

## Mission Atlas Project

### Bangladesh

#### Basic Facts

##### Name

The conventional long form of the country's name is People's Republic of Bangladesh, but it is called Bangladesh for short. It was formerly known as East Pakistan.

##### Population

The estimated population in July 2001 was 131,269,860 people, which makes it the eighth most populous country in the world. Bangladesh is considered the most densely populated country with 2,200 people per square mile. Bangladesh's population to land ratio is approximately half the population of the United States squeezed into an area the size of the state of New York.

The age breakdown is 0 -14 years – 35.04%, 15-64 years – 61.6%, and 65+ - 3.36%. The population growth is estimated at 1.59%. The life expectancy is 60.54 years, which includes 60.74 for males and 60.33 for females.

(<http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html>)

##### Area

Bangladesh is located in Southern Asia and is bordered by the Bay of Bengal, between Burma and India. Its total land area is 144,000 sq km, with 10,090 sq km of that is water. Most of Bangladesh is at low elevations as the country is the largest deltaic region in the world. The Ganges Delta runs through the middle of the country and mangrove forests thrive in the delta area. Bangladesh is a country dominated by rivers and has many tributaries spread across its landscape.

Bangladesh has a tropical monsoon climate with heavy summer rains and high summer temperatures. Winters are usually dry and cool. The majority of the rainfall, 95%, falls between mid-April and mid-October and their average rainfall for the year is normally 80 inches. The country is susceptible to drought, cyclones, and much of the area becomes flooded during the summer monsoon season.

(<http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html>)

(<http://www.bangladoot.org/aboutbangladesh.asp>)

##### Economy

Bangladesh is one of the world's poorest nations, suffering from over population, periodic cyclones and devastating floods. While half of the GDP is generated by the service sector, over two-thirds of the population is employed in agriculture. The frequent cyclones and floods, inadequate port facilities, rapidly growing labor force that cannot be absorbed by agriculture, and insufficient power supplies impede economic growth.

Bangladesh has a GDP of \$203 billion, with 30% from agriculture, 18% industry, and 52% service industry. Bangladesh has 55% of the people living below the poverty line with an unemployment rate of 35.2%. They receive \$1.5 billion in economic aid yearly. Bangladesh's major exports include garments, jute and jute goods, leather, and seafood. (<http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html>)  
Johnstone, Patrick. Operation World, (Paternoster, 2001), 94.

### **Government**

Bangladesh has a parliamentary system of government with a prime minister that is chosen from the political party with the most seats in Parliament. The president is elected by Parliament for a term of five years, but his powers are mainly ceremonial. The Parliament has 330 seats, 300 are elected seats and serve five-year terms. The remaining 30 seats are reserved for women, who are chosen by the elected Parliament members for five-year terms.

World Book Encyclopedia 2001, (World Book, 2001)

### **Society**

Most Bangladeshis continue to farm the land in much the same way as their ancestors. They have since the mid-1970's been using fertilizers and new kinds of seed. Typical rural homes are comprised of one or two rooms, made of bamboo with thatch roofs, and do not have electricity or plumbing.

Urban dwellers live together in small wooden houses. Wealthier people live in brick or concrete houses. The urban slums contain houses constructed of cardboard, wood scraps, or sticks. The Hindus and other minority groups typically live together in distinct neighborhoods.

Bangladesh does not produce nor import enough food to feed its population. Few Bangladeshis have variety in their meals as a typical meal consists of rice and spicy curry fish. Tea sweetened with sugar is a popular beverage, but many continue to only drink water.

Bangladeshis spend leisure time visiting with friends. Men typically congregate at cafes while women usually visit with one another in their homes. Stories and folk ballads communicate romantic legends and folk tales. Dramas based on religious stories are popular forms of entertainment in Bangladesh.

Food shortages and unsanitary living conditions contribute to the outbreak of disease including cholera, leprosy, tuberculosis, and other diseases. Mosquitoes spread malaria that kills thousands of Bangladeshis annually. Doctors, nurses, hospitals, and medical supplies are in short supply and the Red Cross continues to send teams to improve medical conditions.

World Book Encyclopedia 2001, (World Book, 2001)

## **Language**

Bangla, also known as Bengali, is the official language and is spoken by 99% of the population. English is also widely used especially in the urban areas. Bengali script has a close relationship to Thai and Cambodian scripts.

(<http://www.bangladoot.org/aboutbangladesh.asp>)

## **Urbanization**

The amount of people classified as urban is 20%. Dhaka is the capital and largest city with 10,979,000 people. Another major city is Chittagong with 2,289,000 people.

Johnstone, Patrick. Operation World, (Paternoster, 2001), 94.

## **Literacy**

56% of the population over the age of 15 can read and write. This figure includes 63% of males and 49% of females. The law requires that children attend school from ages 6 – 10, but the law is not strictly enforced so many children do not attend school.

(<http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html>)

## **Religion**

Islam is the dominant religion claiming 85.63%, 110,556,810 people, as adherents. Hindus comprise 12.38%, 12,989,408, of the population. The remaining are Buddhists, Christians, or animists. Islam was declared the official state religion in 1988, but officially, Bangladesh has religious freedom. This freedom is in jeopardy from militant Islamic pressure.

Johnstone, Patrick. Operation World, (Paternoster, 2001), 94.

## **Brief History of Bangladesh**

### *Early History*

Ancient Hindu epics indicate that a tribal people inhabited a kingdom called Vanga in what is now present-day Bangladesh. The region would become part of the Mauryan Empire about 200 B.C. The empire broke up in 185 B.C. and from then on, the local kings ruled Bengal. From A.D. 320 to 500, the region was part of the Gupta Empire.

Buddhist rulers gained control of Bengal in the mid 700's. Buddhist culture spread throughout the region for over 300 years until Hindu kings later came to power. Beginning in the 1200's, Turkish Muslims that had conquered northern India extended their control in Bengal. Independent Muslim rulers would govern Bengal until the Mughal emperor Akbar conquered the region in 1576.

### *Mughal Rule*

Bengal became part of the Mughal Empire that spread across Afghanistan, India, and Pakistan. During Mughal rule, Muslim art and architecture matured. By the early 1600's, most of the people in eastern Bengal had converted to Islam. The Mughal Empire declined due to local governors taking more control and also the pressure from Hindu groups in central and western India.

### *European Influence*

British, Dutch, French, and Portuguese traders began competing for trade privileges with the East Indies and Europe. By the 1600's, trade settlements had been established in Bengal. The Europeans took sides with governors in local conflicts in exchange for trade monopolies.

### *The East India Company*

In 1600, the English government, to develop trade with India and the Far East, chartered the East India Company. By the mid 1700's, the company became the strongest trade power in Bengal. In 1757, East India Company forces led by Robert Clive defeated a local governor of Bengal in the Battle of Plassey. Clive put a puppet governor in power, but in actuality, the East India Company ruled Bengal.

The East India Company made large profits on jute production, but did little to improve the welfare of Bengal people. Discontent with the East India Company spread and led to the Indian Rebellion of 1857. The revolt failed, but it caused the British government to take over the East India Company in 1858. All the territory governed by the East India Company became known as British India.

### *British India*

Bengal became a province of British India. Industrial and educational reforms advanced rapidly in western Bengal, where most people were Hindus. Many Hindus gained economic and political power. In eastern Bengal, where most people were Muslim, they remained backward and agricultural. In 1905, the governor of British India divided Bengal into East Bengal and West Bengal. East Bengal became part of a new province. Many Hindu Bengalis opposed the division, fearing a loss of their political and economic power. Muslims favored the division because this made them the majority in East Bengal. Bloody rioting ensued between Muslims and Hindus in Bengal. The British reversed the decision in 1911, but tension between the Muslims and Hindus remained.

Independence movements began to gain strength during the 1900's. The *Muslim League* became the voice for India's Muslim minority. By 1940, *Muslim League* leaders were demanding a new Muslim nation be created named Pakistan from Indian territory. The riots between the Muslims and Hindus convinced British leaders that a new nation should be formed. In 1947, Britain granted independence to India and also founded Pakistan as an independent nation. Bengal was divided between the two countries with West Bengal part of India and East Bengal became East Pakistan.

### *East Pakistan*

East Pakistan was separated from West Pakistan by over 1,000 miles. The two peoples of East and West Pakistan had the Islam religion in common, but little else. They had different languages, traditions, culture, and physical traits. East Pakistan contained more than half of Pakistan's population, but West Pakistan controlled government, economy, and armed forces. Only 1/4<sup>th</sup> the money was spent on East Pakistan and the per capita income of East Pakistan was less than 3/5 that of West Pakistan.

East Pakistanis became more and more dissatisfied with the government of Pakistan. When a cyclone and tsunami devastated East Pakistan in 1970 that killed 266,000 people, the government was slow to respond with needed relief supplies.

In December 1970, elections were held throughout Pakistan to elect a legislature to write a new constitution. The *Awami League*, led by East Pakistan's Sheik Mujibar Rahman (known as Sheik Mujib), won a majority of the seats. The party supported increased self-government for East Pakistan.

When President Yahya Khan of Pakistan postponed the first meeting of the assembly on March 1, 1971, East Pakistanis protested and Yahya Khan sent troops to East Pakistan to stop the protests. Sheik Mujib was then imprisoned in West Pakistan.

### *Civil War*

Civil War broke out and fighting began in East Pakistan. On March 26, 1971, the East Pakistanis declared East Pakistan an independent nation named Bangladesh. They then gathered a guerrilla army to fight against the government troops. Thousands of civilians died in the bloody fighting that followed and millions of refugees fled to India.

During the Civil War, the East Pakistani guerrillas would cross the border into India. The Pakistani troops would follow them into Indian territory where they would continue to fight. Indian troops then joined the conflict by fighting in border clashes with Pakistani government soldiers. In December 1971, Indian troops advanced into East Pakistan and joined the guerrillas. The Indian troops and East Pakistan guerrillas overpowered West Pakistan, forcing them to surrender on December 16, 1971.

### *The New Nation*

Sheik Mujib was released from prison in January 1972 and returned to Bangladesh in triumph becoming its first prime minister.

Bangladesh faced many problems now that it was an independent country. Millions of its people were homeless. Trade, transportation routes, and communication lines needed to be restored. Hospitals, factories, and schools needed rebuilding. Reconstruction began quickly, but food shortages, floods, and charges of government corruption slowed progress.

In January 1975, the Bangladesh Constitution was amended to give the president all executive power. Mujib resigned as prime minister and became the president. He suspended all opposition political parties and declared Bangladesh a one-party state. In August 1975, military leaders killed Mujib. They dissolved the Parliament, took control of the government, and began to rule the country under martial law. Ziaur Rahman (known as Zia), an army officer, assumed the head of the martial law government in November and took the title of president in 1977. In 1978, the people elected Zia president. In 1979, Zia became the head of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) that was formed after the 1978 elections.

In 1979, martial law was ended and the people elected a new Parliament and Zia remained president. Rebels, under the leadership of a military officer, killed Zia in 1981. Vice President Abdus Sattar was elected president later that year. In 1982, military leaders again took control of the government. Lieutenant General H. M. Ershad suspended the Constitution and established martial law. From 1982 to 1984, Ershad banished political parties and took the title of president in 1983.

In May 1986, Ershad allowed the first Parliamentary elections in Bangladesh since 1979. In August, Ershad resigned from the army to run as a civilian candidate for president. He became head of the *Jatiya Dal* political party formed by his supporters. In November 1986, the people elected him president. Soon after, Parliament passed a law protecting Ershad from prosecution for actions taken during martial law. He then ended martial law and restored the Constitution.

In the late 1990's, thousands of people protested against Ershad's government and he resigned as president in December. He was tried and convicted of abuse of power, corruption, and possession of illegal firearms. He appealed the charges and in 1996, the conviction for illegal firearms possession was overturned.

Elections were again held in February 1991 and the BNP gained control of Parliament and Khaleda Zia, became prime minister. Zia was the widow of President Zia and became the first woman prime minister of Bangladesh. In September 1991, Bangladesh amended the Constitution returning executive power to the prime minister and the office of president became mainly ceremonial.

The BNP again won elections held in February 1996, but the elections were marred by charges of election fraud, violence at the polls, and low voter turnout. Elections were then held again in June 1996. In the June vote, the Awami League won the most seats in Parliament and its leader, Sheikh Hasina Wajed, became prime minister. Wajed is the daughter of the country's first prime minister, Sheik Mujib. In the elections of October 2001, the BNP won the most seats in Parliament and Khaleda Zia returned as prime minister for a second time.

World Book Encyclopedia 2001, (World Book, 2001)

Bangladesh Embassy (<http://www.bangladoot.org/aboutbangladesh.asp>)

### People Groups of Bangladesh

People Group	Population	Language	Religion	Notes
Abdul	104,452	Bengali	Muslim	Agriculturalists
Agaria 2	373	Bengali	Muslim	
Aguri	1,057	Bengali	Hindu	Traditionally businessmen
Ahang	39	Unknown		
Ahir 1	321,944	Bengali	Hindu	

Ahom	23	Assamese	Hindu, Buddhist	Agriculturalists
Akhandji	496	Bengali		
Amat	158	Bengali	Hindu	
Anglo Indian	7,882	Bengali / English	Roman Catholic, Seventh-day Adventist, Jehovah's Witness, Church of Bangladesh	Mixed Race persons (British/Indian) In administration/ government.
Ansari	988,953	Bengali / Urdu	Muslim	Textile-weavers, small shop owners
Arab	39,000	Arabic	95% Muslim	Traders originally from Arab countries of Middle East. Arabic now compulsory in all primary schools.
Arakanese, Maghi	185,000	Arakanese	90% Buddhists, some animists	Form of Burmese, many bilingual in Bengali. Found in Morma and Chittagong Hills.
Arleng	791	Mikir	Hindu	Agriculturalists
Asho Chin, Southern Chin	1,422	Chin, Asho Theyetmyo	40% Animists, Baptist, Evangelical Christian Church	Agriculturalists in tropical forest. Also found in Burma and China
Assamese	11,000	Assamese	70% Hindus, 30% Muslim	Also found in India, China, and Bhutan
Badaik	1,369	Bengali	Hindu with traditional religious practices	Agriculture, Weaving
Badhai 1	1,332	Bengali	Hindu	
Badhai 2	24	Bengali	Hindu	
Bagdi 1	132,926	Bengali	Hindu	Fishing, Cultivation
Bahelia 2	3,063	Bengali	Hindu	Wage Laborers
Baidya 1	478	Bengali	Hindu	
Baidya 2	180,348	Bengali	Hindu	
Bairagi 2	342,180	Bengali	Hindu	Small Shopkeepers
Baiti	9,300	Bengali	Hindu	Basket weavers, business
Bajikar 2	121	Bengali		
Baliya 1	79	Telugu	Traditional Religion	Agriculture, Trade
Baliya 2	193	Telugu	Traditional Religion	Agriculture, Trade
Baloch	334	Balochi	Muslim	Originally from West Pakistan
Bania 1	78,646	Bengali, Bhojpuri, Gujarati, Hindi, Marwari	Hindu	Business, Trade, Industry
Banjara 2	3,137	Banjar, Lambadi	Hindu, Traditional Religion	Landless Laborers
Bantar	32	Bengali	Hindu	Thatching Houses, Fishing

Bari 1	192	Bengali	Hindu	Making leaf plates and cups
Bauri	14,808	Bauzi, Bengali, Oriya	Traditional Religion with mixture of Hinduism	Casual labor, sharecropping, manual labor in homes
Bawn	10,000	Chin, Bawm	Bawn Evangelical Christian Church	Chittagong Hills; nomads and agriculturalists
Bedia 1	16,086	Bengali	Traditional Religion	Agriculture
Bedia 3	12,138	Bengali	Traditional Religion	Agriculture
Beg	529	Bengali	Muslim	Business, Government
Behara	54,002	Bengali	Hindu	Landless Laborers
Beldar 1	11,530	Bengali	Traditional Religion	Agriculture, wage labor
Bengali	86,000,000	Bengali, Siripuria	99% Muslim, Roman Catholic	
Berua	9,207	Bengali		
Besya 1	1,690	Bengali		
Besya 2	6,020	Bengali		
Bhandari	283	Oriya	Hindu	
Bhangi 1	12,569	Bengali, Hindi, Mewari	Hindu	Sweeping roads, Cleaning drains
Bhangi 2	550	Bengali	Hindu	Sweeping roads, Cleaning drains
Bhar	6,697	Bengali	Hindu	Agriculturists
Bhaskar	192	Bengali		
Bhat 3	2,503	Bengali	Hindu	Day laborers, small businessmen
Bhathiara 2		Bengali	Muslim	Day laborers
Bhoi 1	11,900	Bengali	Traditional Religion	Fishing
Bhotia 1	29	Tibetan	Buddhism, Hinduism	Live in foothills of Himalayas
Bhotia 3	43	Tibetan	Buddhism, Hinduism	Live in foothills of Himalayas
Bhottada	118	Oriya	Traditional Religion with mixture of Hinduism	Agriculturists
Bhuinhar	830	Bengali	Ancestor Worship	Agriculturists
Bhuinmali	149,514	Bengali	Hindu	Landless Laborers
Bhuiya	19,483	Bengali	Traditional Religion	Agriculture, wage labor
Bhumij	14,078	Bengali, Bhumij	Hindu with traditional religious practices	Agriculturists, Animal Trappers
Bihari	1,983,000	Bhojpuri	Muslim	Refugees from Bihar (India), hated for their ties to Pakistan and massacres of Bengalis in 1971.
Bind	12,396	Bengali	Hindu	Agriculture, Fishing, Hunting



Birhor		Birhor, Kurux	Traditional Religion	Agriculture, making and selling rope and jungle produce
Biswas 1	23,853	Bengali		
Biswas 2	4,253	Bengali		
Bodo	36,492	Bodo, Naga Pidgin	Christianity, Reformed Hindu	Agriculture
Brahman 2	1,367,011	Bengali, Gujarati, Kashmiri, Maithili, Marathi, Marwari	Hindu	Landowning group, white-collar jobs, business, household industry
Brahui	522	Brahui		
British	9,000	English	Church of Bangladesh, Seventh-day Adventist, Jehovah's Witness, Roman Catholic	Expatriates from Britain in education, development.
Brittal Bania		Bengali		Silver and goldsmiths, daily wage laborers
Buna 1	28,020	Bengali	Ancestor Worship	Weaving
Buna 2	159,581	Bengali	Ancestor Worship	Weaving
Burmese	100,000	Burmese	97% Buddhist, 2% Muslim, Baptist	Mainly in Burma, also India and USA
Chain	37,062	Bengali	Hindu	Agriculturists
Chak	909	Bengali, Chak	95% Animists	Chittagong Hills, agriculturalists
Chakma	260,600	Chakma	90% Buddhists	Southeast, Chittagong Hills. Guerilla War against Bengali settlers
Chamar 2	123,845	Bengali	Hindu	Wage Laborers
Chasadhobi	13,990	Bengali	Hindu	Agriculturists, Artisans, Builders
Chaudhari	299	Bengali	Hindu, some Christian	Agriculture
Chhetri	276	Nepali	Hindu	Migrated from Nepal, involved in agriculture
Chik Baraik	49	Bengali	Traditional Religion	Hunters, gathers, daily wage earners, sharecroppers
Chinese	104	Chinese, Mandarin	Buddhism, some Christian	Tanning, shoemaking, carpentry, restaurants, dentistry
Chittagonian	14,000,000	Chittagonian	Muslim	Possible dialect of southeastern Bengali
Dabgar 1	726	Bengali	Hindu	Dealers in animal hides
Dahiara 1	332	Bengali		
Dai	13,013	Bengali	Buddhism	Originally from China
Dalu	1,812	Bengali	60% Animists, Garo Baptist	Agriculturalists
Damai	214	Nepali	Hindu	Traditionally Tailors
Daphtari	524	Bengali		

Darlong	5,300	Darlong	45% Animists, Church of Bangladesh, Roman Catholic	
Darzi 1	4,219	Bengali	Hindu	
Dhangar	166	Gujarati	30% Animists, 10% Hindus, Bangladesh Evangelical Lutheran Church	
Dhanuk	1,964	Bengali	Traditional Religions	
Dhimal		Dhimal	Hindu with traditional religious practices	Hunting and Gathering
Dhobi 3	4,212	Bengali	Hinduism	Agriculturalists
Dhobi 4	289,428	Bengali	Hinduism	Agriculturalists
Dholi 2	41,561	Bengali	Hindu with traditional religious practices	Agriculturalists and Day Laborers
Diwan	130	Bengali		
Doai	3,383	Bengali	Hindu	Fishing, raising pigs, and wage laborers
Dom 3	708	Bengali	Hindu with traditional religious practices	Thatching Houses, agriculture
Dom 4	33,476	Bengali	Hindu with traditional religious practices	Thatching Houses, agriculture
Dosadh 1	470	Bengali		
Dosadh 2	17,579	Bengali		
Dulia	9,400	Bengali		
Dura		Bengali		
Eastern Baluch	6,300	Balochi, Eastern		
Eurasian, Anglo-Indian	75,295	English	Catholic, Protestant	Colleges, markets, neighborhood
Falam Chin	2,033	Chin, Falam	80% Animists, Baptists	Mainly in Burma, a few in India
Faqir	24,346	Bengali, Urdu	Muslim	Agriculture
Gadaria 1	3,069	Bengali; Panjabi, Eastern	Ancestor Worship	Shepherds, basket weavers
Gain	10,230	Bengali		
Ganak	3,921	Bengali	Hindu with traditional religious practices	
Ganda	205	Oriya	Hindu	Agriculturalists
Gandpal	1,645	Bengali		
Garo	102,000	Garo, Matchi, Tandek	Mymensingh Garo Baptist Union, Roman Catholic, Church of Sylhet, 10% Animists	Majority in Assam (India)
Gauda	268	Oriya	Hindu	Agriculture
Ghasi 2	1,511	Bengali	Hindu	Selling produce
Ghatwar	826	Bengali	Hindu	Agriculture, day laborers
Ghazi	47,796	Bengali		
Ghosi 1	32	Oriya		

Ghulam	2,619	Bengali		
Ghusuria	53	Bengali		Pig-rearing
Gokha 1	19	Oriya		Fishing
Gond	3,252	Gondi, Northern	Hindu with traditional religious practices	Agriculture
Gonrhi	6,819	Bengali	Hindu	Fishing
Gorait	112	Bengali	Worship natural objects	Agriculturalists
Gorkha	89	Nepali		
Gosain 1	1,153	Bengali	Hindu	Agriculture
Gujarati	66,000	Gujarati	60% Hindu, 38% Muslim	Migrants from Maharashtra, India
Guria	162	Oriya	Hinduism	Agriculture, wage laborers
Gurung	695	Gurung, Western	Traditional Religion	Agriculture
Hadi	81,257	Bengali, Hadiyya	98% Animists	
Hajang	32,000	Hajong	95% Hinduized Animists, Garo Baptist Union	
Haka Chin, Tlantlang	100,000	Chin, Haka; Zokhua	65% Animists, Baptist, Church of Bangladesh	Almost all in Burma, some in India
Halwai 2	115,756	Bengali	Muslim	Tobacco-selling
Han Chinese, Mandarin	2,600	Chinese, Mandarin	Assembly of God, Roman Catholic	Chinese from China's diaspora, mainly in commerce
Han Chinese, Yue	2,600	Chinese, Yue		Found mainly in Dacca, South China origins
Hazra 1	596	Bengali		
Hazra 2	239	Bengali		
Hindi	400,000	Hindi	90% Hindus	Indians from North India
Ho, Lanka Kol	1,800	Ho; Lohara	80% Animists, 20% Hindus	Majority live in India
Indo Burman	45,000	Arakanese		Refugees from Burma
Irani	3,324	Farsi, Eastern	Muslim	Refugees from Iran
Jamadar	274	Bengali		
Jaraj 2	14,875	Bengali		
Jat 2	3,874	Bengali	Muslim	
Jew		Bengali	Jewish	Traders and businessmen
Jhalo Malo	425,730	Bengali	Hindu	Fishing, businessmen
Jharudar	292	Bengali		
Jimdar	72	Bengali		
Jogi 1	4,444	Bengali	Hinduism	Business
Jogi 2	946,597	Bengali	Hinduism	Business
Jotdar	1,448	Bengali		
Kachari 3	16,422	Dimasa	Traditional Religion	
Kadar	2,683	Bengali	Hindu	Agriculturalists

Kaghazi	2,010	Bengali	Muslim	Agriculturalists
Kahar 2	3,131	Bengali	Hindu	Agriculturalists
Kahar 3	120,798	Bengali	Hindu	Agriculturalists
Kaibartta	702,684	Bengali	Hinduism	Fishing
Kalal 2	1,690	Bengali	Muslim	Trade alcohol, also run shoe and clothing shops
Kalingi	39	Oriya	Hindu	Agriculturalists
Kalu	66,423	Bengali	Hindu	Selling oil
Kalwar 2	4,002	Bengali	Hindu	Business
Kandra	153	Bengali	Hindu	Day laborers, sharecroppers
Kandu	22,072	Bengali	Hindu	Business
Kanjar 2	901	Bengali	Hinduism	Selling in markets
Kaora	10,472	Bengali	Hinduism	Agriculturalists
Kapali	320,557	Bengali	Hinduism	Agriculturalists
Karadar	1,847	Bengali		
Karan	85	Oriya		
Karenga	2,033	Bengali	Hinduism	Carpentry
Karigar	141,793	Bengali		
Kasar	10,314	Bengali		
Kawar	4,024	Bengali	Hindu	Workers in tea plantations
Kayastha 2	2,958,796	Bengali	Hindu	Clerks, accountants, agriculture
Khadala	3,003	Bengali		
Khairwar	479	Bengali	Hindu	Wage Laborers
Khami	4,801	Bengali		
Khandait	2,643	Bengali	Hindu	Agriculture
Kharia	3,436	Bengali	Ancestor Worship	Agriculture
Kharwar	1,696	Bengali		Sharecropping, wage labor
Khas	33	Bengali	Traditional Religion	
Khasi	85,100	Khasi	40% Animists, Church of God (Andersen), Church of Sylhet	Found in North. Majority in India
Khatik 2	246	Bengali	Hindu	Fruit and vegetable selling
Khavar		Bengali		
Khomoi		Bengali		
Khumi, Khumi Chin	1,188	Chin, Khumi	40% Animists, Evangelical Christian Church, Seventh-day Adventist, Assembly of God	Mostly Burma, some in India. Agriculturalists
Khyang 1	633	Chin, Asho Khyang		
Khyang 2	3,010	Chin, Asho Khyang		

Kichak		Bengali		
Kisan	204	Bengali	Hinduism influenced by Traditional Religion	Agriculture
Koch	53,000	Koch; Wanang	90% Animists, Garo Baptist Union	
Koiri 2	8,191	Bengali		
Kok Borok, Tripuri	78,000	Kok Borok; Riang	90% Hindus, 5% Animists	Chittagong Hills. Mainly in Tripura (India)
Kol	1,941	Bengali	Hindu	Wage Laborers
Koli 2	868	Gujarati	Hindu	Weaving, Agriculture
Kolta	94	Oriya	Hindu	Agriculture
Konai	17,087	Bengali; Konai		
Konwar	47	Bengali		
Kori	12,781	Bengali	Hinduism	Agriculture, Weaving
Korku	2,250	Bengali	Traditional Religion with some Hindus	Agriculture
Korwa	1,338	Bengali	Traditional Religion	Agriculture
Kotal	166	Bengali	Hinduism	Agriculture, sharecroppers
Kotwal	230	Bengali	Hinduism	Wage Laborers
Kui	2,447	Kui; Kuvi		
Kuki Chin	8,038	Chin, Thado; Thangngen; Tiyal	30% Animists, Baptists	Majority in India, some in Burma
Kuli	458	Bengali	Hinduism	Agriculture, Weaving
Kumhar 2	397,013	Bengali	Hinduism	Pottery making, Agriculture
Kunbi 3	841	Gujarati	Hinduism	Agriculture
Kurmi 1	102,202	Bengali	Hinduism	Agriculture, raising farm animals
Kurux, Oraon	27,000	Kurux		
Kusari	6,809	Bengali		
Lahei 2	2,733	Bengali		
Lepcha		Lepcha	Nature Worship, Buddhism, Christianity	Weaving
Limbu	150	Limbu	Hindu	Agriculture
Lodha 1	11	Bengali	Hinduism	Agriculture
Lohait Kuri	1,521	Bengali		
Lohana	28	Gujarati; Sindhi	Hinduism	Agriculture
Lohar 2	282,947	Bengali	Hinduism	Agricultural Laborers
Lohar 3	11,371	Bengali	Hinduism	Agricultural Laborers
Lunia 2	56,326	Bengali	Hinduism	Agriculture, contract jobs, wage laborers
Lushai, Mizo	10,000	Lushai; Tlau	Baptist Union, Church of Sylhet	Mizo hills. Most in India, some in Burma, China
Mag	358,056	Maaka; Marma; Rakhine	Buddhist, some Hindu	Forrest laborers
Magar	1,234	Bengali	Hindu	Agriculture
Mahaldar	269	Oriya		

Mahanta	717	Bengali		
Mahar 1	462	Marathi	Buddhist, some Hindu	
Mahara	15,184	Bengali	Hindu	Agriculture
Mahatto	6,777	Unknown		
Mahili, Mahle	20,970	Bengali; Mahali	50% Animists	Majority in India; related to Santal.
Mahishya	1,055,897	Bengali	Hinduism	Agriculture
Mahratta Kunbi	519	Gujarati		
Mahyavanshi	123	Gujarati		
Majhwar	12,933	Bengali	Hinduism	Agriculture
Mal 1	3,048	Bengali	Hinduism	Agricultural Laborers
Mal 3	32,735	Bengali	Hinduism	Agricultural Laborers
Mallah 1	11,693	Bengali	Hinduism	Fishing
Mallah 2	19,433	Bengali	Hinduism	Fishing
Mallik 1	288	Bengali		
Mallik 2	31,486	Bengali		
Malto	23,602	Mal Paharia		
Mandala 1	95,913	Bengali	Muslim	Agriculture
Mandala 2	12,067	Bengali	Muslim	Agriculture
Manipuri, Meithei	131,000	Meitei; Pangal	85% Hindu, 7% Animists, 6% Muslim, Baptists	Over a million in India, some in Burma
Maramai	37	Naga; Maram		
Markande	47	Bengali	Hindu	Agricultural Laborers
Marma	32,380	Bengali		
Marua		Bengali		
Masalchi	1,884	Bengali		
Matang	27	Marathi		
Matia	54,244	Bengali		
Maulangi	436	Bengali		
Mech	1,098	Bengali		
Migam	6,600	Megam	35% Animists, Garo Baptist, Roman Catholic	Northeast. Related to Garo.
Mir	11,760	Bengali	Muslim with some Hindus	
Mirdas 1	452	Bengali		
Mirzakhani	2,946	Bengali		
Mishri	2,538	Bengali		
Mizo	1,844	Mizo	Christianity, Buddhism	Agriculture
Mochi 1	550,910	Bengali		
Mochi 2	231	Bengali		
Moghal	43,402	Urdu		
Mru, Mro	17,811	Mru	99% Animists with Buddhist influence, Bawn Independent Church	200 villages in Chittagong Hills. Most in Burma, also in India.

Munda	93,887	Mondari; Mundari; Naguri	80% Animists, Bangladesh Evangelical Lutheran	Most in India, also Nepal.
Munda, Mandari	18,000	Mundari	Tribal Religion, Christianity	Agriculture
Munshi	548	Bengali		
Musahar 1	316	Bengali	Hindu	Agriculture wage laborers
Musahar 2	13,987	Bengali	Hindu	Agriculture wage laborers
Naga		Naga Pidgin	Tribal Religion, Christianity	
Nagar	44	Bengali	Hindu	Agriculture
Nagarchi 1	11,467	Bengali	Hindu	Agriculture
Nagarchi 2	22,933	Bengali	Hindu	Agriculture
Nai	59,042	Bengali	Hindu	Cutting hair
Nai 4	1,108,668	Bengali	Hindu	Cutting hair
Nalband	96	Urdu	Muslim	Mechanical Workers
Naliya 1	715	Bengali		
Namasudra 1	5,231,388	Bengali	Hindu	Wage Laborers
Nat 1	18,255	Bengali	Hinduism, Muslim	
Nat 3	1,565	Bengali	Hinduism, Muslim	
Nepalese	17,000	Nepali	99% Hindus, Roman Catholic, Church of Bangladesh, Baptists	Immigrants and migrants from Nepal and India.
Newar	1,697	Nepali	Hindu	Migrated from Nepal, involved in trade
Nikari 1	47,479	Bengali	Muslim	Sell fish, grow fruit
Nikari 2	111	Bengali	Muslim	Sell fish, grow fruit
Oraon, Sadri	84,000	Kurux; Oraon; Sadri; Uchai	40% Animist, 10% Hindus, Bangladesh Evangelical Lutheran	
Orisi, Utkali	13,300	Oriya	96% Hindus, 2% Muslim, Roman Catholic	Majority in Orissa (India)
Paik	60	Oriya	Hindu	Agriculture
Paliya	98,311	Bengali	Hindu	Agriculture
Pan	400	Oriya	Hindu	Agriculture wage laborers
Panika	46	Bengali	Hindu	Agriculture wage laborers
Pankhu, Panko	2,278	Bengali	5% Animists, Pankho Baptist Union of Bangladesh	Falam area, Chin Hills. Agriculturalists
Parja	209	Bengali		
Parsi	594	Bengali	100% Zoroastrians	Followers of Parsi religion (Zoroastrianism) in India since 750 AD; fire temples

Pasi 1	5,781	Bengali	Hindu	Agriculture, Business
Pasi 2	497	Bengali	Hindu	Agriculture, Business
Pathan	553,232	Bengali; Pashto, Southern	Muslim	Agriculture, Trading Cattle
Patial	11,258	Bengali	Hindu	
Patni 1	186,673	Bengali	Hindu	Repairing boats, digging earthworks
Patni 2	4,944	Bengali	Hindu	Repairing boats, digging earthworks
Patwa 2	6,224	Bengali	Hindu	Agriculture
Pawaria 1	179	Bengali		
Peshakar	446	Bengali		
Pinjara	21,852	Bengali	Muslim with some Hindus	
Pod	25,615	Bengali	Hindu	Agriculture, fishing
Poi	27	Lushai		
Pundari	14,418	Bengali		
Punjabi	10,000	Punjabi, Eastern; Powadhi	90% Sikhs, Hindus	Eastern Punjabi, from India
Qassab	3,991	Urdu		
Qazi	8,542	Urdu	Muslim	
Rabha	104	Bengali	Hindu	Agriculture
Rai	934	Rai; Roglai, Southern	Hindu	Agriculture
Rajbangsi	13,000	Bengali; Rajbangsi		
Rajbansi 1	2,345,961	Bengali	70% Animists, 30% Muslim	Districts of Jalpaiguri, Cooch Behar.
Rajbhar	2,221	Bengali	Hindu	Wage Laborers
Rajput 1	6,336	Bengali	Hindu, some Buddhist and Muslim	Agriculture, business, trade
Rajput 2	42,474	Bengali	Hindu, some Buddhist and Muslim	Agriculture, business, trade
Rajput 3	51	Panjabi, Eastern	Hindu, some Buddhist and Muslim	Agriculture, business, trade
Raju	144	Bengali	Hindu	Agriculture
Rajwar	12,549	Bengali	Hindu	Selling rice
Ralte	24	Ralte		
Ranabhat	48	Assamese		
Rangrez 3	264	Bengali	Muslim	Dying and printing cloth
Rasua	849	Bengali		
Rathawa	24	Gujarati	Hindu with traditional religious practices	
Raute	1,646	Bengali	Hindu	Wage Laborers
Rautia	653	Sadri	Hindu with traditional religious practices	Agriculture
Rayeen 1	37,685	Bengali	Muslim	Small Business owners
Rayeen 2	7,349	Bengali	Muslim	Small Business owners



Riang, Kau Bru	1,011	Riang	90% Hinduized animists, 4% Muslims, Baptist Church	Majority found in India
Sagarbanshi	60	Oriya		
Saharia	5,290	Bengali	Hindu	Basket weavers, business
Sankara	18,776	Bengali		
Santal, Satar	157,000	Santali	70% Animists, Northern Evangelical Lutheran Church, Church of Sylhet, Roman Catholic, Church of Bangladesh	Mainly found in India, also Nepal. Landless and poor.
Saora	1,075	Sora	Muslim	Fishing, trapping birds
Sardar 1	271	Bengali		
Sardar 2	40,522	Bengali		
Sarki	980	Nepali	Hindu	Leather workers, cobblers
Sayyid	541,326	Bengali; Urdu	Muslim	Agriculture
Shabar	158	Oriya		
Shaikh		Bengali; Urdu	Muslim	Agriculture
Shanan	20,155	Bengali		
Shendu, Khieng	1,000	Shendu	90% Animists	Also found in India
Sherpa	26	Sherpa; Solu	Buddhist	Growing potatoes
Sikligar 1	468	Bengali	Sikh	Wage Laborers
Sindhi Hindu	986	Sindhi	Hindu	Business and Trade
Sindhi Muslim 1	13,887	Sindhi	Muslim	Business and Trade
Sindhi Muslim 2	569	Sindhi	Muslim	Business and Trade
Siyalgir 1	267	Bengali	Hindu	Selling vegetables and fish
Sonar 2	15,804	Bengali	Hindu	Goldsmiths
Sonowar	322	Nepali		
Sukli		Bengali		
Sunri 2	970,022	Bengali	Hindu	Trade and service
Sutradhar 1	5,422	Bengali	Hindu	Carpentry, ivory work
Sutradhar 2	312,230	Bengali	Hindu	Carpentry, ivory work
Sylhetti Bengali	3,900,000	Sylhetti	100% Muslim	District of Sylhet. Many immigrants to Britain and India.
Tamang	673	Tamang, Eastern	Hindu and Buddhist	Agriculture, Business, Service
Tamboli 1	75,287	Bengali	Traditional Religion	Growing vegetables
Tamboli 2	342,089	Bengali	Traditional Religion	Growing vegetables
Tangchangya	17,700	Bengali; Tangchangya	80% Buddhists, some Animists	Agriculturalists in tropical forest. Related to Chakma.
Tanti 1	138,874	Bengali		Weavers

Tanti 2	385	Bengali		Weavers
Tarafdar	3,308	Bengali		
Telaga	2,022	Telugu		Agriculture
Teli 1	213,560	Bengali	Hindu	Agriculture
Telugu	9,000	Telugu	85% Hindu, Church of Bangladesh, Roman Catholic	Immigrants and migrants from South India.
Thakuri	248	Nepali		
Tharu		Tharu	Hindu	Agriculture
Thathera 2	150	Bengali	Hindu	Making copper utensils
Tili 1	12,949	Bengali	Hindu	Agriculture
Tili 2	113,300	Bengali	Hindu	Agriculture
Tipera, Tippera-Bengali	105,000	Kok Borok; Tippera	70% Hinduized Animists, 19% High caste Hindus, 10% Muslim	Chittagong Hills, tropical forest. Agriculturalists
Tirendaj	280	Bengali		
Tiyar	83,460	Bengali		
Turaiha	2,561	Bengali		
Turi	24,764	Bengali	Hindu	Animal Raising
Uchai	1,056	Kok Borok	Christianity but with some Tribal Religious elements	Agriculture, Wage Laborers
Urdu	1,300	Urdu	100% Indian Muslims	Originating in North India
Usipi	45,177	Kok Borok	95% Hinduized Animists	Majority live in Tripura (India)
Usui, Unshoi	4,010	Usui		
Vaghri 2	25	Bagri; Bauria; Salar	Hindu	Masonry, Wage Laborers

Barrett, David B. et al. *World Christian Encyclopedia* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. vol. 2, (Oxford University Press, 2001), 38-42.

Singh, K. S. *India's Communities* vol. IV – VI, (Oxford University Press, 1998).

Joshua Project (<http://www.joshuaproject.net>)

## **Christianity in Bangladesh**

### *History of Christianity*

Christians in Bangladesh are a small minority and are mainly former lower-caste Hindu peasants and members of certain tribal groups. These groups include the Garo (now 90% Christian), Santal, Khasi, and Kurulel. These tribes have been more receptive to the Gospel than the Bengalis where few are Christians.

### *Protestant History*

Baptists were the first to arrive as missionaries and are the strongest Protestant group in Bangladesh. William Carey entered Calcutta in 1793 and within two years, work was begun in Dinajpur. Dacca was reached by 1816 and mass conversions took place in

Mymensingh in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Growth continues to occur among the tribes of the Chittagong Hills.

Anglicans and English Presbyterians united in 1970 to form the Church of Pakistan. Relations with the other Pakistani churches became difficult after the civil war, so they formed the Church of Bangladesh that acts autonomously today. Welsh Presbyterians founded the Church of Sylhet.

The Bangladesh Evangelical Lutheran Church was formed from the Santal Mission of the Northern Churches, which began in 1867 and continues to be supported by Norwegian, Danish, and American Lutheran societies. Today, most church members are located in India.

Protestant Churches continue to sponsor medical and educational programs for the purpose of relief and rehabilitation following Bangladesh’s civil war and other natural disasters.

*Roman Catholic History*

Catholic missionaries were originally attached to the Portuguese trading posts as early as the 16<sup>th</sup> century, but failed to establish dioceses until 1886 when four were established. The Catholic Church strength is in urban areas, especially Dhaka, where the church attracts those of mixed Portuguese descent.

Barrett, David B. et al. World Christian Encyclopedia 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., (Oxford University Press, 2001), 99.

**Christian Church Groups in Bangladesh**

*Baptist Groups*

The Baptist Sangha (formerly Baptist Union of Bangladesh) is the result of early British Baptist work. The Bangladesh Baptist Fellowship is a combination of the work of New Zealand Baptists, Australia Baptists, and United States Southern Baptists. The Mymensingh Garo Baptist Convention is an independent body that receives aid from Australian Baptists.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Congregations</b>	<b>Members</b>	<b>Affiliates</b>
Bangladesh Baptist Fellowship	518	16,498	40,000
Bangladesh Baptist Sangha	325	12,500	28,000
Garo Baptist Union	156	11,960	23,900
Free Baptist	84	2,102	7,000

*Seventh-day Adventists*

The Seventh-day Adventists maintain a presence within Bangladesh and manage mission schools, a dentist clinic, and operate a publishing house. They also have an Adventist

University and Seminary that has an enrollment of 125. The Seventh-day Adventists have 100 congregations, 13,000 members, and 29,510 affiliates.

#### *Independent Groups*

Two independent groups that are not affiliated with any overseas mission group or denomination include the Evangelical Christian Church and the All in One Christ Fellowship. The All in One Christ Fellowship is a Bengali-speaking movement that has spread to Bangladesh from Calcutta, India. They have 138 congregations, 11,000 members, and 27,500 affiliates. The Evangelical Christian Church is primarily among the Bawn people in the Chittagong Hill tracts. The Evangelical Christian Church has 50 congregations, 6,557 members, and 16,000 affiliates.

#### *Anglican Groups*

Anglican missions began in 1895 and were known as the Diocese of Dacca until after the civil war, when they became known as the Church of Bengal. They have 43 congregations, 4,755 members, and 13,600 affiliates.

#### *Lutheran Groups*

Lutherans began work in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and is mainly among the Santals. Other groups where work has been successful include Garo, Lushai, and Khasi. These groups are located in the northeastern part of the country. The Evangelical Lutherans have 126 congregations, 5,028 members, and 9,000 affiliates.

#### *Presbyterian Groups*

Presbyterian missions began in 1829 and now claim 98 congregations, 3,911 members, and 7,000 affiliates.

#### *New Apostolic Church*

The New Apostolic Church has 50 congregations, 10,000 members, and 20,000 affiliates.

#### *Assemblies of God*

The Assemblies of God began work in Bangladesh in 1945 and now have 160 congregations, 5,000 members, and 14,000 affiliates.

#### *Catholic Church*

The Catholic Church is strong in urban areas, especially in the town of Dhaka. They have 81 congregations, 129,121 members, and 235,000 affiliates.

(<http://www.gospelcom.net/od/>)

Johnstone, Patrick. Operation World, (Paternoster, 2001), 94.

## **Non-Christian Groups in Bangladesh**

### *Islam*

Islam is the dominant religion and 85.63% of the people or 110,556,810 people are listed as Muslim. Most Muslims are Sunnis, but there is a small Shiite population that has been exerting considerable influence on the government to become an official Islamic state. Islam was declared the official state religion in 1988. It is estimated that 5,000 Bangladeshi Muslims made pilgrimage to Mecca in 1995.

### *Hinduism*

Hindu is the second largest religious group in Bangladesh. There are 15,989,408 people or 12.38% that are Hindu. These people are mainly from India and suffered heavy losses from deaths and refugee movements in the 1971-72 civil war.

### *Buddhism*

The Buddhist population in Bangladesh remains small as it contains 800,762 people, or 0.62% of the population.

### *Traditional Religion / Animists*

Some of the Chittagong Hill tribes, Santal, Koch, and Oraon Sadri still participate in traditional tribal religions. The number of these people is estimated at 736,184 or 0.57% of the population.

Barrett, David B. et al. World Christian Encyclopedia 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., (Oxford University Press, 2001), 99.

Johnstone, Patrick. Operation World, (Paternoster, 2001), 94.

## **Missiological Implications**

1. Bangladesh is in serious need for improving infrastructure. Roads, water systems, and electricity systems all need improvements. Evangelicals should recognize these needs and send business leaders, engineers, and people skilled in agriculture to help the Bangladesh people improve living conditions. This would be a great avenue to lead to witnessing among the Bangladeshi people.
2. Doctors, nurses, and medical missionaries are needed to minister to the Bangladeshi people as they battle diseases.
3. The church is growing among former lower class Hindu people and tribal groups, they need expand their vision to reach Bengali people as prejudice exists between the groups. An avenue to reach the higher Hindu classes must also be developed.
4. The Bangladeshi Church needs to remain strong during persecution and increasing Muslim pressure.

5. Church leaders need to be trained to lead effectively. Five denominational Bible Schools (Assembly of God, Association of Baptists for World Evangelism, Free Baptist, Lutheran, and Church of Bangladesh) exist within Bangladesh. Bible Correspondence Course can also be used to train church leadership.
6. The Bengali remains one of the most unreached people with over 110 million people, mostly living in Bangladesh. Many are Muslim with a blend of their traditional religion and Hindu beliefs. Efforts to reach these people have continued since William Carey with little progress.
7. Other unreached people groups exist among the tribal regions. These include the Mru, Chakma, Mogh, and Khyang. Other unevangelized groups include the Bihari Muslims and the Rohingya Muslims.
8. Reaching the younger generation needs to be a priority. Over 35% of the population is under the age of 14 and most of these youth are living in great poverty. Their needs should be addressed while presenting the message of Jesus.
9. Church planting and evangelization is desperately needed, but government red tape and limitation of visas remains a problem.
10. Evangelism techniques include the *Jesus Film*, where response among the Hindus and Muslims has been good. Drama teams are also effective as the Bangladeshis have a long tradition of drama for religious and folk stories for entertainment.
11. The entire Bible was published in Bengali in 2000 and continues to be well received by Bengali Muslims. Translation into some tribal languages is also needed.