

# INDIA



CAPITAL:  
NEW DELHI



INDIAN RUPEES

POPULATION OF  
1.3 BILLION



MAJOR INDUSTRIES:

IRON & STEEL  
TEXTILES  
AGRICULTURE

## LANGUAGES

HINDI, BENGALI  
& ENGLISH (THERE  
ARE 22 MAJOR  
LANGUAGES)

21% ARE LIVING  
IN POVERTY

2.3%  
CHRISTIAN

2%  
OTHER

1.7%  
SIKH

14.2%  
MUSLIM

## RELIGION

79.8%  
HINDU



FAVOURITE SPORTS:

CRICKET  
SOCCER  
HOCKEY

2,973,193 SQ KM  
IN LAND SIZE



# INDIA



Children performing a dance for everyone.



Children playing outside together.

## Geography

India is part of the continent of Asia and has an incredibly varied geography and climate. Northern India is characterised by the snowy mountain range of the Himalayas and the Great Indian (Thar) Desert. The south is distinguished by tropical jungles, rainforests, coastal plains, islands and beaches.

Nature plays a vital role in India – especially rivers such as the Ganga (or ‘Ganges’) in the north and Godavari in the central and southeast. Both provide irrigation for farmlands, a method of transportation and are considered sacred to many followers of Hinduism.

## History

India is a land of ancient civilisations with human settlement starting more than 55,000 years ago. A highly sophisticated urban culture – the Indus civilisation, which brought Hinduism – dominated the northwestern part of the subcontinent from about 2600 to 2000 BCE. From that period on, India functioned as a virtually self-contained political and cultural arena.

The fifth century saw the unification of India under Ashoka, who had converted to Buddhism, and it is in his reign that Buddhism spread in many parts of Asia. In the eighth century, Islam came to India for the first time and by the eleventh century had firmly established itself in India as a political force. It resulted in the formation of the Delhi Sultanate, which was finally succeeded by the Mughal Empire, under which India once again achieved a large measure of political unity.

The Europeans arrived in India in the 17th century, which coincided with the disintegration of the Mughal Empire. This paved the way for regional states. In the contest for supremacy, the English emerged “victors”. The Rebellion of 1857-58, which sought to restore Indian supremacy,

was crushed; and with the subsequent crowning of Victoria as Empress of India, the incorporation of India into the empire was complete. It was followed by India's struggle for independence, which was achieved in 1947.

## Culture

Home to more than a billion people, India accommodates great cultural diversity between languages, religious traditions, and social stratifications. However, there are common themes and principles that contribute to the values, attitudes, and beliefs of the dominant society. Generally speaking, Indians tend to have a strong sense of pride in their culture's distinctiveness and diversity.

Indians generally place a high value on harmony and unity with others, keeping a strong link with their community and relatives. Many Indians tend to have a sense of acceptance towards one's life position or a belief that, due to actions in one's past life, good or bad personal circumstances are deserved. This attitude partly stems from religious ideas such as ‘karma’ (the idea that one's actions will affect their current or future life) and ‘samsara’ (the cycle of rebirth).

## AMS Projects in India – Operation Rainbow

Of the 65 million people living in the state of Tamil Nadu, about 650,000 are HIV positive. Of these, one in seven is a child under the age of 14. These people are some of the most neglected in society. Because of the stigma associated with the disease, many families do not access services that can assist in managing the illness.

Operation Rainbow was established in 2003 by the Marist Brothers to provide support to families and children affected by HIV. It works with families in their own settings and assists them access resources available within their local communities.

Operation Rainbow provides families and individuals with community support that enables them to live with dignity.

## Further reading/resources:

SBS Cultural Atlas ([www.culturalatlas.sbs.com.au](http://www.culturalatlas.sbs.com.au))

World Atlas ([www.worldatlas.com](http://www.worldatlas.com))