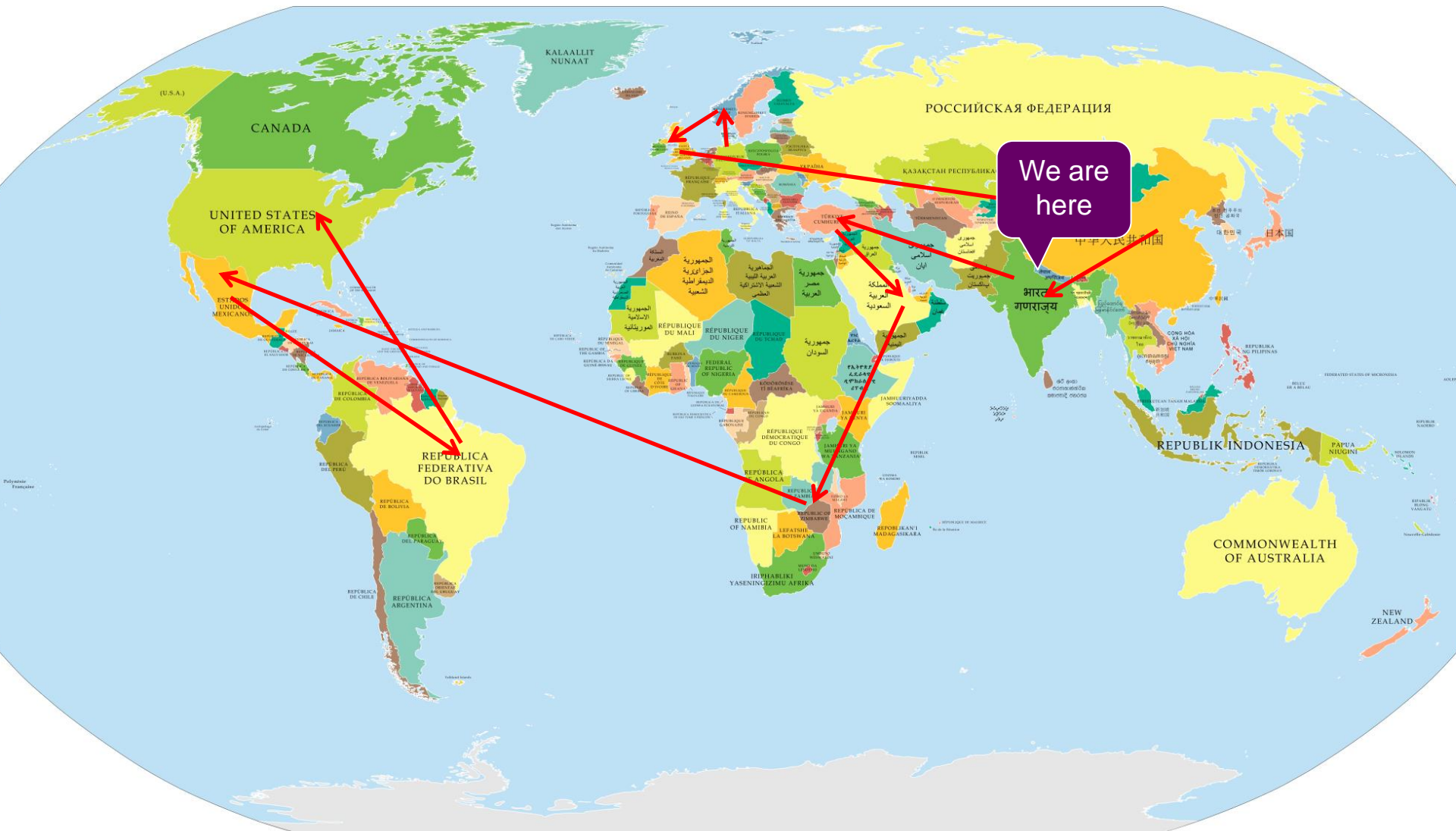




India

Osher Course, February 2024  
John Hooker

# Travel Plan







The new Mumbai



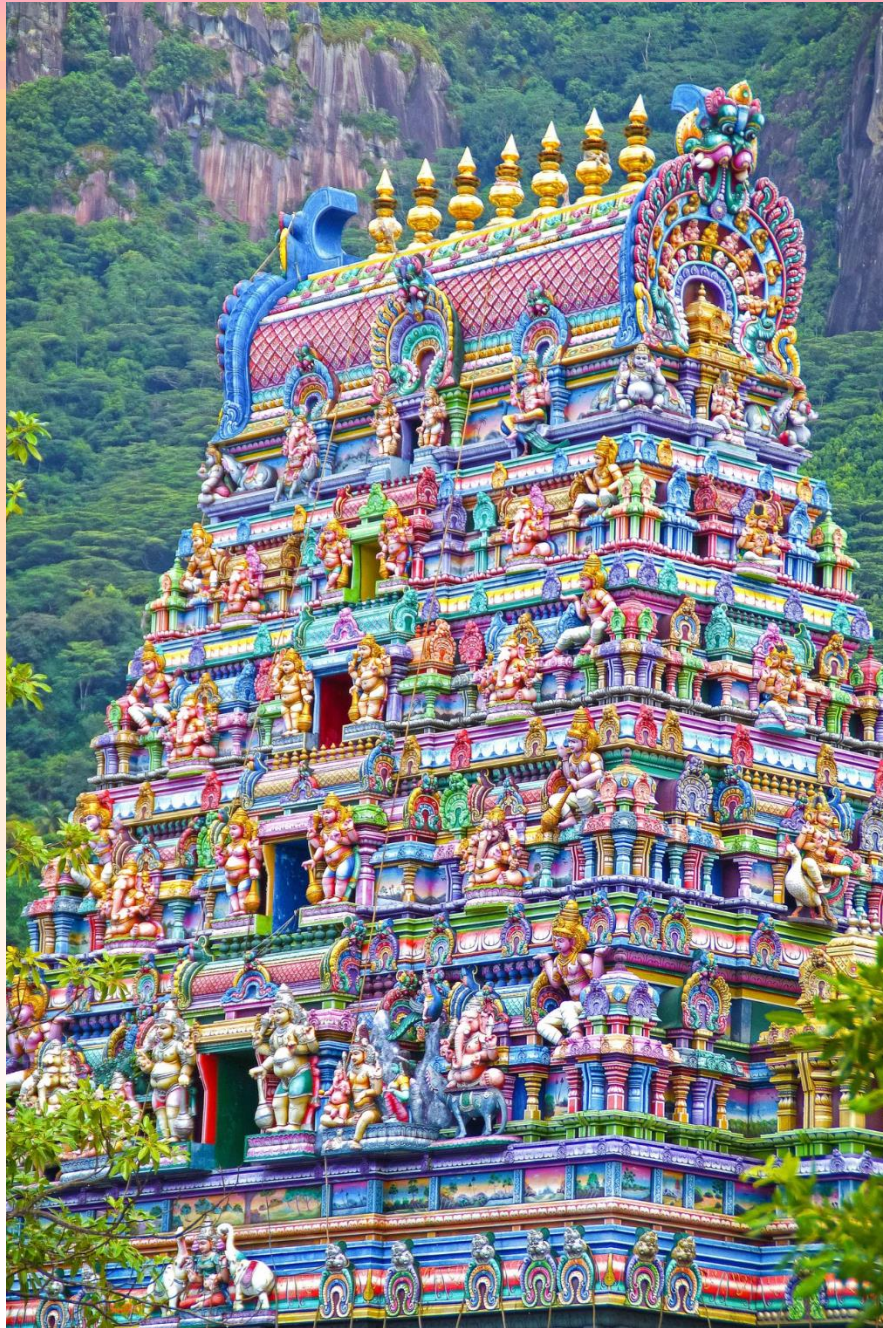
## Dharavi slum, Mumbai

Featured in the  
film *Slumdog  
Millionaire*

About 40% of the  
Mumbai population  
lives in slums



Near Srinagar, Kashmir



## Meenakshi Amman Temple, Tamil Nadu

Gods are manifestations (avatars) of underlying unity (*Brahman/atman*)

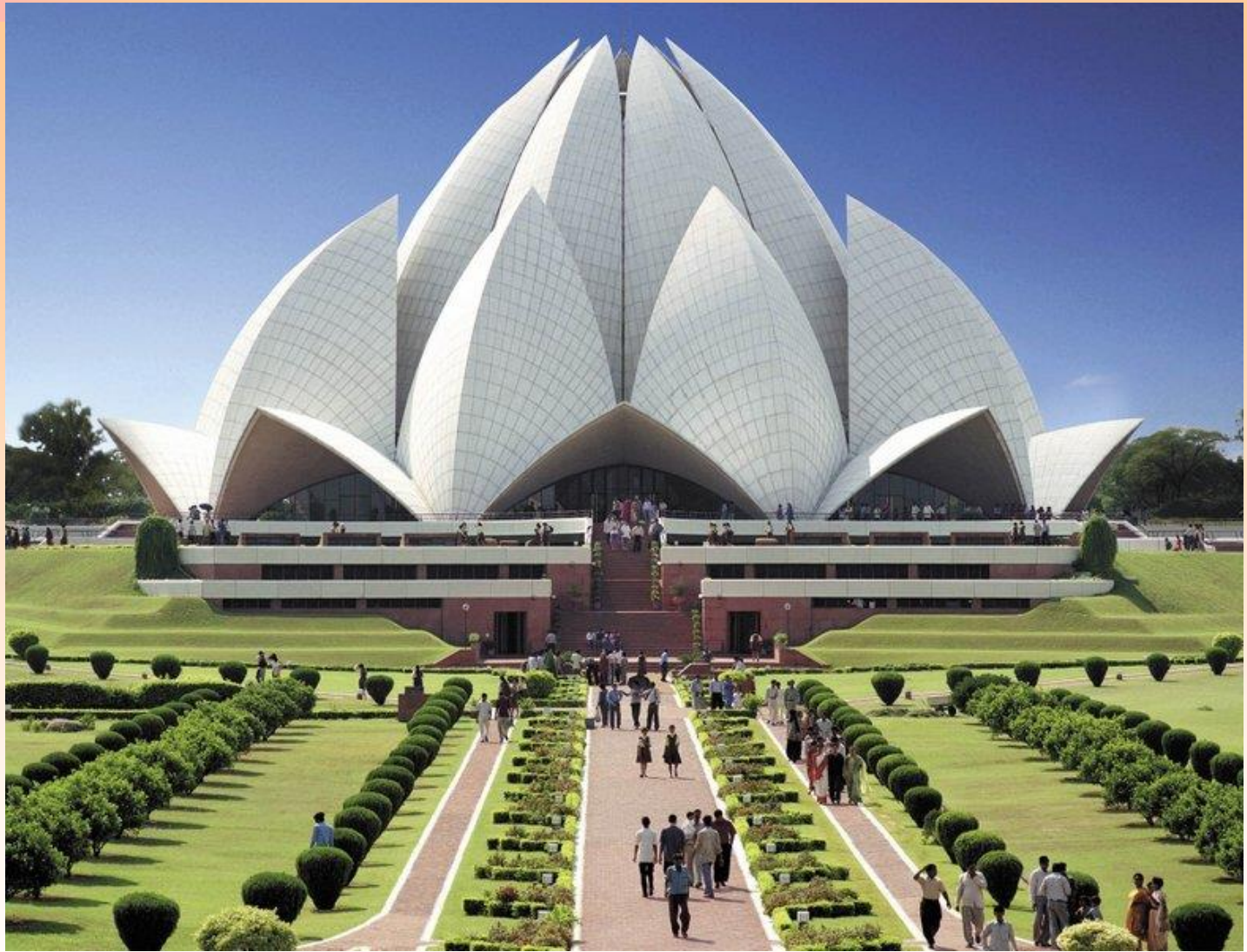


Taj Mahal, Agra  
Built by Mughal emperor Shah Jahan



# *Religions in India*

- Major religions:
  - Hindu (80%)
  - Muslim (13%)
  - Christian (2.3%)
  - Sikh (1.8%) - blend of Hindu & Muslim
  - Buddhist (0.8%) - exported to rest of Asia
  - Jains (0.4%) - pioneers in math & logic
  - Parsis (0.03%) – followers of Zoroastrianism



Lotus Temple (Bahá'í faith), Delhi



Ritual bathing in the Ganga (Ganges)  
Polluted, but the phenomenal world is illusory.  
Similar view in Platonism, Western science



Street scenes





Saris remain popular



# *A land of infinite variety*

- About 2000 ethnic groups
  - 22 official languages
  - 700+ languages overall
- One constant: **networking** is the key to everything.

# *Cultural Background*

- Indians are the world's consummate networkers.
  - Work through family and friends.





**Parliament Building, New Delhi**  
The real power resides in networks of influence

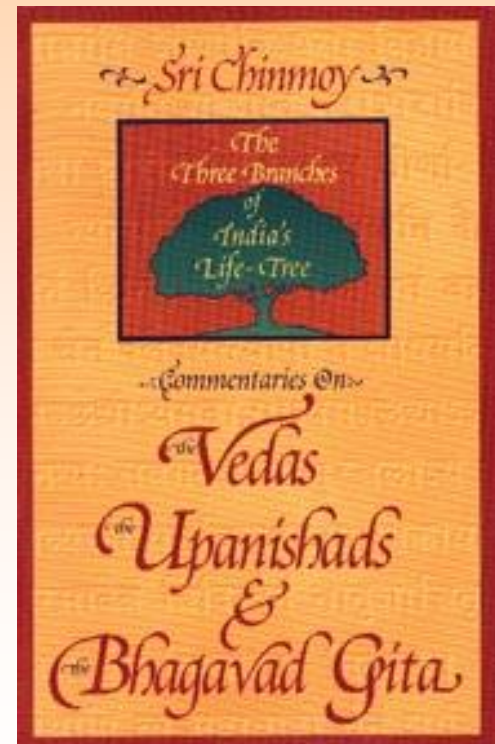




Bride & groom at wedding ceremony  
Unites 2 networks

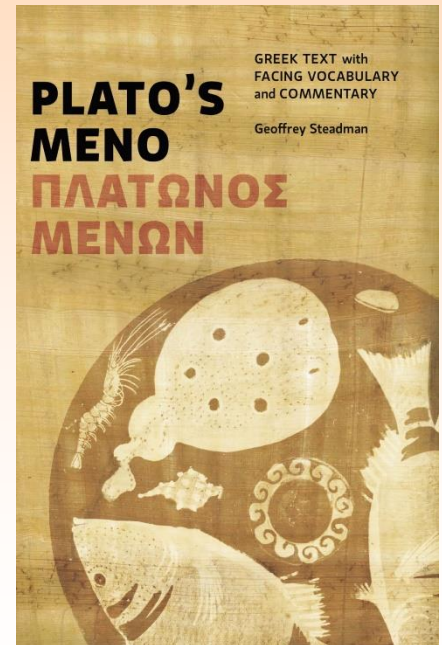
# *Two civilizations*

- Harappan (Indus Valley) Civilization (3000 bce)
- Aryans (1500 bce)
  - Vedic literature, Sanskrit language.
  - Hindu religion, caste system.



# *A bit of history*

- Common roots with the West.
  - Culturally closer than most of Asia.
  - Indo-European language.
  - Emphasis on rationality.
    - Greek/Hindu philosophy.
      - Plato recognized transmigration of souls
    - Aristotelian/Jainist logic.
    - Eleatic/Indian mathematics.



# *A bit of history*

- 1947 partition of India set stage for today's tension.
  - Ethnic cleansing
  - 25 million migrated
  - Half a million died in “communal” violence.



# *A bit of history*

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi, 2014-present
  - BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party)
    - Business-friendly policies
    - Proponent of Hindu nationalism



# *Demographics*

- Population 1.44 billion, world's largest
- Fertility rate down to 2.0



# *Cultural traits*

- Strong on intellectual capital.
  - Information technology & software
  - Top-flight universities
    - 3% Harvard acceptance rate
    - 4% Stanford
    - 4% MIT
    - **1% Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs).**
  - English fluency is a big advantage

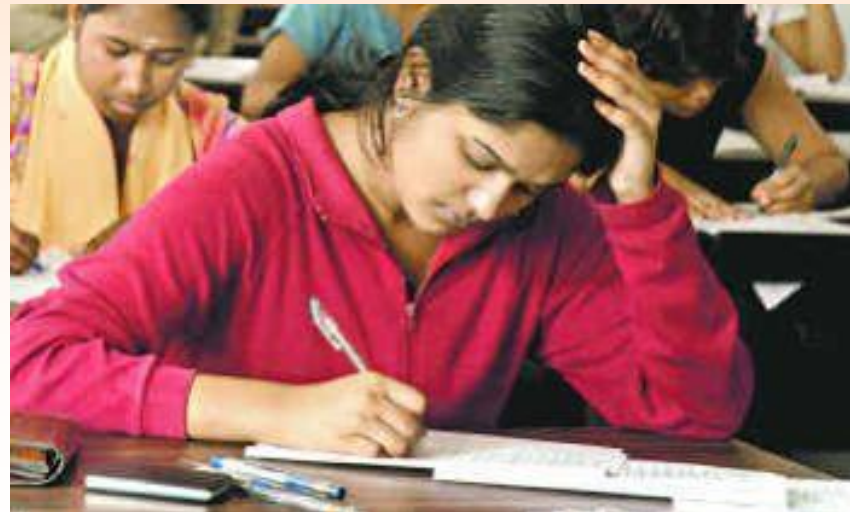


IIT Madras

# *Cultural traits*

- Cope by mental discipline.
  - Rather than by engineering the environment.
  - Today, yoga = studying for the exam

Taking college  
entrance exam





# *Cultural traits*

- High-context society.
  - Rely on Indians for advice and assistance in business and everyday life.
  - However, sophisticated legal system inherited from British



# *Cultural traits*

- High power distance
  - Everyone has a place
    - Traditional **castes**:
      - *Brahmins* (priests)
      - *Kshatriyas* (soldiers)
      - *Vaisyas* (merchants and farmers)
      - *Sudras* (laborers and servants)
    - Some 4635 **jatis** (occupations, ethnic/linguistic groups, religious sects).
      - 134 *jatis* consist of **dalits** (untouchables)
  - Affirmative action programs for “scheduled” classes

# *Cultural traits*

- Bollywood is world's largest film industry
  - Stories of family conflict and resolution.
  - Religious epics (e.g. from *Mahabharata*).



# *Cultural traits*

- Relationship based
  - Due to network-based relationships...
    - No need for supportive or familiar external environment.
    - Comfortable with travel and relocation
    - Easy to keep in touch by phone etc.
  - Strongly polychronic



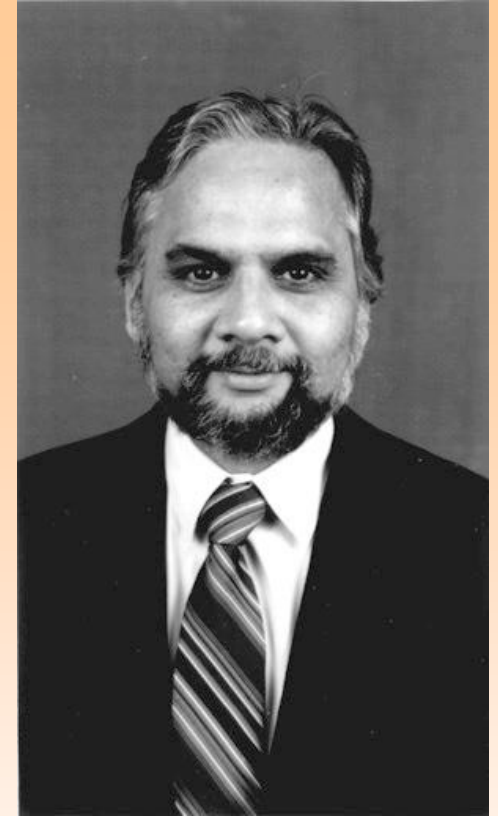
# *Cultural traits*

- Respect and obey parents
  - Many use *Namaste*
  - Or touch parent's feet.



# *Names*

- Can be long and complex.
  - Nicknames common.
  - Titles prefixed to given name.
  - When in doubt about what name to use, just ask.



M. Vidyasagar  
(short for Mathukumalli  
Vidyasagar)  
Addressed as:  
Dr. Vidyasagar,  
Dr. Sagar, Sagar

# Money

- Indian have their own terms for numbers.
  - *Lakh* is 100,000
  - *Crore* is 10,000,000.



# *Social life*

- If invited to a private home, arrive late.
  - Dinner tends to be last, maybe 10-11 pm.
  - Acceptable but unnecessary to bring a small gift.
  - Enjoy conversation with well-informed guests





# *Anecdote*



Conference room, India Ministry of Defence