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**The Economic, Cultural and
Social Life of Bahnar People
Sustainable Development**

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SUMMARY

- Mang Yang district is the longstanding residence of the Bahnar people.
 - Some programs (135 and 327 projects and ADB project) → a positive influence on the economic development of ethnic minorities in Mang Yang district.
 - “Kinhization” → changes in values of traditional cultural and ethnic cultural identities.
- the study of traditional culture and its current transformation has a practical scientific significance

History Of Each Hamlet

→ process of formation of each village, from the establishment till today (2009):

- history of villages in Lo Pang commune: Hlim village, Roh village, and Chup village, etc.
- history of villages in Kon Thup commune: Chuk village, Groi village, Đak Ponang village, etc.

History Of Each Hamlet

- process of immigration of the Kinh, Tay and Nung groups and their impacts on Polei village of the Bahnars
- Data on the number of households, “*rong* home”, housing, schools and economic, cultural, social, and political events related to the change of the Bahnar villages
- several suggestions for developing the economy, culture and society for the Bahnars proposed

Economic Activities

→ livelihoods in the traditional and modern ways

1. The traditional economy section:

- hunting (deer, boars, fish, etc.)
- gathering (popular vegetables)
- freely breeding (mainly buffaloes, pigs, cows) by natural methods
- Planting: "tree cutting - clearance - burning – scattering seed – rain waiting"
- traditional industries: textile weaving, mat weaving and knitting.

Economic Activities

2. *The modern economy section:* replacement of traditional production methods with modern ones and their impacts on ecological environment.
- Participation of the Bahnar community in forest management and afforestation
 - Adoption of new cultivation technique and new crop varieties
 - how the Bahnars exchange their goods and hire labor
 - the availability of the credit system
- some practical solutions and proposals for the development of traditional economy, modern economy, business, and official credit system

Material Culture

→ the whole complexion of habitation, houses, dress, musical instruments, cuisine, means of transportation, etc.

□ **Polei:** The complexion of traditional co-habitation

- cells of Bahnar community
- cultural traits of the Bahnars
- basic unit of social organization
- influenced by different factors (nature conditions, history background, economic activities, social environment, etc.)

Material Culture

- *Musical instruments:* becoming rare
- Only some basic musical instruments are preserved at communal house and in some families
- Only used in the buffalo–stabbing festival and funeral rituals
- Western musical instruments encroach traditional musical instruments
- will no longer be present in festivals in the near future

Material Culture

□ *Gastronomy*

- source of food: plentiful and diversified (yams, sweet potatoes, banana tubers, fruits in the forest, birds, mice, seafood, insects, bamboo shoots, etc.)
- raising cattle and poultry
- planting some kinds of vegetables and fruits at home or on terraced field (gourds, pumpkins, chilies, pineapples, etc.)
- fish, chicken, pork and beef are rarely present in daily meals

Material Culture

□ *Gastronomy*

For drinking:

- partly influenced and replaced by the gastronomy of the Kinh
- Traditional gastronomy is only present in festivals and rituals
- “todro”: a favorite drink of old people only
- Bahnars young men prefer drinking white wine of the Kinh

Material Culture

□ *Modern means of transport*

- Traditional means of transport: papoose
- Honda motorcycles and tractor-pulled ploughs: not preferred → polluted the environment
- Utensils to contain water such as the gourd are also replaced with plastic jars and bottles
- If no recommendations or solutions are proposed → plastic things and nylons in this area cause ecological environmental pollution

Social Culture

→ the relationships in the society of Bahnar people

□ ***Kinship***: a basic social structure

- identified by the blood lines including family lines, marriage and family bonds
- the society of a clan develops its own kinship system
- complicated → no specific conclusion until today

□ ***Relationship***

- the Bahnars do not include family names in their full names
- all members are related to both the father and the mother's sides

Social Culture

□ *Marriage and Family*

For marriage:

- Their principle of marriage: *“to marry a person not belonging to the family but not necessarily so”*
- The Bahnars practice exogamy, but not very strictly
- Girls and boys are supposed to get married at their adolescence (from 13 to 18 years old). Resulted from:
 - low rate of literacy
 - lack of understanding of the law
 - influence of sexual materials and long-lasting festivals

Social Culture

□ *Marriage and Family*

For family: a great family of 3-4 generations → a small family of 2 generations

- social activeness of many individuals
 - ensures economic and social functions in the village and commune's scope
 - positively influenced to labor assignment, with a tendency of increasing men's responsibility of managing family economy
- => partly broken Bahnar people's traditional social structure

Social Culture

□ *Genders and the role of genders in family and society of the Bahnars*

- the division of labour is always clear and infringes the limits of age and generation.
- gender attendance level in economic and social development influenced by:
 - traditional customs
 - property inheritance
 - education
 - access to information

Spirit Culture

- Bahnar's belief: everything in the earth even human beings was created by gods → Gods play an important role in Bahnar life.
- Rituals are also closely connected with Bahnar's festivals: *Samah yang dak* (ceremony of water source), *samah yang ba* (ceremony of new rice harvest) and buffalo stabbing
 - buffalo stabbing: biggest for having both rituals and festivals
 - the other two festivals are nearly disappearing (as a result of the influence and adjustment of government policy, people consciousness, etc.)

Spirit Culture

- **Literatures and arts:** legends, proverbs, folksongs and riddles
- Folksongs and children's songs are two major components of Bahnar's music: nearly fade into obscurity lately
- Dance is mainly performed in festive seasons in order to serve various beliefs and rituals activities: sink into oblivion

Spirit Culture

□ Customary law

- An elder committee (3 - 8 elders of the villages): provide solutions and advices for all problems and issues in the villages based on the customary law
- They act as mediator
- includes regulation of the village, public order in the village and rules to preserve environment

Spirit Culture

- The regulation of a village not only enacts for residents of the village but also for strangers
- Everyone should follow public order: love and help each other; actions of outraging the elder, perturbing others and stealing from others are not accepted, even fined.
- Each village has its own rules to protect and preserve environment particularly soil and water
 - drain water: most important
 - aid of the government and some international organization → water issue has improved

CONCLUSION

- present all factors impacting the local economy and life of the Bahnars → establish a scientific basis for socio-economic development of Lo Pang and Kon Thup communes
- proposed solutions and warnings based on collected data from the reality of the two communes → contribution to implement the project of rural economic development in the area