India: Heritage, Culture, & Customs

India in Transition
Thayumanasamy & Gnanabhanu Somasundaram
Tallahassee, FL 32317

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Few Words @ the Beginning
- We are thankful for the opportunity
- Glad that many of you came
- We are neither professional speakers nor experts
- Talk is based on our personal observations
- Errors and mistakes are our own
- Thanks to FSU International Center
- Part of Global Ambassador Program
- We are from Southeastern India
- We speak a language called Tamil
- Purple links give credit to original sources

About the Speakers
- Thayumanasamy Somasundaram [Soma]
  - FSU Assoc Research
  - In the US since 1989
  - Born in Rural India
  - Raised in India till 30
  - Ph.D in Chemistry
- Gnanabhanu Somasundaram [Gina]
  - Leon County Library
  - In the US since 1992
  - Born in Urban India
  - Raised in India till 25
  - Engineer

Which India: Rural or Urban?
- Rural/Urban: 70/30 (US 30/70)
- Father of India
  - Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (Gandhiji)
  - India does not live in her cities, .... she lives in her villages – M.K. Gandhi, 1931.
- My Grandfather
  - Sardar A. Vedaratnam Pillai
  - Firm believer in educating women. India can attain self-sufficiency only when rural women have education and economic status in free India.

Which India: Poor or Rich?

India: Historic Time Line

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National Symbols of India

Geographic Features of India
- India (Bharat)
- South Asia
- One of the Oldest Civilizations
- 2nd Populace Country
  - ~3/5 US size
  - ~3 time more people
- Himalayas in North
- Indian Ocean (S), Bay of Bengal (E) & Arabian Sea (W)
- Sri Lanka (S), Myanmar & Bangladesh (E), Nepal, Bhutan, & China (N), & Pakistan & Afghanistan (W)

Environment of India
- North: Himalayas
- South, East, & West: Seas
- Latitude: (E-W): 32°-10°N
- Longitude: (N-S): 70-90°E
- Tallahassee (30°N; 84°W)
- Summer: March to June
- Monsoon: June to October
- Winter: October to March

Government
- Gained Independence from British on August 15, 1947
- Became a Democratic Republic on January 26, 1950
- Constitution of India adopted
- 395 Articles and 7 Schedules
- 93 Amendments
- President Head of the State
- Parliament
  - Prime Minister
  - Council of Ministers
- Members of the Parliament
- Based on British System

Government of India (Central)
- Parliament
  - Head of Nation: President
  - Dr. A.P.J. Kalam
- Head of Government: Prime Minister
  - Dr. Man Mohan Singh
- Cabinet of Ministers
- Lok Sabha (People’s House)
  - MP elected by people
- Rajya Sabha (State’s House)
  - Appointed by States
- Supreme Court

Government of India (State)
- States are Semi-Independent
- Head of State: Governor
- Head of Government: Chief Minister
- Cabinet of Ministers
- Members of Legislative Assembly (Elected)
- Members of Legislative Council (Appointed)
- Regional Parties (DMK, TD)
- National Parties (Congress, Janata Dal)
Economy of India

- Traditional
  - Legacy System
  - Agrarian
  - Textile
  - Raw Materials
  - Spices
  - Jewelry
- Modern
  - Knowledge-Based
  - Information Technology
  - Out-Sourcing
  - Customer Service (English helps!)
  - Manufacturing (Low cost qualified people)

Education in India

- State is Responsible
- Age 5-16 Free
- Elementary 1-5 grades
- Middle 6-8 grades
- High 9-12
- State & Private
- Local Language & English
- Taught in English (British Legacy)
- Bachelor
- Master
- Professional
- Doctoral
- Mostly Private

Religion in India

- India is a Secular Country
- No State Sponsored Religion
- Major Religions
  - Hindu: 75%
  - Muslim: 12%
  - Christian: 6%
  - Sikh, Jain, Buddhist, & Jews: 7%
- Ironically religion is a unifying feature
- Hinduism is non proselytizing
- No preaching
- Most people are tolerant
- Very private
- Becoming less important

Languages in India

- Twenty-two (22)
- Official Languages:
  - Hindi
    - Language of the State
  - English
- Languages Demarcate States
  - North India
    - Sanskrit (like Latin)
    - Indo-Iranian-Germanic Branch
    - Hindi, Bengali, Gujarati, & Marathi
  - South India
    - Dravidian Branch
    - Tamil, Malayalam, Telugu, and Kannada

Health Care in India

- Insurance is Rare 9%
- Life Expectancy: 65 (M) | 65 (F) (74 & 80 US)
- Infant Mortality: 66/1000
- Public Health Services
  - Covers 20% Population
  - 150,000 Centers
  - 23,000 Primary Care Facilities
  - Government Doctors & Facilities
  - Waiting Lines
  - No Fees!
  - Pervasive Corruption
  - Lack of Amenities

Family & Women

- Family is the Main Unit
  - Joint Families
  - Family Comes First
  - Individuals Less Important
  - Patriarchal System
  - Divorce Less Common
  - Social Factors
  - Economic Factors
  - Children

- Status of Women
  - Improving
  - More are Educated
  - More have Jobs
  - More Acceptance of Working Women
  - Economic Necessity
  - More Progress Expected

www.india.gov.in
Travel in India
- Mumbai (Bombay), New Delhi, Chennai (Madras), Kolkata (Calcutta), & Bangalore
- Air travel on the rise
- Many travel by trains
- Local travel by bus
- Hotels are okay
- Food is mostly vegetarian
- Food and water use caution
- People in general are friendly
- Little violent crime
- But cautious of petty thieves

Tourism in India
- North India
- South India
- Coastal India

Monuments: All Religions
- Sanchi, Buddhism, 3 BCE
- Kangaikonda Cholapuram Hindu Temple, 11th Cent
- Sanchi, Buddhism, 3 BCE
- Agra Fort, 10th Cent

Monuments: Temples & Sculptures
- Lord Bahubali
- Halebid
- Hawa Mahal

Customs and Traditions
- Food:
  - North India: Wheat, Tea
  - South India: Rice, Coffee
- Dress:
  - North India: Kurtha, Pajama
  - South India: Veshti, Sari
- Traditions:
  - North India: Influenced by many cultures
  - South India: Very little outside influence
- Castes:
  - Based on Family Tradition

Customs and Traditions: Dress
- Cotton, Silk, & Polyester
- Colorful & Ornamental
- South India:
  - Sari
  - Silk Shirts & Sari
  - 22 Ct Gold Jewelry
- North India:
  - Kurthas, Pajamas
  - Silk, Cotton, & Wool
  - Gold & Silver Jewelry
Customs and Traditions: Jewelry

• Tota Ram
• Rasi Silks

Customs and Traditions: Food

• Use of Spices, Lentil, & Herbs
• Practicing Vegetarians
• South India
  • Idli, Dosa, Vadai
  • Sambar, Chutney, Vegetables
  • Rice, Pickle, & Yogurt
  • Coffee (Milk + Sugar)
• North India
  • Roti, Chapati
  • Lentils, Cheese
  • Sweets, Yogurt
  • Tea (Milk + Sugar)

Entertainment: Movies

• Largest producer of movies
• About 1000 movies/year
• Bombay (Bollywood)
• Chennai
• Kolkata
• Hindi, Bengali, Tamil, Telugu, and others
• Songs and dances are important
• Story line range from banal to serious

Entertainment: Television & Radio

• Slowly Replacing Movies
• Doordarshan (State owned)
  • National and Regional
• Other Television Stations
  • Private
    • Corporations
• Hindi, Tamil, English language programs
• News, Sports, Drama, Mini Series
• Regional (Sun TV)
• Radio is losing popularity
• Urban Stations Popular
• All India Radio

Entertainment: Dance

• Traditional (Natraj: Shiva)
  • Bharata Natyam
  • Kuchi Pudi
  • Katha Kali
• Popular Dance
  • Movie Dance
• Western Rock & Roll
• Spectators

Entertainment: Music

• Traditional Music
  • Hindustani (N India)
    • Vocal
    • Instrumental
  • Carnatic (S India)
    • Vocal
    • Instrumental
• Popular Music
  • Movies
    • Very Popular
  • Professionals
  • Western Pop Music
  • Urban Areas
  • Clubs
Conclusions

- India is in Transition
- Middle Class is Gaining Economic Status
- There is a Widening Gap Between Rich and Poor
- Small Percentage is Very Rich
- Social System may not be Ready
- There is no Economic Safety Net
- Young Entrepreneurs should Embrace Rural Folks
  - Grameen Bank of Bangladesh
  - Micro Lending
  - Technological Empowerment
- Government Should Enforce Fair Distribution of Wealth

Thanks

- Thank You All for Attending
- Questions?
- Comments?