

Paniya



The scars of slavery are still visible in the way Paniya conduct their lives

labour. They prefer not to associate with others living in the area.

The Paniya do not have many religious practices. They tend to associate a spirit behind anything in their seen-world and include spirits of their dead for worship. Their main god is that of the forest, called kadubhagavathi, or kuli, which is neither male nor female. Its shrine is usually

Pray for:

1. Complete freedom in their world view, from past scars of slavery and that they would become self-sufficient through education and economic development.

2. The Paniya Christians to become strong in faith and reach their community through evangelism and church planting.

3. The Word of God in their mother tongue to open their hearts to see Jesus and help them to grow in His love.



represented by one or more stones, placed under a tree. Their worship at this shrine is usually through offering boiled rice, half a coconut and a few coins. The Banyan tree is very significant in their unseen world as they believe that spirits live on it.

A few Paniya have started following Jesus as a result of many years of ministry. These new Christians, though meeting together as a church, find it difficult to grow into maturity as the truths of the Scripture are not available to them in their language.

Population: 93,000

Literacy: Low

Scripture Status: Translated two Gospel portions

The name Paniya comes from the root word pani, meaning work. The word refers to a worker or labourer and in general, a member of the tribe Paniya. They were literally slaves to

the landlords in Northern Kerala. The famous Valliyurkavu festival in Wayanadu district is reminiscent of the resultant slave trade. During this festival, slaves were sold, purchased or even exchanged by landlords and local chieftains, in front of the Bhagavathi temple. Annual pacts were renewed binding the Paniya slave to work for another year. Cloth, oil or a nominal amount were exchanged, to seal the deal. This practice slowly died, when slavery became illegal. The scars of this practice are still visible in how the Paniya conduct their lives.

Paniya reside mainly in Northern Kerala (Wayanadu district), with relatively few in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. With the government re-settling them in housing colonies, Paniyas now reside mainly in colonies of between eight and twenty-five houses. Very few among them have any form of education and their main means of income is subsistence farming and daily wage

