
India

**Total area:**

3,287,263 km²

Population:

1,326,572,000 (2017)

Literacy:

62%

Official languages:

Hindi, English

GDP (PPP) per capita:

\$7,153 (2017 est.)

Life expectancy:

65 years

Religions:

81% Hindu, 13% Muslim, 2% Christian, 2% Sikh, 1% Buddhist, 1% other religions

Prayer points

Serving those who are suffering

The COVID-19 pandemic is like an evil tidal wave, rushing around the world, bringing death and untold destruction wherever it lands. As we watch the news and see with horror the estimates of the number of people who might die in the UK, we know that India and South Asia are just now at the start of what promises to be a nightmare. Our hearts are broken for what we see today – and for what we know is just around the corner. Already, we see that the limited medical resources will be overwhelmed – but what is most heart-breaking is to know that before long, the most immediate danger for millions will be the prospect of starvation. In the middle of a 21-day lockdown and with proper approval from their local governing authorities, our brothers and sisters serving in Asia are walking the streets, being God's hands and feet to the poorest and most disadvantaged people in their communities. Please keep our brothers and sisters serving in Asia in your prayers as they continue to seek ways to help the most disadvantaged people suffering because of the COVID-19 pandemic. (GFA World - May 2020)

Bringing love to those in Poverty

Please give thanks for our team in India seeking to share Jesus's love with people living in great poverty. Pray for God's help and provision as they seek to support daily wage earners unable to work during the lockdown. Pray for Christians to keep growing in faith day-by-day, even when meeting together is difficult. (International Aid Trust - May 2020)

Lift up widows

Life as a widow can be so difficult, but in many places in Asia, becoming a widow is like living in hell

on earth. Society often believes widows have sinned in some horrible way which resulted in their husbands' deaths, and, as a result, widows can be labelled as cursed and rejected as outcasts. Pray that widows will be able to grieve their husbands' deaths, and for God to provide for each widow's needs. Pray each widow will find hope and the joy of Jesus for her and her children's future. (GFA World - May 2020)

Students stuck in lockdown

At Santhosha Vanam, the boarding school attached to the Dohnavur Fellowship, nearly 100 children are there along with staff and a small number of parents, who got stuck as a result of the sudden coronavirus lockdown. Some children have been stranded on their way back home. There is an organisation called MUT (Missionaries Upholders Trust) which takes care of such children and parents and they are now under their care. (Dohnavur Fellowship Corporation - May 2020)

End discrimination against people affected by leprosy

For many years The Leprosy Mission have prayed for an end to discrimination against people affected by leprosy. It is encouraged by the success of work in India through the efforts of various teams to repeal over 100 outdated laws. Give thanks for the amendment to a law from 1949, preventing people affected by leprosy from attending school and college, or even taking out library books! Continue to pray that all remaining laws will be repealed so that people affected by leprosy can enjoy the same rights as everyone else. (The Leprosy Mission International - April 2020)

From rural poverty or slavery to Mumbai slums

Pray for the Dalit children and families who fled rural poverty or modern slavery to seek a better life in the slums of Mumbai, India, who continue to experience discrimination, injustice and crushing poverty. Pray for safety and encouragement for Global Care's local Christian partners who are seeking to advocate for Dalit children, and under increasing pressure to give up in the context of growing Hindu nationalism and a corresponding hardening of attitudes and increase in caste-based discrimination. (Global Care - February 2020)

Meeting regulations, and Meetings of Vision evangelism

Your prayers are requested for help with the day to day running of The Dohnavur Fellowship so that all is in order concerning government regulations for children's homes and hospitals. Also, following up from the evangelism via the *Meetings of Vision* held just before the New Year, we pray that the seed that has been sown may bring forth wonderful growth in hearts and lives. (Dohnavur Fellowship Corporation - February 2020)

International Aid Trust ministry continues to grow

The ministry of International Aid Trust in India continues to grow: there are now 36 pastors in training through the Extended Bible Teaching Program. Please pray for these pastors that God will help them in all their studies, prepare them for the ministry He has called them to and protect them from all persecution. (International Aid Trust - February 2020)

New hospital opening in January 2020

Please pray for people in mission at Christian Medical College (CMC) in Vellore, where a new 1,500-bed hospital is due to open in January 2020. Please pray for all the necessary planning and administration; for God to provide the right staff as well as all the practicalities that go into running a hospital of a high standard. (Church Mission Society - December 2019)

The Dohnavur Fellowship

The Dohnavur Fellowship is a Christian organisation that works towards holistic development running projects across the areas of child development, education, health care, community development and conservation of nature as a home for rescued children. Please pray for the right children to be brought to the Dohnavur Fellowship. Pray also about the stringent regulations for children's homes in India and for help for our leaders in complying with all of these. (Dohnavur Fellowship Corporation -

December 2019)

Pray for safety in Kashmir

On 5th August, the Indian government ended the special status of autonomy enshrined in the Indian constitution and enjoyed by the princely state of Jammu & Kashmir since India's independence in 1947. Kashmir is the only Muslim majority state in India. Tensions are always high in the region because of the ensuing dispute between the two nuclear powers. The removal of the special status was also accompanied by a clampdown in communication and large congregations banned, escalating the already significant tension in the area. AsiaLink has partners in the Kashmir region with whom they work closely and have not heard anything at all from them since this clampdown, which is obviously a cause of concern. They have no idea of their safety or of their current situation. Please pray for the whole situation and especially for the partners in Kashmir. (AsiaLink - September 2019)

Disability in India

The stigma and shame attached to disabilities in India extends to the whole family and affects people from any class and any community — Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist, Sikh, Christian or Jain. Whispering neighbours and the judgmental stares of strangers mean most persons with disabilities remain isolated behind closed doors. Those who do go out are confronted with a world that is acutely inaccessible. Families, especially outside urban areas, lack the resources or knowledge to help or advocate for people with disabilities. This isolation extends into the church, where people with disabilities too often face the same stigma and lack of access. SIM India is praying about how to remove the barriers around people with disabilities, so that these individuals and their families can participate in the life and mission Christ has for them. (Serving In Mission - September 2019)

Outreach to children by The Dohnavur Fellowship

Please pray for the children who are in the care of The Dohnavur Fellowship, for their education and further training opportunities, that each one may be able to fulfil God's purpose in life. Pray for wisdom as the leaders look at new ways of demonstrating the love of Jesus through impacting the community around them, particularly in outreach to vulnerable children. (Dohnavur Fellowship Corporation - September 2019)

Shortwave radio reaching rural communities

Shortwave radio programmes have been broadcast into Central India for many years in local languages, along with the distribution of radios and solar powered lights into remote villages. As a result, one whole tribe that lives 80 miles from the nearest town, came to know Christ, including the tribal leader. As an act of thanksgiving, the leader set aside a parcel of land to build a community church. The desire is to make this a flourishing community space providing healthcare for the people who live there. Pray for the Stream of Life Community Church as they become a beacon of light to the surrounding region, and for the gospel to spread further into remote parts of the country. (Reach Beyond - August 2019)

Karuna (Compassion) Project in Mumbai slums

Pray for The Leprosy Mission's partners running the church-led 'Karuna Project' (meaning 'compassion' in Sanskrit and Pali), that serves people affected by leprosy in the slums of Mumbai, India. Give thanks for staff and volunteers who dedicate their time to come alongside those excluded by society. Praise God for the workers who are seen as 'angels'. Pray that their unity as a team will enable them to share Jesus' love with those they meet. (The Leprosy Mission England and Wales - August 2019)

Medical ministry in India

With more than 2.4 million lives affected, India has the third largest population of AIDS victims in the world. Each year, 900,000 people die from contaminated water or polluted air, and an estimated 43 percent of all children under the age of five are underweight. In the midst of these statistics, workers

supported by Gospel for Asia are reaching out through medical ministry supported to help those affected. (GFA World - June 2019)

Uttar Pradesh church attack

Rishu, a partially blind girl, was severely beaten with sticks, and a ten-year-old boy needed stitches after the attack on the Uttar Pradesh church in India. Pray that these children will know God's love and healing and become powerful witnesses for Christ. (Release International - February 2019)

Rehabilitation of children from sex trade

Around 2 million children across the world are sold into the commercial sex trade each year. More than half of these children are in India. The girls lucky enough to be rescued have lived through unimaginable horrors and are left traumatised, afraid and struggle to adapt back into normal life. Pray for the restoration of the girls and that they would find strength and confidence as they transition back into a 'normal' life. Pray also for our partner JKPS in Kolkata as they care for these girls at their rehabilitation homes, providing a safe home, counselling, support and spiritual guidance. (WorldShare - February 2019)

Leprosy no longer grounds for divorce

After years of prayer and lobbying for change to the many laws that unfairly discriminate against people affected by leprosy in India, praise God that in August a law was passed so that leprosy is no longer grounds for divorce. Please continue to pray for organisations committed to campaigning until all these outdated and discriminatory laws are repealed so that "equality in dignity and rights" become a reality for people affected by leprosy. (The Leprosy Mission England and Wales - December 2018)

Anti-trafficking prayers needed

Please pray for two mission partners working in North India in the area of anti-trafficking. They write asking for prayer for: "the next year, that we will see where God is moving and be a part of it; the Holy Spirit to speak directly to all church leaders in our land and to prepare them to deal with abuse fully; healing where there is brokenness and the courage to walk the hard road to freedom for those addicted to pornography." (Church Mission Society - December 2018)

Mobile medical clinics provide counselling

Mobile medical clinics were recently carried out in two villages within an unreached area of Central Asia. Over 450 people were seen in the four days the clinic ran and individuals were able to share their health and life concerns. Many who came to see the psychologist had problems which caused ill health and depression. The team remarked how many of these individuals had sad eyes. But, once they had the opportunity to share their stories away from others in the community, they could see ways to solve their problems. At the clinic, miracles were happening: sad eyes became bright! Counselling gave them hope for the future. Pray for these people to begin a journey with Christ as a result of the medical help they received from believers. (Reach Beyond - December 2018)

New converts from radio programmes

Vicky is a radio listener from a Hindu family in India. She said, "Last year, my friend Rakesh told me about your radio programme when I asked why he is different now? He has given up drinking and fighting with everyone. He said he feels different since he started to believe in Jesus and that from your programme he learns good things from the Bible. Now, for the past few months, I have also started listening to radio programmes from your station. I have lots of questions and so many times I have found answers from your programmes. Often when I call your office someone talks and prays with me. Thank you all for helping me." Praise God for those who respond to the gospel through the radio in India. (Reach Beyond - December 2018)

Jesus over the radio waves

Kurux is a language predominantly spoken by three people groups in Eastern India, Nepal, and

Bhutan. Now, gospel radio programmes are being produced in Kurux and broadcast weekly into these areas from powerful shortwave transmitters based in Northern Australia. Pray for the salvation of these people groups, that many will learn about Jesus for the first time through the radio programmes. Also pray that the disciples of Jesus who live in these places will boldly spread the Good News to others. (Reach Beyond - September 2018)

Responding to child abuse

Viva is actively promoting child protection training in schools in six cities across the country in order to combat sexual abuse. Teachers, counsellors and administrative staff are learning how to recognise and respond to child abuse. One headmistress testified saying that this is the first time in 20 years of teaching that she has ever heard about a child protection policy. Children themselves are taught how to protect themselves by taking part in Good Touch, Bad Touch workshops. Pray that those adults taking part in the training would be bold and honest, and willing to change their attitudes where needed. May they be an influence on others around them in schools, and society as a whole. Pray too for children to feel confident in talking about situations of abuse, and that they would be empowered through this training. (Viva - May 2018)

Trapped in a brothel

In Kolkata, the sex industry is booming. There are several hundred brothels in the red-light district of Sonagachi and an estimated 12,000 sex workers. This is a truly exploitative industry where many women and their children are bound in slavery. The sons of sex workers become trapped in the industry and forced to grow up in brothels with no hope of escape. Pray for the Premanand Boys Home in Kolkata which cares for some of these young boys. They provide a loving home as well as education, nutritious food, quality medical care and spiritual nurture. Pray for freedom for all the young boys, for a chance for a better life and for an opportunity to hear about Jesus. (WorldShare - May 2018)

The Mappila People

Unassuming, though quietly remarkable, the Mappila people have inhabited the Indian state of Kerala for more than a millennium. Now one of the largest Islamic groups in this southwestern state, the Mappila adopted their Islamic religion from Arab traders and merchants as early as the seventh century AD. The Mappila have a clear identity and have a significant social presence and interact well with other cultures. They have the Bible in their language but very few Mappilas have responded to the gospel. Pray that the Mappilas will encounter the Lord in dreams and visions, and that Christ's witnesses would boldly proclaim the gospel with demonstrations of the Spirit's power. (Frontiers - January 2018)

Children Develop Dreams

Hidden behind the thriving industrialised region of Kolkata in India are rural communities living in extreme poverty, like Bibirhat. They shelter in mud huts without sanitation with no access to healthcare or education. The long-standing lack of education has left many adults without employable skills and unable to earn. Those that do manage to find work are earning on average, less than 21 Rupees per day (25p). In an aim to break the cycle of poverty, WorldShare partner, JKPS, run an education centre to offer free education to Bibirhat children. Pray that through this education programme, the children develop dreams, ambitions and a hope for the future. Pray that the cycle of poverty can be broken in Bibirhat and other slum villages across rural India. (WorldShare - November 2017)

Persecutors, protection and provision

"I was extremely disheartened because of the opposition from my friends and relations. Many times I even considered returning to my old faith." Deepa is a Christian from a Hindu background in India. Her family were forced to leave their home and their village because of their faith in Jesus. "The people in our old village falsely testified to the police that my husband, Neeta, was a member of the

Naxalites (a militant communist group), so he was locked up in prison. ...I doubted I would ever see him free again. But I learned from the book of Matthew that if I prayed unceasingly God could release my husband from prison." Deepa's husband was released after nine months but her husband had lost his faith. Please pray for believers like Deepa and Neeta, for protection, provision, and strength. Pray for their persecutors, that God would change their hearts and turn them to himself. (Open Doors UK and Ireland - September 2017)

A North Indian Challenge

The North of India remains deeply challenging. Please join with us in asking the Lord to glorify Himself in places like Kashmir and Jammu in the northwest where Christians have always been few. Christian growth in this region often meets with opposition so pray on for protection for God's people and ongoing witness to his name. (AsiaLink - February 2017)

Come Forwards for Treatment

Pray that those who are diagnosed and treated for leprosy, at TLM Hospital in Purulia, West Bengal, India, would understand how important it is to take the full course of multidrug therapy (MDT) prescribed so they can be completely cured. Pray particularly that women and children affected by leprosy will come forward early and be treated with sensitivity. Give thanks for the committed staff who work selflessly providing a wide range of services to 75,000 patients annually from the area as well as 100,000 people who are reached by community health education programmes. (The Leprosy Mission England and Wales - February 2017)

Dare to be Different

In India daughters are often considered a drain on a family. When a girl is born her family must start saving for the dowry which is given to her husband's family upon marriage. A girl's education and health may not be invested in because she will eventually leave them to join another family. This limits her opportunities and makes her more vulnerable to early marriage, child labour or trafficking. Pray for Viva's ground-breaking mentoring programme, Dare to be Different, which teaches teenage girls about their worth, purpose and value, and helps them to make wise choices. Network members comprising a total of 500 local churches and organisations work collaboratively for girls to be as equally valued as boys. Pray that the girls would be kept safe and be given them hope for the future through the training. (Viva - February 2017)

What do you see?

When you look at India what do you see? A huge mass of people, poverty, extreme heat, vibrant colours, chaos, spicy food? When you think of India what religion comes to mind? Probably most of us will think Hindu, yet incredibly India is now just about equal with Pakistan as the second most populous Muslim nation on earth. There are 300,000 active mosques in India, more than any other country. Yet only 1% of it's languages have any scriptures. If the Muslim people of India are becoming open to learning about Christ then it would be a tragedy to miss the opportunity. Just as Jesus encouraged us in (Luke 10:2), let's ask the Lord of the harvest to raise up more workers from our Churches to go to the Muslims of India, live among them, learn their languages and bless them with the good news of the Saviour. (Frontiers - November 2016)

Spiritual Students

The Union of Evangelical Students of India in Jammu and Kashmir praise God for 47 students and a graduate who came to faith this academic year. Give thanks for students from other faith backgrounds who are accepting Christ and growing spiritually. Pray also for pioneering student ministry in several sensitive locations in South Asia. God is working in amazing ways in closed countries. Pray for students to be both bold and wise in their evangelism. (IFES - July 2016)

Sex work in India

Kavita is a lady wrapped in a colourful Sari but who speaks little and rarely looks anyone in the

face. How did a girl from Bangladesh wind up in Mumbai, making a living from sex work? It wasn't her intention, this wasn't how her life was meant to work out. But the aunts she trusted sold her and people she didn't know trafficked her. So now she's here in a seedy slum with just one way to survive. Aesha believes in these women, that they can have a different life, that they can have a 'hope and a future' (Jeremiah 29:11). She and her colleagues work hard to build the women's confidence and skills so that they can find alternative work. Pray for her organisation Sahaara, that they will lead many women to freedom in Christ. (Tearfund - May 2016)

Unreached India

India receives only 6% of the world's full time Christian workers, including 8000 foreign missionaries (7 missionaries per million people) most of whom work with the Indian Christian population. By contrast Latin America (with less than half the population of India) receives over 100,000 foreign missionaries or 172 missionaries per million people – 25 times as many missionaries per person as in India. Africa receives over 90,000 missionaries or 90 missionaries per million people – 13 times as many! Only 10% of the languages of India have any Scriptures. Pray for a team to go to every Muslim people group in India. Pray for the Scriptures to be translated into every Indian language. (Frontiers - March 2016)

Broadcasts into India

A listener writes: "One year ago while tuning in my radio to listen to film songs, I unexpectedly tuned into your Punjabi programme Pyar Di Bhet (Offering of Love). I started tuning in daily and have since heard many different songs and learnt good teaching. I am writing to you for the first time and hope you will write back and send me a programme guide you offered free in your programme. I am not a Christian but I now follow what you talk of in your programmes. I will also like to contact you by phone." Pray for the impact of Christian broadcasts into India and for effective follow-up to correspondence. (Reach Beyond - November 2015)

Rising extremism

Christian leaders in Indian states such as Madhya Pradesh and Jharkhand say the BJP's win in federal elections in 2014 has emboldened Hindu extremists to target churches. More than 20 attacks and incidents of police filing fake conversion cases against Christians were recorded in the first four months of 2015. Extremists reportedly beat Christians praying in a Presbyterian church in Indore. Not only have churches in the state been attacked: a church-run home for physically handicapped children was targeted recently. In Jharkhand, two missionary-run schools were raided by a mob of extremists demanding their closure. Pray that state officials will do more to prevent religious persecution, especially in rural areas. (Release International - September 2015)

Tamil language radio

A listener to Tamil language radio programmes broadcast from Australia wrote: "One day I was tuning into the radio, when suddenly I heard a Tamil programme, and was happy. We are 15 blind people who listen to your programme regularly. The reception is very clear, and we like your songs and sermons. We can't watch television programmes; we depend only on programmes like yours. Please come to Pondicherry to our church and share the Word of God in our church as well." Pray that radio broadcasts into India will bear fruit for God's Kingdom. (Reach Beyond - July 2015)

From persecution to redemption

Christians in India have been stunned by a number of attacks against them in recent weeks, including the rape of a 71-year-old nun in West Bengal. It has been blamed on fanatical Hindus who want to convert Christians and other minority faiths to Hinduism. Other incidents have included the demolition of a Catholic church under construction in northern Haryana state, a 140-year-old cathedral being vandalised by a mob in Madhya Pradesh state and threats of sexual violence and arson at a convent school in West Bengal. BMS's Ben Francis declares: "Make no mistake – we are in the business of plundering hell to populate heaven. I think it is really important at this point that we share the light

with all we've got." Pray that these attacks will be a catalyst for redemption. (BMS World Mission - May 2015)

Change of government

Hindu nationalist Narendra Modi was elected as India's Prime Minister earlier last year. Please pray for him, for the country, and for Christians both in India and in surrounding nations, that peace and justice will reign. Pray for wisdom as a relevant and dynamic regional mission focus is developed, and discernment to meet the ongoing challenges for the future of BMS work in India. Pray that our partners will be strengthened to persevere and work with creativity, particularly in the context of a change of government. (BMS World Mission - January 2015)

Devastating floods

An estimated 20 million people in south Asia have been affected by devastating floods triggered by monsoon rains – the worst in 50 years. Across India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, loved ones have been killed, homes and livelihoods lost and vital infrastructure destroyed. Tearfund's partners are battling extreme weather conditions and extensive flood damage to get emergency aid including food and shelter to those most in need. (Tearfund - November 2014)

False hopes

Traffickers exploit the poorest families in vulnerable communities by promising a better future for their children. Under these false hopes and expectations, women and children are taken and then forced into prostitution or hard labour in fields and factories. Pray for Sahaara Charitable Society (SCS), which has a vision is to bring transformation to Mumbai's commercial sex workers. It's dangerous work - pray for the protection of staff and volunteers as they move about the city's darkest areas and meet with people on the very fringes of society. (Tearfund - May 2014)

A reputation for excellence

In a state where approximately 40% of the population live in slums or temporary shelters, The Leprosy Mission's Shahdara hospital in Delhi, India, carries out over 77,000 separate interventions, treating some 10,000 patients in total each year. It has established a reputation for excellence in the provision of leprosy treatment services which include skin smears and diagnosis, ulcer and wound treatment, reconstructive surgery, multidrug therapy, leprosy reaction management and general medical services. Give thanks for the services that Shahdara hospital is able to provide and pray for its continued successes. Pray also for both patients and staff, that they will feel cared for and loved. (The Leprosy Mission England and Wales - January 2014)

Radio programmes in India

"We are students of the Blind School in Delhi. We listen and enjoy your programme together. We want to take part in your drama. Can you send us books in Braille?" This is one of many texts, emails and letters received from listeners to Christian radio programmes received in India. Programmes in 17 Indian languages are transmitted via powerful shortwave transmitters in Australia. Pray that many listeners would discover Jesus as they listen. Also pray for a new Christian community FM radio station which is in the final stages of the licence application process. (Reach Beyond - November 2013)

Cyclone Phailin

In October, the high winds and torrential rain of Cyclone Phailin destroyed food stocks and damaged 300,000 homes in Ganjam district in Odisha state. Many thatch-built properties were obliterated. Pray for the work of Eficor who are looking to provide emergency supplies, such as pulses, oil and tea, as well as supplying tarpaulin sheeting to provide shelter as soon as possible. Despite the extensive damage, give thanks that the latest death toll figure is only 27 - in 1999, 10,000 people died when a cyclone ripped through Odisha. (Tearfund - November 2013)

Increasing persecution

Persecution in India is increasing - particularly for independent churches in rural areas. It includes

physical assault, attacks on churches and Christian property, and harassment of Christian workers and missionaries. The sharp rise in the number of attacks on Christians over the last 15 years has paralleled the rise of Hindutva extremism. Pray that the church will not be fearful: pray rather that it will be refined and strengthened by persecution. (Release International - September 2013)

Opportunistic traffickers

Following devastating flash floods and landslides in the northern state of Uttarakhand during August, there are concerns that children in the region will be more vulnerable to trafficking. With thousands of families facing an uncertain future, opportunistic traffickers, often a distant relative, offer to temporarily take the child to the city to find work. Out of desperation, families accept the offer, without realising that their child - some as young as six years old - will be sold into the sex industry or into child labour. Please pray for these vulnerable families and for safety for their children. (Tearfund - September 2013)

Falsely accused

Despite living under a constitution guaranteeing religious freedom, Christians in parts of India are often being falsely accused and jailed for allegedly forcing Hindus to convert. In February 2013 two Christians in Madhya Pradesh were beaten up and then taken to a police station where they were assaulted and accused of forced conversion. In the same month activists in Uttar Pradesh threatened to kill a pastor unless he stopped holding services. Seven states have passed laws that impose fines or imprisonment on anyone using force, inducement or 'any fraudulent means' to convert another - these loosely worded terms are open to abuse. Pray for protection and courage for Christians - especially pastors and evangelists. (Release International - May 2013)

Anti-leprosy legislation

Pray for people affected by leprosy in India where legislation, government policies and practices often discriminate against them, resulting in social exclusion and poverty. Pray that leprosy-related human rights work will help to empower them to unite and advocate for their rights and entitlements at local, state and national level. Give thanks that cases of discrimination are being challenged by networks of people affected by leprosy, government representatives, MPs and lawyers and that state and national level authorities are being lobbied to review existing policies and practices, to promote equality for people affected by leprosy. Pray that the Challenging Anti-Leprosy Legislation in India (CALL) project will raise awareness in the UK and that students will be motivated to campaign for changes in legislation and implementation of UN Resolution 8/13. (The Leprosy Mission England and Wales - May 2013)

Increasing persecution of minorities

India is the world's second most populated nation, with just over 1.2 billion people. Christians are thought to make up about 2% of the total population. The country has become increasingly known for its persecution of Christians and various religious minority groups. Recently, the Indian government has made it illegal for the cross of Christ to be displayed in any public place. India is a land that needs Jesus. Pray for strong, indigenous partnership, for effective ministry among nationals and for the Spirit of God to anoint the work and workers to advance His Kingdom and glorify the name of Jesus. (AsiaLink - March 2013)

Helping the poor

India now has several of the world's richest people, and a huge middle-class who are comfortably-off. Yet the country still has some of the world's poorest and most marginalised people. Pray for the witness of churches and other Christian organisations who are involved in ministry amongst such people. Ask that their work may continue to bear fruit. May it serve as a witness to the character of Christ, and an inspiration to better-off Indians to break centuries of economic and social barriers and help the poor. (WorldShare - January 2013)

Standing firm

In the face of persecution, followers of Jesus in the troubled northeast Indian state of Orissa are standing firm in their faith. And they're growing in amazing ways. Twenty-six new fellowships have been started in Orissa in the last few months through the work of *Big Life Ministries*. This is in addition to over 100 congregations already there. In the last month alone, 25 people have been baptised and 500 tracts distributed, with five new *Big Life* church planters added to the ten already in place. Through life's trials and tribulations, and in a place where being a believer is extremely tough, give thanks for God's love, strength and protection for faithful followers in Orissa. (BMS World Mission - September 2012)

Fear of rejection

Leprosy has affected more people in India than any other country in the world. Stigma and discrimination is still common and a diagnosis of leprosy often brings fear of rejection. Pray for the tens of thousands of people who will be diagnosed this year, that stigma will be broken down and they will experience the love of Christ. Lift before the Lord people affected by leprosy who are mobilising in the states of Uttar Pradesh and Chhattisgarh to challenge anti-leprosy legislation; that their voice will be heard, leprosy will no longer be grounds for divorce and justice will prevail. (The Leprosy Mission England and Wales - July 2012)

The Mappila

The Mappila people live in the inland state of Kerala, as well as on the Lakshadweep Islands off the southwestern coast of India. Arab traders brought Islam to Kerala during the time of Muhammad. The Mappila are thought to be the earliest Muslim community in India. In spite of their Islamic beliefs, the Mappila have maintained a matrilineal society. Even priesthood is inherited through the females. Pray for teams of believers to be raised up who will live and work among the Mappila. Pray that women will be open to the Gospel so that the words of Christ will penetrate deep into Mappilan families. (Frontiers - May 2012)

Desire to hear about Jesus

A survey in India of the 15 most widely spoken languages revealed that six out of ten Hindus said they would like a Christian to tell them more about Jesus. When Hindus hear the story of Jesus and are confronted with the gospel they often understand and respond, which is why gospel radio programmes in one of these languages, Chattisgarhi, are being so well received. However, the state of Chattisgarh is presently reeling under the influence of an armed insurgency by the Naxalites, a group operating as 'a parallel government'. Pray for peace in this region and for the gospel to continue to break through. (Reach Beyond - March 2012)

Beyond Words

It is very rare to hear a Christian radio programme in a prime-time slot on government radio in India, but one popular series that can be heard across the whole continent has been running continuously now for two years. *Beyond Words* is a 30-minute programme in Hinglish (Hindi and English) that highlights social problems in modern Indian society, for example honouring parents and preventing suicide, and then comments on these issues using Biblical values and dramatised parables. Although the programme gets a massive response each week, funding is currently hard to find. Please pray that this ray of light on the airwaves in India can continue to change lives. (Reach Beyond - January 2012)

Right to free education

Despite being a brilliant pupil at the top of her class, 14-year-old Deepti had to drop out of school. Not because of bad behaviour, not because she wasn't working hard enough, but because her family were too poor to pay the exam fees of Rs 2,000 - just over £27. In August 2009 India passed legislation giving all children aged 6 to 14 the right to free education. But who is going to seek out the children unaware of their new rights? Organisations and churches in the Vijayawada network have now taken

up this challenge. They have been working to identify at least 100 girls under the age of 14 who have dropped out of school and, with the legal power of the new legislation, help them back onto the path to education. (Viva - September 2011)

The Rawther

The Rawther people of India (population 267,000) live in Rajasthan, India's largest state, which is located in the west of the country and which borders Pakistan. Within Rajasthan, the majority of the population is Hindu, though more than 4.5 million are Muslim. Ask the Lord to bring teams of believers to the Rawther people to share the love of Christ with them. Pray that God will reveal Himself to the Rawther and make them receptive to his truth. Pray too for strong local believers and leaders, and for fellowships of Jesus followers to be raised up among the Rawther. (Frontiers - May 2011)

Witnessing to the transgender community

Some of the most marginalised people in India - the transgender community - are now hearing for the first time that God loves them. Dr Lalita has earned the trust of many people in the red-light area of Pune, including several eunuchs. One of them is B, who ran away from an abusive home at age 8 and entered the sex industry as a teenager. "It is often the only option available, as hijras are considered the lowest of the low in society and face constant discrimination and rejection," explained Dr Lalita. Following harassment on a train, B met a pastor who offered prayer and a listening ear. After meeting with the pastor and attending his church several times, B began following Jesus and has since left the sex industry to minister to other transgender people. "We must work to change the perceptions of the church and of hijras, who believe the abusive things they have heard about themselves." said Dr Lalita. (Church Mission Society - March 2011)

The church in India

Although some may associate India with the major religions of Hinduism or Islam, Christians have enjoyed a long and rich history on the Indian subcontinent. Today, the Church in India is finding creative ways to meet the physical and spiritual needs of others. Pray for the training of Christian leaders to result in effective ministries to the unreached, yielding fruit for God's kingdom. Pray particularly for the continued growth of the house church movement amongst Muslim Urdu and Bengali speakers and amongst Hindus. (Serving In Mission - January 2011)

Red-light districts

Life on the streets of Mumbai is frenetic and noisy at the best of times. Leave the bright lights of the city to venture into the red-light districts and it becomes an altogether uglier affair. Many of the thousands of homeless children are orphans but many others are the children of sex workers, driven onto the streets by a desire to escape the grim reality of life at home. In the face of the dangers associated with homelessness and living in a red-light district, these children are relatively defenceless and are therefore especially vulnerable. Pray for these youngsters as well as for organisations seeking to reach out to them and offer them a brighter future. (Tearfund - November 2010)

Asian Elephants

The Asian Elephant is an endangered species. Herds follow well-defined migration routes and when humans settle along these routes, conflicts follow. A sizable population is found around the Bannerghatta National Park. Here, subsistence farmers stay up at night to guard their crops from hungry elephants and so the people and the animals are often killed or injured. Pray for conservationists working to protect the elephants and help the farmers. Efforts are being made to change the farming practices so that crops are less likely to be raided and to find alternative income sources for these communities. Pray that there will always be enough unsettled lands for Asian Elephants to thrive. (A Rocha International - May 2010)

Gospel radio

Although the official languages in India include Hindi, Urdu and English, there are still 216 languages which have more than 10,000 native speakers. Gospel radio programmes transmitted from HCJB Global's shortwave broadcasting facility in Kununurra, Australia, reach into the heart of the country with regional languages such as Malayalam, Tamil and Telegu. Ask the Lord to give creativity to the local programme producers and pray for the effectiveness of these broadcasts as they communicate God's love in the 'heart language' of the listener. (Reach Beyond - March 2010)

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