

Manipuri of India



The **Manipuri** are also known as Meithei or “different people”. They are of Mongol origin and speak a Tibeto-Burman language called Meithei.

The **Manipuri** follow Hindu customs, which distinguishes them from the surrounding hill tribes. Their community developed as a result of the merging of at least seven communities through intermarriage and political dominance. This league of seven tribes consolidated a kingdom that withstood invaders for almost 2,000 years.

Ninety percent of the **Manipuri** live in rural areas. Their houses are made of reed walls plastered with mud. They are built on wooden or bamboo poles and have thatch or tin roofs. Most of the Manipuri are rice farmers, though they also raise sugarcane, tobacco, mustard, fruits & vegetables.

Statistics

- **People Group:** Manipuri
- **Country:** India
- **Language:** Meithei
- **Population:**
(1990) 1,139,100
(1995) 1,253,100
(2000) 1,368,600
- **Largest Religion:**
Hindu 85%
Ethnic religionist 7%
Muslim 6.5%
- **Christians:** 1%
- **Church Members:** 13,533
- **Persons who have heard the Gospel:** 627,500 (15%)
- Evangelized by local Christians: 88,700 (8%)
- Evangelized from outside: 538,800 (43%)
- **Persons who have never heard the Gospel:** 625,600 (49%)

Prayer Points

- ◆ Pray that God will grant wisdom and favor to the missions agencies that are targeting the Manipuri.
- ◆ Pray that the Manipuri believers will have opportunities to share the love of Jesus with their own people.
- ◆ Ask the Holy Spirit to soften the hearts of the Manipuri toward Christians so that they will be receptive to the Gospel.
- ◆ Pray that God will open the hearts of the governmental leaders to the Gospel.
- ◆ Take authority over the spiritual principalities and powers that are keeping the Manipuri bound.
- ◆ Ask God to raise up prayer teams who will faithfully intercede for the Manipuri.



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INTERNATIONAL

The *Manipuri* of India



Country and State

The **Republic of India** consists of 25 union states and 7 union territories and the nation dominates South Asia and the Indian Ocean.

Most Manipuri live in the Manipur Valley, which is located in the state of **Manipur**, northeastern India. Many also live in the surrounding states, as well in the states of West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh. In 1824, the Manipur community requested aid from the British to help rebel Burmese invaders. The British abolished slavery and built roads in the region before the administration

was taken over by the Indian government. Manipuri became a state in 1972.

Beliefs

The Manipuri had their own traditional religion until they converted to Hinduism 400 years ago. Before their conversion, they ate meat, sacrificed cattle, and practiced head-hunting. Hinduism teaches that when the body dies the soul is reborn, or “reincarnated”, as an animal or as a human. They believe that every action influences how the soul will be born in the next reincarnation. The goal of Hinduism is to be set free from this cycle of rebirth and suffering.

Along with the worship of Hindu gods, particularly Krishna, the Manipuri continue to worship their traditional deities and spirits. Legend says that the god of their *sani-mahi* religion came to earth in the form of a snake.

Needs

Although fifteen missions agencies are currently targeting this people group, only 1% of the Manipuri have accepted Christ. Prayer is the first step toward breaking down the strongholds that are keeping them bound.



Culture

The Manipuri are renowned for their specially designed cloth that is produced on hand-loom. The cloth is now in demand throughout India. They are also well known for their folk dance... a classical dance unlike any other dance; hand movements are used decoratively with liquid-swaying movements. Themes for the dances are usually about Krishna the main Hindu god.

