The Yadav of India

The flames from the funeral pyre grew in intensity, forcing Lalit and the other male members of his family to stand back. The young **Yadav** man watched sadly as the raging flames consumed the body of his late grandmother, Aarti. The terminally-ill old lady had insisted on spending her last months in the holy city of Varanasi. It was her last wish to be cremated by the sacred Ganges River and her ashes to be released into the river. Hopefully her soul would achieve 'Moksha', the ultimate release from the never-ending cycles of reincarnation.

Scattered almost all over India, the 60.56 million **Yadav** are concentrated in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. Their mother tongues differ according to their location; major languages include Hindi, Telugu, Bhojpuri, Bengali, Oriya, Tamil, Chattisgarhi and Marathi. Legend has it that they are from the lineage of King Yadu, who was also the ancestor of the deity Lord Krishna. Traditionally a caste of milkmen, cowherds, cattle breeders and labourers, many today are professionals. Their pride in their identity is seen in many of them using the term 'Yadav' or 'Yadava' as their surname. Within modern India, the **Yadav** are extremely influential especially in the political realm.

Yadav belief systems are complex. The majority are Hindus whose religious worldview includes the worship of numerous deities, the belief in reincarnation and a strong faith in astrology as a guiding force of the universe.

Very few **Yadav** are followers of Christ. Most have never heard the Gospel message.

- Pray for the strongholds of spiritual deception and pride over the **Yadav** to be broken.

- Pray for more opportunities to hear the Gospel message being presented in culturally relevant and meaningful ways.