

The Chakma of Bangladesh



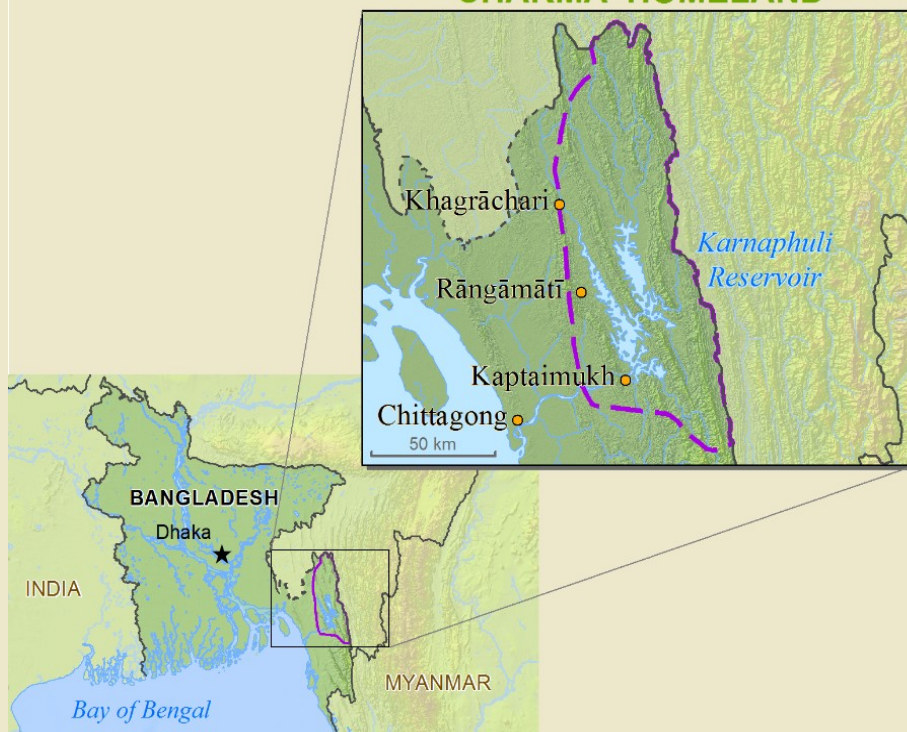
Ethnically, the Chakma are Tibeto-Burman, and are related to people groups in the mountains of northeast India and Myanmar. The Chakma are in many ways more culturally southeast Asian than south Asian. For instance, they neither have the dietary restrictions nor the strict gender segregation of their Bengali neighbors. It is believed their ancestors came from Arakan state in Myanmar. Historically the Chakma were rulers of certain areas of the present day Chittagong Hill Tracts. Today, however, the power of the Chakma king is no more than as an association chief (Wikipedia “Chakma people” 2007).

There are Christians and churches among the Chakma. Not all people call themselves Christian, since doing so means the non-Christians will not want to cooperate with them. Growth in the church is happening though rather slowly.

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|---------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Primary Religion: | Buddhism |
| Disciples (Matt 28:19): | 1% |
| Churches: | 30 |
| Scripture Status (Matt 28:20): | NT completed in 1991 |
| Population (date): | 253,000 (1991) |



CHAKMA HOMELAND



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Have They Heard the Gospel?

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| Number of Pastors | There are about 200 - 300 pastors among the Chakma Christian community. However, not all are trained and ordained by the Church; some simply have been nominated to lead the church service on Sunday and they are still known as a pastor. There are very few ordained pastors. |
| Number of Missionaries | 0% |
| Call Themselves Christian | 2% |
| Comment | There are few Christians among the Chakma. Not all call themselves Christian, since doing so means the non-Christians will not want to cooperate with them. |
| Believe In Jesus As God And Only Savior | 1% |
| Jesus A Prophet, Good Man, Not The Only Savior | 2% |
| Believe In The Local Traditional Religion | 98% |
| Have Not Heard Who Jesus Is | 90% |
| Attitude to Christianity | Somewhat Receptive |
| Attitude to Religious Change | Somewhat Resistant |
| How Have They Responded to The Gospel? | There's a slow movement happening. |
| Number of Churches | 30 |
| Number of Communities | 9 |
| History of Christianity | |
| Year Began | 1930 |
| Begun by Whom | Rev. June, a British missionary. Mr. Chandra Joy Chakma became the first Chakma Christian in 1937. |
| Is The Word Of God Translated? | There is a New Testament in Chakma, completed in 1991. There are also Bible portions. Unfortunately, the Chakma NT is not being used very well, in part because it is in Bangla script and people find it too difficult to read. |
| Other Forms of Gospel Presentations Available | |
| Video/Film | Yes |
| Radio | Yes |

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Have They Heard the Gospel?

What Kind of Missionaries Are Needed?

The best missionaries will be those from the community itself (there are believers) or Bangladeshis (some cross-cultural bridging would be needed for those people, but not as much as for someone outside Bangladesh).