

INDIAN FAMILY TRADITIONS



❏ FAMILY STRUCTURE

A JOINT FAMILY in India is where the entire family lives together, which can include parents, wife, children and occasionally relatives.

At the head of the family is a KARTA, a senior male or female who makes economic and social decisions on behalf of the entire family.

Income goes into a common pool, which benefits all members. Nowadays, economic development and urbanisation have led to an increase in nuclear-like families than joint families.



❏ GREETINGS

One of the most popular Indian greetings is NAMASTE, which is a respectful way of saying hello, goodbye, and thank you.

It has seen around the world a huge uptake during the Coronavirus outbreak as an alternative to handshakes and hugs.

The gesture is performed by placing the palms together in prayer pose in front of the chest, fingers pointing upwards, and making a slight bow.

Another popular saying is 'Atithi Devo Bhava', a Sanskrit verse from Hindu scriptures that translates as 'the guest is equivalent to god'. In Indian culture, guests have always been given supreme importance.



❑ TOUCHING ELDER'S FEET

In India, touching the feet of elders is considered to be **one of the important common gestures.**

It is considered to be a way of giving respect to elders and seeking their blessings. It is believed that when a person bows down to touch the feet of elders, the person's ego comes to an end.

The practice of touching the feet of elders is also called **Charan Sparsh.**



QUESTIONS

1. Which family structure is common in India?
2. What is the head of the family called?
3. Which gesture is commonly used as an alternative to handshakes and hugs?
4. What is the meaning of 'Atithi Devo Bhava'?
5. The gesture of touching feet in India is also called _____.
6. Why do people touch elders' feet in India?