

# MARA AUTONOMOUS DISTRICT OF NORTHEAST INDIA

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## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Maras occupy a large hill tract of the southern part of Mizoram. The whole region inhabited by them is commonly called '*Marara*' in their local language, meaning '*the land of the Maras*'. In the early British period, this hill region was popularly known to the British as '*Lakherland*' as the Maras were then designated as '*Lakher*'. In 1953, the Mara area of the erstwhile Lushai Hills became 'Pawi-Lakher Region' under the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution. Under the same context of the Indian Constitution, in 1972, the Mara area became an autonomous district known as 'Lakher District', which was again rechristened into 'Mara District' in 1988. Saiha, locally known as Siaha is the capital town of the Mara Autonomous District.

## LOCATION:

The Mara Autonomous District lies in the loop of the Kolodyne river, and is situated between the Latitude 22°.07' and 22°.38' North and between the Longitude 92°.55' and 93°.10' East. Situated in the southern part of Mizoram, it covers an area of about 1445 square kilometers. It is flanked on the north and the west by the Lai Autonomous District of Mizoram, and on the south and the east by the Chin State of Myanmar, covering an international boundary with Myanmar for 159kms.

## MOUNTAIN:

There are several high peaks and precipices. The *Sahiatla* with a height of 2022 meters is the highest peak in the Mara Autonomous District. There are other prominent peaks within the district like the *Tliatlu* with a height of 1940 metres, the *Kahrie* 1918, the *Zyhno thiena byuh* 1864 metres, the *Leiparotlah* 1840 metres, the *Mawma* 1834 metres, the *Meisabyu* 1810 metres, the *Chhôchhopaw* 1791 metres, the *Irene Peak* 1787 metres, the *Ngiapikana* 1765 metres and other several peaks.

## RIVER:

Several rivers run through the land in different directions. The more prominent rivers are the Beino (Kolodyne), the Tisi, the Pala, the Ka-ao, the Raphu, the Salyu, the S.Ngodei, the Titlao, the Tisopi, etc. Some of these rivers flow towards the east or the west while others drain towards the north or the south directions. These rivers are abounding with many varieties of fish of which the biggest one is the cat fish. There are also many small rivers, brooks and streams in

almost every rugged valley. Besides, there are also lakes, the most important one being *Pala* Lake, which has a depth of twelve meters, and covers an area of about one square kilometer.

### **CLIMATE:**

Lying below the striking point of the Tropic of Cancer, the Mara District is bestowed with a pleasant climate enjoying coal in summer and temperate in winter. There is, therefore, no extreme variation of temperature throughout the year; the temperature averaging 18°C in winter 31°C in summer. Due to the variation in attitudes and features, some places are subjected to tropical and sub-tropical climate where as the rest has temperate and sub-temperate climate. Monsoon period which falls from May to September brings heavy rains with violent storm, average annual rainfall is about 240.6 centimetres.

### **FOREST:**

The Mara District is very rich in natural forest resources. The entire area of the district is covered with thick forest, which is geographically a continuation of the Chin Hills and Mizoram hill system. The whole area of the forest is classified into different categories according to the natural features and forest resources. About 289 square kilometers of the area is under the supervision of the Forest Department of the Mara Autonomous District Council.

### **FLORA AND FAUNA:**

The tropical jungle with its favourable climate makes the land an ideal sanctuary for wild animals, and large varieties of wild animals are found. These include elephant, *mithun*, bison, tiger, bear, deer, varieties of monkey and ape. Before 1972, a large number of Asian elephants were found in the *Pala* and *Khaikhy* areas, and frequent game and hunting led to indiscriminate killing of elephants and other wild animals.

Besides, several varieties of birds, peacock, black pheasant, jungle fowl, partridge, etc. are also found in the district. There are also many varieties of singing and love birds. In the past wild animals and birds were extremely numerous, but their number has been fast decreased due to devastation of the forest and indiscriminate killing of wild animals and birds.

### **PEOPLE:**

The Mara people were known under different tribal names since time immemorial. The more popular nomenclatures are Mara, Lakher, Shendu, Zyu or Zho/Zô, etc. The generic term '*Mara*' includes several groups namely, Chapi, Hawthai, Tlosai, Vytu and Zyhno. The Maras are widely distributed in the Indo-Myanmar bordering areas, but the greater numbers of the people are found in the Mara Autonomous District of Mizoram. According to the District Census Record of 2011 conducted by Local Administrative Department, Mara Autonomous District Council, Saiha, there are 49 Mara villages in the Mara Autonomous District, and there are 85 Village Councils and also 11965 houses; and the total population is 60453, out of which 31025 are males and 29996 are females.

**STATISTICS OF MARA VILLAGES  
AS ON MADC CENSUS RECORD OF 2011**

<b><u>S/No</u></b>	<b><u>Name of Village</u></b>	<b><u>No. of House</u></b>	<b><u>Male</u></b>	<b><u>Female</u></b>	<b><u>Total</u></b>
1.	Ahmypi	45	113	144	257
2.	Amôbyu (B)	144	331	358	689
3.	Amôbyu (Ch)	70	165	146	311
4.	Amôbyu (Zero)	128	375	365	740
5.	Amôtla	113	270	279	549
6.	Bymari	95	222	202	424
7.	Chakhei	326	766	818	1584
8.	Chapi	215	540	574	1114
9.	Chhaolô	239	666	648	1314
10.	Chheihlu	94	270	240	510
11.	Iana	145	307	324	631
12.	Kaochao (East)	247	542	521	1063
13.	Khôpai	131	310	341	651
14.	Kiasie	103	251	218	469
15.	Laki	201	609	637	1246
16.	Laty	54	110	173	283
17.	Laty (New)	134	326	338	664
18.	Leisai	53	112	111	223
19.	Lôbô	172	427	408	835
20.	Lôdaw	68	187	133	320
21.	Lômasu	82	163	149	312
22.	Lôpe	16	34	32	66
23.	Lôpu	189	434	394	828
24.	Maisa	58	147	140	287
25.	Mawhro	108	302	257	559
26.	Miepu	60	130	174	304
27.	No-aotla	539	1366	1271	2637
28.	Pala	115	300	317	617
29.	Phura	270	676	631	1307
30.	Riasika	45	81	74	155
31.	Saikao	258	527	401	928
32.	Saikao (New)	38	85	92	177
33.	Siaha	4839	13310	12347	25657
34.	Siasi	65	155	162	317
35.	Siata	216	549	527	1076
36.	Siatlai	76	206	210	416
37.	Supha	41	82	89	171
38.	Theiri	128	303	317	620
39.	Theiva	128	330	407	627
40.	Thiahra	78	204	201	405

41.	Thosai	72	180	149	329
42.	Tipa	616	1594	1664	3258
43.	Tipa (B)	140	536	431	967
44.	Tipi (Ferry)	61	145	153	298
45.	Tisi	221	514	538	1052
46.	Tisôpi	105	302	301	603
47.	Tôkalô	114	267	263	530
48.	Vahia	164	406	416	822
49.	Zyhno	346	908	692	1819
	<b>Total</b>	<b>11,965</b>	<b>31,025</b>	<b>29,996</b>	<b>61,021</b>

**STATISTICS OF OF SAIHA TOWN CENSUS  
AS ON MADC CENSUS RECORD 2011**

<u>S/No.</u>	<u>Name of Village</u>	<u>No. of House</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>
1.	College Vaih-1	242	668	704	1372
2.	College Vaih-2	271	720	726	1446
3.	Council Vaih	287	758	748	1506
4.	ECM Vaih	140	346	333	679
5.	Meisatlah-1	199	534	513	1047
6.	Meisatlah-2	155	387	334	721
7.	Meisah Vaih East	192	532	570	1102
8.	Meisah Vaih West	159	460	446	906
9.	New Colony-1	352	911	1003	1914
10.	New Colony-2	271	716	730	1446
11.	New Colony-3	303	1014	794	1808
12.	New Saiha East	423	1067	1085	2152
13.	New Saiha West	615	2050	1125	3175
14.	Siahatlah-1	256	646	607	1253
15.	Siahatlah-2	223	587	634	1221
16.	Siahatlah-3	167	410	384	794
17.	Siaha Vaihpi-1	300	706	712	1418
18.	Siaha Vaihpi-2	179	466	474	940
19.	Siaha Vaihpi-3	105	332	425	757
	<b>Total</b>	<b>4839</b>	<b>13310</b>	<b>12347</b>	<b>25657</b>

**REFERENCES:**

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