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
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


- 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
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 $\rightarrow$ 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

$\Rightarrow$ 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 đak* (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
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