

Finding Life, Hope and Purpose Through CBSI in India



Sandeep, far left

"God saved my life from suicide."

Sandeep was wrestling deeply with doubt. This young man living in one of India's most developed cities, Hyderabad, began to contemplate taking his own life. Ironically, these suicidal thoughts began shortly after he achieved an engineering degree, when he would have expected to feel eager anticipation of good things coming his way. Instead, he found himself at the edge of total despair.

Being from a Christian family, Sandeep turned to something he hoped would help him pull out of his increasingly dire state of mind: the Bible. Unfortunately, instead of gaining greater clarity and reclaiming his faith, he became more disoriented.

He turned then to the churches—trying a few of those he thought might direct his journey and lead him into the truth he sought to

know. Still, to no avail. The churches he chose were promoting false teachings. At first he began to embrace some of the fallacies they promoted, but instinctively he started to sense they were wrong.

At this point, he nearly gave up.

As a last resort, Sandeep decided to stop attending church altogether, quit listening to those misleading voices, and commit to directly seeking God's face in prayer. So he did just that.

And God responded to Sandeep's prayers by causing his path to cross with the CBSI Country Coordinator for India. Sandeep accepted an invitation to begin attending a CBSI group. There, he began to study God's Word verse by verse, chapter by chapter. He was especially careful to answer all the questions in the daily lessons.

He now shares that by doing so, "My understanding of God's Word gradually changed. The discipline of the CBSI study method helped me to study God's Word regularly, and God spoke to me personally ... While I was studying Luke's Gospel, God answered all my doubts, helped me to understand, and I was moved by His love. Even though He is Sovereign God, He humbled Himself and came to this world to save me by sacrificing His life on behalf of my sins."

Hope replaced Sandeep's despair. He exchanged his lack of purpose for a growing desire to invest himself in reaching people with the Gospel and teaching them God's Word. That sense of purpose began to take hold when he was reading Isaiah 6:8, which states, "I heard the voice of the

Tragic Trend Among Youth in India

Suicide is the leading cause of death among young people in India, and India accounts for a growing share of the world's suicides, according to a report published by The Lancet Public Health.

India's share of the world's population is 17.8%, but it has 36.6% of all female suicide deaths and 24.3% of male suicide deaths globally.

Psychologist Mathew Kurien of the Southern Medical Centre, Bangalore, told Rediff News, "In this modern age children are not brought up peacefully. They are under pressure to deliver at school; they are under pressure to appear for competitive examinations. After they reach puberty, no one in the family gives them any advice about the meaning of life."

God's Word can give India's youth the wisdom and hope they need!



Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?' Then I said, 'Here I am! Send me.'"

Sandeep shares that he saw God crying out for unsaved souls. In the Bible class he was a part of, they were studying Luke chapter 24. Sandeep was deeply stirred by Jesus's words to His disciples: "You are witnesses of these things" (24:48).

At that time, he felt that Jesus was directly speaking to him, asking him to share His love with others. Sandeep recognized that God had saved his life for this very purpose. Because of this realization, he has left his job, set aside his desires for this world, and committed himself to the Lord and His ministry. He is now helping in CBSI, teaching CBSI groups and facilitating small-group discussions.



Sandeep (left) facilitating small-group discussion

Isn't this a beautiful story of transformation? From suicide to life in abundance ... despair to certain hope ... worldliness to Kingdom-focus. God is GOOD!

Still, Sandeep is just one man among 1,350,000,000 people in India. Let that number sink in for a moment. With less than 3 percent of India's population being followers of Jesus Christ, there are STILL more than 1.3 BILLION people in India who do not know God nor His Word. It's hard to get our heads around that, isn't it?

This is why the work of Community Bible Study International is so critical, friends. This is why every prayer you can offer is strategic. This is why financially contributing to the work in South Asia matters. This is why advocating for our South Asia team is so very important. May I ask you to do all three things: **Pray-Give-Advocate?** We need you on the team, if you will, so that people like Sandeep can experience the transformative power of God and His Word.

Grateful for you!

Keith Spartzak, International Director



Community Church Ministries International (CCMI) is a church-planting movement. One of its urban churches in Hyderabad was conducting a training for laypeople, and they invited the CBSI South Asia Director to teach. He introduced CCMI to the CBSI Country Coordinator for India and the Children & Youth Coordinator.

The CCMI leader shares, "Our church has a good leadership team, dedicated volunteers, sound management and good infrastructure. However, we did not have any Bible study curriculum for our people. The CBSI leaders explained to us in detail the CBSI Bible study method, which could be adopted by CCMI. The CBSI lessons perfectly fit into the structure of CCMI, which teaches, preaches and practices the Word of God in all its purity.

"We started with 30 children in Levels 1 and 2. Due to how well it was received by excited children, parents and teachers, after a few months we started Levels 3 and 4. We now have 132 members studying the Bible systematically.

"As these Bible studies are growing, new leaders have emerged to handle the classes. CBSI not only edifies our people, it equips upcoming leaders. **In fact, CBSI was an answer to our prayer.**"

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