

Bagheli



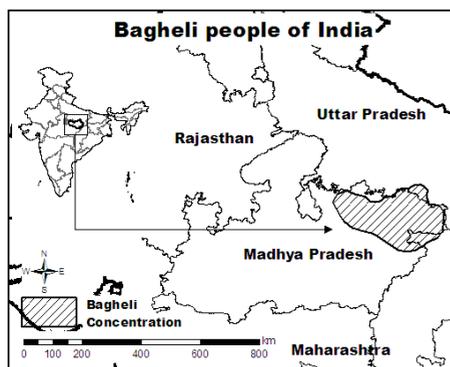
There is still no translation of God's Word in the language of nearly 8 million Bagheli people

Population: 8 million (80 lakhs)

Literacy: Good

Scripture Status: No translation in progress

Baghelkhand - the region in Northeastern Madhya Pradesh is as beautiful as it is harsh. Its mountains - the Kaimur Range - are stunning, rising over a barren land, dividing the land into



two regions. Several rivers cut through the land, forming deep valleys. It is also a region of high temperatures and little rainfall. Yet when the monsoons arrive, they leave the roads flooded and travel becomes difficult. The land is fertile, with a mixture of red and black soil, so good for growing crops like rice, wheat, dal and channa.

Bagheli speakers are simple but conservative, with strong ties of respect for the earth they cultivate. There are more than twenty-seven significant communities, each with their own different traditional rituals and deep divisions along caste lines. Depending on their social and economic status, they live in simple houses made of mud and stone. The roofs are usually thatched with grass. Men usually wear dhotis and women wear saris, but in villages, women may also be found wearing dhotis like their men.

A large number of castes and tribes speak Bagheli, and this holds them together

as a larger community. Social identity is provided by the caste divisions and caste segregation is quite strong. While Hinduism is the dominant religion, there are a few Muslims and Christians among the Bagheli. Most Christians in the area were originally from lower castes and continue to be among the poorest. Thus, to be a Christian is considered in Baghelkhand as belonging to a low caste



group. Response to the gospel remains hindered by the great importance given to caste hierarchy and the maintenance of social status.

Literature, songs and art are vital aspects of the Baghelkhand culture. Yet, there is still no translation of God's Word in the language of nearly 8 million Bagheli people. Songs of praise to God are waiting to be sung in Bagheli, the heart language of Baghelkhand.

Pray for:

1. God to raise messengers of the Gospel who will present the good news in a culturally acceptable way to the caste conscious Bagheli speakers.
2. The name of Jesus to be revered and not to be scorned because of the representatives of the name.
3. Open doors and a team to start translating God's Word into Bagheli.

