

## **Cultural Ways of Teaching and Learning: Hindi Group**

### **1. Who Sponsors Education in India?**

In modern India, education is managed by the states. Central government makes some policies but it is up to the state government to implement them or not. Some institutions of higher learning are directly under the control of the central government, such as IITs (Indian Institutes of Technology). There are three types of K-12 schools in India: public schools (known as “government schools” in India), government-aided schools and private schools (known as “public schools” in India after the British-style education system). The private schools are considered prestigious in India because of their good quality of instruction. They are, however, quite expensive as compared to the government schools where the education is free for all children up to the age of 14. There are almost 80% government schools in India but almost 30% of all children go to private schools.

### **2. How are teachers viewed in Indian society?**

Traditionally teachers are viewed as all-knowing ‘gurus’ in India and they are highly respected. However, the image of teachers has changed in modern times as education has become more like a business. Teachers are still looked upon as an authority and students are not encouraged to ask many questions or express their viewpoints in most classrooms.

The social status of school teachers in India is not high because they earn lot less as compared to other professionals such as engineers or health professionals.

### **3. What is the level of parents’ influence over schools in India?**

Parents’ influence in government schools (in terms of activities or curriculum) is almost non-existent in India. Some private schools, however, encourage parents’ involvement and their input.

### **4. What are some of the beliefs and practices about learning in India?**

- Classrooms are mostly teacher-fronted. Teachers often believe that their students are “empty vessels” to be filled with information. Mostly teachers lecture and allow little time for discussion or group work.

- There are no course evaluations or teacher evaluations by students at any level of education in India.
- Schools often announce students' grades publicly or they post them on schools' bulletin boards. The results of Board Examinations (where questions papers are set and evaluated by the Central Board of Secondary Education of India) for 11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> graders are published in local newspapers or posted on websites.
- Generally there is great emphasis on 'rote' learning in K-12 education, especially in 'government' schools.
- Most schools start with a 'secular' prayer and there is no real controversy about such a practice.
- There are no real taboo topics in schools. Sex education is frowned upon by some parents but it has been introduced in many schools now.
- There is mostly summative assessment (half-yearly and yearly exams); the concept of formative assessment is relatively new and is practiced in some schools now.
- The responsibility of learning is mostly on learners and teachers are not held responsible for students' failures.
- Schools do not provide extra help to students outside the classes. For this reason, most parents hire private tutors for help with their children's homework and their queries.

#### **5. Is teaching is a male vs. female vs. either gender profession?**

There is no gender bias in the teaching profession in India. Both men and women serve as teachers and there is no pay discrimination.

#### **6. Is academic success highly valued vs. less valued in Indian society?**

Education is highly valued in today's India as it is linked with upward social mobility. Most high paying jobs in India with multinational companies are hiring college graduates and post graduates.

For more on Indian education and society, please go to:

[http://www.indianchild.com/education\\_society\\_india.htm](http://www.indianchild.com/education_society_india.htm)

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