as innocuous as asking for directions can result in her withdrawing immediately. A good strategy is to keep more physical distance and being extra respectful. It is also advised that you do not shake hands with persons of the opposite sex unless the other person extends his/her hand first. The formal greeting among Hindus is to bring your palms together in front of your chest and uttering a greeting, such as ‘Namaskar’.

Living in India as a Western Woman
by Esther Motullo

I came as a woman to India, my choice of destination for fulfilling the next endeavours…

… and guess what, I’m still in India and believe or not: I am still a woman!

What is it like to be a woman from Germany living in India? What a simple and complex question at the same time! Let’s begin with the daily routine, pulling the bicycle out of the garage, preparing for the regular ride to work. This seemingly not worth mentioning act is today welcomed by a burst into heart full laughter of the by now well-known neighbour. Shortly after he asks in Hindi at least for the third time, what in the world I’m up to.
Despite all the attempts of the most obvious explanations, ranging from the enjoyment of riding a bike, exploring the new city, saving money, looking for an exercise – to mention a few – he still seems to bang his head on what to make of this shockingly awkward picture. I will come across this almost paradigmatic reaction several times more on my way to work. I don’t mind, not the least, because it adds a significant amount of entertainment to my daily routine. I am grinning over some of the ones out there, bumping into each other or on good days crashing into street lights while staring towards the cycle lane.

This has on the other hand been the initiator to learn about the notorious “German Stare”, I was not even aware of before. The Internet offers a whole literature on how Germans have a serious staring problem! Either a grandmother from the balcony on the second floor or the guy next to the other passengers in the subway, we prefer to take a real close look at the scenario around us – not to be forgotten, the tempting foreign look of non-Germans, who we here and there thoroughly stare at. For me this is personally a fruitful inter-cultural learning experience.

Nonetheless this morning I’m left alone with a number of thoughts while riding among the almost exclusively male cyclers. These thoughts slowly but surely evolve into a recognizable pattern, circling around the questions, what is it then really like and how does it actually feel, to be a ‘Western’ female undertaking the attempt to settle in India.

Let’s keep the general and quite evident cultural differences between Germany and India aside. Being a woman that has developed her ideas, habits and understanding within something called the European value system and that is now searching for her role within another part of this world, does adjoin a very unique character to the experience and daily inter-cultural lessons.

The public sphere of Indian society is still highly dominated by men. This in itself requests a number of adjustments by a woman trying to find a spot within societal life. There is the daily task, probably known to almost all the females visiting from outside (and who are not just throwing themselves into Goan fashion): the task of finding an appropriate outfit equivalent to the common dress code for women in India.

Sadly enough, but since the wonderfully comfortable sari is still not my choice of look yet, it becomes a mission of creativity to properly cover tempting parts of the female body and at the same time breaking the conservative manner of how women are supposed to dress themselves – a brilliant and enjoyable task in a country like India, offering an unbeaten inspiration to use colour and comfort in designing clothes. To this our casual Friday looks like a rainy afternoon.
Not to be neglected – that is important to add here – is the encouragement of India’s young women of today. Particularly in the drastically modern realms, such as some districts in the metropolises Mumbai, Delhi or Bangalore, she is strongly demanding for acceptance of her own style and individual taste. And this is not restricted to fashion only. The fashion revolt though can be witnessed by the untrained eye somewhere between the lines of modern alterations of the traditional Indian shalwar qameez and beautiful Indian inventions of the familiar Western style look, if such one exists (yes, also including high heels, miniskirts and jeans with tank top). It’s evident that the need for adjustment and compromise doesn’t mean you are left without choices!

On top of that, the “white factor” seems to open up interesting new money-making opportunities. As recently discovered by a Delhi based newspaper: being a hot white woman in itself has founded a new industry branch in the field of event management. The presence of firang babes at parties is supposedly a sign of a new trend in Delhi, where a bevy of sexy blondes are hired to add glamour to the evening — be it a high profile cricket match after-party, a posh club launch or an upscale wedding.

Depending on whether these women act as hostesses and bartenders or simply offer a sight of their beauty – all there to raise the glamour factor – they seem to get paid starting at thousands of Rupees per night, with significant room for a raise. What a stunning career opportunity compared to the rather boring standard job of being a civil servant at your embassy or engaging in development projects for the civil society. The journalist had an interesting headline for this and called it the white mischief.

The fact that Delhi is the top scorer when it comes to unsafe conditions of women in the public sphere – especially working in nightshifts and walking outside after sunset – doesn’t necessarily make the prosperous job more attractive. Delhi is shortly followed by Bangalore on this award scale. By taking a closer look at the National Crime Records Bureau findings, the whole fame aspect of being a woman (let it be white) loses its glamour effect. Harassment in public spaces is perhaps a problem faced by every second woman in Delhi, no need to differ between Western and Indian.

There are many reasons that the still very deprived status of women exists with regards to freedom and safety. Major reasons can be traced to the poor urban environment: dark or badly lighted streets, empty lots, badly maintained public spaces, and a lack of public toilets. Also insufficient presence and unresponsive attitudes of police, civic authorities or the neighbour next door choosing to look away are some of the key factors. Sadly enough this holds especially true for Indian women, whereas Western women in many of the cases receive a privileged and very responsible attention.
Other factors could be a traditional notion of privacy and refusal to intervene in situations of harassment or violence on women. Here ideas and beliefs about appropriate behaviour could be leading to reluctance to protest openly. The impact of patriarchal structures is very evident and still seems to feed the lack of respect towards women and women’s rights. Each individual taking part in the public sphere can be a victim and is given the opportunity of making a difference at the same time.

There is still a long way to go until we woman will be accepted as a truly equal part of public life in India, but as much this is evident here, it also holds true in many more societies in this world, including my own. India is undertaking some serious efforts in the government sector as well as within civil society to achieve this change. This struggle deserves a much broader coverage than can be provided here. Meanwhile I’m continuing to find my way between compromise, inspiration for change, and the actual threats to personal integrity, which can hardly be accepted as cultural perks.

Let’s continue the journey…

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The opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of Knowledge Must.
FAQ Free Time

1. How can I spend my leisure time?

Newspapers including the Hindustan Times and The Times of India carry daily and weekly listings and information on interesting events. For Delhi, Mumbai, and Bangalore the famous Time Out magazine is published and gives you lots of ideas on what is up in the city. In Delhi, for example, there are other local magazines such as First City and Delhi Diary. For major cities like Mumbai, Bangalore, Chennai, Hyderabad, and Kolkata you can check out the website www.burrp.com. This site provides you with the latest information about nightlife, shopping, events, exhibitions, and so on. Besides that, you will hear about a lot of events by word of mouth and never will have to worry what to do and whom to go with.

But also outside of the cities India has a very lively cultural scene. If you are willing to adjust a little bit, you will be able to make the most of the local festivities and religious observances you are most likely to encounter. Ask around to learn about things that are happening. Often you will end up being a guest of honour at a marriage or shaking a leg during some lively celebrations.

Even if you are living in one of the big cities, make it a point to visit the surrounding rural areas. You will be stunned by the many natural marvels and genuine peasants and herders you are going to meet there. Do not feel intimidated by their traditions. Indians tend to be very curious by nature. Your visit to the most far-off places will generally not be perceived as an intrusion – quite the contrary. People will seize the opportunity and pour all their curiosity on you!
Besides, with our division Culture Must (www.culture-must.com) we offer you many opportunities for immersion, covering a wide range of culture-specific activities. These can be something as leisurely as our Sunday walking tours or more strenuous as week-long rituals during religious festivities. Joining in festivals will give you a spectacular opportunity for firsthand glimpses of local celebrations and developing an understanding of the symbolism behind these events. During the evenings, you also get the chance to attend local receptions, parties, weddings, or concerts of contemporary, traditional, or spiritual music. Every culture is unique in its own special way. We can sense each other’s differences as we can taste spices in food.

With us you will access cultural realms through the arts and beyond, and celebrate cultures in all their diversity. For example, our venture Sound Tamasha (www.sound-tamasha.com) is an event series promoting the exchange of determined artists from the music scenes of India, China, and Europe. Including musicians, DJs, performers, and other creative minds, the driving spirit of the collaboration is to connect across cultures through different forms of musical expressions.

Our websites, newsletters, and personal invitations will keep you updated about any upcoming sports event, music collaboration, art exhibition, film and photography project, intellectual discussion, or workshop. We are looking forward meeting you on one of our next immersion activities. Many new friends are awaiting you!

2. What about travelling in India?

No visit to India would be complete without the experience of travelling and exploring the beauty of this extremely diverse country. Therefore you should travel around in India and discover the Himalayan mountains in the north by going on a trekking tour or just relax on South India’s golden beaches. Anyway, to travel around in India is very cheap. Either you want to go on a tight budget (rooms for around 100 to 500 INR per night / 1.5 to 8 Euro) or allow yourself a bit more if you like by staying in ancient palace hotels (rooms for around 1,000 to 5,000 INR / 15 to 80 Euro) which is again still very affordable considering what you get for the price.

On the one hand travelling by train or bus is very inexpensive but on the other hand it can be very time consuming. Reasons are the undeveloped infrastructure, delays and other unpredictable incidents like elephants, cows, and camels crossing the street. So be prepared and therefore also keep your camera always ready, because you will get extraordinary pictures. A faster way is travelling by plane with one of the many domestic air-carriers, which is, because of the intense competition in this sector, also
affordable. Besides, you should always plan in a couple of weeks for travelling while in India. You can also have weekend trips to places near your Indian home. Opportunities are almost infinite!

“Certainly, travel is more than the seeing of sights; it is a change that goes on, deep and permanent, in the ideas of living.”
- Miriam Beard

Journeys to India can be complex and challenging. If any tourist destination asks for support in logistics, knowledge of culture, local connections, and insightful guides, it must be India. At the same time, the extra amount of support and attention needed is highly affordable in India. Drivers fluently speaking English, high-profile facilitators accompanying guests in tribal villages, staying in the home of a professor and his family or dining with the Maharajas in their family palace, in India the extraordinary becomes the rule rather than the exception.

With our division Travel Must, we at Knowledge Must also offer unique travel services. All our trips are tailored according to your individual interests and will take you to places far beyond the usual tourist spots picked out of a travel guidebook. Years of experience, proven logistical capabilities, and exceptional knowledge of the most remote areas and cultures make Travel Must the ideal partner to consult you on possible destinations and activities, book your accommodation and transport, and conduct adventurous expeditions. All you have to do is enjoy your trip and have the time of your life. For further inspiration please have a look at: www.travel-must.com.

3. What about transport in India?

The transport by bus, rickshaw or train is the cheapest and safest way to travel in the splendid scenery and great geographical diversity of India. For short trips within the cities you will normally use an auto-rickshaw. For 10 km all the way across Delhi, for example, you should pay 80 INR (Indian Rupees) maximum, which is a little bit more than 1 Euro.
As the drivers sometimes try to charge strangers (but also locals) a highly over-priced fee, it is all about bargaining, which can also be lots of fun. At the same time these experiences will be a good practice for other daily situations. Taxis are around double the auto-rickshaw price but also more comfortable. Take one if you want to have a nostalgic ride in the typical black and yellow Ambassador cars, which were copies of the famous 1950s British Morris.

Riding Wired Donkeys – Cycling Culture from Berlin to Delhi
by Magali Mander

I used to be a passionate cyclist in Berlin – now I cycle in Delhi. People have told me that Delhi used to have separate lanes for cyclists. Back then when South Delhi was still a conglomeration of villages, cars were the more exceptional mode of transportation. Sometime back the space was taken over by cars and planning was taken over by those who thought a modern city needed wide streets for cars rather than lanes for its inhabitants to walk on, or ride on their bikes – often affectionately referred to by Germans as their "Drahtesel" (a 'donkey made out of wire' in German language).

The same idea was popular in my hometown Berlin some 60 years ago, too. Rebuilding the city after the war, huge areas were left empty so inner-city highways could be built and create any city planners’ dream of those times: the so-called ‘car-friendly’ city.

Fortunately, urban development was slower than green thinking. Early enough people realized that an inhabitant-friendly ecologic city was more desirable than exclusively ‘car-friendly’ cities. And finally, many of the vast empty spaces were converted into parks much to the delight of almost everybody.

Now you see hordes of people riding their bikes to work, university, school or even kindergarten, like in many other European cities. You see bicycles, tricycles, bicycles with small trailers transporting babies and little kids – I haven’t seen anyone transporting their grandma yet – and lately you can even see rickshaws cruising around the more touristy parts of the city.
In some cities there are spaces, which make you feel like cyclists had taken over power in the streets. They ride where and how they like and car-owners better get used to being overtaken by a two-wheeler sporting at fast pace in 30km/h residential zones. Many cyclers routinely disobey traffic lights even though this – for those who are not familiar with German traffic rules – might cost them their license to drive cars.

Cycling has become fashion – first for those primarily concerned with the health of our planet or their own, and in the last years for almost everybody else, too. A nice bike – be it an old-timer, a racing bike or a “Klappfahrrad” (folding bike) – is the prestige object of the young and cool Berliner. This is comparable to owning a shiny new MacBook Pro or a pair of neon coloured pilot sunglasses.

Being a Berliner I can’t let go of the urge of riding by bicycle everywhere I want to go. Therefore, one of the first things I did in Delhi was to buy a cycle, precisely a neon-pink girls' bike – a big change in my identity construction – as I used to be a passionate racing bike owner. Anyway, since the trend demands for a second cycle, a classic Indian model for men now complements the pink one.

So, how do I survive riding a bicycle out there on Delhi’s traffic inferno, you might wonder? “No problem” would be my answer. First of all you might have noticed that Delhi streets – even after having taken over the bicycle lanes – are cloaked with cars. Cars, which most of the time don’t move even the tiniest bit during rush hour. It’s a bit like riding through a labyrinth but it’s definitely better than spending hours waiting in a standing rickshaw, inhaling exhaust fumes from the truck next to you. Secondly seeing a foreign woman (or an office person and not a labourer?) on a bicycle seems to be a blow-off.

Stopping cars (I suspect they stop because the driver, instead of pushing the accelerator, pushes the breaks to inspect the unusual sight) are easy to overtake – and off I ride, turning the stunned car-drivers to a distant sight within seconds. And even if they don’t stop or slow down, the least thing many car drivers do, is to overtake with a lot more than the usual distance between me and them when driving past. Maybe because they expect me to fall down any second, trying to tame my “wire donkey”. It seems that in order to find out how respectful car drivers can be, even in Delhi’s chaotic traffic, you will have to get on a bicycle first.

Riding a cycle in Delhi is fun! I have kids in my neighbourhood cheering “Germany, Germany” (“Berlin, Berlin” would be nicer but I can live with that), grandpas in wheelchairs raising the thumb when I ride by, security guards in my neighbourhood greeting me as “sporty madam-ji” and the dhobi wallah’s concerned question what happened to my bicycle when I walk past instead of riding my cycle. The auntie living next door even asked me to teach her how to ride a cycle! (Maybe I should note here that
I am not that irresponsible. That would be as if I decided to teach my own 100 year-old grandma to change from her wheelchair to a skateboard as her regular mode of transportation.

There are gender-specific reactions, too, but I won’t go into detail here. I guess the sight of a woman riding her bicycle used to be very unusual in Europe, too – at some point in history that is. But I guess it is never inappropriate to change perceptions of what is appropriate and what is not.

The question remains, where the future of Delhi’s city planning is headed. It would be a euphemism to say that Delhi is a car-friendly city – but this doesn’t make it a bicycle-friendly city either. Fact is that the streets, despite ongoing construction of flyovers all over town, will not be able to provide enough space for those cars, which are on the streets today already. Let alone the roughly one thousand new cars permitted to Delhi’s streets every day.

Imagine riding a bicycle became as fashionable in Delhi as it is in other cities. If riding a bicycle did not remain only the mode of transportation for the economically deprived parts of population… if the big fat cars that seem to decide over right-and-wrong even in Delhi’s smallest streets would be overtaken by bicycles… Ha, I catch myself thinking about the small social changes that might come along with the cycling trend I dream of.

Honestly, I have no idea where they could fit cycle lanes onto the already overcrowded streets. But I guess it’s wise not to wait with riding your cycle until someone makes space for you. Jump on your cycle, make the critical mass grow, and let’s reclaim the streets!

Since the Delhi government is now constructing bicycle lanes (e.g. on the infamous BRT corridors) to combat global warming – an action taken only after the Delhi Cycling Club (DCC), a non-profit group dedicated to making Delhi a cyclist-friendly city has submitted a memorandum – you can reduce your carbon-footprint on this earth easily. Be it for reasons of coolness, fitness, because you can’t afford a car, or may it be because your Wii is broken and your computer can’t provide you with your daily anti-couch-potato program anymore.

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The opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of Knowledge Must.
4. Which places should I visit in India?

From the majestic Himalayas and the stark deserts of Rajasthan, over beautiful beaches and lush tropical forests, to idyllic villages and bustling cities, India offers something unique for every individual preference. The country is a vivid kaleidoscope of landscapes, magnificent historical sites and royal cities, misty mountain retreats, colourful people, rich cultures, and festivities. Vibrant, mesmerising, completely absorbing, India stimulates all of your senses – often simultaneously. Luxurious and destitute, hot and cold, chaotic and tranquil, ancient and modern – India’s extremes never fail to leave a lasting impression.

With a population of over one billion, no single country is so multi-faceted and laden with contradictions. Culturally India might very well be the most diverse place in the world. India’s immensely varied art, history, religions, and traditions are organically woven together into an intricate tapestry. Its infinite variety favours you with different facets of fascination every time you visit. To travel in India is to expand one’s notion of the possible configurations of human society.

Journeys to India can be complex and challenging, but they are always supremely rewarding. If there was ever a place that called for expertise in logistics, knowledge of culture, local connections, and insightful guides, this is it. Immerse yourself in Indian culture!

In India, you could:

- Ride on camels, elephants, and horses through the countryside
- Swim with dolphins in the Indian Ocean
- Practice yoga in a traditional Hindu ashram
- Act in a Bollywood movie
- Witness the largest congregation of mankind on the Hindu festival Kumbh Mela
- Conquer your first mountain in the majestic Himalayas
- Stay in palaces and discuss the good old times with the maharajas
- Strike up a conversation with wise sages and insightful scholars
- Get lost in a maze of alleys and make a new discovery behind every corner
A very popular destination for foreigners in India is Kerala, for example, a state on the tropical Malabar Coast of south-western India that is nicknamed as “God’s own country”. It is famous especially for its houseboats travelling the extensive backwaters, Ayurveda retreats, jungle lodges in the Western Ghats, pristine beach resorts, eco-lodges, and other Eco-Tourism initiatives. Its unique culture and traditions, coupled with its varied geography, has made it one of the global hotspots.

Wherever you choose to go, please pay extra attention when choosing your travel service providers that they make it a point to minimise the negative environmental impacts caused by your visit and make positive contributions to the conservation of biodiversity. So when you chance upon a Red Panda in the Himalayas or witness the hatching of sea turtles on the Bay of Bengal, you have improved the chances of preserving their habitat by providing a realistic economic alternative to exploiting local natural resources.

5. What can I study next to working in India?

In India you will also have the chance to do courses that are often not even offered in most other countries. The variety of universities, the sheer number of Higher Education institutions and different regional traditions result in a great diversity of courses.

Apart from undergraduate, postgraduate and doctoral courses, there are many training and diploma-level institutes and polytechnics that cater to the growing demand for skill-based and vocational education. Besides conventional educational institutes, you might also be interested to study with Pandits to learn Hindi and Sanskrit in genuine settings as well as with Mullahs to study Urdu, Persian, and Arabic. You might also like to live with famed Ustads to study traditional Indian music. There is so much to enjoy about and learn from the activities of other cultures. Whether you are interested in philosophy or religion, cuisine or dance, India will have the right opportunity for you. Sampling the diversity of local food is one of the most straightforward ways of learning about a culture. Learning to prepare the foods by yourself yet goes another step towards developing a deeper understanding.

To give you an idea about the type of activities that you could pursue in India, have a look at the following examples:

- Cuisine
- Nature awareness (e.g. in Uttarakhand)
- Nomad studies (e.g. in Rajasthan)
- Fine Arts
• Tribal Art  
• Music (singing, instruments, etc.)  
• Dance (traditional, contemporary, etc.)  
• Fashion  
• Religion  
• Philosophy

All these trainings can be conducted in their authentic settings. Learn about Islam in a centuries old madrassa, explore tribal arts in a remote village in the Indian jungles, or study yoga on the banks of the holy river Ganges.

Vocational training prepares learners for professions with a focus on practical activities, traditionally non-academic and related to a specific trade or occupation. Whether one trains to become an artisan or a carpenter, vocations generally contain a very high cultural content. Each region has developed and refined its own distinctive vocations, reflecting geographic and historic conditions and people’s needs. Vocations vary in technique and use of materials from region to region depending on the climate, topography, availability of materials, social environment, and so on.

The legacy of these crafts is as unique and diverse as Indian cultures themselves. Traditional crafts have been passed down to the artisans of today, who incorporate modern ideas and production methods into their work. Vocational trainings are an excellent vehicle for understanding culture. We can learn much about cultures through the tools, techniques, and products they create.

Knowledge Must’s division Training Must gives you the opportunity to learn a wide range of vocations from cooking over making music instruments to becoming a goldsmith and directly experience an alternative way of life. You will spend time with the craftsmen, learn their craft, and sharpen your skills. Learn more from our website www.training-must.com and get in touch with us.
6. Can I do sports in India?

In India sports like cricket, football, field hockey, and golf are very popular and spread around the whole country. Visiting a fitness centre might be a good possibility for you to do sports, too. Jogging can also be done, even in the big cities like New Delhi or Mumbai. There are uncounted parks and gardens such as the beautiful and serene Lodi Garden in New Delhi which is really a jogger’s paradise. There you will be able to escape the chaos of the cities and have a moment of peace and quiet. Big cities also have large sports complexes with various facilities like swimming pools, tennis and squash courts, football fields, gyms, running tracks, etc.

7. Where can I find more information on the Internet?

The following selection of links, while not comprehensive, includes a range of useful resources for your stay in India. Choose from the following categories to access the links and get in touch with us if you have further recommendations that we can incorporate in our next edition. Also, if you find any broken links, please let us know so that we can fix them.

**Travel Logistics:**

Embassy World:
Provides a list of contact resources for all of the world’s diplomatic offices, the diplomatic community and the online community.
http://www.embassyworld.com/

Project Visa:
Information on visas, embassies, and travel.
http://www.projectvisa.com/

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:
Source for credible health information for travellers.
http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/

World Health Organisation - International Travel and Health:
Source for credible health information for travellers.
http://www.who.int/ith/en/

What’s on When?:
Helps you to find out about local events while you are travelling.
http://www.whatsonwhen.com/
Destination Guides:

Portals to the World:
Library of Congress links to cultural information of the countries of the world.
http://www.loc.gov/rr/international/portals.html

World66:
User-generated travel information for destinations all over the world.
http://www.world66.com/

Wikitravel:
User-generated travel information for destinations all over the world.
http://www.wikitravel.org/

Virtual Tourist:
Travel-oriented community website featuring user-contributed travel guides for locations worldwide.
http://www.virtualtourist.com/

TrekEarth:
TrekEarth is dedicated to fostering a global community interested in photography from around the world.
http://www.trekearth.com/

Tripadvisor:
User-generated hotel reviews, photos, and travel advice.
http://www.tripadvisor.com/

Lonely Planet:
A wide variety of travel guides.
http://www.lonelyplanet.com/destinations/

Rough Guides:
A wide variety of travel guides.

Footprint:
A wide variety of travel guides.
http://footprintbooks.com/Home/Index.cfm

Destination India:

Enrico Fabian Photography:
Very talented photographer based in Delhi.
http://www.enrico-fabian.com/

Gateway to India:
Gateway to plenty of interesting India-related websites.
http://www.uni-giessen.de/~gk1415/india.htm
IndiaMike:
IndiaMike is an India travel site, and a source for researching and reviewing India travel.
http://www.indiamike.com/

Language:

Google Language Tools:
Google’s collection of language tools, such as online translation.
http://www.google.com/language_tools

Google Transliterate:
Google’s transliteration tool.
http://www.google.com/transliterate

Word2Word:
Totally free language learning resources for a huge assortment of languages.
http://www.word2word.com/

Shabdkosh:
One of the most comprehensive English to Hindi and Hindi to English dictionaries.
http://www.shabdkosh.com/

Maps:

University of Texas Library Collection:
University of Texas’ outstanding collection of maps.
http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/

National Geographic Map Machine:
Locate nearly any place on Earth, find country facts, and search and print historical, weather, and population maps, and more with our dynamic atlas.
http://maps.nationalgeographic.com

Wikimapia:
An online editable map allowing everyone to add information to any location on the globe.
http://www.wikimapia.org

Google Maps:
Find local businesses, view maps and get driving directions in Google Maps.
http://maps.google.com
**Work Guide India**

**Tools:**

Universal Currency Converter:  
Converts all major currencies.  

World’s Weather:  
Weather news including real-time forecasts and educational information for local, regional, national and global weather conditions.  

Unit Converter:  
This tool converts all major units.  

World Time Server:  
Internet time clock with adjustments for Daylight Savings Time and global location choices.  

INCA Project:  
Online intercultural competence assessment.  
[http://www.incaproject.org/index.htm](http://www.incaproject.org/index.htm)

**Culture, History, and Religion:**

National Geographic World Music:  
An overview of music traditions from around the world.  

Ancient World Cultures:  
On-line course supplement for students and teachers of the ancient and medieval worlds.  
[http://eawc.evansville.edu/index.htm](http://eawc.evansville.edu/index.htm)

Window into Global History:  
Multimedia lesson plans and video clips useful for anybody interested in geography or world history.  

Sacred Sites:  
Anthropologist and photographer Martin Gray spent 25 years to study and artistically photograph nearly 1000 sacred sites in 80 countries.  

BeliefNet:  
BeliefNet is the largest spiritual website containing information on various faiths.  
Cultural Institutes Working in India:

Indian Council for Cultural Relations:
Fosters cultural relations and mutual understanding between India and other nations and peoples.
http://www.iccricindia.org/

Asia Society:
Institution promoting communication between Americans and the Asian-Pacific region.
http://www.asiasociety.org/

Japan Foundation:
Promotion of the Japanese language and culture world-wide.
http://www.jpf.go.jp/

Goethe Institut:
Promotion of the German language and culture world-wide.
http://www.goethe.de/enindex.htm

Alliance Française:
Promotion of the French language and culture world-wide.
http://www.alliancefr.org/

British Council:
Promotion of the English language and culture world-wide.
http://www.britishcouncil.org/

Instituto Cervantes:
Promotion of the Spanish language and culture world-wide.
http://www.cervantes.es/

Società Dante Alighieri:
Promotion of the Italian language and culture world-wide.
http://www.ladante.it/

Instituto Camões:
Promotion of the Portuguese language and culture world-wide.
http://www.instituto-camoes.pt/

News from India:

Frontline:
Weekly newsmagazine from India.
http://www.frontlineonnet.com/
Tehelka:
Weekly newsmagazine from India.
http://www.tehelka.com/

The Hindu:
Daily newspaper from India.
http://www.thehindu.com/

Samachar:
Overview of news from various Indian sources.
http://www.samachar.com/

BBC:
BBC offers a wide range of world news in different languages (great if you want to learn Hindustani).
http://news.bbc.co.uk/

Reference Resources:

America’s Library of Congress:
Largest library in the world.
http://www.loc.gov/

United Nations:
The UN is committed to preserving peace through international cooperation and collective security.
http://www.un.org/english/

The World Bank:
The World Bank Group offers advice and an array of customised resources to more than 100 developing countries and countries in transition.
http://www.worldbank.org/

CIA World Factbook:
These country profiles focus more on facts than cultural trends. Learn about the economics, government, and people of individual countries.
FAQ Support from Knowledge Must

1. Why should I approach Knowledge Must for working in India?

Whether you are interested to work in a clinic in the jungles of India’s tribal belt, with international organisations promoting cultural and institutional exchanges, in a development project in urban or rural areas, on a construction or engineering site, in a school in the mighty Himalayas, or with a globally operating bank in the megacities, it will be the excitement of a lifetime to live and work in India. Today the country offers more than ever the chance to immerse yourself in one of the most captivating societies in our globalising world and to witness one of the oldest and at the same time most forward-looking cultures.

Knowledge Must’s division Career Must will assist you in locating and securing a position that suits your needs. Career Must provides you with a total employment resource no matter where you are in your career. We not only help you find quality job opportunities, we also provide you with comprehensive assistance throughout the process, from legal and logistical requirements up to instilling the skills required for your new endeavour.

Career Must’s wide network of prospective employers, interested in applicants of diverse cultural backgrounds, forms a solid basis for placing you in rewarding job positions. Depending on your particular career objectives we help you to advance your individual career. Many who come with our support to India for a short while, end up staying back, hooked to the culture. Get in touch with us to learn more about job opportunities in your fields of interest and together with us explore borderless career opportunities!
2. How do you make sure I have a suitable and satisfying work experience?

While we are one of the prime placement agencies for outstanding job opportunities in India, we are different from other organisations. Our intercultural solutions are carefully structured around your individual objectives and education background, all coordinated and supervised by experienced consultants, who have experienced other cultures the same way you are planning to. That is why our team has first-hand knowledge regarding the potential benefits, your expectations, your potential concerns as well as the problems that might ensue in the process.

The entire placement exercise is a joint effort between you and Career Must. What is most important to understand about our placement process is that you are in complete control at all times. You choose your field of interest, the organisations to which you would like to apply, and whether or not to accept each offer you receive. Career Must even offers you a money-back guarantee. We guarantee that we will place you in your field of interest. In the highly unlikely event that we do not succeed in finding you a job opportunity that meets your sole approval by the designated placement deadline, you will receive a full refund – no questions asked.

3. What are your accompanying services?

We are also able to offer you all-inclusive programmes, complete with accommodation, meals, transportation, travel arrangements, language training, and more. With our solution Relocation Plus, for instance, we offer the most comprehensive array of relocation services available in the market. Based on our five company divisions Career Must, Language Must, Training Must, Travel Must, and Culture Must, we are able to offer the whole range of services required to successfully adjust to living in Indian culture. And our services do not even stop with your successful relocation to India. We
provide ongoing on-site support for all your intercultural needs. Our key priority is always your cultural experience, comfort, and safety.

But complimentary services can also be as specific as organising your transfer from the airport to your accommodation or assistance with getting access to the Internet. You pick the additional services you desire and we will take care of the logistics for you. Take accommodation as an example. You can choose to handle your own accommodation or Career Must may assist you in securing appropriate accommodation, generally in the vicinity of your place of work. We can act as a coordinator between you and property owners, making firm reservations and payments on your behalf.

Options include:
- Homestay accommodation (your own room with a host family where meals can be provided)
- Shared accommodation (your own room in a shared flat or house with local and international students or young professionals)
- Independent accommodation (your own flat or house)

Or if you would prefer something more unique in terms of accommodation, we are happy to arrange your stay in ashrams, monasteries, palaces, villages, or wherever you might like to live. When you tell us your budget and the type of accommodation you are looking for (homestay, shared, independent, or special accommodation), we will accordingly search for an adequate home for your stay.

Also our cultural activities are very popular. Travelling and experiencing your host culture is a crucial element in allowing you to explore all your new home has to offer. In order for you to gain additional cultural insight, we organise culture-specific activities to introduce you to the intricacies of your host culture. These are great opportunities to let loose after work, and they provide a fun way to meet like-minded people. You can look forward to guided tours of the locality, longer excursions, sport events, performing arts, and nights out in town. We invite you to our cultural activities, such as our famous Sound Tamasha series of music events.
4. What could a work abroad experience with Knowledge Must include?

Depending on your objectives and the amount of support you would like, the following services might be included in your tailor-made experience in India.

- Needs Analysis
- Career Counselling
- Providing required information to you about job opportunities in India
- Transfer knowledge to you about the Indian labour market and your particular challenges in competing in it
- Develop a detailed Project Plan to achieve your career vision
- Research and counselling on best suited job opportunities in respect of your career fulfilment
- Intensive counsel on pros and cons of different options
- Create top-notch Application Documents
- Facilitating pre-departure and visa formalities

- Logistical support
- Finalise terms of employment in India
- Finalise living arrangements in India
- Assistance with all travel arrangements prior to departure for India
- Arrange transport and pick up to the accommodation
- Orientation tour and neighbourhood familiarisation
- Assistance with authorities (registrations, permits, etc.)

- Monitoring of the work experience on the job
- Arranging for preparatory courses if required
• Regular support from our Knowledge Must team in India
• Show up opportunities to continue immersion in India
• Optional travels to discover India’s diversity

5. What can Knowledge Must do for our organisation?

Organisations need to have strategies in place to address the ongoing changes not only in their own workplace but also in their place of operations. Stagnancy means falling behind in global competition. The ability to operate successfully in diverse geographies and shift operations flexibly between countries may be essential to furthering your objectives. In order to successfully venture into Indian culture, Knowledge Must has developed a variety of powerful tools and innovative services to overcome the strategic, logistical, technical, and tactical challenges resulting from crossing your cultural boundaries.

Among our clients are leading businesses, prestigious organisations, and outstanding institutes. We help them navigate the intricacies of culture, advice on intercultural strategies, help forge cultural and political alliances in local communities, and support the implementation of operational strategies. We help clients incorporate a long-term perspective into their strategies, while focusing on the biggest issues they currently face and on the best way to get results.

For your organisation we offer a comprehensive range of Intercultural Consulting, Implementation, and Facilitation services designed to further your objectives. We provide the additional expert resource you need to develop and drive a focused intercultural strategy through in a cost effective way. When working through international channels and partnerships, engaging with a critical outsourcing vendor, executing a corporate merger across cultures, or conducting a joint project with international organisations, we assist you in the preparation and optimisation of your intercultural activities.

At Knowledge Must consulting is delivery. This is why we also confidently offer the implementation of our advice. While consulting, our experts employ the most expedient methods for any particular situation, which may include training, coaching, facilitation, logistic support, and project implementation.

Knowledge Must also offers effective and professional intercultural facilitation for a variety of purposes and various types of groups. Whether you need facilitation for conducting business meetings or for resolving political crises, independent skilled facilitation can make all the difference to your success.
We act as helpers and enablers with the goal to support you to achieve exceptional performance. By using our facilitation skills to draw the best out of your experience and expertise, and adding the best of ours, we build a fully participative process which enables you to focus on your objectives.

We invite all organisations to contact us and learn how we can maximise their intercultural potential!

6. What other services does Knowledge Must offer?

Knowledge Must is a leading intercultural solutions provider that assists students, professionals, and organisations to successfully cross cultural boundaries, mainly between East Asia, South Asia, and the Western world. Our team of highly qualified experts has the knowledge, experience, diversity, and passion to provide clients with the best customised solutions to achieve their individual objectives. Unlike other solutions in the market, Knowledge Must offers complete service packages with its five company divisions: Career Must, Language Must, Training Must, Travel Must, and Culture Must. Starting with career consulting, Knowledge Must provides work experience, language immersion, culture-specific and process-oriented training, individualised travel arrangements and cultural events, in order to fully equip our clients to work more effectively across a multitude of cultures.

Once you have arrived in India, you may like to learn Hindustani language, or find out about the context and origins of "Indian quirks" with a cultural training. You may want to have some assistance in your travel planning and booking, because we at Knowledge Must, with our cultural expertise, can bring you to places away from the mainstream and take care of the sometimes stressful travel organisation, so you are enabled to fully focus on enjoying the beauty of India. Moreover, with our company weblog that you can find under blog.knowledge-must.com we offer you many interesting insights and valuable advice on intercultural issues, such as experiences of other foreigners working in India.
With our division **Career Must**, we assist students and professionals to build an international career. Career Must’s platform directly interlinks requirements to select highly qualified personnel for organisations and rewarding work prospects for outstanding job seekers. We help to bring the right people together, even across the largest cultural gaps, and handle the ensuing complexities in an effective and efficient manner.

With our division **Language Must**, we offer the best in language teaching. Whether you are working or studying abroad, effectively crossing cultural boundaries requires a considerable level of language proficiency. Students and professionals alike benefit from the Language Must Method of language training. We know that language is about communication. And that is exactly what we focus on. We equip you with the tools to effectively communicate with people from other cultures.

With our division **Training Must**, we offer a range of flexible and effective intercultural training solutions that are both practicable and tailored to each particular cultural challenge. In today’s increasingly smaller world, understanding the ways of other peoples’ cultures is an essential. Our specialised training solutions broaden your intercultural capacities in diverse areas. From process-oriented to culture-specific competencies, Training Must instils in you the ability to interact effectively across cultural boundaries.

With our division **Travel Must**, we offer the best in intercultural travels. Because travel is such a precious commodity, part education, part relaxation, part life-enriching experience, part adventure, Travel Must takes utmost care to fulfil your individual expectations. Our unique travel services cater to open-minded individuals from all walks of life. From executives to students, from urbanites to outdoor enthusiasts, Travel Must offers you great ways to immerse yourself in a foreign environment and culture.

With our division **Culture Must**, we make you experience the arts and beyond. To appreciate the strength in differences between us and find comfort where we overlap, Culture Must events let you experience the backbones of culture, be it music, visual arts, religion or festivities. With us you will get to know the best that human creativity and intellect has brought about. Connecting musicians, performers, designers, painters, writers, film makers, photographers, and other artists, Culture Must creates a platform that cultivates and promotes intercultural collaborations. Diversity is the true source of our inspiration. At Culture Must we celebrate diversity every day.
Knowledge Must takes a highly integrated approach to the complexity that is culture. Combining the expertise of our five divisions Career Must, Language Must, Training Must, Travel Must, and Culture Must into Integrated Solutions, we deliver truly comprehensive services for individuals to experience a new professional and private environment. Leveraging HR solutions, professional experience, language and cultural training, travel, and intercultural events, our Integrated Solutions provide the most effective way to cultural fluency. All our solutions reinforce each other providing increased efficiency and insight.

Knowledge Must is an organisation with strong social objectives. Through the prism of language, religion, ethnic identity, traditions, and other principal pillars of culture we apply our effective solutions for fostering intercultural understanding among individuals, organisations, communities, and countries. At Knowledge Must we understand that embracing diverse ideas, creating diverse opportunities, and developing diverse partnerships will positively impact the communities that we engage. In order to stay affordable to everybody and to live up to our philosophy to promote genuine cultural exchange, we are committed to keeping the fees of our Cultural Immersion Solutions as low as possible for all of our participants. The synergies generated when people of diverse cultures collaborate are truly borderless.

Join hands with us!
Thank you for your interest in Knowledge Must. We invite you to have a look at our division website [www.career-must.com](http://www.career-must.com) to find out more about our career services and visit [www.knowledge-must.com](http://www.knowledge-must.com) to learn what our entire organisation can do for you. Please contact us with any enquiries and bookings as well as with comments or suggestions you might have. For more information on how our intercultural solutions can benefit you, we would be happy to discuss your needs.

So what are you waiting for? Be proactive and trust in yourself to take the right decisions. Rather than just think about it, start to take action. Whether you come with our support or just by yourself, we look forward to welcoming you in India!

*Your Knowledge Must Team*
Contributors

Author:
Mr. Daniel Ratheiser

Born in Montreal, Canada, Daniel has lived, studied, and worked for extended periods in eight countries and speaks nearly as many languages. Having himself relocated many times across national borders (and having helped many others to do so), he has practical experience moving between cultures and understands firsthand the complexities that arise when crossing cultural boundaries.

Founding Knowledge Must, Daniel has assisted individuals and organisations to cross cultural boundaries and to grow their global competence. He also conducted numerous research studies in the intercultural field, from historical cultural exchange to contemporary interfaith relations. His real passion, however, has always been researching and writing about the cultural relations between South Asia / India and East Asia / China, the two regions of the world he feels most indebted to.

Additional Contributors:
- Mr. Peter Braun
- Ms. Gülcan Durak
- Mr. Stefan Heil
- Mr. Lars Messmann
- Ms. Julie Pusch

With contributions from Knowledge Must’s Blog (blog.knowledge-must.com) by:
- Ms. Gülcan Durak: “Dilli or Dili?” and “Hinglish – A ‘Pakka’ Way to Speak?”
- Ms. Magali Mander: “Riding Wired Donkeys – Cycling Culture from Berlin to Delhi”
- Ms. Esther Motullo: “Living in India as a Western Woman”
- Mr. Benjamin Weiss: “Immersed – Leave a Message”

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