



Know
Before
You
Go

INDIA

A Guide to Keep You Safe Abroad

Provided by Sexual Assault Support and
Help for Americans Abroad (SASHAA)

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SASHAA
Sexual Assault Support &
Help for Americans Abroad

Let's be perfectly clear, the number one way to prevent sexual assault is to **not rape**. While the responsibility of ending sexual gender-based violence is on the perpetrators, this guide will offer general safety tips, country-specific information, and resources to help prevent and prepare travelers for the possibility of sexual assault abroad.

GENERAL SAFETY TIPS:

1. Use the **buddy system** and travel with friends!
2. Be aware of **social and cultural norms**. For example, looking at someone in the eyes when you speak to them is perfectly normal in the U.S., but in another country that could signify you're interested in the person.
3. **Recognize controlling behavior** when entering a relationship. Most rape survivors recall feeling "uncomfortable" about some of their partner's behaviors such as degrading jokes/language or refusal to accept "no" as an answer, whether in a sexual context or otherwise.²
4. **Avoid secluded places** where you could be more vulnerable. Meet new people in public spaces and let a trusted friend know where you'll be beforehand.
5. **Trust your gut**. Many victims have a "bad feeling" right before an assault takes place.



ALCOHOL AND DRUG AWARENESS:

- Always watch your drink being poured and carry it yourself, even to the bathroom.
- "Drug-facilitated sexual assault drugs," also referred to as club drugs or roofies may turn your drink slightly salty, bright blue, or cloudy. Effects such as distorted judgment, lost sense of time, sight, sound, identity, and consciousness can be felt within 15 minutes and may last up to 4 hours.³
- India's legal drinking age varies by jurisdiction. In Bihar, Gujarat, Manipur, Nagaland, Lakshadweep drinking is illegal. Other age limits vary range from 18-25 years of age.⁴

CULTURAL INFORMATION:

Major Religions: Hinduism 82%, Islam 12%, Christianity 2.5%, Sikhism 2%, Buddhism 0.7%, Jainism 0.5%⁵

Legal System: India's Judicial system, though partially inherited from British law, is based on Common Law. This means that the law is partially developed by written laws, but can be reformed and interpreted by judges and their orders, setting precedents for other trials.⁶

Social/Cultural Norms: Indian people value personal space and respect. Public displays of affection are generally not appropriate, and touching someone's head or feet is an invasion of personal space. Use the right hand when greeting someone and interacting with money; the left is considered unclean. India's society is still dominated by men. Women tend to dress more conservatively and may not always be invited to social events.⁷

Gender Equality: A 2015 survey by the World Economic Forum ranked India 108th out of 142 countries in terms of gender equality. Women in India have very little economic opportunity or power, and the female literacy rate is at 61% compared to 81% for males.⁸



Sexual Assault and the Law: Indian Context

As of 2013, India amended its constitution to take a tougher stance on sexual assault. However, these amendments are limited. Crimes such as stalking, acid violence, and disrobing are all illegal now, and absence of evidence of a physical struggle does not lawfully prove consent. However, the new laws do not protect against sexual assault of males or transgender people. Marital rape is still legal in India unless the couple is separated. Members of the armed forces in “disturbed areas” are more or less immune from prosecution of sexual assault.⁹

If You Experience Sexual Assault...

Don't blame yourself! **Sexual assault is never the fault of the victim.** You may be unsure of how to proceed, and that's okay. First, consider taking the following actions:

1. If you are in a safe place, **call someone you trust** to be with you. If you are not safe, call someone you trust to come and get you.
2. Do **self-collection of evidence**. Put all of the clothes you were wearing, bed sheets, and so on in a paper bag. If you have any injuries, **take pictures**. If there is semen present, collect what you can in a hotel glass or cup and put it in the paper bag.
3. **Call a SASHAA advocate** internationally toll free, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. They can help you through the ordeal, honoring your decisions. (See Resources)

Medical Care and Reporting Sexual Assault in India

Until recently, there were few guidelines for rape examinations. Doctors did not regularly label samples, and the “two finger test” was administered to determine whether a woman was “habituated to sex.” Recently, new guidelines have been released by the government banning this particular test, and mandating STI/STD testing, examination of physical injuries, and psychological counseling should be offered.¹⁰ In the past, victims have experienced victim shaming and blaming when reporting to the police, as well as persuasion to not press charges, especially against upper classes or family members. However, the national police force has been undergoing gender sensitivity training as of 2015, and the country is working on these problems.¹¹

LGBTQ VICTIM CONCERNS



Homosexuality activity is illegal in India with punishment of imprisonment for 10 years to life. Additionally, same sex marriage and serving openly in the military is illegal. There are no protections against discrimination of LGBTQ people. Furthermore, there has been no officially recognized female-female marriage law. Overall, the laws do not favor or protect members of the LGBTQ community, thus **it is not safe for LGBTQ people to report to the police** for danger of possible imprisonment.¹²

POST EXPOSURE PROPHYLAXIS, EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTION, AND ABORTION

Q: Are post exposure prophylaxis and emergency contraception available?

A: Yes; emergency contraceptive should be offered to the victim if the assault happened in the preceding five days, and PEP should also be offered. It is okay to ask for both if they are not offered.¹³

Q: Is abortion legal in India?

A: An abortion is legal under up to 12 weeks by a licensed doctor under most circumstances, including rape, potential harm to mother or fetus, contraception failure, and socio-economic difficulties. After 20 weeks, another doctor's opinion is needed before the procedure may continue.¹⁴

Resources

SASHAA

SASHAA International Crisis Line:

To call our confidential, toll-free, International Crisis Line first dial the country specific AT&T access code for **India (000-117)**. Then, at the prompt, enter our phone number: **866-USWOMEN (866-879-6636)**.

Crisis Email:

To reach a SASHAA advocate, you can email us at crisis@866uswomen.org. All crisis emails will be responded to within 24 hours. However, if you need to get in touch with us immediately, please call the international toll-free crisis line.

Live Chat:

SASHAA online chat services are available 24/7 at our website <https://sashaa.org>.

ABORTION CENTER

Abortion in India (VIBHA - THE FAMILY HOSPITAL)

A 101, Mangal arambh, Kora kendra,
Borivli west, Mumbai 400092 - India
Tel: +91 98 211 50889
Website: www.abortionindia.com

NON-VIOLENCE ORGANIZATIONS

Sayfty

Tel: +91 93 350 37018
Email: team@sayfty.com

A P Women's Network

12.13.441, 1st Floor, Street No.1
Tarnaka Secunderabad, 500017, Telangana
Advice Line: +91 040 270 14394

Social Action and Research Centre (SARC)

147, Vindhyavasini Colony, Orderly Bazaar
Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh
Tel: +91 094 152 25665
Email: sarc@rediffmail.com

National Alliance of Women (NAWO)

B4/206, Safdurjung Enclave, New Delhi - 110 029
Tel: +91 011 261 71446
Email: nawo.india@gmail.com

Rape Crisis Cell Delhi

Helpline: +91 11 2337 0557

US EMBASSIES/CONSULATES

New Delhi (Embassy):

Shantipath, Chanakyapuri, New Delhi - 110021
Tel: 011-91-11-2419-8000

Chennai (Consulate):

Gemini Circle, Chennai 600 006
Tel: +91 044 2857 4000

Hyderabad (Consulate):

Paigah Palace, 1-8-323, Chiran Fort Lane
Begumpet, Secunderabad 500 003
Tel: +91 040 4625 8222; 0120 484 4644

Kolkata (Consulate):

38A, J.L.Nehru Road, Kolkata - 700 071,
West Bengal, India.
Tel: +91 33 3984 6300

Mumbai (Consulate):

C-49, G-Block, Bandra Kurla Complex
Bandra East, Mumbai 400051
Tel: +91 22 2672-4000

HOSPITALS

DELHI: Artemis Health Sciences Hospital
Sector 51 Gurgaon (Haryana)
Tel: +91 124 676 7999 / Emergency: +91 124 6767000

CHENNAI: Apollo Hospital Chennai
21 Greaves Lane, Chennai, 600 006
Tel: +91 (044) 2829 3333, +91 (044) 2829 0200

HYDERABAD: Kamineni Hospital
4-1-1227, Behind Taj Mahal Hotel, Abids, 50000
Tel: +91 40 6600 2200

KOLKATA: Apollo Gleneagles Hospitals
58 Canal Circular Road, Kolkata 700054
Tel: +91 33 2320 3040

MUMBAI: KEM Hospital
Acharya Donde Marg, Parel, Mumbai 400012
Tel: +91 22 241 07000

POLICE

Emergency police: **100**
Emergency medical/ambulance: **102**

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- ¹⁴ "Termination and Abortion." AnglInfo. Accessed July 19, 2016. <https://www.anglinfo.com/india/how-to/page/india-healthcare-pregnancy-birth-termination-abortion>.