

The Garo of Bangladesh



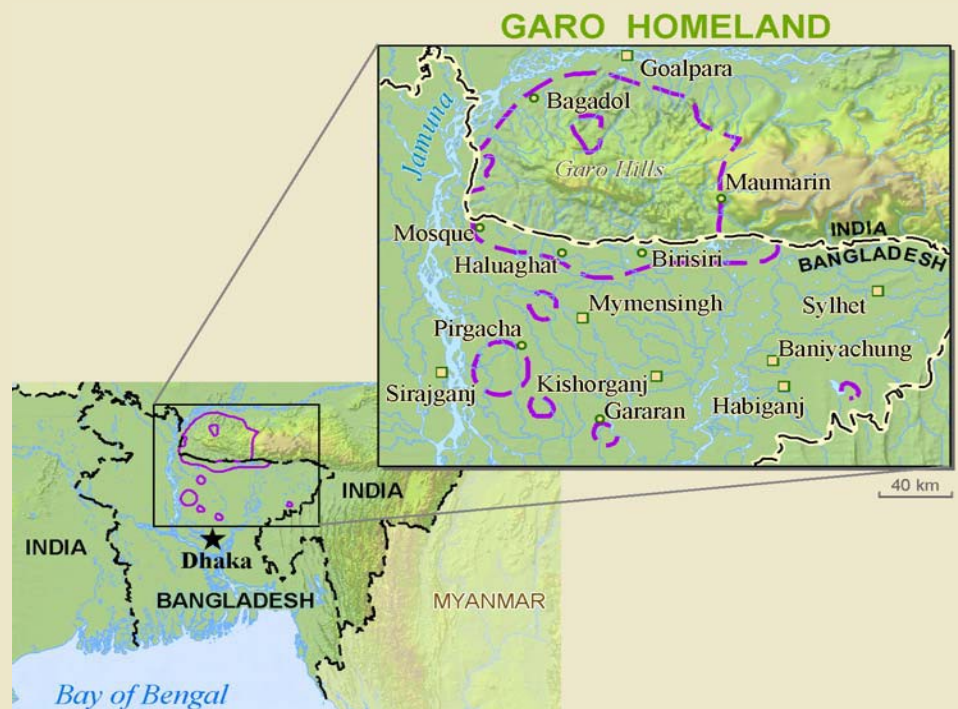
Within Bangladesh mostly the Garos are living in the northern area of Dhaka and Sylhet divisions along the Indian border. Some Garos are living in Modhupur area of Tangail district and some are living in Mallikbari, Bhaluka of Mymensingh district and in Kewachala, Shripur of Gajipur district. Among the Garos in Bangladesh, six language varieties are spoken: A'tong, Abeng, Brak, Chibok, Dual, and Megam. Together these are all called the Mandi language.

Most of the Garos are poor. Their main occupation is farming, and many of them farm as day laborers. Known for their integrity and hard-working spirit, Garos are also commonly employed by NGOs. Some also work in government offices, medical centers, and schools. About 80% of them are at least somewhat literate, and the number of Garos attaining higher education is increasing day by day.

Many Garos are living in very simple houses made of bamboo, straw, and mud. Some of them have brick-wall and tin-roof houses. Most Garo villages are neat and clean.

Almost all the Garos are Christian. They have the complete Bible in the Achik language written in Roman script published by the Bible Society of India. The Bangladesh Bible Society also published a New Testament in Bangla script using the Abeng dialect, which is spoken as a language of wider communication among Garos in Bangladesh.

Primary Religion:	Christian
Disciples (Matt 28:19):	90%
Churches:	264
Scripture Status (Matt 28:20):	New Testament
Population (date):	120,000 (2005)



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Have They Heard The Gospel?

Call Themselves Christian Comment	99% Almost all are Christian and are likely to introduce themselves as Christian.
Believe In Jesus As God And Only Savior Comment	90% Almost all Garo Christians believe that only Jesus can save them from sin and death.
Prophet/Good Man, But Not God's Son	0%
Believe In The Local Traditional Religion	1%
Have Not Heard Who Jesus is	0%
Number Of Pastors Comment	246 Among them 217 are Garo Baptist Convention (GBC) pastors, 17 are Roman Catholic (RC) fathers, 6 are Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) pastors and 6 are Church of Bangladesh (COB) priests.
Number Of Missionaries Working Comment	2 Two Roman Catholic fathers from abroad are working among the Garo people in Bangladesh & 6 Seventh Day Adventist Garos are working abroad as missionaries.
Response To The Gospel	They responded very well.
Number Of Churches Comment	264 150 are GBC churches, 87 are SDA churches, 10 are RC churches, 10 are COB churches, 5 are Church of Fellowship (COF) churches and 2 are Church of Christ (COC) churches.
Is The Word Of God Translated?	Yes, they have the New Testament in the Abeng dialect with Bangla script published by the Bangladesh Bible Society and the whole Bible in the Achik dialect with Roman script published by the Bible Society of India.
Forms Of Gospel Available	There are chorus & songbooks, primarily in the Achik dialect.
What Kind Of Missionaries Are Needed?	Cross-cultural missionaries are not needed.

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Group Description

Countries Where People

Group Lives

Country Name Bangladesh

Literacy

Adult Literacy Percentage 80%

Literacy Attitude Very receptive

Active Literacy Program No

Economics

Occupation Farming, day labor, service

Income Sources Farming, labor

Products / Crafts Traditional clothes, household materials

Community Development

Health Care (Quality) Good

Diet (Quality) Good

Water (Quality) Good

Comment Most villages have tube wells for safe drinking water.

Shelter Description Many live in homes made of bamboo, straw, and mud. Some have brick homes with tin roofs.

Clothing Men wear western clothes outside the home and sometimes lungi (wraparound skirts) inside the home. Women wear sari, salwar kamize or traditional dress of blouse and hand-woven wraparound skirt.

Transportation Walking, bicycle, motorbike, bicycle rickshaw, boat, and bus beyond the village area.

Leading Cause Of Death Old age

Society & Culture

Family Structures Matrilineal with extended families living together

Neighbor Relations Amiable

Cultural Change Pace Medium

Identification With National Culture Distinct

Self Image Neutral

Celebrations Wangala, Christmas, New Year

Attitude To Outsiders Very receptive

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Education

Comment (Primary Schools)

There is a primary school in almost every village.

Comment (Enrollment)

These days nearly all Garo children start school and complete at least class 5. Many then start secondary school, and, of these, most study through class 10. If they pass their class 10 exams, they go on for higher education.

Language Of Instruction Early Years

Bengali

Language Of Textbooks Early Years

Bengali

Language Of Instruction Later Years

Bengali

Language Of Textbooks Later Years

Bengali

Comment

There are very few if any homogeneous schools; possibly a few primary schools.

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Status of Christianity

Church Growth

Bible Schools

1

Comment

It's in Birisiri.

Christian Clinics/Hospitals

16

Comment

14 clinics (9 RC missions & 5 GBC) and 2 hospitals (1 leprosy hospital in an RC mission in Jalchatra, Madhipur, Tangail and the other run by GBC in Joyramkura, Haluaghat, Mymensingh).

Christian Literacy Centers

1

Comment

GBC book room in Birisiri

Religion & Response

Attitude To Christianity

Very receptive

Comment

Still some Garo people are following their traditional religion called "Sangsarek." Many of them are living in Modhupur area under Tangail district and a few are living in Haluaghat under Mymensingh district. Except very young kids every body knows about Jesus Christ.

History Of Christianity In Group

Year Began

1800

By Whom

Church of England

Significant Events

Mr. Radhanath Bhoumik is the first Garo Christian in Bangladesh. He became Christian at the end of 1864 AD. He was a landowner. He was living in Sombhuganj.

Comments

At the beginning the Missionaries of the Church of England started to preach the gospel among the Garo people and then they invited the ABMS (Australian Baptist Mission Society) in Bangladesh to preach the gospel among the Garo people and they baptized them in the name of Jesus Christ.

Scripture

Comment (Scripture Use)

Most Garos are exposed to Scripture only at church, but some also read the Bible privately. Almost all of this is done using the Bangla Bible. A few people along the border use Achik Scriptures.

Other Forms Of Gospel Available

Literature

Yes

Recordings

No

Film/Videos

Yes

Radio

No

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Missions and Churches

Organization Name	Church of Fellowship
Country Of Origin	Bangladesh
Main Ministry	Evangelism
Year Started	1956
Number Of Adherents	475
Comment	All of them are baptized.
Number Of Congregations	5

Organization Name	Garo Baptist Convention (GBC)
Country Of Origin	Bangladesh
Main Ministry	Evangelism
Year Started	1800
Number Of Adherents	29,000
Comment	All of them are baptized.
Number Of Congregations	150
Number Of Expatriate Workers	5

Organization Name	Roman Catholic Church
Main Ministry	Evangelism
Number Of Congregations	10

Organization Name	Seventh-day Adventists
Country Of Origin	USA
Main Ministry	Evangelism
Comment	Another ministry is teaching.
Year Started	1954
Number Of Adherents	4000
Comment	All of them are baptized.
Number Of Congregations	87
Comment	In some areas they don't have church buildings. They do church services at home and they called that home church. They have a total of 20 home churches, which are included in the total number of congregations. Main Ministry

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Number Of Expatriate Workers 6
Comment These are Garos working in different countries as SDA missionaries.

Organization Name Church of Bangladesh

Country Of Origin United Kingdom

Main Ministry Evangelism

Number Of Congregations 10

Organization Name Church of Christ

Country Of Origin USA

Main Ministry Evangelism

Year Started 1997

Number Of Adherents 50
Comment All of them are baptized.