

# Kurichiya



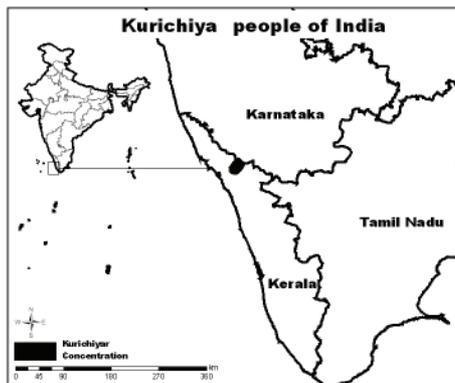
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Population: 28,287

Literacy: 68 %

Scripture Status: No translation in progress

"I felt guilty of breaking my community's laws by mingling with other boys when I was in school. Now that I'm out of school, I'm determined to be truthful and abide by the laws of my community." This was the



confession of a young Kurichiya boy who had studied up to the tenth standard. He was speaking about the Kurichiya belief that mingling with others would destroy their community!

Kurichiya live in small villages in the hills of the Wayanad, Kannur and Kozhikode districts of Kerala. They live in villages comprising about 5 to 50 houses each, away from the main road. Before India's independence, Kurichiya men were soldiers for a small princely kingdom in North Kerala. After losing a battle against the British army, they fled deep into nearby forests for safety and settled there.

Their present main means of livelihood is agriculture – with lush green paddy fields, plantain and pepper crops. As a tribe, they maintain a high level of personal cleanliness and are always neatly dressed – a very distinct habit, compared to other tribes. They consider themselves superior to any other caste or community and mostly do not interact with anyone else.

Though residing in Kerala, the Kurichiya language is distinct !” and very different from the state language, Malayalam. The present generation is literate, but older people are not. They follow a mixture of animism and Hinduism, worshipping several family and village deities as well as Shiva. They also use witchcraft to appease their gods, especially against diseases. Kurichiya are the only community in Kerala that do not perform animal sacrifices.

Among their four clans, three are closed to the Gospel. The clan that broke their community law of maintaining clan purity by mingling with outsiders was excommunicated from the rest. Most from this clan are Catholic Christians as a result of the work of a Catholic priest in the early part of the 20th century. This group of Kurichiya is well advanced in education.

The strict practice of untouchability has prevented any outsider from entering their region with the Good News. So far no portion of the Bible is available in the Kurichiya language. God's Word in their mother tongue has the power to penetrate the closed doors of this community.

Pray for:

1. God to open the hearts of the Kurichiya to the message of the Gospel.
2. God to raise missionaries who are burdened to reach this closed community.
3. God's Word to be translated into the Kurichiya language and that it would transform their lives.

