



Spread across both sides of the Bhagirathi (Hooghly) River, a main tributary of the Ganges, Murshidabad district was the seat of Muslim power in the Bengal region after 1704. The greatness of Muslim rule is still visible in the museum of Hazar Duari (the Palace of a Thousand Doors), the Imambara, the Katra Mosque and a number of other monuments. This land was once famous for its Nawab dynasties (Muslim Moghol provincial governors). However, it has largely been forgotten in recent times. With its rich history of artisans and strong agricultural crops, this district provides skilled workers to a number of trades across India. Murshidabad's industries include ivory-carving, as well as silver and gold embroidery, silk-weaving, and fine crafts.

Problems: Unfortunately the region is also now known for its numerous problems, including cases of human trafficking, child labor, severe poverty and local political assassinations. It has largely missed out on the foreign



influence and development that have been present in other parts of West Bengal.

There are approximately six million people in Murshidabad district with almost 90% of these people living in rural villages. While the majority of the population of West Bengal is Hindu, Murshidabad is 64% Muslim (3.8 million people). The number of Muslims in Murshidabad district rival that of the entire populations of nations like Albania and Lebanon. There is less than one full-time minister for every million Muslims in this district.

PRAYER REQUESTS

- ▶ *Pray that God will reveal Himself to the young and old Bengali Muslims in Murshidabad (Acts 2:16-21).*
- ▶ *Pray that Muslim background believers will be called, equipped, and motivated to witness and teach the Way of Christ in unity with other believers (Matthew 28:20).*
- ▶ *May the Messiah's glory be revealed in the land of the Nawab dynasties.*

Although there are only a handful of believers, their witness has already brought many Muslims to life changing faith. Many believers are now experiencing severe persecution in the transparency of village life, where nothing is hidden. On a recent trip one believer visited a Bengali Muslim family known to him through a common acquaintance. This family expressed interest in the Gospel and made a joint decision to follow the Messiah. There are many families like this one among the Bengali Muslims residing in the area, but many never have had an opportunity to hear the Gospel (Ingil) in their own language.

