

**Refugee Review Tribunal
AUSTRALIA**

RRT RESEARCH RESPONSE

Research Response Number: IND34371
Country: India
Date: 5 March 2009

Keywords: India – IND34371 – Catholicism – Baptism - Kurukshetra

This response was prepared by the Research & Information Services 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. This research response may not, under any circumstance, be cited in a decision or any other document. Anyone wishing to use this information may only cite the primary source material contained herein.

Questions

- 1. Can a person who is not baptised/christened, or confirmed in the Catholic Church in India, and has not attended a regular church service legitimately claim to have converted to Catholicism?**
- 2. My understanding is that in Australia an adult who wishes to become a Catholic has to undergo a course of study at least with the parish priest. Do these procedures apply in India?**
- 3. Is there a Catholic Church in Kuruhsheti?**

RESPONSE

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On the advice that no information was located in a search through the sources consulted, the Member decided to go to DFAT to seek assistance.

On 18 February 2009 a request was sent to DFAT regarding the above questions (RRT Research & Information 2009, Email to DFAT: ‘Country Information Request – IND34371’, 18 February – Attachment 1). In response, a reply was received on 5 March 2009 (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 2009, *DFAT Report 973 (V2): RRT Information Request: IND34371*, 4 March – Attachment 2), replacing an earlier version of the report.

DFAT provides the following response to RRT request IND34371.

DFAT spoke to a contact in Chandigarh, Haryana which has jurisdiction for Kurukshetra (post is not aware of any location named 'Kuruhsheti'). DFAT's contact provided the following answers to the questions referred by the RRT.

A. Can a person who is not baptised, christened or confirmed in the Catholic Church in India, and has not attended a regular church service legitimately claim to have converted to Catholicism?

2. DFAT was advised that the church does not recognise claims to be a Catholic unless the person concerned has been baptised.

B. Our understanding is that in Australia an adult who wishes to become a Catholic has to undergo a course of study at least with the parish priest. Do these procedures apply in India?

3. Adults who wish to convert to Catholicism in India undergo a course of study before being baptised.

C. Is there a Catholic Church in Kuruhsheti?

4. DFAT is not aware of any location named 'Kuruhsheti'. There is one Catholic church in Kurukshetra, the Ismata Ashram. There are no other churches in Kurukshetra but there are churches in neighbouring villages and towns (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 2009, *DFAT Report 973 (V2): RRT Information Request: IND34371*, 4 March – Attachment 2).

List of Attachments

1. RRT Research & Information 2009, Email to DFAT: 'Country Information Request – IND34371', 18 February.
2. Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 2009, *DFAT Report 973 (V2): RRT Information Request: IND34371*, 4 March