

Bagri



Quick Facts

Population: 2,200,000

India: 2,000,000

Pakistan: 100,000

Language Group: Rajasthani

Location: Rajasthan, Sindh

Religion: Ethnic/Hinduism

Believers: 0.11%

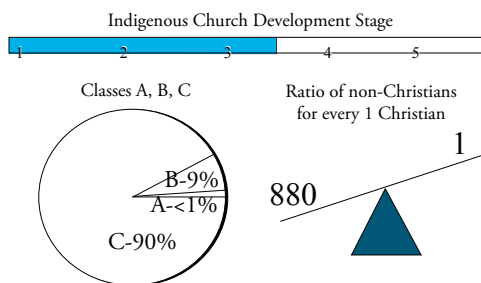
Scriptures: None

Ministry Tools: None

Church Status: 3

Mission Status: 2

MS Subgroups: 5+



Class A- Are members of a Culturally Relevant Church
 Class B- Have close access to a CRC, but have not yet joined
 Class C- Have no reasonable or close access to a CRC

Identity: The Bagri are a nomadic tribe, whom anthropologists believe may descend from the ancient migrations of the Jat and the Rajput to India; unlike other clans they retained much of their traditional lifestyle. Bagri, their mother tongue, is still spoken by the vast majority.

Lifestyle: In the last century the Bagri were better known as the Badhaks (or killers), due to their tradition of banditry in certain areas. Under British rule, the government made a concerted effort to put an end to this practice, and as an ironic compromise, many were inducted into police service. Today, the Bagri are largely a landless people, raising buffaloes, goats and cattle. Women actively participate in the pastoral economy, and are responsible for milking and selling dairy products in public markets.

Customs: Normally, the Bagri cremate the bodies of the deceased according

to Hindu custom, and then transport the bones to the Ganges river. However, if they are unable to conduct a proper cremation, they will cut off two fingers of the deceased instead and place them in the Ganges at a more auspicious time.

Religion: The Bagri practice a syncretistic blend between Hinduism and their own ethnic religion. Many of the gods they worship are ancestral heroes who performed great feats of banditry. Sacrifices to the gods are costly, but essential. Before undertaking any great enterprise, leaders will assemble before an altar to invoke the blessing of Suraj Deota (the sun god), along with lesser deities. Up to ten goats may be brought to the altar. If the goats shake their bodies, it is a sign that the endeavor will be successful and the sacrifice will be initiated. Otherwise, the sacrifice is canceled and the proposed endeavor will not go forward.

Christian Outreach: The criminal reputation of the Bagri, combined with their

rugged nomadic lifestyle has discouraged and hindered work among the Bagri in India for years. However, in Pakistan there has been a significant breakthrough with over 30 fellowships now established. Work in Rajasthan by an indigenous evangelical fellowship is also seeing fruit, and several hundred new believers are now being discipled.

How to Pray:

✚ Illiteracy is as high as 95% among the Bagri. Pray for those mission organizations seeking to set up children's education programs, and for the creativity to make these work among a people always on the move.

✚ There are nine major clans among the Bagri. Pray for the leaders of each that they might hear the gospel and respond favorably. Intercede for a "people-movement" to Christ that will result in thousands of extended-family fellowships and the development of strong Kingdom-centered communities of faith.

✚ Pray for those seeking to develop leaders among the Bagri believers—a difficult task with no Scriptures in their language. Pray for the completion of oral-based discipleship resources.

Every year 20,000 Bagri die without Christ.