

Possibly five million people in northern Pakistan are Hindko speakers. This is more than the population of Norway and about the same as Turkmenistan. Made up of several ethnic groups, mostly Pathans and Moghuls, the Hindko are more of a language group than a people group.

Lifestyles: Hindko speakers make their living as farmers or merchants in the foothills of the Himalayas. Corn and wheat are the most important crops. These grains are ground into flour and used to make a flat bread that accompanies every meal. The people lead very simple lives but often go to great lengths to secure an education and a better future for their children. Only about 25% of Hindko speakers can read in any language.

Compared to their Pashto-speaking relatives, Hindko speakers are known for being gentle and peace-loving. They even tend to be more open-minded than their neighbors. Still, only a handful of Hindko speakers are followers of Jesus. At the same time, economic disparities and political disenfranchisement have led many of these gentle people to seek change through Islamic fundamentalism. The local school system has been largely taken over by fundamentalists, who have sometimes even led young men

from poor families into terrorist organizations.

Looking for Answers: The devastating earthquake of October 2003 caused deaths in nearly every Hindko-speaking family. Even today, many are still looking for a new livelihood, permanent housing, and answers to their deeper questions. Interest in reading the New Testament remains high, but the Word of God in Hindko is not yet available in print. Most have never had an opportunity to hear the Gospel.

PRAYER REQUESTS

- ▶ *Pray that Hindko believers would overcome their fear of persecution.*
- ▶ *Pray for additional believers willing to lovingly serve Hindko speakers through practical means.*
- ▶ *Pray that God would reveal Himself through various means including dreams and visions among Hindko speakers.*
- ▶ *Pray that Hindko speakers would have access to God's Word in their own language through print, audio recordings, radio, and the Internet.*

The entire world has become aware of the suffering of Pakistan. The Kashmir Earthquake, terrorist bombings, and the assassination of Benazir Bhutto kept Pakistan in the headlines in recent years. It is possible there will be other events before this booklet is published. Remember to pray for this country.

