



CLC Mission Helper India Handbook

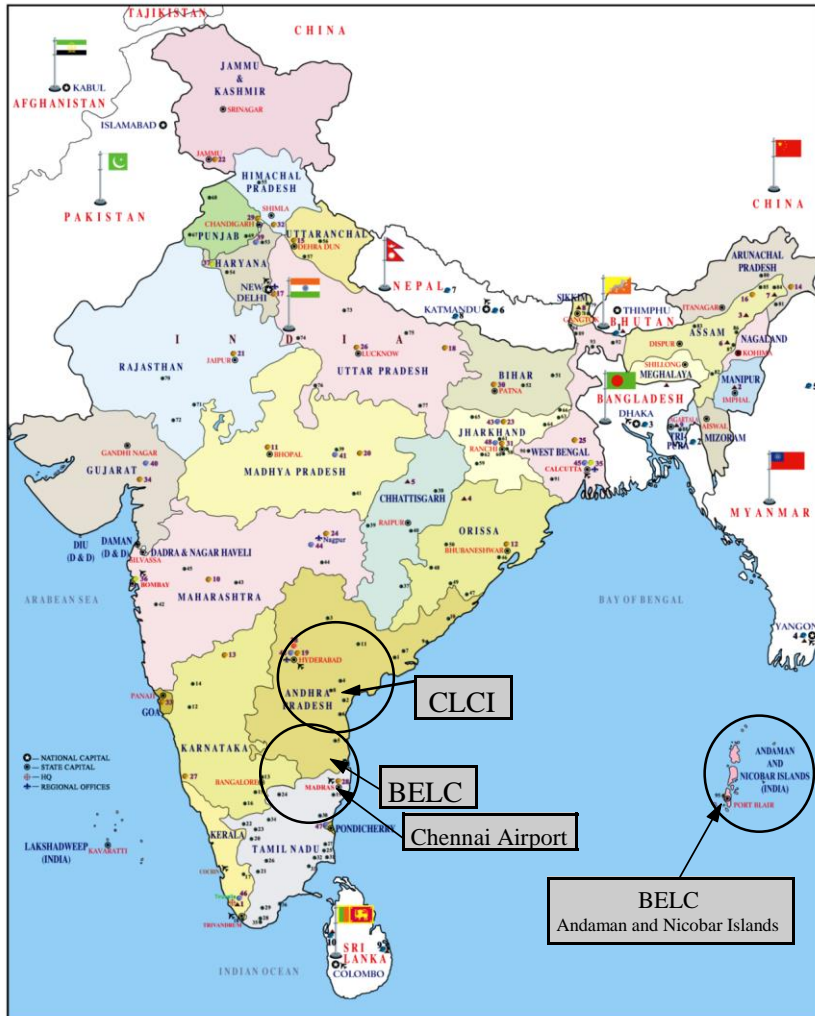


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Indian Culture and Etiquette

Visiting India for the first time can be intimidating, especially if you are not aware of the **cultural differences** that make India so unique. Indians often treat foreigners with much respect as honored guests, and are usually very understanding amid cultural mistakes. The following guidelines

explain some cultural differences that can help you adapt and enjoy your time in India.

A Respectful Culture

India remains **a traditional society** governed by strong family values. Although in larger towns youth may have Western dress with a modern, cosmopolitan outlook, they remain traditional in many ways. Common values exist amid diverse social, religious and caste customs.

Indians are extremely **hospitable** and helpful to visitors – sometimes to an almost embarrassing degree. You may respond by bringing your host flowers or a small gift, even though this is not an Indian custom. If you face delays, inefficient services or bureaucracy, it is far more efficient and Christ-like to be firm and polite than to lose your temper.

Respect for elders is very important. An elder is anyone older than you or who is in a higher position, such as ministry leaders, pastors, missionaries and your team leaders. One way to show respect for your elders is to stand up when they enter the room. It is normal to reserve front seats for leaders; if there is no available chair, the younger person should give their seat to the elder. During meal times, please reserve the ends of the table

for them. Please don't sit there unless you are asked to by a leader. In Indian culture, it is also respectful to walk beside or behind your leaders.

Meeting People

The **traditional greeting** in India is *namaste* (pronounced "namastay") when meeting or parting. The palms are pressed together, raised towards the face, and the head is bent slightly forward. In Telegu, the language spoken in Andhra Pradesh the typical greeting is *wandanalu*.

The **Western handshake** is also widely used, though most of the men and women we will be working with still prefer to greet visitors with the traditional *namaste*. Unless a woman puts out her hand first, men do not shake hands with a woman.

Using first names only can be taken as overly familiar, so it's best to **address new acquaintances** as "Mr.", "Miss" or "Mrs."; when greeting other Christians you may address them as "Brother" or "Sister".

Indians will think nothing of asking **personal questions** within minutes of first meeting you, so don't take offense if a stranger asks you your age, whether or not you are married or where you are going. Such questions are seen as nothing more than being polite and showing a normal friendly interest in a new acquaintance.

Body Language

The feet are considered the lowliest part of the body, and shoes are treated as unclean. People will usually **take off shoes** before entering a house. Placing feet up on the furniture is considered bad manners, as is touching someone inadvertently with your feet. If you are sitting on the floor, as is often the case, try to keep your feet tucked underneath rather than stretched out, and avoid stepping over people.

The head, on the other hand, is thought to be a person's spiritual center. An older person may bless someone younger by touching his or her head. Some Christians in India have a difficult time understanding why some men from the West have long hair. To them, short hair is a sign of their commitment to Christ.

Living in close quarters with family and neighbors gives Indians a different sense of **personal space** than many Westerners are used to. If you find yourself crowded or jostled, particularly while traveling, be as tolerant as you can, since space is often at a premium.

Suitable Dress

Indians tend to **dress conservatively**, keeping the body well covered. In small towns, most women wear a *sari* (a long decorative cloth wrapped over the body) or a *salwar-kameez* (drawstring pants, shirt-dress and head covering outfit also called a *Punjabi suit*). In cities, jeans, skirts and t-shirts can be common among the younger generation.

Please wear modest clothing. Ladies, avoid wearing short skirts, shorts, tight fitting pants, tank tops, sleeveless tops, sheer garments or anything that might attract unwanted attention. Loose fitting skirts and pants are the most acceptable. The men we will be working with typically wear *Docker* type pants and button down shirts. The women mostly wear the traditional Sari or Punjabi.

Table Manners

In most of India, people eat with their **right hand only**, normally without utensils. Eating with your left hand is considered impolite. The left hand is reserved for the duties that are taken care of in the restroom.

Most of the time you will be provided eating utensils. There may be times when you will not be given a fork or spoon to use. **Eating with your fingers** can take time to learn but it is the best way to enjoy traditional Indian food. If unsure how to eat a particular dish, don't be embarrassed to ask. Sitting on the floor for meals is common and, in the south, banana leaves are often used instead of plates.

1. With your right hand fingers, mix a little rice with some curry on your plate.
2. Scoop up a small amount with your fingers.
3. Lean over your plate and put the food into your mouth.

A water bowl and towel is often provided to wash your hands after the meal.

It is common in India to hear someone **burp** after eating. This tells the cook that the meal was satisfying and enjoyable. Please do not feel offended if you hear someone burp without saying, "excuse me". Also, please understand that you are not at all expected or required to follow this custom.

Do not feel that you have to eat all the food that is prepared for you. Simply explain to your host that Americans do not typically have a large appetite and that you would prefer a smaller portion. If you are polite they will certainly not be offended.

Gifts, Money and Beggars

It is best that you **do not give money to others**, even as gifts.

Be sensitive when handling money in front of others. Never reveal large amounts of cash at one time from your purse or wallet. Rather, take out a little, then if that is not enough, reach in and take out some more. Remember that though it may not seem like much money to you, it may appear to locals as a lot. It is usually best to carry only enough in your wallet or pocket for your daily expenses. Keep the bulk of your money in a money belt or in the hotel safe. Never leave your money in your hotel room, even if your suitcase is locked.

Be sensitive when you shop. It is difficult for our native brothers and sisters to see American Christians purchasing or carrying items whose cost would feed an entire family for a year or more. If possible, please purchase expensive items only at the end of the trip. You will have an opportunity for gift shopping in Chennai on the last day before departure.

As a foreign visitor in India, you will get more attention from **beggars** at city traffic lights, markets, and outside places of worship. Although a persistent beggar is very difficult to refuse, visitors who give money to one will soon find themselves surrounded by a throng of beggars. Be especially careful of being pick-pocketed in the confusion. The best strategy is to ignore them until they leave you alone. Although when one is moved with compassion it is certainly not forbidden to help the needy.

In Church

In congregational settings, you will often see **men and women** sitting on separate sides of the church. This also applies during meal times. Please make sure you sit in the proper place, according to your gender. If you are unsure where to sit, simply observe the natives and follow their example. Most often, you will be given a place of honor at the front of the church.

Remember to **take off your shoes** when entering a church or someone's home. This is traditional custom in many Asian countries.

The women in India typically **wear a head covering** with their Sari dress during prayer, and sometimes throughout the worship service. It is a good idea for the women of the group to bring along a shawl or scarf for this purpose. Men may wear button-down shirts and casual dress pants.

If you are in a church that has **chairs** to sit on, please try your best to **sit up straight** and do not slouch or put your feet on the chair in front of you. Indians regard the church building as a sacred place where they go to hear about the Lord.

Communication and Relations

Though India is often viewed by foreigners as being a noisy culture, foreigners are also viewed by Indians as being loud and obnoxious. Independence, self-assertiveness, and other American values are not held in high esteem. As guests in this land, remember to respect your hosts' culture. Too often, westerners do not have a sense of their surroundings, especially in public places. While in India, please **do not talk or laugh loudly**. Respect leaders when they are speaking or making public announcements. Try to be aware of your surroundings, and follow what the natives are doing.

In India, **people may stand very close** during conversation. When in a church or when traveling, people may sit very near to you. This is quite normal. Do your best to adjust with your surroundings. You will also see men holding hands with other men in public. This should not be seen as a homosexual act but simply part of the very close and friendly attitude of the Indian culture. If you are a man, do not be surprised if one of the Indian pastors or young men attempts to hold your hand as you are walking along.

When **addressing people in India**, especially elders, it is impolite to use their first name alone. Please be sure to precede a believer's name with "Brother" or "Sister".

In Indian countries, **certain statements have meanings** that foreigners often misunderstood as criticism. For example, an Indian may tell you that you look tired or sick or point out a blemish on your face. This is only meant to show that they care about your health. Someone may say to you that you look fat, which does not mean that you are overweight but instead is a complement that you come from a good family that takes care of you.

There are some **subjects of conversation** that would be unwise to discuss while in India, such as dating, politics, divorce, sex, homosexuality, and movies. Avoid sarcasm. These all may lead to great misunderstanding. Please make sure that you avoid these topics in general conversation, during public speaking, and when sharing from God's Word.

Most of the time you will be communicating through a **translator**. Please keep in mind that certain words in the English language do not always translate directly into the local language. Therefore, one sentence in English, may take up to five sentences of the local language to translate the meaning well enough for the people to understand.

Please **be careful when you encounter different customs** from your own; do not laugh or make jokes. Though they may not show it, the natives can be deeply hurt by this. Try your best to understand and appreciate their culture.

When talking to people, please **do not use Western slang** such as, "cool", "awesome", "dude", "whacked", "tight", "stoked", "cheesy", "wicked" or other words with double meanings. This may work within the Western culture where it is immediately understood. However, outside of the West, it is neither understood nor able to be translated.

In India, **the word "guy"** is a derogatory term. So please do not address others as "guys"; instead, use "brothers" and "sisters".

Many Indians **learn English by watching television**. Words they hear on TV may be repeated because that is all they know. You could hear a word said that may offend you. Please keep in mind that many Indians are not aware of cuss words or their negative meaning. They might use one as an exclamation only because they heard it on TV.

Most believers in India **abstain from cinema movies, drinking alcohol, and smoking**, so mentioning viewing a movie, or drinking a beer or wine, or smoking may be misunderstood.

Please be considerate if you brought snacks to eat in public. In India, it is only right to **share food with those around you**. Eating in front of someone without offering anything is considered rude.

Please **do not eat beef jerky** in public – cows in India are considered holy and sacred by the Hindu people.

One of the best things to do while you are in India is to **get to know Indians** by talking with them. Ask them, "What is your name?", "Where are you from?" and "What does your father do?" Asking questions like these mean that you care enough to take a personal interest in them.

When giving and receiving things, such as food, money and gifts, please remember to **use only your right hand**. Using your left hand would be impolite in this culture since it is often used, along with a jug of water, in place of toilet paper.

It is common for **foreigners to feel strange** when people stare at them or intently watch what they are doing. However, this is nothing more than mere curiosity and should not cause you to be afraid or uneasy. Make sure that you **smile a lot and say hello** to people whenever you see them. Indians are a very happy people for the most part and appreciate a happy face. 😊

Indians are of a very **helpful nature**. Please do not feel strange if someone, like your host, tries to help you by carrying your bags or insists on doing something for you that could be easily done by yourself. To them, it is a privilege to assist you. It is better to accept their generosity with a thankful heart.

If a stranger asks what you are doing in India, be careful and discreet. Tell the truth that you are simply here to visit India and for security reasons **do not mention ministry names** or contact information. Share that you are touring the country with your group and mention places of interest that you have visited or plan to visit.

Male-Female Relations

The roles of men and women in Indian society are different from those in the West. Men sit on one side and women on another in church and believers' meetings. It is culturally inappropriate for a woman to greet a man first by shaking his hand; allow the man to greet first and if he feels comfortable shaking your hand, he will. Otherwise, just smile and say, "Praise the Lord."

If someone of the **opposite gender** asks you to pray for them, please do not lay your hands on them directly. Instead, you may stretch out your hands toward them as you pray.

Even when joking, please **be careful not to touch** the opposite sex. Even small things, like patting someone on the shoulder or playing with someone's hair, could be misunderstood in this culture.

You should also be aware that **public displays of affection** between couples is disrespectful in Indian society. Conversely, it is acceptable for people of the same gender to hold hands in public, only as a cultural sign of mutual friendship.

How to Be a Blessing as a Visitor

Pray. There is no greater preparation for this journey. You will be challenged spiritually, emotionally and physically by what you see and experience. Have a morning prayer in your heart, "Lord, help me to be open and willing to learn what you are going to teach me today." Share needs with your group and pray together. God is with you!

Take time to observe what the Lord is teaching you in the midst of your busy day. Record these things so you will not forget them when you go back home.

"Blessed are the flexible, for they shall not break." Expect changes and delays in itineraries, dinner times, departure time, meetings, etc., due to weather, strikes, unavoidable circumstance, and the typical "Indian time." It is better to stay flexible and continually ready for change. Walk with an attitude that chooses to praise God in all things.

Be willing to give up rights and convenience for the sake of others. Allow the Lord to build you together as a team. You are not in India for your own selfish gain but to allow the Lord to use your lives for the furthering of His kingdom.

Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. ⁴Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. Philippians 2:3-4

¹I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, ²with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, ³endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. ⁴There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; ⁵one Lord, one faith, one baptism; ⁶one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. ⁷But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. Ephesians 4:1-7

Seek to serve one another and the brothers and sisters you meet.

Ask your leader if you are ever unsure about something. Most mistakes are made unintentionally due to lack of information.

Be punctual! It's your responsibility to find out when and where to assemble for the next meeting. If one person is late, the whole team could miss a flight, causing major complications since it could be a full day or more before the next available flight out.

Do not go off on your own. Check with your tour leader before splitting the group. Never go anywhere without someone knowing where you are going and when you will be back.

Please keep your room clean and your things arranged properly each day.

Teaching and Preaching

When sharing **the Gospel** in India here are a few things to keep in mind.

1. **Simplicity** is the key since many people here have no idea who Jesus is.
2. **Do not use slang** words or expressions.
3. **People will listen** to you and respect what you are saying because you are a foreigner and you are considered an expert in your field, so please know that your words carry a lot of weight.
4. **Do not be discouraged** if some of the people you are teaching do not seem to believe what you are teaching them. Remember, the important thing is that they were able to hear the Gospel. Remember the promise from God that His Word will not return to Him void. You can be sure that the Lord will continue to work in their heart. What you have shared with them will not be forgotten.
5. **Do not** include derogatory remarks about the Hindu religion or customs in your teaching and preaching. It is best to simply teach and preach God's Law and Gospel and let the individuals come to their own conclusions about the falsehood of Hinduism. The local pastors will be able to follow up after we have come and gone.
6. **When teaching through a translator**, remember to use simple, short, and complete phrases. Try to avoid words or expressions that would have no meaning in their culture or daily lives. Example: don't use an illustration about driving a car or buying a new TV since most of the people we will work with have no opportunity to do either of these things.

Health and Cleanliness

For extensive information on travelers health and vaccinations please visit the website for The Centers for Disease Control at: <http://www.cdc.gov/travel/indianrg.htm>

Please **do not touch animals** on the street or anywhere else. Many of them carry diseases. If a dog or any other animal bites, please inform your group leader immediately. Don't be afraid of the many harmless geckos that often climb room walls and prey on mosquitoes. Keep your distance from the monkeys because they can be quite aggressive if approached.

If possible, **bathe** twice a day. This will help prevent illness. Use baby powder to keep dry.

Bathing using a bucket may be another interesting challenge for you. Here are a few tips to help you in the process:

1. Fill the bucket with water and use the small plastic cup to **pour the water over you**. Make sure that your hair and body are completely soaked in water but do not allow water in your mouth or ears – this can cause illness or infection. Women with long hair should bow their head and hair down to pour the water away from their ears.
2. Use soap and shampoo to **lather yourself** well.
3. **Rinse off the soap** and shampoo by using the plastic mug to pour water over you.
4. **Dry yourself** with a towel.
5. **Scratches and scrapes** can lead to a bad infection. Clean them well and keep them covered.

Food and Drink

Please make sure that you **drink plenty of bottled water** even if you are not thirsty because your body can become quickly dehydrated. Bottled water should be frequently available from your leaders and hosts.

Tap water is unsafe for drinking, brushing or rinsing. Drink and brush your teeth only with bottled water. If you develop stomach or intestinal problems such as diarrhea, a likely cause was drinking impure water.

Make sure water bottles are sealed before opening. Always order cold drinks without ice, since ice is often made from local water.

Hot tea and coffee are okay to drink and are usually served with milk and sugar already added. If you are allergic to milk or cannot have sugar due to a medical problem, please inform your leader.

Do not assume foods are okay to eat; always check with the leader. Be careful to not eat raw vegetables or uncooked food. Try to eat freshly cooked foods and beware of food that has been left sitting around for a long time. Do not eat fruit that cannot be peeled, such as grapes and apples. Do not eat food given to you by strangers. Your host will normally let you know of food you should not eat. Many places along your itinerary prepare safe meals specifically for your visit.

In case of illness:

1. **Advise your group leader right away so he knows when the sickness began.** Do not be embarrassed **(diarrhea will be a part of your trip to India)** and you will most likely not be the only one with a problem. Your host is prepared to assist you when aware of the need.
2. **Prevent dehydration.** Replenish lost fluids by drinking plenty of fruit juices and bottled water. If you feel dehydrated, ask your host for re-hydration fluids.
3. **Limit food intake** to hot tea, soups and bananas. As your appetite returns, follow with bland crackers and dry toast. Then try simple baked foods.
4. **Take non-prescription medication.** Your host may have some available or can take you to a pharmacy to buy some.

How to Avoid Traveler's Diarrhea

- **ONLY** drink purified or **sealed bottled water**, hot beverages, and fresh 100% fruit juice.
- **DO NOT** drink or brush your teeth with **tap water**.
- **DO NOT** consume **non-pasteurized milk** or dairy products.
- **ONLY** eat fresh **fruits that can be peeled** like bananas and oranges.
- **DO NOT** eat **uncooked vegetables**, including salads.
- **DO NOT** eat **fruits that you are unable to peel**.
- **ONLY** eat food that **arrives hot** and is well cooked.
- **DO NOT** eat **undercooked or raw** meats, fish, or shellfish.
- **DO NOT** eat foods sold by **street vendors**.

Jet Lag

Jet lag is a physiological disturbance experienced by air travelers on flights across different time zones. It affects the body's internal clock, disrupting sleeping patterns, eating schedules, and body temperature. Increased noise levels, changes in atmospheric pressure, low humidity, and stress are all influences.

The body will naturally readjust its biological rhythms to the new schedule and environment after a period of time, normally one day for each time zone crossed. However, there are some steps you can take that will lessen the effects of long periods of travel and shorten the time required for readjustment:

1. **Prior to departure, adjust your sleep patterns** to fit those of your destination if your schedule permits. Go to sleep and get up an hour earlier or later each day until your pattern begins to approximate the one you will have at your destination.
2. **Avoid a last-minute rush** by packing and finalizing details well ahead of the day of departure. Reducing unnecessary stress will improve your energy level and help your body adapt.
3. **Wear comfortable and loose-fitting clothing** during long flights. This improves blood circulation and resting ability. Wear comfortable shoes that can be easily loosened or removed in case your feet swell.
4. **Drink plenty of fluids**, such as fruit juices and water. Try to drink one glass of water for each hour of flight. This will help counteract the tendency of pressurized cabins to cause dehydration.
5. **Regulate caffeine intake wisely.** Caffeine speeds up body functions and contributes to dehydration but might be helpful to avoid drowsiness during daylight.
6. **Avoid alcoholic beverages** on the flights.

7. **Avoid foods with high levels of salt or sugar**, such as sodas, snack foods, and desserts. Salt increases fluid retention, causing more swelling of your feet, and sugar will decrease your blood-sugar level after the initial rise. Also, avoid heavy foods or overeating that will consume more energy for digestion.
8. **Eat potassium-rich foods**, such as bananas. Water loss from perspiration, etc., depletes the potassium in your body.
9. **Exercise by stretching and walking** at least five minutes every hour when the fasten-seat-belt sign is off. Exercise will keep your blood circulating and prevent blood from pooling in your legs and feet, causing swelling or dangerous blood clots.
10. **Try to fully relax and sleep if possible**. If the flight is not full, look for multiple seats to stretch out. Sleeping when dark and staying awake with minimal napping during daylight can help your body to adjust to the destination's time zone.

Applying for your Indian Visa –

India recently started offering electronic tourist visas online. You can only apply for your E-Visa up to 30 days in advance of your arrival. So you will not be able to apply until June 12th. Please make sure you apply at least three weeks in advance just in case there are issues with the application process. You can apply online at: <http://indiavisa.travisaoutsourcing.com/>

You will need the following documentation when you apply for your E-Visa online:

- **Scanned First Page of Your Passport**
 - Format – PDF
 - Size - Minimum 10KB, Maximum 300KB
- **Digital Photograph**
 - Format – JPEG
 - Size – Minimum 10KB, Maximum 1MB
 - Height and Wide must be equal
 - Front view of full face with eyes open
 - Center head within the frame of the picture with full hair at the top and chin at the bottom
 - Background should be white or very light color
 - No Shadows
 - No Borders
 - Similar to your passport photo in size and appearance

Travelers Health Insurance –

You are required to have a traveler's health insurance policy to participate in the Mission Helper Program. This policy will cover any health problems, injuries, or accidents that may occur while in India. This policy will also cover evacuation from India in the case of a serious illness or injury. The company used is **International Medical Group - IMG. The Patriots Travel Medical Insurance** policy provides adequate coverage. The Mission Helper Trip coordinator will arrange a group policy and forward the insurance documents to you via email. A copy of the policy information should be left with a trusted individual here in the U.S. in case of emergency.

Travel Information

Voltage in India is 230V, unlike 115V in the west. To operate electric devices, both a voltage transformer and a plug adapter must be used. Note that some computer A/C adapters are labeled "Input: 100-240V"; in this case, a separate voltage transformer is not required. It is strongly recommended that a surge protector be used for electronic devices.

Photography at Indian airports is prohibited.

Always carry your passport with you. You may be asked to show your passport when entering certain areas of the country. Keep your passport, money, camera and other valuables close to you at all times. Never leave your bags unattended.

Always watch your luggage, especially if you allow a porter to carry your bags. Know your bags and watch carefully as they are loaded and unloaded.

Exchange money only at airports, hotels and banks to avoid receiving counterfeit bills. Units of Indian currency are the *Rupee* and *Paisa*. One Rupee equals 100 Paise. In 2006, the U.S. Dollar (US \$1.00) exchanged for approximately 45 Indian Rupees.

Save all exchange receipts. These are required for re-converting unspent money when departing India. You will not be able to exchange Indian Rupees outside of India.

The customary **tip for a porter** who takes your baggage to your room is: Rs. 2/- per bag or Rs. 10/- per trolley.

Tipping of **taxi and rickshaw drivers** is not customary. It is best to negotiate cost of the trip before you leave and expect an attempt to re-negotiate the price once you arrive. **Do not pay more than the price you agreed upon** before you got into the rickshaw or taxi.

In India, **traffic runs in the opposite direction** as in the United States and **pedestrians do not have the right of way**. When crossing the street, first look to the right and then to the left. Cross the street only when you are sure it is safe. Vehicles will not stop for you!

When walking at night, it is wise to bring a friend and use a flashlight.

Hotel room security varies, so never leave any valuables or money in your room while away, even if hidden.

Arrival Instructions

Arrival and Departure Card for Foreign Nationals

Before landing in India on your international flight, you will be given a required form to fill out. This *Arrival and Departure Card* requires an "**Address in India and Tel contact No.**". The customs officer desk has approved listing a hotel as a contact. Since we will be visiting multiple places in India we will use the hotel that we will be arriving to and departing from. Please use the following information on the *Arrival and Departure Card*:

Hotel Melody

281,Purasawalkam High Road,
Madras (Chennai) - 600 007
Tel: +91 44 642 7201
Fax: +91 44 6427215

For security reasons, **never list or mention church body or pastor's names**, contacts, or addresses.

Deplaning Procedures

International Airports have two lines for arriving International passengers, the Red Channel for those declaring goods for duty, and the Green Channel for those who have nothing to declare. Once you deplane, proceed to the baggage claim and **customs/immigration** via the Green Channel line. Ensure your passport and *Arrival and Departure Card for Foreign Nationals* is ready for customs officers. When going through customs be very careful not to say too much about your reason for coming to India. When the customs agent asks the reason for your visit, answer truthfully that you are here to visit India with a group. **Do not tell the customs agent that you are coming to India to spread the Gospel or to do mission work.**

One lead person will exchange money at the airport to arrange transportation to the hotel when we arrive. Later on the first day the group will be taken to a currency exchange office where better exchange rates will be given.

U.S. Embassy Emergency Services

The American Citizen Services Unit provides emergency services to Americans in the event of death, arrest, illness, missing persons, destitution and other circumstances. Services provided are limited.

Chennai Office

+91 (44) 2857-4000

Domestic dialing Instructions

To call locally within India look for a sign that says: STD. You will pay cash for the phone call once the call is complete.

To call long-distance or to a cell-phone within India, dial: 0 (Area Code) Local Number.

Calling Home

Each team will have a cell phone that will allow you to make an occasional or emergency call home.

The Flag of India



The Indian flag is a horizontal tricolour in equal proportion of deep saffron on the top, white in the middle and dark green at the bottom. In the centre of the white band, there is a wheel in navy blue to indicate the Dharma Chakra, the wheel of law in the Sarnath Lion Capital. This center symbol or the 'CHAKRA', is a Buddhist symbol dating back to 200th century BC.

Its diameter approximates the width of the white band and it has 24 spokes, which intends to show that there is life in movement and death in stagnation. The saffron stands for courage, sacrifice and the spirit of renunciation; the white, for purity and truth; the green for faith and fertility.

The design of the National Flag of India was adopted by India's constituent assembly on 22nd July 1947. Its use and display are regulated by a code.

The flag symbolizes freedom. The late Prime Minister Pandit Nehru called it a flag not only of freedom for ourselves, but a symbol of freedom for all people.

Andhra Pradesh



In medieval times, the diamonds that came from the mines of Andhra Pradesh drew world acclaim. Today, the state is a major tourist center, with historical monuments and temples-and India's largest tiger reserve.

Geographically, Andhra Pradesh lies on the Bay of Bengal and forms the link between northern and southern India. The state has 374 miles of coastline, and its terrain ranges from the fertile plains along the coast to the mountains of the north. The seaport city of Vishakhapatnam is the most famous shipbuilding center in India.

The state has 80 million inhabitants-most of them Hindus-and 500 major ethnic groups. It derives its name from the "Andhras" people group, an Aryan race that migrated to the area centuries ago. From 1565 until it became a state in 1953, Andhra Pradesh was ruled by Muslim sultans.

Important industries include textiles, paper, fertilizers, tobacco and cement. Handloom saris, silver articles of fine filigree work, wooden toys and carpets also contribute to the economy. Agriculture accounts for around 50 percent of the state's income and sustains 70 percent of the people. Since fishing is widespread, a typical diet includes plenty of fish, along with vegetables and a flatbread called chapati.

Eighty-five percent of the people speak Telugu and around 8 percent speak Urdu. Small segments also use Hindi and Tamil. Thankfully, the Scriptures are available in all of these languages. Sixty-two percent of the population is literate.

In 1710, a Roman Catholic missionary established one of the first mission stations in the region. Various Protestant missions groups arrived some two hundred years later. Today, 30 major denominations are represented in the state.

Until recently, little effort has been made to evangelize many of the 33 tribal groups in Andhra Pradesh. The CLCI is actively working among the tribal peoples of Andhra Pradesh.

Tamil Nadu



Tamil Nadu is found just south of Andhra Pradesh. A few thousand years ago, the Dravidians—the original people of India and the architects of the Indus Valley civilization—inhabited many areas of the Indian subcontinent. When Aryans from the north began to gain power around 1500 B.C., however, the Dravidians were driven south into what is now Tamil Nadu. There they remain to this day.

Tamil Nadu is known as the "Land of Temples," where life revolves around religious practices. Hindus represent 88 percent of the population, and the caste system is strictly observed. In 2002, Tamil Nadu enacted an anti-conversion law that made changing one's religion illegal. Aimed at preventing the Dalits (the so-called Untouchables) from leaving Hinduism, the law illustrates the powerful hold of casteism on Tamil society.

Of the 65 million people in Tamil Nadu, 87 percent speak Tamil, one of the oldest languages in India. The rest speak Telugu, Urdu (used by the Muslim population), Kannada, Malayalam and tribal languages.

Most people in Tamil Nadu are involved in agriculture. Rice is the main crop, producing two or three harvests a year in the most fertile areas. Other crops include sugar cane, cotton, coffee, tea, rubber and chilies. On the coast, fishing is a major industry. As an exporter, Tamil Nadu sends leather goods, cotton, tea, coffee, spices and tobacco around the world.

The first Christian missionary to Tamil Nadu was the Apostle Thomas, who was martyred near the modern city of Chennai (formerly Madras) in A.D. 72. In 1504, Portuguese fleets brought priests and friars. The East India Company came to Chennai a century later, setting the stage for Great Britain to rule the nation. In 1901, Irish missionary Amy Carmichael began her work of rescuing temple children from prostitution. Today nearly six percent of the population is Christian.

Andaman and Nicobar Islands

As union territory of India, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands comprise 572 islands formed by a submerged mountain range stretching from the southern tip of Myanmar down to Sumatra in Indonesia. Only 36 of these islands are inhabited. The total population is around 350,000.



It is believed that Marco Polo was among the first from the West to set foot on the islands. Kanhoji Angre, a Maratha admiral, established a base on the island in the early 18th century. From here he attacked passing Portuguese, Dutch and English merchant vessels on their way to or from various Indian colonies.

The British established their first colony in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands in 1789 and later annexed the islands and turned them into a penal colony for Indian freedom fighters. Hundreds of anti-British Indians were tortured to death or executed in the infamous Cellular Jail in the early 1900s. During the Second World War, Japanese troops occupied the islands, and local tribes initiated guerrilla activities against them.

These forested islands export sawn timber, commercial plywood, match splints and veneers. Paddy, the main food crop, is mostly cultivated in the Andaman group of islands. Coconut and areca

nut are the main cash crops of the Nicobar group of islands. Fishing, tourism and ship repairing create further employment opportunities. The islands have a tropical climate with medium to heavy rain during the monsoon season (the months from May to mid-September and again from November to mid-December). Rains and tropical storms in late summer often cause heavy erosion damage.

The people follow many different beliefs, including Hinduism, Christianity (about 25%), Islam and Sikhism. A variety of languages, including Hindi, Bengali, Malayalam, Tamil, Telugu, Punjabi and Nicobari are spoken on the islands. Despite such cultural diversity, the people live together in peace. Inter-religion and inter-regional marriages are common. Mission work is forbidden among some indigenous people groups, yet the Gospel is slowly progressing in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

Notes and Questions:

Suggested Packing List

Clothing –

- 3-4 pants/skirts covering the knees (remember that the women should wear very loose fitting clothing)
- 4-6 shirts (Casual, cool and light fabric, no words or confusing graphics. I bring button down short sleeve shirts) (light weight long sleeve shirts help with sun protection, and are commonly worn by Indians)
- 1 sweatshirt or jacket (to wear on the plane.)
- Undergarments
- Sleep and lounging around the hotel clothing (*modest shorts and t-shirts*)
- Sandals and/or shoes
- Handkerchiefs (For wiping sweat from your weary brow and blowing the dirt and dust from your nose)

Toiletries –

- Soap and shampoo
- Deodorant
- Toothbrush and toothpaste
- Body powder
- Feminine hygiene needs
- Towel (some of the hotels do not provide towels)
- Toilet paper (or baby wipes...these also come in handy for cleaning your face and hands)
- Eye contacts needs (contacts may be very difficult to care for due to the dust in the air)

First Aid Kit –

- Pain reliever (Tylenol, Aspirin, etc)
- Insect Repellent
- Thermometer
- Band-Aids
- Ace bandage
- Cough drops or lozenges
- Diarrhea medicine
- Laxative
- Dramamine for motion sickness (only if this is a problem for you)
- Eye drops (there is lots of dust in the air)
- Cipro (a multipurpose antibiotic. You can probably get a free sample from your doctor)
- Any prescription meds you need
- Antiseptic, antibiotic ointment, hydrogen peroxide
- Chapstick

Miscellaneous Items –

- Journal, pens and pencils (I strongly encourage everyone to keep a daily journal. You will appreciate it if you are asked to give any presentations, it will be handy when you pray for those you have met, and it will be the best memento of your trip for years to come)
- Travel book for India (South India)
- Bible
- Safety pins
- Camera
- Addresses, e-mail, and phone # list
- Money belt (one that fit around your waste and tuck under your pant...Walmart for a few bucks)
- Wallet that you can carry in your front pocket for spending money and ID
- Backpack/daypack

- Alarm clock (battery travel)
- Travel sewing kit (plan on losing a few buttons when you have your clothes laundered)
- Electric Outlet Transformer (Small, inexpensive adapters for blow dryers, etc...Walmart.)
- Pocket knife (Be sure to pack in your checked luggage, not in your carry-on)
- Small flashlight and batteries
- Credit Card/ATM card (you will have limited use for this but good to have)
- Snack type foods (just a few candy bars or granola bars, and beef jerky)

DO NOT FORGET –

- Passport and Tourist Visa documentation
 - Money – NOTE: **It is best to bring crisp and new \$100 dollar bills to exchange.**
- Teaching materials and notes

Packing Tips –

- Carry-on luggage – I pack enough clothing for 1 day and toothbrush and deodorant along with a few snacks, teaching notes, Bible, pen, book, flashlight, medications, journal, laptop, and anything I don't want to be without if my luggage gets lost.
- Checked luggage – extra clothing and shoes/sandals

Journaling and Blogging Guidelines

One of the most important parts of your trip experience is expressing the personal impact the trip has had on you. Sharing it with others will help others to see the incredible opportunities and open doors that the Lord has shown to you on your trip. **Personal websites, blogs and email lists** make communicating more simple, convenient and up-to-date than ever before. Depending on your location you will often have access to the Internet. I would suggest that you make use of e-mail or blogs to journal your experience. A personal, hand-written journal will also provide a long lasting memento of your journey.

As you report about your trip using a website, blog or an email list, please consider who else may be reading it, acting wisely to protect our Indian brothers and sisters. Please refrain from mentioning specific names or places. This may seem a little extreme but excerpts from Pastor Todd Ohlmann's 2001 Mission Helper Trip report have been quoted in a derogatory manner by an anti-Christian website.

Returning Home

Some may get a bit of culture shock visiting a foreign country, you may also feel some culture shock when you re-enter the United States. Small things that you may have taken for granted all your life might now be seen as true blessings from God. Rejoice in this, this is the proper perspective to have, not only having the knowledge that God has blessed you greatly, but really feeling blessed. When returning from a foreign country, we may find ourselves judging or looking down on others. This is only because our view of the world has been changed by what we have seen and experienced. However, it is important to keep in mind that others have not yet seen or experienced what we have. We should instead **be a window through which they can see what God is doing in South India** so that through our life they will also be challenged to reach the lost world with His love.

Useful Websites

- www.mdtravelhealth.com/destinations/asia/india.html (Health advice specifically for India)
- www.heartspace.org/travel/TravelTips.html (an interesting site on travel to India)
- www.lonelyplanet.com/worldguide/destinations/asia/india (Lonely Planet - lots of interesting stuff but not too practical)
- www.nojetlag.com/jetlag3.html (tips for avoiding jet lag)
- <https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/in.html> (lots of info about India)
- www.tourindia.com/ (more info about India)
- www.incredibleindia.org (official tourism site for India)

Timeline

Pay special attention to the timing of passports, visas, and immunization these are time sensitive.

Time Line	Need	X	Comments
6 months before trip	Prayer		Pray daily for this ministry and your part in it
	Discuss health issues of trip with your doctor,		Make a list of questions to ask your doctor based on your health history, travel to the third world, and suggested immunizations. You may need to go to a clinic that specializes in foreign travel. If travel involves travel through African countries, be sure to inquire about the requirements for the Yellow Fever injection.
	Immunizations,		For extensive information on travelers health and vaccinations please visit the website for The Centers for Disease Control at: http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/india.htm
	US Passport,		Passport info: http://travel.state.gov/passport/
2 months before trip	Lesson Plans		Begin working your team to develop lesson plans and divide teaching duties
	Travel Plans to Chicago Airport		If you are flying to Chicago, make sure you have a flight that will get you to the Chicago O'hare airport at least 3 hours before the flight to India
30 Days before trip	Walking,		Begin a walking program that works up to at least 2 miles per day so you are in shape for the trip.
	Financial Support		Send thank you notes to those who have helped make this trip possible.
			Trip cost and goal is \$3,500. Check with your funding sources to make sure you will have the money you need for this trip.
	Immunizations,		Get any final immunizations
	Travel Plans to Chicago		Make sure you made final arrangements to get to the Chicago O'hare airport at least 3 hours before the flight to India
	Visa Application,		http://indiavisa.travisaoutsourcing.com/
Final week before trip	Travel Plans to Chicago		Verify that your travel plans to the Chicago O'Hare
	Pack for trip,		Begin packing (1 bag - 48 pounds or less) See suggested packing list You will receive an additional bag of ministry items to check in at the airport.
Day of departure	Prayer Re-read Handbook, Start prescribed medications,		Begin the day in the Word and prayer, asking God to use you for His glory
	Check List:		Passport, Teaching notes, Bible, Medications

Much of the info for this travel guide was adapted and used by permission from Gospel for Asia publications.