

TILL (NOBO Project) - A brief Overview

It's a wonderful opportunity to share about where God has placed and what he is accomplishing in and through us for his Kingdom work. Here is a brief overview about TILL and what it does. We are a ministry in India called TILL, which stands for **Translating for India's Leading Languages**. We are working on to bring in a dynamic, high-impact Bible version in some major languages for outreach and deeper scripture engagement among people.

A brief history of TILL:

- In 2011, two American and three Indian consultants met in Bangalore, India to check the gospel of Luke in two minority languages. But in the process, the two Indian men said, "Why is it that excellent translation principles are applied to India's minority languages, with thousands of speakers, while many state languages, with tens of millions of speakers, have Scriptures that are **unclear** to the average man?" The five of us began to pray about this need.
- In this way was born a vision called **TILL**: Translating for India's Leading Languages.
- We devoted two years to careful preparation. We **evaluated**, with native speakers, the accuracy, clarity and naturalness of over forty Bible translations in twelve major languages.
- Our team did research, built **relationships**, listened and learned, in dialogue with agencies both national and international: SIL, LCI, NLCI, IEM, BSI, FMPB, TWFTW, VBS, Wycliffe-India, and BCS/Operation Agape. With this last group we did training and checking at two workshops in Nov 2015. We launched the NOBO project with the knowledge and blessing of these groups.

Examples of Need in Indian Bible Translation:

- A Tamil Bible translator says, "My teenage daughter is a native Tamil who has gone to school in Tamil and grown up in the church, raised by missionary parents. When she reads some passages in the traditional translation, she understands about **25%**." (Tamil: 70 million native speakers.)
- A native Telugu seminary professor with a doctorate in theology reads through more than one of the existing Telugu translations and says, "Okay, on this page, **I don't understand** this word, this word, this word..." Then what hope is there for the average Hindu blue-collar worker? (Telugu: 75 million native speakers.)
- An Indian Bible translator working in a minority language project in the state of Odisha, "Of the Odia Scriptures available, my native-speaker co-translator understands only version X. And I have found that we **cannot trust version X**." (Odia: 32-40 million native speakers.[1])
- *For perspective on these numbers of native speakers, 32 to 75 million: By contrast, the Auca community in which missionary Jim Elliott and four others were speared in 1956 has 1800 native speakers.*

The Vision of TILL:

- TILL seeks to give to the speakers of India's leading languages the word of God in a form that is accurate, clear and **natural**.
- TILL prioritizes the spiritual needs of the **have-nots**: the less-reached, the less-churched, the less-educated, the lower-caste, the non-urban. (Hence the name of the

NOBO project: the **New Outreach Bible in Odia**.)

- TILL envisions tens of millions of Indians reading or hearing a Bible that is truly **incarnational**: in which God sounds like a Father, in which Christ sounds like Immanuel--one of us, near to us, and in which the Spirit is doing again what he did at Pentecost, speaking in the language of family.

The first TILL project, NOBO:

- NOBO stands for New Outreach Bible in Odia. This project...
- The vision and mission of NOBO project

Vision: *The NOBO project exists to see thousands and millions of Odia speakers liberated and transformed by truly incarnational Odia Scriptures.*

Mission: *“The NOBO project exists to translate the Bible afresh into the Odia Language in a way that is incarnational, that is: accurate, clear and natural to unschooled, unchurched and unreached Odia-speaking communities.”*

- Is based in Bhubaneswar, the capital of **Odisha** state. Professing Christians of all denominations number under 2% of the population. Odisha was the center of a horrific wave of anti-Christian violence in 2008.
- In addition to the needs of 30+ million native speakers, this project would serve the needs of 64 even needier **minority** language groups in the state of Odisha, who currently have access to God's word only through Odia. At least 15 Bible translation projects now ongoing in these languages have stated their desire to immediately use what the NOBO project produces.

The Expansion of TILL:

As funding becomes available, TILL is looking to expand. And presently we have launched projects in two other large state languages, Tamil and Gujarati (49 million native speakers). In these projects, consultants and translators are already working.

We are seeking partnership for this initiatives. Especially, we need committed translators, consultants and promotional workers. We also need financial support for our translation teams. We have been supported by TEAM missions for NOBO project, but additional support is needed for team expansion to speed up the work.

Please let us know if there are questions we can clarify. We look forward to meeting you sometime soon. In addition, feel free to contact us before or after the synod itself.

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Thank you so much for considering this strategic kingdom opportunity. We look forward to getting to know you.

Yours in Christ,

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for TILL