

Malayali Caste Hindu



Quick Facts

Population: 14,500,000

India: 14,000,000

UAE: 100,000

Kuwait: 80,000

Malaysia: 75,000

Religion: Hindu

Believers: 0.34% (HBB)

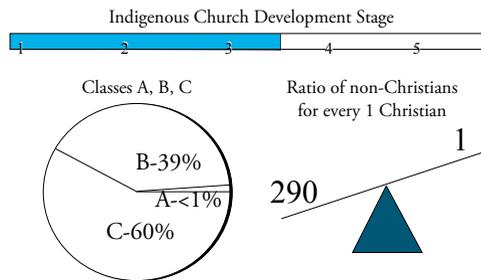
Scriptures: NT, OT

Ministry Tools: JRGT

Church Status: 3

Mission Status: 2

MS Subgroups: 50+



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 Malayali speak a Dravidian language called Malayalam, which split off from Tamil around the 9th century A.D. Their language and culture has been shaped by their position on the Malabar coast, which has been the center of maritime trade between east and west for millennia.

Lifestyle: The Malayali rank the highest on the Physical Quality of Life Index for India. They have the highest literacy rates and life expectancy. However, they have received little international investment from multi-national companies, unlike other areas of India. The agricultural sector contributes the most to the growth of the economy. Major cash crops are coconut, tea, coffee and rubber. Over 600 varieties of rice are grown.

Customs: Among many Malayali communities, women have traditionally held a higher place in society with more power and freedom than in other

Indian societies. Among the Nayar, women could choose their own marriage partner, as well as divorce them and remarry. They were also free to have more than one sexual partner at the same time. Property was also inherited through the female line rather than the male. However due to British influence and pressure, many of these practices have been gradually discarded.

Religion: Malayali Hinduism has been strongly influenced by a Brahmin subgroup known as the Namboothiri. They regard themselves as the most orthodox Brahmin in India, requiring every member to complete rigorous studies of the Vedic scriptures in the sacred Sanskrit language. They practice tantric temple worship, which seeks to energize the temple's idol by channeling the power of the gods.

Christian Outreach: About 43% of Malayalis converted to Islam and Christianity centuries ago. Christians,

which make up about 19% of the population (the highest percentage of any Indian society) trace their origins to the first century arrival of the Apostle Thomas. Over time, the Christian community became a caste group within Malayali society and developed an inward focus, effectively ceasing to be an evangelizing influence among the Hindus.

How to Pray:

☞ Those castes and clans that remained loyal to the Brahmins became even more strongly entrenched in Hinduism. Pray that God would tear down the pride of the Brahmin community and reveal the spiritual bankruptcy of idol worship.

☞ In the last few decades there has been revival among many traditional Christian churches with many being saved. Pray for their influence as salt and light among their Hindu friends and neighbors.

☞ Hindu background believers are often ostracized from their families, and absorbed into a Christian caste, diminishing their impact. Pray for creative ways to reach Hindu communities that allow new believers to retain their family connections and identity.

Every year 130,000 Malayali Hindus die without Christ.

Malayali Caste Hindus (cont.)

30 Least-Evangelized Malayali Peoples

People, Population, % Evangelical, Caste Type

Nayar	7,400,000	0.01%	FC	Valan	65,000	0.01%	BC
Ilavan Hindus	4,000,000	1.50%	BC	Urali	62,000	1.00%	ST
Brahman	550,000	0.00%	FC	Panan	53,000	0.00%	SC
Cheruman	420,000	0.00%	SC	Panikkan	50,000	0.00%	ST
Velakathala	300,000	0.00%	BC	Krishnanvak	47,000	0.00%	BC
Kannakan	190,000	0.01%	SC	Ilavathi	40,000	0.00%	BC
Arayan	180,000	1.00%	BC	Eluthassanrsa	40,000	0.00%	BC
Malayan	85,000	0.00%	ST	Kalladi	32,000	0.00%	SC
Veluthadanayar	85,000	0.00%	BC	Moger	24,000	0.00%	SC
Paniyan	80,000	0.01%	ST	Kanikaran	23,000	0.01%	ST
Kaniyan	80,000	0.01%	ST	Pathiyan	22,000	0.01%	SC
Velan	80,000	0.00%	SC	Ilayathu	20,000	0.00%	BC
Mannan	68,000	0.01%	ST	Valluvan	17,000	0.00%	SC
Ambalavasilan	65,000	0.00%	BC	Nayadi	14,000	0.00%	SC

Nayar- The Nayar are the dominant Hindu community in Malayali society. They are regarded as a Dravidian people, though some scholars believe they originated from Nepal, as part of the Newar tribe. Whatever the case, there is little or no trace of any Tibetan-like features among them. Traditionally, they were a military caste, living in exclusive settlements near Malayali villages and towns. Today, almost all the Nayar speak Malayalam and are integrated into Malayali society as professionals, cultivators and land-owners. Many peoples were absorbed by the Nayar over the centuries, and there are at least 18 major heirarchacal sub-groups among them.

Ilavan Hindus- The Ilavan, also known as the Izhava, are the descendents of migrants from Ceylon (the name Izhava is an ancient designation for the island of Ceylon, modern-day Sri Lanka). The Izhava migrants brought with them coconot and palmyra palms, and settled on the Malabar coast. Maintaining palm and coconot groves, as well as toddy-tapping and preparing unrefined sugar, are the chief source of livelihood for the community today. The Ilavan are accepted as participants in Malayali Hindu temple worship, though in the past this was more uncommon. Traditionally, property among the Ilavan was controlled by the extended family. Property was not inherited by a father's children, but by the children of the father's sister. Recently, laws have been passed allowing for inheritance to be split equally by both families. Four clans of the Ilavan became Christian through the influence of Latin and British colonial occupation, beginning in the 16th century. Due to endogamous marriage practice, this minority has become a separate sub-group in Malayali society known as the Chogan.

Cheruman- The Cheruman claim to be the original inhabitants of the Chera kingdom, which ruled Kerala for hundreds of years before the Christian era, and was finally destroyed in the 15th century A.D. The nobility of the Chera kingdom were known as Cheraman, but today the community that goes by this name are essentially serfs, or landless peasants. Like many Malayali peoples, the Cheruman hold women in high regard. Women make important family decisions and control the budget. Though the Cheruman have their own priests to conduct their religious ceremonies, they participate with other communities in Malayali festivals and visit the same shrines.