

Our Rich Culture

India is rich in art and culture. Indian languages, dresses, dances, music, monuments, paintings, handicrafts and festivals enrich her culture.



Each language has a set of letters in which it is written. This set of letters is called script.

Languages

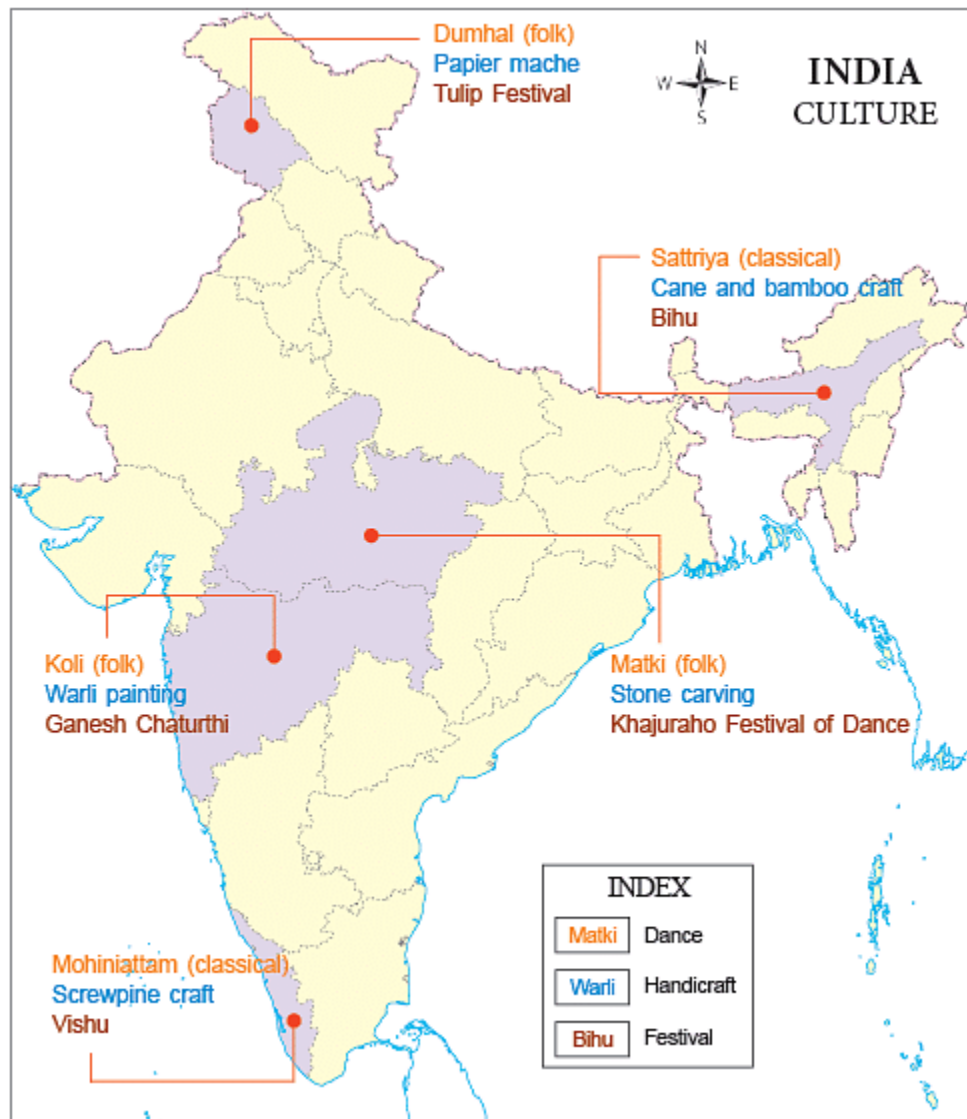
There are 22 languages recognized by the Constitution of India. **Hindi** and **English** are the official languages. Most languages are written from left to right. But Kashmiri, Sindhi and Urdu are written from right to left.

Dresses

The people of India wear different dresses. Women wear sarees, salwar kameez, jeans, shorts, skirts and gowns. Men wear jeans, trousers, shirts and T-shirts. In some states, men wear kurta-pyjama and kurta dhoti. Some men also wear turbans of different types.

Dances

Folk and **classical** are two types of dances in our country. Folk dances are performed on marriage, birth of a child, festivals, change of seasons, and sowing and harvesting of crops. The classical dances began in temples. Later, kings encouraged these dances. Some famous classical dancers are Pandit Birju Maharaj, Sharmila Biswas, Mallika Sarabhai and Sonal Mansingh.



Popular dances, handicrafts and festivals of India

Music

Music is also of two types – folk and classical. The Bihugeet of Assam, Pandavani of Chhattisgarh, Bhavageethe of Karnataka and Baul sangeet of West Bengal are some examples of folk music. There are two main styles of classical music – Hindustani and Carnatic. Hindustani music developed in the north and Carnatic music in the

south. Anand Bhate, Pandit Ajoy Chakrabarty, Ustad Rashid Khan and Shubha Mudgal are some famous Hindustani classical singers. Ranjani and Gayatri, D Karthika Anagha and Shankar Mahadevan are some famous Carnatic classical singers.



Ektara is a commonly used musical instrument in Baul sangeet.

Monuments

Forts, palaces, temples, pillars, stupas and monasteries are the different types of monuments. The stupa at Sanchi, built by Emperor Ashoka, and the temples at Mahabalipuram are examples of early monuments.

The Mughal rulers built many monuments. Akbar built the Fatehpur Sikri and the Agra Fort. Shah Jahan built the Taj Mahal in Agra, and the Jama Masjid and the Red Fort in Delhi.

The Portuguese built many monuments in Goa. The British built the Rashtrapati Bhavan and the Parliament House in Delhi, and the Victoria Memorial in Kolkata. There are also many modern monuments. These include the Akshardham Temple in Delhi, the Vidhana Soudha in Bengaluru and the Assembly building in Mumbai.



The Lotus Temple in Delhi is a modern monument. Thousands of people visit it every day.

Tips:

- Hindi / Telugu is the official language of India.
- Women / Men wear turbans.
- Dances performed on festivals are called classical / folk dances.
- Classical music is of two / three types.
- The stupa at Sanchi was built by Emperor Ashoka / Akbar.

Paintings

Early humans painted on the walls of caves. These are called cave paintings. The cave paintings at Bhimbetka in Madhya Pradesh show early humans dancing and hunting animals. The paintings at Ajanta caves in Maharashtra show scenes from the life of Lord Buddha. The Mughal emperors also encouraged painters to paint scenes from everyday life. Paresh Maity, Anjolie Ela Menon and Baiju Parthan are some modern painters.



Cave paintings at Ajanta

Handicrafts

The handmade decorative items are called handicrafts. India is famous for its handicrafts. Some famous items are terracotta horses of West Bengal, cane and bamboo crafts of Tripura, puppets of Rajasthan and Kanchipuram sarees of Tamil Nadu.

Festivals

The festivals celebrated in India can be grouped into four categories.

- **National festivals** – We celebrate three national festivals. Name them.
- **Religious festivals** – People celebrate Diwali, Christmas, Eid, Gurupurab, Buddha Purnima and Mahavir Jayanti.
- **Harvest festivals** – Baisakhi in Punjab, Bihu in Assam, Pongal in Tamil Nadu and Onam in Kerala are some harvest festivals. They are celebrated when the crops have been cut.
- **Special festivals** – These are organized by governments to attract tourists. The Tulip Festival of Jammu & Kashmir, the Desert Festival of Rajasthan, the Konark Festival of Odisha, the Taj Mahotsav of Uttar Pradesh, the Rann Utsav of Gujarat and the Hornbill Festival of Nagaland are a few examples.

Tips:

- The Constitution of India recognizes 22 languages.
- Women and men wear different dresses. Men also wear turbans.
- Folk and classical dances are popular in India.
- Hindustani and Carnatic are the two styles of classical music in India.
- The beautiful monuments of India attract many tourists.
- India has a rich tradition of painting and handicrafts.
- Many national, religious, harvest and special festivals are celebrated in India.