

**Refugee Review Tribunal
AUSTRALIA**

RRT RESEARCH RESPONSE

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This response was prepared by the Country Research Section of the Refugee Review Tribunal (RRT) after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the RRT within time constraints. This response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum.

Questions

- 1. Please provide information about the typical treatment by family and community of a woman returning alone to a rural area in Punjab.**
- 2. If the treatment is harsh, what is the perception of such women which motivates that treatment?**
- 3. Would the local police provide her with protection if she needed it? If not, why not?**
- 4. Would there be any serious practical difficulties for a woman in relocating to a new part of the country (including renting accommodation, finding work etc., living unmolested etc)?**

RESPONSE

- 1. Please provide information about the typical treatment by family and community of a woman returning alone to a rural area in Punjab.**
- 2. If the treatment is harsh, what is the perception of such women which motivates that treatment?**

One report was found of an alleged honour killing in Punjab involving a young woman and citizen of the United Kingdom. Newspaper reports from 2001 detail the case of Surjit Athwal who, while in the process of divorcing her husband in Britain, returned to the Punjab in 1998 for a vacation with her mother-in-law during which time she disappeared. Her family and others suspect that an honour killing. According to *The Observer*:

[Surjit Athwal's] impending divorce and Western dress would not have made this hard-working mother popular **among villagers steeped in the traditional culture of Punjab. It's a region known for so-called 'honour killings' of wives – where a friend or relative of a deserted husband will sometimes take it upon themselves to take murderous revenge.**

... Amnesty International may also consider taking up Surjit's case. **'It does bear some of the hallmarks of an "honour killing" of the kind that Amnesty International has been investigating and reporting for many years,'** said a spokeswoman.

“Honour killings” occur where a family or society’s honour is seen to be closely bound up in a woman’s conduct. Where a woman is perceived to have brought shame or dishonour on her family – for having an affair or for simply wishing to divorce her husband, or indeed just as a trumped-up excuse for getting rid of her – then a family member or friend may decide to put the woman to death, supposedly in “defence of their honour”.

‘Suspected “honour killings” and other human rights abuses must be fully investigated and the perpetrators brought to justice. It is vital that all UK citizens receive support from all our state institutions, in particular the Foreign Office’ (McVeigh, T. 2001, ‘Riddle of the mother who vanished’, *The Observer*, 22 July, <http://observer.guardian.co.uk/international/story/0,6903,525649,00.html> – Accessed 13 February 2007 – Attachment 1).

Seven years after the disappearance in December 2005, Surjit Athwal’s former husband and mother-in-law were charged by Scotland Yard with conspiracy to murder (Tandon, A. 2005, ‘Disappeared NRI’s kin wants CBI inquiry’ *The Tribune* online, 8 December <http://www.tribuneindia.com/2005/20051209/world.htm#2> – Accessed 13 February 2007 – Attachment 2). The motivation behind the alleged murder remains unknown and the case is still ongoing, with the trial currently delayed until April 2007 (‘Murder plot trial delayed’ 2006, *Coventry Evening Telegraph*, 26 September – Attachment 3). The US Department of State in its 2006 report on human rights practices in India states that honour killings continued to be a problem in the Punjab, and that police in Delhi arrested 4 men and a father suspected of ordering an honour killing of his daughter for “living separately from her husband” (US Department of State 2006, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices – India, 8 March – Attachment 4).

Considerable information was found on the situation of single women in the Punjab deserted by overseas based Indian husbands. The typical situation involves male non-resident Indians (NRIs) returning to the Punjab for a short period during which time an arranged marriage is undertaken. The husband then returns to their home country – usually the United States, Canada, Britain, or Australia – never or rarely contacting the bride again and in some cases requesting a divorce (‘Where have our husbands gone?’ 2004, *The Asian Pacific Post*, 21 October <http://www.asianpacificpost.com/portal2/402881910674ebab010674f4f02015e1.do.html> – Accessed 13 February 2007 – Attachment 5). In such cases, the abandoned women live with relatives, become “unwanted dependents on their in-laws and parents”, or:

Activists say that a large proportion of the abandoned wives end up as a statistic in India where a woman is molested every 26 minutes, raped every 34 minutes, sexually harassed every 42 minutes and kidnapped every 43 minutes.

Those who do not accept their fate and fight back take on the risk of becoming part of another deadly number in India—every six hours a young married women is burnt alive, beaten to death, or driven to commit suicide (‘Where have our husbands gone?’ 2004, *The Asian Pacific Post*, 21 October <http://www.asianpacificpost.com/portal2/402881910674ebab010674f4f02015e1.do.html> – Accessed 13 February 2007 – Attachment 5).

Other cases included in this category of single women do involve overseas marriages which breakdown due to familial abuse. However, little information is provided on the situation of these women once they return to India:

The National Commission for Women (NCW) in New Delhi recently identified desertions of women by NRIs as one of the most serious gender issues in Punjab. It proposed a draft convention on custody of children and distribution of property from such failed marriages.

“The necessity for the convention arises from the fact that NRI marriages are becoming more and more common. **In Punjab, there is an NRI marriage in every third or fourth house,**” according to NCW Chairperson Poornima Advani. The NCW estimates the number of women deserted by NRIs in Punjab alone at between 10,000 to 15,000 and recently recommended establishing a special cell for problems related to NRI marriages in the Ministry of External Affairs and the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs, and some Indian embassies have added welfare officers to assist **Indian women caught up in bad marriages overseas.**

... When things don't work out in a cross-country marriage, the woman from India is especially vulnerable. She is in a new country, alone and dependent on her husband's family, without any support system to fall back on.

Marriage to an IT professional brought Roshini from New Delhi to New York. She was pursuing a degree in college, and her new husband had told her she could continue her studies in the U.S. “But when I came here, he suddenly changed,” recalls Roshini, whose name has been altered to protect her identity.

“He started abusing me by name calling, pushing me around and not even letting me talk to my parents in India. He basically isolated me from everyone.”

This man whom she was just getting to know was so violent that he could be sitting next to her and slap her for no reason, and even hit her with a slipper and threatened her with a hammer. One morning, as she slept, he came and kicked her on the back: “I was scared for my life and that's when I called the police. I got an order of protection and then I contacted Sakhi.”

... Nor is it just village women in this situation: well-educated, urban women are also finding themselves trapped. The Indian media have widely reported on women who after spending a few idyllic months with their new grooms in India, have never seen them again. **They've been abused by in-laws and have had to face dowry demands. In many cases, their in-laws have thrown them out and the men have remarried abroad.**

... According to a report by Indo-Asian News Service, the parents of Gurmeet Singh and Balwinder Singh, who are based in Chicago, advertised in Indian matrimonial columns seeking brides for their two NRI sons. They forgot to mention one small, inconvenient detail – the older son Gurmeet was already married! He had married Chandigarh resident Jasdeep Kaur on January 18, 1998. The two even had a child.

In order to facilitate her migration to the U.S., Jasdeep alleges, the family arranged a fake court marriage with Balwinder, the younger brother who was a green card holder. **While in the U.S. she was abused and tortured by her husband and his family, with dowry demands of Rs. 1 million. She returned to India in March 2001.** After seeing the advertisement for brides for the two brothers in the newspapers, she petitioned the courts there and the two brothers have been restrained from marrying by the court. Her mother Baljit Kaur said they went to court so that other girls would not get cheated like their daughter (Melwani, L. 2005, ‘Dishonor And Abandon – The word is out in India: Marry an NRI at your own peril’, *Little India* website, 2 May, <http://www.littleindia.com/news/134/ARTICLE/1475/2005-02-05.html> – Accessed 13 February 2006 – Attachment 6).

A later August 2006 article details the case of domestic abuse in an overseas marriage. The only information provided on the situation of the women on return to India is that “many [are] unwilling to speak out, fearing the shame and stigma associated with being a divorced or separated woman in traditional Indian society”:

[A] 22-year-old student from the north Indian city of Chandigarh thought she was heading for a prosperous new life in the West with a British-born Indian doctor after he chose her from scores of women who replied to his advert seeking a bride.

But after leaving her family and homeland to live in the UK, Sonal found her new husband was a fraud. **“He was mentally sick and wasn’t a doctor and didn’t have a job. His family tricked me and now my life is finished,” she said.**

Women’s groups say every year hundreds of starry-eyed girls seeking a better life in the West are duped into wedlock by men of Indian origin living in the diaspora -- in countries like the United States, Britain, Canada and **Australia** -- mostly for money.

... Very often the women go abroad after the wedding only to find themselves abandoned with no one turn to, no money, no ability to speak the local language and no knowledge of the norms and customs of the alien country.

Other women tell tales of being battered or kept prisoner in the home and treated like domestic workers. Some even find their new husband is already married to someone else.

There are also cases of “holiday brides” -- women abandoned in India within days or weeks of marriage with the husband promising to return once visa arrangements have been made for his wife, but never actually doing so.

There are no accurate numbers on how many cheat marriages take place, but some reports say India’s northern state of Punjab, which has a large community overseas, has so far registered 15,000 cases alone. Other states like Gujarat and Kerala have also seen cases.

But activists say the number of deceived brides is under-reported with many unwilling to speak out, **fearing the shame and stigma associated with being a divorced or separated woman in traditional Indian society** (Bhalla, N. 2006, ‘Indian brides seek protection from abusive grooms’, *The Scotsman* website, 15 August http://news.scotsman.com/latest_international.cfm?id=1188452006 – Accessed 14 February 2007 – Attachment 7).

Some further information was found on the situation of single women of failed marriages with NRIs specific to the Punjab district of Hoshiarpur in which the village of Gohgron, Mahilpur, is located (‘Information regarding mother self help group (Hoshiarpur)’ undated, Government of Punjab - Department of Education website, <http://www.punjabeducation.gov.in/sub-pages/MDM/MSHG/Hoshiarpur/mahilpur1.pdf> – Accessed 12 February 2007 – Attachment 8; ‘Punjab’, Maps of India, CD Rom – Attachment 9). A news article from January 2005 details a meeting in Hoshiarpur between delegates of India’s Human Rights Department, district police, and 20 women:

To know the **sorrowful plight** of young wives of Non-resident Indians (NRIs) who are living under **miserable conditions with their parents or close relatives after desertion** by their husbands and to find out ways and means for their rehabilitation, a delegation of Human Right Department of the Union government along with **district police authorities Hoshiarpur met 20 such ladies who were allegedly exploited by their NRI husbands.**

The delegation included M K Jabbi, Council for Social Development, New Delhi and Belu Mehshwari from History Department of Punjab University Chandigarh. A many as 40 deserted wives of NRIs had been invited **by the women cell of Community Policing Resource Centre Hoshiarpur on Sunday appearing before the members of this delegation were of which 20 had turned up.**

The members listened to the sorrowful plight of exploitation by their NRI husbands **and their present miserable living conditions. Majority of them were still hopeful for their re-union with husbands who had completely ignored them.** Balwinder Kaur, who has a 5-year-old daughter Rakinder Kaur narrated her plight in a choked voice and tears in her eyes. She said she was married with NRI Roop Lal, serving in Belgium on December 3, 1997 through her aunt.

After staying 14 years with her, Roop Lal left for Belgium. She was told by her-in-laws that to sent her to Belgium, her passport was required which would not mention her married status. They got prepared her passport and on one month visa she went to Belgium on September 16, 1998 where she came to know that Roop Lal was already married there with a Belgium girl.

She alleged that she was **mentally and physically tortured by her husband and his first wife.** Later she was shifted to Italy where she stayed illegally with close relatives of Roop Lal.

She was blessed with a daughter there in August 1999 before being **ultimately deported to India on January 28, 2000. Balwinder Kaur was now living with her parents.**

Her father is a petty shopkeeper at village Bulhowal. Her husband and members of her in-laws family were insisting her for divorce. They never paid a single paisa to her and her daughter for their maintenance even then she was still interested to stay again with her husband, she said. Similar is the plights of Kulwinder Kaur, wife of NRI Jaspal Chaudhry of Lebanon, Rajinder Kaur wife of NRI Shobha Singh of Kuwait, Jaswinder Kaur wife of Jora Masih of England and Bharti Singh wife of NRI Kuldip Singh of Canada.

All of them have been **deserted by their husbands and are living with their parents under miserable conditions.** Belu Mehshwari while talking to media persons said that to know the plight of ground reality of desertion of their wives by the NRIs, the Human Rights Department had sent this delegation to meet the victims and to listen to their grievances ('40 deserted wives of NRIs had been invited by the women cell of Community Policing Resource Centre Hoshiarpur', 2005, NRIinternet.com website, 23 January http://www.nriinternet.com/Marriages/Desrted_Wife/2005/Jan_/1_40wives_invited.htm – Accessed 9 February 2006 – Attachment 10).

A 2006 report was also found on the assistance offered by one non-government organisation to single women (which includes widows, divorcees and deserted women) in the neighbouring state of Himachal Pradesh which borders with Hoshiarpur. The articles states that "these women ...continue living in misery" ('NGO comes to single women's aid', 2006, *The Tribune* online edition, 16 May <http://www.tribuneindia.com/2006/20060517/himachal.htm#3> – Accessed 9 February 2007 – Attachment 11). The extent and seriousness of failed overseas marriages is such that in July 2006 a workshop was held in the capital of Punjab, Chandigarh, involving the Ministry of Overseas Indians, the National Commission for Women, and non-government organisations in an attempt to warn prospective brides and their families of the potential risks of such marriages ('Non resident Indian (NRI) marriages: dreams to nightmares', 2006, Women

living under muslim laws website, 15 August

[http://www.wluml.org/english/newsfulltxt.shtml?cmd\[157\]=x-157-541371](http://www.wluml.org/english/newsfulltxt.shtml?cmd[157]=x-157-541371) – Accessed 13 February 2007 – Attachment 12).

3. Would the local police provide her with protection if she needed it? If not, why not?

Some evidence of the ability and willingness of police to help protect single women who may be at risk of an honour killing is perhaps offered by the actions of the Punjab police with regard to their investigation of the murder of Surjit Athwal in 1998 referred to in Questions 1 and 2 above. In a 2004 *BBC News* article on the case, the brother of Surjit Athwal, Jagdeesh Singh stated that:

The Punjab police proved to be completely uncooperative, completely unprofessional and completely undetailed in its attention to Surjit's case. **Their attention to her case was a grudging disinterest, a pure paper exercise, no serious investigative follow-up of Surjit's disappearance** ('Honour killings' 2004, *BBC News*, 8 September <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/programmes/newsnight/3638014.stm> – Accessed 13 February 2007 – Attachment 13).

The same *BBC News* article also gives a contrasting opinion on the Punjab police by British detective superintendent Jim Blasir, who was in charge of the investigation:

My experience in working with Punjab police is I found the officers very professional, but historically, there have been some abuses in Punjab, some abuses of human rights. I think that there does need to be good links. I think that if this Surjit Athwal case was to happen today, you would get a very different response. That's the first thing I would say because we're going back ten years when our relationships weren't as good, and I think sometimes lots of the good results in homicide investigations are where we have good evidence collection at the scene and there's good initial investigation, and I think that if a case similar to Surjit Athwal was to happen tomorrow in Punjab, the results would be very different ('Honour killings' 2004, *BBC News*, 8 September <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/programmes/newsnight/3638014.stm> – Accessed 13 February 2007 – Attachment 13).

News reports do indicate that district police in Hoshiarpur have set up centers and helplines which may assist single women in a failed marriage with an NRI (Non resident Indian). From July 2003, the female Senior Superintendent of Police in the district inaugurated 3 police help lines for "women, children, old people and NRIs" as part of a Community Police Resource Centre (CPRC), which also looked into "marital problems amongst NRIs in the district, women abuse and travel agent related cases". Approval was also granted for 7 CPRCs to be set up in various districts ('Now community policing gets real' 2003, *The Times of India* website, 20 July <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/85224.cms> – Accessed 9 February 2007 – Attachment 14). As reported in answer to questions 1 and 2 above, the women's cell of the CPRC in Hoshiarpur was part of the group which met in January 2005 to listen to the grievances of deserted wives from NRI marriages ('40 deserted wives of NRIs had been invited by the women cell of Community Policing Resource Centre Hoshiarpur', 2005, NRIinternet.com website, 23 January http://www.nriinternet.com/Marriages/Desrted_Wife/2005/Jan_/1_40wives_invited.htm – Accessed 9 February 2006 – Attachment 10). Further details of the role of CPRCs in relation to protecting women who are at risk are provided in a 2005 *Frontline* news piece:

The CPRCs provide a range of services to citizens in a congenial atmosphere. Besides facilitating grievance redress to deal with **common complaints such as problems in accessibility of police officers at the lower levels, they act as nodal centres for community-oriented schemes for combating domestic violence**, helping the aged, providing legal aid and arranging meetings of residents welfare associations with traffic regulation committees and economic offences wings. Also taken up are drug de-addiction campaigns and counselling for women. The CPRCs act as community service-cum-information centres to provide “no objection certificates” for arms licences, to help with verification for the issue of passports, grant permission for religious and political processions, and to use loudspeakers for social functions, and to deal with requests for security arrangements.

Considering the CPRC’s role as “victim relief centres”, their personnel have been trained to focus on the rights, requirements and expectations of victims of crimes. They have been trained to improve police response to victims of sexual and other violent crimes, specially trained women officers helping avoid insensitive questioning. Community group volunteers and retired civil officers have been engaged in running different helplines.

... Sanjiv Gupta, the Inspector-General of Police who heads the Community Affairs Division of the Punjab Police, said that the State planned to set up CPRCs at the police station level. **This initiative is expected to have the maximum impact as it will improve the response of police personnel dealing with victims of sexual and other violent crimes.**

While CPRCs have been set up at most district headquarters, the ones at Patiala, Kapurthala, Hoshiarpur and Bhatinda have received the highest appreciation. The Kapurthala CPRC self-appraisal revealed some important trends. **In the six months before setting up of the CPRC, the “crime against women” cell disposed of 109 of the 145 complaints it received. It took 37 days on average to decide each complaint. With the setting up of the CPRC, 359 out of the 429 complaints received were disposed of, each taking an average of 19 days. In all, 3,049 public complaints were received after the setting up of the centre as compared to 2,825 prior to it** (Pandher, S. 2005, ‘A pioneering effort’ *Frontline*, vol.22, iss.8, March12-15 <http://www.hinduonnet.com/fline/fl2208/stories/20050422002612000.htm> – Accessed 14 February 2007 – Attachment 15).

While the establishment of CPRCs in Punjab provides some evidence of the ability of police and state authorities to receive and respond to complaints from women who may be at risk, the extent of crime perpetrated against women in the Punjab remains high. A news report of October 2006 detailing statistics relating to crimes against women in Punjab stated that “women in the state continue to live under terror”:

Twenty one women are murdered and four are attempted to murder every month in Punjab. About 28 women are raped and two face attempt to rape every month. At an average 27 women are kidnapped every month and about 10 women commit suicide. About 22 cases of molestation of women are registered every month.

This is a glimpse of law and order situation in Punjab while the women in state continue to live under terror.

During last five years, at an average 2300 cases of crime against women were registered. Lowest crime rate was registered in 2005 when 2282 cases were registered. During 2006 till month of August only 1756 cases of crime against women have been registered.

If figures tell the tale of women’s plight, it is shocking to know that during last five years

(2002-2006 till August) have seen an increase in rape cases with 1591 women raped and 143 faced an attempt to rape.

About 200 women have been murdered in the state in first eight months of current year. The figures were 271 murders of women in 2002, 239 in 2003, 240 in 2004, 256 in 2005 and 191 in 2006.

The dowry deaths shows the fate of women in Punjabi society. According to figures 165 women were killed for dowry in 2002, 104 in 2003, 105 in 2004, 96 in 2005 and 85 in first eight months of 2006.

The dowry harassment cases in Punjab have been going unabated. Till August this year, 534 dowry cases have been registered. In five years 3946 dowry harassment cases were registered which means 70 cases every month.

1231 of molestation of women were registered in Punjab in five years of Congress rule. 475 cases of eve teasing (nine every month) have been registered ('Crime against women in Punjab goes on unabated' 2006, Punjab Newslite Network website, 25 October <http://www.punjabnewslite.com/content/view/1761/46/> – Accessed 14 February 2007 – Attachment 16).

4. Would there be any serious practical difficulties for a woman in relocating to a new part of the country (including renting accommodation, finding work etc., living unmolested etc)?

In July 2004 the UK Home Office undertook a fact finding mission to India to look at the situation and treatment of women. The mission sought the opinions of around a dozen experts on the question of relocation for women in India, including those who are single or divorced. The most relevant views expressed with regard to the practical difficulties that young women may face in relocating are the following:

The representative at the NCW [National Commission for Women] said that **internal relocation is not easy for women all over India. Even if a woman is independent she can still face violence. In small cities it is very difficult for women to set up homes independently if she has a family. It is not easy for single women to survive and the problem of literacy also plays a part.**

According to Dr Basu at AIWC in Delhi, it is still **difficult for women to live on their own in India however not so much in urban areas though. Security is not there. Some women manage to live on their own in apartments but this is an urban phenomenon.** In addition it would be very difficult for single unmarried women living outside of a hostel because it would be very difficult to rent due to the expense and **landlords do not let apartments to women.** The situation is changing but the general view is that women should be married and not working, or staying as a paying guest with a family.

Jagori representatives echoed this view when they said that it is very **difficult for women to move and relocate because in northern India they do not have access to information and women's illiteracy rates are still high in rural areas. It is difficult for lone women to move to rural and urban areas.** By law the woman is the custodian of her children until the age of 7 but the father remains the guardian, sometimes the children are given the option of where they want to go. The first option for a woman is to return to her parent's home and the parental advice is to return to the husband's home and endure the situation because of the cultural aspect.

... According to Dr Mohini Giri at the Guild of Service it would be very difficult for a single woman to relocate as society goes by natural law with everything in pairs and it would be even harder with children. ...She suggested that **even the more educated** would find it hard so by comparison it may be easier for a single woman to relocate. A single woman wanting **to rent an apartment would be viewed with hesitation** so she would have to stay in a hostel without her children. Most women prefer to relocate to natal areas where parents or siblings live. In recent years in urban affluent areas, parents are more protective and the mindset has changed over the last decade or so but this is not the case amongst the urban lower middle classes. **Women are educated in the affluent classes so can get work, however violence against women is huge particularly with regard to communal riots.**

Kamal Singh at the British Council stated that mobility is an issue and that the situation was very grim with **safe housing being hard to find even for those in the higher income bracket**. Women from both **high and low income brackets** moving on their own in search of a safe home, are viewed with **suspicion**. She thought it may be easier in urban areas as accommodation for younger women to live alone did exist but along with tight restrictions, in the form of paying guest accommodation.

...According to representatives from the AP Women's Network and Oxfam it is **not possible for women to live on their own because society clings on to age old customs**. They stated that it would also be a major problem for women to relocate, including **middle class women**.

As noted by a senior lecturer from Osmania University in Hyderabad, there are more occurrences of **girls living independently where they get jobs in Call Centres where cars are sent for women working at night**. In Hyderabad, by and large people have accepted this situation and there are a lot of girls living on their own. Whenever change is necessary people are changing without a fuss. She also stated that there is stigma attached to a married woman returning to her parents so within the constraints she may try to signal to her family that she is under pressure.

...According to a representative from Sanchetana in Ahmedabad, **even for educated women it is very difficult for them to live separately**. On the subject of inter-faith marriages we were told that this did not happen between Hindus and Muslims so much anymore. Re-marriage for Muslims is possible but not for Hindus. Widows are alienated and isolated in their social life and are forced to live in poverty. **For divorced women it is not easy to set up on their own. The delegation were told that there are not many divorced Hindu women** but that you do find remarried Muslim women and single women (UK Home Office, 2004, *Report of the fact finding mission to India – Women in India*, UK Home Office website, 11-24 July, chapter 9 http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs06/india_ffm0704_250106.doc – Accessed 13 February 2007 – Attachment 17).

Two experts in the report refer specifically to the state of Punjab in stating their opinion on the possibility of relocation:

According to a representative at the Institute for Development and Communication **in Punjab single unit migration takes place but only from white collar high profile workers, relocation does not take place amongst the working classes**. Dr Dagar at the Institute reported that in some areas such as Maharashtra and Gujarat it has changed for the better for women in terms of better access to education. In terms of mobility, globalisation has enabled women to get night jobs in call centres, in Bombay it is always easy to get a job. She commented that the awareness is there but not the sensitivity. **She said that social mobility even in the upper income groups is very limited and happens more within the family circle**. Social structures are very important and when a girl goes to university she will stay with family. Women see home as a protection and this view will always prevail.

As stated by Rajvinder Singh Bains, in **Punjab** in terms of relocation, **girls are not free to move around and are kept inside in the evening** to prevent them from being subjected to eve-teasing and a woman would not feel safe out and about after eight-thirty in the evening. **In the villages she would be subjected to more repression and ridicule. North India is very different, it is a violent part of India and this makes a woman a hindrance, as she is unable to “wield a sword.”** (UK Home Office, 2004, *Report of the fact finding mission to India – Women in India*, UK Home Office website, 11-24 July, chapter 9 http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs06/india_ffm0704_250106.doc – Accessed 13 February 2007 – Attachment 17).

A more recent July 2006 UK Home Office *Operational Guidance Note* on India stated the following on internal relocation for single women:

3.11.6 Internal relocation. The law provides for freedom of movement and the Government generally respects this in practice, however, in certain border areas the Government requires special permits. **However, the situation as regards internal relocation for single women, divorcees with or without children, and widows may differ from the situation for men as it may be difficult for women on their own to find secure accommodation. Although rents are high and landlords are often unwilling to rent to single women there are hostels particularly in urban areas where a large number of call centres provide employment.** The situation for women with children is likely to be more difficult as children may not be accepted in hostels. Illiterate women from rural areas are likely to find it particularly difficult to obtain accommodation as a lone woman. **For some women in India relocation will not be unduly harsh but this is only likely to be the case where the individual is single, without children to support and is educated enough to be able to support herself. Some single women may also be able to relocate to live with extended family or friends in other parts of the country. However, where these circumstances do not apply internal relocation is likely to be unduly harsh.**

3.11.8 Caselaw

BK [2002] UKIAT03387. The Tribunal found that it would be unduly harsh to expect a woman from a rural background to relocate to another part of India because in reality she would be destitute, without accommodation, without housing and with no one to turn to (UK Home Office 2006, *Operational Guidance Note – India*, UK Home Office Immigration and Nationality Directorate website, 10 July <http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk/documents/countryspecificasylumpolicyogns/indiaogn?vie w=Binary> – Accessed 14 February 2007 – Attachment 18).

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<http://www.punjabeducation.gov.in/>

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US Department of State www.state.org

United Nations (UN)

Non-Government Organisations

International News & Politics

BBC News website <http://news.bbc.co.uk/>

The Observer website <http://observer.guardian.co.uk/>

The Tribune website <http://www.tribuneindia.com/>

The Asian Pacific Post website <http://www.asianpacificpost.com/>

Little India website <http://www.littleindia.com/>

The Times of India website <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/>

Region Specific Links

NRIinternet.com website <http://www.nriinternet.com/>

Topic Specific Links

Women living under muslim laws website <http://www.wluml.org/>

Search Engines

Google search engine <http://www.google.com.au/>

Online Subscription Services

Library Networks

University Sites

Databases:

FACTIVA (news database)

BACIS (DIMA Country Information database)

REFINFO (IRBDC (Canada) Country Information database)

ISYS (RRT Country Research database, including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, US Department of State Reports)

RRT Library Catalogue

List of Attachments

1. McVeigh, T. 2001, 'Riddle of the mother who vanished', *The Observer*, 22 July, <http://observer.guardian.co.uk/international/story/0,6903,525649,00.html> – Accessed 13 February 2007.
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