

Forgotten Firozabad



Photos: Glass bangles

Firozabad, India, a city of half a million people, is in some ways a forgotten city. It is the closest large city to Agra (the home of the Taj Mahal) which is a major tourist attraction. When the rare tourist does come to Firozabad, traffic literally stops in the streets.

Firozabad has been called the glass capital of India. Local artisans and factories produce glass bangle bracelets, drinking glasses and other glassware. Some have observed that the people of Firozabad do not breathe air but glass. Thousands of children work in poor conditions for low wages in the 300 glass factories, polishing and painting bangles.



The city suffers from poverty and low literacy, and there is significant pollution linked to the glass industry.

Firozabad is still being researched for ministry purposes. Although a very large Jain temple is located on the outskirts of the city, the tallest building is the main mosque in the city center. It is still not certain if the Muslims in this city are religiously Muslim or simply culturally Muslim. The Jains do not believe in a supreme being but in the natural laws governing the universe. They stress monistic spirituality and have an emphasis on non-violence.

There are no known believers in this city. Some Christians who visited the city recently saw God open doors for the Gospel with four Muslim young men. They gave a Bible to one of them, who is now sharing it with the others. Through follow-up phone calls and e-mails it is known that the young Muslim men are discovering more about Jesus.

Firozabad Statistics

- 50% Muslim
- 50% Hindu and Jain (believers in Jainism)

PRAYER REQUESTS

- ▶ *Pray for God to raise up workers to go to this city and share the Gospel message. Pray for discernment as they do research and minister.*
- ▶ *Pray for God to speak to the city's youth through His Word and Christian television programs.*
- ▶ *Pray for the many children used as cheap labor in the glass factories and for real solutions to the poverty and pollution problems.*

Also pray for ...

- ▶ *More than three million people were left homeless by the October 2005 Kashmir earthquake. During the winter of 2006 about two million survivors still did not have adequate housing. Continue to pray for the reconstruction efforts.*