CHAPTER - 2

2.1 PHYSIOGRAPHY

India and Myanmar share a long and porous border stretching over 1600 kms. with 158 major and minor riverlets and is well known for cross-border insurgency, drug trafficking and smuggling of illegal arms.

Moreh is relatively isolated from the hill ranges of Eastern Manipur and more open to the Saigang division of north-western Myanmar. Moreh is easily accessible to the plain of Tamu than from the adjoining parts of Chandel in Manipur. The whole town is divided into nine (9) wards. Ward No. 3, 4, 5, are level plain and very close (physiographically) to Myanmar. The remaining wards are partly plain and partly hilly. The town is surrounded by hills on north, west and south but open to the east. The degree of slope of hills is very high in ward No. 1, 8 and 9 as well as northern side of ward No. 7 (Chingdong Leikai). Generally the slope decreases from west to east.

Moreh lies at the junction of Himalayan Geosynclines and Burma Geosynclines of early tertiary times. In a hilly country the market town is at the junction of two valleys.44

The surrounding hill ranges were formed at a comparatively recent date in the earth’s history, during the period of the great Tertiary or Alpine earth-movements.
Moreh town is bounded by Myanmar on the east, by Laiching (Dung Laobi Hill) on the north, and Lokchao River on the south.

"Plate No. 3. Dung Laobi Hill (Laiching) surrounding the Moreh town in the North"

The topography of the town is the extension of Kabow valley to the eastern Geo-Synclinal window of Himalayan Mountain. Indeed, the eastern Manipur hills meet the plain border of North-Western Myanmar at Moreh. Here, the boundary becomes "a place of meeting" instead of "a line of separation". Border trade thrives on Moreh town generally because of its close proximity with the fertile plain of Saigang division (Myanmar) and its wider lowland relief. Different ethnic minorities especially Chins are living on the other side of the border; the ethnic-cultural similarities in both sides of the border encourage and boosted trading activities since ancient time.

Moreh is about 100 kms. south-east of Imphal. Tamu, the nearest main commercial
centre on Myanmar side is about four (4) miles away from Moreh.

The traders of Moreh are allowed to travel upto Kalemyo / Kalewa by obtaining Indo-
Myanmar Travel Pass. The travel pass holders are entitled to carry Foreign exchange @ 50 US$ a day subject to a maximum of 350 US $. The 165 Km. Long Tamu-Kalewa-Kalemyo road is
very important for traders since the road has direct link between Mandalay, the second largest
city in Myanmar and Imphal in Manipur (India). All these physiographical characteristics of Moreh
and its surrounding environments are the basis of economic development from the early period
till now and also the main factors for thriving border trade at Moreh town.

**Drainage:** Moreh is drained by three rivers - Lairok on the northern side, Lokchao River on the south and Khujairok on the west. All these streams are originated from the surrounding hills and have a general direction from west to east corresponding to the degree and directions of slopes. All the rivers are not perennial and in winter the volume of water is very less.

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Large scale deforestation in the surrounding hills of Moreh town creates shortage of water in all the rivers. If this trend (rate of deforestation) continues, after 20 years there will be a great problem for water at Moreh town.47

2.2 CLIMATE

Since Moreh in Chandel District of Manipur is situated near the Tropic of Cancer, she is under the influence of Sub Tropical Monsoon climate. In this type, there are wet and hot summer and dry winters. But there are differences in temperature and wind between places of different elevation in short distances.

According to Koppen’s classification of world climate, the region falls in the “Cwa” i.e. sub-tropical monsoon, mild winter; dry winter; hot summer. High temperature is the main feature that should be kept in mind when one think about the climate of Moreh town which is not much...
favourable to hard work of the peoples. With the start of March, due to low elevation and low vegetation covers temperature starts increasing at a greater speed.

According to Thornthwaite’s classification of the climate of the world, Moreh falls under group B i.e. humid having forest as vegetation and 64 to 127 P–E (precipitation effectiveness) index & T-E (temperature efficiency) index ; exactly Moreh belongs to BA’W i.e. Monsoon (deciduous) forest belt. According to Dudley Stamp’s natural vegetation division of Asia, Moreh falls under the Monsoon vegetation with deciduous forests. With between 40 and 80 inches of rain are the monsoon forests which lose their leaves during the hot season. These forests are the home of the valuable Teak tree as well as of the Pyinkado and other useful timber trees.48

In Moreh, where high temperature is the main climatic feature, slopes are beneficial for the cool air. But the temperature in the valley is too warm for comfort, health, or efficiency. Moreover large-scale deforestation in the surrounding hills of Moreh town for farming and firewood leads to further increase in the temperature of Moreh town.

Plate No. 7: A bridge that links Moreh (India) and Myanmar on the Lokchao river.