



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Mr John Pullinger
UK Statistics Authority
1 Drummond Gate
London
SW1V 2QQ

16th January 2019

Dear Mr Pullinger,

Thank you for your letter of 14th December.

Although I am grateful to you for bringing the Census White Paper to my attention, I am concerned that you do not address the points raised at our last meeting with members of the Office of National Statistics.

I have therefore recapped our position and look forward to your specific response. Details on all these points has been previously provided to the ONS, but I would be happy to resend them should you so wish.

Firstly, the Jain faith is recognised as a major religion by the UK and the United Nations. For example, Jainism was represented on Remembrance Sunday with a representative present at the Cenotaph with the Royal Family.

The 2011 Census captured approximately 20,000 UK Jains, from a community of circa 65,000. This is only 30%.

Secondly, as we discussed at our last meeting, the reason for this confusion is that people of Indian origin continue to see the word 'Hindu' as culturally and geographically identifying them as 'Indian'. It is only during the British colonial period that 'Hindu' was also seen as a term defining a specific religion. Not having a 'Jain' box will continue to propagate this confusion and misrepresent the Jain community.

Thirdly, there had been an argument that the ONS had limitations with space. We understand from the White Paper that the Digital First strategy will see 75% of the population fill the census online. This online version poses no problems with space. For the remaining 25% who will use a paper Census, again there are no space issues, as we understand that the number of pages has increased from four to five. However, the users of the paper Census will have no option (such as 'search-as-you-type') other than to tick 'Other' and write the word 'Jain'. We know from the 2011 Census that only a small percentage do this.

Fourth, we are grateful for the ONS' offer to work with members of the Jain community, however for all practical scenarios, this will reach a small percentage of the target audience.

Collecting inaccurate and incomplete data will also mean that UK Jain organisations cannot plan for community needs. This includes places of worship, birth and marriage rites etc.

Lastly, there is no guarantee that working with Local Authorities will address policy and funding decisions that are made by central and local government bodies. We continue to be concerned about that lack of provision, in areas where there are a significant number of Jains, from the NHS, for crematoria, housing, and by broadcasters like the BBC.

As stated in section 3.140 of the White Paper, "*Information on religion is used by a range of data users including central government, local authorities and religious organisations to plan and deliver services*"

I and other members of the Jain APPG continue to be concerned that the ONS will again understate and underrepresent that Jain community in the 2021 Census, and that the current opportunity to address this is not being given the importance and attention it deserves.

I look forward to hearing from you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Gareth Thomas". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "G" and a long, sweeping underline.

Gareth Thomas
Member of Parliament for Harrow West