

# Abdul People

## Introduction / History:

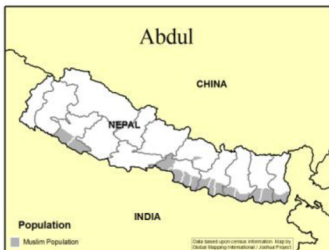
The Abduls in Nepal are said to have originated from the *Abdal* Muslims. The term *Abdal* means "lieutenant". Little other information is known of the origin of this group that has a strong tradition in the music, singing and particularly the playing of percussion instruments. In many parts of India they are known by the name Dafali. This majority of the over 50,000 Abduls are found in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal India as well as Bangladesh and Nepal.

## What are their lives like?

Being of a lower social status has caused many Abdul families to survive on charity. In some communities they are alms gatherers while singing and drumming or selling perfume. It is said that during Ramadan some Abdul wake up early and go village to village playing their dafali (instrument) and singing the names of Allah. Traditions like this have given them the title "wandering singers" or "a class of wandering Muslim saints" in some places. They are Sunni Muslims in Nepal and are not vegetarians. They include wheat, rice and maize in their diet. Maithili is their primary language though most understand Urdu and Bhojpuri.

## Ministry Needs:

Because of the Abduls tradition of being able to share food and water with most Hindu communities, this group is likely easier to reach than some Muslim people. Their community is small and hidden in many ways.



## Population:

Nepal : 1,100

Total **57,000**

**Language:** Maithili,

Bhojpuri, Urdu & Nepali

**Believers:** 0