GUIDING QUESTIONS

• India has one of the largest populations on earth. There is an almost 20 percent difference in the literacy rate between women and men. Why is that significant? What are the actual numbers?
• Why would educating girls make a significant impact on the country? How would it help address poverty, businesses, the economy? What other improvements might it bring?
• What does India’s Constitution ask of the country’s government? How can these areas of need be addressed in a country with a population of more than 1 billion? Who, or what, can help?

GENERAL INFORMATION

Capital: New Delhi

Population of India: 1.3 billion (2016 est.)

Population of New Delhi: 21.72 million

Mobile/Cellular Telephones: 1.01 billion

India is a country of extremes. While a majority of Indians are farmers, India’s already large cities continue to grow. Due to India’s diverse population, traditions are largely localized and differ from life in major cities. In the late 1700s, India came under British rule and it was not until 1947 that it won its long struggle for independence. There are over 1,000 languages and dialects spoken in India. Hindi is the country’s official language but English is commonly spoken and used for business purposes.

India is located in southern Asia and has one of the largest populations in the world, second only to China. It is also one of the most densely populated countries in the world, covering 3.3 million sq km, approximately
one-third of the area of the United States. India is bordered by the Arabian Sea and Pakistan to the west; by China, Nepal and Bhutan to north; and to the east, Myanmar, Bangladesh and Bay of Bengal. The country encompasses portions of the Himalayas, desert in the west, and lush rainforests and tropical lowlands.

GOVERNMENT

India is a Federal Republic. The Indian president is elected by an electoral college while the prime minister is selected by members of parliament representing the majority party. The parliament is made up of two branches: the Council of States and the House of the People. India’s Constitution went into effect in 1950. It guarantees equal rights to all citizens; calls for the government to promote the welfare of the people; and encourages the government to set a minimum wage, provide education and jobs for those from disadvantaged backgrounds, and improve public health. The country’s constitution also prohibits discrimination based on race, sex, caste, religion or place of birth.

THE PEOPLE

Education

Percent of the population considered literate: Citizens able to read and write over the age of 15.

Female: 60.6%
Male: 81.3%

Ethnic Group distribution (2000 est.)

Indo-Aryan: 72%
Dravidian: 25%
Mongolien and other: 3%

Religious Group distribution (2011 est.)

Hindu: 79.8%
Muslim: 14.2%
Christian: 2.3%
Sikh: 1.7%
Other and unspecified: 2%

Languages

Hindi: 41%
Bengali: 8.1%
Telugu: 7.2%
Marathi: 7%
Tamil: 5.9%
Urdu: 5%
Other: 25.8%

English is the subsidiary official language used for national, political and business communications.

Rural vs. urban

Percent of the country’s population that lives in urban areas: 32.7%

THE ECONOMY

While India’s economic policies have led to high levels of success in the global market, the country faces long term challenges, including poverty, violence against girls and women, an often inefficient legal system and inadequate education system. India has capitalized on its large English-speaking population to become a major exporter of business outsourcing services, information technology, and software workers. India has a wide range of modern industry and agriculture. In contrast, the country also is supported by traditional farming and handicrafts. India is in the process of addressing its increasing need for energy and crude oil. Despite a high growth rate compared to the rest of the world, India’s government-owned banks continue to face mounting debt, resulting in restrained economic growth.

Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in US$: 2.089 trillion
Currency Exchange Rate: 1 US$ = 68.3 Indian Rupee (2016 est.)

Imports and exports

- India imported $402.4 billion in crude oil, precious stones, machinery, chemicals, fertilizer, plastics, iron and steel in 2016.
- India exported $271.6 billion in petroleum products, precious stones, vehicles, machinery, iron and steel, chemicals, pharmaceutical products, cereals and apparel in 2016.
NATURAL RESOURCES
Coal (fourth-largest reserves in the world), iron ore, manganese, mica, bauxite, rare earth elements, titanium ore, chromite, natural gas, diamonds, petroleum, limestone, arable land

RESOURCES
• Khan Academy www.khanacademy.org
• Times of India http://timesofindia.com
• World Bank www.worldbank.org

All data was reported in 2015 unless otherwise noted.