

ANTIOCH CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

THE GUJARATI PEOPLE OF INDIA

Unreached Peoples Prayer Profile for October & November



The 35 million Gujarati are the inhabitants of the state of Gujarat, though they are also scattered throughout west central India. One of the most industrialized states in India, Gujarat has long been an area of shifting populations. Its long coastline and numerous harbors have made it a focus of maritime travel and trade. The original, non-violent cultures gave way to the militaristic feudalism of Hindu rajputs (Indian nobility). The rajputs, in turn, were succeeded by the Muslims, Moguls, Maratha, and ultimately, the British.

The Gujarati are a relatively peaceful people, except for religious tensions that exist between the Hindus and Muslims. Known for their resourcefulness and their good business sense, they have successfully emigrated and prospered in many countries around the world. The Gujarati speak an Indo-Aryan language, which is also called Gujarati. It has many different dialects, some based on region and others based on caste or community.

What Are Their Lives Like?

In the state of Gujarat, 70% of the employed are engaged in agriculture, with cotton being the main crop. Other cash crops include sugarcane, tobacco, and oil seeds from peanuts. Wheat and millet are staple food crops, and rice is produced in wetter areas. As the Gujarati have become more modernized, the use of tractors has increased. Some, however, still must supplement their income by hiring out their children as migrant laborers. In addition to farm products, Gujarat produces textiles, plastics, chemicals, and heavy machinery.

The Gujarati are divided into a number of social groups. The Hindus, who constitute the largest group, are further divided into a number of *jatis* (castes, or social classes). Castes are culture groups based not only on occupation but also on customs, manners, and habits. The *Brahmans* (priests and scholars) are in the highest position, while the "scheduled" castes, or untouchables, are the lowest. These jatis have an endless number of sub-groups. Each caste has a *panchayat*, or council of elders that helps regulate social customs.

In Gujarati Hindu society, warriors and merchants rank after the Brahmans. The *Bania* (merchants) established the leading textile centers in India and are also the top money-lenders. Some who were traditional weavers are now thriving in the artificial silk industry. The Gujarati are very successful carpenters, metal workers, goldsmiths, and potters. Wood carving is one of their specialties. Cattle breeders and vendors of milk products are respected because of the religious significance of cattle. Laborers, such as fishermen, those who press oil and mill rice, tailors, barbers, and leather workers, come next in the caste system. Beneath them are those who remove dead animals and garbage.

Muslim Gujarati range in occupation from herdsmen to government officials. They are strictly endogamous (marry within their own group) and observe *purdah* (a practice in which the women wear veils and are secluded).

What Are Their Beliefs?

Most of the Gujarati (88%) are Hindus. The belief in reincarnation, or the continuous cycle of death and rebirth, is a central part of their belief system. They hope to better their position in life by showing devotion to their gods and by demonstrating love and mercy toward cattle as well as other people. The Muslim Gujarati (6.6%) despise the millions of Hindu gods and are devoted to only Allah. The *Jains* are an offshoot of Hinduism and compose 4% of the Gujarati. Many hold important positions in business and industry. They reject the spiritual supremacy of the Brahmans and hope to achieve a state of perfect peace, thus ending the cycle of death and rebirth.

What Are Their Needs?

The Gujarati have the Bible, *Jesus* film, and Christian broadcasts available to them. Also, eight missions agencies are currently targeting them. Still, response to the Gospel has been minimal, with less than 1% being Christian. Sustained prayer is the key to tearing down the strongholds that have blinded the Gujarati to the Truth.

Prayer Points

- Ask the Lord of the harvest to send loving Christians to share the Gospel with the Gujarati.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to grant wisdom, favor, and unity to the eight missions agencies that are targeting the Gujarati.
- Pray for effectiveness of the Jesus film among the Gujarati, with many conversions resulting.
- Ask God to anoint the Gospel as it goes forth via radio in their area.
- Pray that God will give the Gujarati believers boldness to share Christ with their own people.
- Take authority over the spiritual principalities and powers that have kept the Gujarati bound for many generations.
- Ask God to raise up prayer teams who will begin breaking up the soil through worship and intercession.
- Ask the Lord to bring forth a triumphant Gujarati church for the glory of His name!

Country:	India
Language Spoken:	Gujarati
Population of People in this Country:	41,000,000
Population of Language Speakers in the World:	42,959,600
Language Code:	GJR00
% Christians of this People in this Country:	1%
# of Evangelicals of this People in this Country:	57,400
% Evangelicals of this People in this Country:	0%
Latitude, Longitude:	22.5287, 70.4883
GMI Map Code:	GJR-IND-EPY
Affinity Block Name:	Indo-Iranians or Indo-Aryans of S Asia
People Cluster:	Gujarati
Race Code:	CNN25e
1995 Beginning Joshua Project List:	Yes
Active Original Joshua Project List:	Yes

Additional People Group Information:

Complete Bible:	1823
New Testament:	1820
Bible Portions:	1809
Jesus Film:	Yes
Christian Radio Broadcast:	FEBA, TWR
Audio Recording of Gospel:	Yes