

South Asia

Home to more than 2 billion people, a staggering 26% of the world’s population, South Asia* covers four countries. Once ruled by the British, these nations are now thriving democracies.

Some parts of South Asia have had Christian presence from the earliest centuries. The region is also the birthplace of major religions Hinduism, Buddhism, and Sikhism. Islam came to the region early in its growth.

Recently, persecution has increased sharply. Bible translation teams are often monitored and scrutinized, and church leaders have been arrested.

REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS	KEY STRENGTH	MAJOR CHALLENGE
We are grateful to partner with more than 30 Bible translation agencies in South Asia.	Many highly motivated and committed nationals are engaged in the Bible translation movement.	Some prominent political parties oppose Christian outreach and make policy changes to oppose evangelism.

**Because this region represents numerous security risks, asterisks have been used throughout this prayer journal to indicate when a pseudonym is being used.*

Regional Update

Finish Line Project: Harassed, but Not Turning Back

Six Bible translation organizations have come together to identify South Asian languages that still need Bible translation. [We prayed for their research effort, called the Finish Line Project, in May.](#)

In August, four of the language researchers we prayed for were taken into police custody. Their phones and bags were seized, and they were interrogated because of suspected “illegal activities”—including attempting to convert people through fraudulent means.

Leaders of their organizations promptly provided police with information confirming the legitimacy of their work and refused demands for bribes. Hundreds of people prayed, and the researchers were released late in the evening. However, the police have yet to return one of the phones that contains the names of associates of the Bible translation organization.

PRAISE

Undaunted, the researchers are continuing at full speed. In just six months, they’ve completed research in 46 languages—more than half of the languages they set out to survey!

PRAY

The researchers have discovered new language groups, raising the total number of languages needing surveys to 182. Ask for God’s protection as they travel through places that are hostile to the gospel. Many of these states have anti-conversion laws that are misused to harass rather than protect.

Monday

And then he told them, "Go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone."

—Mark 16:15 (NLT)

PRAY FOR BIBLELESS PEOPLE GROUPS **Six Language Groups Begin Oral Bible Storytelling**

On September 1, the Bamboo Shoots Cluster Storytelling Project began, translating God's Word orally for six South Asian languages.

Two of these languages, Upini* and Tajmaya*, have no Scripture. Local Christians, along with national evangelists and church planters, are partnering in this project to train oral Bible storytellers to craft and spread Scripture stories throughout these communities.

PRAY

- For people in these communities to become interested in hearing more about the gospel of salvation through God's translated Word!
- For the storytellers and trainers, as this is the first time Oral Bible Storytelling has been attempted in these communities.
- For protection for those who attend the initial workshops, as Christians in nearby states have been arrested due to anti-conversion laws.

PRAISE

- For the open doors God has provided for our partner IEM to work with these two Bibleless communities.

Pray Now

For our brothers and sisters in Christ in a northern Indian state where there is heavy persecution. In August, more than 300 pastors were unjustly imprisoned. Some have gotten relief from the courts, but since then, many more have been arrested.

Tuesday

God will do this, for he is faithful to do what he says, and he has invited you into partnership with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

—1 Corinthians 1:9 (NLT)

PRAY FOR PARTNERS Voice of the Martyrs

We are grateful for the ways [Voice of the Martyrs](#) highlights the persecuted church, including Bible translators who serve in incredibly hostile environments.

Voice of the Martyrs recently produced a video about a boy named Sejun. At age 5, he was sent to a Buddhist monastery to become a monk, but he later became a believer. His story is similar to that of several local translators we work with. As you watch Sejun's story, pray for him and others like him in South Asia:

[Watch Sejun's story.](#)

PRAISE

For the faithfulness of Voice of the Martyrs to bring visibility to our persecuted brothers and sisters across the world like Sejun.

PRAY

For God to continue to extend the reach and impact of Voice of the Martyrs.

Pray Now

For God to spread his Shalom peace across India in the year 2024, which will be a general election year. With each passing election, Hindu nationalism has increased, along with anti-conversion laws and general hostility to the gospel in some states.

Wednesday

For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.

—John 3:16 (NLT)

WATCH JOHN 3:16 IN YAIPAN*

Watch the video [here](#).

Pray for the Yaipan People of South Asia

Most Yaipan people depend on traditional religious rituals for curing diseases and removing curses. Around 1,500 of them are believers (mostly first-generation), comprising less than 2% of the population. Their translation team is working on publishing the New Testament and recording it with Faith Comes By Hearing.

PRAISE

Though alcohol addiction is common among the Yaipan, many who have come to faith in Christ have stopped drinking.

PRAY

For Jesus to heal the Yaipan community from alcoholism, lack of education, poor health care, and both physical and spiritual poverty through his Word.

PRAY FOR AN ACTIVE TRANSLATION PROJECT Update on Rutara* of South Asia

We praised God for the completed Rutara New Testament [in February 2022](#). Since then, it has been widely praised and made a huge impact, sparking requests for Old Testament translation.

With a blend of animism and another major world belief system as their predominant religion, the Rutara people live in one of the least evangelized areas of South Asia that is witnessing growing resistance to the gospel. Christians make up about 0.5% to 1% of the population. This translation marks a bright spot in the middle of much darkness.

The Rutara church may be small, but it's multiplying rapidly, and these believers long to explore the stories of creation and heroes of the Old Testament. Seed Company's partner [IEM](#) remains committed to publishing the full Bible, responding to the enthusiasm of this vibrant, growing church.

PRAY

- For the Rutara church's strength, faith, and effectiveness, as they face hostility and opposition.
- For the continuation of this translation effort as it spurs local disciples making disciples and local churches planting churches!

Thursday

Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ.

—Ephesians 4:12 (NLT)

EQUIPPING THE SAINTS

Can the Saints Be Equipped by AI?

Artificial intelligence is a hot topic, and the world of Bible translation is no exception. Recently, six teams in South Asia have been experimenting with how they can use AI to accelerate their work. Their idea is to use AI to more quickly produce a first draft of the Old Testament, which they'd go through verse by verse to improve until it's ready for consultant checking.

Five of these teams recently translated four chapters in 1 Samuel—two in the traditional way and two with an initial draft produced by AI. Three consultants evaluated the work and concluded that there was little difference in quality between the drafts in terms of accuracy, clarity, and naturalness, though the results varied somewhat between consultants and languages. The AI-drafting process was somewhat faster than the traditional way.

PRAISE

All of the teams felt that the AI-drafting method would produce faster and better translation!

PRAY

For wisdom moving forward. These initial findings are exciting, but other factors still need to be evaluated before teams could start implementing this model.

Praise God

In one South Asian country, Christian organizations must be registered in order to receive funds from overseas, but applications are frequently delayed or denied. Recently, one of our partners in the northeast of this country received their registration renewal, which will allow their work to move forward for the next 5 years!

Pray Now

For a second partner in this region who is still waiting for their registration to be approved. Ask for speedy approval or at least another extension so that their Bible translation work can continue.

Friday

Rise up, O Lord, in all your power. With music and singing we celebrate your mighty acts
—Psalm 21:13 (NLT)

IMPACT STORY

Transformative Power of the Gospel: Over 30 Salvations and a Miraculous Healing

From the Manaver* team in South Asia:

“Kalyani* was afflicted with anorexia and was consuming only water. She followed the country’s majority religion, along with the rest of her family, but someone recommended that they seek Pastor Rajan*, the senior Manaver translator, for healing prayer.”

“Accompanied by her son Ayyappan* and some relatives, Kalyani visited Pastor Rajan. After praying, Pastor Rajan handed Ayyappan a recorder containing the Oral Bible Translation of the Gospel of Luke and the Epistle of James.”

“Three months later, Ayyappan contacted Pastor Rajan and shared the transformative impact of the Scriptures. Over 30 people had embraced Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior and begun attending a local church after listening to the recordings. In addition, Kalyani had experienced complete healing from her long-standing battle with anorexia.”

Training God's People in Oral Strategies in South Asia

About 40 South Asian leaders and experts in Bible translation attended a 3-week translation training workshop on the book of Isaiah, led by four members of Seed Company's oral strategies team. They report, "The Lord blessed our time together, and the results surpassed our expectations!"

The participants all had the opportunity to practice the training they'd received and did an outstanding job on their presentations. Later, one participant sent photos showing how he'd already put the training into practice in his church on the Sunday following the workshop.

PRAY

- That the participants will continue to practice and grow in their translation skills, using this training to equip other believers across South Asia and building local capacity in Bible translation.