

SPIRITUAL EMPOWERMENT AND ENRICHMENT

Giving hope to the Mising Tribe

INDIA



Baptist Women is the exclusive fundraiser for this project which is part of our strategic giving program for 2020. It thrills us to give you this opportunity to connect, or re-connect with India . . . where so many of our own women served as missionaries with courage, grace and humble excellence.

Review the January-February 2020 issue in which we launched the program. Look at the photos and stories we'll publish on Facebook. Most of all, please share about the program and this project with other women in your church and Association.

BACKGROUND

LOCATED IN THE NORTHEASTERN part of India, Assam is one of the continent's most undeveloped states. While blessed by cooler temperatures, and thus spared from the debilitating heat for which the rest of India is known, Assam's people rely on agriculture for their livelihood and the state is prone to heavy flooding.

The Mising Tribe

The Mising Tribe is one of the largest Indigenous tribal groups in the state, with 687,310 members (2011 census).

by Kristine Gonzalez (CBM)

PROJECT COSTS

Fundraising Target: \$20,000

Coverage:

\$175 – tailoring classes

\$220 – raw weaving materials for women

\$325 – computer training for young men

\$425 – supplies and materials for one tutoring centre

\$1,500 – one motorbike for an evangelist

There are so many more people like Sanjay, Runu and Samuel who need a hand up. Help bring the gospel of Jesus Christ to the Mising Tribe so that they may know hope through His grace. With education, skills training and spiritual empowerment, they can realize and live out the life that God has intended for them—in fullness and in all His glory.

To learn how to give to this and other strategic giving projects during 2020, please visit baptistwomen.com/causes/international-projects.



Photos courtesy CBM

Sanjay

They have their own religion called *Donyi-Polo*. The Misings' beliefs integrate with Animism and Hinduism and they believe in supernatural powers and gods. Less than one per cent of Misings are Christians and they live in urban areas, seldom remaining among the remote tribal communities.

The Misings live in poverty with a literacy rate well below India's average. Dependent on small-scale agriculture and river fishing, the Misings usually live hand-to-mouth. They don't have the resources available to them for alternative livelihoods, especially when floods come and wipe out resources. Their youth in particular, lack skills, education and employment opportunities.

Social, economic and political

conditions are quite challenging for the Mising. Many see their situations as their only reality. Youth are going astray without the necessary proper guidance.

Canadian Baptist Ministries (CBM), Alempang Baptist Church (ABC) and Canadian Baptist Women of Ontario and Quebec (CBWOQ) are offering a different reality for the Mising Tribe through a program called *Spiritual Empowerment and Enrichment of the Mising Tribe*. This initiative provides education and the means to strengthen the tribe's socio-economic situation through vocational training for unemployed youth.

The program

Education for children: Sixty children from five villages will receive

quality education. Tutoring is provided so that participating children will better understand their lessons, resulting in higher chances of success. We hope that literacy rates will increase and young students will pursue higher education.

Training: Training in computers, mechanics, tailoring and cosmetology will give participants the extra edge they need to stand out.

Self-help for women: As they are provided with raw materials, women will be encouraged to continue to preserve their family tradition of weaving and knitting cultural shawls and attire. They will earn good income, stand on their own feet and be able to live



Runu



Samuel

a dignified life.

We hope that transformation will take place in the villages. In fact, it has already started.

Sanjay, Runu and Samuel

Sanjay is 19. He is the only one in his family who has kept on with school. His two siblings dropped out to continue the family business of weaving and farming, often the only option for Mising youth. Sanjay signed up for computer education classes. Not everyone who goes to college is computer literate. These computer classes give Sanjay a huge advantage over his peers and open up bigger opportunities for the future as he wishes to become a teacher.

More importantly, Sanjay soon came to learn about Christ and with the help of the Mising Baptist Association, embraced a life following Jesus.

Runu is a traditional weaver, 34 years old and a mother to three children, two of whom are married, have dropped out of school and live with their own families in Runu's house. Runu teaches nursery school and

while the family also farms for food and for some income, any additional access to finances helps.

She received seven kilograms of thread from the program, enough for her to make 10 items of clothing. "By providing me with financial assistance to continue weaving and knitting, you have made me continue my family tradition of weaving with renewed vigour," Runu says. "This also fetches me income and I can live a life of dignity." A member of the Mising Baptist Association, she is a living testament to her community that hard work pays off.

Samuel is 25, married with a son. His wife is a weaver. Samuel doesn't have many skills despite finishing school. To earn money, he fishes and also helps with his father's farm, but he needs a more sustainable source of income.

"For years I felt a void in my life as I did not have any useful skill," he shares. "Thanks to ABC and CBM, I now have driving skills." Not only does Samuel now have additional skills to help him provide for his family, he has gained self-worth. ■