



The Dhaiso of Tanzania

The Dhaiso live in the lush, tropical foothills of the Usambara Mountains in the northeastern corner of Tanzania. Most are farmers and are able to grow a wide variety of foods and spices such as cocoa beans, coconut, cassava, black pepper, and cinnamon. All of the Dhaiso are followers of the Muslim religion.

The Dhaiso are small in number and live peacefully in close proximity to many other people groups. A number have intermarried with people of other languages. Due to this need for a language of wider communication, the Dhaiso are very fluent in Swahili, the national language and the language of trade along the coast. They use Swahili almost to the exclusion of Dhaiso, their mother tongue. In fact for many, Swahili is their mother tongue. This is all to say that the Dhaiso are in the process of losing their original language and much of the accompanying culture and traditions. Their unique cultural identity is being lost.

Primary Religion:

Muslim

Disciples (Matt 28.19):

Churches:

Scripture Status (Matt 28.20):

None in their language

Population (date):

29,000 (1987)



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Item Name	Item Note	
Have They Heard The Gospel?		Profile Summary
Comment (Jesus As God & Only Savior)	Completely Unreached	
Prophet/Good Man, But Not God's Son (%)	100	
Is The Word Of God Translated?	No	
Any Hinderance To Scripture Distribution?	Influence of Islam	
Forms Of Gospel Presentation Available (Summary)	The Gospel would be understood in Swahili in whatever form of media.	
What Kind Of Missionaries Are Needed?	Yes, cross-cultural missionaries are necessary because it is reported that the neighboring churches and Christians are not reaching out to the Dhaiso/Segeju.	
Population All Countries		Group Description
World Population For This People	29,000	
World Population (Date)	1987	
Comment (World Population)	This figure is taken from the 1992 Ethnologue entry.	
Countries Where People Group Lives		Group Description
Country Name	Tanzania	
Geography & Environment		Group Description
Location	The Dhaiso live at the foot of the Usambara Mountains on the north-east side. Administratively, they belong to the Muheza District of the Tanga Region in the northeast corner of Tanzania.	
Country	Tanzania	
Ecosystem Type	Tropical Forest	
Geological Type	Mountain Slopes	
Elevation	300 m (1000 ft)	
Longitude	W38	
Latitude	S4.7	
Climate	The mountains are so close to the coast that their climate is similar to the coastal region. Basically very warm and humid.	
Comments (Geography & Environment)	As explained later, there is also a geographically isolated group of Dhaiso (Segeju) living on a 30 kilometer strip of land along the coast.	
Language & Linguistics		Group Description
Comment (Language)	The Dhaiso call themselves Daiso when speaking their own language. When using Kiswahili, they refer to themselves as the Segeju. There is another group of related people on the coast who call themselves Segeju in both their own language and in Kiswahili. Reports from both peoples indicate that at one time they spoke the same language, but they have been isolated from each other for some time. The coastal variety has changed much more or perhaps it is being replaced by Kiswahili too.	
Alternate Language Names	Daiso, Segeju, Sageju, Sengeju	
Attitude Towards Mother Tongue	Indifferent	
Comment (On Other Mother Tongues)	Almost all can speak Swahili fluently. In fact for a number of them, Swahili is their mother tongue. Several also say they can speak other neighboring languages like Digo or Sambaa.	
Linguistically Related Languages	KAMBA	
Linguistically Related Languages	DIGO	
Linguistically Related Languages	KAMBA	
Linguistically Related Languages	DIGO	
Comments (Related Languages)	Ethnologue reports that it is 32% lexically similar to Digo. The coastal Dhaiso are surrounded by Digo, and they indicated that many of them also speak it and perhaps even mix it into their own language.	

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Item Name

Comments (Related Languages)

Item Note

Nurse and Philippon (1980) group the inland Dhaiso with the Thagicu languages, and they state, "For Daiso, phonological considerations would indicate its particular relatedness to Kamba, but this is not borne out by use of a 100 word list, where it shows a fairly constant relation to all the main Thagicu languages." (p.48)

Literacy

Group Description

Active Literacy Program

No

Comment (Literacy)

No specific studies were done; there are schools in the area, and it seems that most of the children attend.

Economics

Group Description

Subsistence Type

Agriculturalists

Occupation

Farmers

Products / Crafts

Black pepper, cassava, cocoa beans, coconuts, jack fruit, corn, coffee, cloves, cardamon, cinnamon, lentils, and beans.

Modernization / Utilities

The larger towns have stand pipes with running water, which are gravity fed from springs in the mountains.

Comment (Economy)

The coastal Segeju are fishermen. Some have gardens or grow small coconut groves.

Community Development

Group Description

Diet (Quality)

Good

Water (Quality)

Good

Shelter Description

Houses are similar to others in the region. The walls are commonly stick frames filled with small rocks and covered over with mud. The roofs are either thatched or corrugated iron. Many homes have fenced courtyards or verandas for shade and protection from the rain.

Clothing

For men, trousers and shirts are common with Muslim hats. Some might also wear the long Kanza (the Islamic shirt-like dress). The women wear the African 'kanga', a cotton cloth wrap colorfully dyed. Many also wear western style dresses, skirts, and blouses. Although a Muslim society, the women do not generally wear veils or head coverings.

Transportation

Buses pass both locations frequently, and transport to Tanga is readily available. Similarly, one can also catch a bus to Arusha, Kenya, or Dar es Salaam fairly easily. Of course, the coastal Segeju also have boats.

Society & Culture

Group Description

Neighbor Relations

Good relationships. Lots of intermarrying.

Authority / Rule

From observations, the children were not particularly obedient to their elders.

Cultural Change Pace

Slow

Identification With National Culture

Integrated

Self Image

Threatened

Local Language Broadcasting

None

Attitude To Outsiders

Indifferent

Attitude To Change

Indifferent

Comment (Culture)

Their culture is basically Islamic. Much of their traditional heritage has been forgotten.

Youth

Group Description

Labor and tasks (6-12 year olds)

They help with the farming.

Education

Group Description

Primary Schools

2

Primary School Enrollment

742

Percent Of Eligible Students Enrolled

80

Teacher To Pupil Ratio

39

Language Of Instruction Early Years

Swahili (specific)

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Item Name

Language Of Textbooks Early Years

Comment (Education)

Item Note

Swahili (specific)

In the two inland schools, one was only 25% Dhaiso students, and the other was 75% Dhaiso students. Instead of these public schools, some children also attend an Islamic school where they study the Quran.

Church Growth

Comment (Church Growth)

The Dhaiso/Segeju are unreached. There are no known believers. An interview with a local pastor in a nearby town said that there are some Christians among the neighboring tribes, but none are Dhaiso. He further stated that there are no churches currently trying to reach them.

Status of Christianity

Religion & Response

Attitude To Christianity

Somewhat resistant

Attitude To Religious Change

Somewhat resistant

Spiritual Climate And Openness

They are all Muslim

Comment (Religion)

Many no longer learn their language, customs, and songs. They are a small group, and are losing their uniqueness and identity. Pray that the Lord will use this sense of loss to bring them to Himself.

Recommended Approaches

Possibly some sort of service like recording their language and customs combined with friendship evangelism.

Current Needs

There is a felt need by a small portion of the people to preserve their language, at least to have it recorded and written down to show their grandchildren.

Items For Prayer

That Christians in neighboring people groups would be a living testimony to the Gospel through changed lives and righteous living; that they would get a burden for their lost neighbors and reach out to them in love; that wise and sensitive Christians would be sent to work among them.

Status of Christianity

History Of Christianity In Group

Comments (History of Christianity)

It's not known if there has ever been any Christian influence or evangelism among the Dhaiso or Segeju.

Status of Christianity

Scripture

Translation Status

Bilingual

Available Scripture

None

Comment (Scripture)

There was no evidence of previous Christian witness among the Dhaiso/Segeju. Since they seem to be adequately bilingual in Kiswahili, it is possible that distribution of Swahili Scriptures might work combined with relationships of friendship and trust.

Status of Christianity

Christian Literature And Media Status

Literature Available

A great deal of literature is available in Swahili. These would all be very well understood by the Dhaiso/Segeju.

Status of Christianity