

Assamese Muslims



Quick Facts

Pop. in India: 2,700,000

State Populations:

Assam: 2,500,000

Meghalaya: 130,000

Manipur: 30,000

Nagaland: 18,000

Religion: Islam

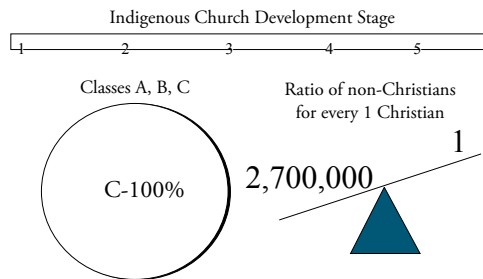
Believers: 0.00%

Scriptures: NT, OT

Ministry Tools: JRGT

C Status: 0 **M Status:** 1

MS Subgroups: 10+



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 Assamese Muslims are a heterogenous group of Assamese speaking Muslim peoples which descend from defeated Pathan and Mughal soldiers who were allowed to settle in Assam during the 16th century. Others descend from Muslim artisans and technicians imported by the Ahom rulers of Assam. They are broadly divided into two groups: the Gorias (Shaikh, Sayed) and the Murias.

Lifestyle: The majority of the Assamese Muslims are cultivators of their own farmland, though a few are sharecroppers and day laborers. Main crops are paddy rice, maize, sugarcane, oil seeds and jute. In eastern Assam, some Muslims harvest agar wood oil from disease infected trees, which create a unique scent used for perfumes. The oil is exported to Bombay and from there to the Middle East.

Customs: In an Assamese Muslim marriage ceremony, three elderly males

must be present, one of which, the *ukil*, or chief negotiator will make proposals to both the bride and groom asking if they are willing to marry one another. The other two elders act as witnesses, and upon mutual acceptance of the proposal, an imam will recite verses from the Quran to solemnize their vows.

Religion: Assamese Muslims are probably the least orthodox in South Asia and widely practice and participate in Hindu customs and festivals. This is probably due to the fact that many of them intermarried with Hindus, and have historically been well treated by their Ahom Hindu patrons. Few Assamese Muslims speak Urdu, and identify little with the larger Muslim community. Only a small minority know the Quran, or even basic Muslim doctrine. They are in fact more likely to be familiar with Hindu Vaishnavism than with the tenets of Islam.

Christian Outreach: There are few

missionaries working among the Assamese Muslims, and those that do find them to be eager to learn about the gospel, but hesitant about making decisions for Christ. It is important to note that the Assamese Hindus are also largely untouched by the gospel and one of the least-reached Hindu peoples in the world. Christianity is actually on the decline in the state as a whole.

How to Pray:

Most believers in the area are from tribal backgrounds and missionaries have noted a lack of indifference on their part about evangelizing their Hindu and Muslim neighbors. However there is one tribal-background ministry that is seeking to impact the entire state. Pray for their success and for God's blessing on their missionary training program.

Millions of Bangladeshi Muslims have immigrated to Assam. Pray that the recent breakthrough among Bangladeshi Muslims may spread among these immigrants and impact the Assamese Muslims as well.

Pray for the deployment of missionary teams in every Assamese Muslim district, especially Cachar (470,000), Kamrup (260,000), Dhuburi (240,000), Na-

Every year 24,000 Assamese Muslims die without Christ.