

Cultural diversity of Chut Ethnic minority in Viet Nam in front of the threats of the fades •

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Abstract

Chut is official name of special ethnic community in Viet Nam, who consists of 5 local groups: May, Sach, Ruc, A Rem and Ma Lieng in the end of 1973 year. They are living in the western border of central provinces Quang Binh and Ha Tinh of Viet Nam. These minorities groups left their wild life in the high mountains very late in comparison with the other ethnic groups in Viet Nam. In the years 60 of Century XX, the Chut was considered as the secluded group and in that time they have brought to return to concentrated village. Previously, due to war, disease and extremely difficult economical life, the population of ethnic minority Chut have declined much. So the international and Vietnamese scholars had worry about their danger of extinction. Nowadays, ethnic Chut is belonging to 16 smallest ethnic groups in Viet Nam and standing in 42 orders in the List of 54 Vietnamese ethnic minorities.

The most important of Chut minority is that, in their language still preserved lots of elements of proto Viet-Muong as the ancient Vietnamese language. So Vietnamese scholars call “Chut minority as National live museum in Viet Nam” and these ethnic groups have a huge significance for international and Vietnamese scholars to study the history of Vietnamese Nation and language, also. Vietnamese Government and the whole community are trying to support Chut ethnic minority in development and preservation their original culture. But nowadays, in the process of integration with other ethnic groups living in central provinces of Vietnam, while the Chut population is developing sustainable, but the ancient features of Chut's traditional culture are standing in front of the risk of fades. Our research paper will indicate the current situation of cultural diversity of Chut ethnic minority and the challenges in their cultural preservation.

Keywords: Ethnic minority; Cultural diversity; Cultural identity,

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1. Introduction

As a smallest minority of ethnic groups with Vietnamese – Muong language, Chut ethnic group brings many common cultural characteristics of the Tho, the Muong, as well as the ancient culture of the ancient Vietnamese: for example: dyed black teeth, eat betel, bun, men in loincloths and women use coveralls covering body,...; About capacity, Chut ethnic group has talented to walk, tree climbing, hunting, stamina and adaptability in the extremely harsh natural conditions... The communities in groups with Vietnamese - Muong language are sharing a way of traditional shifting cultivation “slap, burn, core, sowing”, they also share the same dish “poi rice”... share some folk songs, oratorio, as well as some traditional folk stories.... So we call Chut minority in Viet Nam as the "National live museum" about ancient life of the ancient Vietnamese. By our research in period 2014-2015ss, we recognized that, this ancient culture of Chut minority is losing in process of integration, because the young Chut people do not still interested on their tradition culture. So we focus more attention on some cultural features of Chut ethnic group, that have made the cultural diversity of ethnic cultures of Vietnam and the way of their cultural preservation.

2. The main research's approach and methods

2.1. *The research's approach and methods*

To implement this research, we have carried out anthropological survey with 874 questionnaires to Chut's households, 58 cases of depth interviews with the local leaders and 18 focus group discussions with various people of Chut communities: with the women, young people and veterans.... By this way, we have got directly about 1500 opinions and proposes from Chut's community, so we have implemented successfully participate research approach with Chut ethnic minority. This is the best current approach to get the scientific evidences on the base of the involvement of the community, because they are the main subjects of the adaptation and conversion process to their development.

2.2. *The location of research*

The Chut ethnic group includes Sach, May, Ruc, Arem, Ma Lieng with population of 6.022 heads (2009 year census) and they have increased to about 7.000 heads (by our research 2014-2015)¹, who are resident mainly in 11 communes of 3 mountainous districts Tuyen Hoa, Minh Hoa and Bo Trach of Quang Binh province and in 2 communes of Huong Khe district of Ha Tinh province. We have taken the surveys in 11 communes of 04 mountainous districts of 2 provinces. Thus we have to understand the cultural and economic life of nearly 3500 inhabitants of Chut ethnic group (accounting over 50% of their population).

3. The cultural diversity of Chut ethnic minority in Vietnam and threats of fades

3.1. *What is cultural diversity*

In any culture there is a majority and many minorities, in Vietnamese also. Diversity is nothing more than a difference from the majority. Culture is a set of norms that set standards for a society of acceptable behavior. Cultural diversity is based on the idea that cultural identities should not be discarded or ignored, but rather maintained and valued. The foundation of this belief is that every culture has made a substantial contribution to human life. As social and cultural capital, cultural diversity makes human life richer by making it a more interesting place in which to live.

Theoretically, UNESCO has defined cultural diversity expresses first and foremost through the different ways in cultural expressions (cultural expressions) of the community, such as language (voice), lifestyle,

¹ We affirm Chut ethnic population has increased steadily, because according to the Census of Vietnam in various periods since ethnic Chut appeared in more than 40 years showst hat: in 1979 there was 2984 people; In 1989 there was 2427 people. 1999 there was 3829 people and in 2009 had 6022 people.

daily life, cure and care for the family, forms of entertainment, folklore and folk songs..... The Chut ethnic minority have a original and diverse culture expressed through cultural practices and the following contents:

3.2. The origin of Chut ethnic group

There have two hypotheses on the origin of Chut ethnic minority, showed that:

- 1) From the language evidences, many scholars suggest that the peoples of Vietnamese - Muong groups with the same ancient ancestors are Lac Viet people². Chut people are a direct descendant of population communities of Proto Viet - Muong were separated from this community before the Muong separated from Viet. Due to living scattered and isolated in small groups in the remote forest, not to have conditions for development, this ethnic group is still preserving elements Proto Viet Muong languages;
- 2) Chut people are a division of residents in Bo Trach and Quang Trach area, or a place near the sea, but because of taxation, wars,... they have to run up high mountains. Due to the harsh living conditions, isolated from other communities for a long time, they have left a long distance compared to the overall development.

3.3. The Chut's language

Language of Chut people has never had the writing, so the language was recorded by audio and video transcription. Especially, in the Ruc phonetic language and Sach May group... still preserve semantic elements and diphthongs of Vietnamese allowing philologists further study about Vietnamese history. In the local groups of Chut ethnic group has its own voice, they communicate with each other by their ethnic language in internal communication. However, personal voice of Chut ethnic group is no longer present homogenization, which has a mix with the language of the ethnic groups living community residents or residents' access.

Up to now, the problem of Chut people in particular and that of the proto-Viet-Muong in general have been looked upon under the angles of linguistics by many researchers. Relying on linguistics documents, Vietnamese scholars come to the conclusion: "We suppose that the proto Viet- Muong mass is one of the ancient South Asian groups. In this mass, there was a small part developing fairly independently due to isolation and thus retaining some old forms. They are the Chut and the Poong languages in the central areas om Viet Nam".

3.4. The Chut living house

House on stilts is the most characteristic associated with the lives of A Rem people, May people and Ma Lieng people. And soil house is attached to the life of Sach people and Ruc people. Their home is a fairly simple construction with raw materials as wood and bamboo, cork, thatch, rattan... Fixtures for indoor use are also very humble; by Chut people haven't had habit to use furniture, bedding, cabinets... and other expensive items. Besides, the community of Chut people also has the temporary house, often built as watch-tower/camp/location near farm field to protect crops in cultivation in the harvest time or do prepare accommodation in time for cultivation. But nowadays, almost of Chut groups are living in the houses built by the Vietnam government like the the houses of Viet majority. Chut traditional houses are losing. Like the peoples residing on Truong Son - Central Highlands, the notion of Chut people about childbirth is considered an unclean work, which affects the common life of the community. Therefore, women who

² Dao Duy Anh. *Vietnamese ancient history*, 1955. *Hystory of Vietnam*. Upper book, 1958.

give birth to the stage will not be born in the house. They are relatives up to a small shack in the forest or in the garden, the woman must be born and confinement in shack which came about after the birth as long as 10-15 days. After a bath, the new mothers with babies up to the main house with the attic stairs and living in the area privately reserved for women.

3.5. Marriage and family of Chut minority

Chut communities are loyal marriage, monogamy. Chut community accept both boys and girls are free to learn and be able to eat and sleep together referred to as “sleeping rough” before the wedding. Chut family under the patriarchy. The man is the head of the family, have the rights to decide on all the major and was also employed in the ritual ceremony family on holidays, new buildings, weddings, funerals,... He was right to travel freely in his home, while other members of the family, especially the daughters-in-law, sons-in-law must comply with many taboos. Chut family is mostly small family, two generations of parents and children, because it tends son after getting married often separated in particular. Some families also allow son-in-law to live, or to live separately but near parents-in-law. Each family of Chut people is usually an independent economic unit and private ownership of property such as cultivation, production tools,... The family members together to work and enjoy the results of their labor.

3.6. The Chut family and ancestor worship

Family of Chut groups have different names between ethnic groups, but expressed are the same families with a common ancestor and a ghost. Each family consists of the family of older and younger brothers have blood ties about 4-5 generations and have the same ancestor. The head of the family has the right to decide the important issue to its family as ancestor worship, to supervise the implementation of regulations and handle conflicts arise within the internal family or between family... Relations between the members of the family is mutual, solidarity, mutual assistance in daily life and production. In ancestor worship, Chut people worship house ghost and ghost of family. House ghost is the grandparents or parents dead and the dead children from 16 years old and older - are worshiped in the families in all groups. Ghost of family is from fourth generations and older.

3.7. About costumes and jewelry

Chut people don't know to plant cotton and woven fabric so they don't have private uniforms of their people. Previously, traditional costumes of Chut people are mainly clothes and loincloth made of bark of *Antiaris toxicaria* Lesch, screening plants, acacia... Barks are smashed, soaked for acne; crumpling repeatedly residual fibers, drying, spread out, and use the forest rattan in small split into sheets. If gown chest called *kché*, or a small hole in the middle folded, wearing to tie rope to people. May and Ma Lieng women still wear skirts woven from palm leaves, Ma Lieng men in loincloths crushed *Pandanus amaryllifolius* leaf. Nowadays, Chut people tend to wear according Kinh people or use costumes of ethnic groups living together as Khua people, Ma coong people...

Chut people are almost no attention using precious jewelry, valued in economic terms. Sach women often carry mostly jewelry made of silver, copper... necklace, bracelets, earrings, round neck for leg... Most Ruc women are unused jewelry like necklaces, agate, which is common only within shells, are considered as a sign of diligence and wish good luck. In particular, Ma Lieng women used jewelry relatively more elaborate, including copper or silver earrings shaped apricot, string beads... And one of the criteria of beauty of Ma Lieng women are black teeth. Ruc men and Ma Lieng people often use products from hunting like fangs, claws of wild boars, tigers, bears... to wear as talisman.

3.8. The treasures of folklore

Chut compatriots, especially the groups of Sach people, May people and Ma Lieng people- are the communities preserved many folk tales with rich content with different variants of the plot. Particularly in Ruc people, folk tale of this genre is quite poor. Old tale is a dominant type of life narrative of Chut people although they are usually content simple and easy to understand but has created the spiritual and cultural values is made distinctive. Some tales have contents of plot with similarities between peoples revolves around the following themes: 1) about the world, human origins, about the things and phenomena in nature...; 2) about the aspirations, dreams to conquer nature; on the work tools... by way of intuitive thinking, reflecting the formation and survival of the compatriots associated with certain lands; 3) Reflect the struggle to cope with nature, aspirations towards a prosperous life, human happiness... In addition to the above contents are some other stories mention conjugal love, happy people, or talk about the integration of the powerful gods of them. From what tales of Chut people, we see part of their desire to conquer nature, build a life, guide people to the good values and also contain traditional educations for the younger generation.

3.9. The types of oratorio and folk instruments

In folk oratorio repertoire, although it is not voluminous and rich but Chut ethnic group still pride with what they have. The only kind of people are folk songs. Here we encounter the borrowed tunes between groups of resident' access as famous folk song, "The buffalo to plow" or the song "Afternoon on the mountaintop". Folk musical instruments of Chut people are very simple, including horn and - the instrument is made of buffalo horn or from raw of forest cork. Horn is commonly used when calling for the participation of the community such as doing agriculture, hunting large number, carnival... to replace the call of home village, or an announcement that people can detect by the tone change. Cork guitar is the type of cork tube with a rope, a sound very simple and limited, but very typical of voice of the mountains; Jew's Harp is made of *Enterolobium cylocarpum* and *Houttuynia cordata*. Along with flutes, Jew's Harp is instrument used quite common in daily life as well as the occasions of the ceremony. Also, during the process of survey, we have also May village elders to mention some other instruments like phèng la (cymbals) used in funerals, óng pía of the shaman is used to conjure up a deal person's soul which does not use anymore.

Above are some of the cultural characteristics of Chut community - are all that make up the energy, vitality and identity of ethnic communities in the past and present. With the above characteristics, Chut people have become particularly attractive to other communities with many mysterious elements... Thereby stimulate learn to exchange and learn from each other, provide the basis for understanding and cooperating, create community unity. Cultural diversity can generate income to feed people if local authorities know how to promote the capacity of the community who have been close to the jungle as Chut people, such as protection for biodiversity, forestry care, or join in ecotourism...

4. Some traditional habits, mentality and habits are the challenges in developing the current Chut people

Chut people have many generations to stick with jungle life, living in the mountains, based on the mountains, they consider the mountains as birth gods, nurture and protect them. Therefore, they have a habit like hunting and gathering in the forest rather than foodstuff production, food. Such behaviors also make up the general sentiment of the community is "Hungry does not worry, full does not celebrate," hungry into the woods, hard well into the woods. Along with the special attention of local authorities and the community, Chut people have more passive mentality, moral hazard,... in the prompt, exhorting, or the support material... of government. With that many bad practices, superstitious phenomena, worship, underage marriage, inbreeding marriage... in the community still exists.

Previously, Chut people isolated in small groups in the remote forest. After the State brought settlers into the village, the biggest difficulty of this ethnic group is not used to the new lifestyle and new production methods. As infrastructure is invested, (especially roads and other means of mass communication) has opened the new social connections of Chut society with the outside world. Along with the market economy, freedom of residence, marriage and widely communication,... on the one hand, the cultural identity of Chut people is also shown, exchanged,... On the other hand, the exchange with shortage protection oriented and lead to the erosion of traditional culture of the community. Most clearly manifested in some young Chut people minded newly not to be selective, they seemed like dressing themselves through wearing strangely, expensive furniture shopping, gatherings, racketeering, dancing... not focused on production, while their material life is more difficult. Moreover, many of them had broken with the voice of their people, they turn to speak Vietnamese or voice of the community of resident' access... when communicating with people of other ethnic groups. The language of the compatriot is only used for internal communication in the ethnic group.

Scientists have considered Chut people are "living museum" of voice, history and culture of the ancient Vietnamese, because they are the embodiment of Pre-Viet - Muong community, but today, their culture and voice are rapidly eroded, in the absence of effective measures to conserve and promote positive values. Thus, the risk of losing many unique cultural values as well as languages of Chut ethnic group is a realization of pre-label if Party and State do not have timely policies for conservation and development.

Change some habits are no longer suitable to be a challenge as well as Chut people want rise to master life. It is customary alcoholism, liberated, wild, lazy for working and relies on state subsidies. In Chut people, most people regardless of composition, gender, age (male, female, old, young... even children are 9 and 10 years old) have a habit of drinking and smoking. Chut man can change anything they have in the house (rice, corn, hunting for animals, Calamus Tetradacylus, snail butter...) to get alcohol, and they drink is to drink to get drunk, do not want to work. Alcoholism is one of the causes of poverty, material life, the spirit of the people is still very difficult, and the poverty rate remains high. Children are inadequate nutrition because parents are alcoholism; phenomena of rickets in children in some local groups like A Rem, Ruc, May... are quite common.

Besides alcoholism, wildlife habit like standing in Chut well. Due to long years of wandering life in the woods before, when returning to settlement life, in just a short time, Chut people leave in forest. Sometimes just a small event in life such as disease, food shortages, natural disasters,... they also leave. This habit leads to impatience, hang on, overcoming difficulties when settled into villages.

Chut people are normally shy, do not like crowded places and with the humility of intellectual, educational, they do not like to express their opinions. This is a big challenge in getting Chut people employed the life and also a difficult to study and community to propose development policies.

Although the local government and communities have worked hard, but besides that, we still had visible some causes from management apparatus of the local culture at present, namely:

- 1) Many good customs and habits, the traditional cultural values of Chut ethnic group over time, due to the war and during the process of integration,... have not been studied, evaluated systematically and scientifically.
- 2) Infrastructure systems for grassroot cultural activities in the state generally still patchy, asynchronous and low efficiency. The increased organizing in cultural activities to folk art for Chut ethnic group to practise and preserve their culture, though there have been many attempts, they have yet to form a regular activity with funding priorities.
- 3) The staff of cultural facilities in villages and communes lacks both in number and limited in their capacity to work, not to realize the policy of our Party "Building a culture of Vietnam advanced,

imbued with national identity” and advocated respect for cultural diversity of the peoples in our country.

5. Some recommendations on conservation measures and promote traditional culture to ensure cultural rights as human development goals

Modern approach to cultural rights of a community is clearly reflected in the following key activities:

- Recognize the importance and vitality (vitality) of the cultural characteristics;
- Promote the uniqueness and diversity of the private identities of a community culture
- Put the strategic development of culture in development policies at both national and international levels;
- Create an environment of respect, equality and encourage cultural actors to freedom of expression, freedom to enjoy the cultural products of the community;
- Create opportunities for interaction and promotion of creativity in the cultural expressions of the community. On that basis, the cultural rights are enforced obviously are the respect and protection of cultural diversity, and increase the benefits of cultural diversity for development.

From studying the above fact, before the increasing requirements of the conservation and community cultural development, especially culture of ethnic minority communities, the study authors recommend:

- 1) Develop the action plans, the systematic policies aimed at socioeconomic development in areas of ethnic minorities live with the motto: the people’s cultural actors and actors of the socioeconomic innovation.
- 2) Facilitate the people of ethnic minority groups to participate in activities for socioeconomic development - based society traditional cultural practices of the community, such as ecological protection and biodiversity, reforestation and protection forest protection in ecoregions, and participate in tourism activities at Phong Nha – Ke Bang National Park.
- 3) Expand opportunities for minority to demonstrate cultural and artistic, can exchange culture with brothers of ethnic minority groups (exchanges between districts and cities, regional exchanges, exchanges nationally...) for the people to be able to use their own languages to introduce with friends about the unique beauties, the unique cultural characteristics of their nation.
- 4) Need to expand and enhance the broadcasts in the language of the community to promote the guidelines and policies of the Party and the State to the people; through this radio programs to preserve the language and promote the unique cultural values of Chut ethnic group.
- 5) Invest adequate funds for research, collect, preserve the traditional culture of Chut ethnic group, which should have special policies for ethnic groups, local groups are in danger eroded traditional identity at Chut people.
- 6) To respect and promote cultural rights of Chut community, the State should also complement the priorities and policies to conserve and promote traditional cultural values of this community, special needs the award aims to encourage people to make proposals relating to the protection of their traditional culture.
- 7) Prioritize investment and deploy more efficient scientific works towards interdisciplinary to delve into the theoretical framework of cultural diversity conservation and human rights enforcement and research solutions, conserve culture and the voices of Chut ethnic group, promptly stop the erosion of traditional cultural identity of the community while is still not too late.

Conclusions

In the current scene, the preservation and promotion of traditional culture of Chut ethnic group are considered a meaningful task for especially great. It is through the language sounds and wild lifestyle of the local ethnic groups belong to this ethnic group, the archaeologists, ethnographers and linguists gave important hypotheses about the developmental stages, the population distribution of the local Vietnamese people, as well as identify the developmental history of the ancient Vietnamese. Preserving traditional culture of Chut people: Proto Viet - Muong languages, cork guitar with Ca lenh ca tuong folk songs, lifestyle and respect of mountains and woods, marriage with monogamous fidelity... are the most vivid expressions of respect for cultural diversity, which are also the affirmation and assurance of community cultural rights of Chut people, as an important condition for their development and further integration than with common life in homes of solidarity of the peoples of Vietnam.

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Appendix

Minority Chut in the list of Ethnic groups in Vietnam

Order	Ethnic groups	Population	Census	% in comparison with Vietnamese population
-	 Viet Nam	90.493.352	04/2014[3]	100 %
-	 Viet Nam	85.846.997	01/04/2009	
1	Viet	73.594.427	01/04/2009	85,7274%
2	Tay	1.626.392	01/04/2009	1,8945%

Order	Ethnic groups	Population	Census	% in comparison with Vietnamese population
3	Thai	1.550.423	01/04/2009	1,806%
4	Muong	1.268.963	01/04/2009	1,4782%
5	Kho Me	1.260.640	01/04/2009	1,4685%
6	H'Mong	1.068.189	01/04/2009	1,2443%
7	Nung	968.800	01/04/2009	1,1285%
8	Chinese	823.071	01/04/2009	0,9588%
9	Dao	751.067	01/04/2009	0,8749%
10	Gia Rai	411.275	01/04/2009	0,4791%
11	E De	331.194	01/04/2009	0,3858%
12	Ba Na	227.716	01/04/2009	0,2653%
13	Xo Đàng	169.501	01/04/2009	0,1974%
14	San Chay	169.410	01/04/2009	0,1973%
15	Co Ho	166.112	01/04/2009	0,1935%
16	Cham	161.729	01/04/2009	0,1884%
17	Sán Diu	146.821	01/04/2009	0,171%
18	Hre	127.420	01/04/2009	0,1484%
19	Ra Glai	122.245	01/04/2009	0,1424%
20	M'Nông	102.741	01/04/2009	0,1197%
21	X'Tiêng	85.436	01/04/2009	0,0995%
22	Bru-Vân Kieu	74.506	01/04/2009	0,0868%
23	Tho	74.458	01/04/2009	0,0867%
24	Khơ Mu	72.929	01/04/2009	0,085%
25	Cơ Tu	61.588	01/04/2009	0,0717%
26	Giay	58.617	01/04/2009	0,0683%
27	Gie Trieng	50.962	01/04/2009	0,0594%
28	Ta oi	43.886	01/04/2009	0,0511%
29	Ma	41.405	01/04/2009	0,0482%
30	Co	33.817	01/04/2009	0,0394%
31	Chơ Ro	26.855	01/04/2009	0,0313%
32	Xinh Mun	23.278	01/04/2009	0,0271%

Order	Ethnic groups	Population	Census	% in comparison with Vietnamese population
33	Ha Nhì	21.725	01/04/2009	0,0253%
34	Chu Ru	19.314	01/04/2009	0,0225%
35	Lao	14.928	01/04/2009	0,0174%
36	Khang	13.840	01/04/2009	0,0161%
37	La Chí	13.158	01/04/2009	0,0153%
38	Phu La	10.944	01/04/2009	0,0127%
39	La Hu	9.651	01/04/2009	0,0112%
40	La Ha	8.177	01/04/2009	0,0095%
41	Pa Then	6.811	01/04/2009	0,0079%
42	Chut	6.022	01/04/2009	0,007%
43	Lu	5.601	01/04/2009	0,0065%
44	Lo Lo	4.541	01/04/2009	0,0053%
45	Mang	3.700	01/04/2009	0,0043%
46	Co Lao	2.636	01/04/2009	0,0031%
47	Bo Y	2.273	01/04/2009	0,0026%
48	Cong	2.029	01/04/2009	0,0024%
49	Ngai	1.035	01/04/2009	0,0012%
50	Si La	709	01/04/2009	0,0008%
51	Pu Peo	687	01/04/2009	0,0008%
52	Ro mam	436	01/04/2009	0,0005%
53	Brau	397	01/04/2009	0,0005%
54	O Du	376	01/04/2009	0,0004%
55(*)	Others	2.134	01/04/2009	0,0025%

Source. GSO of Vietnam. *Statistic 2009 & 2014*

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