

# Gujjar Muslims



## Quick Facts

**Population:** 4,000,000

India: 2,500,000

Pakistan: 1,500,000

**Location:** Himalayas

**Language Group:** Rajasthani

**Religion:** Islam

**Believers:** 0.0006%

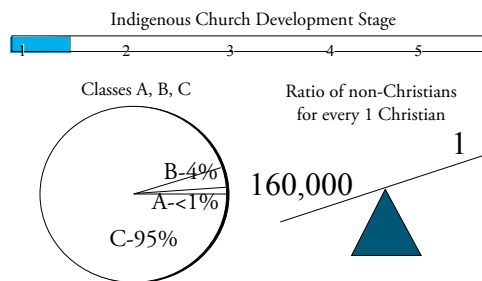
**Scriptures:** Portions

**Ministry Tools:** JRGT

**C Status:** 1

**M Status:** 1

**MS Subgroups:** 5+



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 Gujjar Muslims are a nomadic tribe of obscure origin living throughout the Himalyan foothills in India and Pakistan. One theory suggests they are the descendants of the 5th century White Huns who came to India as nomadic hordes. They are divided into two major endogamous groups: Bhatariye and Bhanariye.

**Lifestyle:** The Gujjar Muslims have traditionally been buffalo herders, and have grazed their herds in forests. Though nomadic, they have also established permanent settlements along their migratory routes. Deforestation and government restrictions in India have limited their ability to find suitable grazing land for their Buffalo herds and many have begun herding sheep instead, or have become settled agriculturalists. Milk and dairy products are their main sources of income.

**Customs:** Gujjar Muslims practice what they call *satt batta*, or exchange

marriage. In this practice if one family gives one of their daughters in marriage to another, the other family must reciprocate in the same way. If they are unable to do so they must pay a substantial brideprice (20,000 rupees, or \$500).

**Religion:** Gujjar social organization and traditions suggest significant influence from Hinduism. The Gujara Hindu empire was defeated in the 13th century by a series of raids and conquests beginning with Muhammad Ghazni, the Pathans and then the Moghuls. It is believed that the Gujjars were forced into nomadism at this time for survival, though ironically the majority adopted the religion of their conquerors. They are despised by surrounding Muslim peoples such as the Kashmiri, and regarded as untrustworthy. However they are sometimes allowed to share mosques and shrines with them.

**Christian Outreach:** A close partnership of mission organizations have seen

remarkable results in the last few years among the Gujjar Muslims. The first few fellowships of believers have been established, and progress has been made in developing discipleship resources for the emerging church. The 2005 Kashmir earthquake did much to open doors and hearts due to significant outreach by Christian aid groups in partnership with missionaries.

## How to Pray:

☞ The Gujjar Muslims love to sing, and one of their songs about the biblical character Joseph takes five days to finish! Pray for efforts to produce a Christian Gujjar album by a gifted believer who has this calling.

☞ The “One-Story Project” has finally been completed among the Gujjar (50 recordings of Bible stories). Since the Gujjars are only 18% literate, this resource is vitally needed. Pray for its widespread distribution by believers as they travel with their herds and mingle with other families and clans.

☞ The Bible is finally being translated into Gujjari. Recordings are being made as books are completed, and literacy classes are being organized for children. Pray for God’s blessing and wisdom for those involved.

**Every year 36,000 Gujjar Muslims die without Christ.**