

Gond



Quick Facts

Pop. in India: 13,000,000

State Populations:

Madhya Pradesh: 4,500,000

Chhattisgarh: 4,000,000

Maharashtra: 1,800,000

Orissa: 870,000

Religion: Tribal/Hindu

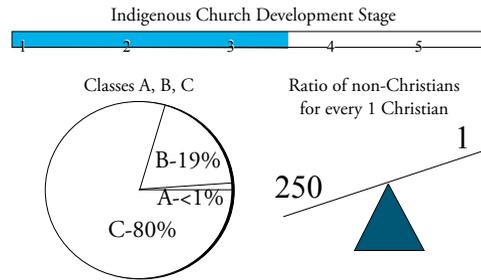
Believers: 0.4%

Scriptures: NT

Ministry Tools: JRGT

C Status: 3 **M Status:** 2

MS Subgroups: 40+



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 Gond are the largest tribe in South Asia. They are scattered across the entire breadth of Central India, with major concentrations in the hills of Madhya Pradesh where the Gond once ruled powerful kingdoms from 1400-1700 A.D. Their language is Dravidian, related to Tamil and Kannada. The name Gond (meaning hill) is used by outsiders; their name for themselves is Koitur or Koi.

Lifestyle: About 20% of the Gond continue to engage in hunting and gathering, the traditional occupation of most tribal peoples in India. Encroachment of Gond ancestral lands by other peoples is one of the greatest problems facing the tribe. Many have become agricultural laborers on farmland previously occupied by their own clan. Conflict over land rights has led to violent clashes over the last century.

Customs: Cross-cousin, arranged marriages are the rule for the Gond. How-

ever if a young boy and girl in love run away with each other, they are allowed to return and the two families will negotiate the marriage terms. Generally, marriage within one's own clan is forbidden. Clan distinctions are easily determined by inquiring how many gods the family worships, since each clan has a different number.

Religion: For the most part, the Gond practice their own traditional religion, though they are becoming increasingly influenced by popular Hinduism. Outside of every Gond village is a gate with a beam above it where animal skins are hung to ward off evil spirits. These skins are usually from goat or pig sacrifices, which are offered at harvest-time or if there is sickness in a family. High-priests will serve three or four villages. The sacrificial animal must be willing to die; a nod of its head gives its consent.

Christian Outreach: At least a dozen large Indian mission organizations have

planted hundreds of small village churches among the Gond. Momentum is building towards a strong people movement led by indigenous leaders. However, presently of the estimated 75,000 Gond villages less than 1% have culturally relevant disciple-making fellowships.

How to Pray:

☞ There is an urgent need to develop strategic training programs for Gond church planters. Pray for the funds and personnel to equip and deploy 10,000 Gond evangelists in the next ten years.

☞ The Gond have about 40 tribal divisions, and speak over 70 secondary languages, depending on the clans proximity to other peoples. Pray for church-planting breakthroughs among every Gond sub-group.

☞ Pray that Indian cross-cultural missionaries to the Gond would be effective in passing the baton of leadership to the emerging Gond church.

☞ Pray against the infiltration of radical Hindus who seek to evangelize Gond children through the public education system.

☞ Pray for the completion of the Bible in Gondi.

Every year 120,000 Gond die without Christ.