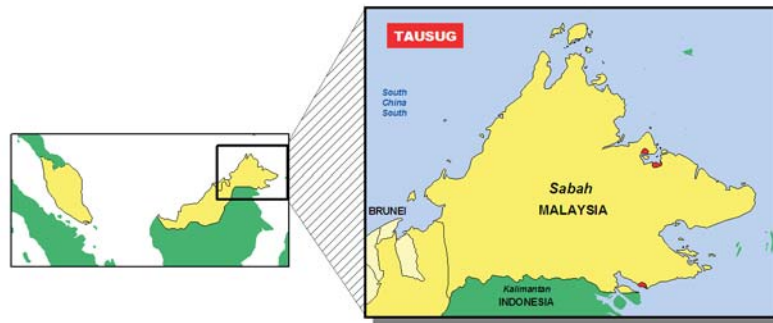


TAUSUG



| Population | Major Religion | Language |
|------------|----------------|----------|
| 110,000 | Islam | Tausug |

Who are the Tausug?

The Tausug, meaning 'people of the sea current', are also known as Suluks or Sulu in Sabah. Originally from the Sulu Archipelago in the Philippines, they migrated to Sabah in the 18th century and have now become established Sabahans. The Tausug people can be found mainly in coastal area communities in eastern Sabah.

In the past, the Tausug made their living as pirates but now rely on agriculture, fishing, and livestock raising to sustain their lives. They are distinct from the Bajau as they speak their own language, also called Tausug, and by aspects of their own culture.

What are their lives like?

The main means of livelihood among the Tausug people are farming and fishing. Some farmers still use swidden agriculture, by which fields are cleared by slashing down the trees and brush, letting them dry, and then burning them. The soil, fertilized by the ash, is then planted with rice. Their main crops include dry and wet rice, coconut, coffee, yams, cassava, corn, and various kinds of fruit. Fishing is done from motorized boats in offshore waters using fishnets, hook and line, or bamboo traps. They also raise livestock, including water buffaloes, cattle, goats, chickens, geese, and ducks.

On special occasions and weddings, they perform their traditional dance called *daling-daling* (a dance in which dancers wear curved metallic nails on the finger tips) and sing *Sulu pantun* 'Sulu poems' accompanied by a musical instrument called *gabbang* 'bamboo xylophone'.

The typical Tausug house is built in a rectangular shape; the walls are constructed with timber or bamboo beams and enclosed with coconut or nipa

palm leaves. It has a thatched roof and sits on stilts six to eight feet above the ground. The house is surrounded by a series of raised porches leading to a separate kitchen. Usually, a wall is built around it for protection.

What do they believe?

Sunni Islam is the majority religion of the Tausug. As the children grow, they have tutors that give them religious instruction from the Qu`ran (Islamic Holy Book). Despite the influence of Islam, they retain some of their animistic beliefs and practices associated with the spiritual world. They believe in environmental spirits that may cause either good fortune or sickness.

Their view of life after death mixes Islamic beliefs with non-orthodox beliefs in spirits. They believe that a person has four souls which leave his body when he dies. The body of the deceased goes to hell, where the punishment of his sins will be revealed according to his wrongdoings while he was living.

What are their needs?

Many of the Tausug people are living below poverty level. More efficient farming methods and more innovative fishing techniques will help raise the standard of living among the people. There is also a need for improved health care. Pray that God will send helpers to the Tausug to help meet their spiritual needs and be a channel of blessing. A translation has been completed in the Tausug language. Pray that God would give the Tausug access to it and give them receptive hearts.