

Assamese Caste Hindus



Quick Facts

Population: 13,700,000

India: 13,500,000

Bhutan: 105,000

Bangladesh: 10,000

United States: 1,000

Religion: Hinduism

Believers: 0.007%

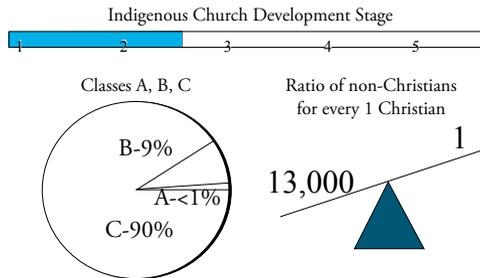
Scriptures: NT, OT

Ministry Tools: JRGT

Church Status: 2

Mission Status: 2

MS Subgroups: 40+



Class A- Are members of a Culturally Relevant Church
 Class B- Have close access to a CRC, but have not yet joined
 Class C- Have no reasonable or close access to a CRC

Identity: The Assamese are the descendants of the Ahom kingdom (1300-1821 A.D.). The Ahom (from which the name Assam derives) were a Tai people related to the Shan of Burma, which migrated to the Brahmaputra valley in the 14th century, and gradually adopted Hinduism and a dialect of Bengali-Oriya, which today is called Assamese (a British designation).

Lifestyle: The British developed Assam into hundreds of tea plantations, due to its abundant rainfall and mild weather. At the time of independence, Assam was one of the wealthiest states. Today, it is one of the poorest. Deforestation has led to frequent flooding and soil depletion. High unemployment in rural areas has fed an insurrection which has further destabilized the state and the region.

Customs: The Assamese are known for their fine silk weaving. Almost every home has a loom, and every woman

is taught the skill and trade, whether they are from low or high castes. The Assamese celebrate several non-religious festivals throughout the year called Bihu, which mark the beginnings of seasons and which all segments of society participate in. During the Rongali Bihu, all the cows are taken to nearby rivers to be bathed.

Religion: The temple of Kamakhya in Assam holds great importance for the Assamese, and for all India, as the center of Tantric worship. Kamakhya (or Sati) was the bride of Shiva, who killed herself through immolation (this is said to be the origin of widow-burning). The god Vishnu cut her body up into 51 pieces, which fell to the earth. Her sexual organs fell to the place where the Kamakhya temple is built. Tantrism involves liberation through sexual activity.

Christian Outreach: The Assamese are the least-reached Hindu ethno-linguistic cluster in South Asia. Missionary work

in Assam focused mainly on the tribal peoples, while neglecting the Hindu majority. Subsequent to the British pullout, instability in the region, from the Chinese invasion in 1962 to the growing independence movement, has discouraged further missionary effort.

How to Pray:

☞ There is yet no indigenous Assamese disciple-making movement. Pray that God would thrust out laborers into this needy harvest field.

☞ Ask God to break the stronghold of Tantrism which grip the Assamese in both spiritual and physical bondage (through temple prostitution, and human sacrifice, especially children).

☞ Atrocities by the Indian military continue unabated. Pray that God would use this to open the eyes of the Assamese to find the Prince of Peace, and to recognize the spiritual bankruptcy of today's fascist Hinduism.

☞ The Ahom seek to revive their ethnic identity and language, much to the dismay of the Hindu nationalist BJP. Pray for sensitivity and wisdom on the part of missionaries who are seeking to contextualize the gospel.

Every year 120,000 Assamese Hindus die without Christ.