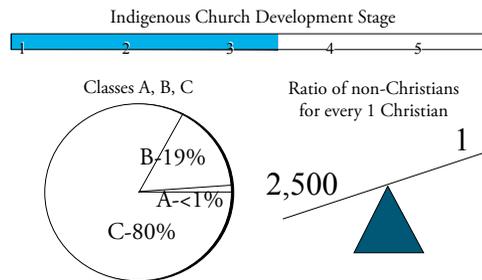


Hindi Caste Hindus



Quick Facts

Population: 275,000,000
 India: 272,000,000
 United States: 1,000,000
 United Kingdom: 450,000
 Bangladesh: 400,000
Religion: Hinduism
Believers: 0.04%
Scriptures: NT, OT
Ministry Tools: JRGT
Church Status: 3
Mission Status: 3
MS Subgroups: 250+



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: There are over 250 peoples that use Hindi as their mother tongue. They are concentrated in the northern states of India in what is called the Hindi belt, though they can be found all throughout the country, as well as in Bangladesh, Pakistan and Nepal.

Lifestyle: In rural areas, the lifestyle of the Hindi speaking peoples varies by their traditional occupation. The Ahir, for example, make their living primarily from raising cattle and sheep. Because of Hindu influence the Ahir, along with most Hindi speaking peoples, don't eat beef anymore, and their cattle are used for dairy purposes. Peoples that continue to eat beef are regarded as ignorant and uneducated, and will be assigned a low-caste status in Hindu society.

Customs: The Hindi speaking peoples follow complex marriage regulations, such as restricting arrangements between different clans to avoid "first

cousin" intermarriage. Other marriage rules permit a man to marry his wife's younger sister, even though his wife is still living. Intermarriage between different peoples is highly regulated, and mostly forbidden.

Religion: Almost every Hindi speaking people claim some kind of descent from a powerful Hindu god and goddess. The Ahir claim to be descendants of the god Krishna since he is a herdsman in Hindu tradition. Each people will venerate their patron god by offering sacrifices and celebrating various rituals throughout the year. They also venerate Hindu saints such as Haridas Baba, who is said to have mastered the art of separating his soul from his body--a necessary requirement for a community exorcist.

Christian Outreach: Over 90% of the Hindi speaking peoples are without a disciple-making movement in their midst. Most Hindi speaking believers

come from people groups that are regarded as low-caste, such as the Chamars, where a people movement to Christ is underway. Unfortunately, this has prejudiced the gospel from spreading to the vast majority of Hindi speakers.

How to Pray:

☞ Pray for spiritual breakthrough among all the Hindi speaking peoples, especially the upper caste Brahmin, Rajput and Bania.

☞ Pray for the establishment of Christian *Ashrams* (place of spiritual learning) in every Hindi speaking town and city.

☞ Pray for the 2 million Hindi speakers who have immigrated to Christian countries. Ask God to give a burden to believers in these countries to reach out to them.

☞ Pray for the protection of missionaries from radical Hindu groups seeking to eradicate Christianity from the Hindi belt through legislation, intimidation, and occasional violence.

☞ Pray for effective outreach in the 250 universities and 10,000 colleges where Hindi speaking young people are studying.

Every year, 2.2 million Hindi Caste Hindus die without Christ.

Hindi Caste Hindus (cont.)

30 Least-Evangelized Hindi Peoples

People, Population, % Evangelical, Caste Type

Ahir	17,000,000	0.00%	BC	Kumhar	1,800,000	0.00%	SC
Brahmin	11,000,000	0.00%	FC	Lunia	1,500,000	0.00%	BC
Kurmi	6,500,000	0.00%	BC	Darzi	1,400,000	0.00%	BC
Rajput	6,400,000	0.00%	FC	Sonar	1,400,000	0.00%	BC
Lodha	6,000,000	0.01%	ST	Ahar	1,300,000	0.00%	BC
Bania	5,500,000	0.00%	FC	Bhoi	1,300,000	0.00%	SC
Chamar	5,500,000	0.45%	SC	Balai	1,200,000	0.01%	SC
Kachhi	4,800,000	0.00%	BC	Kalwar	1,200,000	0.00%	BC
Gadaria	4,200,000	0.00%	BC	Khatik	1,100,000	0.00%	SC
Nai	3,600,000	0.00%	BC	Kol	900,000	0.00%	SC
Kahar	3,400,000	0.00%	BC	Taga	730,000	0.00%	BC
Pasi	2,800,000	0.00%	SC	Kunbi	720,000	0.00%	BC
Dhobi	2,800,000	0.00%	SC	Bairagi	700,000	0.00%	BC
Koli	2,600,000	0.00%	ST	Kirar	670,000	0.00%	BC
Kayastha	2,000,000	0.00%	FC	Murao	640,000	0.00%	BC
Gujar	2,000,000	0.00%	BC	Gosain	580,000	0.00%	BC

AHIR

The Ahir are an ancient pastoral tribe which immigrated to India from Central Asia around the time of Christ. Their name derives from the word Abhira, which is thought to be a reference to the tribe's practice of serpent worship. Today they are incorporated into the Hindu caste system as a Backward Caste. They live primarily in rural areas and make their living raising cattle and sheep. Because of Hindu influence, most Ahir no longer eat beef, and instead use their cattle primarily for dairy purposes. This has given them a high standing in the caste system in India, though they are still regarded as uneducated and ignorant by those in the higher castes.

BRAHMIN

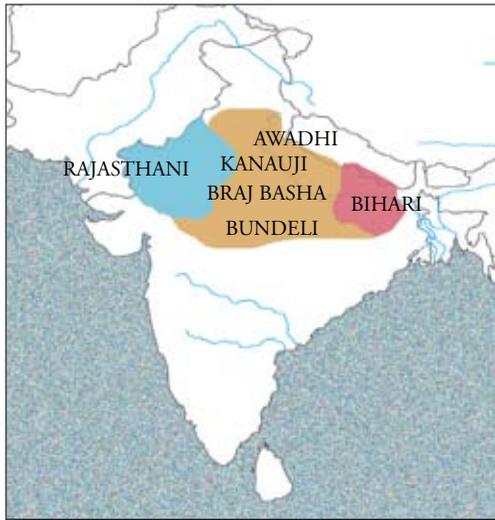
The Brahmins are the highest and most powerful caste in India. For thousands of years they have held the monopoly on priestly service in Hinduism. They are believed to have originated as singers of sacred songs at a time when the head of households performed the sacrifices of the family. Gradually they began to replace these functions with increasingly complex rituals until the point where only they were able to perform the sacred functions associated with life-crises events, such as birth, marriage and death. As a result of this ancient monopoly they have become incredibly wealthy, and today they form a high percentage of India's scholars, doctors, lawyers, professionals and business executives. Marrying a non-Brahmin is generally forbidden. Within their own ranks is a complex social hierarchy in which girls are required to marry up and men are required to marry down.

RAJPUT

The Rajput are the second highest caste in Hinduism and traditionally served as warriors and rulers. The name Rajput comes from the Sanskrit phrase "raja-putra" which means "son of a king." There are 36 traditional clans among them with varying social rank. Like the Brahmins, a father's responsibility is to marry his daughter into a higher clan. To accomplish this he must save his money for many years to put together a dowry. Females are thus regarded as a financial liability, resulting in the widespread practice of female infanticide. In the past, widows of Rajput warriors who died in battle were required to throw themselves on the funeral pile of their husband.

Hindi Caste Hindus (cont.)

MAJOR HINDI LINGUISTIC SUB-GROUPS



Sub-Group	Population	% Evan
W. Hindi (Rajasthani)*	30,000,000	0.05%
Marwari	14,000,000	0.05%
Dhundari	9,000,000	0.01%
Mewati	5,000,000	0.01%
Central Hindi	255,000,000	0.04%
Kharboli	180,000,000	0.06%
Awadhi	40,000,000	0.01%
Bundeli	13,000,000	0.02%
Eastern Hindi (Bihari)*	70,000,000	0.01%
Bhojpuri	24,000,000	0.05%
Maithili	22,000,000	0.01%
Magahi	12,000,000	0.01%

*Profiled separately

AWADHI

Awadhi is the second largest dialect among the central Hindi cluster with an estimated 20 to 40 million speakers (although the 1991 Indian census recorded only 480,000 speakers, due in part to the fact that many speakers of the dialect refer to it as Hindi). Historically, it has been one of the most significant literary dialects in India with numerous historical, poetic and religious works. Its geographic center is in Awadh, Uttar Pradesh, with significant numbers in Bihar, Nepal, and Madhya Pradesh. Awadhi is a bridge dialect between the Central and Eastern Hindi clusters. It has been significantly influenced by Braj Basha (believed to be its parent dialect) and Magahi. Due to Awadhi's significance as a literary language it has had a profound impact on standard Hindi, which is based on the Khariboli dialect of western Uttar Pradesh. There has been little progress of the gospel among the Awadhi. TransWorld Radio is now broadcasting two programs a week, and the Bible was recently published in 2000 (up to 75% of Awadhi are literate in their mother tongue).

BUNDELI

Bundeli, also known as Bundelkhandi, is spoken primarily in Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh, though speakers can be found as far south as Andhra Pradesh. Reported estimates of speakers range from 650,000 to 13 million (the 1991 census returned 1.6 million responses). Major groups speaking Bundeli are the Kumhar (1,150,000), Teli (1,000,000), Ahir (660,000), and Basor (330,000), among the 16 major peoples using the dialect. Bundelkhandi is closely related to Braj Bhasha and was a literary language in India for many centuries.

BRAJ BHASHA

Braj Bhasha was the predominate literary Hindi dialect of India until the adoption of the Kharboli dialect as the national standard of Hindi in the 19th century. The range of estimated speakers is vast, from a paultry 85,000 in the 1991 census, to as high as 20 million by linguists who make the case that the dialect is still the vernacular for the cultural and geographic region once known as Braj Bhoomi. This region includes NW Uttar Pradesh, eastern Rajasthan and Southern Haryana. It is spoken in the cities of Mathura, Agra, Bareli, Bharatpur, Dhaulpur.

KANAUJI

Kanauji is a transitional dialect between Braj Bhasha and Awadhi. Though a large dialect it did not appear in the 1991 census as all its speakers refer to it as Hindi. Estimates of usage range from 6 to 10 million people. It is reported that speakers are beginning to use standard Hindi more and more, as is the case with most Hindi dialects. Though there are attempts by a few to protect the dialect from absorption, there is actually little that can be done.