

Location: Southern Asia, bordering the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal, between Burma and Pakistan

Population: 1,166,079,217

Language: Hindi 41%, Bengali 8.1%, Telugu 7.2%, Marathi 7%, Tamil 5.9%, Urdu 5%, Gujarati 4.5%, Kannada 3.7%, Malayalam 3.2%, Oriya 3.2%, Punjabi 2.8%, Assamese 1.3%, Maithili 1.2%, other 5.9%

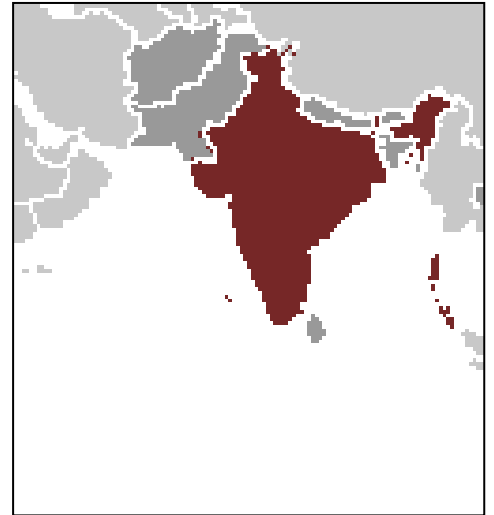
Literacy: (definition: age 15 and over, and can read and write)

total population: 61%

male: 73.4%

female: 47.8%

FACTS AND FIGURES FROM THE WORLD FACTBOOK, CIA



Braille Bibles in India



India has the largest number of blind and partially sighted people in the world, the estimated figure is around 12 million. Malnutrition due to poverty, and diseases like glaucoma etc., are the main cause for blindness in India. The Government of India through various health care programs is trying to address these problems. However, there is much still to be done. In rural India, blindness is considered a social stigma. As a result, the blind are ignored by the family and society. Neglected, they take to begging or peddling small value items for their livelihood. Frustrated, they live a life in loneliness - without much hope.



There is no other agency in India, apart from the Bible Society of India (BSI), involved in the translation and the publication of Scriptures in Braille. BSI has the full Braille Bible (each Bible comes in 43 volumes) in almost all the major Indian languages, as well as New Reader Portions, and a wide range of other Scriptures.

The Scriptures bring hope, comfort and joy and 'the light' in their otherwise dark world. The Mission Agencies working among the blind look to the Bible Society for this valuable support and contribution. Many lives have been changed through the Scriptures distributed and they have now found a new hope in their lives. The Department continuously does research and brings out new Scriptures to meet the 'felt needs' of the blind.

Thirty-one visually impaired people came to a specially organised camp at the Union of Evangelical Students of India Retreat Centre in Dodda Gubbi, Bangalore. Everyone that attended the camp was affected in some way...

"I have three sisters who are also blind like me. This used to worry me much. In this camp I have learnt not to worry but to trust in the Lord for everything."

"I have learnt not to blame God for the difficulties I face in life. I will overcome temptations by the help of God."



A Bible study session at the camp for visually impaired people held by the Bible Society of India in Bangalore.

"I was a sinner and I came to this camp drunk... I was touched by the message and realised my sins. I am a different man these two days."

"I was filled with worries. I was searching for peace and joy. Today's messages spoke to me and I do believe that God is with me."

...all of this from one camp where the Bible was accessible in a format, language and context that enabled people to encounter its life-changing message.

Hope and Comfort to the Visually Handicapped through God's Word in Braille

Through this project, BSI plans to distribute, during the year 2009, the following Braille Scriptures:

2,500 Braille New Reader Portions.

13,200 Braille Bible Portions

5,500 other Scriptures in Braille.

35,000 Braille Scripture calendars.

Many people who are visually-impaired regularly attend weekly house prayer cells, and camps are periodically organised to help the rural blind to study the Bible. In all these camps and meetings, the Scriptures supplied by BSI are used as source materials.

It is hoped that many visually impaired people will be impacted by God's Word all across India.

Pray . . .

That those who receive the Scriptures will find comfort, strength and hope in God's Word.

For the Mission Agencies and the BSI Staff involved in this demanding ministry.

For the multitude of visually impaired in India.

