

The Tumulung Sisaala of Ghana



representative by Paul Williams cropped CC

The Sisaala Tumulung cover most of the Sisaala East District to the Burkina Faso border in the north and shares a border with the Wa East District which is the Pasaale-speaking Sisaala area.

Making charcoal is a Sisaala occupation along with farming. Farms are mostly within 5 kilometers of the village; crops include millet, corn, guinea corn, white and brown beans, groundnuts (peanuts), bambara beans, yams, rice, sweet potatoes and cotton. During the last decade, corn has become a profitable cash crop while the cultivation of cotton as a cash crop has declined sharply.

A town or village is a clan settlement made up of lesser kindred groups or sections, separate family compounds, and individual living quarters. Traditions of migration into the area differ from clan to clan but suggest origins among the Mossi, Mamprusi and Dagombe.

Although Islam is relatively new it has gained much influence in the Sisaala East District. Since the 1990s, mosques have been put up in all the villages mostly with money from Arabic countries. Islam has become attractive because it counts among its fold most of the wealthy and influential Sisaala men and women in politics and business. However, syncretism is wide spread among adherents of Islam in the Sisaala area.

The Sisaalas are open to listen to the gospel preached on FM radio since the dedication of the full Bible in June 2014 but only a few are ready to commit themselves.

On the whole Christianity is seen as a worthy religion to follow because two chiefs in Tumu, who are the paramount chiefs of the Sisaala East have been Catholics. In addition the chiefs of 7 villages are also Christians.

Primary Religion:

Ethnic Religion

Disciples (Matt 28:19):

3%

Churches:

35

Scripture Status (Matt 28:20):

Bible (2014)

Population (date):

57,000 (2010)



TUMULUNG SISAALA HOMELAND



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Have They Heard The Gospel?

Call Themselves Christian (%)	5%
Believe in Jesus as God & Only Savior	5%
Believe Jesus is a prophet, but not God's Son (%)	40% ?
Believe in their Traditional Religion	20%??
Number of Pastors	20
Number of Missionaries Working	10
Number of Communities	There are 120 listed Sisaala localities
Number of Churches	35
Response to the Gospel	positive, new fellowships started
Is The Word Of God Translated?	Yes, the NT was published in 1985 and the complete Bible was published in 2014.
Translation Medium	Printed
Any Hindrance to Scripture Distribution?:	No major hindrances. The area is large but well defined with good services.
Forms Of Gospel Presentation Available (Summary)	Live radio presentation, Sisaala Bible App for smartphone Android
Kind of Missionaries Needed?	Almost all villages have Primary Schools. A few have Quranic schools. Tumu, the Sisaala East District capital has a senior high school, a technical cum senior high school and a College of Education (teacher training college). There is a Government Hospital in Tumu, 4 clinics, and several CBHPS compounds in the area. Generally illiteracy is still high in the Sisaala East district. Sisaali as a language can now be taught in the primary, junior and senior secondary schools and College of Educaion. Expanding literacy in Sisaali among school children will yield good dividends as every fluent reader in Sisaali is a potential reader of translated Scriptures. Missionaries are needed who can train church leaders.

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Group Description

Population

World Population For This People	57,000
World Population (Date)	2010
World Population (Urban Percent)	18%

Countries Where People Group Live

Country Name	Ghana
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Geography & Environment

Location	Upper West region: Tumu area east to Sisili river area; Upper East region: Bulisa district. North central.
Ecosystem Type	Savanna
Geological Type	Cape Coast Granite Complex
Elevation	300-350 m
Longitude	1-2 W
Latitude	10 N
Climate	Tropical, hot and dry

Language & Linguistics

Primary Language	Sisaala, Tumulung
Alternate Language Names	Sisai, Issala, Hissala, Sisala tumu, Isaalung
Language Status	Developing
Dialects	Gil Bagale (Galebagla), Isala, Nsihaa, Potule
Comment	Sisaalas in the Sisaala East District speak two dialects, Sisaali Tumulung and Gelbagil.
Language Use	Vigorous. Used in all domains and by all ages.
Attitude Towards Mother Tongue	Very positive. Important Sisaala cultural identity. Used on radio to discuss religious, political and socio-cultural issues that affect the development of the people.
Second Languages	Akan [aka], Hausa [hau]
Neighboring Languages	Western Sisaala [ssl], Kasem [xsm], Buli [bwu], Paasaal [sig], Konni [kma]

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Literacy

Adult Literacy Percentage	25%
Literacy Attitude	Somewhat receptive
Active Literacy Program	Has lost its appeal
Publications in Vernacular	The Sisaali-English, English-Sisaali Dictionary. 43 other publications on traditional stories, proverbs, health, agriculture, developmental issues, etc.

Economics

Subsistence Type	Agriculturalists
Occupations	Farming, charcoal burning; petty trading, Vehicle and tractor maintenance and repairs
Crops	Corn, guinea corn, white and brown beans, yam, rice, groundnuts, bambara beans, millet sweet potatoes, cotton. Corn has since 2008 become a major cash crop.

Education

Sisaali Tumulung has been approved to be taught in the training colleges and at the university level.

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Status of Christianity

Church Growth

Reached Status Reached

Religion and Response

Attitude To Christianity Open but hesitating

Attitude to Religious Change Ready for change. A Sisala young evangelist who was formerly a Moslem has returned to his home area and is using the Jesus Film to spread the gospel among his own people. The response is great.

Resistance / Receptivity They will listen to the Christian message with interest but only a few commit themselves to become followers and disciples.

Items For Prayer A lot of people in the villages would want to hear the Christian message, but not many workers are ready to bring them the good news.

History of Christianity in Group

Year Began 1950

By Whom Roman Catholic Church

Scripture

Translation Status Complete

Available Scripture New Testament (1985), Complete Bible (2014)

Form of Scripture Available Printed, Online, Audio, Film/Video

Missions and Churches

Organization Name The Catholics were the first in the area, followed by Baptist Mid-Mission (Regular Baptist) in 1950. Sometime later the Presbyterian and Methodist Church jointly opened a chaplaincy. Now the two denominations have their own churches. At the moment there are about 12 denominations in Tumu town alone; Catholic, Regular Baptist, Ghana Convention Baptist, Methodist Church of Ghana, Presbyterian Church of Ghana, Church of Pentecost, Assemblies of God, Good News Church, Fountain Gate Chapel, Church of Christ, Deeper Life Chapel, Light House Chapel International, International Central Gospel Church, Apostles Revelation Society and a Prayer Group led by persons from the south of Ghana. The Pioneers Ghana has Community Churches in five villages in the south-east of the Sisaala East District and two in the Sisaala West District.

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Christian Literature and Media Status

Literature Available	‘The Way of Righteousness’ (in preparation).
Audio Recordings Available	Yes. Gospel Recordings has extensive audio Bible stories and lessons available.
Film/Videos Available?	Yes. The Jesus Film, also God’s Story
Radio Available?	Yes. FM Station (Online radio)
Online?	Yes. New Testament is available online from Bible.is in textual and audio format. Also available in audio from Faith Comes By Hearing and through iTunes podcast.