

Vettakada Irula



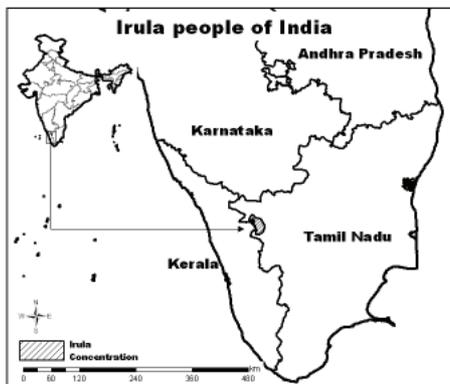
Vettakada Irula has been, until now, only a language of oral communication.

Population: 200,000 (2 lakhs)

Literacy: 20%

Scripture Status: New Testament translation is in progress.

The Irula are one of the major tribes of Southern India. There are a total of six branches of the Irula tribe, one being Vettakada Irula. This socially insecure tribe considers their



speech form to be inferior and they avoid speaking in their mother tongue, a dialect of Irula, in the presence of others. Most Vettakada Irula are jungle dwellers and dwell in isolated houses.

The Government has done much to develop the Irula. Yet, Irula villages deep inside the forests remain underdeveloped. Though the government has also granted land to each family, few do agricultural work, and, as a result, starvation is a part of their life. There are several primary health care centres that also provide free vaccines and medicines. Despite this, when they are ill Irulas generally prefer to approach their folk doctors, who do sorcery and witchcraft for the cure.

The Government also runs tribal residential schools with teaching through the medium of Tamil and Malayalam in Tamil Nadu and Kerala

respectively. In addition, there is also an adult literacy centre run by a Christian mission agency. Despite these efforts, very few Irula have become educated, and may only have the ability to read or write a few simple sentences.

Vettakada Irula has been, until now, only a language of oral communication. With the development of their language, it is hoped that their confidence as a community will be increased. This will lead to an increasing knowledge and confidence in all areas of life.

The Irula are animists, but of late they have started worshipping a few Hindu deities. They worship their ancestors and offer the things they like the most as sacrifices. The few Christian missions that are working among the Irula have planted about 20 churches. These churches have developed a vision to reach out to their own community with the Gospel.

The Gospel of Mark is translated, and preparation of literacy materials is progressing. A decade ago, eight Irula families became Christians, but they have gone back to their traditional beliefs due to a lack of Christian teaching. With God's Word translated into Vettakada Irula, they should be able to stand in faith on their own.

Pray for:

1. The ongoing Bible Translation work in Irula.
2. Culturally appropriate ways for the Gospel to make an impact on this people group.
3. God to raise more indigenous workers.

