

# Overview of Indian Perspective



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# India



- 5000 year old ancient civilization
- 28 states, 6 union territories
- 3.28 million sq kilometres – area
- 1.3 billion population(1278450066)
- World's largest democracy
- World's 4<sup>th</sup> largest economy
- Largest English speaking nation in the world
- 2<sup>nd</sup> largest pool of scientists and engineers in the world

# Languages of India

Punjabi

Dongri

Gondi

Urdu

Hindi

English

Oriya

Assamese

Bodo

Sanskrit

Manipuri

Bengali

Nepali

Konkani

Marathi

Santali

Kannada

Tamil

Sindhi

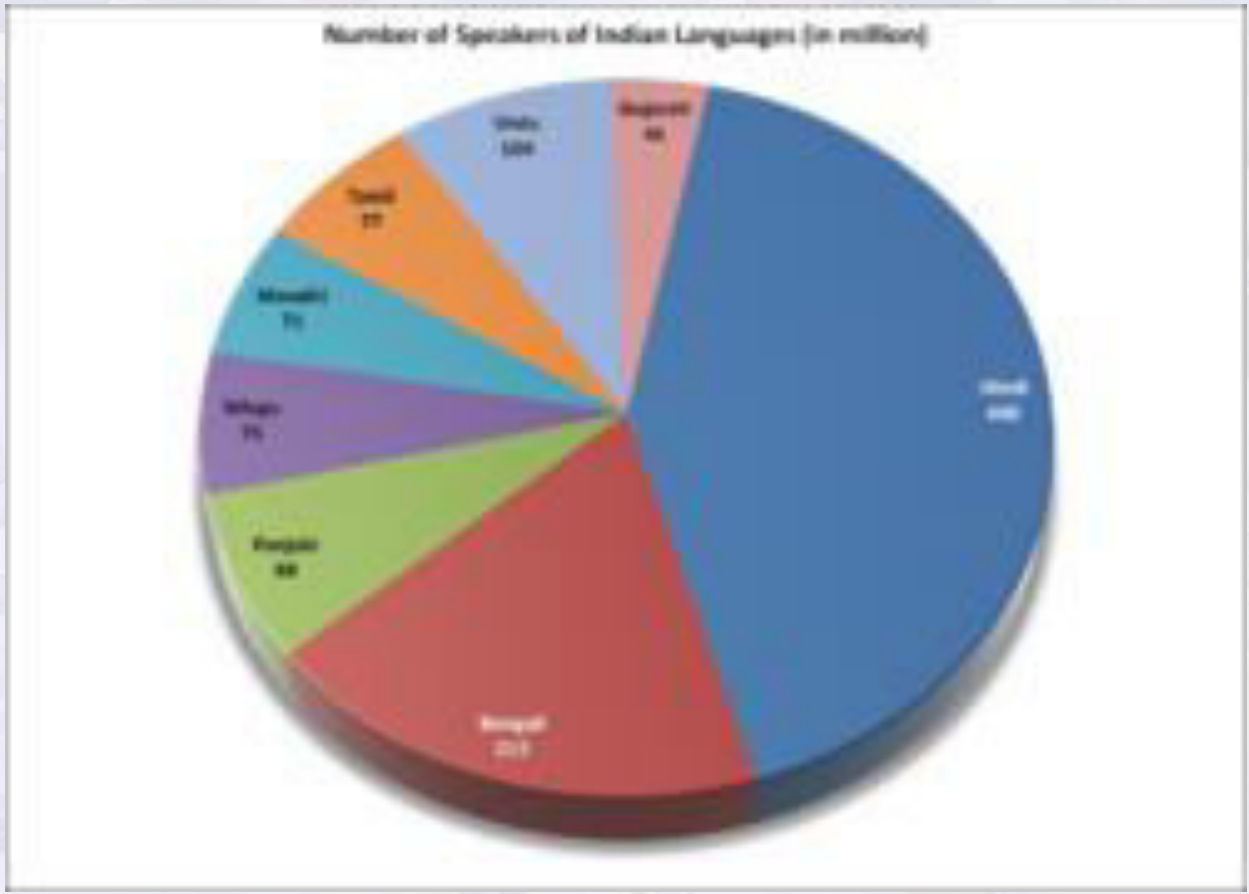
Malayalam

Kashmiri

Maithali

Telegu

Gujarati



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# India

- It is the only society in the world that has never known slavery
- India never invaded any country in her last 10,000 years of history
- India was the richest country on earth until the time of the British in the early 17<sup>th</sup> Century
- It has been estimated that the total amount of treasure that the British looted from India had already reached \$1,000,000,000 (\$1 Billion) by 1901
- Taking into consideration interest rates and inflation this would be worth close to **\$2,000,000,000,000 (\$2 trillion) in real-terms today.**

# Glimpse of India

“ The United States imports oil from Saudi Arabia, cars from Japan, televisions from Korea and whisky from Scotland.

So what do we import from India?

We import people, really smart people,” co-host Leslie Stahl began while introducing the segment on IIT.

# Secular Tolerance

In India today,  
we have a lady of Christian faith (Sonia Gandhi)  
stepping aside so a Sikh (Manmohan Singh)  
could be sworn in by a Muslim President  
(Abdul Kalam)  
to lead a nation that is 82% Hindu

This wealth of diversity along with acceptance and  
fusion of the difference is unique to a country like  
India

# India is an Amalgamation

- Cultures
- Religions
- Languages
- Philosophical beliefs
- Different climatic conditions

Thus there is an amalgam of traditional ways, norms and values that are learnt from one's ancestors and then passed on to the generations that follow and reinforced by the surrounding community.



# Value in Diversity

Mental Map – guidance to an individual

But whoever they are, wherever they come from, whatever they do for a living, they value their diversity

# New Zealanders

- Provide an outline about key issues ≠ expert status
- Tremendous social change – India has changed tremendously in the last 50 years
- In New Zealand
  - India
  - Fijian Indians
  - South African Indians

Diversity within these populations.

Important to acknowledge these differences in a therapeutic context

E.g. Indian ≠ Fiji

South African ≠ Hindi

Indian ≠ Dairy owner

## Common Characteristics

Despite their social, religious, economic, political and geographical differences, there are some characteristics that are shared by most Indians.

- Tolerance and fore-bearance
- Ingrained belief in tradition and social-cultural norms

## Common Characteristics

These two characteristics are responsible for the retention and maintenance of a social structure based on caste discrimination, acceptance of injustice, discrimination, exploitation and abuse as part of one's **KARMA**.

In therapy the concept of KARMA – highlights difficulties towards change.



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"This alter-ego... does it tell you to do things?"

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# Karma

- Basic definition: Karma is a concept of eastern religions about the entire universal law and cycle of cause and effect.
- Simply explained, it is the sum of all that an individual has once done during many lives and is currently doing. The effects of those deeds actively create present and future experiences, thus making one accept the course of one's own life passively.

e.g. Intellectual Disability - 10 year old boy with mild to moderate ID, physically competent, looked after by parents.

# Indian Family Systems

- Variety of family structures exist
  - Nuclear
  - Extended
  - Joint
  - (Single Parents)
- Common for children to live with parents as adults until married – misunderstood as an unhealthy dependence.
- Support and finance children – reciprocal responsibility.



# Indian Family Systems

- Role in terms of relationships, duty and obligation
- Either elevate or maintain family status and pride
- Avoid shame

Therefore each person's life is closely connected to the others in a family and each one's actions have considerable power or impact on the others' standing in society.

# Family Relationships and Structure

- Family holds primacy over the individual
- Concept of marriage – traditionally arranged ≠ love marriage
- Consultation of elders and extended family members on important matters  
e.g. Holiday
- Traditional division of labor – Male / Female roles  
e.g. My personal role

# Immigrant Families

- Immigrant families - strong sense of responsibility towards extended family that remains in their home country
- Immigration – heighten pressures based on differing gender roles
  - male – greater sense of responsibility to succeed as provider
  - female – paid employment / resent the traditional role
  - children – losing authority to the foreign culture.

# Immigrant Families

- Most Indians migrate with high expectations for better living standards and more financial prosperity which of course does not always occur. Issues of unemployment - Hopes of a better life are dashed.
- Culture shock, loneliness because of loss of family support, prejudice due to race, English with an Indian accent are hardships people face
- Parents enforce pressures on children to achieve academically / discourage sexual contact– often results in clashes as children in NZ grow up as more independent and outspoken.
- Confusion between the two worlds – that of their peers and the media pressures and that of the parents.

# Approaches to Therapy with Indian Families

There is no “RIGHT WAY “ of doing therapy

Highlight some important issues and dilemmas for therapists working with Indian families

- Diversity amongst our culture
- Variation of problem faced

My own bias based on my particular experience and beliefs

# Issues Related to Therapy with Indian Clients

- Understanding of the Indian cultural values and the family system is important.
- Importance of power and influence of extended family members.
- Traditionally spiritual healers provided relief and help – counseling is a new concept.
- Acknowledgement of the individual's difficulty to access external help.

# Issues Related to Therapy with Indian Clients

- Acknowledgement of the KARMA concept.
- Spirituality and religion play an important role for most Indians – ranging from traditional forms to the more subtle beliefs.
- Psychological and emotional issues are second to work commitments - decreased commitment to therapy.
- Seek connections with the therapist and invite them to their house ≠ breach of boundaries.

# Issues Related to Therapy with Indian Clients

- Relate better to a therapist when they self disclose
  - as an Indian therapist I tend to disclose too.
- Adopting a systems approach  $\neq$  individual work
  - personal experience while conducting therapy
- Involvement of an Indian Therapist
  - complex family issues (marital conflict / child care)
  - issue of confidentiality
  - unique situation / cultural matching



# Finishing Thought

*“India is not a nation, nor a country. It is a subcontinent of nationalities.”*

*– Muhammad Ali Jinnah*



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## Indian languages - 23 official languages

- Telegu - 38,351
- Malayam - 5,394
- Manipuri - 22,120
- Kannada - 5,096
- Bengali - 16,893
- Sanskrit - 3,877
- Hindi - 15,806
- Gujarati - 407
- Marathi - 15,613
- Punjabi - 282
- Urdu - 6,781
- Assamese - 174

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