

Economically marginalized Muslims in India

Day 30

In the heart of Western India's Gujarat State lies India's seventh largest city, Ahmedabad, which has a population of over five million people. Once famous for being the birthplace of Gandhi and his commitment to pacifism and tolerance, Gujarat has now developed into a major centre for Hindu religious zeal known as "Hindutva" which is seeking to preserve and expand Hindu influence in all of India to the exclusion of Islam and Christianity.

A divided city: Ahmedabad visibly reflects India's widening divergence of cultures, just as the Sabarmati River splits Ahmedabad into two distinctly different worlds. On the western side of the river is an increasingly affluent, modern, and predominantly Hindu city. India's modern Hindu elite is present in the commercial district and shopping malls. To the east is an ancient, chaotic, and predominantly Muslim walled city of narrow, winding alleys and confined neighborhoods which reflects Ahmedabad's Islamic past.

More than one million economically marginalized Muslims live in the city. Often jobless or underemployed and unable to return to their villages, many live on by sheer force of will. They survive in the ghettos and slums, and even the progressive Muslim elite now feel the segregation and the

economic disparities with the Hindus. This profound human suffering does not have easy solutions.

Making Jesus known: As believers in Jesus, we acknowledge that the greatest need of Muslims is Christ. Yet an extremely small amount of evangelistic work in Gujarat focuses on the unreached Muslim peoples of Ahmedabad which include the Shaikh, Bohra, Memon, Khoja, Pathan, and the Sayyid. Most local followers of Jesus openly acknowledge they are afraid to reach out into the Muslim community. Imagine over one million people in Ahmedabad who have practically no Gospel witness. Pray for laborers to bring the Gospel of hope to the Muslims of Gujarat.

PRAYER REQUESTS

- ▶ Pray that Muslims will realize their inability to meet the demands of God's perfect law.
- ▶ May a true and healthy fear of God come upon the Muslims (Proverbs 1:7).
- ▶ Ask God to increasingly establish faithful followers of Jesus among the Muslims of Gujarat so they might be examples of godliness and bearers of hope in difficult situations.

