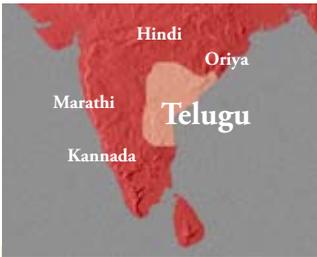


Telugu Caste Hindus



Quick Facts

Population: 62,000,000

India: 61,500,000

Myanmar: 100,000

United States: 90,000

Malaysia: 60,000

Religion: Hinduism

Believers: 0.24%

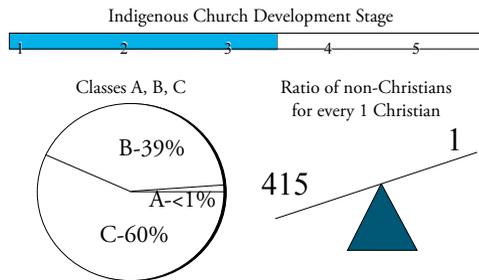
Scriptures: NT, OT

Ministry Tools: JRGT

Church Status: 3

Mission Status: 2

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: Over 250 Hindu peoples use the Telugu language as their mother-tongue. They are concentrated in the southern state of Andhra Pradesh. The majority people, from which the language derives its name, are the Telaga, which number 12,000,000. The Telugu language is of the Dravidian family, related to Tamil and Malayalam.

Lifestyle: Agriculture is the chief source of income for the Telugu Hindu peoples. Unfortunately drought has affected much of the rice, sugarcane and cotton crops in recent years. In Urban areas the Telugu are outstanding for their advancements in information technology, biotechnology and pharmaceuticals.

Customs: Among the Telaga, as with many Telugu speaking peoples, marriage is traditionally patrilineal, meaning the bride will go to live with the husband's family in exchange for some monetary compensation. Marriages

are overseen by Brahmin priests, who perform the necessary rituals to bind a couple for life. Once married, there can be no re-marriage in traditional Telaga culture. However, this is changing in big cities such as Hyderabad, the Telugu capital.

Religion: The Telugu Caste Hindus worship a variety of deities, most notable being Shiva, Vishnu and the Ganges River. According to tradition the goddess Lakshmi empowered Telaga warriors supernaturally to conquer a band of demons which were haunting the local sages. Upon defeating them, the Telaga were given vast estates, ending their tradition as a warrior caste and marking their transition to agriculture.

Christian Outreach: In the early 20th century the gospel spread rapidly among the lower caste Telugu peoples. However, in the last thirty years tens of thousands were re-converted in an aggressive campaign by Hindu funda-

mentalists. This has resulted in an overall negative rate of Christian growth, with as many as one-third being re-converted to Hinduism among certain peoples.

How to Pray:

☞ Over 80% of Telugu villages are without an evangelical Church. Pray for the training and commissioning of Church planters and evangelists.

☞ Close to 200 Telugu speaking peoples are without a disciple-making movement. Pray for spiritual breakthrough in each of them.

☞ Pray for revival to come and counter the spread of nominalism in many older churches.

☞ Intercede for effective outreach to the new tech-savvy generation in Hyderabad, and to the movie industry there which produces about 100 films a year.

☞ Petition for Kingdom Harvest among the 3.5 million Telugu Brahmins which have influence in every Telugu speaking people.

☞ Ask God to protect religious freedom and to counter the efforts of radical Hindu fundamentalists.

**Every year 540,000
 Telugu Hindus die
 without Christ.**

Telugu Caste Hindus (cont.)

30 Least-Evangelized Telugu Hindu Peoples

People, Population, % Evangelical, Caste Type

Telaga	12,000,000	0.00%	BC	Bhoi	1,000,000	0.00%	SC
Ahir	7,300,000	0.01%	BC	Kurmi	750,000	0.00%	BC
Kunbi	7,100,000	0.01%	BC	Arunthathiyar	700,000	0.00%	SC
Mala	4,900,000	0.05%	SC	Rajput	650,000	0.00%	FC
Viswakarma	3,700,000	0.00%	BC	Dom	630,000	0.00%	SC
Bania	3,600,000	0.00%	FC	Baliya	600,000	0.00%	BC
Brahman	3,500,000	0.00%	FC	Lohar	500,000	0.00%	SC
Kalal	3,300,000	0.00%	BC	Teli	450,000	0.00%	BC
Boya	3,200,000	0.00%	BC	Bazigar	430,000	0.00%	SC
Dhobi	3,200,000	0.00%	SC	Sali	430,000	0.00%	BC
Vaddar	2,700,000	0.01%	BC	Razu	410,000	0.00%	BC
Mangala	1,700,000	0.01%	FC	Vanniyan	360,000	0.00%	BC
Kaikolan	1,400,000	0.01%	BC	Satani	350,000	0.00%	BC
Nai	1,400,000	0.00%	BC	Darzi	340,000	0.00%	BC
Kumhar	1,200,000	0.00%	SC	Badhai	250,000	0.00%	SC
Sonar	1,130,000	0.00%	BC	Konda Dhora	240,000	0.01%	ST

TELAGA

The Telaga are the major subgroup of the Kapu cluster of peoples. The word Kapu means “protector” and refers to the historic legend that these peoples are the descendants of soldiers which established a feudal system over much of Andhra Pradesh. Today they own vast tracts of agricultural land, and many have become wealthy cultivators. The Telaga are also known as Kamma, which refers to a female ear ornament. According to an ancient legend, a group of sages were being harrassed by demons. The goddess Lakshimi told them to worship her *kamma* for one hundred years and they would be delivered. At the end of this time, five hundred warriors rose up from the dead and defeated the demons. For this victory, they were promised estates throughout Southern India, and from these five hundred warriors came the Telaga people.

MALA

The Mala, also known as the Adi-Andhra, are a low caste people, closely related to the Madiga. According to Hindu legend these two peoples descend from two watchman of Lord Shiva which killed the divine cow, Kamadhenu. For this they and their descendants were cursed by Lord Shiva to be menial servants. There are fourteen Mala subgroups, one of which is an endogamous Christian group, which converted in mass within the last thirty years. (It is reported that this group is still highly syncretistic). Though the Hindu sub-groups worship a plethora of Hindu gods, they are not served by Brahmins due to their untouchable status. As such, they have their own sacred specialists called Mala Dasara or Mala Jangam, which officiate at festivals and important life-crises events.

VISWAKARMA

The Viswakarma are a caste of artisans and metalworkers, including coppersmiths, goldsmiths and silversmiths. Their name derives from the god Visvakarma (architect of the gods), from which they claim descent. There are five major divisions among them, each with its own headman, who is elected democratically through representative leadership. Over these is a chief headman, who is chosen by a child that picks a name out of a pile of nominations. This is done in a solemn ceremony before the goddess Kamakshi Anman.