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Traditional Life of the Moyons

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Abstract- Moyon tribe is located in the Chandel district of the state. Food and drink plays an important part in their social life. Rice is their principal food and they consume rice beer, which is obtained from fermented rice. The attires of the Moyons are of different colours and designs and they are related to their history and culture. They are all designed and woven by women from time immemorial. In ancient days, they prepared the yarn from certain plants and cotton they grew themselves. It took them time but they managed to prepare and weave for their needs. The traditional shawls worn by both men and women are called peen. During festivals, they adorned themselves with different types of ornaments. While performing the dance they would embellish themselves with beautiful ornaments and colourful dresses. Women decorated themselves with ornaments made of shells and animal bones. Men dressed up with headgear of tail feathers of hornbill which signified the promise made between their forefathers and the birds when they came out from the cave. There was also dormitory system only for the boys. One of the ways by which the customs and social values of the people are transmitted from one generation to the next is through folk tales and folk dances.

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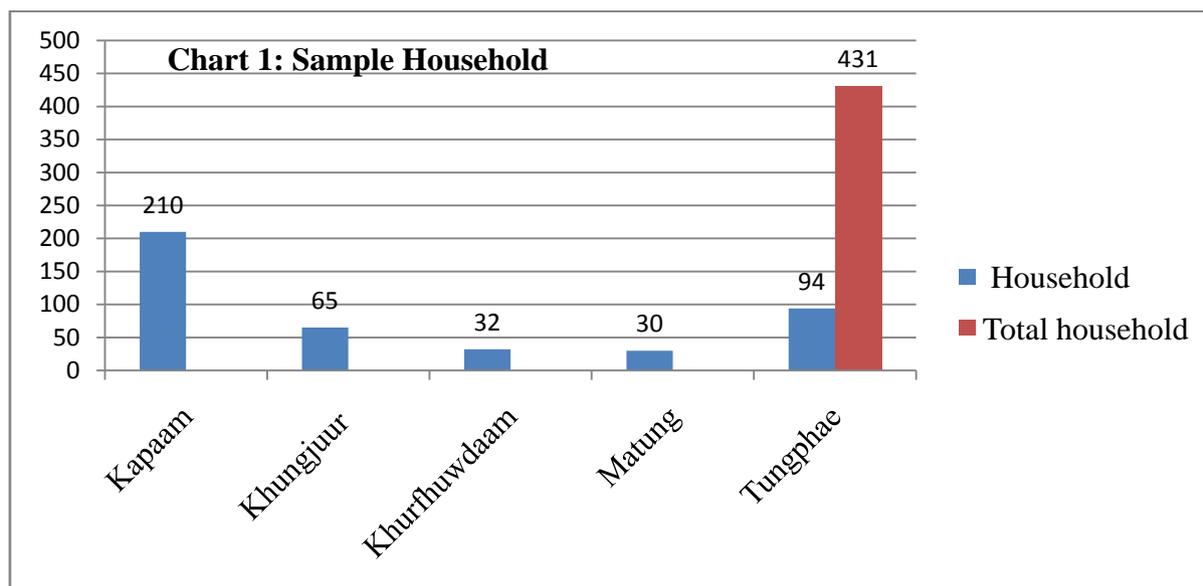
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I. INTRODUCTION

In the Royal Chronicles of Manipur, Moyon tribe has been mentioned in a few episodes of war with the Meitei kings such as “Mongyamba in 1580 A.D” (Singh, 1998, p.171). Moyons are located in the Chandel district of Manipur. Chandel district is linked to the Myanmar town called Tamu to facilitate trade between both the countries.

Bujuur is the indigenous name of the Moyon tribe and their common language is *Bujuurchong*. They belong to the Indo-Mongoloid group of race and speak the Tibeto-Burman branch of the Sino-Tibetan group of language (Moyon, 2006, p.3). They are located in eighteen villages in Chandel district, Manipur. Some of these villages have both indigenous and government recognized names. For the sake of convenience, the indigenous names are retained all through the study.

Five sample villages have been selected purposively for intensive study. It is observed that Kapaam has 210 households, Khungjuur has 65 households, Khurfhuwdaam has 32 households, Matung has 30 and Tungphae has 94 households. The total number of sample households is 431.



Source: Field Study.

Chart 1 : Depicts the sample household

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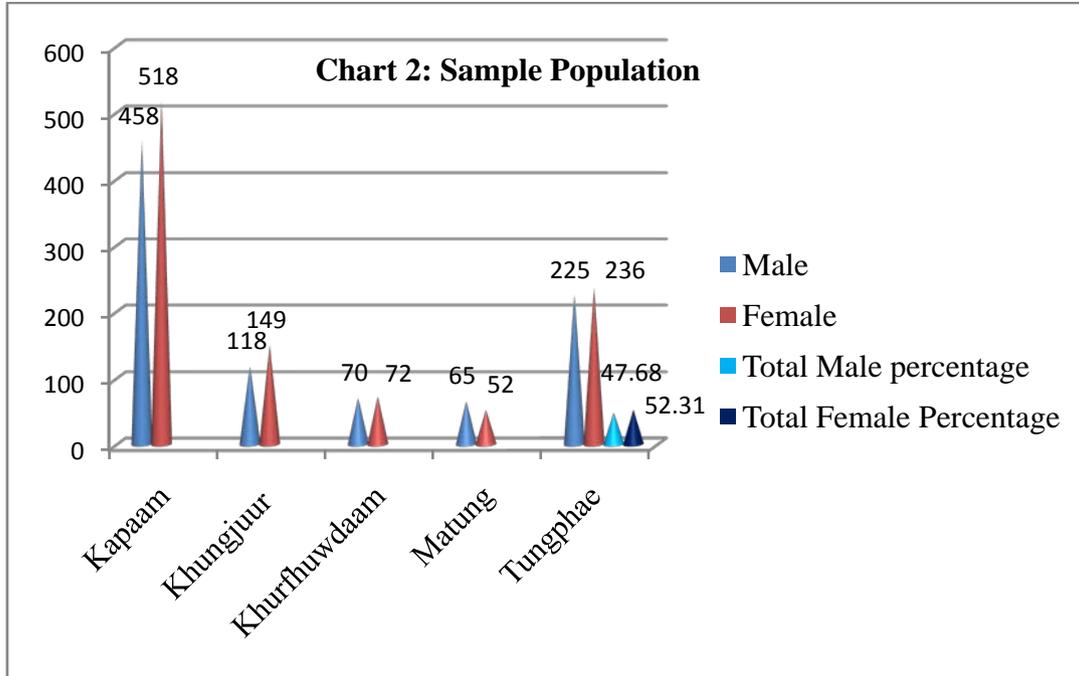
Table 1 depicts that the total population of five samples is 1963 of which 936 are males and 1027 are females. The percentage of male is 47.68% and the

percentage of female is 52.32%. The female ratio is higher than that of male by 4.64%.

Table 1 : Sample Population

	Sample Village	Male	Female	Total Male and Female
1.	Kapaam	458 (46.92%)	518 (53.07%)	976
2.	Khungjuur	118 (44.19%)	149 (55.80%)	267
3.	Khurfhuwdaam	70 (49.29%)	72 (50.70%)	142
4.	Matung	65 (55.55%)	52 (44.44%)	117
5.	Tungphae	225 (48.80%)	236 (51.19%)	461
	Total	936 (47.68%)	1027 (52.32%)	1963

Source: Field Study



Source: Field study

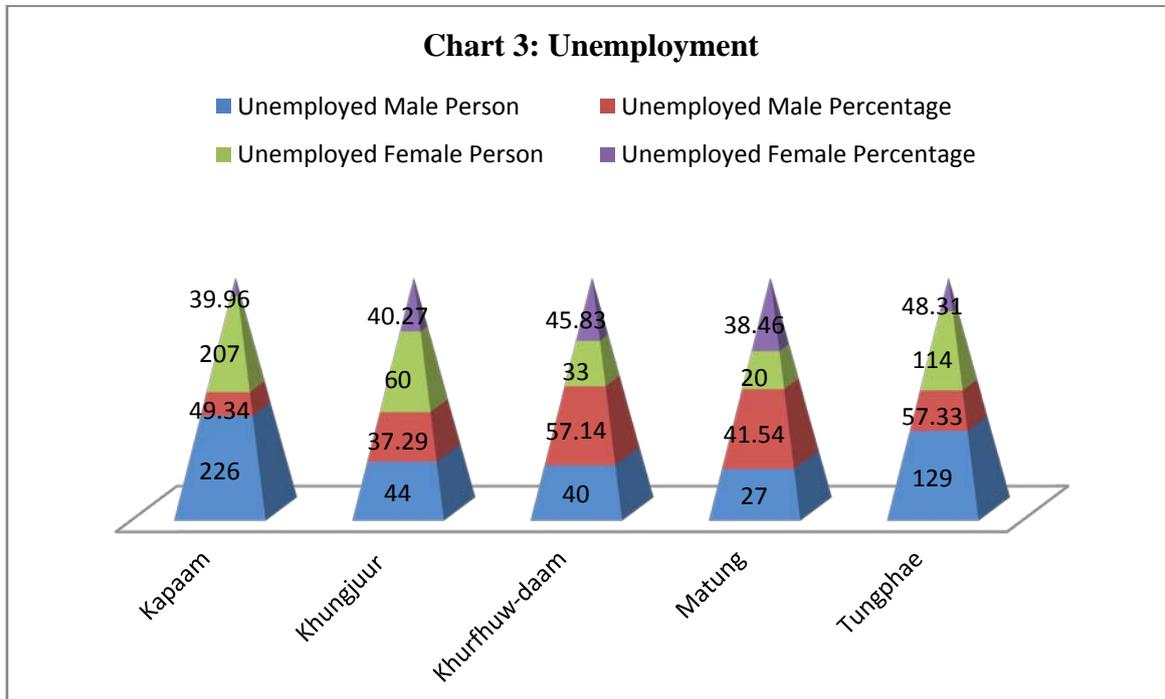
Chart 1.2 : Illustrates the sample population of both males and females

In (Rangya Gachui, 2007, p.56), UNO (1970) defines literacy as the ability of a person to read and write with understanding a short simple statement in his/her everyday life. Literacy can be both formal and informal. Table 2 illustrates the literacy status of the sample villages.

Table 2 : Literacy Status

Village	Total Literate		Total Illiterate		Total Population		
	M	F	M	F	M	F	MF
Kapaam	458 (46.92%)	517 (52.97%)	0 (0%)	1 (0.10%)	458	518	976
Khungjuur	118 (44.19%)	149 (55.80%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	118	149	267
Khurfhuwdaam	70 (49.29%)	72 (50.70%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	70	72	142
Matung	64 (54.70%)	52 (44.44%)	1 (0.85%)	0 (0%)	65	52	117
Tungphae	225 (48.80%)	236 (51.91%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	225	236	461
Total	935 (47.63%)	1026 (52.26%)	1 (0.10%)	1 (0.09%)	936 (47.68%)	1027 (52.31%)	1963

Source: Field Study



Source: Field Study

Chart 3 : Illustrates the unemployment of the sample villages

The total literacy of both male and female of the sample villages is 99.89%. The total illiteracy of the sample population is one male and one female only. While the percentage of literacy is high, the percentage of literate unemployed youths of both genders is also high. It is observed that the total number of both male and female unemployed of the sample population is 45.84%.

The principle objective of the present study is to make an ethnographic study of the past and to document the cultural heritage of the people so that the younger generation and future scholars can benefit it for deeper and further research. The present paper adopts field study method through direct experience, household survey, observation, case studies and interviews with relevant informants while analyzing the empirical findings analytically and scientifically. Moreover, my identity as a Moyon gives better advantage for an amicable approach and hence collection of data was made easier and more objective.

The present paper attempts to examine the *traditional life of the Moyons* before India's independence i.e., 1947. It may be mentioned that the Moyons did not have much written history in the past except their rich oral traditions in the form of folklores which are passed on from generations to generations. It examines the different traditional life of the Moyons such as food and drink, attires, ornaments, dormitory system, folk tales, folk literature, folk songs, folk dance, music and instruments, games and sports, social taboos, etc.

Food and Drink: Food and drink plays an important part in the social life of the Moyons. They are the means whereby sharing is practiced and friendships are maintained among the communities. Rice is the principal food of the people. *Naenthubuw* (steamed rice) and *ithaebuw* (sticky rice) are some famous dishes. Vegetables like pumpkin, cucumber, gourds, beans, chillies, Job's tears, sweet potato, varieties of tubers, sesamum, etc., are cultivated and consumed. Edible wild leaves and fruits also form most of their food-stuff. People consume rice beer, which is obtained from fermented rice. Roasted meat of domestic or wild animals and dried fish are common. Bamboo-shoot, wild tea leaves form part of the diet. Certain habits like chewing or smoking of tobacco in pipes were also practiced in the past. The different seasons of the year viz., winter, spring, autumn and summer determine the food habits of the people, for they greatly depend on the natural grown plants for their food. The people drink indigenous soup with different types of vegetables such as pumpkin leaves, passion leaves, raw papayas, cabbage, mustard leaves, beans, banana leaves, etc. Moyons enjoy *champhuk* (boiled vegetables) and eat various natural grown plants and *thingshuw* (chutney) leaves. Some of the local names of such varieties are as follows: *shaven*, *shaapa*, *kiriim*, *sheersah*, *waktumder*, *pakep*, *patin*, *parchiip*, *batiim*, *bashuwarow*, *rikniing*, etc. Some of the local delicacies are *juungchah* (perkiaroxburghii), *buroshtuw* (king chilli), *ngathuw* (fermented fish), *bayaangngathuw* (fermented beans), *aethuw* (a kind of onion leaves), *shopum* (fermented

bamboo shoots), *entuw* (fresh bamboo shoots), *nachang* (banana stems), etc.

Attires: The attires are of different colours and designs and they are related to Moyon history and culture. They are all designed and woven by women from time immemorial. In ancient days, they prepared the yarn from certain plants and cotton they grew themselves. It took them time but they managed to prepare and weave for their needs. The traditional shawls worn by both men and women are called *peen*. The men folk usually wore headgear and wrapped up with white cloth.

The following Table 3 illustrates the attires for men:

Table 3 : Attires for Men

1.	<i>Kuurkam peen</i>	6.	<i>Lashen peen</i>	11.	<i>Lapoh peen</i>
2.	<i>Laangam peen</i>	7.	<i>Langtom peen</i>	12.	<i>Lukhaang</i>
3.	<i>Vangjam peen</i>	8.	<i>Langphae peen</i>	13.	White head turban
4.	<i>Laarchang peen</i>	9.	<i>lthor peen</i>		
5.	<i>Lathing peen</i>	10.	<i>Duupzih peen</i>		

Source: Field study

a) *Kuurkam Peen:* *Kuurkam peen* depicts the memory of the famous and extraordinary “*iruwng*” or king of the Moyons named “*Kuurkam*”. The shawl is of four colours, viz., black, red, green and white each symbolizing their history, their hopes and aspirations and also the extraordinary gifts and qualities of their king. It is a multi-coloured shawl signifying the stages of Moyon civilization.



b) *Laangam Peen:* *Laangam* was a legendary hero of the Moyons who was believed to have gone round the world. It was also a belief that he made an attempt to reach heaven by a ladder using his magical powers. But before he could reach his target, the ladder broke at its foot as it was eaten by white ants which, it is said, he forgot to appease earlier. It took him years to come home as he is said to have fallen on the other end of the world. By the time *Laangam* reached home, his first daughter

who was born in his absence grew up to a marriageable age. This whole episode is called “*Laangamthangtah*” and to commemorate this, the shawl is woven. It is black and blue stripes with ‘*shabakureh*’ (bags of paddy). After harvest people take home their crops in *shabaku* (a basket made of cane and bamboo; cloth bag using white shawl). The clothes are usually woven and are called *Langphae peen* or shawl. The *shabaku* represents the cultural life as well as the wealth of the people who performed feast of merit called “*ikam*” because one could do so only when one had more than sufficient. The shawl is used by both males and females.



c) *Vangjam peen:* *Vangjam peen* is a combination of black and red colours. *Vangjam* was the bosom friend of king *Kuurkam*. The colours signify the sorrow and the danger due to the treacherous death of their king whom they esteemed so much in the person of *Nguwruw Kuurkam*. Red and black striped shawl with *sabakureh* or designs is named after the bosom friend *arupa* of king *Kuurkam* mentioned above. After the killing of king *Kuurkam* by his enemy, *Vangjam* too faced danger. The shawl is meant for both men and women.



d) *Laarchang peen:* This is a special shawl for courageous noble hearted and generous wealthy

people as the term indicates. It is manifested in the performance of feast of merit “*ikam*” having eight stages. *Laarchang peen* (shawl) is being woven with designs which are of different shapes. The prominent ones are ‘*sharings*’ and the animal, heads and others. It is originally meant for those special people mentioned above.

There are shawls commonly used and most of them are white except two which are woven from a plant called “*lathing*” and another one brownish in colour. These are *lathing*, *lashen*, *langtom*, *langphae*, *ithor*, *duupziih*, *lapoh*, etc. *Langphae peen* which consists of off-white and reddish colours made from the barks of particular trees and used by men for the night. Men in the past wore white head turban.

Table 4 : Attires for Women

1.	<i>Changkak</i>	13.	<i>Kungkunginih</i>
2.	<i>Lummuwpeensuwmm</i>	14.	<i>Kuurkiinih</i>
3.	<i>Lungven</i>	15.	<i>Lamtaanginih</i>
4.	<i>Lukhaang</i>	16.	<i>Kungbenginih</i>
5.	<i>Lukhum</i>	17.	<i>Duupziihinih</i>
6.	<i>Khungarnuw</i>	18.	<i>Riikiinih</i>
7.	<i>Inih</i>	19.	<i>Shungnunginih</i>
8.	<i>Tudeeninih</i>	20.	<i>Thiinavifuwinih</i>
9.	<i>Shamjeerinih</i>	21.	<i>Pikhuwnginih</i>
10.	<i>Khungarnuwinih</i>	22.	<i>Poihyngghir</i>
11.	<i>Aarshuumpainih</i>	23.	<i>Laengki</i>
12.	<i>Tongtingpainih</i>		

Source: Field study.

Table 4 illustrates the attires of women. Women in the past wore *changkak* tied around their waist and wore also *lummuw peen suwmm* around their shoulder. Even today during the festivals they wear the full set of traditional attires. For instance during the *ikam* festival the women wear *sarong* which is also called *inih* made of different colours like red, green, black, yellow, etc.

The following is a brief explanation of *sarong* or *inih* (women’s wear) which consists of different colours, designs and significance.

- *Tudeeninih* is a *sarong* named after a capable and a beautiful lady named “*Tudeen*”. The background of the *sarong* is usually red with *tingpi* design at the two ends. It is used on special occasions by aged women. Any background of green, black, blue is also used. *Khungarnuwinih* is a special *sarong* having varieties of designs depicting natural gifts and productions. It is worn during feast of merit called “*ikam*” by dancers.



- *Aarshuumpainih* (praying mantis): There is a Moyon folk tale about a woman named Lungnuw who married a lazy squirrel. She worked very hard but her husband harassed her often. Many animals promised to avenge her but none could do it. It was finally *Aarshuumpa* that came to her rescue. In gratitude, Lungnuw gave it two shawls which were *peendum* and *peenlang*. Once a designer saw the insect, she observed it carefully, wove it and called it “*aarsshuumpainih*”.
- *Tongtingpainih*: The Moyons believe that spiders keep the house firm with their cobwebs. They further believe that the spider has strong and good teeth. So whenever a milk tooth falls, he/she addresses the *tongtingpa* (spider), “Spider, let’s exchange your good and healthy tooth with my bad one”. So saying the tooth is thrown up to the roof of the house. The importance and significance of this insect in the life of the Moyons is depicted in this cobweb like designed sarong called *tongtingpainih*.



Besides these, there are sarongs mainly for young women. They are *kungkunginih*, *kuurkiinih*, *lamtaanginih*, *kungbenginih* (representing an indoor game), *duupziihinih*, *riikiinih*, *shungnunginih*, *thiinavifuwinih*, *ruwchanginih*, etc. There are also another type which are shorter and smaller in length and size which the people call *inihtak* literally meaning real *sarong*. They are worn at the waist covering the lower portion of the body up to the calf while the upper portion is covered by “*peensuwminih*” starting at the chest up to the knee. They are *changkak*, *laengki*, *ynghir*, etc.

- *Lukhum*: It is a small and short cloth for covering the women’s heads. It is worn by all elderly women but with a difference in wearing it between the married and unmarried ladies. There are two colours viz., white and orange. There are stripes of two in green colour at both edges (length) and other stripes in green at the other two ends (breadth).

e) *Ornaments*

During festivals, Moyons adorned themselves with different types of ornaments. While performing the dance they would embellish themselves with beautiful ornaments and colourful dresses. Women decorated



themselves with ornaments made of shells and animal bones. Men dressed up with headgear of tail feathers of hornbill which signified the promise made between their forefathers and the birds when they came out from the cave. Some of the ornaments of the Moyons are listed in Table 5:

Table 5 : Ornaments

1.	<i>Lukhumpa</i> ar/ <i>Shamcher</i> (headgear): For men and women.
2.	<i>Naathuur</i> (earrings): Both men and women have their respective earrings.
3.	<i>Sanak</i> (necklaces): <i>Ruwthii</i> , <i>laangamruwthii</i> , <i>kebuwr</i> , <i>lushen</i> , <i>ruka</i> , <i>hor</i> , <i>laarchangsanak</i> such as <i>kuurkam</i> , <i>laangam</i> , <i>vangjam</i> , <i>tudeen</i> and <i>riinglah</i> .
4.	<i>Baenlehtuk</i> (armlets): <i>haar</i> and <i>korencho</i>
5.	<i>Kikchii</i> (bangles): <i>paantha</i> and <i>kuursang</i>
6.	<i>Khilehtuk</i> (anklets): <i>khikae</i>

Source: Field study.

- *Lukhumpa*ar/*Shamcher* (headgear): Both men and women use headgears 'lukhumpa' while performing traditional dances and songs. They are made of bamboo sticks, feathers of hornbill, peacocks, fowls, sea shells, thread, etc. In the past, hornbill feathers were used. However, in due course, due to the environmental changes, the hornbills migrated to other places. So in its place, feathers mainly of the hens and the cocks are used.
- *Naathuur* (earrings): *Nae-naa-ivuw*h (ear boring) ritual was performed for every child in the family. *Naathuur* was the usual ornament for both men and women. It was made of lead and was always worn by men and women in the past.



Lukhumpa

- *Sanak* (necklaces): There are two types of *sanak*, viz., *ruwthii* with a usual round and the other oblong shaped beads which is called *Laangamruwthii*. *Ruwthii* is a necklace of round cornelian stone of light brown colour. It has unequal sizes. The neck portion is smaller followed by bigger beads and the centre is the biggest bead called *abarae* (navel). It serves as a pendant of the necklace. A woman is considered as the centre of the family which is

substantiated by a folk tale on "*Shajaangnuw*". This lady was given in marriage to someone unknown to her without her knowledge and consented by her brother. The folk tale says that her future mother-in-law on seeing her plight, asked her in singing of her status of life to which she replied in singing that while her mother was alive she was considered *buungsiibarae* i.e., *ruthiibarae* (navel). The folk song goes like this: "*Juwnuwaringraenbe e, buungsiibaraetahnge*." It means when her mother was alive, she was the centre of attraction and affection.



Sanak

- *Laangamruwthii* is also a cornelian necklace but the beads are longish in shape. Like the *ruwthii* mentioned above, it has different sizes of beads, small, bigger and biggest. It has the pendant which is the biggest at the centre. It is also known as *abarae*. It is also worn by women throughout their life. There is yet another folk tale "*Laangam Thangtah*" how this necklace is so named *Laangamruwthii*. According to the legend, when Laangam the great warrior failed to reach heaven due to the breaking of his magical ladder, he was wandering around the world and was sustained by the beads given by an old wise lady as food. On reaching home while answering to nature's call, he washed the beads out of the waste. He found them to have become oblong in shape. They were made into a necklace which came to be known as *Laangamruwthii*. These necklaces are worn mainly by women.
- *Kebuwr* is a big sea shell and is worn only at the time of dancing specially during festivals by men and women. A full set of *buungsiikeplae* or ornaments is worn by a man who has to spear the animal tied to a 'Y' shaped wooden post called '*sharing*' while performing *ikam* festival. It is worn across the body from the neck.
- *Lushen* is a red bead necklace worn along with other necklaces. *Ruka* is a long necklace worn across the body from the neck and was made of

elephant tusks in the past and is used by both men and women dancers. It is a show of power and strength. *Hor* is made out of sea shells. It is used as a string for male dancers' basket.

- *Laarchangshanak* are necklaces resembling Kuurkam, Laangam and Vangjam shawls. They remind the greatness, power and bravery of the Moyon legendary personalities. The famous King Nguwruw Kuurkam Moyon reigned in Khungjuur Village. Laangam was an adventurous Moyon who walked across the world. Nungchim Vangjam Moyon was the bosom friend '*arupa*' of King Ng. Kuurkam Moyon. *Tudeenshanak* is a necklace in memory of the most beautiful Moyon lady called Tudeen. It is mainly used by women on special festivals. It is made of different beads. *Riinglahsanak* are short necklaces worn along with the long ones.
 - *Baen Leh Tuk* (armlets): *Haar* and *korencho* are the main armlets used by both men and women dancers. *Haar* is worn at the arm. It is made of lead by the people themselves with the help of a small bamboo by heating it. While it is being prepared or heated, women particularly who are in their periodical menstruation and pregnancy are prohibited as their presence would disrupt the process. *Korencho* is made out of brass. The two ends are called '*aha*' which means 'teeth' and is worn at the arm next to *haar*.
 - *Kikchii* (bangles): *Paentha* which is made of brass is worn at the wrist as a bangle. It is worn by the women daily as well as during the festivals. *Kuursang* is a bangle for men worn only during the dance. It is made of brass. It is thicker and heavier than *paentha*.
 - *KhiLehTuk* (anklets): *Khilehtukare* decorative pieces for feet while dancing. There are pieces of decorative items used by both men and women dancers tied at the arms, wrists and ankles. They are usually made of colourful threads.
- i. *Dormitory System*: The present study finds that the traditional practice of *ireraerihonii* was a dormitory system only for the boys. The girls remained in their own houses. Once the boys reached the age of puberty, they would be sleeping in groups at a residence. Ng. Riimtha says, "By evening after the dinner, the boys would go to their *ireraerihonii*. There, they learnt to interact and adjust themselves to grow in community life. They would share their experiences and through fraternal relationship, they learnt to cultivate community feeling and belongingness. Coming together enabled them to develop skills in singing, dancing, music, sports and games. The dormitory system was in a way a training place where they were formed with practical life skills." Shangkhram (1995, p. 449) confirms, "In

the past, the Moyons had a dormitory system, but not separate house was constructed for such purposes. Though freedom was given to the youngsters, hardly any immoral activity occurred before proper marriage."

- ii. *Folk Tales*: One of the ways by which the customs and social values of the people are transmitted from one generation to the next is through folk tales. They are not simply tales but they convey important messages. Moyon folk tales give much information about the history of their ancestors. They contain information about their social setting, social practices and beliefs of their ancient times. The tribe has treasures of folk tales which tell us of their extraordinary qualities of strength, courage and wisdom which is expressed in the Moyon code of conduct.
- iii. *Folk Literature*: In his collection of *Moyon Folk Literature*, Kosha (2009, p.1) gives picture of social, as well as religious norms and beliefs of the ancient Moyons. It is a collection of songs and rhymes, some of which are lullabies, riddles, proverbs and dictums and beliefs of many elders and knowledgeable persons. For instance, at night when a mother refines cotton with a bow, she sings this song so that the child does not cry.

- *In Moyon*

Peshaepeshaephikphik, Iriirhangsuwhninge. Peshaepeshaephikphik, Chingkhuwngghanghangkate. Peshaepeshaephikphik.

- *English Translation*

O refining bow, twang twang, I go to see the poultry shed. O refining bow, twang twang, I go to take the drum. O refining bow, twang twang.

The Moyon folk literature reveals some of the traditional beliefs of the people such as *taasham*. It is assumed that when someone dies, the stretcher used to carry the dead body should be destroyed soon after the burial. If this is not done, it is thought, that the dead with the stretcher would roam about at night and can enter every house in search of men. Consequently, somebody might again die in the village. In this way the Moyon folk literature depicts the beliefs of the people and the expectations of their social behaviour and social life and action.

Folk Songs: Folk songs are a rich resource for understanding Moyon culture. They reflect their social life and their social organization. They also depict their deep attachment to the land and their dependence on the natural resources for their sustenance of life. All the events of their day to day life are depicted in the form of folk songs. No celebration in the ancient days was held without music and folk songs. Emotional expressions are communicated through poetic songs. For instances, deaths were mourned through funeral songs, love songs

were composed for lovers and songs attributed to the beauty of nature were also popular in olden days. Grandparents through their songs blessed their grandchildren. Social gatherings at nights were marked with folksongs. In his preface, Kosha (2010) has

mentioned twenty seven groups of *Bujuurkastam la* (*Moyon folk songs*) which are sung on different occasions and festivals. This information is given in Table 6 below:



Folk singing

Table 6 : Folk Songs

No	Folk Songs	Different Occasions and Festivals
1.	<i>Een La</i>	Sung during the inauguration of a new house
2.	<i>Een Vernii La</i>	Sung at <i>Jaakaitheeng</i> festival
3.	<i>Eentu Kuurchiim La</i>	Sung at an agricultural function, <i>Shaangkeng</i>
4.	<i>Imah La</i>	Sung at <i>Ikam</i> festival
5.	<i>Jukam Kuurchiim La</i>	Sung in the night of the last day of <i>Ikam</i> festival
6.	<i>Kaethok La</i>	Lovers Love songs
7.	<i>Khomae La</i>	Sung when the forest was cleared for <i>jhum</i> cultivation
8.	<i>Khuwngchar Deengnii La</i>	Sung at the release of a new drum
9.	<i>Khuwng La</i>	It had a theme and could be sung on any occasions
10.	<i>Khuwngtik La</i>	Seed-sowing song
11.	<i>Kungkung Kuurchiim La</i>	Song of <i>Ikam</i> festival
12.	<i>Laamru La</i>	Song when <i>Kungkung</i> dancers danced around Y-shaped erections called <i>sharing</i> erections.
13.	<i>Laangam La</i>	Song which depicted the story of a legendary Moyon hero called Laangam
14.	<i>Lacheeler</i>	Sung for a rest when a song ends
15.	<i>Latee</i>	Song of the <i>Ikam</i> festivals
16.	<i>Men La</i>	Song of the bride price
17.	<i>Naepang Bathaenii La</i>	Lullaby song
18.	<i>Phaetha La</i>	Song of bravery
19.	<i>Pham tuknii La</i>	Sung after the 5 th stages of <i>Ikam</i> festival
20.	<i>Phamshah La</i>	Sung during the installation of a village authority
21.	<i>Sha La</i>	Sung when a big jungle animal is killed
22.	<i>Shaang Bashumnii La</i>	<i>Ikam</i> song sung for a good harvest
23.	<i>Shasheeshanii La</i>	<i>Ikam</i> festival song
24.	<i>Thiifhuwjaang La</i>	Song of the <i>Ikam/Jukam</i> festival
25.	<i>Torae Yndomnii La</i>	Song of the harvest festival of <i>niim</i> , Job's tears
26.	<i>Tuwr Reengnii La</i>	Lovers' love songs
27.	<i>Vaangcheh La</i>	Song of the harvesting festival

Source: Field study

iv. *Folk Dances*: The varieties of folk dances found in the tribe pertain to various events and festivals. It is noticed that the people perform folk dances with traditional attires by forming separate rows of males and females accompanied by *Kongkaepa* (singers and drummers). The most popular dance is that which depicts their origin from the cave. In his work, Philip Roel Moyon (2006, p. 29) mentions different

types of dances which are performed during *ikam* feast and other occasions. On every festival, people hold their hands with each other and stand in two circular lines and perform the folk dance to the rhythmic beat of drums. Every one present for the festival comes out to dance spontaneously irrespective of gender and age.



Folk dance

Table 7 : Folk Dances

1.	<i>Khisin laam</i>	6.	<i>Kinchong laam</i>
2.	<i>Sikaengiirchak-chak laam</i>	7.	<i>Imah or lthur laam (Jaaka laam style)</i>
3.	<i>Isi rin-rin laam</i>	8.	<i>Kaethok laam (Ingthep)</i>
4.	<i>Laamlu laam</i>	9.	<i>Jaaka laam - performed during the Jaakalthiing</i>
5.	<i>Khavaetang laam</i>	10.	<i>Trektraang dance – ritual dance during the house dedication</i>

Source: Field study.

In the past the dancing group would move around the village and danced wherever the *sharings* were erected by those who had performed *Ikam* festival in the previous years. All the villagers, particularly the youth used to stay all night in the house of the *Ikamafhuw* used to dance backward and forward. Moyons in the pre-independence period also performed sword dance and war dance by holding shields and spears. It would be stimulated with war songs.

v. *Music and Instruments*: R. Angnong in his writing on the *Origin, migration and settlement of the Moyons* (1986, p. 30-31) mentions the different notes of Moyon music and musical instruments which are used in different dances and these are given below:

- Musical rhythmic note of *jhum* cultivation i.e., preparation of crop field.
- Crop seedling note of music.
- Note of traverse along the hill ranges.
- Musical note of dawning of the day.
- Warning song at the approach of enemy attack.
- Victorious song at return of a successful campaign.
- Luxurious and decorative songs.

Musical instruments which used by Moyons in different dances are drum (mridhanga), *khung* (twirl), *lusheem* (bamboo-gourd flute), *shananta*, *pena*, *pashim*, *puba*, *jurping*, etc. Other traditional instruments which are made from natural objects are *taamfhuw* (small

bamboo flute), *khuwng* (drum), *daar* (gong), *pengkum* (trumpet) and *sharakii* (mithun horns).



Traditional music and instruments

vi. *Games and Sports*: Wrestling was one of the common games played in the Moyon villages. The champion of the wrestling was considered brave and he was regarded with high status. Other indigenous games of the Moyons are archery, *sareer-yngkhu* (javelin throw), *tarek-taraangikhuwng* (high jump), *tosaerung* (stone throw), etc. Archery competition was the main event of the *ber-ikap* festival. Traditionally it was performed during the festival of *Midim*. *Sareer-yngkhu* is similar to that of javelin throw. The only difference is that in *sareer-yngkhu*, pestles are used while spears are used in javelin throw. The indigenous game of *tarek-taraangikhuwng* was performed on the occasion of

any house inauguration. This game is similar to that of bamboo dance. The purpose of playing such a *tarek-taraangi khuwng* was to ward off the evil spirits from the newly built house. There is yet another traditional indoor game called *tosaerung*. It is played with five small stones and normally children enjoy such a game. They also enjoy the game of racing and football. In the past, boys used the urinary bladder of a pig or a cow as a ball for football matches. Yet another interesting indigenous game is that of hunting the *mithun* head. The head of the *mithun* is tied at the top of a post which is normally a bamboo. The bamboo post would be greased with the oil of the pig and the men folk especially the youth exhibit their best strength and skill to climb and get the *mithun* head. The one who succeeds to climb to the top of the bamboo post, in spite of the grease which is very slippery, wins the prize.



- vii. *Social Taboos*: An important feature of the Moyons in the pre-independence period is their practice of social taboos. A taboo could be defined as “a prohibition”, which, if violated, would lead to an automatic supernatural penalty. Through taboos the society restricted any act that violated the community norm which ultimately brought the wrath of the supernatural. A taboo should not be seen, heard, smelled or tasted. It was a certainty that when any person violated a prohibition he breached a taboo and he brought upon himself the wrath of the gods or the spirits. In his work, Kosha (2009, p. 39, 42) underlines that it was a taboo for the Moyons to shed blood at night because an evil spirit would see it and it would suck it causing death of the person. Again, in a funeral procession, the family of the dead person threw coins on the way between the house and the graveyard. It was a taboo for anyone from the family of the dead person to collect the money. If collected by the family, some

evil might happen to them. Others could collect it. The thought behind throwing coins was that the departed soul would require money on the journey to the land of the departed souls. The practice of social taboos guided the social life of the Moyons in the past.

II. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

The present study discovers changes in the traditional life styles in the sample villages in the post-independence period. These changes are notable in such areas like food habits and drinks, dress and hair style, replacement of traditional dormitory system, birth of educational institutions, literacy status, Moyon literature, occupational status, unemployment, modern sports and games, modern songs, dances and music, health and hygiene, impact of urbanization and modern gadgets. Unlike in the pre-independence period, Moyons in the post-independence period do not have any taboos on food habits. Fasting from food is observed on good Fridays, Ash Wednesday and in the Lenten season, and according to the health of the people. Consumption of any intoxicating drink is prohibited. Again, a finding in the life style of the people is the change in their dress and hair style. Ancient Moyons hardly ever covered their full body in their way of dressing. Women sometimes put *inih* without blouse and men wore *peen* around their waist without shirts. But today, they wear different styles of dresses. During the marriage ceremony, the bride adorns herself with a white gown and the groom wears a suit and necktie of the western pattern. Even during any festival, men wear western types of dresses and women wear their traditional '*inih*' with modern types of blouses and adorn themselves with cosmetics. Their traditional attires are undergoing changes and modifications in their designs and colours. The practice of “beauty contest” is becoming a fashion in today’s life styles of the sample villages.

In the traditional life of the Moyons, the dormitory system was a training place where the youth learnt the art of life skills. Today, it is replaced by educational institutions. The formation of “Moyon Literature Committee” is an example of such a growing consciousness on literature development. A collection of Moyon folk literature (Kosha, 2009) gives valuable information about the literature of the Moyons which was handed down through oral methods.

The traditional folk songs and love songs have been replaced by western hymns and modern rocks. Western instruments and modern music are being used in the Church and at other social and religious gatherings. The use of *khuwng* during social functions and religious ceremonies is still maintained but the traditional musical instrument called *daar* is seldom used. Modern sports and games have replaced almost

all the traditional sports and games. "short put" has replaced the traditional game of "stone throw", "javelin throw" has replaced "shareel-yngkhu" and "high jump" has replaced "tarek-taraangi khuwng". In the modern times, exercises such as aerobics, march past, drills, etc., are being propagated in the educational institutions of the sample villages. Even for *mithun* head hunt, buffalo head or bull's head is used. Earlier, the winner got the *mithun* head, today, money is also kept and whoever wins the game gets the head as well as the money.

The impact of urbanization is seen in the life style of the Moyons in the sample villages. The people of the sample villages are flocking towards the plain areas. They are moving out of their villages in search of jobs or to cater to the education of their children or earn their livelihood on the basis of daily labour. With their exposure to the plain areas, they no longer perform the ancient practice of blood offerings of animals and fowls to appease the spirits for good health. Instead of consulting the *ithiim*, they go to the hospitals or doctors or clinics for their health care. Education has given them the value of keeping themselves hygienically clean to prevent the spread of air borne or water borne diseases.

A striking finding of the present study is the growing demands for modern facilities of life which is creating a crisis among people in sample villages. They are unable to cope with the rapid transition to modernity. Their exposure to the modern society either through the media or through education or through interactions has created in them a desire for modern life styles. For instance, they want better houses with concrete buildings yet their low economy often shatters their hopes and aspirations. There is a growing desire for better economic and educational facilities. Frustrations expressed in the form of addiction to alcohol or drug

abuse are observed among the people of the sample villages due to the inability to fulfil their desires, hope and aspirations especially among educated unemployed youths. Another disappointment is observed arising from the inability to acquire modern gadgets due to the poor economic status in the sample villages.

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• Glossary

Moyon	English
<i>Aarshuumpainih</i>	Praying mantis
<i>Abarae</i>	Navel
<i>Aethuw</i>	Onion leaves
<i>Aha</i>	Teeth
<i>Arupa</i>	Bosom friend
<i>Baen Leh Tuk</i>	Armllets
<i>Bayaangngathuw</i>	Fermented beans
<i>Bujuur</i>	Moyon
<i>Bujuurchong</i>	Moyon language
<i>Bujuur kastam la</i>	Moyon folk songs
<i>Burosfhuw</i>	King chilli
<i>Champhuk</i>	Boiled vegetables
<i>Daar</i>	Gong
<i>Entuw</i>	Fresh bamboo shoots
<i>Haar</i>	Bracelet for female
<i>Hor</i>	Sea shells used as a string for male dancers
<i>Inihtak</i>	Real <i>sarong</i>



<i>Iraerihhii</i>	Dormitory system only for the boys
<i>Ithaebuw</i>	Sticky rice
<i>Ithiim</i>	Village physician
<i>Juungchah</i>	Perkiaroxburghii
<i>Khung</i>	Twirl
<i>Khuwng</i>	Drum
<i>Khi Leh Tuk</i>	Anklets
<i>Kikchii</i>	Bangles
<i>Kongkaepa</i>	Singers and drummers
<i>korencho</i>	Bracelet for female
<i>Kuursang</i>	Bangle for men worn only during the dance
<i>Lukhumpaer</i>	Headgear
<i>Lushen</i>	Red bead necklace
<i>Lusheem</i>	Bamboo-gourd flute
<i>Naathuur</i>	Earrings
<i>Nachang</i>	Banana stems
<i>Nae-naa-ivuw</i>	Ear boring
<i>Naenthubuw</i>	Steamed rice
<i>Ngathuw</i>	Fermented fish
<i>Niimzuw</i>	Local beer prepared from jobs tear
<i>Paentha</i>	Worn at the wrist as a bangle
<i>Peen</i>	Traditional shawls
<i>Pengkum</i>	Trumpet
<i>Ruka</i>	Long necklace worn across the body from the neck
<i>Ruwthii</i>	Necklace of round cornelian stone of light brown colour
<i>Sanak</i>	Necklaces
<i>Sareer-yngkhu</i>	Javelin throw
<i>Sarong or inih</i>	Women's wear
<i>Shabaku</i>	Basket made of cane and bamboo
<i>Shabakureh</i>	Bags of paddy
<i>Shamcher</i>	Headgear
<i>Sharakii</i>	Mithun horns
<i>Sharings</i>	'Y' shaped wooden post
<i>Shopum</i>	Fermented bamboo shoots
<i>Taasham</i>	Death
<i>Taamfhuw</i>	Small bamboo flute
<i>Tarek-taraangikhuwng</i>	High jump
<i>Thingshuw</i>	Chutney
<i>Tongtingpa</i>	Spider
<i>Tosaerung</i>	Stone throw