

THE DAWOODI SHIA Bohra of India

Want to get involved? |

250,000

Population in Gujarat, India

250,000

all over the rest of India

SURAT

Largest Bohra University

MUMBAI

Official Headquarters



PHOTO BY BY MUFFIZAINU

SPIRITUAL OPPORTUNITY

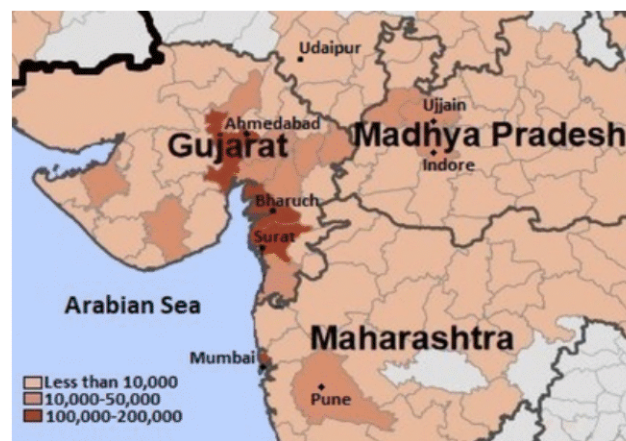
We do not currently know of any cross-cultural workers from any agency engaging fully and intentionally with the Dawoodi Shia Bohra in India. Outsiders engaging them will likely need to be **solely focused** on this group because of the communities insular and separatist nature.

Hiding religious conversion for fear of ostracism and persecution from such a tight community is inevitable and understandable, but it is encouraging to note that Jesus is already developing relational intimacy within this community. One Bohra Muslim Background Believer estimates that there are thirty families following Jesus within the communities of Southern Gujarat. **But it is a tiny fraction of a percent** in the sea of a half million Bohra of India.

EASILY IDENTIFIABLE BY CLOTHING

The Dawoodi Bohra sect is the most populous of the six Ismaili Shia Bohra sub-groups, with approximately 1 to 1.5 million worldwide adherents. They are **noticeably unique** within the Islamic landscape of India and are **easily identified** by their religious garments—women's brightly colored *ridas* or men's gold trimmed white hats. Another example of Bohra distinctiveness includes the prohibition of women from wearing black. In fact, a surprisingly accepting posture towards western dress and customs might also be observed—and one can expect to meet a Bohra woman in jeans and a t-shirt when she is at home or some other setting that doesn't require her colorful handmade *rida*.

WHERE THEY LIVE



THE DAWOODI SHIA BOHRA OF INDIA

Overview & OPPORTUNITIES

Are you interested to pray or go? |

UNIQUE AND INSULAR

A shocking statement of group identity one might hear among the Bohra is, *"We are not Muslim."* Bohras go to this length to distinguish themselves from Sunni Muslims. This disassociation includes the Sunni Bohras with whom relations have been cut since 1538 after 80% of the Shia Bohras converted to Sunniism.

Distinct and somewhat mysterious Bohra idiosyncrasies emphasize the uniqueness and insularity of this group, separating them from outsiders. For example, a sign of relational intimacy is being invited to a Bohra meal where traditional dining customs will include sharing one spoon between up to ten people around a large dish called a thal.

STRATEGY POINTS

- Live inside or close to Bohra neighborhoods to build trust through natural relationships.
- Learn Gujarati, if possible, from a Bohra person to communicate in their heart language.
- Intentionally honor virtuous aspects of their faith since they are ostracized by other Muslims.
- Humbly discover and emphasize common ground before moving into a discovery rhythm.
- Use business or education as common ground and possible entry strategies.
- Connect through social activities in neutral settings they prefer.
- Deep, extraordinary prayer, with signs and miracles for communities, families, and individuals.

LED BY THE D'AI

"Leader" and "guru" are common local words used to describe the stately man in pictures hung from prominent walls of Bohra homes and businesses. His actual title is Da'i al-Mutlaq (*unrestricted missionary*), and he is believed to be the representative of the secluded Imam of the Ismaili sect of Shia Islam. Several branches of the Bohra sect have emerged over disputes over the Dai's successions, but each branch agrees that its respective Dai's authority is unquestionable. As Syedna (Arabic for *our master*), he and his many local community representatives oversee most areas of Bohra life.

Excommunication from the extremely insular community is an unbearable threat that ensures devotion and obedience. One Bohra MBB insisted, "they worship the Da'i more than Allah."



Awareness of this unyielding commitment to the Da'i is essential for workers seeking to engage Bohra.

Are you intrigued by the Muslim Dawoodi Bohra of India? We need university professors, international students, and business people to live nearby and IN Bohra communities to offer Jesus with love and respect.

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LEARNING GUJARATI ESSENTIAL

The Gujarati language is one unique feature of the Bohra people. They are required to speak it at home wherever they live in the world.

The name *Bohra* can be attributed to the Gujarati word for *trade*, and reflects the people group's origin history in which a caste of Gujarati traders accepted the teachings of Yemeni Ismaili missionaries in the 12th century.

The Bohra name also reflects the community's traditional occupation of dealing in goods like hardware and home provisions. They are regarded as honest and reliable businesspeople.

Besides Gujarati, fluency in Hindi and English is highly regarded by Bohra people and reflects their values of patriotic civility and higher education.

A university professor teaching at a university even in English—or a foreign student taking classes at the university—may be well regarded.

Religious lessons are conducted in *Lisan ud-Dawat*, a Gujarati variant influenced by Urdu, Persian and Arabic. Language poses a unique challenge for cross-cultural workers among Muslims in Gujarat because speaking Gujarati with an understanding of Urdu religious terms is a worthy goal that can facilitate deep relationships with Bohra people. Location options for workers may be best in Gujarat in order to learn language well enough to engage this community in its heart language.

WHERE YOU COULD LIVE

Their presence is most obvious in the state of Gujarat with a population of about 250,000—marked by their distinctive colorful clothing. Popular localities include places like the bazaar surrounding their main University in Surat, large newly developing plots of land in North Central Baroda, and ancient mausoleums throughout Ahmedabad.

Within India, there are approximately 250,000 Bohra living outside Gujarat. The official headquarters of the Dawoodi Bohra is in Mumbai, where Bhendi Bazaar is a famous neighborhood of 20,000 population of Dawoodi Bohra.

Pune contains the famous market, Bohra Ali, and at least 20,000 Bohra residents. In Madhya Pradesh 10,000 plus member communities exist in Indore and Ujjain. Rajasthan's Udaipur district has a similar Bohra population.



Is God speaking to your heart about the Muslim Dawoodi Bohra of India? They are like the pharisees: ***"Then his disciples remembered this prophecy from the Scriptures: 'Passion for God's house will consume me" (John 2:17)***

THE DAWOODI SHIA BOHRA OF INDIA

EXTRA INFO for serious inquirers

Are you considering going? |

LEARNING GUJARATI ESSENTIAL

From Lee's book...

Daudi

- After death of 6th imam 2 sects emerged... ismaili is one and believe Dai-UI-Mutlag leads... he's a living saint
- 1067... missionaries came to cambay port and converted Hindus... sunnis persecuted so it stayed secret
- Bhora is not the surname... surnames usually follow names of ancestors' occupations
- Women get equal status in home and community but not politics... some work. UT most are homemakers
- Love in nuclear family rather than jointly.. value independence
- Systematic and well organized Jammat... Dai's local representatives permission is needed for decisions like marriage, business, death rituals

Salumaini

- Split over 27th dai
- Baroda, Surat and Ahmedabad... speak urdu? Dress d differs from daudi
- Women have lower status
- Traders in hardware cutlery and cloth
- Salumaini co-op bank of baroda

Alivi

- Split with daudi after 28th dai 1624
- Smallest sect... baroda, nadiad, kalolpanch mahel district, ahmedabad baruch
- Circumcision of boys and girls at 3 months

Sunni

Rander was a **port... Iraqi Saint came... married local girls and converted many Hindus... migrated to patan and became patani vora... also surati and kanamia sect developed based on land boundaries**

Many own land and farm

Gujrarti

Well organized... ex... rander sunni vora jamaat

SOURCES TO LEARN MORE

1. Searching Wikipedia articles of various Bohra sects can be helpful.
2. <https://www.thedawoodibohras.com/about-the-bohras/>
3. Bohra - Indpaedia
4. Bohra | Encyclopedia.com
5. <https://english.newsnationtv.com/india/news/dawoodi-bohras-pm-modi-in-indore-dawoodi-bohra-community-202811.html>
6. THE BOHRAS IN SOUTH AND SOUTH EAST ASIA - Centre for Study of Society and Secularism (csss-islam.com)
7. Bohri Gujarati Language - Vernac Language Technologies Pvt. Ltd
8. <https://english.newsnationtv.com/india/news/dawoodi-bohras-pm-modi-in-indore-dawoodi-bohra-community-202811.html>
9. <https://m.economictimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/sanghs-ghar-wapsi-event-in-full-swing-in-gujarat/articleshow/45611337.cms>

Is God speaking to your heart about the Muslim Dawoodi Bohra of India?
Moving to the state of Gujarat, Pune or even the big city of Mumbai will give you access to this separatist group that needs the good news of the Kingdom.