



## Monthly Mission Focus: India



Location: Southern Asia, bordering the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal, between Burma and Pakistan

Area: 3,287,590 sq km – slightly more than one-third the size of the US

Population: 1,080,264,388 (July 2005 est.)

Peoples: Indo-Aryan 75.3%; Dravidian 22.5%; Austro-Asiatic 1.13%; Sino-Tibetan 0.97%; Other 0.1%.

Official languages Hindi (language of Union, 66% speak it); English (legislative and judicial language and language of wider communication, 19% speak it). All languages 1,652 (1971 census).

Religion: India's constitution provides for full religious freedom of worship and witness for all religions but the persecution index is 29th in the world. Religions: Hindu/other 79.83%, Muslim 12.5%, Christian 2.4% (the religion figures for 2000 are largely derived from the 1991 census which, for many reasons, seriously under-enumerated Christians at 2.34%), Sikh 1.92%, Traditional ethnic 1.4%, Buddhist 0.8%, Jain 0.35%, non-Religious 0.55%, Bahai 0.23%, Parsee 0.02%

### Answers to Prayer

☉ Praise for continued freedom for Indian Christians to proclaim the gospel despite efforts to limit this through intimidation and persecution.

☉ The dynamic growth surge of Indian mission agencies and church-based mission initiatives from south and northeast India and elsewhere. From small beginnings in the 1960s the movement has burgeoned and matured to over 44,000 workers in nearly 500 agencies with over half in cross-cultural fields in India and beyond.

### Challenges for Prayer

☉ India has more (and larger) people groups with no Christians, churches or workers than any other part of the world.

☉ There are about 100,000 full-time workers in India; about half are pastoring local churches. There is, on average, one pastor for every six congregations.

☉ Indian missionaries serving in India face heightened and organized opposition and even persecution. A number of those serving in literature distribution, showing evangelistic films, and in discipling young Christians have been martyred in recent years.

*(Statistics are compiled from Operation World and CIA – The World Factbook)*

## Global Recordings Network (GRN)

Global Recordings Network recordists work in various continents, including the sub-continent of India. There are hundreds of dialects and sub-dialects in the country, and the goal of Global Recordings Network is to make the gospel message available and accessible because it is spoken by someone "at home" in the dialect. Subtle intonation and accent often reveal the heritage and background of the speaker, and when hearers feel a close affinity with the speaker, they are much more likely to believe the message and accept Jesus as savior.

One recordist, Swapan, last year traveled to Simla, the capital of Himachal Pradesh state of India. From there he traveled long distances to remote villages where the people speak sub dialects of Pahari. Swapan found translators in each village who would translate the Hindi script into a Pahari dialect, and then often another translator would record the message into the specific sub-dialect. He was able to record in several Pahari dialects: Rohru, Cohora and Malane. He was even able to record songs in some of these dialects. Swapan plans a future trip to a remote hill area to record in another Pahari dialect. *(Global Prayer Digest – February 15, 2006)*

### Hindu Assamese of NE India

Anish squatted on his heels atop his thatched roof. "Here it comes, Dasa." He exclaimed to his friend. Dasa winced as the floodwaters caused the house to shudder and sway. Anish lifted his eyes to the barren hillsides with deep erosion forming cascades of runoff from the monsoon rains.

"With a deep sigh, Dasa said, "I was a farmer. Now I am a beggar, and soon I will be homeless. First the government lets all the trees be cut, now they are trying to secure the hillsides from landslides and soil erosion. It is hopeless." Dasa replied, "This Brahmaputra River was once our life source, but it has become our death sentence. First it brought us crops, then it washed them away. It is always changing."

Of the 15 million mostly Hindu Assamese, there are about 1,000 Christians, and the number keeps shrinking. These Assamese people are one of the least reached Hindu peoples in India and one of the most desperate in situation, both physically and spiritually. *(Global Prayer Digest – December 10, 2005)*