

The Bentong of Indonesia



The Bentong people are also known as the "To Bentong". They are located inland to the east of the town of Pangkep in the province of South Sulawesi. The Bentong are nomads and are still categorized by the government as an "isolated" society.

The Bentong live in a hilly area approximately 400-500 meters above sea level. This area is marked by dense forest underbrush, with limited land available for both irrigated and non-irrigated rice fields. A large portion of the Bentong people lives as farmers and fishermen.

The Bentong people are followers of Islam. Marriage and burial ceremonies, for example, are performed according to the laws of Islam. Nevertheless, elements of traditional beliefs are still maintained; namely belief in ancestral spirits, sacred objects and sacred locations. They call this system of worship, arajang and believe it will bring safety and must be done to avoid being cursed. Arajang objects, such as the keris (traditional knife), spear, shield, umbrella, and others, are only brought out at certain times for worship, specifically at the king's inauguration, marriage ceremonies, and natural disasters.

Other forms of worship are done toward pantansa (a small yellow houses symbolizing the gods). Also, all sorts of ceremonies take place in the fields at the times of planting and harvesting rice. A pinati operates as a mediator between man and the ancestral spirits, and leads the ceremonies.

The Bentong people need help in management of commercial farming, so they can achieve more significant yields. Also, since neither Bentong adults nor children have had many educational opportunities, they need better education. In terms of health, the Bentong regard cleanliness as a hindrance to their daily activity, with the result that most Bentong suffer from attacks of malaria, dysentery, diseases of the skin and eyes, and other sicknesses.
 used by permission © 2001 PJRN Indonesia

Primary Religion:

Islam

Disciples (Matt 28.19):

0.004%

Churches:

1

Scripture Status (Matt 28.20):

Population (date):



BENTONG



The Bentong of Indonesia

Item Name	Item Note	
Have They Heard The Gospel?		Profile Summary
Believe In Jesus As God & Only Savior (%)	0.004%	
Number Of Churches	1	
Countries Where People Group Lives		Group Description
Country Name	Indonesia	
Economics		Group Description
Occupation	Farmers & fisherman; Their primary production is from copra, rice, and processing of forest products.	
Community Development		Group Description
Transportation	Until 1975 there were no major roads, except for narrow footpaths, connecting the area with the outside world.	
Society & Culture		Group Description
Social Habits/Groupings	The Bentong marriage system calls for marriages among people of the same group. A young man desiring to marry a woman outside his own group has the duty to give preference to a woman within his own group. The groom offers a dowry. In the past, this dowry took the form of land or cloth. After marriage, the newlyweds can reside near either the husband's or wife's relatives.	
History Of People Group	According to the Bentong themselves, they are the descendants of the son of the King of Bone, who married the daughter of the King of Ternate. Outside sources suggests that they are the descendants of Bugis and Makassar intermarriages. This can be seen in their traditions and language, which reflect Bugis and Makassar influence.	