

UZBECKISTAN

In Uzbekistan there are 67 distinct people groups. Following are two of the groups.

Tajik



The Tajik are one of the major people groups of Central Asia. While the majority live in Tajikistan, there are significant communities in most of the other Central Asian republics, including neighboring Uzbekistan, Kazakstan, Turkmenistan, and Kyrgyzstan.

The Tajik have repeatedly been invaded and conquered throughout their history. The armies of Alexander the Great, the Arabs in the seventh century, Genghis Khan, the Turks, the British, and the Russian empire have all had a profound impact on these people. In fact, the numerous invasions have been the major factor in the dispersion of the Tajik to other locations.

The term "Tajik" comes from the word taj, which means "crown." This name was probably first used by the seventh century Arabs to differentiate the Persian (Tajiki) speakers from the Turkic speakers.

What are their lives like?

Most of the Tajik are mountain farmers and shepherds. Seasonal grasses create suitable pastures for raising sheep, goats, cattle, a few camels, and some horses. They also practice a remarkable system of terraced, mountainside irrigation so that wheat and barley can be grown at the higher, dry altitudes.

More and more of the Tajik have moved to the cities over the past fifty years. Most families farm during the summer period, then return to the cities for the remainder of the year. This has resulted in an unstable work force throughout the region. Conflicts often occur between the Uzbeks and the Tajik as a result of the competition for jobs.

A majority of the urban Tajik live in governmental housing. The rural Tajik live instead in village communities located on non-farmable, rocky land. There they build low, square or rectangular houses out of unbaked mud. Pressed mud bricks made with stone are used for the foundations. Flat roofs are made of tightly packed earth and twigs, and are supported by mat covered beams.

Women wear colorful national costumes with printed cottons and silks accented by flowered head scarves. They rarely wear veils; however, they do wear chaddors, which are multi-purpose shawls. The men wear shirts and trousers, sometimes with quilted robes and belts. They also wear embroidered skull caps, and some wear turbans or fur hats during the cold mountain winters. The upper class and city dwellers tend to wear European style clothing.

Green tea is served with most meals. Bread is a staple food, and the Tajik bake bread out of anything that can be ground into flour, including a variety of peas and mulberries. They also eat starchy foods, rice, grapes, dried fruits, chicken, lamb, and vegetable dishes.

Tajik society is patriarchal, meaning that the authority belongs to the oldest males of the extended family. Inheritances are passed down through the males, and after marriage, a new bride moves in with the husband's family. Traditionally, marriages were arranged by the family. Today, however, most Tajik are free to choose their own mates.

Villages and communities are ruled by a majlis, or council, made up of the male leaders of prominent families. A chief is elected from among the council. The "kinship structure" is still dominant in social and political spheres of life. The Tajik live in tight-knit communities and are a very hospitable people.

What are their beliefs?

Most Tajik are Sunni Muslims of the Hanafite branch, although some Shi'ites exist. Approximately one-tenth of the Tajik are classified as non-religious. This has probably been a result of Russian atheistic pressure.

What are their needs?

The people have remained closed to the Gospel. There are currently no known Tajik believers in Uzbekistan.

Prayer Points

* Ask God to raise up long-term missionaries who will go to Uzbekistan and share the love of Christ with the Tajik.

* Ask the Lord to reveal Himself to these precious people through dreams and visions.

* Pray that God will open the hearts of Uzbekistan's governmental leaders to the Gospel.

* Pray that God will call out prayer teams who will begin breaking up the soil through worship and intercession.

* Ask the Lord to raise up strong local churches among the Tajik.



Country: Uzbekistan

Continent: Asia

Region: Central Asia

Persecution Rank: 10 (Only top 50 ranked, 1 = highest persecution ranking)

10/40 Window: Yes

People Name in Country: Tajik

Population in this Country: 1,314,000

Affinity Bloc: Iranian-Median

People Cluster: Tajik

Primary Language: Tajiki

Secondary Languages: Sarikoli (Unknown)

Primary Religion: Islam

Religion Sub-division: Sunni

% Christian Adherents: Data not available

% Evangelical: 0.00 %

Gypsy, Domari, Luli



Gypsies, often called Romani or Domari, are made up of two groups: the Ghorbati and the Nawari. Both groups speak a dialect of the Gypsy language called Romany, which is related to the North Indo-Aryan language of India. Their dialect, Domari, contains many Arabic words.

Gypsies call themselves Rom, which in their language means "men." Rom is derived from the Indian word Dom, meaning "a man of low caste who gains his livelihood by singing and dancing." The Ghorbati are named from the Arabic word, gurbet, which means "stranger." In the Arab world, Gypsies are called Nauar, hence the Nawari Gypsies.

Gypsies originated in India where they worked as musicians, entertainers, and metal workers. There they were discriminated against and excluded from the temples. Later,

they were sent to Persia as minstrels. From there they were separated into two groups. One traveled northward and became the Romany-speaking European Gypsies. The other traveled southward and became known as the Domari, or Middle Eastern Gypsies.

What are their lives like?

Dark skin and dark eyes are typical of most Gypsies. Their almost "mystical" lifestyle has made them the objects of curiosity, distrust, and even fear, from their beginnings until now. However, they are a proud and dignified people often not deserving a negative reputation.

The Gypsies live scattered throughout much of the world. Most of them are nomads, wandering from region to region, and they depend on a variety of entrepreneurial skills for their livelihood. It is common for Gypsies to have two or more specialized occupations. This makes it easier for them to adapt to a changing society's needs. When a region's people no longer need a Gypsy's particular skill, they move on to one that will.

Gypsies have long been known for their abilities as musicians, singers, and dancers. They also hold a wide variety of other occupations. The men are skilled makers of sieves, drums, bird cages, and reed mats. They also entertain with animals, work as tinkers, or play music. The women sometimes sell such things as cloth, shoes, kitchen utensils, or other products made by Gypsy men. Many also sing and dance. Both men and women shear sheep, spin wool, and tell fortunes. Sadly, some of the women and children are forced to beg for food as a means of survival.

Today, there are some Gypsy villages and communities in the Middle East. Some also live in the cities and have become an integral part of urban life. Other Gypsies are nomadic and either travel in caravans of wagons or carts, or they ride on camels, donkeys, or horses. The settled Gypsies usually live in houses that are typical to those of the region in which they settle.

Gypsy marriages usually take place between couples in their teens. The Gypsy family unit is highly valued and each member is depended on for his financial contribution.

Values such as justice, fidelity, and morality are very significant in Gypsy society. Such things as courtesy and friendliness are also very important. The control of deviants is strictly enforced. If a Gypsy becomes impure by some immoral or unlawful act, he is considered an outcast. Also, sexual purity is considered a must for young girls. In fact, it must be proven before marriage that the girl has never before been with a man. This strict social code is related to their old Hindu caste system which they have kept since their origin.

What are their beliefs?

The Middle East Gypsies are often Muslim and they follow the practices and beliefs of the Islamic faith. The traditional beliefs of the Gypsies such as that ghosts, lizards,

and snakes are capable of harming humans, that men have the power to curse others by giving them the "evil eye," and that some people have the power to heal the sick are no longer held by most Gypsies. There are a growing number of Christian Gypsies.

What are their needs?

The quality of health care, nutrition, housing, and education is poor. Adequate educational opportunities must be provided in order to raise their standard of living.

Spiritually, the Islamic religion is very difficult to influence. Their nomadic lifestyle has also made it difficult for missionaries to reach them. It is encouraging to hear of recent breakthroughs in ministering to Gypsies.

Most Gypsies have no Christian resources available to them. Christian broadcasts and Scriptures must be made available if they are to hear the Gospel. Christian workers are needed to teach them how to live lives pleasing to God.

Prayer Points

- * Ask the Lord to call people who are willing to share Christ with the Gypsies.
- * Ask God to strengthen, encourage, and protect the small number of Gypsy Christians.
- * Pray that those Gypsies who know Christ will be bold witnesses of the Gospel to their own people.
- * Ask the Holy Spirit to soften the hearts of Gypsies towards Christians so that they will be receptive to the Gospel.
- * Pray that God will raise up intercessors who will stand in the gap for them.
- * Ask the Lord to raise up strong local churches among the Middle East Gypsies.
- * Pray for translation of the Bible to begin in this people group's primary language.
- * Pray for the availability of the Jesus Film in the primary language of this people.



Country: Uzbekistan

Continent: Asia

Region: Central Asia

Persecution Rank: 10 (Only top 50 ranked, 1 = highest persecution ranking)

10/40 Window: Yes

Population in this Country: 11,000

Affinity Bloc: South Asian Peoples

People Cluster: Gypsy

People Name General: Gypsy, Domari

Primary Language: Domari

Primary Religion: Islam

Religion Sub-division: Sunni

% Christian Adherents: 0.00 %

% Evangelical: 0.00 %