



The Koch of Bangladesh

The Koch of Bangladesh live in a small pocket of land along the Indian border in northwestern Dhaka division. These Koch speak a Tibeto-Burman language, and this distinguishes them from a much larger group of Koch (sometimes spelled Cooch) who speak an Indo-Aryan language. Within Bangladesh the Tibeto-Burman Koch generally continue to follow their traditional "Sonaton" religion, though some say they are Hindu. Most of the Indo-Aryan Koch speakers in Bangladesh have embraced Islam.

Among the Tibeto-Burman Koch there are two groups in Bangladesh: the Tintekiya and the Chapra. The Tintekiya, whose name means "three pieces of clothing" and comes from their traditional dress, live in about 19 villages. The Chapra live in only three villages, and in each they are the minority.

Both the Tintekiya and the Chapra Koch are primarily farmers, with some farming their own land and most working as hired day laborers for neighboring Bengalis. They continue to live primarily in Koch villages in simple homes with mud walls and floors and thatched or corrugated tin roofs.

There are also some Koch living in Gazipur near Dhaka. These people's ancestors apparently spoke a Tibeto-Burman variety of Koch, but today these people speak Bangla as their mother tongue. They have little or no communication with the Koch living in northwestern Dhaka division, but they do still share some cultural traits. Most of these Koch, too, are Sonaton, but possibly one or two families say they are Christian.

The Koch are poor and uneducated. A Christian education and/or community development organization could possibly be a real blessing to the Koch. At the same time, it seems the Koch tend to equate Christianity with opportunities for education and health care and are in great need of someone to share true Christianity with them.

Primary Religion:

Indigenous

Disciples (Matt 28.19):

<0.1%

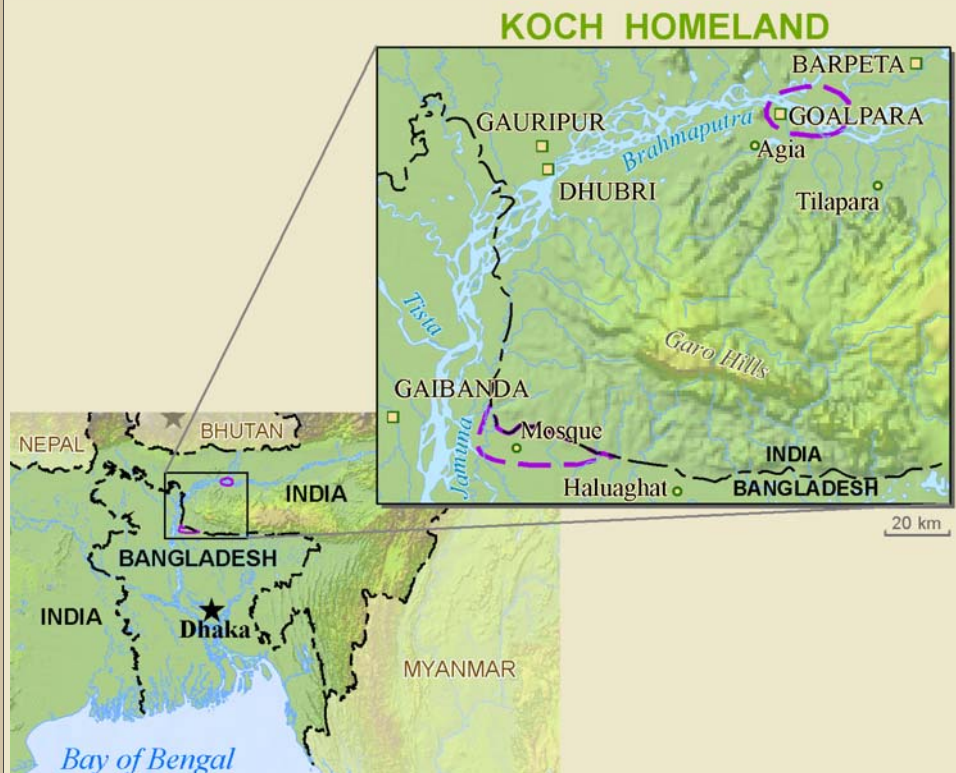
Churches:

0

Scripture Status (Matt 28.20):

Population (date):

5,000



The Koch of Bangladesh

Item Name	Item Note	
Have They Heard The Gospel?		Profile Summary
Call Themselves Christian (%)	0%	
Comment (Call Themselves Christian)	possibly 1 or 2 families	
Believe In Jesus As God & Only Savior (%)	<0.1%	
Believe In The Local Traditional Religion (%)	99%	
Have Not Heard Who Jesus is (%)	95%	
Number Of Pastors	0	
Number Of Missionaries Working	1	
Comment (Number Of Missionaries)	part-time	
Response To The Gospel	Apparently members from one or two families in the Gazipur area (near Dhaka) have become Christian.	
Number Of Communities	23	
Comment (Number Communities)	19 Tintekiya Koch, 3 Chapra Koch, at least one other Koch where they no longer speak Koch	
Number Of Churches	0	
Comment (Churches)	There apparently used to be a church in a Koch village near Dhaka, but it is no longer open.	
Is The Word Of God Translated?	No	
Any Hinderance To Scripture Distribution?	The Koch in Bangladesh do not seem to be adequately bilingual in any language that already has Scriptures.	
What Kind Of Missionaries Are Needed?	People who offer medical and educational services could provide useful services, but they should have a long-term presence in a Koch community to show the Koch through their lives that Christianity is more than offering and accepting such services.	
Countries Where People Group Lives		Group Description
Country Name	Bangladesh	
Geography & Environment		Group Description
Comments (Geography & Environment)	The land is fertile and good for growing rice. It sometimes floods during monsoon season (May-Sept).	
Map Features	Sherpur, city, latitude: 25.00, longitude: 90.08 Jhinaigati, town, lat. 25.17, long. 90.1 Nalitabari, town, lat. 25.1, long. 90.2 southern edge of Garo Hills, mountain range, lat. 25.15-25.30, long. 90.00-90.25 (source for all points: Graphosman Dhaka div. map)	
Language & Linguistics		Group Description
Percent Monolingual (%)	2%	
Literacy		Group Description
Active Literacy Program	No	
Economics		Group Description
Occupation	day laborers, small-scale rice farmers	
Income Sources	labor	
Trade Partners	nearby Bengalis	
Modernization / Utilities	villages do not have electricity, but there are a few TVs in most villages and maybe 1 or 2 mobile phones	
Community Development		Group Description
Health Care (Quality)	Poor	
Diet (Quality)	Fair	
Water (Quality)	Good	

The Koch of Bangladesh

Item Name

Item Note

Shelter Description

small homes with mud floors and walls and thatched or corrugated metal roofs; a front porch or open area in front of the home is an important feature as that is where people may gather

Electricity

very few have electricity; we saw no generators or solar panels

Clothing

Men may wear western clothes or a more traditional long, wrap-around skirt; women sometimes wear South Asian saris and sometimes a wide, woven cloth which they wrap around their body

Transportation

walking, bicycle; bus beyond the village areas

Society & Culture

Group Description

Family Structures

patrilineal

Neighbor Relations

amiable

Cultural Change Pace

Slow

Identification With National Culture

Distinct

Attitude To Change

Indifferent

Youth

Group Description

Labor and tasks (6-12 year olds)

household chores, caring for younger siblings, helping with farm work

Youth Problems (Teens)

lack of job opportunities, so little incentive to stay in school

Education

Group Description

Comment (Primary Schools)

Most villages have a gov't primary school or a non-gov't primary school within about one mile of the village.

Comment (Primary School Enrollment)

most start primary school; many do not complete class 5

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 (Education)

Few complete class 10.

Church Growth

Status of Christianity

Comment (Total Baptized)

Possibly a few in Gazipur near Dhaka city

Bible Schools

0

Religion & Response

Status of Christianity

Attitude To Christianity

Somewhat resistant

Attitude To Religious Change

Indifferent

Comment (Religion)

Nearly all who follow a traditional religion follow one they call "Sonaton." This appears to be a mix of Hinduism and animism. It's very possible some have heard about Jesus through their Garo neighbors, who are Christian.

History Of Christianity In Group

Status of Christianity

Year Began

1990s

Comments (History of Christianity)

The few Koch who became Christian did so in the 1990s. It is hard to say where they are in their faith now.

Scripture

Status of Christianity

Scripture Use

Hardly at all

Comment (Scripture Use)

Only those few possible Christians would sometimes use a Bangla Bible.

Reason For Urgent Need Of Translation

The Koch of Bangladesh do not have Scriptures in any language that they can use adequately. Especially if the same is true for the Tintekiya Koch of Bangladesh, this is a definite translation need.

Other Forms Of Gospel Available: Literature

No

Other Forms Of Gospel Available: Recordings

Yes

The Koch of Bangladesh

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