

Scripture Impact in India

Venkanna was content to call himself a Christian. It was enough. He did not need to stir up strife with his atheistic father by becoming more involved with the Christian community. He did not need more than an assurance of heaven for himself—or so he thought. Through a growing friendship with a pastor who visited his village regularly, Venkanna heard about the translation project being planned for his language group, the Banjara People. He was curious. What would it be like to have Scripture in his own mother-tongue? Could he be part of that? When his friend invited him to join the team, he accepted, fully aware of the ripples of opposition this would create from his father.

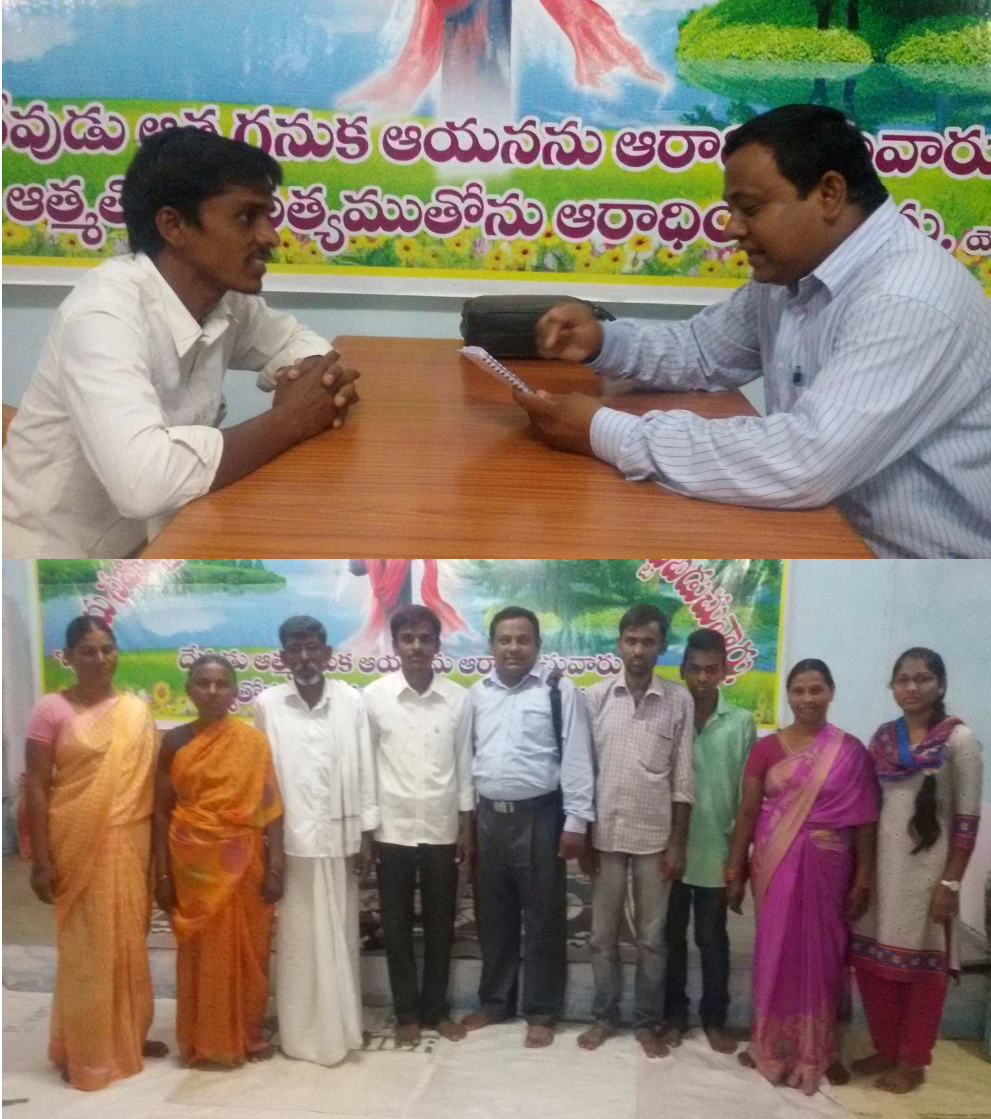
Sure enough, Venkanna's father, a communist supporter who constantly fought against the local church, was so outraged, he practically disowned his son. But Venkanna had committed to attending the workshop and he was determined to follow through. Joining his friend, and several other Christians from his language group, he attended a MAST workshop in Hyderabad at a local retreat center. Over the course of that week, Venkanna began to see Scripture in a whole new light. By the time the workshop was done, he knew he would never be the same. Calling himself a Christian was no longer enough. Being a Christian meant living like Jesus. It meant caring for the lost around him, especially his family, and living a life of sacrifice for the kingdom.

Venkanna changed his name to Venkanna Paul, naming himself after the apostle whose story he had helped to translate from Acts. He saw himself as "Paul" to his community. He was determined to be a witness to his lost family of the precious truth of Jesus. This, of course, created more strain. Venkanna Paul was not welcomed home. His father refused to talk to him, especially about Jesus. Venkanna Paul was undaunted. He felt certain that when his family could read Scripture in their own language, they would begin to understand the truth and fall in love with Jesus as he had. And so he continued translating.

When his father was in a devastating accident that broke both of his legs and nearly took his life, Venkanna seized this tragic situation to witness for Christ. He told his father, "It was God who kept you alive. He is the one you need to know. God wants you to know his son." His father listened. Venkanna Paul read portions of the newly translated Scripture to his father. His father softened further. Venkanna Paul saw that God's Word was reaching into his heart and mind, changing him from a hardened atheist to a broken, needy man. Jesus became beautiful. Venkanna Paul's father, believed the gospel and began testifying to others.

It wasn't long before all of Venkanna Paul's family accepted the gospel message. His brother and sister, his mom, his wife and daughters, all became eager followers of Christ. Living in a village that is primarily pagan, this family has become the pillar of the local Christian church. VanKenna Paul is overwhelmed by the changes Christ has brought to their community. Young people read the Scripture portions that have been translated. A surge of youth have become involved in serving in the church. Women's Bible studies and small groups are taught from the new translated Scriptures. VanKenna Paul's family has been baptized, and they continue witnessing for Christ. Venkanna Paul continues his work on the translation having completed more than any of the other pastors on the team. Together they glorify the God who speaks their language, worshipping the Savior who set them free.

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VanKanna Paul's family (upper) and (lower) with his pastor friend Brother Sreeraj.

- VanKanna joined the Banjara translation team in February of 2016
- He attended a BILD workshop in Hyderabad.
- His first translation experience was working on the book of Acts.
- He has continued to work on translation since then.
- The New Testament is fully drafted but not all checking steps (MAST final 4 steps) have been completed because the pastors on the team live far from each other.