

The Tumari Kanuri of Niger

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The Tumari Kanuri, a name that includes the Tumari, Suwarti, Kuburi and Fachi peoples, live in and around the town of N'Guigmi, and around the Lake Chad basin in eastern Niger. Their language has its roots in the former Kanem-Bornu empire, one of the earliest known Islamic empires in Africa. The Tumari Kanuri have been Muslims for over 1,000 years; their religion is part of their identity. The Quranic school system is well developed; most children receive religious education. The Tumari Kanuri are proud of their language and their heritage. They would prefer to use it over other languages that they use in trade relations, such as Hausa or French.

The Tumari raise cattle, and engage in active trade with their neighbors. During dry periods, herdsmen take their cattle to Lake Chad, while the other members of the group stay at home. With their home at a crossroads of desert trade routes, men spend a lot of time buying and selling; women and girls spend most of their time in food preparation and related activities. Children are expected to assume tasks suitable to their age, including caring for younger siblings, water carrying and running errands. Visiting neighbors and friends, and expressing hospitality and generosity are important to the Tumari Kanuri. Having many friends and relationships is more important than accumulating money and possessions.

Only a small percentage of the eligible school-age children actually attend primary school, and of those, only a very few continue on to secondary school. In 1980 an experimental school opened in the town of N'Guigmi to teach students in their mother tongue; however, teachers were given material in a related Kanuri dialect which students did not understand. Because of this, most attempts at education and literacy in the mother tongue have not been successful. The Tumari Kanuri need materials in their own language.

Primary Religion:

Islam

Disciples (Matt 28.19):

0

Churches:

0

Scripture Status (Matt 28.20):

None in their language

Population (date):

40,000 (1998)



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Item Name	Item Note	
Have They Heard The Gospel?		Profile Summary
Call Themselves Christian (%)	0	
Believe In Jesus As God & Only Savior (%)	0	
Prophet/Good Man, But Not God's Son (%)	0	
Believe In The Local Traditional Religion (%)	100	
Have Not Heard Who Jesus is (%)	100	
Number Of Pastors	0	
Number Of Missionaries Working	0	
Response To The Gospel	With the possible exception of some individuals who may have left their home area, the Tumari Kanuri have never heard the gospel. The only known church work in the area targets other groups.	
Number Of Churches	0	
Is The Word Of God Translated?	No translation	
Any Hinderance To Scripture Distribution?	Literacy is < 13.6 % (national rate)	
Forms Of Gospel Presentation Available (Summary)	Existing work in Manga Kanuri may reach some bi-dialectal Tumari Kanuri speakers. Manga Kanuri and Tumari Kanuri have a high level of cognate similarity demonstrating historical relationship, but the two speech varieties are no longer intercomprehensible because of complex phonological and grammatical changes.	
What Kind Of Missionaries Are Needed?	Ministries focusing on Bible translation or practical help such as digging wells or running small businesses may be successful. The Tumari are not overly receptive to change, and they do not believe they need a religion other than Islam.	
Population All Countries		Group Description
World Population For This People	40,000	
World Population (Urban Percent)	< 1%	
Comment (World Population)	It is possible that other Tumari Kanuri live for all or for part of the year in Chad or in Nigeria, because of the trade activities, and the cattle herding; however, this is speculation based on observations and what the Tumari Kanuri revealed in interviews about their travel and activities.	
Countries Where People Group Lives		Group Description
Country Name	Niger	
Geography & Environment		Group Description
Location	Eastern Niger, Lake Chad basin Prefecture of Diffa, Sous-Prefecture of N'guigmi	
Ecosystem Type	Desert	
Geological Type	Plains	
Elevation	200 meters	
Climate	Dry, hot. One rainy season late June or July through August.	
Language & Linguistics		Group Description
Alternate Language Names	KANEMBU	
Alternate Language Names	KANOURI	
Comments (Dialect)	(Small groups closely related to Tumari who would be reached by the same materials: Kuburi, Suwarti, Fachi)	
Attitude Towards Mother Tongue	Very receptive	
Percent Monolingual (%)	40-60%	
Second Languages	Hausa (30-40%); French (7-15%)	
Comments (Neighbor Languages)	Dazaga and Tedaga, Mobar Kanuri, Kanembu, Chadian Arabic. Hausa is a major trade language in the area.	
Literacy		Group Description

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Adult Literacy Percentage	< 13.6% (national rate)	
Comment (Attitude to literacy)	Low motivation	
Literacy Attitude	Indifferent	
Active Literacy Program	None	
Publications In Vernacular	None	
Comment (Literacy)	Recitation of religious texts in Arabic has a higher value than reading other texts.	
Economics		Group Description
Subsistence Type	Pastoralists	
Occupation	cattle herders, traders, shop keepers, commercial vendors, religious leaders	
Income Sources	Buying and selling	
Products / Crafts	Those related to cattle – beef, milk, the skin and horns.	
Trade Partners	The Tumari Kanuri live on a north-south trade route between Nigeria and Libya, and also have access to populations in Chad. They seem to have a high level of contact with other Kanuri groups, both in Niger and in Nigeria.	
Modernization / Utilities	The town of N'guigmi has electric power to some areas, running water to some homes. There is a post office with mail and telephone services, medical clinic, and government offices.	
Comment (Economy)	In the extreme east of Niger are the dialects of Suwurti, Kuburi, and Tumari. This is in the Lake Chad basin, but over the last several years, the lake has dried up, and many of these cattle herders have moved southward to have access to water. We were told in the Kuburi and Suwurti villages that as many as half to three-quarters of the village population had left and gone south to Nigeria and Chad	
Community Development		Group Description
Health Care (Quality)	Poor	
Diet (Quality)	Poor	
Water (Quality)	Fair	
Electricity	wood, kerosene and propane are used most often for heating and cooking	
Energy/Fuel (Quality)	Fair	
Clothing	good – this is where people often spend the bulk of their means as outward appearance is very important	
Transportation	: The main road which connects N'guigmi (the last point on a maintained road) to Diffa (the next town to the west) is in poor condition. The SNTN (Société National des Transports Nigériens) bus goes to Diffa and on to points west once a week. Bush taxis are also a common form of transportation. Donkeys, camels or travel by foot are more common. There is also a small, unpaved airstrip outside of town for small, privately chartered aircraft. Pick up trucks loaded with passengers travel into Chad (no developed roads on this route).	
Infant Mortality Rate	134 per 1000 live births (national rate)	
Life Expectancy	43 years for men; 46 years for women	
Leading Cause Of Death	dehydration, disease, malnutrition	
Comment (Community Development)	At least one clinic and several pharmacies are available in N'guigmi. Most Tumari Kanuri rely on traditional medicines, as these are the most affordable, and believed to be the most effective.	
Society & Culture		Group Description
Neighbor Relations	Relations with neighbors are mostly tied to commerce and trade	
Authority / Rule	unknown. The Tumari were formerly part of the Kanem-Bornu Empire, ruled by an emperor over a structure similar to a federation.	
Cultural Change Pace	Slow	
Identification With National Culture	Distinct	
Self Image	Neutral	
Judicial / Punishment System	A preference for Islamic law.	

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Item Name	Item Note	
Celebrations	Muslim holidays	
Local Language Broadcasting	None	
Attitude To Outsiders	Somewhat receptive	
Attitude To Change	Somewhat receptive	
Youth		Group Description
Labor and tasks (6-12 year olds)	carrying water, watching over younger siblings, errands	
Education		Group Description
Primary Schools	1	
Secondary Schools	1	
Percent Of Eligible Students Enrolled	Very low percentage	
Language Of Instruction Early Years	French	
Language Of Instruction Early Years	Kanuri, Manga	
Language Of Instruction Early Years	Kanuri, Central	
Language Of Textbooks Early Years	Kanuri, Central	
Language Of Textbooks Early Years	French	
Language Of Textbooks Early Years	Kanuri, Manga	
Number Of Schools > 90% Homogeneous	0	
Comment (Education)	<p>The Tumari Kanuri tend to be resistant to the state-run school system. They prefer sending their children to Quranic schools, which are well established among the greater Kanuri groups.</p> <p>In 1980 an experimental primary school was established in N' guigmi, offering the first few years of instruction in the related language of Manga Kanuri. However, the teachers have reported that Tumari Kanuri children cannot use these materials. Often the teachers re-write the materials for the children.</p>	
Church Growth		Status of Christianity
Reached Status	Reported	
Reached Classification	World A	
Total Baptized	0	
Christian Clinics/Hospitals	0	
Christian Literacy Centers	0	
Comment (Church Growth)	No known believers, churches, or mission agencies for this group.	
Religion & Response		Status of Christianity
Spiritual Climate And Openness	The Tumari have not yet been exposed to the gospel, therefore their responsiveness is unknown.	
Current Needs	Resident Christian workers of any kind so that this group may be exposed to the gospel	
Items For Prayer	Pray for workers for this harvest. One translation team who was assigned to the Tumari Kanuri was forced to return to their homeland because of health problems of their children.	
History Of Christianity In Group		Status of Christianity
Comments (History of Christianity)	No history of Christianity in this group	
Scripture		Status of Christianity
Translation Status	Definite	
Available Scripture	None	
Comment (Scripture Use)	Existing translation projects in related language of Manga Kanuri may reach some bi-dialectal Tumari Kanuri. Tumari speakers report listening to the radio in Manga Kanuri (in Niger), Yerwa Kanuri (from Nigeria), and Kanembu (from Chad). It is not known if evangelical or Christian broadcasting is available in these other languages.	
Other Forms Of Gospel Available: Literature	No	

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Item Name	Item Note
Other Forms Of Gospel Available: Recordings	No
Other Forms Of Gospel Available: Film/Videos	No
Other Forms Of Gospel Available: Radio	No