

### 1. The caste system and status

Although discrimination on the basis of caste is illegal in India, the ancient Hindu system continues to prosper in society. Social mobility may be improving but parents still work towards securing suitable marriages for their children. Arranged marriages are normal. Marrying outside one's caste is frowned upon, although the lines are far more blurred now in business, education and friendships. The concept of hierarchy, though, is strong in business. For example, Indians do not like to do jobs that they consider beneath them, or more suited to a lower caste, whereas, in the SA, it is completely normal to work as a waiter while studying for a PhD, or for the chief executive to socialise with the factory floor in the interests of bonding.

Both cultures enjoy what others may seem as over-inflated job titles; to an Indian, a fancy title brings status to their family. To an American, it signifies personal success.

### 2. Family ties

Families in India are extremely close-knit. Young people tend to stay in the family home until they marry. The constant approval of the matriarch is vital, whether it's a job, an outfit or a new partner. Parents will exert influence over their children throughout their lives. This closeness is often reflected in business, where hierarchies are strict and nepotism rife. In the US, families tend to be much more widely dispersed. It is assumed that young people will leave home when they go to university and be financially independent when they start work. The family influence fades as young people achieve independence.

### 3. Goals and hierarchies

Americans tend to be highly goal-orientated, working to achieve profit as fast as possible. Usually, this is achieved by efficient teamwork and by delegating responsibility, with each individual responsible for their own decisions and actions. In India, the emphasis is more on the hierarchy. Individuals lower down the hierarchy are not empowered to make decisions and it could be argued that those further up the system are likely to make decisions with their own interests in mind. Americans tend to regard the Indian system as inefficient.