
THE LIFESTYLE OF MANIPUR PEOPLE

(A Case study of Neura village in Tiswadi Taluka of Goa)

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Abstract

Goa has become a melting point for migration from all over the country. The latest wave of migrants in Goa are the people from the Northeast. Over 1,500 workers from north eastern states and of India are employed in Goa, mainly in the hospitality industry as well as spas and beauty parlour here. This is the first generation of north- eastern state wherein people have left their homes and come to Goa for various reasons. The purpose was to know how they are different from the other mainstream society. The qualitative and quantitative method has been used to gather the information. The result of the survey is quite interesting as it provides an incredibly unique information about their life.

Keywords: *Innaphi, Phanek, Lonchak, Meitie.*

Introduction

Internal migration or domestic migration is human migration within one geopolitical entity usually a nation state. Internal migration is the movement of people from one defined area to another within the country. Compared to intra-state (short distance) movement, inter-state (long distance) migration has grown faster in Goa. Internal migration tends to be travel for education and for economic improvement or because of a natural disaster or civil disturbance. Migration is the movement of the people from one place to live in another. Emigrants leave their country, while immigrants enter a country. People have many reasons why they might want to move from one place to another. These reasons may be economic, social, political, or environmental. For migration to take place there are usually push factors and pull factors at work. Often push factors are negative things such as unemployment, crop failure, droughts, flooding's, war, poor education

opportunities or poor services and amenities. Pull factors on the other hand, are the expectations which attract people to the new place. They are usually positive things such as job opportunities, a better standard of living, better education, or better health care. Many people choose to migrate these are *voluntary migrants*. Many are *economic migrants*. However, many other people have no choice and are forced to leave their homes. These are involuntary migrants. Their lives and homes

may be in danger due to war or a natural disaster These people are also called refugees. (Singh, 2007:54).

Objectives of the study- This research was initiated keeping in mind the following important objectives

- To investigate about their social, economic, and religious life.
- To know the pull and push factors for migration.

Scope of the study

In terms of its objective and scope, it provides an initial step towards the documentation of all the information related to Tangkhul and Naga tribes of Manipur which remains in oral form so far. The research work will contribute and support the information required by the research scholars, teachers, students etc and make share and exchange the information resources available in the Manipur culture. The proposed research work is very important to understand the cultural heritage of Manipur and preserve them for future use.

Methodology of the study

The reason behind choosing this topic was to know what are the reasons that are attracting them to migrate to Goa and to find out their perception of life in Goa compared with their life in Manipur. To attain the objective of the study both qualitative and quantitative information is used. The survey method has been used to gather quantitative data and for qualitative information the researcher adopted field work research. The primary data was gathered mainly from the people of village Neura which belongs to the Tiswadi taluka of the district of North Goa.

- a. The sample survey- The purpose of the sample survey was to gather information from the Manipur people. A standardized questionnaire was prepared to accumulate information about their perception and opinion on living in Goa.
- b. Observation method was used not only to attain new data but also to validate the existing data.
- c. Focus Group Discussion- The focus group discussions were used to validate the data gathered through the survey as well as to gain further insights into the actions, perceptions,

and attitudes of the respondents. The focus group discussion was held with the following respondents: - Students, non-students, mothers, employed and unemployed people.

I have selected 20 families both males and females to avoid biasness. Data is collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources include collecting data through questionnaire, observation, informal discussion and FGD. Secondary sources include collecting data from published book and websites etc.

Limitations of the study:

1. The culture of Manipuri is a vast concept. But I could not get in-depth information about every household because of lockdown.
2. Also, the time limit was a major constraint faced by me.
3. The research is based on the survey conducted by selecting 20 families.

Sociological perspective on Migration

There is no universally accepted definition of migration. It applies to a relatively settled population. It is a form of spatial mobility that shows the change from one geographical area or residential unit to another. The phenomenon of migration is so complex that the theoretical and empirical understandings are unable to comprehend it. Since the phenomenon is time and culture specific there is no universally valid theoretical formulation.

Migration includes both additive as well as separative aspects. It involves change due to separation from the place of origin and addition to the place of destination. These aspects make the concept of migration less precise when compared with other demographic processes.

The movement of population within and across the region is an important aspect of change. The large-scale and long-distance movements are basic features of modern development. They are basic because they cause socio-economic changes that promote progress. These changes affect the society and the movement of population itself. Among the sociological approaches the most important is the structural –functional approach. It focuses on migration as one of the integrated social processes and as an integral part of the larger social system. It is the society that provides a social context to migration and makes the process of migration socially conditioned. The socio-structural and cultural conditions affect the process of migration and in turn are affected by the process. Thus, the movement of population becomes an institutionally and normatively or

culturally determined phenomenon. Its occurrence depends on institutional suitability. For example the rapid process of spatial mobility of population, particularly the long distance migration is institutionally or structurally and culturally suitable for and consistent with the urban industrial society while the immobility or the slow process of spatial mobility is structurally consistent with the traditional rural agrarian society.

There are some specific sociological formulations within the fold of this approach that are significant for the study of migration. The Parsonian paradigm of pattern variables provide a guideline for an analysis of mobility and immobility of a population. In Parson's scheme of variables, the effectivity and effective-neutrality value components showing a paradigm shift from tradition to modernity has a bearing on migration. It explains the social conditions under which the movement of population is active or inactive. Social attachment restricts the mobility of population. Yet it serves as a force to consolidate and reinforce the existing institutional patterns and the network of relationship. It is through institutional consolidation that effectivity becomes a barrier in the spatial mobility of a population. As soon as the effectivity is changed into effective neutrality and impersonal attachment the spatial mobility of the population are accelerated. Thus, the Parsonian formulation provides a theoretical basis to examine the process of migration from a sociological point.

The theories of social stratification also provide another viewpoint on migration. They focus on the social class character of the society and highlight various tendencies of the social class. A class tends to maintain itself and the same time it tends to optimize gratification through spatial and vertical patterns of mobility. These social class tendencies have a bearing on the process of migration because they focus on the social class character of the process of mobility. The class component functions as a push factor at the source to move out for gratification of motives through improvement in the social status. The class factor also functions as a pull factor to hold the people together and does not allow them to move out from the place of residence. The class factor promotes spatial mobility from the source and develops adjustment and adaptation at the destination.

Various theories of social change and modernization in sociology also provide different viewpoints on migration. The culturological approaches have special significance in this regard because of their emphasis on a cultural basis of change and transformation. They assume that culture is the

cause and effect of social change. In this frame of reference migration is considered a cultural change. It is both the cause and consequence of the cultural basis of spatial migration. The caste, class, and related cultural bases of spatial disparities in income, resources, opportunities and associated styles of life, difference in value orientations of the people towards rural and urban styles of work and work subcultures. The act of migration affects these cultural factors. They are the push as well as pull factors of migration. There are cultural causes of migration at the source and cultural consequences of migration at the destination.

Among the sociological approaches the theory of social evolution provides another viewpoint on migration and social change. The theory assumes that the society is inherently unstable in the homogenous form and pushes it to move in a linear evolutionary direction of social change. This model consists of a series of universal laws of progress focusing on the evolution of the society from homogeneity to heterogeneity and multiformity. In this process of unilinear direction of social transformation every component of the system tends to change adjust each other in an integrated form and evolves into a higher social form.

In this process the society also evolves demographically through a spatial movement of the population and changes in other demographic components. In Durkheim's social evolution migration is a necessary social condition to push the process of social evolution from one type of social order or another. The active movement of population pushes the society to evolve from simple, segmental, and mechanical society to a complex structurally differentiated interdependent and organically well-knit society with an elaborate division of labour.

The economic and sociological viewpoints are the two broad perspectives on migration. They show that migration is a complex and multivariate phenomenon. A single variate explanation of migration as viewed by economists is a limited viewpoint. Sociologists view migration in a holistic perspective that is inclusive of the economic viewpoints. The socio-economic and cultural milieu of the village itself and its wider social environment explain the out migration from a village.

The sociological approaches provide a social context to the text of migration but the relationship between the context and the text is not a simple relationship. The social context of migration derived from various theoretical approaches consists of economic, social, cultural, demographic, developmental and physiological factors of migration.

A study on 'The people of Manipur'

The people of Manipur include Meitie, Naga, Kuki, Meitie Pangal and other colourful communities which have lived together in complete harmony for centuries. The Meitei ethnic group represents around 53% of the population of Manipur state, followed by various Naga tribes at 24% and various Kuki-Zo tribes at 16%. The main language of the state is Meiteilon (also known as Manipuri). Tribals constitutes about 41% of the state population (according to 2011 census) and are distinguished by dialects and cultures that are often village-based. Manipur's ethnic groups practice a variety of religions. According to 2011 census, Hinduism is the major religion in the state, closely followed by Christianity. Other religions include Islam, Sanamahism, Buddhism, Judaism etc. ((Singh, 2007:54).

Goa has become a melting point for migration from all over the country. The latest wave of migrants in Goa are the people from the Northeast. Over 1,500 workers from northeaster states and of India are employed in Goa, mainly in the hospitality industry as well as spas and beauty parlour here. This is the first generation of north-eastern state wherein people have left their homes and come to Goa for various reasons.

Neura is a village in Tiswadi Taluka in North Goa District of Goa State, India. It is located 14 km Towards East from District headquarters Panaji. According to 2011 census the total population of the Neura village is 487 and number of houses are 119. Village literacy rate is 84.4%. It is a place that has lovely villas and mansions. During the Kadamba rule this was a busy place due to the Naval quarters and was once even the seat of learned Brahmin- Sinais. Oscar de Noronha, a native of Neura, who lives in Miramar, opines that the genesis of the word Neura is derived from 'Nevri', a rice variety that the villages cultivated. Others say that Neura derives its name from 'navrak' which means 'town of boats'. This could be possible as the site now known as 'Velfali khazan' was a safe refuge for ships during the kadamba era.

Social Aspect- There are 33 recognised tribes in Manipur which either fall under Nagas or the kukis, the two different conglomerates of Manipur tribal. The Manipur people living in Neura village are the Indigenous tribes, they communicate in their own dialects among the same ethnic group while communication with different ethnic groups is carried out in Meitei or Manipuri language, the official language of Manipur but while interacting with Goans they mostly speak in

English as they do not understand Konkani or Hindi. Despite the socio-political and linguistic differences among them, all the ethnic tribes originate from the same Mongoloid group having similarities in cultural and traditional domains. The Tangkhul tribes are found in majority in Neura village and very few belong to Naga, Ukhrul and Zeme tribes. Some common names among tribal men are Edimchube Newme, Soyo Wungsek, Awungpa Wungsek, Ranpei Leisan and among females are Thotrinphi Wungsek, Yoangamphy Haoshimwung, and Elungliale Riame.

They follow Patriarchal system. The head of the family is the male member. They do not own any house in Goa rather they are tenants who live with their parents/ friends/ siblings and cousins and most of them belong to nuclear families and very few i.e. one or two families follow joint family system. Their children are currently studying in various schools and colleges of Goa and have come here to take up good and higher education. Educational level among the elders (their parents, brothers, and sisters) is less than standard XIIth.

They feel their people should acquire more and more education because they want to get wisdom, protection, respect to compete with other ethnic groups as well as the rest of the world. They want to help and uplift their own community people and to enable to fight for their rights etc. because they feel education is the key to solve all the problems.

Rice is the staple diet among them. They are non-vegetarians, they do like Goan fish curry rice. Kabok is their speciality where the rice is fried with lots of vegetables. They also love Nгри which is a type of fermented fish and carries a distinct smell. Lonchak happens to be their favourite vegetable which is none other than a bean. Iromba is a fermented delicacy, which is a combination of fish, vegetables, and bamboo shoots.

Innaphi and Phanek are the most common Manipuri traditional dress for women. The white turban called Pagri is the most common among men. Nowadays with modernization taking over traditional culture, the people wear the traditional dress only during festivals or rituals. In Goa they follow modern way of dressing such as men wear modern trousers, shirts, coats, tie etc whereas women do wear salwar, skirts etc and young children wear modern clothes.

Religious Aspect- Nagas and Tangkhul tribes of Neura village are Baptist Christians (who believe that baptism is valid only for individuals who profess the Christian faith, so no infant baptism or

otherwise forced baptism and that baptism must be done via complete immersion). There are Hindu Manipuri's as well, but they are scattered in different parts of Goa.

Dowry is not a compulsion among the Manipur tribes but very few practice dowry systems and even if it given than it is in the form of kind. Cases of divorce are exceedingly rare among the catholic tribes and incase if divorce takes place then it could be because of alcoholism or gambling. Child marriage is not practiced among them whereas preferred marriageable age for the girls and boys is 20 and above. Their marriages take place with proper rituals and ceremonies. The marriage rites are officiated by Licensed Pastor. He is the leader of the church who preaches gospel about Jesus Christ. He is also the head of the church administration. After serving as a Pastor for many years the tribal community gives him the license (rights) to conduct or solemnize the weddings. In most of the cases the marriage partner is selected by the person himself/ herself through falling in love. Incase if it is an arranged marriage than the mate is selected from within their community but there are also cases where in people have married outside their community, but such cases are very rear.

Manipur tribes in Goa practice Christianity and believe in Jesus Christ and they do celebrate Christmas and New year, they visit Tangkhul Baptist Church (in the form of a hall) for mass on every Sunday which is located at Calangute.

Manipuri's hosts numerous festivals in Manipur some of the major ones are Dol Jatra (Yaoshang), Rath Jatra, Lai-Haraoba, Ramjan ID, KUT, Gang-Ngai, Chumpha, Cheiraoba, Heikru Hidongba, Lui-Ngai-Ni, and Kwak Jatra. (Ahmed,2009:56).

In Goa they celebrate festivals such as lui-Ngai- Ni and chumpa. Lui-Ngai-Ni is the seed-sowing festival celebrated by the Naga tribes. The festival heralds the season of seed sowing and marks the start of the year for the Nagas which is celebrated on 14-15 of February and Chumpa festival is a harvest festival held every year. This special occasion is mainly celebrated by Tanghul Nagas. The word chumpa in local Manipuri language means openings of the Granary. It is just a simple and beautiful, thanksgiving ceremony dedicated to the local Tribal god for blessing them with a plenty of agricultural crops. This festival is celebrated for 7 days and a week after the harvest season in the month of December. The religious rights and rituals such as birth, marriage and death are performed by their License Pastor (He is a minister in charge of a Christian church or

congregation, especially in some non- episcopal churches. He is the leader of a Christian congregation who also gives advice and counsel to people from the community or congregation). They do invite other tribes on occasion of Lui-Ngai-Ni, Christmas and during weddings.

Economic Aspect- In Manipur agriculture and forestry are the main sources of income. Rice is the major crop. Among some of the hill tribes, domestic animals are kept only for meat and are not milked or used for hauling. Teak and bamboo are major forestry products. The Nagas are known to use intoxicants to catch fish. Manufacturing is limited to several well-established cottage industries. The designed cloth produced on hand looms is in demand throughout India and outside the country. Other industries include sericulture (silk production), soapmaking, carpentry, tanning, and the manufacture of bamboo and sugarcane products. An industrial complex, including an electronics plant, has been established at Imphal. Manipur remains somewhat isolated from the rest of India, and communications within the state are poor. (Sheram,2011:41).

Considering village and town, professional differences are seen. In their village, they perform household activities and handicraft. It is exceedingly rare to find a Manipuri person who is not economically engaged in an earning activity. Although agriculture is their traditional and prime earning source, many are changing their occupation due to different circumstances e.g. scarcity of land, lack of capital, less benefit, lack of available work in rural areas. Those who are receiving higher education have started to involve themselves in different mainstream earning sources and involving both in government and non-government organization.

In Goa, these people work in different fields. some work in companies at Carranzallem, Goa Velha etc. some males work in salon as hairdressers and females as beauticians in beauty parlors. Few among them are housewives who are taking care of their families etc. Most of them got the jobs in Goa through the reference by their friends, family members, advertisement in paper or internet. None of them are wage laborer's rather almost all are salaried people earning between five to fifteen thousand. They feel incredibly happy at workplace and they are treated well by their employers and are not exploited by them. They do not work more than eight hours per day. Either once in six months or monthly they send money for their family members living in Manipur. They want their children to be into higher occupations such as Doctors, Teacher, join military etc but

there are few respondents who still believe that their children should follow their own family occupation. The various push and pull factors which have led them to migrate to Goa varies from person to person. Most of them have migrated to acquire a good job, to get good education, to accompany their family members who are staying in Goa, due to unemployment in Manipur etc.

Conclusions

Though they are smaller in number, they are living peacefully and happily in Goa, celebrating their own feast and festivals without disturbing the peace of Goan society. They have come to Goa just to fulfill their aims. They have their “Goa Manipuri Meitei Association in Goa” located at Mapusa which works for the welfare of their own community members, communicates with them, and builds a good relationship among the members and help their members financially. This association is working for the upliftment of their community. Manipuris may not be Goans, but as the citizen of India they have right to live with their unique living pattern. We should create space for them to foster their culture which is not only their culture, but also a subject of pride over the world for us. Some of them are staying in Goa since last fifteen years, some have completed more than five years. They are scattered in various villages of North and South Goa. They are also found in Agassaim, Pilar, Calangute, Goa velha, Porvorim, Caranzalem, Vasco etc. They are very much satisfied having lived in Goa.

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