

# Monpa



Christian workers who will identify with them culturally and linguistically are needed

Population: 17,000

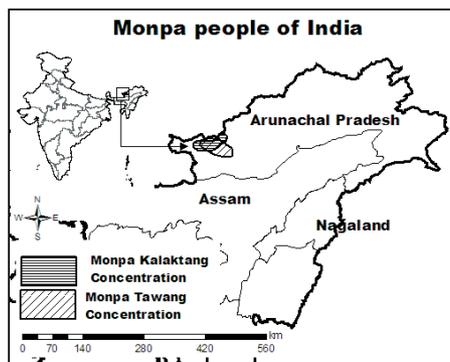
Literacy: High

Scripture Status: No translation in progress

Located high in the mountains of Arunachal Pradesh, the Monpa region remains cool throughout the year. With summer temperatures barely reaching 20° Celsius, the Monpa dress warmly in

traditional and colourful Tibetan styles. Men often wear a decorated cap, made of felt or wool, and they wear coats and trousers also made of wool. Women wear a long woollen dress, tied at the waist with a piece of string, and both men and women wear a heavy jacket over this, to keep themselves warm.

There are about 8,000 Kalaktang Monpa and 9,000 Tawang Monpa who share a similar culture and history, although their languages are very different. As they were part of the former Tibetan kingdom, much of their Tibetan heritage is reflected in their culture and lifestyle. Besides their dress, their houses also reflect Tibetan styles, being built of wood and stone, and with beautifully carved doors and window frames crafted by the Monpa men. The roofs are built of woven bamboo, which helps keep their homes warm through the cold winters.



The Monpa make their living from the surrounding mountains, where many raise cattle, pigs, sheep and yaks. The women, besides raising crops, weave and make carpets from sheep's wool. Hunting in the forests is still a favourite pastime. Travel is difficult, with roads remaining blocked for weeks at a time by land slides or snow. As a result, the Monpa are forced to be self reliant.

Most Monpa follow Tibetan Buddhism. In many households, families place water offerings in small cups or burn butter lamps in front of a statue of Buddha. Many young Monpa boys join the Tawang monastery and are raised as Buddhist Lamas. A few Monpa are animist. There are very few Christians.

The Monpa are particularly welcoming to outsiders. They have a reputation for showing kindness and hospitality to outsiders and even to animals. Yet they show little tolerance to Christian workers, and those suspected of doing ministry are no longer welcome.

Christian workers who will identify with them culturally and linguistically are needed before the Monpa people will even listen to the Gospel. The Christian Monpa need God's Word in their mother tongue for the proper grounding of their faith and for growth in quality and quantity.

Pray for:

1. God to raise up messengers of the Gospel to go specifically to the Monpa and for them to be accepted by the people.
2. Culturally and ecologically sensitive development (education, infrastructure etc.) to be initiated to achieve easier lifestyles for the Monpa.
3. Open doors for initiating translation of God's Word into Monpa.

