

# Muslim Halwai



## Introduction / History:

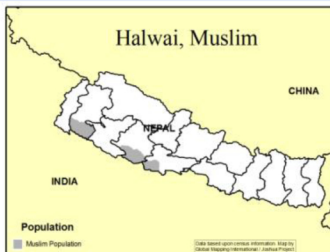
The Halwais get their name from the word *halwa* which is a "sweetmeat made from sugar, flour and butter". The Halwais are famous as a caste of confectioners and sweet shop owners. A large majority of Halwais are Hindus but about 10 percent in India and 1 percent in Nepal are Muslims.

## What are their lives like?

The Halwais still maintain their occupation in many places of India and Nepal as sweet shop owners and sellers of sweets and sometimes tobacco. In Nepal the greater Halwai population is a part of the "clean castes". Because their halwa is often eaten at weddings and festivals they tend to have a relatively high social status. The smaller Muslim Halwai however can be found in any number of service or labour jobs. Whereas the Hindu Halwai community in Nepal tend to speak Maithili and Nepali, the Muslim Halwai speak Nepali, Urdu and Awadhi. The Halwai follow the birth, death and marriage traditions of the Sunni Muslim and the Maulvi is the name of the spiritual leader who performs those religious rites.

## Ministry needs:

Once again ministry among the Hindu Halwai population has had success in recent years but among the small number of Muslims no work exists. In India families have shown interest in school-based development programmes. Perhaps Muslim-friendly community development projects could benefit this and other Muslim communities.



## Population:

Nepal : 800

Total : 175,000

**Language:** Nepali,  
Awadhi, Urdu & Bhojpuri

**Believers:** 0