



Australian Government
Refugee Review Tribunal

Country Advice

India

India – IND39373 – New Delhi –
Christians – Languages – Hindi and
Gujarati – Relocation

7 October 2011

1. Can you advise what the situation is for non-denominational Christians living in New Delhi, India?

Some reports were located regarding the Christian population, and regarding attacks against Christians, both in the city of New Delhi and in the wider Delhi national capital territory area (NCT Delhi).

The Archdiocese of Delhi website contains the same demographic information as cited in RRT Research Response IND32870. That is, the Archdiocese has 80 diocesan priests and 60 parishes, most of which are situated within the city of New Delhi.¹ Census results from 2001 indicated that the Christian population in New Delhi was 130,000, or 0.9 per cent of the population. At the time of writing, similar information from the 2011 government census was not available.² In August 2008, Christian Solidarity Worldwide reported that a rally against anti-Christian violence in Orissa state was held in New Delhi. Approximately 10,000 people attended the rally.³

Additionally, the Archdiocese of Delhi claims to have a significant number of other congregations throughout the NCT Delhi area and Haryana state. According to the Archdiocese, Catholic congregations and communities comprise 105,000 of the total 19,500,000 religious congregations within its territory.⁴ With regard to interreligious violence, the Archdiocese's website also states that "[by] and large, people of different faith, states, languages and cultures live together in peace, though occasionally there are communal riots and clashes which rarely go out of control".⁵

¹ 'History – Archdiocese of Delhi' 2006, Archdiocese of Delhi website http://www.delhiarchdiocese.com/arch/arch_history.html – Accessed 11 February 2008 <Attachment>; note that the Archdiocese of Delhi website domain name appears to have changed since IND32870 was written. The website, which includes a list of parishes in New Delhi, is available at <http://archdioceseofdelhi.com/index.html>

² 'Population by religious communities – census of India 2001', Census of India, Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner website, http://www.censusindia.gov.in/Census_Data_2001/Census_data_finder/C_Series/Population_by_religious_communities.htm – Accessed 6 February 2008 <Attachment>

³ 'India: CSW, Dalit Freedom Network and Human Rights Watch call for world action over anti-Christian violence in Orissa' 2008, Christian Solidarity Worldwide, 29 August, <http://dynamic.csw.org.uk/article.asp?t=news&id=780> – Accessed 18 March 2009 <Attachment>

⁴ 'History – Archdiocese of Delhi' 2006, Archdiocese of Delhi website http://www.delhiarchdiocese.com/arch/arch_history.html – Accessed 11 February 2008 <Attachment>

⁵ 'History – Archdiocese of Delhi' 2006, Archdiocese of Delhi website http://www.delhiarchdiocese.com/arch/arch_history.html – Accessed 11 February 2008 <Attachment>; note that the Archdiocese of Delhi website domain name appears to have changed since February 2008, IND32870 was written. The current Archdiocese of Delhi website, which includes a list of parishes in New Delhi, is available at <http://archdioceseofdelhi.com/index.html>

Most major, relevant annual reports did not contain reports of Christians being targeted for harm in New Delhi. An exception was the US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), which reported that a Christian pastor was attacked in 2010. The pastor was reportedly beaten with hockey sticks by 25 members of the Hindu Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) organisation.⁶

Other relevant news reports of attacks in New Delhi, many of which were reports from the Christian *Compass Direct* news service, were located. These reports generally reported attacks on Christian leaders in various areas within New Delhi. Search results included the following:

- *Compass Direct* reported that, on 22 August 2010, a pastor was forcibly escorted by armed members of the RSS to a community hall where approximately 150 RSS members were meeting. The pastor was accused of conducting forced conversions, and attacked.⁷
- In June 2010, an Afghani Christian was reportedly beaten by two people, who were suspected to be Muslim, in Malviya Nagar, New Delhi. An unnamed source reported to *Compass Direct* that Afghani Christian residents had faced “warnings, threats and attacks in different areas of New Delhi”.⁸
- The All India Christian Council reported two attacks on Delhi Christians in March 2010. In one incident, approximately 20-25 people reportedly entered a convent school in Faridabad, NCT Delhi, and assaulted a school management committee member. In a separate incident, a New Delhi pastor and one other person were reportedly beaten by RSS members while they were on their way home from a prayer meeting.⁹
- In December 2009, Christians attending a Christmas service in Nagafgarh area were reportedly assaulted by Hindu extremists. *Compass Direct* reported that three pastors sustained injuries in the attack; the pastors did not file a complaint with police.¹⁰
- In June 2009, the *The Times of India* reported the arrest of a man in connection with a series of attacks on churches and the murder of a priest in Noida area, New Delhi.¹¹

Further reports note past attacks on church buildings. Another article published by *The Times of India* reported that four NCT Delhi churches had been attacked between December 2007 and October 2008. A pastor of one such church, in west Delhi, reportedly alleged that police would not allow him to reconstruct the boundary of the church.¹² *Compass Direct* reported the disturbance of a New Delhi prayer meeting and assault of a pastor in July 2008,¹³ and on a

⁶ US Commission on International Religious Freedom 2010, *Annual Report 2010*, 29 April, p. 245 <Attachment>

⁷ ‘India Briefs: Recent incidents of persecution’ 2010, *Compass Direct*, 31 August

<http://www.compassdirect.org/english/country/india/24929/> - Accessed 1 September 2010 <Attachment>

⁸ ‘India Briefs: Recent Incidents of Persecution’ 2010, *Compass Direct*, 30 June <Attachment>

⁹ ‘2 attacks on Christians in NCR’ 2010, All India Christian Council website, 25 March

http://indianchristians.in/news/index2.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=4042&pop=1&page=0&Itemid=45 - Accessed 27 August 2010 <Attachment>

¹⁰ ‘India Briefs: Recent incidents of persecution; 2010, *Compass Direct*, 7 January <Attachment>

¹¹ ‘One held for killing Christian priest’ 2009, *The Times of India*, 27 June

http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2009-06-27/delhi/28212617_1_christian-priest-malegaon-special-cell - Accessed 5 October 2011 <Attachment>

¹² Sengupta, N. 2008, ‘City Christians still scared’, *The Times of India*, 21 October

http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2008-10-21/delhi/27919801_1_attacks-police-stations-firs - Accessed 5 October 2011 <Attachment>

¹³ ‘India Briefs: Recent Incidents of Persecution’ 2008, *Compass Direct*, 26 July <Attachment>

February 2008 attack on a church and vandalism of parishioners' cars in northeast Delhi.¹⁴ Police reportedly registered both cases.^{15 16}

The US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) has noted that, despite a generally peacefully coexistence, communal violence does occur at times between religious groups across India. The Indian Ministry of Home Affairs recorded a total of 826 incidents of communal violence in 2009, in which 125 people died.¹⁷ According to an article in the *Asia Times*, the most common form of communal violence occurs between Hindus and Muslims. However, the source also notes that Hindu-Christian violence is not uncommon.¹⁸ The USCIRF's most recent annual report cites several examples of attacks on Christians across India in its most recent annual report, although none of the incidents cited occurred in New Delhi.¹⁹ According to *Compass Direct*, the majority of attacks against Christians from 2001 until December 2010 occurred in Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh states.²⁰ The USCIRF has also reported that India's "democratic system, open society, independent legal institutions, vibrant civil society, and free press actively provided mechanisms to address violations of religious freedom when they occurred".²¹

2. Please advise on any other possible places of relocation for speakers of Hindi and Gujarati.

To assist in responding to this question, Map A, below, depicts the states of India. This map also provides a simple language breakdown, naming the majority language in each state. According to this map, Hindi is the majority language in the following northern states: Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Delhi, Uttaranchal, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh. Gujarati is the majority language in Gujarat state. The map is undated but the source suggests that it was created circa 2002.²²

¹⁴ 'India Briefs: Recent Incidents of Persecution' 2008, *Compass Direct*, 26 February <Attachment>

¹⁵ 'India Briefs: Recent Incidents of Persecution' 2008, *Compass Direct*, 26 July <Attachment>

¹⁶ 'India Briefs: Recent Incidents of Persecution' 2008, *Compass Direct*, 26 February <Attachment>

¹⁷ US Department of State 2011, *2010 International Religious Freedom Report (July-December) – India*, 13 September, Introduction <Attachment>

¹⁸ 'India divided over communal violence bill' 2011, *Asia Times*, 30 June http://www.atimes.com/atimes/South_Asia/MF30Df02.html, accessed on 1 July, 2011 <Attachment>

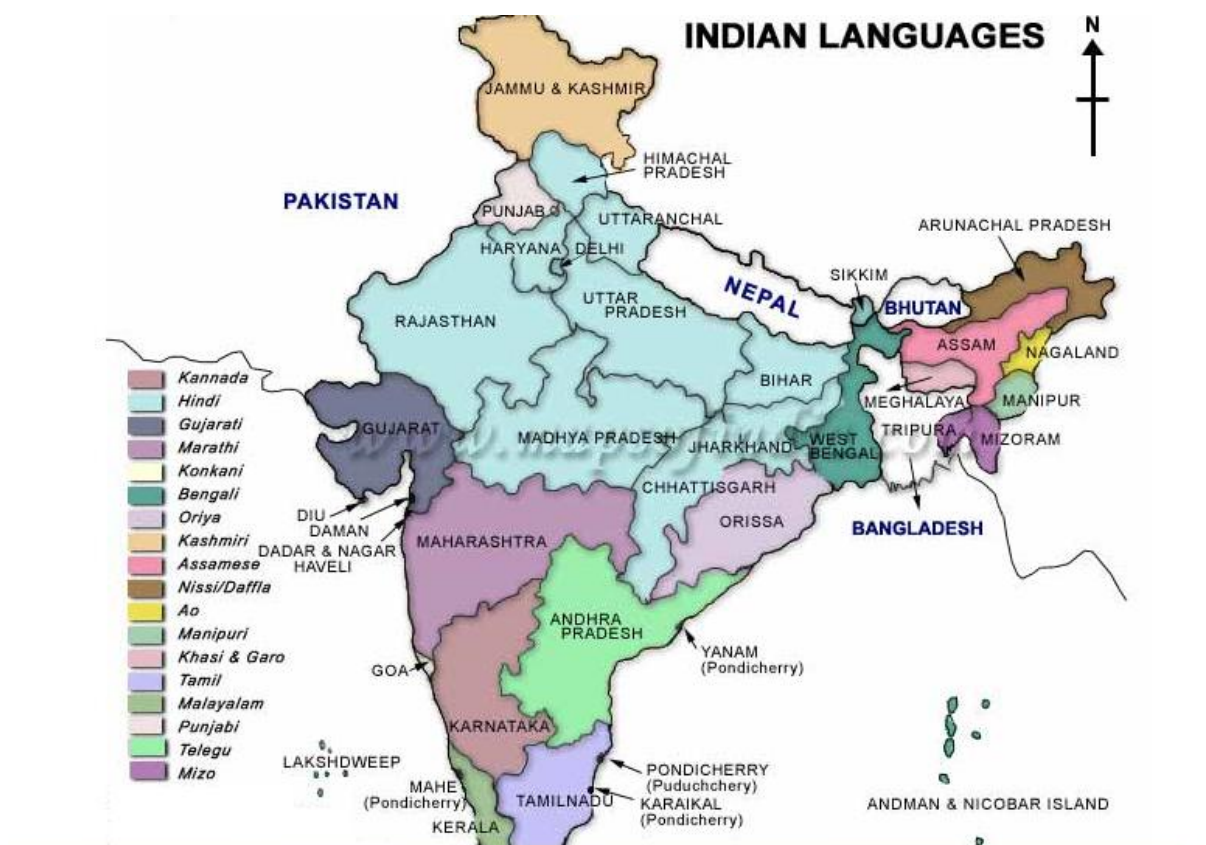
¹⁹ US Department of State 2011, *2010 International Religious Freedom Report (July-December) – India*, 13 September <Attachment>

²⁰ 'India's Christians suffer spike in assaults in past decade' 2010, *Compass Direct*, 30 December <Attachment>

²¹ US Department of State 2011, *2010 International Religious Freedom Report (July-December) – India*, 13 September, Introduction <Attachment>

²² 'Indian Languages' (undated), Maps of India website

<http://www.mapsofindia.com/maps/india/indianlanguages.htm#> – Accessed 4 October 2011 <Attachment>



Hindi is the official language of eight of the nine states listed above; in Chhattisgarh, one of the dialects of Hindi is the official language.²³ In addition to the states listed above, the Online Computer Library Center website notes that Hindi is spoken in Punjab state. As a recognised national language, Hindi is also understood by around 40 per cent of the population across India, with the exception of some southern states.²⁴ According to the Encyclopaedia Britannica Online website, Hindi is spoken as a first language by approximately 425 million people across India, and as a second language by an additional 120 million.²⁵

Sources state that Gujarati is spoken by approximately 46 million people²⁶, or 70 per cent of the population in Gujarat.²⁷

The greatest concentrations of Christians are also in India's northeast, particularly where they form a majority in Nagaland, Mizoran and Meghalaya, and in the southern states of Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Goa.²⁸

²³ 'A Brief Profile of the Hindi Language' (undated), University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign – Linguistics Department website
http://hindi.linguistics.illinois.edu/documents/ABRIEFPROFILEOFTHEHINDILANGUAGE_000.pdf - Accessed 4 October 2011. <Attachment>

²⁴ 'Languages of India' (undated), Online Computer Library Center website,
<http://www.oclc.org/languagesets/educational/languages/india.htm> - Accessed 7 February 2008 <Attachment>

²⁵ 'Hindi language' (undated), Encyclopaedia Britannica Online website
<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/266241/Hindi-language> - Accessed 4 October 2011 <Attachment>

²⁶ 'Gujarati' (undated), Gujarati Samaj of Western Australia website <http://gujarati.org.au/Gujarati-Language.aspx> - Accessed 4 October 2011 <Attachment>

²⁷ 'Languages of India' (undated), Online Computer Library Center website,
<http://www.oclc.org/languagesets/educational/languages/india.htm> - Accessed 7 February 2008 <Attachment>

²⁸ US Department of State 2011, *2010 International Religious Freedom Report (July-December) – India*, 13 September, Section I <Attachment>

Regarding relocation issues more widely, freedom of movement is reportedly generally available within India. In the context of relocation for Punjabi Sikhs, the UK Home Office has noted that local police do not perform background checks on people arriving from other parts of India. Furthermore, there is no registration system for citizens. It is common for a person not to carry an identity card, although identity cards can be easily forged.²⁹ An earlier UK Home Office report, from 2008, explicitly states that Indian citizens are not required to register their religion with authorities. The report also notes, however, that permits are required to travel in certain border areas.³⁰

However, women who wish to relocate, and who do not have support from extended family, may have difficulty securing appropriate accommodation. Rents may be unaffordable, and landlords may refuse to rent a property to single women. There are reportedly hostels which will provide accommodation to single women, particularly in urban centres where many women find employment in call centres. However, such hostels may still refuse to provide a single woman with accommodation if she has children.³¹ The UK Home Office sums up the situation for single women seeking accommodation in India:

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.³²

²⁹ UK Home Office 2010, *Country of Origin Information Report – India*, 21 September, p.95 – <Attachment>

³⁰ UK Home Office 2008, *Operational Guidance Note: India*, April, p. 6 – <Attachment>

³¹ UK Home Office 2008, *Operational Guidance Note: India*, April, p. 6 <Attachment>

³² UK Home Office 2008, *Operational Guidance Note: India*, April, p. 6 <Attachment>

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<http://dynamic.csw.org.uk/article.asp?t=news&id=780> – Accessed 18 March 2009.
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