

"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations" **Matthew 28:19**

Unreached People Prayer Profile  
September & October, 2004

## The Mirpur Punjabi People of India



The term "Punjabi" is used to describe both those who speak Punjabi and those who inhabit the Punjab region of [India](#) and [Pakistan](#). It is derived from the Persian words *panj* (five) and *ab* (river). Punjabi is an Indo-European language having six main dialects. The 935,000 Mirpur Punjabi speakers live in the Mirpur region of Kashmir, near the Pakistan border. Their language is distinct from, but related to, Western Punjabi.

The Punjab region is an ancient center of civilization that has been the main route of invasion and migration into India. Its chief historic cities are Lahore, Ludhiana, Jalandhar, and Patiala.

Modern Punjabi culture was largely shaped by the partitioning of India and Pakistan in 1947. This resulted in massive migrations that separated the Muslims from the Hindus and Sikhs. (Sikhism is a combination of Islam and Hinduism.) Millions of Hindus and Sikhs migrated to India, and millions of Muslims moved to Pakistan.

### What are their lives like?

The Punjab has long been one of the world's most important agricultural regions. About 70% of the Punjabi live in rural areas and work as farmers. The principal crops are cotton and wheat, which grow easily in the dry climate. Cotton is the primary cash crop, grown mainly for export. The staple diet of the Punjabi consists of bread and preserved or fresh vegetables.



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Villages in the Punjab region have houses that are built closely together. The outer walls are joined together, protecting them from outsiders. Entrance into the village is through a stone gateway, or *durwaza*, which arches over the main road. It serves as an important meeting place for villagers, as well as a favorite stopping place for visiting merchants and traders. The average population of a village in the central area is about 1,000 people. Urban areas have a full range of occupations, including shopkeepers, teachers, tailors, postmen, religious professionals, and medical practitioners.

In traditional Punjabi culture, the men are responsible for overseeing the family possessions such as land, shops, or other business assets. The women are responsible for overseeing the homes. They cook, care for the children, manage the household finances, and take care of any domestic animals. The "caste" system is India's strict organization of social classes. The Punjabi are divided into castes called *jati*. Castes generally have origin stories that explain how they came into an area, and/or their present occupational position. Caste divisions vary according to region, but they generally range from the upper castes of *Brahmans* (priests, scholars, landowners, and skilled artisans) to the lowest caste of laborers and servants. Various artisan castes include those who are skilled as carpenters, masons, blacksmiths, barbers, and weavers. The *jati* are further divided into *gots* (clans), *pinds* (villages), *pattis* (divisions), and *parivars* (families).

Marriage ceremonies differ by caste and religion. Generally, they are symbolic of the ideal that a marriage is a free gift from the bride's family to the groom, with nothing taken back in exchange. The bride's family usually pays all the wedding expenses. Often her family provides substantial gifts (a dowry) for her to take to her new home. The Punjabi have many unique forms of art, including dance, folk epics, poetry, and architecture.

### What are their beliefs?

The majority of the Mirpur Punjabi are [Hindu](#). They worship a pantheon of gods, particularly *Vishnu* (the preserver of the universe) and *Shiva* (the destroyer).

### What are their needs?

While all of the major Christian resources are available in the Eastern Panjabi language, very little is available in Mirpur Panjabi. Currently, there are no missions agencies working among this people group. The complex nature of Indian society makes church planting a difficult task. Prayer is needed to break down the barriers of resistance that separate these people from a knowledge of God through Jesus.

### Prayer Points

- Ask the Lord to call people who are willing to go to India and share Christ with the Mirpur Punjabi.
- Pray that God will raise up linguists to translate the Bible into the Mirpur Panjabi language.
- Take authority over the spiritual principalities and powers that are keeping the Mirpur Punjabi bound.
- Pray that missions organizations and churches will accept the challenge of adopting and reaching the Punjabi.
- Pray that the Punjabi believers will rise to the challenge of taking the Gospel to their people.
- Ask God to raise up prayer teams who will begin breaking up the spiritual soil of India through intercession.
- Ask the Lord to save key leaders among the Punjabi who will boldly declare the Gospel.
- Ask the Lord to raise up strong churches among the Mirpur Punjabi.

## Statistics (Latest estimates from the World Evangelization Research Center.)

### THE PEOPLE

- **People name:** Mirpur Punjabi
- **Country:** India
- **Their language:** Mirpur Panjabi
- **Population:**  
(1990) 850,600  
(1995) 935,700  
(2000) 1,022,000
- **Largest religion:**  
Hindu 90%  
Sikh 9%
- **Christians:** 1%
- **Church members:** 9,357
- **Scriptures in their own language:** None
- **Jesus Film in their own language:** None
- **Christian broadcasts in their own language:** None
- **Mission agencies working among this people:** 0
- **Persons who have heard the Gospel:** 196,500 (21%)  
    Those evangelized by local Christians: 65,500 (7%)  
    Those evangelized from the outside: 131,000 (14%)
- **Persons who have never heard the Gospel:** 739,200 (79%)

### THE COUNTRY

- **Country:** India
- **Population:**  
(1990) 850,638,100  
(1995) 935,744,300  
(2000) 1,022,021,300
- **Major peoples in size order:**  
Hindi (High Hindi) 9.5%  
Telegu 7.8%  
Maratha 7.4%  
Bengali 6.4%  
Hindi (Bazaar, Popular) 5.5%
- **Major religions:**

Hindus 78.2%  
Muslims 12%  
Christians 4.3%

- **Number of denominations:** 163
- **Additional People Group Information:**

|                                   |      |
|-----------------------------------|------|
| <b>Complete Bible:</b>            | Yes  |
| <b>New Testament:</b>             | Yes  |
| <b>Bible Portions:</b>            | 1981 |
| <b>Jesus Film:</b>                | Yes  |
| <b>Christian Radio Broadcast:</b> | FEBA |
| <b>Audio Recording of Gospel:</b> | Yes  |

