



Soman Naik's Story

An Indian Refugee

● FACT...

In India some tribal people were relocated forcibly because of religious persecution. These people are mistreated because they are different. Those with disabilities face an even greater challenge when they are displaced.

● STORY...

Soman Naik is a five-year-old boy. He and his parents were forced from their home and they fled to Bruhawadi in Odisha, India. They were forced out because they are Christians. This was not the end of their problems because Soman Naik has a minor mental disability. This causes trouble for the family.

Soman Naik could not receive admission to any of the nearby schools because of his disability. He attended a Balwadi, a government-run nursery school for needy children. However the teacher made him sit separately in the corner of the classroom. Soman Naik was sad and discouraged and so were his parents.

Then Soman Naik's parents learned about the education class at Sugudawadi for displaced children at the Hindustani Covenant Church center. They came and shared their problem with the teacher and staff at the center. The teacher allowed Soman Naik to come play and learn with other children there. Soman Naik was accepted and encouraged by the teachers and other children. He began to learn and his friendship with children in the class allowed him to learn faster.

This year Soman Naik was taken to a primary (elementary) school at Sugudawadi where the teacher interviewed him. Both Soman Naik and his parents are now happy. Because of the help Soman Naik received at the Hindustani Covenant Church center, he has now been accepted in primary school.

● REFLECTION...

What were you thinking about as this story was read? Have you ever been rejected or made fun of? What was it like? Look at a map and find India.

● RESPONSE...

Pray for Soman Naik to make friends and do well as he begins school. Give an offering for the Hindustani Covenant Church and Covenant World Relief so that others like Soman Naik can be prepared for school.

