



SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DIMENSIONS OF MOIRANG TOWN IN MANIPUR

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ABSTRACT

Moirang is a town located in the Manipur central valley, about 45 km from the Imphal city, the state capital of Manipur. The town has a total population of 19,893 persons of which 9,841 are males, and 10,052 are females in 2011 and in 2021, the town has 25,800 persons covering a total geographical area of 6.6 km² on the southern bank of the Loktak Lake. Moirang has been originated on its present site because of the physical and economic factors rather than political factors. It is a historic town as it was a Kingdom during historic period. Moirang had become a statutory town under the administration of Notified Area Committee (NAC) in 1971; and it was upgraded as a municipal town in 1991 and classified as class (IV) town. Presently Moirang has become a Class III town. Moirang play a very important role in the region economically and politically. The socio economic, and social and cultural life of the people of Moirang has been changes at different levels. This paper aims to highlight these changes and other challenges on the cultural lives of the town.

Key Word – Cultural dynamics, Statutory Town, Socio-Economic Challenges, Social diversity, Fabulous Love Dance.

1. Introduction

Moirang is a town growing along the southern bank of the Loktak Lake in the Bishnupur district of Manipur. It is an important historical town in the state having distinct characteristics historically, politically, and culturally. The town has a total population of 19,893 persons in 12 Wards, with an area of 6.6 km² in 2021. The density of population is 3,014 per km². The literacy rate of the town is 84 percent. Gender ration of the town is 1021 females per 1000 males in 2011.

Moirang was a rival kingdom of the Imphal Kangla in all respects of social, cultural, historical, economic and political during the historic periods. It was from the kingdom of Moirang that the great Epic 'Khamba-Thoibi' and fabulous love dance of Khamba-Thoibi, a Social folk dance, in Manipuri culture had been originated. The diversity, divinity, dignity and prosperity of the Loktak Lake, the largest fresh water lake of the north east India, were kept under the sovereignty of the Moirang kingdom since the beginning of the historic periods. The socio- economic, cultural and traditions, historical and political life of the Moirangs had been connected with the Loktak Lake.

2. Study Area

Moirang town is located within the cardinal location of 24°50' N Latitude and 93°77' E longitude. It is about 45 km from the Imphal city, the state capital of Manipur. The town is situated at an elevation of 766 metres from the mean sea level in Bishnupur district, on the southern bank of the Loktak Lake in Manipur Central valley.

3. Objective of the Study

The main objective of this paper is to discuss the socio-economic parameters and to identify the cultural aspects of the people of Moirang urban center.



4. Methodology

This ongoing research paper examines the Moirang town in different periods by working with posing questions particular to this urban growth, social parameters, cultural parameters and problems and prospects of the town, and then collages these together to provide multiple viewpoints. The model operates in several levels base on two fold system structure of urban studies

(i) 3D digital Model and (ii) Interactive database. Fundamentally, it contains a shell that allows urban researchers to contribute to the database simultaneously. A 3D computer model of a selected urban area in Philadelphia is the core of this shell. This method is used to represent current and past typological elements of urban centres such as spatial types and morphological series and to explore and analyse historical transformations, particularly socially, culturally and economically of the Moirang town. The details of the study have been brought by available other theories and methods of urban development and planning utilizing for the survey of the existing physical, economic and cultural conditions of the townscape.

5. Moirang Urban Population Growth

An urban growth and urbanization has different identical. An urban growth denotes the net population increased of towns and cities. While urbanization refers to the proportionate increased of urban population in relation to the total population of a place. In such a way urban growth maybe occurred, but not urbanization. Moirang was developed as a small town of historic importance. It was the place, where the first Indian National Army's (INA) flag hoisted on the soil of India, during the Second World War (1942-1945 AD). After a long historic monarchy of 2215 years in AD, the growth and development had become an urban centre. Moirang becomes a statutory town under the administration of a Notified Area Committee (NAC) since 1971. The rate of urbanization is very rapid with the outgrowth of the new settlements around it. It was upgraded as a Municipal Town since 1991 and classified as a class IV town with a population of 16,684 persons in 2001 and 19,893 persons in 2011 with a geographical area of 6.6 sq. km. The town has 12 wards with population density of 3,014 persons per km².

Table 1. Moirang Urban Population Growth

Year	Area km ²	Number of Population	Growth rate in percent
1961	2.80	3,212	-----
1971	2.80	4,119	28.24
1981	6.59	12,862	212.26
1991	6.60	15,443	20.07
2001	6.60	16,684	8.04
2011	6.60	19,893	19.23

Source ; Census of India 1961-2011

The growth of urban population from 1961 to 1971 was 28.24 percent in 1971. It rose to 212.26 percent. It was because of the rapid expansion of the Moirang town to a large extent of 6.59 sq. km from its 2.80 sq. km in 1971. The growth rate of urbanization was 20.07 percent in 1991, but it reduced to 8.04 percent. It was because of no census operation had been done in this year for Moirang, and the population of Moirang town was recorded based on estimated projected population. In 2011 the growth rate of urban population of Moirang was 19.23 percent (Table-1). The average growth rate of urban population of Moirang from 1961-2011 was 86.56 percent. It was higher than the all India average urbanization rate of 62.95 percent per census during the past 6 decades, and the urbanization rate of the state of Manipur during this period was 188.64 percent. The main function of the Moirang town is a market centre cum services with primary and secondary activities. The rate of growth of population in



the town is very rapid during the past decades; and the process of urbanization has a well progressive and higher than the national level. Moirang has 12 Municipal Wards. The ward wise distribution of population has been observed that the town has uneven distribution of population. Ward number 3 has highest concentration of population (2115 persons) with 390 households; Ward number 7 has least concentration of population (1121 persons) with 209 households. The build-up area has more concentration than other wards.

6. Social parameters

Socially Moirang is dominated by the Hindus. Base on the occupation structure, the important function of the town is a service town. The town has a total working population of 6,114 persons; of which 1,312 persons are cultivator, 268 persons are agricultural labourer, 482 persons are household industrial occupations, 4,052 persons are other workers and services in 2011. Thus, the main social and economy of the people of Moirang professional and other services like manufacturing other than household industries, trade and commerce and other business etc. Agricultural labourer has least in the economic activity of the people. The housing condition of the town area has poor. The literacy rate of the town is 74.74 percent of the total population in 2011. The town has a total of 4,126 of residential houses; out of which pucca houses constituted 4.86 percent of the total houses; pucca cum Semi pucca houses constituted about 11.03 percent; Semi-pucca houses constituted about 39.63 percent; and Kutcha houses constituted about 44.45 percent of the total houses respectively. The basic amenities of housing like water, sanitation, electricity and drainage for healthy urban lives are quite inadequate for the present need.

Road is only the means of transport and communication in the Moirang region of the state. The circulation systems of roads have wide variations depending on number factors of road width, nature of the settlement pattern, and density of population. The present congestion of traffic is due to lack of adequate road to serve the existing needs of the town. The most urban road network of the Moirang town is an unplanned condition of width, high volume, intensity and variety of traffic etc. The road pattern in the Moirang town area is radial type. The road width of the NH 102 and Imphal Wangoo State Highway has now been expanded 60 to 100 meters, but other roads streets are very narrow. The NH.No.102 Imphal –Churachandpur road is the most important road of about 45 km. It provides vital links between the Moirang and Imphal the state capital city and other towns in the region. These roads account for about 98 percent of the total traffic and more than 92 percent of the first moving vehicles coverage at Moirang. These are the major route through which the traffic plies regular buses and other public and private vehicles for long and short distances.

7. Cultural Parameters

Culturally, Moirang is an important pace of Manipur. Moirang was a most prosperous and powerful kingdom during the historic period, and a native place for the origin of the most popular Khamba-Thoibi classical folk dance of the state. The place was considered as 'a land of legends'. Among the incarnation folk stories of Moirang the romantic story of Khamba-Thibi is still prominently remembered. There is a museum, which displaying photographs and wartime relics. It is a very sacred place for the Manipuri's, particularly of the Meitei communities. It holds an ancient temple of pre-Hindu deity, Lord Thangjing. The Moirang town is famous as a head quarter of the Indian National Army (INA). It is a traditional centre of the Meitei culture and one of the most visited tourists destination. Loktak Lake, the largest fresh water lake of north east India has a close relationship with Moirang historically, culturally and politically. Loktak is the life of Moirang in the state. Thus, Moirang is culturally a rich town in Manipur. Moirang are Meitei community and their facial look like Mongoloid of South East Asian type.

8. Problems and Prospects

The problems of the Moirang urban areas can be brought under the following categories (i) economic problems, (ii) physical problems, (iii) social problems, and (iv) administrative problems. The most important



economic problem is the inadequacy of the availability of resources for the provision and maintenance of urban infrastructures in the economic development; public utility,

housing, supply and demands of the domestic items, transport and communication, traffic congestion, shortage of water supply and power supply, sewerage and sanitation, and lack of storage capacities and distribution systems, etc. are the important problems. The available resources have extremely limited. The town has only water head tanks or reservoirs, located near the INA complex and Sendra hillock. These two water head tanks provide drinkable water through tap and pipe within the Municipal areas. Other sub-urban areas water supply is very inadequate. The town has no 24 hour water supply facility. The main source of water in the urban and sub-urban areas was ponds and Loktak Lake water. About 64 percent of the urban dwellers get water from the taps, and the remaining 36 percent can get water from tanks and ponds, and from the mobile urban drinking water supply operated by the private tankers for the public on payment basis from time to time. The main source of water for Moirang is Loktak Lake. Loktak is largest fresh water lake. There are 22 public ponds of large, medium and small size within the Municipal areas of the town.

Among the *Physical problems* land use pattern, housing, and the problems of sewerage, drainage, air and water pollution, congestion, transport, etc are included, because these problems have an immediate impact on the urban dwellers of the town. The drainage facilities are very poor to the increasing strains of the urban life. Open drains often serve as depositories for road sweepings and human wastes. Water overflows and swept into the roads and streets during the rainy season presenting a dingy view promoting unhygienic conditions causing outbreak of spreading numerous infectious diseases. Moirang has poor housing conditions. Most houses are kutchas cum semi-pucca houses with household size of 6.0 persons per houses. Sewerage and drainage condition of the town are very poor with overloading during the rains. Roads are not good condition with narrow land.

Among the *social problems*, rapid urbanization of the town have thrown out social instability resulted from the unemployment and corruptions, which tend to focus break down the traditional behaviours of the inhabitants. It produces many problems of personal disorganization among the urban youths. It precipitates problems such as 'juvenile delinquency', social crime, alcoholism, drug addiction, suicide, mental disease, etc. Moirang witnesses large size population of youths. Problems of unemployment is prevalent since long past.

It is highly necessary to tackle action plans or master plans to solve the problems faced by the Moirang town from its lower level up to the higher level of development. Adoption of national urbanization policy will be fruitful in the urban development planning of the Moirang town with the adoption of a policy should be mitigated the misery of the urban poor section as early as possible. It can be ensured that problems of urban amenities and the like do not arise in the future.

9. Conclusion

Moirang is a developing town in the state of Manipur. It is a very important place socially and culturally since the historic past in the state. It has a rapid urbanization with facing numbers of problems on physical, social and economic development. The town required a planning for proper development from its early stage to solve all problems in future.

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