

Rural Settlement Transformation System in Manipur: A Case Study of Sunusiphai Village in Imphal Valley

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Abstract: The problem of human settlements has emerged as one of the most challenging issue confronting the humanity today while the world is at the crossroads of a successful breakthrough in inter planetary space mobility, consequent upon the scientific and technological revolution. In this fact, the study of rural settlement and its transformation arises into necessity. The study attempts the transformation of rural habitat particularly in Sunusiphai Village. The village (94°45' E and 24°31' N) located along the Imphal Churachandpur Road (Tiddim Road). As the village is near to the Loktak Lake, there is plenty of agricultural land in the west of the village, the main occupation of the village is oriented in fishing and cultivation of rice. Out of the total population about 82% are workers of which 60% depend upon cultivation and fishing. The real growth of the village started in the last quarter of the 20th century and since then unprecedented development has taken place in every field like demographic, occupational and infrastructural changes. Regarding literacy, there is an abrupt change from 18.67% in 1961 to 68.03% in 2015.

Key Words: Rural settlement, transformation, demography, occupational structure, rural habitat, peneplain.

INTRODUCTION:

Sunusiphai is a village of Bishnupur District, Manipur. It is located in the south west of Manipur Central Valley, 11 km away from district headquarter, Bishnupur. It is extended between 24°10' and 24°45' North latitude and 94°45' and 94°52' East longitude. The altitude of the village is 822.18 m above sea level. It is bounded by Loktak Lake in the east, Phubala village in the North, Hills in the West and Naranseina village in the South. The village occupies an area of 619.60 acres. It is divided into two Leikais i.e. MamangLeikai (eastern part) and ManingLeikai (western parts of the village). It is under the jurisdiction of Phubala Gram Panchayat and administrative office is lying at Shunusiphai village and their tributaries. The type of the river system of Shunusiphai village is of the lower Sunushiphai village may be divided into three parts viz. (i) Plain area (ii) Area under water and (iii) Area under hillocks and forest. The village drained by Shunusiphai River, Sanathoibi River, Mayangkhang River, recourse and it occurs deposition. Thus, peneplain, flood plain and deltas are formed. The rivers flow from hills heated at the west and flow towards the east falling into the Loktak Lake. These rivers provide water for the purpose of agricultural activities and other domestic purposes. People's ways of life, as well as other physico-cultural activities are governed by the climate in one way or the other. According to Dr. W. Keoppen's classification, the study area falls under the Sub-tropical (CWA) monsoon type of climate. Being a plain area the village enjoys the pleasant climate. Influenced by Loktak Lake the land surrounding the lakes are foggy in the winter morning but not feeling too cold. The cold season lasts from November to February and January is the coldest month. Most of the rainfalls occur during the period from April to October. The distribution of rainfall is generally higher in the hilly portions of the state in the same way this village is as well than plain areas. Thus, average annual rainfall is 1204.2 millimetres.

DATABASE AND METHODOLOGY:

The present study is based on both primary and secondary sources of data. Primary data have been gathered by field surveys through questionnaire interviews held during 2014 – 15. Secondary sources of data were obtained from various government records, statistical records, gazetteers, censuses handbooks etc. The decadal growths regarding population, occupational structure and literacy pertaining to the village are analyzed as a part

of transformation. The infrastructural development is also one of the major part in the study of rural transformation. The levels of infrastructural development have been measured in terms of facilities like transport, communication, education, health, recreation, sports facilities, electricity, water supply and other use of mechanized farm equipments. The dynamics of basic infrastructural development were measured at two points of time spread over five decades i.e. 1961 to 2015. In designing the body of the research works, most of the sources for ready references. Here, suitable tables, maps and diagrams have been depicted, as regards the techniques of mapping and construction of diagrams general principles have also been followed.

It is being realized that change is an inherent quality of human society. As our survey reveals, the village has undergone considerable changes during the last 50 years or so. The real growth of the village started in the last quarter of the 20th century and since then unprecedented developments have taken place in every field of the village’s life. These developments have contributed much to the interval structure of the village which will be the subject of our discussion in the following aspects.

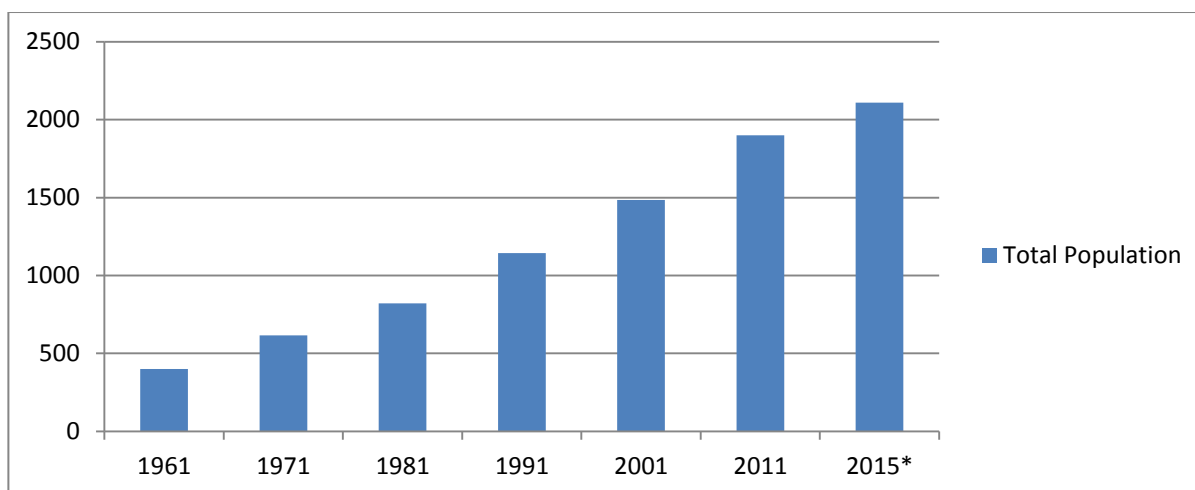
DEMORGRAPHIC CHANGES:

The village has experienced a very high decadal growth rate of population between (1961 – 2015). In 1961 the population of Shunusiphai village was 401 which leaped to 2109 in 2015. Similarly, the growth of population during last 54 years had increased abundantly i.e. more than five times in the village especially at the eastern part of the Tiddim road. This is due to the fact that this eastern part is more convenient for catching fish and establishment of new fish farms. The following table indicates the population growth of the village during 1961 – 2015. At present there is little artificial check in the natural growth of population and the village’s population is found to increase faster than before with lower death rate and increased medical facilities.

Table – 1
TREND OF POPULATION GROWTH OF SHUNUSIPHAI VILLAGE DURING 1961 – 2015

Year	Total Population	Decadal variation
1961	401	
1971	617	(+) 216
1981	822	(+) 205
1991	1143	(+) 321
2001	1485	(+) 342
2011	1900	(+) 415
2015*	2109	(+) 209

Source : Base on Census Volume of India (1961 – 2011) and Personal Field Source : Base on Census Volume of India (1961 – 2011) and Personal investigation. Source :



* The population of 2015 is mentioned by the help of personal field survey.

From the above table it is noted that there is steady growth of population during the decades 1961 to 1981 but there is slight sudden increase of population in the decadal period from 1981 to 1991. This was caused due to the improvements of basic health care services and migration from other surroundings villages like Phubala, Naranseina and Thanga etc. In the trend of population growth of the village from 1961 to 2015 no declination was perceived. The positive growth of population of the village includes both the natural increase and the gain by migration.

OCCUPATIONAL CHANGES:

The occupational structure of population also exhibits a similar trend. The percentage of working population engaged in primary, secondary and tertiary activities has been increased proportionately. Another interesting aspect that we find in recent years in the village is that there is considerably a change in the occupational structure. Shunusiphai is a multi- occupational village, and no single occupation except that of cultivation and fishing occupies 20% of the total village households. Recent field survey reveals that most of the youths of the village were in favour of a change of their occupation, 55% wanted to enter into service, 17.5% wanted to become businessmen (traders) and only 7.5% wanted to enter into become cultivators. These current trends give an impression that most of the households are interested in the change of their occupation and wish that their sons should give more attention towards new innovations in their occupation.

NEW RESIDENTIAL BUILDING:

It may further be noticed that within a short period of 54 years (1961 – 2015) a large number of houses sprang up all over the village. In 1961, the total number of houses of the village was 66 which increased to 421 in 2015. Further it is also remarkable that the majority of the new houses were semi-Pakka. The old parts of the village also managed to build a few ‘pakka’ and “semi-pakka” houses. Thus, the village has developed into a great extent with the initiation of this century.

LITERACY TRENDS:

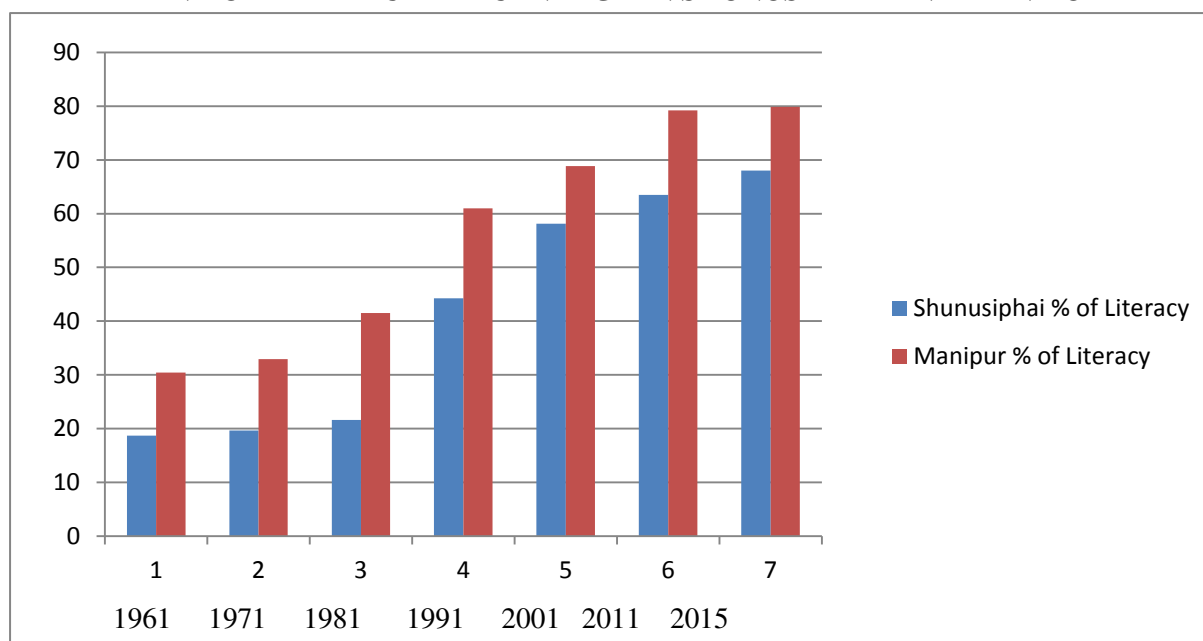
Regarding literacy there is a tendency of increase in the number of literates in 1981. Out of 401 persons in Shunusiphai in 1961, only 74 were considered to be literate, i.e. 18.7% of the total population. In the group 17.2% were male and 1.52% females. Percentage of literates and educated persons however, rose to 63.5 in the village in 2015. Thus, the village has made much progress in education since 1981. This will be clear from the following table.

Table – 2
LITERACY PERCENTAGE IN SHUNUSIPHAI AND MANIPUR, 1961 – 2015

Year	Shunusiphai P.C. of Literacy	Manipur P.C of Literacy
1961	18.67	30.42
1971	19.62	32.91
1981	21.62	41.52
1991	44.24	60.96
2001	58.16	68.87
2011	63.50	79.21
2015	68.03	79.85

Source : *Census Volume of India (Manipur) and Field work.*

Fig – 2
TREND OF LITERACY PERCENTAGE IN SHUNUSIPHAI AND MANIPUR



The detailed study of the above table reveals a remarkable rise in the literacy percentage during last three decades. The impact of the five year plans is evidently visible in the growth of literacy rates of Shunusiphai during the last 34 years. Thus it can be concluded that literacy rates of this village is lower than that of the state literacy rate in every decades. It is further observed that with the increasing number of school going children, teachers and sound economy of the villagers may be the main thrust to rise up the literacy rates as well as the disparity between male and female literacy showed a considerable decrease. It can, thus be concluded that the number of literates, educated and highly educated professional teachers have gone up in the recent past particularly in this village.

DEVELOPMENT OF TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATION:

As the village located along the Tiddim Road (ImphalChurachandpur Road) the village has good transportation since the past days but the transportation was done by bullockcart, now a-days it is completely changed. Such transportation had been completely represented by bus and trucks. Numbers of vehicles are very frequent in this route because it connects with Moirang and Churachandpur. Frequency of traffic flow is also congested in this route. From the village to the state capital Imphal it takes only 45 minutes by bus.

It is further proved by the fact that recent improvement of roads and the introduction of bus services between the village and Imphal during the past two or three decades have benefited the villagers so far as their socio-economic life is concerned. Because, due to the existence of daily and regular bus services between Imphal and Moirang as well as Churachandpur, the inhabitants of the village can go comfortably to Imphal for selling their products and for buying things by spending little amount of money as bus-fare. Thus, the contact of the villagers with the urban people becomes regular and frequent. Consequently, it brings a gradual change in the modes of dress and habits of the villagers. Indeed, the place of the village in the economic and social structure of the region may be said to be gradually improved. In the field of communication also the village has post office, telephone connection and mobile phone signal. Therefore at any moment people could communicate to other parts of the country.

CHANGES IN LAND-USE (1961 - 2015):

In the last two decades have witnessed some visible changes in the village, both in its morphology and functions mainly to the extension of the village limit. Now, the village settlement area is quite expanded towards east direction. The land use pattern also quit changed with the formation of new fishfirms, establishment of

schools, veterinary office club houses and health centers. Thus the land use pattern of the village has undergone a considerable change within the last two decades.

AGRICULTURAL SITUATION AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL:

Shunusipahi is an agrarian village that requires special attention for the upliftment of the areas. In the context of agricultural situation, the village is not in a position to serve fully its people. The basic agricultural problems of the village include lack of proper credit facilities for agricultural development, uncertainty of rainfall, inadequate of water supply for irrigation, lack of proper channelization of agricultural product from village to market, lack of proper chemical fertilizer, poor communication facilities, lack of effective agricultural policies and programmes, etc. Due to tradition as system of agriculture the yield of rice and other dominating crops is comparatively low. Several efforts have been made to promote the level of agricultural development, but until now the agricultural situation of the village has not improved much. For increasing the output of agricultural production, it is necessary to provide better quality seeds, chemical fertilizers, compost and insecticides. Through the agricultural extension schemes, farmers should be educated so that they may effectively utilize modern techniques of farming. There should also be loan arrangement for purchasing agricultural equipments. With such provision it is expected that the double cropped and triple cropped land will certainly be increased and the required goal would be achieved.

INFRA-STRUCTURAL ACTIVITIES AND RURAL NETWORK:

In basic infrastructures elements like road, housing condition, post office, school, health centre, public pond, electrification, school, etc. have to be developed properly. Although the village lacks good quality of road facility, yet the most of Leikai (wards) are inter-connected by the village paths and passage ways, however, their condition is very bad i.e. very muddy during rainy season and very dusty during dry season.

The present housing conditions of the village is very poor. More than half of the houses are Katcha. Improvement in housing conditions in this village is considered essential to provide a neat, clean and healthy life. On the basis of the present growth trend of population and housing requirements, it is estimated that by 2021 A.D. another houses will be required in the village at a ratio of 5.2 persons / household.

There is one Junior high school in the village which provides educational facilities up to class VIII. For higher educated the student have to move Moirang college (5km) from the village. There are 4 and 5 shops in the village. This fulfil the daily need of the villagers. For general clothing requirements a person contacts the nearby market place of Moirang and Bishnupur while to purchase costly cloths and garments, jewelry, etc. they visit big shops of Imphal city. It is notable that since independence the tendency to enjoy various facilities has been growing among the villagers as well; however, the scale and degree of such facilities vary with the economic status of the people and no longer by social status.

In general, the health of the villagers is not up to the mark, mainly due to the lack of balanced diet (speciallylabour and middle class). The village is served by a dispensary located at the middle part of the village. Among diseases anemia, dysentery and tuberculosis are prevalent in the village. There are some psycho-somatic problems among the women due to family disputes and conflicts. The general illness and prevalence of diseases are mostly associated with the environmental pollution caused through open sewage disposal and contaminated water. Another important general cause for ill health is unbalanced diet.

After assessing the different aspects of the village, it has been estimated that by 2021 A.D. about 6% of land will be needed for further expansion of settlements. To improve the existing position of the village provision for better condition part of the village and one playground should be made available in the village. With the consultation and common agreement of the villagers, the sites for each establishment have to be settled. In fact, the success of village of development programmes will depend upon an ideal combination of local, state, regional and central government system.

FINDINGS:

On the basis of the analysis of the present work, the following observation were highlighted.

PROBLEMS:

Shunusiphai village poses the following main problems viz :

- The present agricultural condition of the village is not in position to serve fully its people. Lack of irrigation facilities and lack of flood control is the biggest stumbling block in the development of the village.
- The coverage and capacity of the existing village roads are insufficient to meet the needs of the village.
- From the health service view-point, the conditions in this village are not satisfactory at all. The existing dispensary located at phubala could not meet the local needs. Due to the inadequate facilities within the village; one has to rush to Moirang and Bishnupur or Imphal when an emergency arises.
- The existing housing condition of the village is very poor. More than 50% of the total houses are still kutcha and in dilapidated condition.
- Another main problem of the village is the recent growth of population at an alarming rate. At present, there is lack of artificial check in the natural growth of population in the village.

PROSPECTS :

The problems having by the village have been realized by both the state and Central Government and considerable efforts have been made in the Five Year Plans to improve some of the situations.

- Several efforts have been made to promote the level of agricultural development in the village. For increasing the agricultural production, the Agricultural department. Government of Manipur has provided better quality of seeds, chemical fertilizers, compost and insecticides. Recently, the government has also made loan arrangement for purchasing agricultural equipments at the reasonable subsidized rates. With such provision it may be expected that the double cropped and triple cropped land in and around the agricultural fields of the village will certainly be increased and the required goals for 2021 would be achieved.
- There is a proposal to upgrade in existing dispensary center at Phubalaup to the status of a Primary Health Centre during the 10th Plan and it would provide at least minimum needs of the state.
- As a plan of the Loktak Development Project the state Government and Central Government have taken various steps to control the siltation of Loktak Lake and floods given to the paddy fields in the surrounding villages.
- As our survey reveals, the housing conditions of the village has undergone considerable changes during the last two decades due to the better socio-economic conditions of the villagers.
- As discussed earlier, the population of this village has more than four times within the last 54 years (1961 - 2015). If the population of this village is allowed to grow unchecked, it is expected that the Population will more than double itself within the need two decades or so. However, it is observed that the increase of population in the village can be reduced to a considerable extent by the postponement of marriage, say up to 22-25 years, and by some controls of family planning. During the course of our field investigations in the village, it was revealed that there has been in increase in the age of marriage of both males and females. In fact among the educated youths of the village late marriage has become a general practice.

CONCLUSION:

Socially, economically, culturally, politically, Shunusiphai is changing and such a change is visible in every walk of life. The growth of recent rural marketing and transportation at Shunusiphai tends to influence the

whole socio-economic milieu of the village and emerges as centers of power. This has given rise to a continuing process of transformation of a rural society to an urban society. Davis rightly observed that this process of transformation of society is giving rise to a number of problems due to the fast changing pattern of spatial interaction. Nevertheless, the degree of urbanization in an area is after index of the level of its socio - economic development. With the result, there is a change in the altitude of the people. It, thus refers to a revolutionary change in the pattern of social life of the village.

Keeping in view of the various aspects of rural transformation, the factor of the degree of development of means of transportation is one of the most vital factor in the transformation of rural Society of the village under study. In fact, much of the interaction envisaged in the process of rural transformation depends largely upon the degree of regional mobility. Thus, the development of means of transportation and communication will break the rural isolation which may result in accelerating community activity between countryside and urban places. Thus the nature and magnitude of rural transformation is governed largely by the nature of its economy, social life and demographic character.

Before we conclude this study we would like to re-examine the assumption with which we stated in order to see whether the growth of the village under study has been generative or otherwise. The improvement in the availability of civic amenities such as water supply, lighting arrangements, roads streets etc. is a positive indication of the growth of the village. This indicates that most of the household in the village possess those amenities a sign of growth. Considering the overall situation, it can be stated that the standard of normal way of life in this village has been improved upto a reasonable limit.

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