

A horizontal yellow bar with a white circular icon on the left side.

Travel and Migration to and from India: 1990–2010

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Part of the series: International Travel and Migration Articles

This paper was prepared by the Population Statistics unit of Statistics New Zealand as part of the series: International Travel and Migration Articles.

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Travel and Migration to and from India: 1990–2010

Introduction

This article examines permanent and long-term (PLT) migration and short-term travel to and from India. India is an increasingly important source of migrants to New Zealand. In the December 2010 year, India had the highest net inflow of migrants to New Zealand (6,300), more than the inflow from the United Kingdom (5,300), New Zealand's traditional source country.

The rapid growth of the India-born population in New Zealand has resulted in more short-term trips to and from India, as people visit friends and relatives in both countries. Holiday trips are also on the rise as India's wealth increases and its people travel more. World Tourism Organisation figures indicate that India is one of the fastest-growing travel markets in the world, with outbound travel departures increasing from 3.7 million in 1997 to 9.8 million in 2007. The United Nations' medium projections show that by 2030 India's population will be the largest in the world, surpassing that of China.

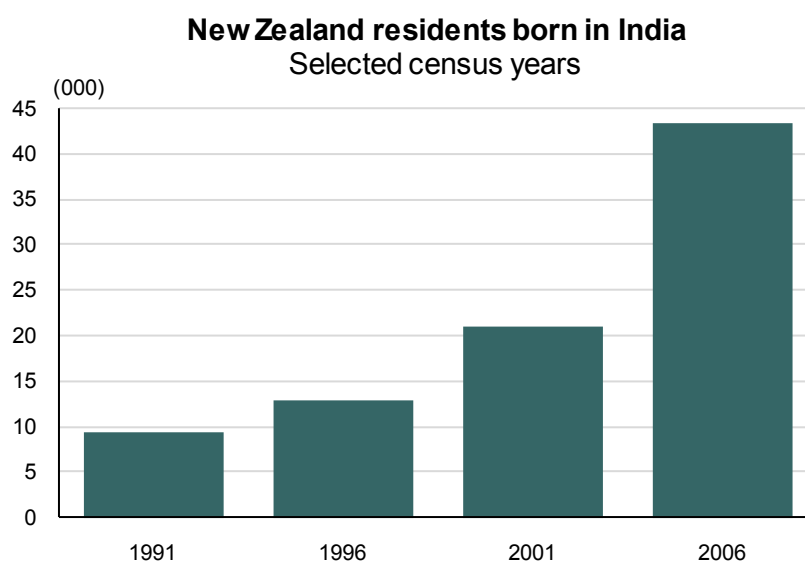
Data is for June years unless otherwise specified.

Census data

The five-yearly census of population and dwellings counts New Zealand residents by their birthplace and ethnicity. In the 2006 Census, 104,600 people identified with the 'Indian' ethnicity, making it the second-largest Asian ethnicity, behind Chinese (147,600). The Indian ethnicity includes Fijian-Indians, who are Fiji-born, as well as people born in New Zealand and other countries.

Census birthplace data shows that the number of New Zealand residents born in India has more than doubled in recent years, from 20,900 India-born residents in 2001, to 43,300 in 2006. Fifty years earlier, in the 1956 Census, there were only 4,500 India-born residents in New Zealand.

Figure 1



Source: Statistics New Zealand

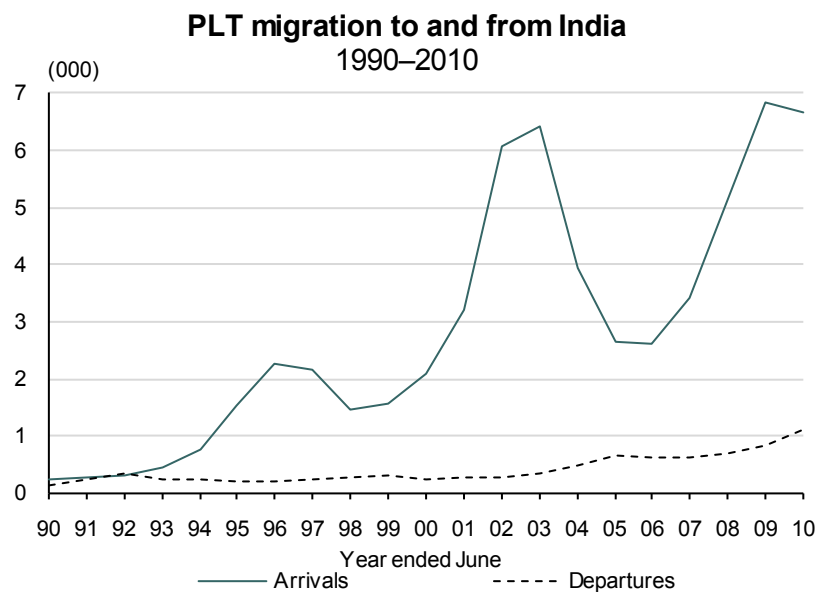
In the 2006 Census, India was the fifth-largest birthplace for overseas-born residents in New Zealand. The top four birthplaces for overseas-born living in New Zealand in 2006 were England (202,400), China (78,100), Australia (62,700), and Samoa (50,600).

Permanent and long-term migration

Between 1979 and 1989, few people migrated from India to New Zealand, with an annual average of only 180 PLT arrivals. Correspondingly, there were few PLT departures to India, averaging 200 a year between 1979 and 2003. PLT departures then steadily rose as the number of India-born New Zealand residents increased and some chose to return to India. In 2004, there were 500 PLT departures to India, and by 2010 this had grown to 1,100. Most of the 2010 departures (83 percent) were migrants born in India, with only 12 percent being New Zealand-born. Of the New Zealand-born departures, 59 percent were aged less than 10 years, and may have been the New Zealand-born children of earlier Indian migrants travelling with their families.

PLT arrivals from India began to increase from the early 1990s. Arrivals followed the same pattern as PLT migration to New Zealand in general, with peaks in 1996, 2003, and 2009. Peaks and troughs in migration flows are due to economic conditions in New Zealand and its source countries, as well as a result of changes to immigration regulations.

Figure 2



Source: Statistics New Zealand

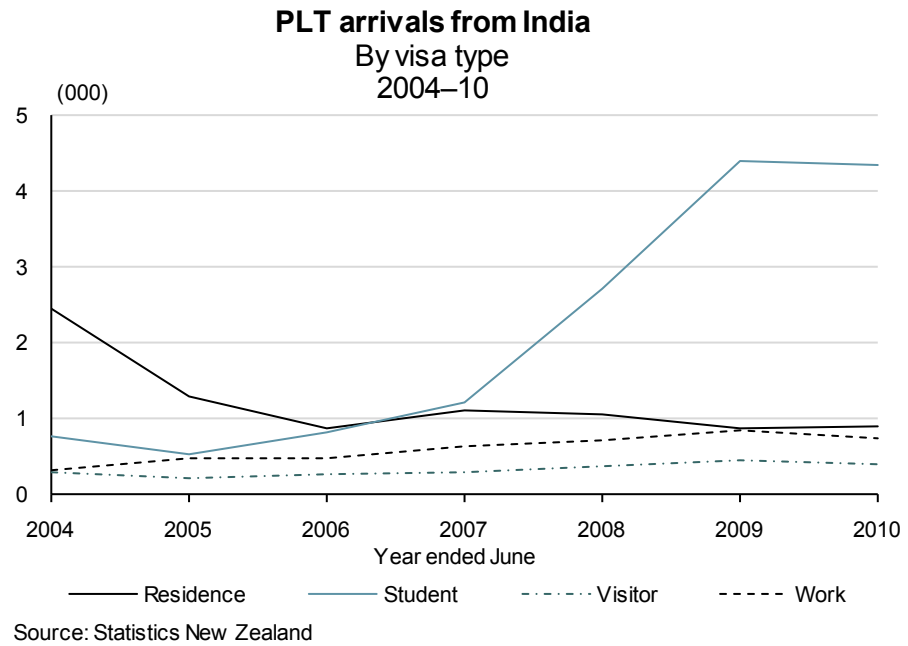
Visa type

In the last few years, there has been a lot of growth in migrants arriving on student visas, compared with other visa types. In 2010, 65 percent of PLT arrivals from India were people on student visas, compared with 20 percent in 2004. By contrast, arrivals on residence visas dropped from 63 percent in 2004 to 14 percent in 2010. Arrivals on work and visitor visas were relatively stable in this time period.

Immigration New Zealand statistics on visa application approvals of Indian nationals show a greater number of approved work visas than arrivals data show. This is because most successful work visa applications (85 percent in 2010) were approved 'onshore' (ie in New Zealand, not overseas). Migrants

with onshore visa approvals enter New Zealand on one visa type before either applying for a different visa or renewing their existing visa while in the country.

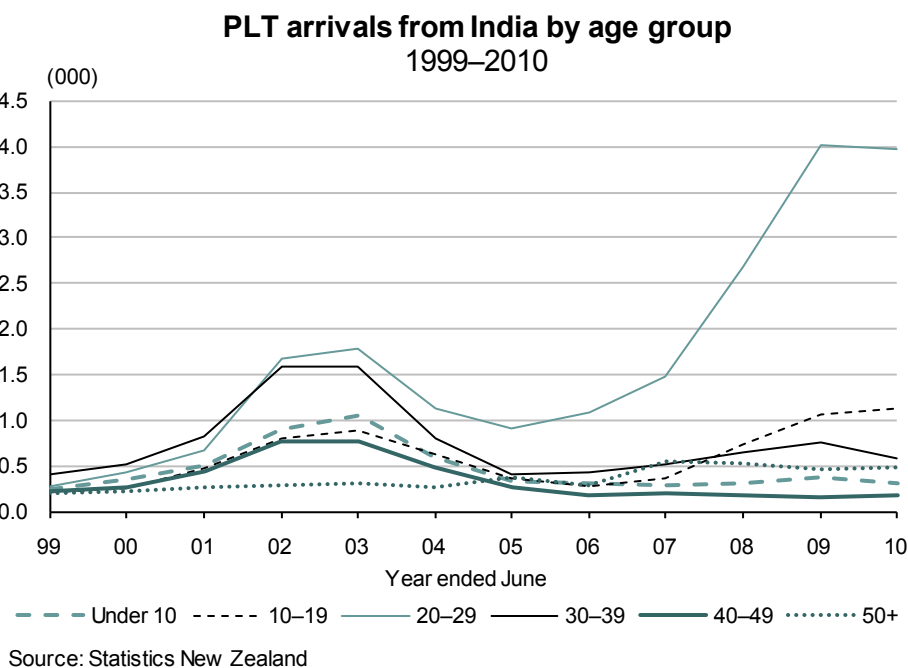
Figure 3



Age of migrants

The majority of PLT arrivals from India in the June 2010 year were aged 20–29 years (4,000 or 60 percent). Most people in this age group were males (2,800 or 70 percent). The most common visa type for migrants aged 20–29 years was the student visa (3,100 or 79 percent).

Figure 4



Migrants aged 40–49 years had the fewest migrants (200 or 3 percent). Although there were 500 migrants aged 50 years and over, this group contains more years of age than the other 10-year groups so is not directly comparable. Older migrants include parents arriving to be reunited with their New Zealand-based families. In traditional Indian society, elders live with their married adult children, particularly sons. New Zealand's immigration policy acknowledges families with its 'Family capped scheme', where people can sponsor their parents' move to New Zealand. This is especially true if the family has its 'centre of gravity' in New Zealand – that is, if the parents have more children here than in their home country.

Region of residence

Migrants are asked to state their New Zealand address on arrival cards. In 2010, 23 percent did not state an address. Of the 5,100 migrants who did state an address, 64 percent named an address within the territorial authorities that make up the new Auckland Council area. A further 5 percent of migrants indicated they were migrating to Wellington, and the same proportion to Christchurch. The remainder were scattered throughout New Zealand.

Occupation of migrants

The occupation classification was changed in October 2009, so there is not yet a full June year of data to analyse. Most migrants from India do not state an occupation on arrival in New Zealand, or the occupation they state cannot be coded. This applied to 90 percent of PLT arrivals for 2006–09. Around half of the migrants who did state an identifiable occupation were professionals.

Short-term travel to and from India

In general, travel from India has increased as its economy grows, making travel more accessible to a greater number of people. The following sections examine short-term travel (less than a year's duration) to and from India.

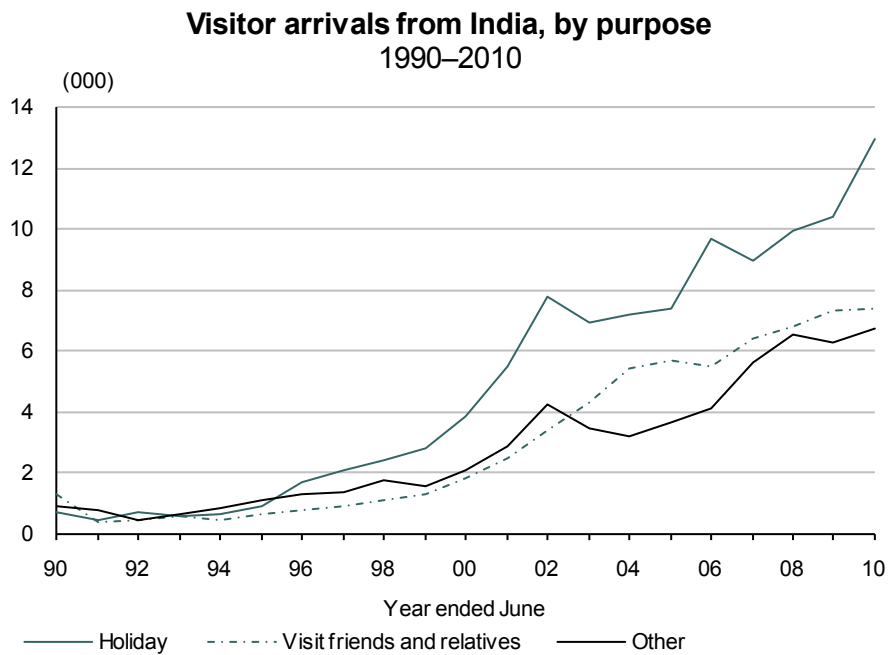
Visitor arrivals

Arrivals of visitors from India have been steadily increasing since the mid-1990s. Most of these visitors are born in India – an annual average of around 93 percent for the last decade. In both 1991 and 1992, there were 1,600 arrivals, rising to 10,800 a decade later in 2001. The 27,100 visitor arrivals in 2010 were higher than 2009 numbers by 3,100 (13 percent). India was the 10th-highest source of visitors to New Zealand in 2010, up two places from 2009.

The Tourism Strategy Group (Ministry of Economic Development) expects visitor arrival numbers from India to continue their recent rapid growth. It forecasts that by 2016 visitor numbers from India will reach 41,000, representing a projected annual growth rate of 7 percent.

In 2010, around half of all visitor arrivals from India were in New Zealand for a holiday (13,000 or 48 percent), up 2,600 from the 10,400 holidaymakers in 2009. Those stating that their travel purpose was to visit friends and relatives (VFR) numbered 7,400 (27 percent). Arrivals for reasons other than holiday or VFR were lower, with 1,900 visitors arriving for business (7 percent), 1,000 for education (4 percent), and 800 for conferences and conventions (3 percent) in 2010.

Figure 5

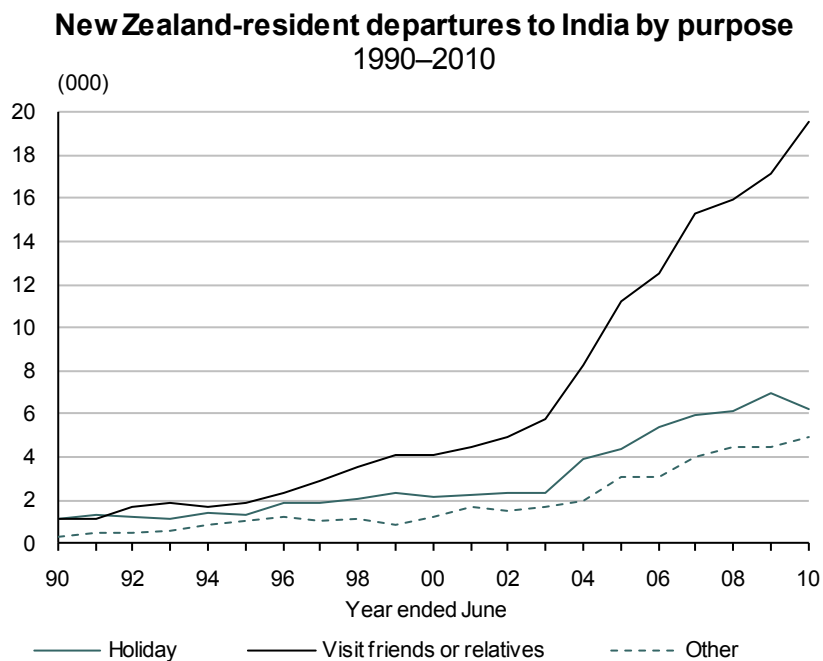


Source: Statistics New Zealand

Resident departures

Short trips by New Zealand residents to India have been increasing steadily since the 1990s. In the decade 1989–98, there was an annual average of 4,200 departures. This rose to 9,800 in 2003 before increasing sharply, a reflection of the growing Indian population in New Zealand. In the year ended June 2010, there were 30,700 short-term resident departures to India, making it the eighth most popular destination for New Zealand residents.

Figure 6



Source: Statistics New Zealand

When analysing resident departures to India by country of birth, the influence on travel of the growing number of India-born New Zealand residents is obvious. In the June 2002 year, 58 percent of departures (5,100) were of India-born residents. In 2010, 20,700 (or 67 percent) of the total 30,700 departures were travellers born in India. In the same time period, the proportion of travellers to India who were born in New Zealand reduced from 29 percent of short-term departures (2,600 trips in 2002) to 22 percent (6,700 trips in 2010).

The influence of the growing number of India-born residents in New Zealand is also reflected in the increasing number of trips to visit friends and relatives in India. In 2010, visiting friends and relatives was the travel purpose for 64 percent of all trips to India (19,500), while holiday trips (6,200) made up a further 20 percent. Two decades earlier, in 1990, 43 percent of trips to India were to visit friends and relatives, the same proportion as departures for holidays.

Conclusion

India is becoming an increasingly important source of migrants and travellers to New Zealand, as well as a popular travel destination for New Zealand residents. The increase in India-born residents living in New Zealand has had a positive impact on short-term travel to India, with most short-term travellers from New Zealand to India indicating that they were intending to visit friends or relatives.

The increase in tourists from India has been influenced by improvements in its economy, which has resulted in increases in outbound travel from India to many destinations. With more Indian residents able to afford international travel for holidays and other purposes, leisure travel from India to New Zealand is expected to continue increasing in the future.

Data sources

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