

## CARIM INDIA SERIES

### DEVELOPING EVIDENCE BASED MANAGEMENT AND OPERATIONS IN INDIA-EU MIGRATION AND PARTNERSHIP (DEMO: INDIA-EU MAP)

# *Media Report on the Indian Community in France*

**Mathilde Lebrand**

DEMO-India Research Report 2015/07



**DEMO-India**  
**Developing Evidence based Management and Operations in**  
**India-EU Migration and Partnership**

**Research Report**  
**Thematic Report**  
**DEMO-India RR 2015/07**

**Media Report on the Indian Community in France**

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If cited or quoted, reference should be made as follows:

Mathilde Lebrand, Media Report on the Indian Community in France, DEMO-India RR 2015/07, Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, San Domenico di Fiesole (FI): European University Institute, 2015.

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ISBN: 978-92-9084-340-5

doi:10.2870/441849

Catalogue Number: QM-04-15-613-EN-N

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## **DEMO-India – Developing Evidence based Management and Operations in India-EU Migration and Partnership (DEMO: India-EU MaP)**

The Demo: India-EU MaP project, co-funded by the European Commission, is a continuation of the Carim India project ([www.india-eu-migration.eu](http://www.india-eu-migration.eu)) and it examines the multiple facets of Indian migration to the EU. Its overall aim is to improve migration management between India and the EU, strengthen EU-India relations, and produce in-depth empirical knowledge about the different migration streams and pathways of Indian nationals in the EU. Its specific goals include providing:

1. Evidence based research for more informed policy making and state intervention.
2. Improved source country capacity in managing migration.
3. Raising awareness among potential migrants of the risks of irregular migration.
4. Collaboration with civil society groups.
5. Empirical research and analysis of Indian communities across the EU, and their impact.

The project is led by the Indian Centre for Migration in Delhi with the partnership of the Migration Policy Centre, RSCAS, EUI.

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## **Abstract**

France has, in Indian terms, a relatively small Indian community. This paper analyses the French media coverage of this community in recent years. Compared to other French communities, the Indian community is seen as discrete and it is not widely covered in the media: few articles having been written. These articles can be broken down into two sets: articles covering local events, with a focus on the community; and articles covering broader events that define relations between France and India. Several topics are detailed in the paper: higher education, business and investment, crime, culture, integration and religion. The two main themes in media coverage are: business opportunities between the two countries and religious tensions. Indian culture is little covered in the French press. This might be explained by historical factors, the small size and the relative (economic and integration) success of this community.

**Key words:** Indian community, media, integration, investment, crime, religion

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## 1. Introduction

The Indian diaspora has only recently been recognized in France. It is, unlike other Asian groups like the Chinese diaspora, small and diverse. The first migrations were linked to the colonial past of France and its outposts in India (Pondichery, Karikal, Yanaon, Mahe and Chandernagor). Thousands of families emigrated after France withdrew from India in the 1950s. Other political and economic events added to this migration process. For example, in the 1990s, thousands of Sikhs fled from India for political reasons. These different waves of migration established a complex and diverse Indian community in France. It is a small community compared to the Sub-Saharan African and North African communities, might partly explain its relative invisibility in the media. Another factor in its invisibility is successful integration. However, the ban on ethnic statistics in France makes it difficult to make precise estimates about minorities in France.

This paper analyses French media coverage of the Indian community in the last four years. Several topics are covered: higher education; business and investment; crime; culture; integration; and religion. Compared to other communities, the Indian community is seen as discrete and is little covered by the media. The articles we have break down into to: ones on the community in France; and articles covering the political and economic relation between France and India. Local newspapers tend to report news about the Indian community only in Paris and its suburbs, where most of the community is based. General and national newspapers develop broad topics about business relations between the two countries, main cultural differences and discussions about the notion of laicism. All have a focus on France and its own (economic and religious) tensions. In this study, it appears that two main types of events have been widely covered: business opportunities between the two countries and religious tensions in India and in France. From the study it appears that Indian culture remains largely unknown and not widely covered in the French media. This might be explained by historical factors, the small size and the relative success of this community in economic and integration terms. However, coverage has recently increased. This goes hand in hand with the rise of India as a major economic power and also as an influential soft power with its culture (yoga, Bollywood, etc). In recent years France has seen the potential benefits of an Indian diaspora and of an increase in students, goods and technology exchanges between the two countries. Understanding Indian culture has become crucial for French businessmen in India. The general French population seems also to have become more interested in Indian culture.

### 1.2. Methodology

In order to get to grips with media coverage of the Indian community in France, I have used as many sources as possible to cover the different topics and political stances, as well as local versus national news. I restricted my study to articles written in the last four years. The quality and length of the articles varies depending on the newspapers, but taken together they offer an interesting and wide-ranging view of our topic.

Most articles come from the main national daily newspapers with different editorial lines (*Le Monde*, *Le Figaro*, *Libération* and *Le Parisien*). Other daily newspapers have been used: *La Croix* for its focus on religion and *Les Echos* for its economic perspective. In addition to the traditional daily newspapers, free daily newspapers e.g. *Direct Matin*, online media (*Atlantico* and *The Huffington Post*) and online investigative blogs, e.g. *Mediapart*, provide information. Local newspapers (*La Dépêche*, *la Tribune* et *Le Journal de l'Île de la Réunion*), weekly newsmagazines with diverse political lines (*L'Obs*, *L'Express*, *Courrier International* and *Challenges*) and specialized magazines (*L'Étudiant*, *Studyrama*, *L'Usine Nouvelle* and *Indes Magazine*) have also been employed. Finally, one article comes from FdeSouche, a far-right blog that offers a complementary perspective on integration issues for minorities. A more detailed presentation of each media follows (see Appendix).

## 2. Higher education students and exchanges

Given the small number of exchanges between India and France, new opportunities to attract Indian students in France and to develop partnerships are positively welcomed in the media. The media focuses more on events aimed at attracting Indian students in France than in the opposite direction. Exceptions about French students in India can be found in students' magazines that promote the recent increase in exchanges for French students in India and that give useful advice to potential French students.<sup>1</sup>

### 2.1. Attracting Indian students to France

Most articles focus on attracting Indian students for political and economic reasons. This race for good Indian students represents the strength of France versus its European and North American competitors. The French system is often compared with the competitive offers in the UK and the US which are considered as a model in a globalized world in which universities compete to attract the best students and professors. In general France is depicted as a country whose education system has great advantages (cost, quality... etc.) but also a lot of disadvantages and rigidities that make the country less competitive on the education market than the UK or the US. This coverage is very similar to the comments about the position of France in terms of economic innovation, starts-up, and diverse economic policies.

The number of graduate schools and universities that have created or reinforced partnerships with India has been increasing. This is particularly true for "the Grandes Ecoles" (high-level graduate schools) that are reported to be efficiently promoting exchanges with Indian engineering and business schools. Partnerships have been signed directly between schools and between the two National Education ministries to promote the mobility and cooperation of students and researchers between the two countries. The coverage differs depending on whether the media focus more on economic benefits in a globalized world or on the broader benefits of such exchanges. For example, *Les Echos*<sup>2</sup> chooses to highlight the current international competition to attract Indian students in education. They list the benefits and drawbacks of the French system. The main positive aspect of French education is the low price of studies. Even the best business schools in France (HEC, ESSEC...) are cheaper than an average business school in the US. In addition, *Libération*<sup>3</sup> boasts of how Centrale, one of the best French engineering schools, opened an affiliate in India together with Mahindra. The goal is reported to be the promotion of the image of France. Indeed, France is often perceived as a country of art and romance alone. In order to give a more dynamic, modern and globalized image, such initiatives are positively reported in the media.

### 2.2. The Difficulties of Indian students

Some articles are more critical and report difficulties faced by Indian students in France. *L'Obs* thus details the weaknesses of the French system in attracting and keeping foreign talents: administration is too complex, the students are insufficiently followed up, French-language-learning facilities are weak, housing is an issue and more grants are required.<sup>4</sup> The magazine mainly criticizes the lack of follow-up of the foreign students that study in France compared to the follow-up organized by the main American universities. The latter create a real network over the world promoting further political and economic exchanges. This is reported as going hand in hand with the fall of FDI in France. The

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<sup>1</sup> *L'Etudiant*, 21.11.2014: Dauvergne, D., Centrale in India: the Mahindra contribution; *Studyrama*, 15.2.2013: France and India want to develop student exchanges.

<sup>2</sup> *Les Echos*, 5.12.2014: De Jacquilot, P., This French finance manager wants to convert Indians to wine.

<sup>3</sup> *Libération*, 9.10.2014: Soule, V., India. Centrale's stroke of genius.

<sup>4</sup> *L'Obs*, 7.6.2013: Fauconnier, P., Reception of foreign students: a shut-out for France.

country is perceived as being less and less attractive for fast-growing nations such as India. In a period when the search for effective economic reforms is intensifying, a greater and better opening of the French educational system to foreign nationals is seen as a solution that could help the country (re)-enter global competition.

Last but not least, language is seen as a major problem for Indian students. Universities in English-speaking countries do not face this dilemma. There has been a heated debate in the media about whether more classes should be taught in English or not. French is often described as an obstacle in attracting Indian students. Some argue that more classes in English would remove the language barriers and attract more students. Others argue that classes in French should continue in order to promote French globally.

This debate is very serious and gets to the heart of the question of the role France should have in an increasingly globalized world. In 1994 the so-called “Toubon law” mandated the use of French language in universities. More recently the “Fioraso law” was passed to create exceptions on the mandatory use of French as a teaching language. Some courses in English should become available, especially in the context of agreements with foreign universities. This law was the source of the recent debate in the media about French being the mandatory teaching language.

On a blog of *L'Express* Jacques Attali has passionately opposed classes taught in English.<sup>5</sup> His main arguments are that the quality of the classes should be the first criteria to attract students, not the language. Such a political trend would go against French interests and France should, instead, keep promoting the French language all over the world. In addition, a group of French professors and researchers (“Indépendance des Chercheurs”) supports the opposition to the “Fioraso Law” in a blog of *Courrier International*.<sup>6</sup> They argue that language issues do not explain the lack of the attractiveness of France, which is best explained by the lack of public financial support to improve French universities.

On the contrary *Le Monde* has several press boxes written by groups of professors and researchers that instead support the law promoting an increasing use of English in universities.<sup>7</sup> They recognize the dominant role of English in research activities that no longer have borders, and the necessity of having one common language for meetings and cross-border exchanges. Promoting the use of English should increase the opportunities of French students and researchers to be better integrated in a competitive and globalized research world.<sup>8</sup>

To conclude, the media see the benefits of more opportunities to promote exchanges between the two countries while reporting the discussions about the way to settle these change and offering a new direction for these exchanges. In general, discussions turn on the benefits for France as well as the drawbacks to world competition. All reflect a France whose plans and identities seem currently to be in the making.

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<sup>5</sup> *L'Express*, 22.4.2013: Attali, J., Teach in French!

<sup>6</sup> *Courrier International*, 23.5.2013: French language and globalization.

<sup>7</sup> *Le Monde*, 7.5.2013: Barre-Sinoussi, F. *et al.*, Teachers: courses in English are an opportunity and a reality; *Le Monde*, 25.4.2013: Hanege, C. *et al.*, English has a role to play in French universities.

<sup>8</sup> *Les Echos*, 21.5.2013: Dupont, S., Genevieve Fioraso: “we need to end this hypocrisy”.

### 3. Business and investment

#### 3.1. Indian investments in France

Two main Indian names are recurrent in the media in terms of Indian companies investing in France: Mahindra and Mittal. Both are associated with job issues, worries around globalization, and political sensitivities and weaknesses. They have become part of a broader debate about the role of France internationally and the question of whether foreign direct investments benefit the country or not.

A lot of articles were, indeed, written when the Indian company Mahindra & Mahindra bought 51% of the capital of Peugeot scooters. This symbolic event was differently reported in the media, and reflects different opinions about foreign investments in France. *La Dépêche* starts by highlighting the historical aspect and the greatest success stories of the French Peugeot brand.<sup>9</sup> A certain nostalgia towards a successful period which preceded the current financial troubles of the company is there in the article. This reflects a common feeling in the population about the current economic and political situation of the country. To avoid nostalgia, *Le Monde* mainly focuses on the financial difficulties of a company that has not failed in the battle to simultaneously face down low-cost Chinese competition while simultaneously specializing in high-value products.<sup>10</sup> Foreign investments are perceived as a financial support for companies that have experienced difficulties in adapting to the current situation. Other worries about the impact of foreign investments can be found. *La Dépêche* concludes with discussions about the decrease in French employees in production mainly due to the rise of outsourcing, as well as the promise not to transfer more production to India. On a more optimistic note, *Le Monde* reports that outsourcing was a strategic choice to compete with low-cost Chinese scooters and one that started several years ago. The article writer aims at counteracting fears and worries about the consequences of outsourcing. Unlike the pessimistic end of the *La Dépêche* article, *Le Monde* focuses on the positive opportunities for French companies and for Peugeot of a booming Indian market and of the recent innovations at Mahindra from which Peugeot could benefit.

From a more right-wing perspective, articles in *Le Figaro* and *La Tribune* are foreign-investment friendly and promote the image of Mahindra and potential partnerships between the two countries.<sup>11</sup> They depict Mahindra as a friendly and powerful potential investor. France is seen as an interesting market and offers a large range of benefits like high-quality infrastructure and the rich human capital. The main remaining obstacles that would slow Mahindra are reported to be high taxes and the perceived uncertainty regarding the economic environment. This reflects the opinion of business circles in France. Investments from India face many obstacles whereas they represent a promising future for French business. It is better to push for foreign investments than to be skeptical about their effects. This contrasts with recurrent doubts about the benefits for workers and worries about future outsourcing of production such as noted in the article from *La Dépêche*. *Les Echos* clearly opposes these widespread beliefs and offers a more optimistic view about the benefits of Indian investments.<sup>12</sup> They recognize that the future of Peugeot Scooter was very uncertain and note that foreign investments have successfully relaunched the made-in-Britain brands. Without being critical towards taxes or other economic obstacles like in *Le Figaro*, this article tries to present a realistic picture of the facts to defuse the heated debate regarding foreign investments.

Another much covered news story emerged in the media in 2012: the company Mittal vs the French government. It started when the Indian steelmaker Mittal bought his European competitor Arcelor,

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<sup>9</sup> *La Dépêche*, 8.10.2014: Peugeot scooters sold to the Indian Mahindra.

<sup>10</sup> *Le Monde*, 17.9.2014: Jacque, P., Why Peugeot does not want to produce scooters.

<sup>11</sup> *Le Figaro*, 17.2.2014: The Indian Mahindra wants to invest in France; *La Tribune*, 29.4.2014: Why all multinationals want an Indian manager.

<sup>12</sup> *Les Echos*, 8.10.2014: Barroux, D., Second chance.

against the wishes of French ministers. A few years later, Mittal decided to stop the Florange furnaces which had previously been part of the French company Arcelor. This closure created unemployment in a period when France had not recovered from the financial crisis. The chief executive Lakshmi Mittal was then publicly accused of “extraordinary lies” by the current French minister of Industry. The latter accused him of having broken a promise not to close the furnaces and not to fire employees: this promise was allegedly made when the Indian company bought the French company. This sparked off a lively argument in the media with the French minister of Industry. The media coverage reflected the ambivalence of French public opinion. The tensions between a state that wants to remain the referee in the economic game and a major multinational emerged. Reactions in the media varied from admiration to rejection for Lakshmi Mittal, a man previously little known in France. Mittal was depicted as one of the largest and most audacious Indian investors. Articles depicting his life tell a successful story of an exceptional entrepreneur, the kind of story that seemed to be hardly possible in France and gives a contrasting image of a booming India facing and testing a small and dazed France.<sup>13</sup> The case of Mittal versus the French government was perceived as showing the importance and/or potential risks surrounding Indian investment in France where worries about the effects of globalization are rising, particularly with high unemployment. This event received very wide media coverage.

This case also shows that foreign investment in France is not just an economic issue but that it also has a strong political counterpart. It first reflects worries that foreign investors are motivated by financial returns alone. They would not consider the public returns on their investment and would not consider keeping jobs in France as a priority. To a certain extent it also reflects the weaknesses of politicians facing such huge economic interests in a globalized world. Plans of nationalization and expropriation are detailed without much optimism in *Libération*<sup>14</sup> or as a setback for *Le Figaro*.<sup>15</sup> Others highlight the political failures of the government in dealing with this case.<sup>16</sup> Most of them were, more or less, neutral observers of the argument between the French government and Mittal around this very sensitive case, except notable articles in *Le Figaro*.<sup>17</sup> This clearly reflects the need for France to choose a line in dealing with foreign investments and worries surrounding the current surge in foreign investments from countries like China or India.

The case became international when the mayor of London mocked the French government over its argument with Mittal.<sup>18</sup> British politicians suggested that they were more familiar with Indian investments and the Indian diaspora.

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<sup>13</sup> *Le Monde économie*, 21.1.2013: Lukacs, P., What is the “dharma” of lakshmi Mittal?; *Challenges*, 28.11.2012: Merieux, A., Why are the Mittal not afraid of French people?; *Huffington Post*, 26.11.2012: Raymond, G., Portrait. Lakshmi Mittal, a manager with a will of iron.

<sup>14</sup> *Libération*, 22.11.2012: Roussel, F., Florange: nationalization, the last solution against Mittal.

<sup>15</sup> *Le Figaro*, 13.12.2012: Bayard, B., Mitta: “Nationalization, what a backward step!”

<sup>16</sup> *Le Monde*, 26.11.2012: Gallois, D., and V. Malingre, Lakshmi Mittal is waiting for Francois Hollande’s arbitration; *L’Express* [*L’Express.fr*], 7.12.2012: Florange: Mittal won the show of strength for 75% of the French people; *Le Figaro*, 6.12.2012: Bourmaud, F.-X., The Mittal case weakens Jean-Marc Ayrault.

<sup>17</sup> *Le Figaro*, 6.12.2012: Bourmaud, F.-X., The Mittal case weakens Jean-Marc Ayrault.

<sup>18</sup> *Le Monde* [*LeMonde.fr*], 27.11.2012: The Mayor of London invites Mittal and mocks the French “sans-culottes”.

### 3.2. French businessmen in India

Interest in the Indian market has recently surged among French businessmen. A large number of articles have been published to give advice to both businessmen looking for partnerships<sup>19</sup> or exporting opportunities and politicians promoting the French image abroad.<sup>20</sup> Most of the advice focuses on cultural differences and second on administrative and economic differences between the two countries. This reflects the ignorance and the misconceptions surrounding Indian culture. The small size of the Indian community in France and the lack of a common colonial past compared to the UK explain this lack of interest and knowledge.

A few major cases have been widely covered, especially the Rafale military planes. The Rafale contract is symbolic of some difficulties for France in exporting its products.<sup>21</sup> The Rafale planes are recognized as a technological success but a marketing failure. Negotiations around a major contract with India have long been ongoing.<sup>22</sup> Under the pressure from the military sector and keeping his promises to boost investment, Modi organized a business tour through Germany and Canada. The media noticed that Modi did not go to the UK, the usual partner given the size of the Indian diaspora but chose to visit other countries for investment. This suggests that relations between French and Indian businessmen might improve over the next months. The media mostly offers a positive image of Modi, despite other criticisms about religious tensions.

Another case is that of the food retailers and large supermarkets that have tried to enter the booming Indian market.<sup>23</sup> This reflects an interest in a growing Indian market as well as the difficulties in entering said market. Auchan is reported to be the last to give up after the main retailers like Carrefour, Walmart or Metro had also given up. All created joint-ventures in the early 2000s, but finally gave up mainly because of local protectionism, bureaucratic difficulties and the clear preference for small Indian producers. Some more individual initiatives have been reported in the media and have started to raise interest. For example, *Les Echos* reports the case of a French investor born in Pondicherry who invested and pushed the wine sector in India.<sup>24</sup> There is no wine-drinking culture but the growth of the wealthy middle classes could soon create a real demand. His special knowledge of Indian culture in addition to his studies at a good French engineering school allowed him to successfully combine French wine culture and booming Indian demand. Such examples are rare but welcomed. Both multinationals activities and individual initiatives show the potential for developments.

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<sup>19</sup> *Le Figaro*, 5.9.2013; Le Gales, Y., How to do business in India?; *Huffington Post*, 7.4.2014; Som, A., Five reasons why managers should follow the Indian elections; *Atlantico*, 24.10.2014; Goulvestre, L., Advice to do business in India.

<sup>20</sup> *L'Usine Nouvelle*, 14.2.2013; Goulvestre, L., Advice for Francois Hollande to be successful in India.

<sup>21</sup> *La Tribune*, 11.10.2013; Rafale in India: the manufacturers target a contract signed... in 2015; *Le Monde*, 13.3.2014; Duthell, G., Rafale: Dassault has ended the technology transfers in India.

<sup>22</sup> *Le Monde* [*LeMonde.fr*], 10.4.2015: The Rafale planes, at the heart of the meeting between Modi and Hollande; *Huffington Post*, 25.2.2015; Duval, J.-B., Rafale: India would have signed for 24 planes according to the local media, Paris denies.

<sup>23</sup> *Le Monde*, 12.8.2014; Garnier, J., One month after Carrefour, Auchan ends his his adventure in India.

<sup>24</sup> *Les Echos*, 5.12.2014; De Jacquetot, P., This French investor wants to convert Indians to wine.

## 4. Crimes and the Indian community

Crimes by Indian nationals in France are totally absent from the media. This treatment differs from crime reporting for minorities from African or Maghreb countries. Security has become a dominant policy topic, but no association has been drawn with crime by Indian nationals. The only recent article that mentioned crime and Indian nationals in France is found in *FdeSouche*,<sup>25</sup> a media known for its focus on security issues and close to the extreme right. Interestingly enough, the article mentions crimes against Indian nationals. Indian nationals, therefore, receive a very different coverage from other minorities. They are perceived as victims of crime rather than offenders. This reflects the differences in the size and composition of the Indian community.

## 5. Culture

### 5.1. Bollywood

Indian culture has been little known in France. Only a small minority of travellers, cinema enthusiasts, and yoga instructors are knowledgeable and well informed. This can be explained by the small size of the Indian community in France and the relatively weak historical links between the two countries. However the media coverage of Indian culture has increased following a rising interest in Bollywood movies and music shows. Few persons knew about Bollywood ten years ago. A few movies were then nominated at the Cannes festival and several actors, Aishwarya Rai, Amitabh Bachchan and Shah Rukh Khan, became celebrities abroad. The nomination of Aishwarya Rai in the Cannes jury and her title of ex-miss World made her famous and much appreciated by French audiences.<sup>26</sup> Reports about Shah Rukh Khan as the second best-paid actor in the world aroused curiosity and, likewise, made him famous.<sup>27</sup> This represents the emergence of the Indian movie industry in the global arena as a real competitor to Hollywood. The ranking of Shah Rukh Khan was perceived, for instance, by the media as proof that Bollywood has emerged as a complete and powerful movie industry despite the quasi absence of Indian movies on the French screens. Bollywood directors have recently started to export their movies outside of India but in general French audiences are not very receptive to Bollywood movies. They are still perceived as being too long, and they have colourful and musical dances with a similar simple pattern. ‘Kitsch’ is the adjective that is mainly used to qualify Bollywood movies in the media.<sup>28</sup> However, a few movies with Indian actors made by English or American directors have been positively received and have gathered a wider audience. Their success was explained by the combination of a Hollywood or European story in a more ‘exotic’ decor in India. Parts of the media have remained skeptical and consider this increasing interest as a mere trend.

By contrast, others have presented Indian cinema as a booming industry full of new and promising talents. Such optimism differs from the more conservative way of presenting Bollywood movies as kitsch productions in an industry still proceeding by trial and error. This still represents the average French view point about Bollywood. However, Indian cinema is not limited to Bollywood blockbusters: indeed, there is a young generation of promising Indian directors, making relatively

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<sup>25</sup> *FdeSouche*, 15.2.2010: Grigny: the India community target of crime.

<sup>26</sup> *Direct Matin*, 2.11.2012: France honours Aishwarya Rai, queen of Bollywood.

<sup>27</sup> *Huffington Post*, 22.5.2014: Guyonnet, P., The second best-paid actor in the world is the Indian Shah Rukh Khan.

<sup>28</sup> *Direct Matin*, 21.7.2013: Bollywood: kitsch India.

inexpensive films.<sup>29</sup> A few independent Indian movies have won recognition from the non-specialized media, on behalf of an educated audience.<sup>30</sup>

The Bollywood brand has been used as a springboard by these independent directors to export their own productions.

*Le Figaro* highlights Bollywood as “soft power” for India to become a major power.<sup>31</sup> Its worldwide influence then goes through the success of Indian movies and TV shows outside of the country. Bollywood productions have not been popular in France, whereas in some Asian and African countries Bollywood movie stars are famous. In the face of these massive victories abroad, the French media has, for the most part, described the contrast between international success and relative failure in France.

The successes of Indian culture, with its radical differences, have mostly been misunderstood. Bollywood culture has long been despised. These articles show a recent change in perception and a progressive attempt to reach out to this other culture.

Finally, another channel through which the Bollywood culture started to be appreciated in France is through musicals.<sup>32</sup> *Bharati* has become one of the most famous musicals outside India. It combines a dramatic story with the exotic features of India through colourful costumes, dances and singing. From media coverage it seems that Bollywood musicals are more appreciated than Bollywood movies in France: certainly the media is less critical. This is unfortunate as the messages and ideas conveyed by movies are richer than those in traditional musicals. The interesting questions raised by many Bollywood movies about the role of women, the caste system, and immigration are, therefore, little covered in the French media. The latter give the impression of being too skeptical to consider them on the same level as American or European movies.

## 5.2. Books

Aside from the Bollywood productions, there exists a myriad of independent movies, books and other art forms that reflect the diversity and resources of India. In general, the French media do not report books or movies made by Indian nationals. Few interviews can be found. This differs from the coverage in the US and the UK where Indians have written a lot about their immigration experiences, the feeling of being homesick, their successes or failures in integration, the return to their home country and the cultures shock between generations. This production has not really reached the French audience. There were a larger number of articles about books focusing on history or main historical characters in India. Reports about Gandhi,<sup>33</sup> the experience of Auroville<sup>34</sup> or the Indo-Europeans<sup>35</sup> are recent examples of books topics that were covered by the French media.

A few articles can still be found about recent Indian writers. Those focus on daily and more modern issues about Indian society. For example, the story of the engineer Vikram Chandra is reported.<sup>36</sup> This example is not trivial as it also illustrates successful integration through the story of an Indian engineer

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<sup>29</sup> *Challenges*, 24.5.2012: Diebold, J.-B., Movies: a wind of change from Bollywood blows through the Cannes festival.

<sup>30</sup> *Le Monde*, 4.11.2014: Mandelbaum, J., “Micmac Masters”: an Indian dark comedy; *Le Monde*, 9.9.2014: Luciani, N., “Recipes for happiness”: an Old France style stew in the “thali” way.

<sup>31</sup> *Le Figaro*, 25.1.2008: Tharoor, S., India and Bollywood.

<sup>32</sup> *Direct Matin*, 23.11.2012: Bollywood in Paris.

<sup>33</sup> *Le Monde* [*Le Monde des livres*], 20.11.2014: Droit, R.-P., Gandhi and the machines.

<sup>34</sup> *Libération*, 11.8.2011: Vallaeys, B., In Auroville, utopia is over.

<sup>35</sup> *Le Monde* [*Le Monde des livres*], 20.11.2014: Droit, R.-P., Indo-Europeans: that is over!

<sup>36</sup> *Rue89*, 27.9.2014: Richard, C., “Geek sublime” of Vikram Chandra: “Coding is emotional for me”.



in Silicon Valley. These articles are, however, rarer than articles looking at the Bollywood brand and the dreamy image they give about an imaginary exotic India. Social, religious and more modern issues about India are little reported in the media.

### 5.3. Music

About music production, the most featured musician in the French media is Ravi Shankar.<sup>37</sup> His personal history is deeply intertwined with the history of Europe and North America in the last decades. He is also the father of Nora Jones who is well known in France. The more traditional Indian music is little covered by the French media.

### 5.4. Others

An interesting article reports on the message conveyed by an Indian photographer organizing an exhibition of his works.<sup>38</sup> He works on the the common image of India in the media and how these prejudices radically differ from the image Indians have of their country. In general European tourists bring back colourful picture of “an ancestral country” and journalists particularly appreciate pictures of misery. On the contrary Indians value the image of a modern and fast-growing country. The French media is thus generally more prone to convey the first image. The relevant article offered a thoughtful report about different French and Indian ideas about India, and the way the media convey these images.

As a conclusion to this part, the media clearly reports events according to their regular readers. They can choose between promoting Bollywood musicals, books fairs or movie festivals. For example, *Le Monde* reported the show of a modern choreographer that recreates the traditional dances of northern India.<sup>39</sup> *Direct Matin* reported the Bollywood Bharati musical, which is much more accessible to a wide audience.<sup>40</sup> *Le Parisien* reports local events for the Indian community or enthusiasts of the Indian culture in or around the capital.<sup>41</sup> It is, however, necessary to notice the increase in Bollywood movie festivals and books fairs. In general media coverage has increased, too, but still remains weak.

## 6. Integration initiatives

### 6.1. Analysis of the integration process

Given the ban on ethnic statistics in France, it remains difficult to quantify the integration of minorities. The Indian community is also formed of a recent and relatively sparse migration. In general, Asian migrations are perceived as “silent” and are little covered in the media, as opposed to immigration from Maghreb or African countries and associated events. By “silent”, the article in *Atlantico* means that discussions about the benefits and successes of Asian migrants’ integration are rare and their presence goes unquestioned.<sup>42</sup> This is even more true for Indians compared to the Chinese migrants. Several reasons are expressed in this article to explain this silence, the strong

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<sup>37</sup> *Huffington Post*, 12.12.2012: Ravi Shankar, master of sitar and father of Norah Jones, is dead.

<sup>38</sup> *Le Monde [culture et idées]*, 18.9.2014: Guerrin, M., Indian style fantasies.

<sup>39</sup> *Le Monde [M le magazine du Monde]*, 5.12.2014: Boisseau, R., Indian odes.

<sup>40</sup> *Direct Matin*, 23.11.2012: Bollywood in Paris.

<sup>41</sup> *Le Parisien [LeParisien.fr]*, 10.10.2009: Second edition of the France-India festival.

<sup>42</sup> *Atlantico*, 15.11.2012: Picquart, P., S. Quere, Front pages of the weekly magazines, posters ni the metro... Islam is everywhere, what about Asians, this other major and silent immigration?

communitarianism of these migrants and the nature of their migration process. Their integration in a new society is described as generally done through mutual intra-communal help. Asian migrants are, in addition, traditionally perceived as hard-workers and discrete persons. This applies particularly to Chinese migrants. Indian migrants are rarely mentioned in the media but benefit more or less from the same image. The small size of the Indian community in northern Paris makes them less visible for mainstream France, especially outside of Paris.

Few examples of successful or unsuccessful integration can be found in the media. One recent case was Anjali Pandit.<sup>43</sup> She learnt French thanks to the Alliance Française network that promotes French culture abroad. She then decided to move to France and tells the media she is very satisfied with her integration. She also makes comments about differences between students in France and in India. This recalls the photographer in the previous section and the relative optimism of Indians about their country and their future opportunities. In particular, she describes French students as pessimistic and depressed by the lack of job opportunities in France. Young Indians on the contrary see future opportunities in developed countries that push them to migrate to find a job. She criticizes the rejection of globalization and the lack of mobility among young French students. This story is both an individual case of successful integration but also shows us the way that Indian immigration is perceived in France. Young and motivated students that are ready to work should not face any integration problems. This might, however, be a partial description of the reality that Indian migrants face in France. Religion and language are two topics that could potentially create integration difficulties but that are not covered by the media.

Other articles offer a broader vision of the Indian diaspora in the world, as well as the cultural, social and economic influences in their host country.<sup>44</sup> For example, cultural and food habits in the UK and in the US are reported to have changed. Their influences can also be seen economically. A lot of Indians are engineers, this allows for transfers of technologies back to their country. On the political side, the Indian lobby is reported to have a major influence on US foreign policy. These are Indians in other countries, but they also tell us something about how the media sees Indians generally. No similar article can be found about the influence of immigrants from African or Magreb countries. The Indian diaspora is placed in a positive light both in terms of the host country and the home country. This reflects the positive vision characterizing a community whose integration seems painless.

A more critical opinion can however be found in an interview with an Indian journalist about integration problems in France.<sup>45</sup> He does not target any community in particular, and his analysis is not even primarily about Indians. However, it is an interesting perspective from an Indian about general problems that any migrant might face in France nowadays. This journalist produces a full and very documented report on integration problems that are specific to France. In particular, he concludes that integration problems are not cultural but, rather, economic and social. Minorities have not been fully integrated in terms of economic success and access to leadership. He finally advocates a reinterpretation of the crucial values and notions of equality and secularism to give them a more modern content. According to him, France should adapt to the present diversity of its population. This analysis applies to Indian communities, too, and shows a less optimistic vision of French integration. However, it is clear that not all minorities face the same integration difficulties. The journalist's opinion reflects a general concern regarding the integration of minorities in France.

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<sup>43</sup> *Huffington Post*, 20.10.2012: Pandit, A., An Indian in Paris: how France has changed my life; *Les Echos*, 6.10.2012: Georges, B., TEDxParis has filled the Olympia stadium to imagine 2030.

<sup>44</sup> *Le Monde*, 18.1.2008: Bouissou, J., The Indian diaspora, a large success.

<sup>45</sup> *Respect Magazine*, 12.3.2010: Ereau, R., Media and minorities: the perspective of a "foreigner".

## 6.2. Local initiatives that target Indian immigrants

A few local initiatives to improve the integration of Indian migrants has been reported in the media. Among them the creation of a Miss India France contest.<sup>46</sup> This follows the success of beauty contests generally, which have been expanded to minorities in France. In addition, the winner is allowed to participate in the Miss India contest in India that gathers all the winners from countries with an Indian diaspora. This reflects both the emergence of an Indian community in France and some initiatives to bring it closer to other Indian minorities across the world. In addition a dating website (<http://www.vivaham.fr>) has been created to allow Indian immigrants to meet. This initiative aims at reinforcing the links between its members while creating a real community.

In addition, several local initiatives aimed at better integrating the community and improving the knowledge of Indian culture among the French population have been carried out. Several websites have been created to present Indian culture and its diversity (ex: <http://tamilexpress.fr>). Except for those who have travelled to India, the differences and diversity of Indian culture and geography are largely unknown. A few events such as cultural fairs or political gatherings have promoted Indian culture. The only newspaper that reports these events is *Le Parisien* that targets a more local “capital” audience than the national newspapers.<sup>47</sup>

In Paris, business and cultural meetings around the association EIEBG (<http://eiebg.unblog.fr>) are organized to reinforce the Indian community, create links with the others and develop cooperation between France and India. The Indian diaspora here is used to develop foreign investment and other business initiatives.

## 6.3. The Reunion Island, a special case

Finally, the case of the Reunion Island is rather different from the rest of the country. The Indian community there is very large. This island is, in addition, characterized by a large number of ethnic groups. The Tamils, a Hindu community, and the Malbars, a Christian community, are the two main Indian groups. The integration between the different groups seem to well advanced. Articles report that successful integration can be seen in the streets when looking at different clothes and physical attributes.<sup>48</sup> In addition, food is characterized by several dishes which are a mix of the different cultures. The religious holidays and other celebrations are also an opportunity for other communities to meet. Many languages are spoken. Good integration does not mean that cultural differences have been removed. For instance, Indian names have been increasingly used for Tamil babies.<sup>49</sup> This rare example of a large Indian community is only covered in the local media: indeed, the Reunion Island is largely unknown in the rest of the country. Only a minority of French people are able to locate the Reunion Island on the map, even fewer know that a significant part of the population is Indian.

An obstacle to increased integration of the Indian community there is the Indian ban on having dual nationalities.<sup>50</sup> The goal of India is partly to incentivize the return of Indian migrants to their home country. This might, however, be an issue for some migrants who could not ask for the French nationality without losing their own nationality. Their economic and social integration is then slowed down.

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<sup>46</sup> *Le Parisien*, 9.2.2008: Peresson, O., The India community chooses her miss.

<sup>47</sup> *Le Parisien*, 22.3.2014: Discover the aspects of the Indian community.

<sup>48</sup> *Madmoizelle*, 10.10.2014: Romilly, Postcard of the Reunion Island: local colours.

<sup>49</sup> *Clicanoo*, 16.11.2014: Indian names, very trendy in the Tamoul community.

<sup>50</sup> *La Gazette de la Grande Ile*, 25.3.2014: The economic communiy “karana”: from another nationality than Indian for most of them.

## 7. Religion

### 7.1. Indian religions

#### 7.1.1 Hinduism, Indian Islam and Indian Christianity

The vast majority of recent articles about religions focus on the tensions between the predominant religion, Hinduism, and the other religions in India, Christianity and Islam. Tensions with the Sikhs are older and seem to largely passed on the basis of what is written in the media. Regarding other Indian religions tensions have recently been reported, especially after the election of Narendra Modi. Modi was an active member of the nationalist Hindu movement RSS (Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh) that pushes India to be defined as a Hindu country. They are accused of attacking Christian churches and of organizing massive reconversions of poor Muslims in exchange for food cards. The election of Modi and indirect support towards such extremist Hindu ideologies are described as a threat for the democratic equilibrium. This situation has been particularly commented upon in the French media where laicism and religious tensions are currently very topical. Laicism in India is different from French laicism. In India religious freedom is the priority, whereas French people might value equality over religious freedom. Insults to religious feelings are punished in Indian law. Thus worries about the rise of Hindu nationalism targeting Muslim and Christian communities are regularly reported in the media. Given its religious editorial stance, *La Croix* covers the worries of religious minorities, especially Christian minorities.<sup>51</sup> They reported the rape of a 70-year-old religious woman whose perpetrators were not punished and the multiple desecrations of churches in India. Inter religious tensions are not new but the silence and potential support of the close circle of Modi have raised worries. *La Croix* also reports on the massive conversions of Muslims organized by Hindu nationalists. It is interesting to notice that *La Croix* is the main outlet reporting on religious tensions and violence towards religious minorities and their problems, especially Christian minorities. Other seem to have been more reluctant to report on religious tensions. Thus a *La Croix* article denounced the arrest of 200 Christians protesting against the violence perpetrated against them and the visa restrictions targeting several Vatican officials.<sup>52</sup> They also reported the case of the *dalits* that are not recognized by the Hindu social hierarchy.<sup>53</sup> A lot of them chose to become Christian to escape from Hindu social logic. The Christian religion is presented as an open religion that welcomes everyone and considers all humans equal. This could be seen as a criticism on the part of *La Croix*: as Hinduism, it is suggested, creates differences and promotes a rigid social hierarchy.

There is no media outlet that is the equivalent of *La Croix* for the Muslim community. Compared to other major media, *La Croix* might report more on religious minorities and other religious question. They, however, focus on Christian minorities. Additional articles about tensions with the Muslim community can be found in other outlets. There are two ways to present such a topic. Some media would talk about these problems in a more general framework analyzing the relations and tensions between France and India. *Les Echos* thus reported rising religious tensions to conclude that these tensions could slow down or prevent the economic reforms that the country needs.<sup>54</sup> Other Indian political parties are opposed to the silent support of Modi to Hindu Nationalistic movements and might threaten to block economic changes. *Le Monde* reports on religious tensions in a more general portrait of Narendra Modi. Nationalist tensions are seen as a barrier between France and India, which is,

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<sup>51</sup> *La Croix*, 5.2.2015: Dougnac, V., Worries among the religious minorities in the India of Narendra Modi.

<sup>52</sup> *La Croix*, 5.2.2015: Lesegretain, C., In India, the police arrests 200 Christians.

<sup>53</sup> *La Croix*, 24.2.2015: In India, the Church claims legal equality between Christian and Hindu dalits.

<sup>54</sup> *Les Echos*, 17.2.2015: De Jacquelot, P., India facing the rise of Hindu nationalism.

however, not on the list of diplomatic priorities compared to foreign investment promotion and the coming negotiations at the Paris climate conference.<sup>55</sup>

The second way the media report these religious tensions is by describing how things have changed since the election of Modi. Articles are, in general, very critical towards Modi and his support of nationalistic Hindu ideologies.<sup>56</sup> *L'Express* denounces a Hindu myth called "Love Jihad", a supposed conspiracy organized by Muslims to attract Hindu women and convert them to Islam by force.<sup>57</sup> The newspaper emphasizes that this question has always existed but has flared up since the election of Modi. Political declarations by ministers are criticized for inflaming passions and fuelling hostilities. Finally, *Mediapart* recently highlighted the fact that India is expected to become the largest Muslim country by 2050.<sup>58</sup> This is due to a high fecundity rate among the Muslim community. The article contrasts this fact with the rise of Nationalist Hindu activism that aims at defining India as a Hindu country. However, this attempt is opposed by other religious minorities. The story of a Buddhist politician who refused to swear on the *Bhagavad-Gita*, the holy book of Hinduism, is then used to illustrate this point. The same media also published a documentary on the Muslim community in Hyderabad where the Muslims represent 40% of the population and have been particularly worried about the rising religious tensions.

All these articles aim either to support religious minorities abroad or to analyze the obstacles to bringing France and India closer. There are, however, no articles about the way these tensions are conveyed in France or how they might affect the different religious Indian minorities in France.

Regarding religious practices, few articles show interest in depicting the particularities of Hinduism. Most articles report on religion to understand another problem: namely, the case of Sikhs and the 2004 French law; minorities in India, their problems and the obstacles to bring the two countries closer; and religious tensions and laicism in general. Very few articles depict Hinduism. One notable article in *Le Monde*, however, describes a very particular Hindu institution, the Ashram.<sup>59</sup> The article tells the story of Indian female emigrants that became very successful in the US in terms of studies and job careers. Interestingly a few of them chose to go back to India, to give up their materialistic life and become Hindu ascetics. Whereas it has almost disappeared in France, the choice of an ascetic life seems to attract more and more Indians, including some very educated persons in search for truth and a more genuine life experience. This article is descriptive and does not aim at any political or polemical discussion.

### 7.1.2 Sikhism

Sikhism is largely unknown in France. This contrasts with the fact that there are 22 million Sikhs in the world: making it the fifth largest religion. This ignorance is partly explained by the small size of the community in France. France hosts just 10,000 Sikhs whereas they are 500,000 in the UK and about 1 million in the US. In addition, most French Sikhs are gathered in Seine-Saint-Denis where a Sikh temple was built. We can, therefore, find several articles introducing Sikhism.<sup>60</sup> This media coverage is explained by the debate around the 2004 law which bans religious symbols at schools. The

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<sup>55</sup> *Le Monde*, 10.4.2015: Racine, J.-L., Narendra Modi, the Indian prime minister, or the manager and the ideologist.

<sup>56</sup> *Les Echos*, 12.12.2014: De Jacquelot, P., Hindu fundamentalism worries India; *Les Echos*, 17.2.2015: De Jacquelot, P., India facing the rise of Hindu nationalism.

<sup>57</sup> *L'Express*, 12.12.2014: Gousset, C., "Love jihad": the Indian nationalistic conservative party blows on the embers of communitarism.

<sup>58</sup> *Mediapart*, 6.4.2015: Delacroix, G., India, futur largest Muslim country in the world.

<sup>59</sup> *Le Monde* [*M le magazine du Monde*], 29.8.2014: Bobin, F., The call of the Ashram.

<sup>60</sup> *L'Obs*, 8.8.2012: Velluet, Q., Sikhism, the fifth religion in the world; *La Croix*, 13.1.2012: Lesegretain, C., What is Sikhism?.

debate started after that the turban was banned, an important religious object for male Sikhs. The media generally offered a neutral or even a positive image of Sikhism and reported that their fundamental values are generosity and fraternity. Other religions in general do not receive such a neutral or positive description.

## 7.2. Indian religious festivals in France

A few associations have been created to describe Hinduism and gather information about religious festivals and other cultural events linked to Indian culture. Most of these associations, like the “Hindu Association for the Indian community in France” Dharmasanghare, are located in Paris. Local media very rarely reports on Hindu festivals. A handful of articles can be found in local newspapers, which are mainly on websites created to share this information.

The only media that reports on Indian religious festivals are local newspapers in the Paris area. This is particularly true for Sikh events given that the vast majority of Sikhs live in Bobigny where the new temple was built or in the regions Seine-Saint-Denis and Val-d’Oise. Recently the main change that was reported was the building of the new temple. Sikh festivals are generally reported in a very neutral and descriptive way like the celebration of the new year by *Le Parisien*.<sup>61</sup> Relations with local politicians are good despite the obstacles in the 2004 law, obstacles that have restricted their practices by banning the turban in public schools.

## 7.3. Indian places of worship

The only Indian place of worship that has appeared in the general media has been the new Sikh temple. The rise of interest in Sikh practices is mainly due to the debate that followed the 2004 law which gave much publicity to the French Sikh community. The building of a major new temple in Bobigny was relatively well covered by the media. Compared to contemporary plans to build mosques, no controversy seems to have surrounded this building project. A *Le Monde* article, for example, sees bystanders start worrying that the temple might be a new mosque.<sup>62</sup> *Le Parisien* reports the opening in a very factual way without starting a debate or controversies about newly-built religious places.<sup>63</sup> On this same topic, *Le Monde*, however, gives more details about the gradual integration of this community in France.<sup>64</sup> A few quotes illustrate the cordial relations between French Sikhs and the mayor of Bobigny. The article also underline how a large part of the funds have been collected in the community and how small jobs have been done by Sikhs themselves. The community is mostly perceived as patient and deserving in this article. In addition, the Sikhs are described as a success story in terms of their integration. They are often entrepreneurs or traders. However, another media, *Indes Magazine*, offers a slightly different perspective about the difficulties of building this temple, especially hostility from the neighbourhood.<sup>65</sup> It reports that the temple was initially planned for another location but the neighbourhood was hostile. In addition, they note that the building took five years mainly because the funds had to be collected among the Sikhs who also participated in the building to reduce the costs. The same facts appear here as in the article in *Le Monde* but as proofs of religious tensions and as a partial rejection of this community and their culture. This description is much less optimistic about relations between the Sikh community and the rest of the French population. Tensions seem also to be present for this discrete community.

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<sup>61</sup> *Le Parisien*, 14.4.2014: 5000 persons celebrated the Sikh new year.

<sup>62</sup> *Le Monde*, 12.11.2011: Vincent, E. In Seine-Saint-Denis, a new temple attests of the rooting of the Sikhs.

<sup>63</sup> *Le Parisien*, 13.11.2011: Bobigny: open day at the Sikh temple.

<sup>64</sup> *Le Monde*, 12.11.2011: Vincent, E. In Seine-Saint-Denis, a new temple attests of the rooting of the Sikhs.

<sup>65</sup> *Indes Magazine*, 1-2.2015: Ferrarini, H., Sikhs of France.

#### 7.4. Controversies over Sikh religious symbols

The 2004 law that banned religious symbols at school sparked an important controversy. This restriction has particularly affected the Sikh community whose men are supposed to wear a turban. In order to be able to attend schools, children from the Sikh community were then asked to remove their turban. This law which aims at promoting laicism in public schools was differently commented upon in the Sikh community. This debate meant many articles about a community that is usually absent from the media. This topic is one of the “hottest” topics in France today.

Compared to the similar controversy about the Muslim headscarf, the media seem to be more sympathetic towards the Sikh community. There are two main reasons that can explain this differential coverage. First the headscarf aims at covering women only and is perceived as reinforcing gender differences whereas the turban is worn by men and does not reinforce in the same way. The Sikh turban is, therefore, perceived more as a cultural than a religious symbol. Second the Sikh community is a very discrete and silent community. Problems of integration are not discussed in the media and the small size of the community makes them relatively invisible.

The coverage about the reactions of the French Sikh community varied. Some outlets focussed on their opposition and their refusal to give up the turban at schools whereas other outlets presented a community ready to comply, which was well integrated in the job market and in society more generally. Few articles are factual.<sup>66</sup> This difference in coverage mainly reflects the different opinions expressed by different newspapers about the 2004 law. This law is either perceived as an old and counterproductive way to enforce laicism; or as a necessary tool to reaffirm the specificity of the French tradition that tries to separate politics in the public sphere from religion (a private matter). Defending the first position, *Rue89* relates and chooses to emphasize and support the request made by India to lift the ban on turbans at schools and on official pictures.<sup>67</sup> In the article, the journalists provide testimonies of workers that experience this ban as a real obstacle to express their identity while remaining French. Mohinder Singh is quoted: “It was insulting. In France the turban is a threat for security. But without it, I can’t achieve fulfillment in the society”.<sup>68</sup> The other article quotes Mann Shingara Singh who explains: “The Sikh community, with 10,000 members in France, experiences this law as a severe impediment to the practice of their religion. Indeed, similarly to the Kesh (non-cut hair and beard) or the Kirpan (traditional dagger), the turban is one of the five attributes that must be worn by a man of this religion, without ever removing them. For them, removing the turban [would be like] a French renouncing the principles of laicism”.<sup>69</sup> Wearing the turban is described as an important part of Sikh identity. Sikhs do not want to abandon their religion to become French. A final interesting comparison is made in the article between the concept of laicism in France and in India. Whereas in France religious freedom can be restricted in order to promote equality in the public sphere, the opposite seems to be the case with India. This article clearly questions the relevance of restrictions on freedom through the example of the Sikh community. This choice is an interesting way to debate the consequences of the 2004 law. The Sikh community is less controversial than the Muslim community and the debate is, therefore, less passionate. In addition *Indes Magazine* that offers a perspective from the Indian community shows the daily difficulties experienced by the Sikhs that wear a long beard and a turban.<sup>70</sup> A long beard is increasingly rejected by the rest of the French population because of its association to the Talibans and other religious extremists. The 2004 law added another layer to these difficulties by preventing some children who wanted to keep the turban from attending schools.

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<sup>66</sup> *Courrier International*, 13.4.2013: France-India: The turban of contention.

<sup>67</sup> *Rue89*, 18.3.2010: Bellini, C., India asks France to let Sikhs wear the turban; *Rue89*, 16.12.2010: Buisson, A., Religious signs at school: Sikhs appeal to the UN.

<sup>68</sup> *Rue89*, 16.12.2010: Buisson, A., Religious signs at school: Sikhs appeal to the UN.

<sup>69</sup> *Rue89*, 18.3.2010: Bellini, C., India asks France to let Sikhs wear the turban.

<sup>70</sup> *Indes Magazine*, 1-2.2015: Ferrarini, H. Sikhs of France.

Other media outlets presented the reactions of the Sikh community to the 2004 restrictions differently. Contrary to the opposition expressed in previous articles, some media convey the image of a well-integrated community that is either not reluctant or even indifferent to the 2004 law. What is underlined is the way minorities reconcile their traditions with several French laws whose goal is to promote equality in the public sphere rather than total freedom. An article in *La Croix* offers such an image of the French Sikh community.<sup>71</sup> They chose to highlight how the turban is now worn by a minority while minimizing the opposition previously described. Most French Sikhs would not see the turban as a major determinant of their identity. This reinforces the sense that Sikhs do not only define themselves by their religious identity but also in terms of their integration into French society. The article quotes Sandeep Walia who graduated from an engineering school in India and who studies in France. He chose to remove his beard and cut his hair to work in France. He tells the newspaper: “In India, I was wearing long hair, the beard and the turban. But to work in France, to work in a firm, there are rules to respect. It does not prevent me from being Sikh. It is not because one does not wear the turban that one does not believe in god”.<sup>72</sup> French Sikhs are, by this logic, different from Indian Sikhs for whom wearing the turban is necessary. In India minorities are allowed to publicly affirm their identity through symbols and clothes. Unlike Indian Sikhs, most French Sikhs did not follow the turban requirements and did not shave their hair. The importance of the turban is minimized: it is seen as a way to keep hair clean, rather than as a compulsory religious symbol. The purpose of the media is rather to focus on people minimizing their religious traditions who are well integrated and who accept the French values of laicism, according to which religion should rather remain a private issue.

The usually “invisible” Sikh community has recently entered the fierce debate about laicism in the media. Different media traditions show the different reactions from the Sikh community to the 2004 law that restricted their freedom and the debate around the definition of laicism and the integration of religious minorities in France. One fact that can also explain the differences in coverage is the lack of statistics about minorities.

## Conclusion

This paper has analyzed French media coverage of the Indian community in the recent years. Articles about Indian nationals or people of Indian origin were gathered together and commented upon. From our varied focus, we noted that, compared to other communities, the Indian community is seen as being discrete and its characteristics have not been widely covered in the media. On the whole, relatively few articles have been written and can be categorized into articles covering local facts with a focus on the traits of the Indian community and articles covering broader events that define relations between France and India. Most articles focus on France and its own (economic and religious) tensions. In this study, it appears that two main types of events have been widely covered: business opportunities between the two countries and religious tensions in India and in France. From the study it appears that Indian culture remains largely unknown and is little covered in the French media. Media coverage has recently increased. First, France has realized the potential benefits of the Indian diaspora and of the exchanges (of students, goods and technologies) between the two countries. Second, a better understanding of Indian culture is crucial for French businessmen in India to bring the two countries closer together. It would be very interesting for further studies to compare media coverage of other minorities in France with that of the Indian diaspora, as well as media coverage of the Indian community in other countries.

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<sup>71</sup> *La Croix*, 6.10.2004: de Buor, C., A minority of Sikhs wear the turban.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibidem*.



## Newspaper sources

*Atlantico*, 15.11.2012: Picquart, P., S. Quere, Front pages of the weekly magazines, posters ni the metro... Islam is everywhere, what about Asians, this other major and silent immigration?

*Atlantico*, 24.10.2014: Goulvestre, L., Advice to do business in India

*Challenges*, 24.5.2012: Diebold, J.-B., Movies: a wind of change from Bollywood blows through the Cannes festival

*Challenges*, 28.11.2012: Merieux, A., Why are the Mittal not afraid of French people?

*Clicanoo*, 16.11.2014: Indian names, very trendy in the Tamoul community

*Courrier International*, 13.4.2013: France-India: The turban of contention

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## Appendix

Here is the descriptive list of media used in the present study.

*Le Monde* is an important centre-left evening newspaper founded by Hubert Beuve-Mery in December 1944. It mainly offers analysis and opinion. *Le Monde* supported centrist or socialist presidential candidates like Mitterand in 1981, Balladur in 1995 and Royal in 2007. In June 2010, investors Matthieu Pigasse, Pierre Berge, and Xavier Niel acquired a controlling stake in the paper.

*Le Figaro* was founded in 1826 in Paris. It is the oldest national French newspapers and is the main competitor of *Le Monde*. Its editorial line is rather conservative. Dassault Group has controlled the paper since 2004 and the company's chairman is Serge Dassault, a mayor and a senator from the right-wing party UMP. It is the second-largest national newspaper after *Le Monde*: *Le Parisien* is the third.

*Libération* is a daily newspaper founded in Paris by in 1973 Jean-Paul Sartre and Serge July inspired by the events of May 1968. Its editorial stance is currently centre-left/left. Edouard de Rothschild acquired 37% of its capital 2005.

*Le Parisien* is a daily newspaper. It was first named *Le Parisien libere* in 1944 but changed to its present title in 1986. It covers both international and national news, as well as local Parisian news. It is owned by Editions Philippe Amaury.

*L'Obs* (initially *France Observateur*, later *Le Nouvel Observateur*) is a weekly newsmagazine created in 1964. It is a general-information magazine and is appreciated for its political and literary articles. Its editorial stance is social-democratic. In 2014 *Le Monde* group bought a 65% stake in the newspaper. It recently took control of the online news site *Rue89*, which focuses on investigations and debates of ideas.

*La Croix* is a daily general Roman-Catholic newspaper. It was founded in 1880 and is now owned by Bayard Press. In addition to religion, it reports on general-interest topics including like world news, economics, culture and science. The editorial stance is neither right-wing nor left-wing.

*L'Express* is a weekly newsmagazine cofounded in 1953 and modelled on *Time* and *Der Spiegel*. The editorial stance is right-wing. It was bought by Roularta Media Group in 2006.

*Les Echos* has been France's leading economic paper since 1908. Its is free-market in its views and is owned by the French luxury goods conglomerate LVMH. It also covers innovations in science and technologies, marketing, management and law.

*Mediapart* is an online, left-leaning investigative and opinion journal created in 2008 by the former editor-in-chief of *Le Monde* Edwy Plenel. The website does not carry any advertising. The journal became famous through two cases: the Bettencourt affair and the Cahuzac case. In 2011, they launched a whistleblower website inspired by Wikileaks.

*Challenges* is a weekly business magazine created in 1982. It focuses on economy and business-related events, and on politics and world affairs. It is owned by *Le Nouvel Observateur* Group.

*Courrier international* is a weekly newspaper which translates and publishes excerpts of articles from over 900 international newspapers. It was first published in 1990 and is today part of *Le Monde* group.

*La Dépêche*, formally *La Dépêche du Midi*, is a regional daily newspaper published in Toulouse. It first appeared in 1870. It published the first articles of the socialist politician Jean Jaures and articles by Georges Clémenceau. It has a leftist editorial stance and is part of *La Dépêche du Midi* group.

*La Tribune* is a newspaper founded in 1985 and is mainly owned by Valérie Decamp.

*Direct Matin* is a free, daily newspaper aimed at commuters.

**Atlantico** is an information website that opened in 2011. The platform aims at directing the reader to finding information on the web. It is inspired by *Daily Beast* and *Business Insider*. It claims to be 'politically independent and rigorous' but is generally seen as right-wing.

**L'Etudiant** is a monthly magazine specialized in advising young students about studies, exchanges opportunities and training programs. It aims at orienting students. It was created in 1972 and is owned by Express-Roulerta group.

**Studyrama** is a magazine specialized in helping students in their studies and professional beginnings. It was created in 1989.

**The Huffington Post** is an American online blog with news and columns. All topics are covered. The French version was created in 2012 in partnership with *Le Monde* and *Les Nouvelles Editions Independantes*.

**Le Journal de l'Île de la Reunion** is a daily regional newspaper of Reunion Island. It was founded in 1951 and today belongs to Cadjee group and Hersant media group. **Clicanoo Hebdo** is its weekly supplement which is free.

**L'Usine Nouvelle** is a weekly business magazine with a secondary focus on technology. It was first published in 1891 in Charleville in the Ardennes department and was then supported by a regional trade association.

**Indes Magazine** is published by Media India Group (MIG), a platform created in 2004 that aims at forging a relationship between Europe and India to improve knowledge of India abroad.

**Francois DeSouche** ou **FdeSouche** is a blog that mainly selects articles or extracts of reports from other media. It might be owned by the Indian Tilak Raj. There is no editorial stance claimed on the blog, but it clearly follows nationalist and far-right movements. The main topics are immigration, Islam, urban crime and education issues.

**La Gazette de la Grande Ile** is a daily newspaper published in Madagascar.

**Madmoizelle** is a monthly women's magazine.

**Respect Magazine** is a quarterly free magazine focused on readers below 40 years old.