COLONIAL STATE AND THE EMERGENCE OF NAGA IDENTITY: 1881- 1947

BY

KHRIEREIZHÜNUO DZÜVICHÜ

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Reg. No. 202/2005

DEDICATED TO MY FATHER

MR. NEIDELIE DZÜVICHÜ

AND MY MOTHER

MRS. DENUO

FOR WHOM I LEARNED

DECLARATION

I, Miss. Khriereizhünuo Dzüvichü, hereby declare that the subject matter of this thesis is the record of work done by me, that the contents of the thesis did not form basis of the award of any previous degree to me or to the best of my knowledge to anybody else, and that the thesis has not been submitted by me for any research degree in any other University/Institute.

This is being submitted to Nagaland University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History.

(Candidate)

Khriereizhünuo Dzüvichü

(Head)	(Supervisor)	(Co-Supervisor)
Dr. N.Venuh Nagaland University Kohima, Nagaland	Dr. Ketholesie Nagaland University Kohima, Nagaland	Prof. Victor Babu B.B.Ambedkar University Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh

CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that the original work prescribed in this accompanying thesis entitled 'COLONIAL STATE AND THE EMERGENCE OF NAGA IDENTITY: 1881-1947' has been carried out by Miss. Khriereizhünuo Dzüvichü under my guidance and supervision. This work is original and has not been submitted so far in part or full for any other degree/diploma to any other institution/university.

It is further certified that the candidate has fulfilled all the conditions required for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. This work is being submitted to Nagaland University, Kohima, Nagaland.

(Supervisor)

Dr. Ketholesie

Department of History &

Archaeology

Nagaland University

Kohima, Nagaland

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CONTENTS

CHAPTER-I

INTRODUCTION

1.1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Identity is the state of sameness. It is who or what a person or thing is. The state of being 'the same' connects or brings people or things together. This process creates and defines identity and explains who a person is or what a thing is.

Identities are always multiple, contingent and continuously constructed so that traditions, the practices and beliefs which reflect the collective memories of previous constructions, which are also continually reinvented, are shared and reiterated. Peter Robb argued that there is no analytical contradiction between long-term civilisation continuities and emerging forms of constructed identity.[1]

The study of identity presents a very interesting and wide scope for research. Individual feelings about their identity vary widely from person to person, which itself is an interesting aspect, which leads to various developments at different levels. What does identity mean to different people? Or why do people need identity and recognition of it? Even though it would be very interesting and challenging to go into

[1] . Robb, Peter., "The Colonial State & Construction of Indian Identity: An Example on North-East Frontier in the 1880s", Modern Asian Studies, Vol.31, Part-2, 1997, p.245.

all these, the concern of this study is limited to see how the ethnic identity of the Nagas emerged.

There are different forms of identity in the modern context. The literary meaning of identity is the state of being the same. In the Naga context, the Nagas consider themselves as being the same, different from others in terms of culture, history and tradition. This defines their identity. There is also a particular form of identity that is currently associated with concepts of public space and rights, and with the nation-state, or, at least with political and territorial units. There are other elements of identities such as pre-existing identities and competing identities.

This study will deal with the emergence of Naga identity, which started among the Nagas first on the basis of them being the same. Eventually, this feeling of identity got constructed, enhanced and developed by the concept of public space and rights, associated with political and territorial units.

The emergence of a modern Naga identity, i.e. a more general sense of being Nagas, of being one and the same, as opposed to Angami, Ao, Sema or Lotha, shall be the main focus of this study, even though towards the later periods, this identity construction came to be characterised by assertion of rights, territorial units and so on. The emergence of Naga identity began as a process first on the simple fact that Nagas are the same, and that they have a separate identity. From here stemmed out the different aspects of Naga identity, formed, constructed and expanded.

Naga identity is a constructed identity and it is a case of ethnic identity. Ethnic identities have assumed great interest and have become an important area of study in recent times. The Nagas are an ethnic minority with a strong sense of their identity. It

was only in the late 19th Century, during the colonial period, that the Nagas first started coming together as an ethnic community. The ethnic identity of the Nagas is thus a recently constructed ethnic identity. To understand the identity of the Nagas, it becomes imperative to also know what ethnicity is, what constitutes an ethnic community or what an ethnic group is.

The concept of ethnicity is more important today than ever as a result of the spread of doctrines of freedom, self-determination and democracy. The term ethnicity is of recent origin. It appeared first in the 1950s in the English language. But its meaning of kinship, group solidarity and common culture is as old as the human historical record. Ethnic community has been present in every period of human history and has played an important role in all societies.[2] Everyone knows that ethnicity has something to do with a kind of "fellow-feeling" that binds people together and makes them feel distinct from others.[3] Ethnicity is thus a concept that makes people of the same group to feel and respond jointly towards a common cause.

The term ethnicity is derived from much older terms and its more commonly used adjective 'ethnic' dates backs to the middle Ages. The English adjective 'ethnic' is derived from the Ancient Greek term 'ethnos', which is derived from 'ethnikos'. It was used as a synonym for gentile, i.e. a non-Christian and non-Jewish pagan in New Testament Greek. Thus it was used to mean non-Greeks or to other people who share some biological and cultural characteristics and a common way of life. The dichotomy between a non-ethnic meaning 'others' and ethnic meaning 'us' has continued to dominate the concept in the field of ethnicity.[4] Eventually the words ethnic, ethnical, ethnicity and ethnique corresponded to an association with race. As

[2] . Hammersley, Martin & Atkinson Paul., Ethnography: Principles in Practice, 1993, p.4.
[3] . Lewis, Maybury David., Indigenous People, Ethnic Groups and the State, 1997, p.59.
[4] . Hutchinson, John & Smith, Anthony., Ethnicity, 1996, p.4.

the field of anthropology developed in the 19th Century, the usage of ethnology or ethnicity became more associated with race.

Ethnicity is a term of elusiveness. The type of identity usually referred to as 'ethnic' can be manipulated for political purpose and even transformed. Ethnicity has been said to have a primordial or ascribed quality, but it is also true that ethnic identity is shaped by historical experience. Thus it is objective, given and subjective at the same time. It is therefore a creation. It is the many possibilities of shaping ethnic identity, the combination of different primordial criteria and their interrelations with a changing historical context, which makes the concept both difficult and indispensable.

The objective factors of ethnic identities are language, religion, territory, social organisation, culture, race and common origin. The objective factors are thus observable culture and shared symbols of a particular group. The subjective factors are a combination of factors chosen by a group to assert its identity, which are then used as common resources by a group to assert their identity, and achieve certain goals (Stavenhagen:1990). The subjective factors are thus the internal beliefs of the people regarding their shared ancestry. They may believe that their ethnic group has a shared origin or family ancestry, or a common homeland in the past.

The subjective aspect of ethnicity entails a 'we feeling' and a sense of community or oneness. A distinction between one's own 'in-group' versus an 'out-group'. This subjective identification of individuals with an ideology of a shared history, unique past and symbolic attachment with a homeland are often the most important expressions of ethnicity. This study shall take into consideration the contribution of both objective and subjective factors in the emergence and construction of Naga

identity.

Ethnic identity changes over time through ethnication, de-ethnication and re-ethnication. It is a variable rather than constant. That is why ethnic identity is a fluid concept, contextual, situational and relational (Hettne:1996). The development of ethnic identity is thus a complex, continuous process, related to many factors. Depending on one's self identity, one may be predisposed to feel in a certain way, and to respond favourably or unfavourably to certain life events. When one studies identity, it is important to relate it to other aspects of personality or self-motivation, cultural self, self-aspirations and physical self.

Ethnic self-identity is the integration of ethnicity or race into one's self-concept or self-image. It is the full recognition of one's ethnicity and the subsequent self-identity that flows from the values, ways and styles of that ethnic background rather than from self-concept based on the opinion and prejudices of the larger society towards that ethnic group. Ethnic identity is an identity that develops from within, instead of an image that is imposed by social stereotypes. Ethnic identity is also related to one's capacity to empower oneself and represent one's ethnicity in the most constructive way.

According to Anthony Smith, a working definition of an ethnic community is "a named human population with a myth of common ancestry, shared memories and cultural elements, link with a history, territory or homeland, and a measure of solidarity."[5] Based on Smith's definition, Michael Brown came up with six criteria that must be met before a group can be called an ethnic community, which are as follows:

[5] . Smith, Anthony., Nationalism in the 20th Century, 1974, p.viii.

i) The group must have a name for itself. This is crucial because a lack of name symbolises an insufficiently developed common identity.

ii) The people in the group must believe in common ancestry.

iii) The members of the group must share historical memories, often myths or legends passed from generation to generation by word of mouth.

iv) The group must have a shared culture, generally based on a combination of language, religion, law, custom, institution, dress, music and craft.

v) The group must feel an attachment to a specific piece of territory, which it may or may not actually inhabit.

vi) The people in the group have to think of themselves as a group in order to constitute an ethnic community, i.e. they must have a sense of their common ethnicity. The group must be self-aware.[6]

Smith's definition, together with the six criteria of Brown is relevant for this study of identity as both the objective and subjective factors including group awareness are taken into study. In this regard, ethnic identity may thus be defined as an identity where the belief in common origin, descent, history and culture is prevalent among the ethnic community.[7]

Max Weber, the classical theorist conceptualises ethnicity as "the belief that in-group affinity, regardless of whether it has any objective foundation, can have important consequences especially for the formation of political community".[8] He called 'ethnic groups' as those groups that entertain a subjective belief in their

[6] . Brown, Michael., op.cit, pp.81-82.
[7] . Vermeulen & Govers., From Political Mobilisation to Politics of Consciousness, 1997, p.1-30
[8] . Weber, Max., Ethnic Group, 1978, p.389.

common descent because of similarities of physical type or of customs or both, or because of memories of colonisation and migration. This belief, according to Weber, is important for the propagation of group formation and it does not matter whether or not an objective blood relationship exist.

As such, Weber combined subjective and objective aspects of ethnicity in his definition and balances their cultural and practical basis. He stressed that no matter how superficial any trait is, it can function as an ethnic boundary and that political action can easily give rise to the belief in a blood relationship. The current debates on ethnicity are partly based on Weber's reflections.

There are four major components of ethnic identity:

i) Ethnic Awareness (understanding of one's own group and other groups)

ii) Ethnic Self-Identification (label used for one's own group)

iii) Ethnic Attitudes (feelings about own group and other groups)

iv) Ethnic Behaviours (behaviour patterns specific to an ethnic group)

Ethnicity thus generally refers to a person's affiliation with a particular ethnic group, or to their sharing qualities, characteristics or customs of that ethnic group. It is noted by scholars that ethnic groups may be the result of migrations of whole or part of societies, military conquests or altered political boundaries. Territorial, institutional and cultural identity factors reinforce each other so that ethnic groups can remain distinct and less prone to assimilation. Historical symbols are also important. Without ethnic pride and knowledge, the desire to continue tradition rapidly diminishes.

The extent to which one identifies with a particular ethnic group refers to one's sense of belonging to an ethnic group and the part of one's thinking, perceptions,

feeling and behaviours that is due to ethnic group membership. The ethnic group tends to be one in which the individual claims heritage. Ethnic identity is separate from one's personal identity as an individual, although the two may reciprocally influence each other. In the same way, an ethnic group is also different from a pan-ethnic group. A key difference between ethnic groups and pan-ethnic groups is that ethnic groups are able to draw upon selected aspects of existing cultures to maintain group identity, where as pan-ethnic groups have to develop some kind of common culture. Ethnic groups are also characterised by factors like control of a territory, within which their offspring may perpetuate their heritage, common culture, language and religion with which individuals need to clearly identify themselves.

In the study of ethnicity, there are two conflicting approaches, namely primordialism and instrumentalism. The primordial approach developed in the 1960s and is associated with the anthropologist, Clifford Geertz. Geertz attempted to describe how many third world countries were trying to build nations and integrate their political institutions based on a 'civil order', a political system based on democratic representation processes other than traditional ties of kinship or religion. In his essay *'The Integrative Revolutions'*, he indicated how this new civil order clashed with other traditional or primordial aspects of kinship, race, ethnicity, language and religion.[9]

The primordialists argue that every person carries with him throughout his life, attachments derived from the place of birth, kinship, race, language, religion and tradition, which are natural and spiritual for him. This provides a basis for people from the same background to come together. The primordialists tend to refer to social realities and personal attachments to them as 'given' and therefore inflexible. But

[9] . Scupin, Raymond & DeCorse, Christopher, R., Anthropology, A Global Perspective,5th Ed. 2004, p.579.

recent investigations of ethnic phenomena round the world suggest that this is inaccurate. Ethnic identities which ought to be given and long established are seen at the very least to be renewed, modified and remaining in each generation.[10]

Joan Nagel has developed a thorough analysis of recent literature that stresses the volitional and fluid characters of ethnic identity. She provides a compelling case for seeing ethnicity as a socially constructed variable definition of self or other, whose existence and meaning is continuously negotiated, revised and revitalised.[11] Ethnicity is thus a concept that is likely to incorporate change for the purpose of a common cause, a deliberate one, pertaining to the exercise or expression of a mutual choice, desire or wish derived from the power of determining the cause.

Kasfir shows that primordialism overlooks the new ethnic groups that suddenly appeared under colonial rule.[12] In many parts of the world, and especially in Africa, new ethnic identities and groups are still being created which receive primordial status. These new 'primordialisms' are not 'givens'. This approach helps in understanding ethnicity because when ethnicity is constructed, it means that it takes latent primordial identifications to arouse the ethnic consciousness.

Geertz argues that ethnic communities have primordial elements and sentiments that are not easily satisfied, as is evident in several ethnic groups in the modern context. He further suggests that ethnic attachments based on assumed kinship and other social ties and religious traditions are deeply rooted within the individual through the enculturation process. He maintains that ethnic affiliation persists because

[10] . Hobben & Heifner., The Integrative Revolution Revisited, 1990, p.18.
[11] . Nagel Joane., Resource Competition Theory, 1995, pp.442-458.
[12] . Kasfir., Explaining Ethnic Political Participation, 1979, p.368.

it is fundamental to a person's identity.[13]

In contrast to the primordialist approach, the central idea of ethnicity for the instrumentalists is the socially constructed nature of ethnicity and the ability of elites to forge their own individual or group identities.[14] Frederick Barth, the instrumentalist anthropologist, regards ethnic identity as a feature of social organisation and boundaries that ensure the persistence of the group (Barth:1969). He noted the fluidity of ethnic relations in different types of multi-ethnic societies. Although ethnic groups maintain boundaries such as language to mark their identity, people may modify and shift their language and ethnic identity in different types of social interaction. Barth emphasises how ethnic boundary markers such as language, clothing or other cultural traits are not based on deeply rooted enduring aspects of ethnicity.

Ethnic boundaries are continually being revised, negotiated and redefined according to the circumstances. The circumstantial model explains how people draw on their ethnic identity for specific economic, social and political purposes. Barth showed how individuals of ethnic groups adopt to specific types of economic and political circumstances in a multi-ethnic society. He was the first who showed the new in-sight that ethnicity as a variable is influenced by the situation and not by something 'natural' or 'given'.

Horowitz uses the group psychology of Henri Tajfel and focuses on the differential estimations of group worth and collective stereotypes. He argues that ethnic groups in Africa and Asia, included in modern territorial states have different cultural and economic resources. He suggests that we can explain their strategies, including secession and irredentism, in terms of the backward or advanced nature of

[13] . Scupin Raymond & DeCorse Christopher, R., op.cit, p.579.
[14] . Hutchinson & Smith., op.cit, p.9.

the group's resources and of the region they inhabit.

This assumption underlies that ethnic affiliation is ultimately based on kinship and myths and on the sense of group honour in relation to other groups (Horowitz:1985). Horowitz is of the view that since social recognition affects self-esteem, much political behaviour aims at bringing objective or official recognition into harmony with the subjective or aspirational recognition of the ethnic group. This approach to ethnicity takes a wider view of ethnicity in the light of collective group rights and collective stereotypes, which the primordial and the instrumentalist approaches ignore.

There are ethnics that trace their origin over several centuries, and there are others that are of modern origin, as well as ethnic groups that have undergone transformation. Ethnicity being an elusive term needs to be studied from a wide theoretical perspective and not limited to a single factor explanation. As such, for the purpose of this study, the instrumental approach can be used to trace how the Naga identity emerged and how it has been constructed, at the same time, existing primordial factors are also taken into consideration.

A study of the emergence and construction of Naga ethnicity or Naga ethnic identity reveals that ethnicity is not a 'given' thing as argued by the primordialists. Rather it is the situation that makes people come together. It was the situation that became instrumental in constructing Naga identity. However, primordial symbols like common origin, religion, history and land are taken and used as the basis for people to come together. The primordial explanation of ethnicity as 'given' does not explain how certain primordial symbols can be constructed. In the Naga context, Christianity came from outside yet it became a factor in the emergence and construction of Naga

ethnicity. Primordial discontent strives more deeply and is satisfied less easily.

Instrumentalists view ethnic identity as socially constructed (Brass:1991). This approach explains that ethnic identity is built for collective objective interests. In the Naga case, it explains the growth of Naga ethnic consciousness with political aspirations. The instrumentalist theory gives importance to the elite in constructing ethnicity in terms of collective objective. This theory is relevant in the Naga context, in that the educated Nagas took initiative in moulding Naga consciousness.

Nevertheless, the Naga leaders also used primordial symbols in their effort to bring the Naga tribes together as an ethnic category and as a society. The traditional leaders and the chiefs were told about the need to get together in order to regain their past status through independence. As the Nagas historically had an independent existence in their villages, the historical symbols appealed to the masses in this regard. Religion, in the form of Christianity, and land were used as primordial symbols to mobilise the Nagas towards solidarity and unity by the leaders.

1.2: OBJECTIVES, SCOPE & SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The present study is based on the following objectives:

i) To make an in-depth study of the traditional polity, administration, economy, education and religion of the Nagas, so as to understand the impact of the colonial rule in a more significant way.

ii) To understand the concept of Naga identity in relation to other ethnic identities, based on the wider theoretical literature of ethnic identity.

iii) To explore the cause and necessity of the emergence and construction of Naga identity against the backdrop of the colonial rule.

iv) To highlight and distinguish the constructive and destructive impact of the colonial rule on the Nagas at large.

v) To facilitate a new understanding of the name 'Naga', so as to define the impact of the name for every Naga, to know what the name stand for, and in what way he is connected to it before accepting it as the general term to identify himself and to relate to it when he is identified as a Naga.

vi) To make a new approach study to narrow frontier—implying a single rule of law within a given territory, and internal frontier—implying administered areas, political control areas, areas beyond political control, hierarchy, tradition and legitimacy.

vii) Since modern Naga identity is currently associated with concepts of public space and rights, nation state or at least with political and territorial units, to examine the contribution of the colonial state to the emergence of this identity.

The Nagas comprise of many major tribes and sub-tribes who are dispersed throughout the Northeastern region of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur and even Burma. However, this study is confined only to the Naga Hills and the present state of Nagaland. The scope and focus of the study is therefore mainly comprised of the Nagas of Nagaland and the processes among them in the colonial age, though on and off mention is made of the Naga communities in the neighbouring states.

The Naga ethnic identity is a unique identity. Nagas today have a strong sense of their ethnic identity. However, this identity was not present among the Nagas till recently, i.e., till the British colonial rule. Till then, Nagas were strongly divided into

their different clans, villages and tribes and, they were known specifically by these divisions. The highest social unit of the Nagas was the village, which was divided into clans. Each clan had its own separate administrative and political set up, with no regular institutional system of government. The relationship between the clans of a village lacked warmth and cordiality. The unit of Naga government was the clan and not the village as assumed by J.H. Hutton.[15]

Naga ethnic identity as one people, one community had not yet emerged. There was no sense of oneness, not even remotely, among the Nagas. There was not even a common name for all the Nagas. Thus, the Nagas had no collective identity before the establishment of British administration in their hills. Naga identity is brought into consciousness only after the tribes were brought under one and the same administration for the first time during the British rule.

As of date, all the scholarly works on the Nagas deal with economy, society and politics of the Nagas. The existing works focus on Naga nationalism or Naga politics, but they have not explained the emergence of Naga ethnic identity or consciousness or the appropriation by the Nagas of the name used by outsiders like the Ahoms, the British and the Burmese to resurge their own identity. None of the present works so far deal with the construction and emergence of Naga identity in a convincing and substantial manner. Moreover, most of the present works are mostly based on secondary data without taking into account the wider theoretical literature of ethnic identity.

The significance of the study lies in the attempt to investigate the possible reasons behind the emergence of Naga identity and the factors responsible for its construction

[15] . Hutton, J.H., The Angami Nagas, 1921, p.107.

over the period; to understand the ethnic identity characteristics that Naga identity displays; to study the similarities that Naga identity exhibits in relation to other ethnic identities in general; to analyse the situation that led to the appropriation of the name 'Naga' by the tribes after being called as such by their neighbours and outsiders for a long time; to explore the cause and necessity for the assertion of Naga identity within the colonial state; to study the significant implications of the emergence of Naga ethnic identity; to study the contribution of colonialism and its various machineries towards the emergence and construction of Naga identity and in moulding Nagas towards the consciousness of oneness and unity and to explore the extent of Naga identity within the Naga society.

This work is thus an attempt to explore a deeper understanding of Naga identity and of the Nagas, to present a better and clearer insight into the emergence of Naga identity within the colonial state, and its virtual construction and expansion in the modern context.

1.3: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A general review of some existing literature on the Nagas is presented below: M. Alemchiba (1970) gives an account of the Naga people, their ethnological affininities and their history in his book *A Brief Historical Account of Nagaland.* His work is mainly intended to present a historical account of the Nagas in general. He wrote extensively on the origin and migration of the Nagas and the British occupation of the Naga Hills leading to the birth of the state of Nagaland.

M. Horam's *Naga Polity* (1975) is a documentation of events regarding the Nagas, and the developments made in the state. Beginning with the historical background of the Nagas, the book covers the essential elements that made up the Naga polity. The

dilemma of choice between tradition and modernisation is highlighted as illuminating the difficulties faced by a tribal society entering the 20th Century.

R.R. Shimray, (1985) in his book *Origin and Culture of Nagas* presented an elaborate study on the Nagas, their origin, culture and traditions. It is a rich work on the culture of the Naga tribes, its main coverage and focus being on Naga culture. His derivation of the Naga culture and tradition is advocated by the word "Nagaism", by which he shows that the forefathers of the Nagas were soulful people and an epitome of the 'natural man'.

Hokishe Sema (1986) in *Emergence of Nagaland* gave an account of the Nagas from their origin, their chivalrous disposition, social customs and animism faith to the success of British imperialism, the coming of modern education, Christianity, the raising of the slogan of an independent Nagaland after the Second World War and the story of the underground movement. Upholding democratic traditions for the peace and progress of the state finds concern in the book.

Piketo Sema (1992) in *British Policy and Administration in Nagaland 1881-1947* interprets the British period and the impact of colonial administrative, cultural, economic and political policies on the Naga society. It is an analytical work on the British policy, which brought the Naga tribes under effective administration for the first time, and at the same time, sacrificed the physical unity of the Nagas due to administrative interest. The colonial policy is presented as having a deep impact on the socio-political resurgence of the Nagas.

Murkot Ramuny's work *The World of Nagas* (1993) is essentially the history of Nagaland since independence. Beginning with the early history of the Nagas, the coverage of the book was mostly taken up by the issue of insurgency, as much of the

author's period of service in the state was taken up the same. Being a work on the post-independence development of the people of Nagaland, its emphasis is on political reforms, issues and solutions.

R. Vashum's (2000) *Nagas' Right to Self-Determination* is a work on the remote past traditions and the development of modern Naga national movement. The book is a historical account of the Nagas' struggle for their right to self-determination, to be independent from India and Mynmar, with special reference to India. Covering the Nagas' old way of life, the emergence of the Naga movement and the later developments till 1999, the perceptions of the Nagas on self-determination, the work essentially concentrated on the politics of the region.

B.B. Kumar, (2005) in his work *Naga Identity* gave a detailed account of the extreme ethnic diversity among the Naga tribes and stressed that any belief or claim that Naga identity formation is rooted in history and anthropology will be contrary to the facts. He briefly concluded that the present Naga identity formation is of recent origin moulded by conviction to a common religion (Christianity), English education, administrative measures (creation of districts and state) and recent economic developmental activities.

Imo Lanutemjen Aier, (2006) in *Contemporary Naga Social Formations and Ethnic Identity* laid special stress on the dynamic development of political, social and economic factors, which resulted in uniting discrete tribes into that of one collectivity. The significant role played by socio-economic and political developments in transforming the Naga society from a stage of traditional inequality to contemporary class emergence of un-equal social relations is extensively discussed. The focus is thus on the development of contemporary social formations.

As such, the existing scholarly works on the Nagas mostly focus extensively and particularly on the origin, migration, economy, society, polity, culture, self-determination, administration and tradition of the Nagas. There are a number of books also on Naga history, particularly with regards to Naga encounters and relations with the British, the Assamese and the Indians. However, to the knowledge of the present researcher, in spite of the noteworthiness of the existing books and articles regarding a variety of significant aspects of the Nagas, none of the works so far deal with the emergence and construction of Naga identity in a convincing and substantial manner.

1.4: DATA ANALYSIS & METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

Data is collected from primary and secondary sources and from interviews. The data collected is analysed by organising the information gathered and by identifying the various patterns of the study theme. Coding and transcription were developed from the interview notes.

The methodology of the study is historical, interdisciplinary and qualitative. The sources include primary, secondary and archival, both unpublished and published, and Tour Diaries/Memoirs of District Collectors. Oral history, gathered through unstructured interviews is used to gain information on the research questions.

1.5: PLAN OF THE STUDY

CHAPTER-I of the study gives an introduction to the study, the objectives, scope and significance and the methodology of the study.

CHAPTER-II deals with the historical background of the Naga clan, village and tribe, and the significance of these institutions in moulding the identity of the Nagas.

CHAPTER-III studies the colonial administration and its impact on the emergence of

Naga identity.

CHAPTER-IV explores the colonial economy and its impact towards establishing a shared system among the Nagas.

CHAPTER-V illustrates the colonial educational policy and its impact towards Naga unity with a broader vision.

CHAPTER-VI deals with the colonial religion and its impact on the mindset of the Nagas, which eventually gave birth to a feeling of oneness.

CHAPTER-VII is the concluding chapter in which the emergence of identity is presented in the context of its formation, construction and expansion.

CHAPTER-II

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1: MIGRATION OF THE NAGAS

The Nagas have various theories of migration and settlement, which are recorded mostly by foreign writers. Claudius Ptolemy made the earliest reference to the Nagas in his popular work, 'Geographia', written in 150 A.D. Referring to the Naga territory in its present position, he called it as 'the realm of the naked.'[16] Sir G.A. Grierson traced the origin of the Nagas to that of the Tibeto-Burmans on the basis of language.[17] Huang Tsang, the Chinese pilgrim who visited Assam in 645 A.D. made mention of the tribes east of Assam.[18] Ahom Buranjees have records that when the Ahoms came to Assam in the 13th Century, the Nagas were already settled in the Naga Hills.[19] Written sources do not provide the exact date of the Nagas' arrival into the Naga Hills, the exact place of origin, or why they migrated. However it is very probable that the Nagas have entered the Naga Hills before the Christian era. According to Dr. S.K. Chatterjee, the Nagas are none other than the Kiratas (Indo-Mongoloids) mentioned in the old Sanskrit literature in 1000 B.C.[20] The Vedas mentions about the Kirata at various occasions. The Yajurveda makes the earliest

[16] . Ptolemy, Claudius., Geographia VIII, ii, p.18.
[17] . Grierson, G.A., Linguistic Survey of India, Vol.III, Part II, 1903, p.11.
[18] . Watters, Thomas., On Yuan Chwang's Travels in India (A.D 629-645), 1973, p.186.
[19] . Gait, E.A., A History of Assam, 1967, pp.78-79.
[20] . Chatterjee, S.K., Kirata Jana Krti, Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, Vol. xvi, 1950, No.2, p.149.

reference to this by mentioning a mountainous wild man. This is followed by the Atharvaveda, which mentioned a Kirata girl searching for medicinal herbs from the mountains. In the Mahabharata, the Kiratas are the hill men living in the eastern Himalayas. According to legend, Ulupi, the Naga princess fell in love with Arjuna, the great hero of Mahabharata, the handsome Pandava Prince, who came to eastern India. Ulupi took Arjuna to *'Naga lok'* (the land of the Nagas) where they lived happily for sometime until Arjuna moved on to Manipur. In the great war of Mahabharata, the Nagas also are shown to have fought on the side of the Kauravas.

Different scholars have come up with the theory that the Nagas have links with Tibet, China, and Southeast Asian countries like Indonesia, Malaysia and Myanmar. This theory is based on Naga art, material culture, language and practices. Interestingly Southeast Asia has been connected with China and India for much of its history. The earliest settlers in Southeast Asia were Palaeolithic or pre-Palaeolithic food gatherers, hunters, fishers and folks.[21] The units of this organisation, like the hunting group or the clan or tribe were small. They were nomadic and generally moved in a defined hunting territory.

With the passage of time, some of the tribes created new living space for themselves. Keeping in view the nature of the primitive agrarian structure, as population increased, the pressure necessitated more area of land, causing some of these groups to migrate. This is taken as one factor that led to migration within Asia. The migrants were directed by the barriers of mountains and jungles southwards along the seaways of the Malayan world.

Another factor that added to this migration within Asia was the expansion of the

[21] . Williams, Watson., China Before the Han Dynasty, 1961, pp.22-54.

Chinese Han people pushing southwards as population increased (Gerald:1972). They filled up sub-tropical and tropical China and further migrated which affected the whole of Asia.[22] Keith Buchanan remarked about the same thing when he wrote that the pre-Chinese people of Central Asia were displaced into the areas of Indo-Chinese lands far to the South leading to tribal movements, which affected the whole mainland South East Asia and the adjoining islands.[23] These immigrant tribes took different routes. Some took the Himalayan section, which extends through the Patkai, Arakan Yoma, and Banda Arch towards Sumatra and Java and some took the Pacific section, which extends from Formosa through the Philippines, Borneo and Japan.[24]

From the above description, it can be argued that perhaps the Nagas were among those tribes who migrated from China through the Patkai section and settled on the way in the Naga Hills. There are examples revealing how during migration some of the tribes broke away and settled on the way. In Borneo and Formosa, there are some indigenous groups who have the same traditions, culture, and socio-religious organisations as the Nagas in the Naga Hills. Some of the mountain tribes of Vietnam are also known to have much common features with some Naga tribes particularly in manner of dress and food habits.[25]

Rice, which is the chief cereal of Asia, as of Nagaland too, is a plant of Southeast Asian origin, and its cultivation was already well established in the Yangtse Valley in pre-historic times.[26] The Nagas must have wandered around before finding their permanent settlement, since their myths and legends have similarity with that of

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[22] . Sardesai, D.R., South East Asia, Past & Present, 1981, pp.7-10.
[23] . Buchanan, Keith., The South East Asia World, 1967, p.26.
[24] . Smith, W.C., The Ao Naga Tribe of Assam, 1925, pp.153-160.
[25] . Sanyü, Visier., A History of Nagas & Nagaland, 1995, p.11.
[26] . Fairbank, John K, Reischauer, Edwin O & Craig, Albert M., East Asia Tradition & Transformation, 1973, p.18.

Borneo, Philippines, Formosa, Indonesia, etc.[27] The natives of Nagaland and Borneo both have a traditional way of hunting and a similar system of terrace cultivation, while the loin loom for weaving cloth and the embroidery on the Naga clothes resemble that on Indonesian clothes.[28]

The original stock starting from the centre of dispersion in Sikiang Province moved westerly and bifurcated into several directions leading to Tibet, Assam and the hill ranges between Assam and Burma. The branch that came to the hill range moved further west and entered Naga Hills, while another branch entered Naga Hills from the Northwesterly direction, using Burma as a Corridor.[29] The Burma Census Report[30] shows that the successive invasion of Tibeto-Burman people came from the region of Western China and between the sources of the Yangtse-Kiang and Hoang-Ho rivers.

According to Hutton, all Naga tribes traditionally point to migration from the South except in the case of Kacha Nagas.[31] These observations pointed out that the Nagas are a Mongolian stock, which migrated from China, before the Christian era. It is also brought to light that the migration of Nagas did not take place in one wave but must have continued for some centuries in various groups. This is also attested by oral sources, folklore and other legendary sources, which suggests that all the Naga tribes did not split up into different tribes only from Naga Hills itself. Indigenous ways of recording events from generation to generation like legendary folktales and mythology provide important information on the origin, migration and settlement of the Nagas.

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[27] . Horam, M., Naga Polity, 1975, p.28.
[28] . Ibid.

[29] . Ao, Alemchiba, M., A Brief Historical Account of Nagaland, 1970, p.19.
[30] . Burma Census Report, 1911, p.252.
[31] . Hutton, J.H., The Angami Nagas, 1921, p.6.

There are some tribes like Angami, Sema, Lotha, Rengma, Zeliang and Chakhesang, who have branched out from Khezhakenoma. But there are other tribes too, which branched out either on the way to Naga Hills or in their early homeland. In fact, each tribe has its own legend, which indicates the course from which their migration took place. A study of these legends and traditions reveal that the migration took place from different directions.

The Angamis, Semas, Rengmas, Lothas and Maos form one wave of immigrants.[32] This wave wandered through the plains of Manipur, came northward through Mao area and settled at Mekruma. They moved further north, northeastward to Khezakenoma. From Khezakenoma, the Angami group moved further northward and entered Chakhesang area. This migratory route is attested by oral history and legends, which is passed down through generations.[33]

The Lotha branch went northward through the Angami area and entered the present area from several directions. The Semas moved from Swemi village in two directions, one branch moved straight to the north and entered the present Sema area while the other group moved westward towards Kohima village, but later turned to the northeast and joined the former group. The Rengma branch entered the present area from Khezakenoma through Angami areas, one group moved eastwards, which are still found in Chakhesang area, while the other group moved westward and became the western Rengmas.

The second wave of immigrants is the Aos, whose legends claim that they emerged from six stones (Longtrok) at Chongliyimti. Studies of the Ao culture

[32] . Ao, Alemchiba, M., op.cit, pp.19-20.
[33]. The interviewees met by the scholar complement the same.

however show that they came from the South in a different trek. There is evidence that they stayed at Chongliyimti, but they must have first migrated from Tangkhul area of Manipur and reached Chongliyimti, through the Sangtam area. From Chongliyimti, they went west and on crossing the river Dikhu settled in the Ongpankong range from where they spread north and northwest and populated the Ao area.

It is apparent that originally the Tangkhuls, Sangtams, Khiamniungans, Yimchungers, Changs and Aos belong to one group and also came through the same way, i.e. the Thaungdut area in Burma, though at different times through different routes. The Konyaks, unlike the other tribes entered their present area from the Northeast and are still confined in the extreme north east of Nagaland. The Phoms have a legend that they stayed with the Sangtams at one time and entered from the east directly, forming a different wave.

Whatever be the legend, it is certain that the Naga tribes now living in Nagaland, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh and Manipur have migrated to these places through Burma and that some settled down in Burma. The fact that the Naga tribes migrated at different times and entered their present habitat in different waves is substantiated by the present location of the tribes.

2.2: ORIGIN OF THE WORD 'NAGA'

The origin of the word 'Naga' is much debated by different scholars. The two largely accepted viewpoints are taken from the etymology of the word 'Naga', and its varying connotations in the Burmese and the Assamese languages.

In Burma, the Naga tribe is called *'Na-ka'*, which in Burmese means 'people with

pierced ear-lobes'.[34] Piercing of the ear lobes is a widespread practice among the Naga tribes. Traditionally, it is an important step for young boys who are about to enter manhood. The Burmese used the name *'Naka'* or *'Naga'* for the tribes, and it was from the Burmese that the British first came to know about the Nagas during the Anglo-Burmese Wars (1795-1826).

Another theory of the origin of the word Naga is subscribed to the Assamese people, who are the immediate neighbours of the Nagas. The Assamese were also the first people to come in contact with the Nagas. In Assamese, the word *'Noga'* means 'naked'. They also called the Nagas as *'Nangalog'*, meaning, and 'naked people'. The word *'Noga'*, which is a part of Assamese working vocabulary, is used for the Nagas even today. In the historical records of Assam, the word *'Noga'* is used for the primitive man living in his natural surroundings. Thus, originally, the word *'Noga'* was used for the naked people of the hills, who often came in contact with the people of Assam. The word in due course of time became *'Naga'*.

The Naga tribes had something in common that has made them recognisable as a people, since at least the time of Ptolemy, who used the words *'Naga log'* to mean the realm of the naked people during the 2nd Century A.D.[35] Interestingly, the location which Ptolemy described about the naked people has been the exact place in which the present Nagas are living now.

The Greeks had heard of the Nagas during the first century A.D. during their visits to western India and South India as a wild people with the characteristic flat nose of the Mongol race. According to Captain J. Butler, the term *'Naga'* is derived from the Bengali word *'Nangla'* or the Hindustani word *'Nanga'*, meaning naked, crude and

[34] . Horam, M., op.cit, p.25.
[35] . Ptolemy, Claudius., Geographia, VIII, p.18-22.

barbarous (Butler:1847). According to Verrier Elwin, the most likely derivation is that *'Naga'* is traced from the word *'Nok'*, which means people, in some Tibeto-Burman languages.[36] According to Dr. Hutton, it is typical of Assamese dialect to change 'a' to 'o' and so *'Nanga'* is changed to *'Naga'* since the second 'n' is nasal and pronounced as *'Noga'*.[37]

The general consensus is thus that the word 'Naga' is given by the Aryan speaking people. In fact, the word 'Naga' remained a terror to the Aryan speaking Assamese for ages, as they understood it to mean naked hill men or head hunters till recently. It is also interesting to note that there are some places in South East Asia bearing allied names like *Naga* and *Nabas* in Philippines, *Naka* in Malaya, *Naiga* in Burma, and *Nagreg* in Java Island.

Gradually, the name Naga was applied to a greater number of people and ultimately it became a general term for many tribes. The term Naga came to signify the separate identity of the people. However, the name was not in general use among the Nagas until recently. For example, some Nagas heard of the name only during the World War II (1939-1945),[38] some only after independence (1947),[39] some heard of it during the time of Kevichüsa in Mokokchung (1948-49),[40] while some still only became familiar with the name only during the time of A.Z. Phizo (1950-60).[41] Even as late as 1954, the people of Tuensang rarely spoke of themselves as Nagas, but as Konyaks, Changs, and Phoms and so on.[42]

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[36] . Elwin, Verrier., Nagaland, 1961, p.22.
[37] . Hutton, J.H., The Angami Nagas, 1921, p.5.
[38] . Tange Phom, 110, Pungo Village, Longleng, gave this information.
[39] . Pulesüh Sapuh, 81,Ruzhazo Village, Phek, gave this information.
[40] . Phongba Phom, 98, Pungo Village, Longleng, gave this information.
[41] . Yemlongjaba Chang, 72, Tuensang Village, Tuensang, gave this information.
[42] . Elwin, Verrier., op.cit, p.4.

According to Captain John Butler, the hill tribes in the areas now known as Nagaland had no generic term applicable to the whole race and that they merely used specific names for a particular group of villages. Thus, the men of Mezoma, Khonoma, Kohima, Jotsoma and other neighbouring villages called themselves as *'Tenyimia'* and the others if asked who they were, would merely say that they belonged to such and such village. They were quite ignorant of any distinctive tribal name connecting them to any particular group of villages. However, as the Nagas became more united, they began to use the name 'Naga' for themselves. The use of the term 'Naga', the presence of people of different race and culture made the Nagas to think in terms of 'us' and 'them', i.e. 'us' meaning the Naga tribes, signifying their oneness and unity, and 'them' meaning the outsiders, who are racially and culturally different from them.

Whatever be the origin of the word Naga, the name was thus entirely unknown to any of the hill tribes themselves.[43] The inhabitants of the Naga Hills were divided into numerous communities or races, and they know themselves by the names of their respective tribes only, and not by any name common to all the races. The name 'Naga' therefore became a collective name, used and heard during the British rule for the tribes, which was eventually appropriated by the tribes themselves.

2.3: THE NAGA CLAN

A Naga clan is a collection of families, subject to a single chieftain, commonly bearing the same surname and supposed to have a common ancestor. Clan is a kinship group or a distinct family based on actual descent from a common ancestor, as traced through the male (patriclan) or the female (matriclan) line. Clans normally require

[43] . Robinson, W., India's N.E.F in the 19th Century, 1962, p.26-28.

their members to marry outside the group (exogamous), and marriage within the clan is regarded as incest. Clans may segment into sub-clans or lineages, and genealogical records and myths may be altered to incorporate new members who lack kinship ties with the clan. Clan membership may be useful in ensuring mutual support and defence as well as in the mediation of disputes over property rights and the mode of residence after marriage. Some clans express their unity by means of a common emblem. Sometimes a clan constitutes a tribe.

The unit of traditional Naga government was the clan. All the Naga tribes have a number of villages, which again have a number of clans. Thus villages make up a tribe and clans make up the village. Every village of the Naga tribes has different numbers of clans. The Sema tribe is reckoned to have about twenty-two clans and a number of other sub-clans. The Rengma tribe, being divided into western and eastern Rengmas has a clan system that fall under six exogamous groups, within which there are more than twenty-three clans and a number of sub-clans. The Ao tribe fall under three broad clans, namely Chongli, Mongsen and Changki, under which there are more than sixty sub-clans or phratries. Likewise, all the Naga tribes have a number of clans and sub-clans within its respective villages.

Within a village, the position of the clan differs from tribe to tribe. For instance, the position of the clan is very strong within the Angami tribe unlike the clan of the Sema tribe. The real pivot of the Sema society is the chief and his predominant position, and his relatives on the male side leads to the rough classification of the whole group as of their clan. The Sema clan is also not as exogamous as the Angami clan. There are no tribal organisations even though clan feeling exists. Even though the Sema clan is not unimportant in Sema polity, it is not as important as the Angami

clan, which is the real unit of the Angami social life.

The strength or members of a clan make the clans of a particular village either powerful or weak. Among the Angamis, the clan is distinct from the village and it forms almost a village in itself. Among the Konyaks and Aos, slave clan existed.

In the old days, the clan is often fortified within the village inside its own boundaries and often almost amount to war with other clans of the same village. This shows the absence of oneness at the village level in the earlier days, while the clan feeling was strong. Rivalry of a clan with another clan within the village has in fact coloured the whole of Angami life. In almost every dispute between two men of different clans, the clans-men of each side appear as partisans to settle the dispute. For certain purposes, however, such as religious issues and cases of serious breach of the social code, the different clans in almost any village would come together. This means that even though certain incidents sometimes bring the different clans of a village together, most of the time the clans of most of the villages live normally at peace and unity together. This peace and unity did not necessarily include peace and unity at the village or tribal level, which shows the absence of oneness and unity at earlier times.

The clan is more or less a very definite section of society, though it is not to be regarded as a rigid institution, incapable of fluctuation or development. On the contrary, it is always tending to split up into component clans, which is a process in almost every Angami village.

Relationship among fellow clan members is spoken of as a blood-tie relation. But clan relationship is also set up by adoption, though the practice is generally held to be decidedly objectionable. A man with no sons will sometimes adopt a young man from another clan or village, on the understanding that the adopted son entirely denounces

the former group and enters the group of his adoptive father, whose property he inherits. Such adoption is rare earlier, but today there is more and more of such cases. Adoption almost invariably leads to property disputes, as the adopted son usually tries to avoid giving up the property rights, which may be forfeited by his leaving his own group, while he has to struggle with his new relatives for the inheritance of his adoptive parents.

Adoption within the kindred presents no difficulties and needs no ceremonies, since it is not more than an arrangement by which one man looks after another, in return for which he inherits his property under a verbal will. Adoption from one kindred to another within the clan is rare and its significance varies with local conditions. Among the Rengmas, it is not unusual for a man to leave his own clan and be adopted by his mother's clan. The aversion to adoption from another clan arises mainly from property disputes, but real adoption is adoption from a different clan. The main feeling which underlies the act of adoption is the desire that the kindred or clan shall not suffer a decrease in number by the death of the childless adopter, and for this reason, adoption is properly done from another clan.

There is one kind of adoption that is looked upon as suitable and proper. This is adoption by kindred of a man of another clan, generally of another village, who has been impelled to leave his own clan and village owing to enmity. If for some reason, a man incurs the enmity of his village, clan, or kindred to such a degree that he finds life uncomfortable, it is regarded proper for him to sell his land and leave his village and seek adoption. A change of clan within the village would lead to clan disputes, but no one actually objects to a man in such circumstances leaving his village and joining whatever clan and kindred he pleases in another village.

Among all the Naga tribes, there is a feeling of closeness among fellow clansmen, which is stronger than the village feeling or tribal feeling. At all conventions like marriages, birthdays or death, fellow clansmen of the particular clan find it obligatory to attend. Even in cases of social disputes, clansmen of the disputing parties would attempt to settle the case among them as far as possible.

Multiplicity of clans is the result of sub-division and immigration. The emergence of various clans led to the formation of village among many Naga tribes. For example, the formation of Kohima village is the result of inter-clan alliances, feuds and mergers of various social and material processes. Although all the various clans of the Naga villages followed the same animist religion, observed the same festivals, sow, plant and harvest on the same day, administratively and politically there was little uniformity and unity among the different clans. Each clan had its separate political set-up. When one clan of a village was at war with another clan of a different village, the other clans remained neutral.[44]

In the village, a Naga gave his loyalty to his own clan and identified himself with his own clan. This was mainly due to his brought-up within the well-marked boundaries of the clan, and because he belonged to the social and political set up of the clan. The clan feeling was reinforced by a more or less permanent confrontational relationship among the constituent clans of a village, while the village and tribal feelings remained dormant for long.

2.4: THE NAGA VILLAGE

A village is an assemblage of houses, which is recognised as a small municipality. The village was the entire world for the Nagas. It was the village from where all the

[44] . This indicates the total lack of solidarity among the tribes at the clan level itself in the past.

requirements were met. The village council ordained the entire life of the village. The collective life took precedence over the individual life. The obligation of a Naga was first to his family, clan and then to his village. This in due course of time required a total submission to the village community. The village community looked after the individual needs that were common to the entire community, and for the satisfaction of such needs the entire village was responsible. The history of the Naga villages was enshrined in custom and tradition, through the celebration of feasts in honour of heroes, through songs about the valour of the brave and through the fine cloth woven by the women for the noble. Each village was like a small republic having almost everything what they required at that time.

In the past, the name of the village from where a person comes from was very important, and the village name, rather than the tribe name, was extensively used in almost all matters till very recently. In fact, even if the name of the tribe was used, it was not very prominent or important at all.[45]

In the earlier days, a Naga village was generally built on a commanding feature, which quite often happened to be the top of a hill. Inter-village feuds being the order of the day, it was necessary that a village be so situated that a raiding party could not surprise it. A village is generally named after some local features or any peculiarity of the site itself.

A village is usually divided into khels depending upon its size and population. In some villages, a particular clan only may inhabit a khel. A village was not only defensively situated, but it was also fortified with stonewalls, bamboo spikes, wooden gates and sometimes a ditch.

[45] . Miakonyü Thou, 91, of Khonoma Village gave this information.

The organisation of the village community differs from tribe to tribe. The Angami, Lotha, Rengma and Ao villages have a democratic structure. Among the Angamis, the village chief is chosen for his wealth, physical strength and skill in diplomacy. But the authority exercised by him is very nominal. When an important decision is to be taken, all the villagers usually assemble and take a collective decision. The chief's voice would be listened with respect and would be given weightage also, but it will not necessarily be a decisive voice.

The Semas have a system of hereditary village chiefs. The chief is the overlord of the village, and all others are his subject dependants. The dependants are given plots of land, which they cultivate on behalf of the chief. They are also under an obligation to work for at least twelve days a year in the chief's field. The chief looks after the welfare of the dependants in various ways like giving them land, protection and financial help. Sometimes the chief even arranges brides for his subjects and pay the marriage price for them. In return, the people look upon the chief as their 'father', work for him, and fight for him and obey him in all matters of village administration. Among the Semas, it was customary for the oldest son of a Sema chief to establish a village of his own on his father's estates, as the structural framework of Sema society encouraged expansionist colonisation.

The Chang polity resembles that of the Semas, but the Chang chiefs are not as powerful as their Sema counterparts, mainly because they do not have the monopoly of land. The Konyak chiefs are protected by sacred rules (sacrosanct). They are given great respect and are considered so sacred that they are not expected to go on a raid. According to the Aos, the council of elders (tatars) governed the village community.

The central feature of a Naga village used to be the '*morung'*, which was a kind of bachelors' dormitory for the village youth. Women were not allowed inside the *morung*. A boy who entered the dormitory at the age of six or seven remained there till he married and set up his own independent house.

The *morung* fulfilled a variety of functions. It was the place where human and animal skulls were kept as relics, it was a guard-house where the village braves kept their daos, spears and shields, and it was also a meeting place where important decisions relating to war or peace were taken. It was in these dormitories that the younger generation of the village was reared to manhood in the traditions of the particular tribe. The folktales and songs were handed down from one generation to the other in the *morung.* The *morung* was also a sanctuary in the sense that a culprit, who took refuge in it, could not be harmed as long as he remained under its roof. The *morung* was the pride of the village, and it was always decorated with trophies of war and the finest woodcarvings that the villagers were capable of.

It has been noted that violent quarrels between father and son were more frequent in tribes that had no *morungs*. This is ascribed to the stresses of the family complex arising out of the son's feelings towards his father as a disciplinarian. The *morung* is seen mostly in Angami, Ao, Lotha, Konyak and Phom areas, where every village practically had one.

The log drums (xylophones) are a striking feature of the Ao, Chang, Konyak, Yimchunger and Sangtam villages. The drum was generally kept close to the *morung.* In Chang, Yimchunger and Sangtam areas, it formed a part of the *morung* itself. The Aos looked upon the drum as almost the village deity and the drum played an important part in the village ceremonies.

The feasts of merit are the hallmark of social distinction for a Naga villager. Inter village wars, culminating in the taking of the enemy's heads were part of the everyday life. The extent to which headhunting conditioned the life of a village and its people were amazing.

A noticeable feature of the Angami village is the sitting out places. These were originally lookout places from where a watcher might decry the approach of possible enemies. Another feature of the Angami village is its graves, normally built of stones either in circular or rectangular shape. The graves are found in the village itself or by the side of the village paths in the immediate vicinity of the village.

A Sema village is usually built either on the summit of a hill or below the ridge of a range of hills. The defences of a Sema village are not strong enough compared with the elaborate arrangement of Angami villages. At the most, the defence of the Sema villages consists of a double fence with a ditch behind, crossed by a single plank. The approach to a Sema village is always over land consisting largely of open jhum and in part of very thick low jungle, in which the movement of an enemy would be most difficult. The paths and communications between Sema villages are much more open than those in Angami village and the arrangement of Sema houses are looser than Angami houses.

Each Ao village is a small republic. Ao villages are thoroughly democratic. Even though the headmen (tatar) exist, their authority is very limited. The Ao villages with their streets of close-packed houses are a conspicuous feature of the state. The gate at each end of the village was closed with a great wooden door. The village relied mainly on its fence for its safety. Every village of any size is divided into khels.

It is an undoubted fact that among the Naga tribes that build *morungs,* the state of

those buildings in a village gives a sure indication of the state of the village itself. Decaying *morungs* means a decaying village, and well-used, well-kept *morungs* means a strong community. It is in the *morung* that the old tell the great deeds of the past, and the coming generations are taught to carry on the old traditions in the future. When the past is no longer glorified, the future seems dark and uncertain, and the *morungs* fall into decay.

All the villages of the Naga tribes were politically and economically independent of each other.[46] History tells us that right from time immemorial, the Nagas, irrespective of tribes were living independently in their own villages. Nagas were not under any authority before the British rule. Each Naga village was a republic. Fear of attack by enemies kept the villages closely guarded because these were the inter-clan, inter-village, inter-tribal headhunting days. As a result of this, Nagas at large had no collective identity in the past. They carried more loyalty and feeling for the respective villages and though conflicts were settled internally, they could not move ahead from their village or tribal identity until ultimate common aspirations and goals were generated within the colonial state under the British.

2.5: THE NAGA TRIBE

Tribe is a set of people theoretically of common descent. It is essentially a division of pre-industrial people for political purposes. When a Naga came out of his village, he identified himself with his village and not with his clan, mainly because of two reasons. First, it identified him as belonging to a particular village as against persons of other villages. Secondly, an outsider knows the name of his village better than his clan name. When the same Naga moved farther afield, crossed his tribal

[46] . This shows the absence of oneness and collective identity among the Naga tribes.

territory and stepped into the territories of a neighbouring tribe, he identified himself with his tribe instead of his village. Thus the tribe was the highest social identity of Nagas in the old days, and there was no collective identity of the Nagas till recently except their respective tribal identity.

The tribal identity had a common language, common culture and belief in a distant common descendent as its basis. But this was a very loose identity. Each Naga tribe living in a distinct territory, speaking a dialect unintelligible to other tribes and having a different culture, views other tribes as an alien tribe. There was not even a remote sense of oneness among the Naga tribes before the British rule. There was no common name for all the Nagas among themselves, even though it is recorded that the Assamese called the people living in the hills of Assam frontiers as Nagas/Nogas when they went to Assam. But for most Nagas, who had never ventured out of their tribal territory and had never been called Naga, the name had no meaning.[47] As such, the name of the tribe was the most generalised level of identification of the Nagas. Thus, though Nagas in general were called as such by the Assamese people, this generalisation had not yet dawned on the Nagas, who went strictly by their clan, village and tribal identity for a long period of time.

The whole Naga society was divided into various tribes and each tribe was independent of the other. There was no centralised political structure, each tribe being governed by its own chief or elders under various custom and traditions. To conceptualise a Naga tribe and to identify the true character of a Naga tribe, one has to look at it structurally and internally and not externally. Internally, here, means from the angle of the village structure. Each Naga village forms the largest residential territory. The village is internally broken down into several distinct and bounded clan

[47] . This indicates the lack of a collective identity among the Nagas during the pre-British period.

territories, which are commonly known as *khels*. These *khels* further have analytic links with the tribal structure through several indigenous institutions.

There are about thirty-four Naga tribes, sixteen in Nagaland, ten in Manipur, and others in Burma, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh. There is however hardly any unanimity over the actual number of Naga tribes. Though the number is put at over thirty, scientific anthropological classification may put them somewhere at fifty or so. This is because anthropologists generally prefer to give structural definition of tribe, particularly as a segmentary system.

Colonial situations created the division of Nagas into tribeship such as Angamis, Aos, Semas, Lothas, and so on as tribes. Members of each Naga tribe show considerable diversity in culture, language and also in physique. Each tribe has indigenous individual social organisations. Whatever sense of ethnic unity a Naga tribe possesses is a response to experience, events and conditions of the recent past. For example, the sense of a common Angami identity for the first time emerged from a common rejection of alien British over-lordship. The sense of a common Naga identity also emerged under the same conditions, which were created by the outsiders, i.e. the British or the Indians.

A careful examination of the literature produced during the colonial period suggested that no attempts were made towards proper classification of true ethnic groups. The British used tribal names to identify that group of people, who in most cases did not represent the ‘true tribes’. The people on politico-administrative grounds later accepted most of these names. The outsiders, like the neighbouring plainsmen, originally coined such names, and self-names of the natives were thus neglected.

Every Naga village/tribe in a particular area/region have the use of a name for

itself or for other tribes, which are attributed to certain characteristics/features pertaining to itself or to other tribe/tribes for which such names are in use. But with the coming of the British, due to the common and official use of a particular name in use, like Angami, Ao, Sema, Lotha and so on, many locally used names are falling into obsoleteness, especially among the younger generations. The significance of such names lies in the fact that these names are self-names representing the true tribes unlike the names in use that are mostly accepted for convenience on political and administrative grounds causing the neglect of the self-names of and by the natives.

Following is a chart of names of Naga tribes used by a particular tribe for itself and names in use for each other:

Tribe Name	Angami	Sema	Rengma	Lotha	Ao	Sangtam	Yachumi	Chang	Konyak
Angami	Tenyimia	Tsungimi/ Semia	Tsugenyu/ Mezamia	Tsungung	Moiyarr (M)Simrr (C)Monrr				
Sema		Simi	Semu	Chümm		Sümrr	Shimrü	Samli	
Rengma	Tsanni	Mozhumi	Nzonyu	Moinyi	Monrr				Aghini
Lotha	Chizimi	Choemi	Tsug-wengu	Kyontsü	Tsindirr	Tsünrr		Tsinrü	
Ao		Cholini	Nankanyu	Uri	Aorr	Aorr		Ao	Paini
Sangtam		Lophomi /Tokomi			Sangtamrr	Pirr/ Isacha-nure		Sangtam	
Yachumi	Tsungre	Yachumi		Chobi-chole	Yamsongrr /Ahorr	Yam-chongrr	Yimchurr	Yamsang/ Motsun-ger	
Chang		Mochumi			Mochungrr/ Mozungr	Machongrr	Machungr	Chang	Mojung
Konyak		Taprongumi/ Minyu-monag-ami			Mirirr	Tablungre		Chagk	Konyak /Haha

In addition to the tribal names given on the chart, there are some other names of the various tribes, used by a tribe for itself or for others. For instance, among the Angamis, all those who put on the loincloth, *(niphi)* without crossing it between the legs were called as *niphikeliemia/Tenyimia*, while all others were called as *Mezamia*.[48] Here, all others means the other Naga tribes who were either naked or used a loincloth, crossing it between the legs from the front to the back.[49] The Angamis further called the Lothas as *Fürmia*, the Aos as *Hatigurimia* (known through buying and selling things), the Konyaks as *Frimia*,[50] (whom they used to chase for ornaments). Angamis called the Zeliangs as *Mezamia*.[51]

According to legend, Angamis are known to have stolen from the Zeliangs and raided their villages, because of which the Zeliangs called the Angamis as '*gami'* meaning thieves.[52] When the British came into contact with the Zeliangs and asked about the people living beyond the horizon, the Zeliangs pointed to those lands as belonging to the *'gami'*. Eventually the name 'Angami' from *'gami'* came to be used by the British and other tribes. The Angamis called the people of Tuensang and Mon as *Tamlumia*.[53] These people used to come to Kohima selling tree products, and children were told not to point fingers at them. (Probably because they were naked). The situation in the Naga Hills remained most complex as small groups occupying distinct territories, formed politically coherent and named autonomous tribes. Therefore there remains the doubtful feeling in the use of ethnic labels like that of Angami, Ao, Sema and Lotha.

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48 . Visakuolie Suokhrie, 79, of Kohima Village & Keriu Morü, 86, of Khonoma Village gave this information.

49 . Neichalhoulie Dzüvichü, 75, of Kohima Village gave this information.

50 . Thezhavilie Chüsa, 83, of Khonoma Village gave this information.

51 . Here *'mezamia'* means 'oppressable' or 'oppressed people'. The syllable *'za'* here has a lower note compared to the other word *'mezamia'* with a higher tone, which means non-Tenyimia/non-Angamis.

52 . Thezhavilie Chüsa, 83, of Khonoma Village & Visakuolie Suokhrie, 79, of Kohima Village gave this information.

53 . Kevimedo Rutsa, 85, of Kohima Village gave this information.

Legends and traditions suggest that before the establishment of peace through British occupation of the Naga Hills, the distinct smaller group of people acted as mutually hostile groups. Colonisation ended the relative isolation of the scattered and autonomous tribal societies and brought them within one administrative set-up, policy and program. This put an end to the institutionalised hostility between distinct groups by abolishing warfare, feud, blood vengeance and headhunting.

The tribal settlement pattern in the Naga Hills always remained such that distinct Naga tribes are distributed in the area with clear-cut boundaries between them. There never existed any central authority of the maximal tribal level. Hostility was not confined only between distinct segments of one tribe, but at village level also inter-clan feuds were common. Thus, the sphere and sense of ethnic identity in the past was highly segmented and diffused, which had meaning and reality mainly in terms of political opposition. Only a supposed genealogical structure, for example, the *Zuonuo-Keyhonuo* group among the Angamis, provided a true tribal unity. This provided an effective device for mobilising people at various levels of conflicts at inter-tribal level.

In terms of traditional political system, the Naga tribes could be placed between two polar types—Angami democracy on one hand and Konyak autocracy on the other. Within and between these types it is possible to trace several intermediate levels of structures. At the same time, it is also possible to observe two contrasting types of political structures within the same tribe, like the Konyaks.

Despite these typological differences, it can be observed that in any Naga society, the inequality of status is basically expressed through kinship institutions. For some Naga tribes, however, social stratification is perceived not only through kinship, but

also through non-kinship, secular or economic spheres. Mention may be made here of status raising feasts/ceremonies among the Angamis, age-set systems among the Aos, and others which remain as characteristic features of the political structure of some Naga tribes.

Traditionally, social stratification in Naga tribes may be observed in the following order: -

i) Political authority: (hereditary chieftainship among Konyaks and Semas)

ii) Religious authority: (Angami *Kemovo* and Ao *Putir*)

iii) Noble class: (landed elite and cattled class)

iv) Common men: (more distinct category of this class is found in Sema and Konyak tribes)

v) Slave/Refugees: (existed among Semas, Aos, and Konyaks, but no longer existence)

In the past, the Naga tribes had little or no knowledge of each other as a people, and therefore no collective identity existed among them. After the British rule was established, the hill tribes of Nagaland were subjected to a rather loose administration, and thus their incorporation in the framework of the nation-state could not be an effective one. This factor forced the Naga tribes to remain as sealed economic and political units. As a result, Naga tribes remained as autochthonous and homogenous groups in distinct territories, influenced by unique topographical conditions. In spite of their common settlement pattern, or their common general physical, and cultural outlook, the Nagas thus remained for long as separate entities, within the zone of their respective clan, village and tribe till the feeling of a common Naga identity gradually dawned upon them amidst the colonial atmosphere.

With the coming of the British, the Nagas were regarded as a tribe in all official documents and administrative proceedings, and consequently, the newly annexed hilly tract was named Naga Hills District,[54] and the Nagas gradually came to accept and appropriate the fact that they belong to one tribe, composed of several sub-tribes. Within the colonial framework, the tribes gradually came to know of each other better, and the name 'Naga' was eventually used for all the tribes in general, which became significantly instrumental in forging a common Naga identity.

[54] . Mackenzie, A., History of the Relations of the Govt. with the Hill Tribes of the NE Frontier of Bengal, 1979, p.33.

CHAPTER-III

COLONIAL ADMINISTRATION AND IMPACT

3.1: NAGA TRADITIONAL ADMINISTRATION

3.2: COLONIAL ADMINISTRATION

3.3: IMPACT

3.1: NAGA TRADITIONAL ADMINISTRATION

Traditionally, the Nagas had no kind of internal government, and they acknowledge no supreme authority.[55] If asked about their authority, they plant their spear on the ground and declare it as their supreme authority and that they will accept no other.

The elders of the village, or the *gaonburas* had some authority conceded to them, but it was very moderate and was often resisted and denied. A council of elders settled petty disputes and disagreements, but only in a way of arbitration. There was no constituted authority lodged anywhere in the community, with every man doing what he liked and what he was able to perform. Thus, in the past, the Nagas never had a unified system of administration.[56]

[55] . Hargovind, Joshi., Nagaland: Past & Present, 2001, pp.14-15.
[56] . Alemchiba, M., op.cit, p.162.

The past history of the Nagas had been a long story of hostility to one another. Every Naga village has been a republic, having its own popular village government. Every clan of the village even today represents the council of the village. The council is the parliament of the village. Under the village government, every citizen enjoys political stability, social justice and religious freedom.

Throughout the 13th Century till the early 19th Century, the Naga village republic continued. The Nagas resisted all outside dominion and isolation continued. Captain Butler found that the Nagas in general, especially the Angamis, had not evolved any settled form of government even during the mid 19th Century. They were nominally under the orders of the headmen of their respective villages, who were chosen for their wealth, bravery, and skill in diplomacy or only powers of oratory.[57] Virtually, every man was a law unto himself, "a form of democracy."[58] Theoretically, with most of the Naga tribes, a man was his own master.

Each Naga village was independent of other villages, and frequent village feuds involving headhunting took place. Every Naga village was like a sovereign independent state. The Nagas bear intense love and pride for their village and land, which would not be affected by hard life or dangers. From the cradle to the grave, a Naga identifies himself with his village. He will always subscribe his interest and welfare to that of his village and strive for the good of the village. As time went on, different tribes and clans emerged on the scene. As population increased, every village grew in strength and the people's feeling of love for their village also increased. They became more and more defence conscious of their village. It

[57] . Gundevia, Y.D., War and Peace in Nagaland, 1975, p.20.
[58] . Ibid.

compelled each village to become self-independent, and especially to adopt a perfect defence system. In this process each village attained the status of a sovereign state, i.e. an independent unit.[59] J.P. Mills and Dr. Horam both support a similar view when they described each village as an independent unit within the tribe.

Administration of a Naga village was indigenous and independent. Village administration of the Nagas stood for a corporate form of government. Administration was just and equitable. The administration of the village was in general by the village chief-in-council, except in some tribes like the Angami Nagas. The village chief in the Naga context was the head of the administration.[60] Chieftainship was therefore, a very important factor in Naga polity. The village chief was a judge, administrator and commander, rolled into one.[61]

Naga society is patriarchal and a lineage is a political unit.[62] Many such small political units constitute a larger community, which shares a common territory. The political organisation in a village is the sum total of these units as presented by the various lineage. As lineage is a political unit, a head is chosen by the unit to represent it in the village council, and thus it is the lineage heads of the village that look after the affairs of the village as a whole. The political system among the Nagas is therefore based on the recognition of the sectional interests of the component groups.

A political unit has a head, recognised as the chief of the political communities. The chief, who is either a hereditary head (as among the Semas and Konyaks), or an elected one (as among the Angamis), becomes a judge, administrator and executive head of the community. In the past, he was commander-in-chief as well. But the

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[59] . Shimray, R. R., Origin and Culture of the Nagas, 1985, pp.43-45.
[60] . Op.cit., pp.51-52.
[61] . Bareh, H.M., Encyclopaedia of N.E. India, Vol.VI, 2001, p.115.
[62] . Op.cit., p. 117.

office that combines so many responsibilities needs checks and balances. In order to check the chief's unlimited power, he is given a council through which he works and exercises his duties. Besides the council, the customs and traditional laws also bind the chief.

Thus, the Naga village state was an independent unit and accordingly enjoyed the right of sovereignty. Every village state pursued an independent policy and implemented its own customary laws. Administration was thus indigenous and independent in the sense that village-state administration of the Nagas stood for a corporate form of government, where each village-state enjoyed the absolute right to make war or peace. It pursued an independent policy of its own.[63]

The village chief-in-council, except in some tribes like the Angami Nagas carried on the administration of the village states in general. The village chief or king (monarch) in Naga context, whether hereditary or otherwise, was the head of the administration. A council thus carried on the administration of the village state. The number of councillors differs from tribe to tribe. The form of government also varied. It was either a monarchy or a republic.

The *Ahngs* (kings) of the lower Konyaks and the kings of the Maos happened to be titular heads over some other villages too. The Konyak *Ahngs* had villages under them that paid tributes to the *Great Ahng.* Each village had one *Ahng* and above them all stood the *Great Ahng.* The term *Ahng* is found only in Wakching village. The other Konyak villages use the term *Wang*. In Konyak society where monarchy exists till date, the *Ahng* or *Wang* clan carries on the administration. In upper Konyak areas, there is quite a different type of administration. Here, they have a republican type of

[63] . Shimray, R.R., op.cit, p48.

government.

The king of Mao also received tributes from other villages. The Sema chief also had tremendous powers. The chief thus enjoyed much power and privileges, but he was not an autocrat. In practice, the councillors ran the administration. The function of the chief was more or less ritualistic.

A typical Naga kingship can be seen from the practice of the Mao Nagas. According to them, the kings, being the founder of each village, possess the right of hereditary kingship. He summons and dissolves the meeting of the council. Among the Aos, Lothas and Sangtams, there exists a republican type of government from the very beginning. In the Ao village, one could become the chief by virtue of his own character and merit. In reality, the Aos, Lothas and Sangtams have no regard for monarchy.

It is difficult to say how the administration was run among the Angamis where extreme type of democracy existed. The independent minded Angamis did not attach much importance to chieftainship, as one Angami was considered as good as any other Angami. They had no council in the past. Any urgent problem or dispute was taken to public meetings where decisions were taken. For the convenience of administration and religious functions, the Angami tribe had a nominal head of the village known as *'kemovo'*, who was religious as well as administrative head.

Dr. V. Elwin summed up the administrative practice in Naga society in the following way: "Naga society presents a varied pattern of near-dictatorship and extreme democracy. There is a system of hereditary chieftainship among the Semas and the Changs. The Konyaks have very powerful chiefs or Angs who are regarded as sacred and whose word is law. The greatest of Angs no commoner may stand upright.

The Aos, however, have bodies of elders, who represent the main family groups in the village and the Angamis, Lothas, Rengmas, and others are so democratic that Hutton remarks that in the case of the Angami, it is difficult to comprehend how in view of their particular independence of character, their village hold together at all before the coming of the British government."[64]

The principle of administration of the village-states, the hereditary system and the divine nature attached with the kingship/chieftainship, the representative character of the village councils, etc, are basically same in all the Naga tribes. However, in application of actual laws in the day-to-day administration, there are variations from tribe to tribe. The Nagas were thus not subjected to a common or uniform administration until the establishment of British rule.

3.2: COLONIAL ADMINISTRATION

Colonial situation is defined by George Balandier as the domination imposed by a foreign minority, racially and culturally distinct, upon a materially inferior autochthonous majority, in the name of a dogmatically asserted racial (or ethnic) and cultural superiority, the bringing into relation of two heterogeneous civilisations, one technologically advanced, economically powerful, swift moving and Christian by origin, the other without complex techniques, economically backward, slow moving and fundamentally 'non-Christian', the antagonistic nature of the relations between the two societies, owing to the instrumental role to which the subject society is condemned, and the need for the dominant society, if it is to maintain its position to rely not only upon 'force', but also upon a whole range of pseudo-justifications and stereo typed patterns of behaviour, etc.[65]

[64] . Verrier, Elwin., Nagaland, 1961, p.6-7.
[65] . Balandier, G., The Sociology of Black Africa, 1970, p.52.

The history of the Northeast India, of which the Naga Hills form a part underwent a significant change with the conclusion of the Treaty of Yandabo on 24th February 1826.[66] The treaty brought Burmese influence to an end and at the same time inaugurated the formal foundation of British power and influence over the whole Northeast India. By the terms of the peace treaty, the British became the rulers of the whole region. The British government concentrated on the establishment and consolidation of authority in Assam, Cachar, Manipur and Jaintia.[67] Assam was directly annexed to the British Empire with the exception of Muttack and Sadiya districts. The hill tribes of the North-East Frontier, i.e. the Nagas, Khasis, Garos, Mizos and tribes of Arunachal Pradesh were categorised as dependencies of Assam according to Article 2 of the treaty.

Consequently, with the annexation of Assam and its adjoining states, there developed inevitable contacts between the numerous independent hill tribes and the British. The inhabitants of these areas had never been subjected to any kind of control either by organised native system of administration or by any outside power. After consolidation of their rule in these states, the British policy was to leave the tribes to themselves. However, the Nagas took to plundering that compelled the British to entrust the control of the tribes to the Raja of Cachar and Manipur.[68]

When the Naga raids in Cachar and Manipur frontiers became frequent in 1835, Raja Tularam Senapati openly stated his inability to shoulder the responsibility of maintaining order. This again placed the responsibility of tribal control to British hands. They had to control these warlike, proud and independent tribes, who put up determined resistance against them.

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66 . Bhuyan, S.K., Anglo-Assamese Relations, Calcutta, 1979, pp.547-50.
67 . Chakravarty, P.C., British Relations with the Hill Tribes of Assam Since 1826, 1964, p.16.
68 . Foreign Department Pol. Extl-A, Jan 1836.

In fact, early British policy towards the hill tribes was guided by the primary consideration of administrative convenience and not by any progressive ideas of what it ought to be doing for the good of the tribes. The application of their policy was determined by the concern for the administrative responsibility in which they had become involved rather than the concern for the economic and moral implications of their undertaking.

The military personnel were the first British who came in contact with the Nagas. The contact took place when the British crossed into Naga territory for survey of strategic road communication between Assam and Manipur. During the early years of contact, the British found it more convenient to distinguish the different Naga tribes with reference to their political relations to the British frontier districts along the Assam border, instead of any ethnical differences.[69] In general, in the west and north of the Naga Hills, the Nagas were classified into *Boree* (tamed and dependant) and *Abor* (untamed and independent) tribes. The *Boree* Nagas were those tribes that lived at the Assam border, and the *Abor* were those tribes in the interior Naga Hills. Few of the *Abor* Nagas came down to Assam plains for trade, but the *Boree* Nagas had constant trade with the plains. The different Naga tribes were constantly at war among themselves, which created disorder on the frontier, and disrupted commerce.

The Treaty of Yandabo (1826) had thus formally encompassed Naga inhabited areas within the sphere of British influence. But, for some decades, it remained beyond the limit of British administration. The treaty had no immediate impact on the Nagas and their undefined country, though the West and South West Naga Hills

[69] . Mackenzie, A., History of the Relations of the Government with the Hill Tribes of the N.E. Frontier of Bengal, 1979, p.77.

nominally became a part of British territory.

More direct Anglo-Naga contact started in 1832, but till 1881, the immediate attention of the British government was given towards the necessity of safer road communications between the strategic state of Manipur and the Brahmaputra valley through Naga Hills, and the alarming problems posed by the menacing Naga raids on the British subjects of the Cachar and Nowgong frontier. In 1881, Naga Hills was brought under a regular system of administration.[70]

The government changed its policy towards the Nagas from time to time, and the early British policy towards the Nagas may be broadly divided into two periods:

i) 1832-1877 (during which the British tried to ward off the Nagas from raids in the administered districts of Assam).

ii) 1877-1880 (during which the government followed a 'forward policy' leading to the final merging of the Hills into the British India system of administration).[71]

From the assumption of active administration in 1881 to the transfer of power in 1947, the British administered Naga Hills as a frontier district of Assam. During this intervening period of seven decades, British administration concentrated on the maintenance of law and order in this border district. The establishment of peace in Naga Hills was a gradual process, which went on steadily throughout the period along with the extension of colonial rule and administration.

The British directed their policies primarily towards practical and pressing problems such as the establishment of law and order, the foundation of administrative

[70] . Allen, B.C., Gazetteers of Naga Hills and Manipur in Assam District Gazetteers, Shillong, Vol.IX, 1905, p.9.
[71] . Ibid.

system, and the dispensing of justice, and the raising of the revenue necessary for the discharge of the function of the government. At the same time, British policy was not that of imposing a European model of administration, but of establishing a rule of law for the security of colonial interests. Accordingly, the existing native institutions that had no contradiction with their policy or interests were left undisturbed.

British colonial administration in Naga Hills district was founded not on a defined territorial boundary, but on a growing process of extension throughout the period from 1881-1947. In extending their administrative sphere, the policy of the government was largely influenced by local circumstances. It was as a gradual process of annexation that the areas of the present Mokokchung, Zunhebhoto and Phek districts were incorporated into the British district of Naga Hills. In following a policy of expediency and convenience, the British left at least half of the present Nagaland unadministered. Thus, a large part of the present Tuensang and Mon districts and Kiphere sub-division remained in the unadministered tract even at the time of transfer of power in 1947.[72]

For understanding the post 1881 colonial administrative policy in the Naga Hills, the hills may be divided into three areas or zones:

i) Administered areas

ii) Controlled/Political control areas (unarmed)

iii) Areas beyond political control[73] (free un-administered Naga areas)

The administered areas were the Southern, Western and Northern Naga tribes. The number of administered villages increased gradually as the British brought them

[72] . Sema, Piketo., British Policy and Administration in Nagaland, 1881-1947, 1992, p.23.
[73] . Shakespear, L.W., History of Assam Rifles, 1980, p.163.

under subjugation. In the administered areas, the government assessed annual house tax at the rate of Rs. 2/- (two) per house and appointed village headmen for the collection of the house tax,[74] and for carrying out the orders of the government at the village level. The government maintained law and order in this zone.

The controlled areas were the political control areas. Longsa, Sema and Eastern Angami (now Chakhesang) tribes, Melomi and Primi villages fell under this category. The government conducted annual military marches in this area and the Deputy Commissioner had the discretion to settle cases of disputes. But the government neither assessed house tax nor was it bound to protect the areas in this zone from the raids of the tribes beyond it. The government had the discretion to punish the raiders depending on the proximity and convenience.[75]

In the areas beyond political control, called the free Naga zone (the tribes bordering Arunachal and Burma), the government followed a policy of non-interference in the internal affairs.[76] However the government had the discretion to punish the tribes in cases of raids of a serious nature.

In course of the gradual annexation of more territories, the British incorporated the controlled areas into administered areas of the British District of Naga Hills, one after another. The circumstances that influenced the government to annex new areas into the fold of regular administration were of similar nature. Headhunting as a law and order problem was the primary concern that made the government to annex the tribal areas. However, administrative considerations of proximity and convenience remained paramount in determining the imposition of control. Consequently, while

[74] . Foreign Department Pol-A, Jan 1882,nos.134-37.
[75] . Foreign Department Extl-A, March 1886, no.25.
[76] . Ibid.

political control areas were brought under administration, the areas beyond political control were deliberately left under political control only.

With the introduction of the 'Inner Line Regulation' in 1873, the administered zone was brought under political control. However, with the British occupation of Kohima and its decision to have permanent control of the Nagas in 1881, the government introduced regular administration in this zone.[77]

Immediately following the formation of Naga Hills district under the British India system of administration, the political control areas attracted the attention of the government, because of headhunting incidents. Accordingly, in 1886, the government brought this zone under political control. However, owing to the increasing raids of the Trans-Dikhu tribes in the control tracts, in 1890, it was bought under active administration and simultaneously, the sub-divisional headquarters which was established at Wokha in 1875 was shifted to Mokokchung. Longsa, which was hitherto an independent Ao village, East of Dikhu, was incorporated into Mokokchung sub-division in 1892.[78]

The areas of the Sema and Eastern Angami tribes which had been under political control since 1903, was brought under regular administration in 1906,[79] with Tizu River as the natural boundary between the controlled and non-controlled territories. Aishan Kukis brought the villages of Melomi and Primi under political control in the wake of their raids in 1913. Later in 1923, it was incorporated into the Naga Hills District. Although there had been disturbances in the areas beyond the administered district, the government limited its control to the Dikhu and Tizu rivers as its district

[77] . Report on the Administration of the Province of Assam, 1880-81, p.5.
[78] . Assam Secretariat, Pol-A, Aug.1892, nos.36-37.
[79] . Bareh, H.M., Gazetteer of Nagaland, Kohima Dist., 1970, p.47.

boundary, leaving the eastern frontier under a 'loose control' till 1947.

Before the passing of the Assam Scheduled Districts Act 1874, the administration of Naga Hills was under the jurisdiction of the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, who as the agent of the Governor-General governed it through the Chief Commissioner of Assam and his assistants. However, with the passing of Assam Scheduled Districts Act 1874, it was governed under the direct charge of the Chief Commissioner of Assam.[80]

The chief purpose of this act was to enable the government to provide for the administration of the 'underdeveloped tracts' and to extend to them any enactments in force elsewhere, which might seem desirable to bring into operation. Thus, in accordance with the provision of clause 5A of Scheduled Districts Act, 1874, the government in April 1884, passed the Assam Frontier Tract Regulation II of 1880 as amended by Regulation III section, clause 2 of 1884 and extended it to the Naga Hills District.[81] This regulation enabled the government to administer the Nagas in a simple and more personal manner. By virtue of this regulation, Naga Hills were excluded for the operation of enactments relating to elaborate codes of law, the code of criminal procedure, and the civil procedure code were never in force in any Hill district. On the other hand, Naga administration continued to function under their chiefs and headmen, free from their legal technicalities.

The next constitutional change came with the Government of India Act 1910. Section 13[52-A (2)] of the Act categorised the Naga areas within the Naga Hills District as 'Backward Tracts' and the Governor of Assam governed it as the agent of

[80] . Home Department Pol-A, Aug 1892, nos.36-37.
[81] . Hunter, H.W., Gazetteer of India, April 1884, Part-I, p.163.

the Governor-General. The Governor was given the responsibility of bringing the inhabitants of the said tracts under close administrative control, so that in due course, the responsibility of administration could be transferred to the provincial government.[82] Accordingly the Governor of Assam administered the Naga Hills through his administrative agencies, namely the Deputy Commissioner, his assistants and other local administrative functionaries, such as the *gaonburas* and *dobashis.*

The last constitutional change was the Government of India Act, 1935, that was implemented in April 1937. The act classified Naga Hills, Lushai Hills and NEFA tracts as 'excluded areas' of the Government of Assam. As an excluded area, the Naga Hills District came under the direct charge of the Governor, who administered the district through the Deputy Commissioner, Kohima. The constitutional position as it stood in 1937 in respect of Naga Hills District continued till 26th January, 1950, the date on which the Constitution of India came into force, except that with effect from 15th August, 1947, the Governor of Assam was deprived of his discretionary powers in respect of administration of the District, which since that date, vested in the provincial government the Governor Act according to the advice of the council of ministers.[83]

The British therefore established their administrative headquarters with the sole purpose of controlling the tribes, especially those that defied their authority. Trouble spots thus largely determined the places for the establishment of the district administrative posts. The district of Naga Hills, which was firstly established at Samaguting (Chumukedima) in 1866 with the purpose of checking the raids of

[82] . Verrier, Elwin., op.cit, p.35.
[83] . Luthra, P.N., Nagaland from a District to a State, 1974, pp.5-9.

Angami Nagas into the plain districts of Assam,[84] was later (1878) shifted to Kohima for the control of the principal Angami villages. Similarly, a new sub-division was first established at Wokha in 1875, for the control of the powerful Lotha villages of that area, which had recently killed Captain Butler, a British survey officer. But later on, when these tribes became amenable to the control of the government it was shifted to Mokokchung for the control of the trans-Dikhu tribal wars.

Along with the establishment of their administrative centres at different strategic regions of Naga Hills, the British followed simple administrative arrangements for the district. The administrative networks were followed by the general administration of the district as a two-tire system, namely, the village and the district. The head of these administrative units were the *gaonburas* at the village level and the sub-division officer at the sub-division level. The Deputy Commissioner was at the apex of the district administration. He was in turn responsible to the Governor of Assam, who was the agent to the Governor-General of India. The same administrative arrangement remained intact throughout the colonial administration of Naga Hills from 1881 to 1947.

The overall administration of the district was under the supervision of the Sub-Divisional Officer and the Deputy Commissioner. Europeans exclusively manned these executive offices. The colonial administration encouraged district tours as a means of promoting relation with the people and affecting civilising influence on them through contacts. The general administration of the district was carried out smoothly during the district tours. These district officers travelled throughout the

[84] . Mackenzie, A., History of the Relations of the Government with the Hill Tribes of the Northeast Frontier of Bengal, 1979, p.119.

district, visiting one village after another and met village chiefs, general public and settled disputes.

The British introduced no significant basic changes in the administration of the Nagas. Nagas were mostly left to continue to rule and administer their villages according to their respective customs and traditions with only loose control by the government.[85] While the techniques of control and administration remained informal, native system of administration functioned under British paramountcy. This popular technique of administration served the dual purpose of keeping the Nagas free to govern themselves in their traditional ways and at the same time, it had immensely reduced the responsibility of the government from the detailed and costly affairs of administration.

The British adopted the system of native administration that would suit local tastes and at the same time be conducive to the maintenance of law and order among the tribes. In other words, the British did not seek to interfere in the internal affairs of the Nagas, nor try to administer them on the European model. Accordingly, they c reinforced traditional form of administration that well suited the peculiar conditions of the people and society. This system ensured social continuity and at the same time facilitated the acceptance of British rule. In following this policy, the government readily used the existing institutions based on local customs and tradition. It made no attempt to introduce any measures based on the alien concepts leading to an elaborate administrative system, which might estrange the tribal people.

By recognising the traditional leaders and elders as chiefs and *gaonburas* the British tried to integrate the existing leadership into the colonial administrative

[85] . Rustomji, N., The Imperiled Frontier, (India's Northeastern Borderlands) 1983, p.26.

framework. Thus, in consolidating their power, the British based their administration primarily on the existing native system. The native leadership, consisting of the village headmen and their assistants, was empowered to supervise and maintain law and order together with their established tribal customs and traditions. This system of administration was uniform all over the district.

The village headmen become the agent of the colonial administration. The people had direct contact with their chief or headmen and had little to do directly with district officials. Their direct concern was with the linkman and not the foreign rulers. Thus, the structure of the district administration left the Nagas with no direct weight of alien rule, because the British rule did not in any way seriously affect the basic social structure of the Nagas that remained traditional in character and content.

The colonial administration utilised two layers of native administrative agencies, namely the village chieftainship and the *dobashi* system. First were the village chiefs, whose traditional leadership at the village level was utilised for village administration. This began with the extension of British protection to the Naga villages in 1874, because protection automatically bound the chiefs to abide by the policy of the government in matters of their relations with the tribes beyond British control as well as their obligation to pay annual house tax. Symbolising their special responsibility and relation with the administration, the chiefs were presented red blankets. This system continued as a basic feature of Anglo-Naga relations even after the introduction of regular administration in 1881. With gradual extension of their administration, the British also applied village chiefs according to local practice and the customs of various communities, starting in 1882.

Second was the *dobashi* system that was first started in 1842 as a system of trial with native delegates from the different Naga clans, and was later (1860) continued on a regular basis. In due course, it became a basic institution of colonial administration in Naga Hills. This system became the chief means through which the British government established successful relations with the diverse Naga tribes. In view of the fact that the Government of India had become convinced of the usefulness of the native delegates, the system was made permanent in 1881. The native representatives to the government were known as interpreters. The Hindu word *'dobashias'*, translated, as speaker of two languages thus became a popular usage for the Nagas as *'dobashis'*.[86]

To the native administrative agencies, the government delegated maximum responsibility of district administration and district officers functioned only at the supervisory level. The village headmen or chiefs were made responsible for the collection of annual house tax from their respective villages. In addition, the administration of justice was assigned to the *gaonburas,* who maintained law and order in their respective village jurisdiction. On the other hand, the role of the district officers was to receive the collection of revenue from the *gaonburas* and intervening in the village administration only in disputes involving cases that could not be settled by the native courts—*gaonburas* and *dobashis.*[87]

This system of administration largely left the Nagas free to run their local administration without much intervention from the British. The colonial administration thus effectively utilised the services of the native administrative agents for the perpetuation of their rule in Naga Hills. In fact, the colonial administration

[86] . Ghosh, B.B., History of Nagaland, 1982, p.152.
[87] . Nagaland Code, Vol.I, p.159.

apparently made progress because of the valuable service rendered by the native agents. Colonial administration thus made use of the native agents, which provided incentives for both parties.

3.3: IMPACT

The Nagas had been living in village states, each village independent of others. The Naga society was a society secluded from contact with the outside world and influence. The British did not try to implant their own culture or impose their civil and political systems on the Nagas. What Britain attempted and succeeded in doing was the modification of those aspects of Naga culture and practices that did not conform to the interests of colonial administration. Besides the suppression of objectionable practices such as headhunting and slave trade, the government did not interfere with the native ways of life. In fact, the colonial policy was directed to the utilisation of the native systems, paying attention to the Naga effort to preserve their culture against the new forces of change.[88] Thus, the initial British policy of administration seemed quite considerate and yielding to the feelings of the natives.

The introduction of effective administration in the district imposed respect for law and order, and this brought the most noticeable change among the Nagas. In fact, it was this respect for the colonial administration, which made the tribes to live at peace with one another. This fostered the feeling of oneness among the Naga tribes. The desire for peaceful living was expressed by the Naga tribes in their voluntary request for extension of British administration over them. Often, the desire to live under the government was accompanied by their willingness to pay house tax. They welcomed the new administration as it had brought peace and relative order in place of

[88] . S.D.O's Diary, D.R.O, Mokokchung, 28th January 1938.

uncertainty and chaos that had prevailed before the British conquest.[89] The response of the Nagas to the British rule was "unexpectedly encouraging",[90] as noted by Verrier Elwin.

Popular appreciation of the new administration was signified by the growth and improvement in the Anglo-Naga relations. The effect of administration on the Nagas was proved by the fact that the British could command the loyal service of the Nagas in all the important regional as well as global wars in which they fought. In 1891, the Nagas served the British government during the Kuki uprising, in the Abor War (1893-94) and in the First World War, (1914-1919), in which two thousand (2000) Nagas were taken to France as members of the Labour Corps. This co-operation continued to the Second World War (1939-45) in which the Nagas' contribution to the allied victory in the eastern sector of India has been an acknowledged fact,[91] though much of the services of priceless value offered by the Nagas had remained hidden for want of written records and documents.

Partition of the Naga inhabited areas was the first consequence of colonial administration. As the colonial policy was deliberately directed to suit its own system of expansion with the introduction of their administration, the areas inhabited by the Nagas were divided into various sectors. Some were within administrative circles, while others were left ungoverned or free to administer themselves. Thus, with the formation of the British District of Naga Hills, the Naga areas were divided and dispersed.[92] As a result, Nagas were scattered throughout the Northeastern states of

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89 . The Naga Problem, Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, pp.1-2.
90 . Verrier, Elwin., op.cit, p.24.
91 . William, Slim, F.M., Defeat into Victory, 1956, p.341.
92 . Until 1960, no concrete measures were taken to integrate the Naga tribes. During the creation of the state of Nagaland, the desire of the Nagas to bring their inhabited areas under a single administration center became more evident and strong. Consequently, a Naga delegation led by Dr. Imkongliba Ao

Manipur, Assam and NEFA (present Arunachal Pradesh), and Burma on the eastern side.

The village administration, which was largely left to the native leaders, brought about some significant changes. The native leadership, which existed loosely in the pre-colonial period, was recognised and legitimised in the form of headmen, and their appointment was made, where the system was found lacking. The new administration reinforced this feudal structure of leadership and integrated it into the colonial administrative apparatus. Consequent upon the recognition of the native leadership, it was institutionalised and infused with dynamism. At the same time, the status of village administrative functionaries was changed significantly as they were given a quasi-official position and were no longer answerable to the village community of which they had been the representatives or servants.

The village administration was delegated with the power to deal with petty local disputes. Yet, in practice, the district administration invariably intervened in the name of maintaining law and order and developmental activities. Though the government's policy was to interfere as little as possible in the internal affairs of the Nagas, this non-interference was superficial rather than real,[93] because notwithstanding the official position and granting a great deal of autonomy to the Nagas in their villages, the government meddled in petty issues of all types. For instance, the government forbade the felling of alders,[94] fishing with cast nets,[95] wearing half-pants and keeping

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met Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru on 19th July, 1960, at New Delhi, and the result of the meeting was the Sixteen Point Agreement, which included a clause for the integration of the Naga inhabited areas into a new state. However, the Naga undergrounds soon assassinated Dr. Imkongliba, signifying their protest against the agreement between the leaders of the Naga People's Convention and the Government of India.

93 . Rustomji, N., op.cit, p.26.

94 . Standing Order No. Nil, D.R.O, Mokokchung, 2nd October 1925.

95 . Standing Order No.2, D.R.O, Kohima, 9th May 1937.

non-traditional haircut.[96] Such petty cases highlighted the nature of the colonial administration that indulged in undue intervention even in aspects that did not pose any law and order problem for the government. But in the long run, many of the petty rules laid down by the British made the Nagas to feel different and helped them to appreciate and pursuit their unique solidarity. For example, the denial of permission to wear half-pants compelled the Nagas to weave and stitch cloths for themselves,[97] and this enabled the tribes to preserve their cultural identity.

Administrative machinery thus made entry into the social structure of the village. Special government organs dealing with administration, education, agriculture and public health had direct contact with the Nagas. The village communities were no longer left to manage their affairs without direct or indirect supervision. Although different influences operated to undermine the social structure of the village community, to a certain extent, the native system retained importance at the village level. For instance, the village council still acted as a tribunal for settling petty cases, and the district officers intervened only in cases that the village authorities could not settle at their level of administration. The other institution of local administration that was created by the British and had a lasting impact on the tribal administration was that of the *dobashis*.

One main impact of administrative control was the virtual elimination of inter-village and tribal warfare within the district besides the gradual checking of objectionable social practices such as headhunting and slave trade. The British passed orders against headhunting,[98] and defaulters were punished, while those who obeyed

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[96] . Chenga Kath, 80, Tsemenyu gave this information.
[97] . Merang Jamir, 82, Mokokchung, gave this information.
[98] . Though head hunting was successfully stopped in the administered areas, the practice continued till very late in the unadministered areas.

orders were employed as British labourers to work in Burma.[99] Besides, during the headhunting days, the Nagas were unaware of each other.[100] Only after headhunting stopped and peaceful conditions prevailed, the Nagas went about freely, and came to know each other better.

With the termination of headhunting, inter-village and tribal warfare, situation became peaceful and friendly among the tribes. This eventually led to marriage alliances between different clans, villages and tribes. Marriage alliances lessened enmity within the village and developed good relation among the various clans, villages and tribes.[101] When marriages take place between two different clans, villages or tribes, the feelings of oneness and unity was created among the participating clans, villages or tribes. From the clan level, peace and unity thus got enhanced from matrimonial alliances and reaches the village and tribal levels. Matrimonial alliances made the tribes to give up their differences and come together as one people. For example, the inter-married women pacified the inter-khel war of Tuensang Village in 1942-43.[102] The contribution of peaceful atmosphere at clan, village or tribal levels in promoting unity at a higher level is very crucial. Thus, under the British administration, marriage alliances became an important institution that moulded the strength and unity of the Nagas in their solidarity movement as one people.

Although colonial administration left the Naga territories scrambled over the administrative units of Northeast India, within the bound of British district of Naga Hills, it also had the positive impact of integrating the chronically unorganised Naga tribes leading to certain cohesion of the Naga tribes as an ethnic group. Thus, it was

[99] . Vesuro Swuro, 77, Phek gave this information.
[100]. Tsathrongo Sangtam, 85, Kiphere gave this information.
[101] . N. Yeshito, 73, Dimapur gave this information.
[102] . Yemlongjaba Chang, 72, gave this information.

only under British India administration that the cohesion of the Naga tribes and their resurgence as an ethnic group of people emerged, with political consciousness. Historically, the Naga tribes were nowhere brought together as a tribal group but under the British India system of administration. With the acceptance of British rule as a settled fact, a growing sense of unity was generated among the Naga tribes as a result of their common subordination to one supreme authority.

The British India administration protected the Nagas from exploitation by the outside people. In their endeavour to maintain law and order within the district, the British sealed off the Naga Hill District in 1873 by the introduction of 'Inner Line Regulation'. By this regulation, the possible socio-economic exploitation of the Nagas by the plains people was effectively warded off.

On the whole, the colonial administrative policy of keeping Naga Hills isolated, benefited the Nagas in so far as it helped preserve and promote the Naga identity with all its consequences. The prevailing situation in the Hills within the British colonial state thus made the emergence of identity formation a very ideal and natural development. Although, constitutionally Naga Hills formed a district of Assam, for all practical purposes, it was never under the normal administration of the province of Assam.[103] As a matter of fact, Nagas continued to live within the reserved parameter of British district of Naga Hills, devoid of normal practical administrative connections with Assam. Therefore, Nagas maintained an exclusive socio-political entity in a classical colonial situation.

Under the British rule and administration, the tribes realised that they have a different identity with a different history, culture and tradition. The British also

[103] . Rustomji, N., op.cit, p.26.

considered the Naga tribes as belonging to the same distinct ethnic group and therefore they gave their effort to unite the Naga tribes. They initiated group discussions and meetings of all the Naga tribes. This became a very crucial step towards the solidarity movement of the tribes when they realised the need to come together and assert their identity. The process of coming together as one, the emergence of Naga identity thus began under the British rule and administration.

The tendency towards the emergence and growth of common socio-political interests became more manifested by the formation of the Naga Club (1918), and the individual tribal councils of the Aos, Angamis, Lothas, Semas, etc. All these semi-state formations worked as a gradual unifying force of the Naga tribes and awakened them to a new dimension of political consciousness, culminating in the formation of Naga Tribal Council in 1945, and the Naga National Council in 1946. The invasion and development of the new political ideas and their diffusion fostered the nascent spirit of nationalism as a unifying factor among the Naga tribes.

Thus, within the bound of British administration, law and order was maintained and it had provided the needed security to the tribes, who lived in a hostile and insecure atmosphere during the pre-colonial period. The dawn of colonial administration in fact started the beginning of peaceful co-existence among the tribes of Naga Hills. It was under the impact of colonial administration that the tribes were drawn together and began to identify themselves as Nagas. This slowly and gradually created awareness of modern politics among the Nagas, and significantly shaped their common political outlook. This outlook was subsequently manifested in the emergence of Naga identity.

Established within a definite territory and embracing most of the Naga Tribes, the

British Naga Hills administrative apparatus thus became the basic framework for the formation and growth of Naga identity. By 1920, most of the Naga tribes now in the present state of Nagaland had been brought under British administration. The unification of the Naga tribes under a common centralised administration and the inclusion of the village and tribal territories into a larger all Naga Hills District, and the fact that the Naga tribes have a common ethnic origin combined to form in the mind of the Nagas, the recognition and realisation of a common identity.

The 'all Naga' feeling was strengthened by increased contacts among the Nagas in the wake of increasing trading activities, wars, construction of roads, introduction of Assamese as the official language, opening of trading and administrative centres in Naga Hills. All these aspects contributed to the awakening of the Nagas towards a feeling of common identity.

The sense of oneness, feeling of solidarity and self-identification as 'Nagas' developed, and it grew faster among the Nagas working in the government offices at administrative centres such as Kohima, Mokokchung and Wokha. Daily contact with non-Nagas, like the Assamese and Bengalis, and the British, whose race and culture were different, also reinforced the Naga feeling of identity.

This study reveals that within the colonial administrative framework, many factors combined and contributed to the creation and emergence of a distinct identity for the Nagas. Naga identity first emerged in the mind of a few people, and gradually it got expanded and reached more people until it finally became a concept with contemporary spirit and recognition. Thus, Naga identity emerged and got consolidated under British colonial administration.

CHAPTER-IV

COLONIAL ECONOMY AND IMPACT

4.1: NAGA TRADITIONAL ECONOMY

4.2: COLONIAL ECONOMY

4.3: IMPACT

4.1: NAGA TRADITIONAL ECONOMY

The geographical situation of the place helped the Nagas to live, move and fight. The abundance of jungle products, reliance on physical strength, complete isolation and close contact with nature had forced the Nagas to rely entirely on indigenous resources. Having learnt to exploit geography, not by training, but by instinct, they became masters in the art of survival.[104]

The traditional Naga economy is described as one of subsistence nature based on agriculture, existing in a crude form (Smith:1980). The autonomous village communities that the British encountered were mainly primitive economic units with a system of subsistence agriculture that provided them with barely enough for their needs. The economic condition of the people that prevailed during the early decades of British rule provides an insight into the pre-administrative economy. According to Allen, "…most of the Nagas have a sufficiency of food and clothing, but there is little accumulated capital, and some villages are said to experience difficulty in raising the very moderate revenue imposed on them. Apart from cotton, chillies and pan exported to Golaghat, there is nothing grown for sale, and cash is generally obtained by working for the public works department, and occasionally on tea gardens in the wintertime. The cash expenditure of the people is, however small, and generally they

[104] . Anand, V.K., Conflict in Nagaland, 1980, p.26.

seem fairly well to do".[105]

The people were largely engaged in agriculture.[106] According to 1901 Census, 93.8% of the district population was agriculturists. The means of production were decentralised, and therefore the relations of dependence were not created within the system of production. Household economy was self-contained, and the food grains produced were largely consumed at home. However, the productivity in the agrarian sector was low and production was not sufficient to build stocks, and thus the economy remained fragile.[107] Apart from occasional exchanges, the tendency was to produce for the direct consumption of the producers. Surpluses were exchanged between groups or members of groups. The producers themselves exercised control of the means of production and labour, and exchange was an exchange of labour and its products. Everyone worked for an immediate need and that was all. Thus the pre-colonial economy had not progressed appreciably from the subsistence level.[108]

There was no standard monetary system in the Naga village economy. Barter played a dominant role in the economy.[109] Trade was carried out with a kind of primitive system of currency. Narrow blade of worn-out dao, brass disc, a small piece of iron, salt packets, conch-shells, beads, spearheads and even a cock were used as articles of exchange. The value of each of these items is equivalent to one day's wage of a man. The Nagas used this as coins for payment of marriage price, i.e. bride's price in addition to paddy and cattle. Some believed that at least one spearhead should be included in the price of the bride, which otherwise will make the bride barren after marriage. Merchandise comprising of woven goods, yarns, livestock, food-grains,

[105] . Allen, B.C., Assam District Gazetteer, Naga Hills & Manipur, p.55.
[106] . Census of Assam, 1991, pp.40-41.
[107] . Robinson, W., A Descriptive Account of Assam, 1841, p.390.
[108] . Hutton, J.H., The Sema Nagas, 1921, p.50-64.
[109] . Bareh, H., Gazetteers of India, Nagaland, Kohima District, 1970, p.123.

agriculture implements, furniture and wares were interchanged in the community.

Nagas are generally self-sufficient of essential commodities to meet their basic needs. Of all the needs for consumption, paddy is the most important. Generally, the well to do people produced sufficient quantity of paddy for their family consumption, but there were people who could produce paddy, which would last for only nine to ten months. Many families had just enough paddies to wait for the harvest and only a few rich families could sell or lend out surplus paddy to others. Those who could not produce enough to last a full year usually borrow paddy from the rich people or render service as labourers in the paddy fields in exchange for the paddy borrowed.

Sometimes even the rich families, due to poor harvest on account of natural calamities like storm, hail, landslide or destruction of crops by wild beasts, birds or even insects, or something unfortunate happening in the family like death of a working family, etc, are compelled to borrow from others. Generally, paddy is borrowed in terms of baskets. A person borrowing one basket of paddy is to pay two baskets the next year. This practice is common among the Ao, Lotha, Sema and Angami tribes of Nagaland. If the principal is repaid in time, the interest may remain unpaid and it will remain as it was at the time of paying the principal. But if the principal is not paid the next tear, the whole outstanding sum redoubles for two years at 100% compound interest and then the interest ceases to occur. Every creditor, therefore wisely pays off the principal, if one is not too helplessly poor. In times of general scarcity or crop failure, the Nagas from one village goes to the other to buy paddy from the rich men, who are generally obliged to sell them. In this way, the villages used to help each other in times of scarcity.

In the past, the Nagas made almost everything for themselves to meet their limited requirements. Everyone do almost all kinds of work for their personal and household requirements. However, among the whole population in all the villages, some developed a singular competence in the creation of both useful and artistic objects, such as the manufacture of salt, pot-making, blacksmithy, basket-making, wood carving, carpentry, dyeing, cloth-weaving and rice beer preparations. These are age-old cottage industries that play vital role in the village economy.

Salt is locally extracted from the brine springs and manufactured by boiling the water over fire in big iron cauldrons or chungas (bamboo vessels). The lid is tightly compressed until water evaporates and the salt residue is left. Such practice is carried out in Jalukie, Peletkie and Mhaupunglwa in Zeliangrong area, and Akhegwo, Yisi, Purr, Molem and Ozeho villages in Chakhesang area. The salt locally manufactured has more value and the villagers prefer it to the imported salt from plain areas.

Nagas, especially in the villages, still use earthen pots for cooking and for storing water and rice beer. These earthen pots are locally hand-made, using clay and sticks. Pots are made in different sizes and shapes. Generally, pots are made during the winter season. Among the Angami, Chakhesang, Zeliangrong and Tangkhul tribes, pot making is entrusted and restricted to the men, but in the Ao, Sema, Lotha and Rengma tribes the women folks also make pots. Pot makers barter their pots for other goods.

Iron smelting was not done locally. But smiths were found in all the tribes, practicing the art as individuals, using imported iron obtained in the form of old tea-garden hoes and other blades from the plains. Usually, two or three blacksmiths are found in large villages, which either solely depends on it for their livelihood or did it

as a part time occupation. Among the Lothas, the trade is restricted to particular families, members of whose families had been blacksmiths in the past.

The main articles manufactured by the Naga blacksmiths are agricultural implements like dao, axe, hoe, scraper, sickle and weapons like the spearhead, arrowhead and knife. With most of the people depending on agriculture for their livelihood, it is only natural that the largest quantity of articles produced is thus agricultural implements. The entire community or village depend solely on the blacksmith/s in the area for the maintenance or purchase of agricultural tools.

Nagaland is rich in cane and bamboo. Nagas are therefore naturally experts in using bamboo and cane for making baskets and mats. Baskets are made in various types, designs and shapes for different purposes. It is used for carrying paddy, water (in gourd), firewood and household articles. The baskets are bartered for other articles in use. Cane ornaments such as headbands, bangles and leg-gourds constitute another model of workmanship.

Generally, all adult Nagas know certain amount of carpentry in their own indigenous ways. Everyman constructs houses, granaries, *morung* houses, field houses and makes furniture out of wood and bamboo, and make cups, plates (with legs), handles of agricultural implements and weapons, and weaving materials, etc. There are persons in every village, who through constant practices, have developed their skill and competence in this trade.

The Nagas are very fond of using variety of coloured clothes and dresses. Their traditional dresses and designs appear to be bright or dark red, blue, green, yellow

with black and white. The colours are obtained from jungle leaves, bark of trees, roots, fruits and flowers. Threads are dyed before they are woven into clothes. In dyeing process, the common system is boiling the yarn or cloth meant for dying, which gives lasting colouring. But variations in the process occur from place to place. Goat hair or human hair is dyed and used for decorating weapons or dress.

Spinning and weaving were the only significant industry in the Naga Hills until independence. The Aos, Rengmas and Lothas used to grow cotton not only for their own requirements, but also supplied the surplus to Assam. Weaving is a cultural heritage of the Nagas, which has been handed down from generations, from the mothers to their daughters. All grown-up females in every household practiced weaving. Every woman has a weaving apparatus in her possession. Shawls, bags, ceremonial dresses, decorative pieces, etc, are the products of weaving. Every Naga tribe has its own model of design peculiar to the tribe. The designs, colour combinations, spacing and borders differ from tribe to tribe. In fact, it even differs from village to village of the same tribe.

Originally, some Naga tribes grew cotton in their fields. They used it for domestic consumption and bartered the surplus to other villages and Assam. During their mercantile trips to the plains, the Nagas usually exchanged their superfluous cotton for domestic fowl, salt, dried fish, tobacco and cloth. Nagas generally breed cows, pigs, goats, dogs and fowl for the purpose of food as well as for sale and barter.

The Rengmas grew cotton for their own needs, and even sold their surplus to the Angamis. Trade was mostly carried on by barter. Among the western Rengmas, the currency was a form of specially made large spearheads. These are never sharpened

and are used only in marriage prices. They passed from hand to hand and their use was compulsory, as it was believed that if at least one spearhead is not included in a woman's marriage price, she could not bear children.[110] In the Tesophenyu group, there was a fixed relation between rice and cattle, i.e. fifty baskets of rice were regarded equal to one cow.[111] The eastern Rengmas used a special type of dao as currency, called *'kharanyu'*, imported from the Tangkhul country where they were made. Small iron digging hoes were also used as money.

Few Naga villages could produce salt. There are no salt springs in the western Naga Hills, and the tribes there obtain their supplies from the plains since time immemorial. Though the eastern Nagas have salt springs on their land, it is taboo for them to make salt.

The Rengmas get their salt from the Lothas who go to the foothills and buy it, or from the neighbouring Sangtam villagers who make it. The Rengmas then sell it to the Sema and Angami villages for distribution. The Rengmas paid one cow for two to four parcels of salt, and when they handed it on, they get a cow for one parcel of salt. Or, they pay Rs. 1/- for 100 cakes and make a profit of 25-50% on resale. This was their main trade. Within the Rengma country, a lump of salt was as large as the big toe, and it was used as the standard wage for a day's work.

Tsemenyu contains expert smiths, and a large trade in daos and spears has always been carried on. All western Rengma villages bring raw cotton for sale in the Angami country. They also traded in pots, dried fish, etc.

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[110] . Mills, J.P., The Rengma Nagas, 1937, p.72.
[111] . Ibid.

One Rengma to another ordinarily lends rice and money. It is considered the duty of those who have reaped good crop to help those whose granaries are empty before the next harvest. Rice is lent by the basket, which is filled to the brim and repayment is measured in the same basket in which the rice was originally taken. A man lending rice to a number of people keeps one bamboo tube for each borrower, containing a pebble for every basket due back, including interest. This signifies a very unique way of counting and numbering for people who have no knowledge of reading and writing.

The Semas never made salt themselves and they obtained it from the Ao, Rengma, Sangtam and other neighbouring tribes. The greater part of the trade done by the Semas was carried on by barter.[112] Like other Nagas, the Semas are dependent on their fields for existence. It is perhaps owing to the very primitive and therefore laborious nature of his agriculture that almost everything in his life was made subordinate to the agricultural year. Although a few Sema villages on the edge of the eastern Angami country have adopted terraced and irrigated cultivation, it cannot be regarded as more than an occasional and exotic form of cultivation. The villages that have adopted it from the eastern Angamis have generally either taken to Angami custom and dress entirely (like Swemi), or in the process of taking to them (like Hebulimi). Villages like Chipoketami and Mesetsü were probably at one time purely Sema villages, but are now reckoned as eastern Angami.[113]

Trade among the Aos is usually carried on either by barter or with coins of the realm. The Aos obtained their salt from the plains through barter. Cotton, chillies,

[112] . Hutton, J.H., The Angami Nagas. 1921, p.58.
[113] . Op.cit.

ginger, gourds, mats, pan and the gum of a tree called '*liyang*' are usually taken for exchange with salt. The salt so obtained is sold to the Phoms and Changs across the Dikhu for pigs, fowls, etc.[114]

While very little rice is sold in the Ao country, vast quantities are lent every year. A man tide over a poor harvest by borrowing rice and not by buying it. In fact he would probably have difficulty in finding anyone willing to sell to him. A rich man with full granaries would be laughed at and accused of being short of cash if he sold his store. But the more he lends, the greater his reputation. Rice is the staple food of the Ao, he being an agriculturalist, before everything. Cotton is the other crop to which whole fields are devoted. Thus, rice and cotton dominated the agricultural fields of the Aos.

The most striking thing about the Angamis and their neighbours on the north is their wet cultivation of rice. While the Lotha, Sema, Ao and trans-Dikhu and trans-Tizu tribes cultivate only by jhumming, the Angamis have an elaborate system of terracing and irrigation.[115] Rice formed the staple food of the Angamis like the other tribes. Angami cloths were made originally from entirely local materials. Cotton was grown in plenty in the lower villages and sold in its raw state to the higher up villages.

All Angami women practiced weaving in the past. This is perhaps the most important industry of the Angamis, followed by cultivation and blacksmithy. Individuals who practice blacksmithy either live on it alone or combine it with cultivation. Spearheads and butts, daos, axes, spade-hoes, sickles and knives are their principal products.

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[114] . Mills, J.P., The Ao Nagas, 1926, p.103.
[115] . Hutton, J.H., The Angami Nagas, 1921, p.72.

Pots are made in certain villages only, notably Viswema and Khuzama. Basketry is a very important industry, as baskets are made for a variety of use. The carving and woodwork of the Angamis is decidedly superior to that of the Semas and Lothas. The carvings on wood are usually conventional designs, which vary in villages and are nowhere of strict uniformity.

Barter was undoubtedly the main method of trade among the Angamis as among the other Naga tribes till the British introduced cash to their economy. An old Angami table of barter runs as follows:

1 male slave = 1 cow + 3 conch shells

1 female slave = 3 cows + 4/5 conch shells

1 pig = 2 conch shells

1 cow = 10 conch shells

1 goat = 2 conch shells

1 fowl = 1 packet of salt

One conch shell was reckoned as Rs. 1/- of plains currency. A sort of currency thus existed in conch shells and iron.[116]

4.2: COLONIAL ECONOMY

The early colonial policy in Naga Hills was directed to the exploration of its economic resources. In this search, as early as 1845, Francis Jenkins, the agent to the Governor-General of North-East Frontier Agency, sent Captain John Butler to Naga Hills on a commercial mission. Butler was directed to the discovery of lime, salt, coal

[116] . Op.cit., p.71.

and iron ores, indigenous tea and coffee plants and timber trees which might appear to possess useful qualities, and all hill products which were likely to become articles of commerce and to submit his researches and samples of all such articles. Butler's discovery of indigenous tea plants brought joy to the government. In a bid to encourage the Nagas to take to tea cultivation, the government purchased some amount of wild tea seeds from them so that the plants would already appear as a source of some profit to the Nagas.

Coffee, being an indigenous product of Naga mountain tract, the President-in-council expressed the desire to encourage the natives to take to its cultivation. However, though the government was interested in the promotion of tea and coffee cultivation, no significant efforts ever took place in this direction. Later events however showed that the government's search for mineral resources in the Naga Hills continued. The continued search for mineral resources by the government displayed its eagerness to procure an avenue of advantage and profit from the Hills.

Colonial economic policy in the Naga Hills cannot be treated in isolation from, and without reference to British interest in Assam, Manipur, Burma and main land China. It appears that it was as part of direct interest in this entire region that Naga Hills assumed strategic importance and it became the gate to colonial economic pursuit in the region. Apart from economic interest in the Far East, the natural resources of Assam immensely attracted the British. The commercial prospects in the province to which Naga Hills was an appendage were promising.

The government followed a cautious policy in extending administration, but there was relaxation in cases where some un-administered areas were identified as having mineral resources. In such cases, the needed areas were brought within the pale of

administration. In 1907, some coal bearing areas were included within Naga Hills and Sibsagar districts of Assam respectively.[117] The incorporation of such areas within the bound of administration was specially made for the purpose of giving protection to the colonial commercial operations in those areas from the raids of the tribes from beyond the controlled line.

The dichotomy of British policy may be noted by the fact that in contrary to their economic activities in Naga Hills, the Anglo-Naga relations, prior to the introduction of effective administration were characterised by a policy of regular military campaigns against the Nagas and of clearing them out from the settled districts of Assam, where the Naga raids posed a problem to British economic interests.[118]

The tea gardens of Cachar had been a target of the Nagas, who occasionally raided the British subjects there sometimes for the purpose of looting and some other times as a retaliation for British military actions against their inroads. The Cachar Frontier had a concentration of tea gardens. Elaborate defensive measures were taken by the government there to prevent Naga incursions.

A major measure taken to check the incursion of the Nagas into the tea gardens of Assam was the creation of Naga Hills District in 1866 with its headquarters at Samaguting (Chumukedima).[119] In his letter to the Secretary of State, the Chief Commissioner of Assam suggested strongly that the only way of effectively preventing the Naga raids was to hold a position in the centre of the hills, so as to keep the homes and fields of the Nagas at the mercy of the British.[120] The approval of this suggestion was followed by the military occupation of Kohima. The influence of

[117] . Foreign Department Extl-A July 1908, no.123.
[118] . Hunter, W.W., The Imperial Gazetteer of India, Vol.1886, p.146.
[119] . Assam Administration Report, 1879-80, p.43.
[120] . Foreign Department Pol-A Jan 1882, nos.106-118, K.W. No.3.

strong colonial economic interests and policy in Assam thus indirectly determined the decision of the government to extend regular administration in the Naga Hills.

With the introduction of regular administration in the Naga Hills and the gradual improvement of law and order situation, significant economic activities also began. However, rather than making efforts for development of the economy of the people of Naga Hills, it appears that the government's primary concern was the maintenance of law and order and the consideration of general administration only. This conclusion can be safely made from the expenditure of the government on various departments. The major expenditure was made on the maintenance of military and civil police and road construction, whereas the expenditure for the remaining heads was comparatively low and even insignificant. The primary concern and objective of the British in the Naga context was the assertion of their authority and assurance of their own convenience, safety and security using their administrative power.

The usual methods of cultivation of the Nagas were of two kinds, namely jhum and terraced. Jhum cultivation is the popular system of the two. Hunter gave a descriptive account of cultivation in the Naga Hills, which, on the whole, provides an important insight into the type of agriculture that prevailed during the later part of the 19th Century. He wrote, "On the higher ranges, the rice crops are grown in terraces and the soil is well irrigated by artificial water channels. It is not at all uncommon to see a hillside thus cultivated from top to bottom, the whole presenting an unbroken succession of steps, covered with a luxuriant crop. This description of land is most sought after, and is of considerable value. On the lower ranges, cultivation is almost entirely restricted to what is termed the jhum system by which a patch of land is cleared of jungle, and cultivated for two or three successive years until the soil is

impoverished, when new land is selected and cleared, and the old clearing is allowed to relapse into jungle".[121]

In jhumming, an individual parcels out his field into a number of plots and cultivates a particular plot for one or two years. In the following years, he shifts to the next plot, which is also cultivated for one or two years. After the rotation is completed, the first plot is taken up again. Under jhum, the grass and reeds, small trees and small branches of large tress were cut and laid about the ground and burnt. The ashes were carefully raked on the ground, which was then hoed up and the seed would be sown. This way, almost all the land suitable for jhumming was taken up for cultivation in turn. This method of cultivation, however entailed waste, and required large areas of cultivable lands at the disposal of every village community. The crop is dependent on the rain. Terraced cultivation was more modern, more scientific,[122] and the Angamis are experts in it. According to the local traditions, the Angami terrace system is as old as the tribe itself. Under this system of cultivation the land is carefully terraced as far as rivulets would be commanded for irrigation. This method involved greater labour input, but it saves the land for cultivation and lead to the conservation of forest resources, which is not possible under jhumming.

These two methods of cultivation received the attention of the government, which having considered jhum as a wasteful mode of cultivation, decided to place restrictions on it. As a measure of restricting jhum, the government proposed to take gradual steps in popularising terraced method of cultivation.[123] Sir Charles Elliot, the Chief Commissioner felt that with the increase of population, which was bound to take place in Naga Hills because of prevailing peace and security, the Nagas should

[121] . Hunter, W.W., Statistical Account of Assam, Naga Hills District, 1908, p.191.
[122] . Hunter, W.W., Imperial Gazetteer of India, Vol.XVIII, 1908, pp.11-12.
[123] . Foreign Department Pol-A Jan 1882, no. 135.

adopt a more productive system of husbandry. Accordingly, he issued instructions to the political officers of the Naga Hills to make every endeavour to encourage the Naga tribes to take to terraced cultivation. He also advised the district officials to introduce the cultivation of potatoes, other staples and different vegetables. He suggested free distribution of seeds and the imparting of the necessary instruction to the Nagas in this regard. Apart from terraced cultivation, the government encouraged the cultivation of potatoes in the district, which proved successful. With the establishment of law and order in the district, agriculture was extended satisfactorily throughout the district.

The subject of agriculture received further attention of the government with the extension of effective administration. Although the government disapproved of the system of jhum cultivation, it could not enforce restrictions on the farmers, as the administration was more concerned with winning the confidence of the Nagas in their administration and would not risk displeasing their subjects. Because of this consideration, only in January 1882, after the British influence had been solidly established in the district, the Chief Commissioner, C.A. Elliott proposed to lay restrictions in the jhum cultivation. However, jhum cultivation continued extensively, while terrace cultivation was still restricted mostly to Angami area.

The Assam Agriculturists' Loans Act XII of 1884 was introduced by the British in the Naga Hills, with the objective of advancing financial assistance for promoting cultivation. Accordingly, annual loans were given to the cultivators.[124] As a matter of fact, regular annual reports of the agricultural department of Assam show that with the yearly advance of loans, the government also tried to encourage the tribes to extend

[124] . Assam Agricultural Department Report, 1886.

terraced cultivation.[125] Thus, the district officer paid active personal attention to redirecting the interest of the people from jhumming to the more scientific method of terraced cultivation.

R.R. Howell, Deputy Commissioner of Naga Hills, in his inspection note highly commended the work of Dundas, the divisional officer at Mokokchung, for doing pioneering works in laying out terraced fields in the sub-division.[126] In 1910, Needham, Sub-Divisional Officer, Mokokchung, visited Longkhum village and taking the *gaonburas* along, selected a suitable spot for terraced cultivation.[127] These instances reveal the keen interest of the government towards terraced cultivation even though no notable increase of it was witnessed throughout the district. This shows the extent to which the Naga tribes have become accustomed to jhumming.

Besides giving keen interest in the extension of wet-cultivation, as early as 1907, Dundas introduced the use of bullock power in Mokokchung villages.[128] However, in spite of the initial appreciation by a few persons, its use was discontinued immediately following his transfer from Mokokchung, and it was not a strange thing therefore, that in 1931, the Assam Revenue Administration Report declared ploughing to be an unknown method of cultivation in the Hills.[129] The efforts of the British officials were thus not always met with success when projects are taken up, which was partially due to the inability of the natives to easily adapt to new methods and partly due to the inefficiency and insufficiency of efforts and expenditures for the purpose.

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[125] . Assam Agricultural Department Report, 1934-35, 1935-46.
[126] . S.D.O's Diary, D.R.O, Mokokchung, July 1907.
[127] . S.D.O's Diary, D.R.O, Mokokchung, October 1910.
[128] . S.D.O's Diary, D.R.O, Mokokchung, July 1907.
[129] . Assam Land Revenue Manual, P.C, XXV.

The government also trained agricultural demonstrators, besides giving annual grant of loans and introducing bullock power. The technique was however indigenous. The Angamis, who were skilful in the development of terraces, were employed for imparting their know-how to the tribes among whom terrace cultivation was newly introduced by the colonial administration. The other measure taken by the government was the protection of field crops from wild animals. At least one gun each was issued to suitable persons in the village.[130]

The Assam Land Revenue Administration Reports annually claimed the progress of terraced cultivation in Naga Hills.[131] But not withstanding the wide popularity gained by the efforts of the government, wet-rice cultivation remained second to jhumming. Nevertheless, the necessity for extension of terraced cultivation as a substitute of jhumming was further emphasised by the Governor of Assam. Based on his spot observation of the Naga method of cultivation, in February 1938, Sir Robert Reid commented, "pressure of population in many parts and the necessity of preventing erosion point to the great need of all change-over from jhumming to terraced rice cultivation".[132]

Despite some significant signs of progress in terraced cultivation, in view of its limited achievement, the policy of its extension continued to draw the attention of the government. Although the government was keen to promote the system of terraced cultivation, the district administration has to work under considerable financial constraints. The extent of terraced cultivation over a period of seven decades strongly indicates that the government could neither provide adequate financial assistance to

[130] . S.D.O's Diary, D.R.O, Mokokchung, March 1912.
[131] . Assam Land Revenue Administration Report, 1924-25.
[132] . Linlithgow Papers, MSS, F.125-30, Letter from Reid to Linlithgow, 19th June1938.

boost the extension of cultivation, nor meet the requirement of the farmers for agricultural instructors.

On the whole, the government's policy and efforts for the promotion of agriculture in the district did not lead to a major transformation in the agricultural economy of the Nagas. Thus, while acknowledging the efforts made by the British, B.B. Ghosh, the Editor of Nagaland Gazetteer, summed up the progress of agriculture of the district during the British period as being "practically nothing or very little".[133]

A remarkable feature of the Naga economy is that there are no absentee landlords and no landless peasants. The village society is so organised that the basic requirements of food, clothing and shelter are guaranteed to all the members. The population as a whole remains gainfully employed in productive activities and there is no surplus labour either. During the planting season, it becomes difficult to get hired labour, and if at all available, very high wages have to be paid. There is however, a system of providing communal labour by forming what are called field companies of men and women of the same age-group (called *pelikhrie* among the Angamis). Every member of the field company/group gets the benefit of the group's labour by turn.

Although the Assam Scheduled District Act of 1874 dealt with the rules for the administration of civil and criminal justice, it failed to deal with the land revenue administration of the district.[134] It was the general policy of the government to interfere as little as possible with the internal affairs of the Nagas. Accordingly, the government did not assess the land of the Nagas for taxation. In fact, the government readily recognised the traditional system of landownership in the district, which

[133] . Ghosh, B.B., Gazetteer of Nagaland, Mokokchung, 1979, p.93.
[134] . Assam Manual of Local Rules & Orders, 1915, Vol. I, pp.64-71.

prevails to date. Under the traditional system of land ownership, each village had its demarcated boundary of land. Land ownership however varied from community to community and from place to place. Land belonged to the village chiefs, clans or to the private individuals. There were frequent land disputes and tribal wars were mostly caused by the necessity of acquiring cultivable land, as there was so much love for land among the tribes, land being the only major source of livelihood that the individual could count upon.

The government's policy was primarily directed by the zeal to pacify and control the tribes. To quote Mackenzie, "all that we sought was peace and free intercourse".[135] The administration accordingly refrained from touching any issues that would tend to alienate the sentiments of the Nagas. Therefore, the land of the Nagas was not assessed in the interest of colonial administration. This policy showed that the British were eager to win the confidence of the natives through peaceful methods.

However, there were exceptional cases of assessment around Numbar forest, Barpathar areas and small estates held by the American Baptist Missionaries at Kohima, Wokha and Impur. The land in these areas was held on annual pattas. In the rest of the district, the government did not assess the land but the houses. At the beginning of British administration (1880-81), there were altogether 170 estates in Naga Hills district paying a total of Rs. 1,787/- as revenue. The land per cultivated bighas was taxed according to rules and criteria that were in force in the Assam valley in general.

[135] . Mackenzie, A., op.cit, p.106.

With the extension of Assam-Bengal railway tract connecting the foothill of the district, the areas assessed for land revenue purposes were extended to Nawgong, Sibsagar and North Cachar Hills District along with the re-adjustment of administrative areas. As a result, the land revenue of the district was confined to Dimapur and its adjoining hamlets, which on the whole formed an insignificant area. Fluctuations in the number of revenue paying estates continued from year to year. The reason was that in certain years, cultivation increased and the area of land brought under assessment also correspondingly increased.

As house tax was an important and major source of revenue for the government, its collection was the first thing with which British colonialism directly confronted the Nagas. However unprecedented it was, the administration utilised it as a factor for both direct identification of their subjects as well as making it an effective means of extending imperial influence among the Nagas. The systematic collection of house tax began simultaneously with the creation of the district headquarters at Samaguting (Chumukedima) in 1866. To the British, house taxation was important, more on political grounds than of fiscal ones.

Emphasising the importance of revenue collection from the Nagas, G.H. Damant, Political Officer of Naga Hills wrote to the secretary of the Chief Commissioner in 1880, “I attach great weight to the realising of revenue from the savages, not so much from a fiscal as a political point of view, as my experience amongst other savage tribes, which has been fully borne out in these hills, has convinced me that nothing has such an effect among them as a regular payment of revenue to a superior authority, the amount realised is, from a political point of view, of but little importance”. Briefly a “savage who pays revenue consider himself a British subject,

bound to carry out all orders given to him, while a savage who does not pay revenue considers himself independent and free to obey orders or not as he chooses".[136]

The inhabitants around Samaguting (Chumukedima) paid their annual house tax to the British as recognition of their authority, which also implied responsibility on the part of the administration to protect them from their powerful and oppressive neighbours. Although payment of house tax to the authorities enabled them to enjoy the protection of the government, it also signified their commitment to obey the authority as also to cease from raids and to pay revenue punctually. So payment of tax implied a variety of reasons for the natives.

The British interpreted the payment of house tax as a conducive step, which promoted acceptance and free association with the authorities. It was also regarded as a civilising influence on the Nagas. The recognition of British authority was emphasised to bring the Naga tribes under British control. Although many villages defied taxation, peace loving ones accepted it, and their genuine desire to live in peace with their neighbours was confirmed from the voluntary submission to house tax and British protection. For the British, this system formed the quintessence in incorporating new villages within the fold of colonial administration.

The major component of the district revenue was formed by house tax. The rate of collection varied according to the economic condition of the Nagas. The Angamis were assessed at Rs. 3/- per house, the other tribes at Rs. 2/- and the foreigners at Rs. 5/-. Registers were maintained showing the total number of houses in the village, the houses assessed, and the number of houses exempted from assessment. The Deputy Commissioner, the Sub-Divisional Officer and their assistants in course of their tours

[136] . Foreign Department Pol-A, Jan 1880, no.509.

through the villages checked the registers. They revived old exemptions and granted new ones where necessary. The house tax was collected by the *gaonburas*, who received a commission of 12½% (twelve and half percent) for the task.[137] The *gaonburas* thus became agents of the colonial masters in more than one way.

The administration took exceptional care for the collection of house tax, as it was the main source of the district revenue. As such, recounting of houses formed a part of the duty of the administrative officers' annual tours. In addition to the annual counting of houses and verification of record registers, they also made surprise checks so as to ascertain the authenticity of records maintained. For example, in 1906, the Deputy Commissioner made a surprise checking of houses at Phesama, Kigwema, Mima and Jakhama villages, where cases of frauds in tax exemptions were detected. The persons caught fraudulently obtaining exemptions were fined Rs. 8/- each, of which the *gaonburas* were made to pay half the amount for not reporting deaths of the exempted persons or the names of the new occupants.[138]

The rapid extension of regular administration and careful assessment of house tax enabled the government to gradually increase the annual collection. Although checking of records was strictly maintained, the government did not lose sight of the humanitarian dimension of tax collection. During natural calamities, it extended relief to the people by giving up the realisation of the annual house tax from the victims. Besides the general grant of remissions for natural calamities, tax revisions was also given to the deserving ones in the villages especially widows and old and aged people, giving due regard of the recommendation of the village headmen.

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[137] . Hunter, W.W., Imperial Gazetteer of India, Vol.XVIII, 1908, p.479.
[138] . Political Cases, Naga Hills, D.R.O, Kohima, May 1906, p.11.

The British used tax exemption as a measure to encourage tribal culture. Village pastors of Assangma and Keelingmen were given relief from taxation on the understanding that they would wear the Ao dress.[139] The other dimension of tax policy of the government was that it was used as an instrument of punishment. Semas as a community were assessed at Rs. 1/- per house, during the early 1880s, but a Sema village of Lozema (Lazami) was assessed a higher rate of Rs. 2/- as a punishment for its refusal to recognise British rule and to pay house tax.[140] In the same way, during early 1930s, the rate of house tax assessment was raised for the Kacha Naga (Zeliangrong) villages connected with Gaidinliu's agitation.

Along with the gradual incorporation of more villages under regular administration, the number of tax paying houses also correspondingly increased. At the beginning of effective administration (1881), the number of occupied houses in the district was calculated at 15,382, where as, at the close of British administration, the Census of 1941 records the total number of occupied houses at 48,919.[141]

House tax was supplemented by the sale proceeds of forest products and tax on urban commodities.[142] Coal-mines formed the second regular annual resource of income for the district, though the mines were not significantly exploited.

With regards to trade, from the very beginning the British policy was to encourage trade between the Naga tribes and the inhabitants of the settled districts of Assam. The colonial perception of trade in the Naga context was to utilise it as a means of civilising them and thereby to promote good relations between the inhabitants of the

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139 . S.D.O's Diary, Mokokchung, Feb' 1933.
140 . Foreign Department, Pol-A, 24th July 1883, No.A.G.E, 17.
141. Census of Assam, 1951, p.148.
142. Singh, Prakash, op.cit, p.170.

settled districts and the Naga tribes. The government was hopeful of making the Nagas civilised through the promotion of their border trade.

The opening of accessible roads connecting the hills with the plains, the establishment of weekly markets at the foot of the hills, posting of police guards near the markets and the abolition of all troublesome duties imposed by the Ahom government were some of the important steps taken by the government to facilitate Nagas to trade with the inhabitants of the British districts of Assam. Thus even though the early Anglo-Naga relationship was marked by hostility, attempts were made to encourage the Nagas to trade in the plains. This policy had resulted in increased traffic of the Nagas with the plains even before they were brought under British rule.[143]

With the incorporation of Naga Hills within the British system of administration and the establishment of peace and order in the district, the Nagas significantly enjoyed relative freedom from fear of losing their lives. The Assam Administration Report of 1881-82 claimed the presence of authority at Kohima to be the main cause of peace and trading progress in Naga Hills. The security of life and the improved condition of the main channels of communication made trading excursions possible throughout the year.[144] The ushering in of a peaceful atmosphere among the tribes further enabled them to trade freely not only among themselves, but even with distant towns and cities. The extent of the prevailing peace and order and relative freedom was witnessed from the gradual increase of trade and commerce. This had a very crucial impact on the Nagas in all aspects of life, particularly in their economy and in their process of coming together as one people with a distinct identity.

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[143] . Godden, G.M., Naga and Frontier Tribes, J.A.A.I., 1989, p.72.

[144] . The Angamis are shown to have taken advantage of these new conditions to turn his capital a greater number of times.

Besides the increase in internal trade, the Angami Nagas of Khonoma, Mezoma and Jotsoma were reported to have reached Bombay, Calcutta and Rangoon for trading purposes.[145] Facilities for adequate trade and commerce further increased with the gradual improvement of link roads, mostly in the form of bridle paths throughout the district. The Administration Report of Naga Hills (1884-85) stated marked development of internal trade and considerable improvement in the opening up of communication.[146] Improvement in communications provided the means of access to the villages for the administration and also fostered internal trade in the district.

Although colonial administration encouraged the Nagas in the rudiments of trade and commerce, there were no large-scale business transactions in the district. Even with all its potential economic resources, such as forests, agriculture and animal husbandry, the district remained undeveloped during the colonial period. As a result, the indigenous products continued to be scarce and limited. The absence of modern technical know-how made the people of the district to trade only with indigenously produced articles. The limitation of trading activities supports this analysis.

Besides the limitation of trading activities in the Naga Hills, communication was also in its infancy. Traffic was confined to a small class of men as well as to a very limited number of articles. Each household produced practically all that it needed, and there was little or no surplus for disposal. The only commercial products that the Nagas could trade in were rice, cotton, ivory and wax. Depending on the local needs and products, there were limited trading activities in the district. At the same time, only small-scale export and import took place with some internal petty local

[145] . Allen, B.C., op.cit, pp.59-60.
[146] . Foreign Department, Extl-A, September 1885, no. E-37.

transactions chiefly in goods consisting of clothing, foodstuffs and domestic animals.[147]

Evidently, the tribes living in close geographical proximity with the neighbouring people of Assam were more active traders than the tribes inhabiting the interior parts of the district or living far away from the border of the settled districts of the plains. The main articles of exchange were cotton, cloth, ginger, pepper, bettlenuts, dry fish, steel implements and utensils, thread, oil, beads, kerosene, umbrella and Manipur liquor. The main article of import for the Nagas was salt and their cotton formed their main item of export.

The Nagas mainly traded in Dimapur, Golaghat, Manipur and Silchar, although occasionally some of them travelled to distant towns and cities of India and Burma for trade. However, there were no regular markets or fairs within the district, although Marwari and Mohammedan traders had opened a few shops at Kohima, Samaguting and Dimapur. Wholesale trade was in the hands of the Marwaris who dealt mainly in salt, oil, cloth, umbrella and thread.[148] Towards the end of the 19th Century, trade increased considerably. Though barter continued, it was slowly giving way to transactions in cash. Before 1866, i.e. before the formation of Samaguting into a civil station, the Nagas were totally unaware of the value of money. Accordingly all trade was conducted by barter. There was no native standard of weights and measures, but gradually *maunds* and *seers* of the plains were introduced.[149] For the Nagas, transaction in coins began with the arrival of the British at Samaguting and gradually cash usage was popularised among them when they were largely involved in the

[147] . Hunter, W.W., Imperial Gaztteer of India, Vol. XVIII, 1908, p.193.
[148] . Allen, B.C., op.cit, p.60.
[149] . Hunter, W.W., op.cit, pp.152-53.

district developmental activities as coolies/labourers, and their usages were paid in cash.[150]

With the introduction of cash economy, trade and commerce increased both in the district as well as outside the hills. The Administration Report of Naga Hill District (1875-76) confirmed that the Naga tribes had already assumed marked proportion even before the imposition of effective administration in the district.[151] During the same period, nearly 1900 Nagas passed through Samaguting to trade at Dimapur, Golaghat and other places.[152]

The occupation of Kohima as district headquarters and its subsequent development as a civil and military station brought significant changes to the Naga economy. The development of the district headquarters opened opportunity for the Nagas to further get involved in cash economy through their earnings as labourers. Further, trading activities were facilitated by the improvement of law and order.

The economic position of the Nagas changed considerably with the onset of the 20th Century. Significant changes took place during the First World War when 2000 Nagas participated in the war as labourers for the allied forces. The return of the Labour Corps personnel from Europe with cash remuneration reinforced the cash economy in Naga Hills. Moreover, the employment of the Nagas in various, government services as *dobashis* (interpreters), schoolteachers, coolies, etc, helped accelerate the spread of cash economy.

Apart from fresh employment avenues for the educated few, mass employment as labourers in the development works of the district such as construction of road and

150 . Ibid.
151 . Foreign Department Pol-A, September 1876, no.143.
152 . Ibid.

bridge, and as transport coolies of the government enabled them to earn cash, thus changing their old economic pattern to a certain extent.[153] Besides forced labour for which they received wages in cash, the administration systematically compelled the Nagas to supply rice to meet the consumption requirements of the British forces.

With the approach of the Second World War, developmental works especially of road communications enabled the Nagas to earn more cash. Apart from increasing employment of the educated Nagas in various government offices, many Nagas participated in the Second World War as guerrillas, interpreters, porters, and workers on roads and as members of the regular fighting forces. Apart from their active participation in the war, the Nagas earned money as government employees, which significantly changed the economy of the Naga society.

Several factors restricted the growth of trade and commerce in Naga Hills during the colonial period. One of the factors that determined the volume of trade and commerce in Naga Hills was undoubtedly the direct impact of inner-line regulation. Under this system no outsider was allowed to enter Naga Hills without taking inner-line permit from the Deputy Commissioner. The system is in operation to date. This regulation added as a check on free trade and commercial enterprise of the business community. The Naga economy was limited to the village levels due to lack of development and absence of channels for productive utilisation of indigenous products. The need of the local population remained limited, and, correspondingly, the demand for imported articles also remained relatively limited. Thus, trade and commerce flourished only to the extent of the people's limited needs for foodstuff, domestic animals, steel arts, and ornaments and clothing.

[153] . S. D. O's Diary, D.R.O, Mokokchung, April 1922, no.146.

However, with the passage of time, developing factors like the introduction of a settled administration and the consequent improvement of law and order in the district, the construction of district link roads and railway tracts linking Naga Hills with the rest of the country and the introduction of money economy among the Nagas through various development activities, altogether accelerated the gradual growth of trade and commerce in the Naga Hills. The growth in trade and commerce affected and changed not only the economic life of the Nagas but also their socio-political life.

4.3: IMPACT

The nature of the British administration and its economic policy in particular produced a lot of changes in the socio-economic life of the Nagas. The introduction of law and order in the district, which followed the colonial administration accelerated the progress of agriculture. Earlier, it was the practice that many able-bodied men had to guard the village and fields for security reasons.[154] However, with the establishment of peace, the Nagas could settle down to peaceful agricultural production. Production got extended and improved, which changed the socio-economic life of the Nagas. Better standard of living, better accessibility to each other and to modern political world eventually led the Nagas towards the goal of establishing their separate identity.

The peaceful settled occupation gradually led to an established economic pattern that encouraged the tribes to move about for trading or buying purposes, which eventually made the tribes to develop a new sense of identity at a higher level as they came to know each other better.

Prior to the introduction of British administration, a great difference existed

[154] . Robinson, S.W., A Descriptive Account of Assam, Calcutta, 1841, p.389.

between the wealthy owners of terraced cultivation and those who had to survive on jhumming or working on the fields of their more well to do neighbours. Wealth was power, and as might was right, no poor man rest secure, even in possession of his small property. However, the coming of British administration gave security to life and provided the tribes the opportunity to emerge as one people.

British administration also improved the condition of the main channels of communication, which made it possible to go for trading excursions throughout the year, which facilitated the tribes to know each other better leading to the realisation of the need to come together as one and forge their separate identity.

The improvement of road communications that followed the colonial administration enabled the people to reach out to different corners of the district. This situation helped the Nagas to develop a sense of solidarity and the realisation that they were the same, with a separate identity. People from different parts of the district became increasingly inter-dependent in their economic needs, and this gradually strengthened the feeling of unity among the tribes.

Trading centres in Naga Hills thus facilitated the Nagas to come together, primarily for trading purposes, which eventually contributed to the emergence of a common identity among them. The means of communication thus fostered identity formation by enabling internal trade and constant contact among the different tribes of the district. With the development of adequate communication facilities in the district, the tribes were no longer the sole consumers of their own produce.

The economic policy of the British administration also had a civilising influence on the tribes. The more prospective British officers felt that the cause of raids,

plunders and killings among the Naga tribes was the absence of any sound principles of right and wrong in their minds. The economic policy, particularly of house tax made the tribes to accept the British authorities, with which they gradually developed free association. This association slowly resulted in the realisation of the tribes that they were different, with a distinct identity unlike the outsiders. The Nagas' feeling of distinctness was further increased by the taxes they paid to the British. The payment became a means of control and subjection of the Nagas to the British, who are different from them culturally and traditionally. At the same time, the house tax they paid gave them protection, leading to a cease from raids, thus encouraging peace in the area. A common identity among the tribes was developed by the favourable conditions of peace in the Naga Hills.

The British also used tax payment and tax exemption policy as a means of punishment and reward. While a Sema village and the Zeliangrongs were punished with more tax payment, tax exemption was used as a means of encouraging tribal culture. For example, tax was exempted in the case of pastors from Mokokchung, on the understanding that they would wear the Ao dress. Thus, indirectly, the British taxation policy encouraged tribal culture. The preservation of tribal culture culminated in the growth of awareness of the people as being distinct from outsiders in appearance and culture. This awareness helped the Nagas in promoting their conviction towards a common identity.

The introduction of settled government in the Naga Hills was thus followed by the development of trade, the cessation of inter-village wars, extension of cultivation and marked improvement in the condition of the people. A taste for the luxuries of civilisation has also been developed. The great demand for labour has caused a large

sum of money to pass into the possession of the inhabitants of the district, and this has been invested in cattle and in the opening out of new land, all tending to the increase of general prosperity.

As such, colonial economic policy fostered the growth of a distinct identity among the Naga tribes in a significant manner. Many aspects of the colonial economic policy and activities led to the encouragement of the Naga tribes coming together as one people. As the Nagas began to share a more related economy, they began to think of themselves as a people, distinct and separate from the foreigners. The facility of better access throughout the district, increased contact and the development of a common established economic system thus made the Nagas to readily accept the notion of themselves as belonging to one tribe, as subscribed by the foreigners since the annexation of the Naga Hills to the British India empire. The Nagas woke up to the realisation of the need to unite and present a united front in order to forge their common identity and to consolidate steps towards their congregated solidarity. They realised that if they remain as separate entities within their village and tribe like they did in the past, they could not surge ahead as a people in the modern world. This realisation tremendously helped in promoting the feeling of oneness among the Nagas and greatly contributed to the emergence and assertion of Naga identity.

CHAPTER-V

COLONIAL EDUCATION AND IMPACT

5.1: NAGA TRADITIONAL EDUCATION

5.2: COLONIAL EDUCATION

5.3: IMPACT

5.1: NAGA TRADITIONAL EDUCATION

Prior to colonial administration, the Nagas did not possess any type of formal educational institution, a common language or a script. The Nagas had no written literature of their own.[155] According to tradition, the Nagas at one time had their own written literature recorded on some animal skin. However, through the careless use of the scroll by a scribe, a dog devoured the skin. So, the Nagas lost their literature, and as far as authentic history goes, the Nagas had no written literature.

Having lost their script, written form of any script was unknown to the Nagas. As a result, they adopted other methods of education/schooling, quite different from that of the rest of the world. They depended exclusively on informal education. Every household was in itself a teaching institution, educating the children in the way they should grow up, to be good and successful warriors and housewives. Home schooling was supplemented by the dormitory (*morung*) system, where both boys and girls learned the social customs of their own. Learning process was simple, yet practice oriented.

The '*morung'* may be identified as resembling a formal educational institution,

[155] . Alemchiba, M., op.cit, p.156.

where the boys of the village learnt the love, tradition and custom of the people, the religious practices, marital process and discipline. The Nagas had different types of *morungs*, and from these *morungs* emerged the perfect citizens of the village state, who could shoulder social responsibilities. The *morungs* were the practical schools where the students were taught methods. At *morungs*, habits and manners were shaped, characters built up and discipline imparted. *Morungs* thus formed and built the character of the Nagas in the earlier days, which is what Herbert Spencer called as the object of education.

There is no appropriate or corresponding terminology in English for the *morung*. However, many writers called it 'dormitory', where many boys slept together. But in reality, it signified something much more. So, perhaps, its local name would be more befitting here. The Angamis call it '*Kichüki*', the Aos call it '*Arriju*', the Lothas call it *'Jambo'*, the Semas call it *'Dakha Chang'* and the Tangkhuls call it '*Longshim'*. Generally speaking, it was known as *morung* for boys and dormitory for girls. *Morung* has its origin in Assamese language.[156]

Morung in the real sense of the term means a big hall built separately for young men to sleep and keep a vigil at night against enemies. The term is now used in general for all the boys' dormitories. *Morung* is common to all the Naga tribes. It was either located in the house of the village chief or a rich man's house or built separately.

Morung or dormitory system was found not only among the Naga tribes, but also in many tribal communities of India. According to Dr. Webster, dormitory system was found in Australia, Africa, Polynesia, etc. Dr. Verrier Elwin spoke very highly of

[156] . Shimray, R.R., op.cit, p.192.

the '*Ghotul*', and called it 'the unique dormitory' of the Murias of Bastur (MP). Other comparable institutions were the *Dhumkuria* of the Juangs of Orissa.[157]

For the Nagas, the *morung* was the pivot around which the social, religious, educational and cultural activities of the young people revolve. According to R.R. Shimray, the *morungs* and the ladies' dormitories can be called as the Naga schools.[158] It is now accepted in function, as the equivalent of a school. Traditional education thus appears like a broad process of socialisation in the indigenous traditions through what the *morung* imparted to the youth. It is expressed that the *morung* ultimately promoted the maintenance of social cohesion and group solidarity within the villages.

Every village used to have one or more *morungs* according to the size of the village. Some big villages had more than four or five *morungs* and ladies dormitories. All the young boys, as soon as they reached a certain stage, between 10-15 years were compulsorily sent to the *morung*. They slept in groups and spent their times there when they were not engaged in the farm or any other activities. They had to sleep there till they were married.

The *morung* institution was common to all the Nagas, but its working differed from tribe to tribe. Among the Aos, Changs, Konyaks and Lothas, a big building was constructed on a commanding location of the village, and used as the *morung*. Among the Semas, Angamis, Tangkhuls and Maos, the house of the village chiefs or influential persons or warriors served as *morungs*. It is a fact that *morungs* played an important role in educating the young people among all Nagas, unlike the view of J.H.

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157 . Op.cit., p.193.
158 . Ibid.

Hutton that it was not important among the Angamis and Semas. The form of the *morung* might have differed from tribe to tribe, but its main objective was the same, i.e. to impart education in war and in peace.

All the young men were compulsorily required to become members of the *morung* and sleep there together. The seniors generally carried on the administration of the *morung* on the advice of the village elders. Functions of the members were divided according to age groups. The junior group was generally entrusted the task of running errands in obedience to their seniors and collected firewood from the jungle for use in the *morung* at night and rainy days. The intermediate group had the important function of helping the distressed people in the village. They were expected to assist the senior group in the administrative work. The senior group had the over all control of the members of the *morung.*

Among the seniors also, functions were divided. Some were made in charge of discipline, and some of distribution of work for day-to-day affairs. If anybody failed to fulfil the work allotted to him, he was forced with punishment varying from double labour to expulsion from the society for a period to be specified by the administrators of the *morung.* Obedience and discipline were the watchwords.

The new entrants were taught manners, obedience and discipline. The difficult boys were dealt with severely. They were given public beating and scolding. Family pride and personal arrogance had no place in the *morung*. Everybody was equal in the membership of the *morung* in particular and of the society in general.

Besides discipline, various other arts ranging from basket making and wood carving to war tactics were taught. *Morungs* produced many fine sportsmen and tough

wrestlers. War dances were also taught along with war tactics. *Morung* members were tested not only for physical strength but they were also put to intelligent tests by sounding mock alarms or a peculiar noise which would indicate the direction from which enemies were coming. Sometimes, they were sent out to the jungle to bring particular leaves for minor surgery or for treatment of injuries. Thus, they were also trained in first aid.

On rainy days, the old and young men alike moved to the *morung*, some with flutes, some with Naga violins, some with baskets or wood carvings to be worked on, some without any work in hand, perhaps to help others or learn something from them or to discuss some problems. Flute and violins played an important role in the life of the *morung*. Almost every night and especially on festival days, the *morung* members listened to the talks given by the village elders and the old men on war, discipline, manner and love and to the stories of brave warriors and sometimes to the descriptions of some natural calamity that had over taken the village-state in the past.

Disciplined by the iron rules of the *morung* and elated by the teachings of the elders, the young people turned out as perfect citizens. They were always willing to volunteer their services and sacrifice their personal interests for the welfare of the people of the village when called for. They were always ready to sacrifice their lives for the defence of their village. In the days when war and raids from neighbouring villages were frequent, an institution like *morung* was very vital and essential for the security of the village-state. The youth kept vigil by turn throughout the night, guarding the village against enemies. A huge war drum carved out of a gigantic single log was placed at every *morung.* In the event of alarm or victory at war, the war drum was sounded, varying in sound according to the event of the hour.

In those tribes, which built separate *morungs* for boys, no womenfolk were allowed to enter into the boys' *morung*. Important decisions of war and peace were taken in the *morung* and the captured enemy heads were brought to the *morungs* for rites. *Morung* was a necessity not only for war and education, but also for bringing understanding and reconciliation of different shades of opinion. Coming to the same *morung* every night, young people could understand one another better. It provided an opportunity to the young men to talk face to face and talk out their differences and reconciliate matters. Thus, the *morung* was also a house of reconciliation.

The *morung* was the place where boys got all the useful lessons of community living. The *morung* gymnasium brings out skilful sportsmen, wrestlers and warriors. Here, the youth receive valuable lessons in leadership. They also get acquainted with the history, culture, folklore, songs and dances of their villages. The activities of the *morung* do not only constitute work, because playing, singing and dancing were regular, if not daily features of this institution. The *morung* is therefore, both a training school in the arts of life and war, and a club for entertainment and fun.[159] It acted as a hostel, a public school and a military training centre.

In the absence of schools, especially in the olden days, the *morung* thus served as a training ground for all lessons that a youth must learn before starting to live independently. Here, they were taught the independent and invaluable lessons of discipline, hard work and the spirit of services. A *morung* is a microcosm of the village and it has its own council, reminding one of a public school with its prefects.[160]

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[159] . Horam, M., op.cit, p.67.
[160] . Mills, J.P., The Ao Nagas, 1926, p.181.

Morungs had their romantic side too. Here, the young men learned the art of love from the experienced senior people. Conversations about love and sex would produce laughter in the *morungs*. The giant wooden bed could accommodate about seventy-five persons. Cleanliness was not considered that important in the past. Security was more important. If not for the *morung*, in case of emergency, community work or help, much time might be wasted in going from door to door, waking up the young people. When somebody called for help, the *morung* young men, like the army in emergency, could immediately respond to the call for a social service, help to the weak or poor, surprise attack or raid.

With mind so alert and physique so robust there was no room for idleness and idle thought. Individual differences melted away in the common cause for defence of the village through the easy contact provided by the *morung* institutions. No service of even a single man was wasted. Life within the *morung* was a continuous and long process of testing the young people till they get married and accepted social responsibility. The young men became more self-reliant, with common sense and better discipline. Their loyalty and sense of service to the corporate body is well developed (Bower:1950).

If a *morung* was well disciplined and suited well to the nature of the stronger sex, ladies dormitory was equally well organised and suited to the requirements of the weaker sex. In every village, there used to be at least two or three ladies dormitories. Big villages were generally divided into several parts called '*khel'*, and in each *khel*, there was one or two ladies dormitory. While some tribes provided separate buildings for ladies dormitory, some used the house of rich men for the purpose. Usually the owner of the house was the patron. Wherever the institution was, it was compulsory

for every young girl to take membership of the dormitory as soon as she attained puberty and sleep there till marriage.

While the boys learned about the art of life and war in their dormitories, girls too learned various arts like cotton ginning, spinning, spindling and weaving. Weavings of various kinds, embroidery and design work, and the handicraft work were taught in the dormitories at night. The nature of handicrafts differed from tribe to tribe, and from region to region. In those areas specialising in weaving, girls brought to the dormitory, weaving materials like indigenous spinning wheels, raw cotton, threads and finished clothes for stitching. In areas where weaving was less prevalent, the girls took up embroidery works, and other handicraft works such as head-dress and necklace, etc. These were some of the important items of work that the young girls learned from their seniors. The most important value of this institution however lay in the moulding of the girls' future, building up their character, and facilitating selection of partners.

The young girls learned social behaviour, manner and obedience in the dormitories. They learned many other things from the seniors, which their parents could not teach them. A young girl arriving at the dormitory had to adjust herself to the changed environment, from a smaller family to a much bigger family of groups of girls, who would be there till marriage. The moment she reached the dormitory, her life changed. She might have been leading a secluded life, or a disappointed life due to family affairs. But she forgets all her woes and sufferings within the community life in the dormitory. The dormitory paved the way for her future responsibility as a mother.

The dormitory played a vital role in the moulding of love and marriage. It

provided the best meeting ground, which afforded girls the opportunity to select their life partners. Every night, the *morung* boys would come to the ladies dormitory with flutes and violins to accompany the group singing. They would sing, talk and laugh with stolen looks every now and then. Boys and girls studied and understood each other during this long period of wooing and courting, which become the basis of marriage.

The coming of Christianity adversely affected the *morung* institution in some areas. It was interpreted as not keeping in tune with the spirit and principles of Christianity. In some areas, however, the new religion brought still bigger re-enforcement for its continuance with greater vigour. This institution was found to be a very important agency through which the Bible could be taught and through which group-singing practice could be arranged easily. Perhaps, this institution reached its climax when Christianity was at its best in Naga areas.

For about half a century after the British came, the dormitory institution was running with varied life. Modified and rejuvenated with the changed environment and Christian spirit, the activities of the dormitory now covered almost all the social activities of the youth. In addition to the improved weaving and embroidery work done, the dormitory became the centre of learning of modern education through night schools in the villages and for teaching Bible. Young boys and girls were taught Roman letters and Christian music.

Whatever good impact the new religion might have brought upon the institution of the dormitories, it gradually died down as young boys and girls were sent to schools and colleges, and the few remaining uneducated ones stayed in their own homes. The heydays of *morung* and dormitories are gone. What is left are some fragments, the last

remains of *morungs* and ladies dormitories here and there in isolated villages, but the charm and vigour of the institution are gone forever.

5.2: COLONIAL EDUCATION

Education began with the Christian missionaries and it was an important agency of British administration. It was the missionaries who first introduced western education through schooling. The British colonial administrators felt that education works along with religious activities, and therefore there was little interference. It was used as an instrument of pacification as well as civilisation. The objective of introducing modern education in Naga Hills was to train the natives for the service of colonial administration. With this purpose, the administration encouraged the establishment of schools in Naga Hills. Although the administration was keen in opening schools, initially they did not directly shoulder the responsibility. The Naga education was left to the care of the American Baptist Missionaries. However, later in the first decade of the 20th Century, the government gradually took over some of the mission schools and opened new schools on its own. Consequently, the number of missionary educational institutions decreased and correspondingly, the numbers of government schools increased.

While the proclaimed intent of education and the gospel was to humanise the rude Nagas, its primary purpose was to help the administration in the maintenance of law and order in the colony, the task that the administration had been endeavouring to accomplish for a long time.[161] It was with the expressed motive of affecting slow and indirect change that the government encouraged the Christian missionaries to preach the gospel along with the introduction of western education.

[161] . Census of Assam, 1951, Naga Hills District, p.111.

From the very beginning of their contact with the Nagas, the British officers considered the need to introduce Christianity and education among the Naga tribes, for they considered education as the best agency to bring the Nagas to order and civilisation. With this viewpoint, the colonial educational policy was mainly directed to the extension of money grants to the Christian mission in Naga Hills.[162] Prior to the coming of the mission, a few schools were opened by the government. In 1876-77, only children of the British officials attended a school at Chumukedima headquarter station, as the local Angamis then were indifferent to any system of education.[163] In 1879, three more government schools were started.[164] The first primary school was established at Molungyimsen village in 1878. Most of the early government schools were in primary level.

In 1884, Rev. C.D. King opened a school at Kohima after much opposition.[165] He put down Angami to the Roman alphabet and taught school children to read and write in their language. King left Kohima in 1886, and the mission charge was taken over by Dr. Rivenburg. Rivenburg was a highly qualified medical man, and he was greatly gifted as an Orthographer and educationist also. It was he who successfully adapted Angami to Roman alphabet by which he produced Angami alphabets, arithmetic and some versions of the Bible for the use of school children.

However, not withstanding the Naga Hills District, the government had not made adequate efforts for the development of education in Assam province as a whole. In 1904, it is noted that the primary education in Assam province in general was still in an experimental stage. In 1903-04, 60% of the students in schools were classed as

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162 . Quinquennial Review of the progress of Education in Assam, 1912-17, p.99.
163. Bareh, H., Gazetteer of India, Nagaland, Kohima, 1970, p.190.
164 . Ibid.
165 . Bareh, H., op.cit, p.191.

illiterate, as they were unable to read and write.[166] The government attributed slow progress in education in the province to the lack of funds.

Although government largely depended on mission schools for the education of the tribes, it also gradually opened more schools on its own. In 1904, the district had six lower primary schools, which were receiving grants-in-aid from the government.[167] The six primary schools maintained by the government were located at Mokokchung, Wokha, Henima, Khonoma, Jakhama and Cheswejuma, and the sixteen mission schools were situated at Molung, Yagong, Sirsemen, Womaken, Merangkong, Akoia, Asangma, Warammung, Chungliyimsen, Changki, Nametong, Longkum, Ungma, Lungsa, Lungpa and Lungsang. In 1908-09, there were 21 government schools, in 1909-11 there were 25 and in 1911-12 the number dwindled at 22. In 1913-14, schools went up to 24 in number again. The public was enthusiastic about having more schools of higher standard. In 1931, there were 42 schools at Kohima.[168]

Thus, it was initial policy of the government to leave the responsibility for education to the Christian missionaries with its annual financial aid. But during the first decade of the 20th Century, the government made a significant change in its educational policy.[169]

Several factors influenced the new educational policy of the government. In the first place, it saw that education was not the primary object in which missionaries were engaged. Education went hand in hand with their religious works. It was considered that when the interests of the two clash, education would be made second

166 . Imperial Gazetteer of Assam, 1906, pp.71-72.
167. Gazetteers of Naga Hills & Manipur, Vol.IX, 1905, pp.67-68.
168 . Bareh, H., op.cit, pp.191-192.
169 . Quinquennial Review of the Progress of Education in Assam, 1901-09, p.108.

to religious mission. Secondly, it was observed that the mission schools were understaffed, and often faced with the lack of qualified teachers. Thirdly, in view of the teaching of the gospel in mission schools and the subsequent conversion of pupils, animists were reluctant to send their children to missionary sponsored schools for fear of conversion.

Under these circumstances, the government felt its moral obligation and responsibility towards their animist subjects, even though it had no objection to conversion. It realised that animist Nagas should not be deprived of modern education, simply for fear of conversion. In consideration of all these aspects, the government modified its educational policy in the district, and accordingly started taking over more and more village schools, which were in fact mission venture schools.

The missions did not quite approve of the government's initial attempt to take over the village schools. Nevertheless, Christian missionaries still continued to establish schools with the grants-in-aid they received from the government.

With the government's annual grants-in-aid, the mission established many venture schools. In 1922, the number of government primary schools and aided venture schools had risen to 42 each.[170] However, during the 1930s, the general policy of the government was to take over the responsibility of education from the missions as early as possible. In 1937, the government stated its view on missionary schools as: "while acknowledgement must be made of the debt owed to the missions for their work as pioneers in the field of education, it must also be recognised that the mission have interested themselves in education solely with the object of Christianising the

[170] . Quinquennial Review of the Progress of Education in Assam, 1917-22, p.99.

children. Portions of the hill tribes have refused education because it brought Christianity with it, and it is unfair that they should be deprived of education because they are unwilling to abandon their tribal customs."[171]

Meanwhile, during the 1930s, government schools had significantly increased though there were still considerable numbers of mission schools also in the district. In 1938, out of 167 educational institutions, 115 were government lower primary schools, 10 governments aided lower primary schools, 36 missions aided lower primary schools, 1 government Middle English school, 2 government aided training schools, and 2 mission aided upper primary school and 1 government industrial school. In trying to take over the responsibility of education in the districts, the government in 1939 further decided to take over 10 schools annually for a period of 5 years.[172] This step was directed to reduce the number of mission schools in the district. As a result, the number of government schools increased year by year. The government however did not keep up its policy of taking over 10 schools a year.[173]

The Deputy Commissioner was in charge of education, which was a subject of colonial administration.[174] On his recommendation, government schools were opened from time to time. The schools were under his close supervision. In 1912, giving a report of education in district, he stated: "… the Nagas as a rule failed to appreciate the advantages of education, so that year by year, the number of private schools and scholars dwindled, until from 32 schools with 787 pupils on the rolls on the 31st March 1907, the number has fallen to 22 schools with 327 pupils on the 31st of March

171. Quinquennial Review of the Progress of Education in Assam, 1932-37, p.63.
172. Quinquennial Review of the Progress of Education in Assam, 1937-62, p.109.
173 . Assam Education Report, 1882-1948, p.109.
174 . Assam Education Report, 1891-92, p.25, 1912-17, p.102.

1912."[175]

The government became concerned by the declining aspects of schools and students in the district, and took measures to study the situation. The nature of the educational system was considered the main reason for the decline by the Deputy Commissioner, and he was supported by other officials according to whom since the Nagas had a very practical turn of mind, they would do well if given education that would be of practical use.

The government also identified the heavy language burden in the school curriculum as another case for the decline of enrolment. The government was compelled to re-examine the system of school education due to the large scale of drop out students and the dwindling number of schools in the district. It was perceived that the practical type of education would be more suitable for the Nagas. Accordingly, in 1907, an industrial school called the 'Fuller Technical School' was opened at Kohima for training the Naga boys in carpentry and blacksmithery.[176] This institution offered a three-year training course for the pupils. In the beginning, the school admitted 3 students annually, but increased the annual intake to 7 students per year during the 1930s. In 1941, the school was brought under education department and amalgamated with the first government high school of the district, located at Kohima.

In determining the medium of instruction in schools in the district, a lot of difficulties arose due to the diversity of tribal languages. At the initial stage, students were taught in their local vernaculars, Assamese and English. Since two of the three medium of instruction were foreign languages for the tribes, it was proved by

[175] . Report on the Progress of Education in Eastern Bengal and Assam, 1907-1912, Vol.I, p.121.
[176]. Quinquennial Review of the Progress of Education in Assam, 1912-1937, p.118.

experience that the course was difficult for the beginners in modern education. Subsequently, in order to remove the linguistic burden, it was decided that Assamese would be dropped as a compulsory subject, and the vernacular and English would be taken as the medium of instruction, with English acting as the medium for higher classes. The educational policy of the British was thus partially guided by the response of the tribal subjects in adapting to the system.

Nevertheless, Assamese was still retained as a compulsory subject, though it was made a non-examinational subject, in consideration of the fact that the Nagas needed to learn it for their commercial transactions with the people of the plains. In 1931-32, it was pointed out that "the disadvantage of having to learn a second language in all classes at the primary stage and to pass Assamese from the Middle English and High School examinations handicaps the Naga pupils in their race for higher education."[177] Eventually, in the mission schools, Assamese was excluded from the school curriculum but it was still taught in the government schools.

The missionaries and the newly converted Nagas translated some of the textbooks used in schools. In view of the language difficulties involved in translation work and the absence of a script in tribal language, the government readily accepted the available books for use in schools as textbooks.[178] The gospel of St. John and the Acts of the Apostles were taken as textbooks for lack of printed books in tribal languages.

No vernacular books could be used as uniform school textbooks in the district due to diversity of language. Accordingly, each tribe had to use books translated or written in their own local language. For example, books written in Angami could not

[177] . Census of India, Progress of Education, 1931, Vol-II, Part I, pp.185-187.
[178] . Allen, B.C., Assam District Gazetteer, Naga Hills & Manipur, 1905, p.68.

be used as textbooks for the Sema students and vice-versa. Consequently, the government closely cooperated with the missionaries in the publication of school textbooks. Textbooks translated into tribal languages were mostly published at the expense of the government, although Christian mission also partly met the cost of some publication.

Scholarships were provided for the Naga students to encourage the prosecution of post-primary school studies. In 1942, there were 3 primary scholarships of Rs. 3/- each and 3 Middle English scholarships of Rs. 10/- each available to the Naga boys. In 1946, the number of scholarships increased to thirteen, which was a significant development. These scholarships were to the value of Rs. 3/- a month, each tenable for 3-4 years for post-primary education.[179]

The government followed a very cautious policy in the promotion of education for the hill tribes. While welcoming the increase of primary education, it expressed doubts regarding the expansion of secondary school education. Hill education failed to provide employment opportunities due to its backwardness. The government discussed the problems of hill education at a conference in Shillong in 1935 and again in 1938 and decided that education up to class eight should be given to the Naga boys in their home hills, and that they should then be given opportunities for training in mechanical pursuits or agriculture, and that facilities for high school and college education should only be given to exceptional boys.[180] The backwardness in hills education, which was partly the direct effect of government policy, not only restricted the scope of higher studies, but also gave no scope for employment.

Thus, though the primary elements of education were laid down in the district, the

[179] . Quinquennial Review of the Progress of Education in Assam, 1901-07. p.118.
[180] . Quinquennial Review of the Progress of Education in Assam, 1932-37, p.63.

government was yet to make efforts for higher education. With the exception of taking over of a high school at Kohima in 1941,[181] and the introduction of another M.E. School at Mokokchung,[182] no further notable measures were taken for the improvement of education in the district. It was just on the eve of their exit from India that the government agreed to the idea of granting financial aid to the high schools at Kohima and Mokokchung.

On the whole, education as a colonising instrument was to a great measure successful, especially as it was an agent of peaceful change. Initially, the response of the natives to education was of mixed nature, but eventually the people became more open to the idea since upon observation, they witnessed that their reservations against it hold no ground. The advantage and importance of education gradually dawned on the people in a very significant manner. Earlier, children were not sent to school for various reasons like the need of man-power that necessitated the sending of children to the field, either to work or to tend to the ancestral family cattle, or to tend to their younger siblings. Fear of conversion and corruption of the mind also made many animist and conservative Nagas to hold their reservation against sending their children to school for a long time. However, all these reservations are broken down today, and whether one is rich or poor, animist or conservative, sending one's children to school is considered the only natural thing to do. This became possible only because Nagas have acquired the awareness of the awakening and liberating influence of education.

5.3: IMPACT

The introduction of modern education produced very significant results among the hill tribes. It caused the indigenous system of learning to decline, yet redirected the

[181] . Quinquennial Review of the Progress of Education in Assam, 1942-47. p.109.
[182] . Alemchiba, M., op.cit, p.160.

tribes to the new pattern of modern education. With the increasing acceptance and spread of modern education, the indigenous system was gradually neglected. Modern education had a substantial influence on the socio-cultural life of the Nagas. Education was largely entrusted to the American Baptist Mission, and it had a revolutionary impact on the Nagas. It affected their religion, behaviour, customs and habits.

Education led the Nagas to a new dimension of valued system of life, and revolutionised their entire cultural ethos. With the progressive propagation of modern education, the outlook of the people, which formerly remained narrow, significantly developed. Application of modern education received further momentum, when the development of a broader and healthier outlook of the people enabled them to accept the new trend of change in their society. As a consequence of the growth of modern education, the Naga society witnessed a gradual tendency for social cohesion, the characteristic of which was conspicuously lacking among them in the pre-colonial period.

The education of the Nagas formed one of the major themes of the process of conversion and laid down the basis for all future developments. It was as a result of education that the Nagas began to differentiate their past and future and chose to advance their careers in various branches of learning. The spread of education proved to be a new avenue for any aspirant for a new life, free from the prohibitions and limitations of tradition and custom. It is popularly described as an entrance to a ‘brave new world’, where survival would be based on the elements of education.

It is felt by many that modern education has erased community co-cooperativeness and social cohesion as taught in the old *morungs* of the village

society. It is evident that the education imparted to the Nagas fostered individual hybridisation, coupled with the urban spirit of competition, which opposed the communal comparativeness of the old village society. Nevertheless, western education gave the Nagas, who were hitherto without a common language, a common means of communication with the introduction of the English language. It gave access to absorption of many new methods of learning, a sense of unity out of being able to understand each other with a sense of change from tradition. English coupled with their native language provided a sense of differentiation in which roots of Naga inability to relate to the larger India becomes evident.[183]

Modern education, which was introduced to the Nagas along with Christianity, played a very vital role in the Naga society. Most educated Nagas were also converts, and there were no notable events when this class of people opposed or renounced Christianity or questioned its belief. Instead, they readily accepted Christianity and largely became responsible for the native conversion by acting as pastors, schoolteachers, and native evangelists. The impact of education on the socio-cultural life of the Nagas was in fact the impact of Christianity. Christianity penetrated the Naga culture through the agency of colonial education, the missionaries being the harbingers of education in the district.

The spread of education among the Naga tribes is thus seen in conjunction with the spread of Christianity. In the growth of the Christian church was rooted the spread of formal education.[184] It is historically evident that formal education, coupled with Christianity preceded the actual and formal take-over of the hills by the British. The spread of education meant more of a transformation then a development for the

[183]. Imo, Lanutemjen Aier., Contemporary Naga Social Formations and Ethnic Identity, 2006, p.50-51.
[184] . Yonuo, A., op.cit, p.155.

Nagas, and it greatly replaced the very mental frame and idea of the traditional world. Education opened up the frontiers of knowledge to the Naga people and helped them to cross over from the dark past to a bright future. It enabled them to shed their superstitious beliefs and get over their complexes, arising out of an isolationist existence.

With the availability of educated Nagas, a silent movement began which could make possible the generation of new occupations hitherto non-existent in the Naga society. It was the educated Nagas who spearheaded the formation of the Naga Club. The Club consisted mainly of government officials and a few leading headmen of the neighbouring villages. The formation of the Naga Club by the Nagas reveals the growing awareness among them regarding their identity and their historical roots. They decided to settle their own political future. Such strong realisation and decision would not take place without the advantage of education. In the absence of a common dialect, English and Assamese became very helpful in communicating ideas among themselves.

Educated Nagas, who provided both leadership and the spirit to start the Naga movement, also led the tribal councils and the Naga National Council. Education thus led the Nagas towards a new dimension of a system of life. Nagas witnessed a gradual tendency for social unity at a higher level, which was obviously absent among them during the pre-colonial period. The impact of education among the Nagas is thus very significant. It transformed the very thinking and outlook of the Nagas who refused to remain static in a rapidly changing world. Their culture, however vigorous and colourful, gradually gave way to the impact of modern civilisation and education. The Nagas became conscious of the changes around them and the need for assertion of

their rights and identity, and they rose to the occasion. They realised that their interest and outlook should go beyond the limits of the village and the tribe, in order to move ahead. This realisation could dawn on them only because education reached them. The impact of education in the emergence and construction of Naga identity is thus highly crucial.

5.1: NAGA TRADITIONAL EDUCATION

Prior to colonial administration, the Nagas did not possess any type of formal educational institution, a common language or a script. The Nagas had no written literature of their own.[185] According to tradition, the Nagas at one time had their own written literature recorded on some animal skin. However, through the careless use of the scroll by a scribe, a dog devoured the skin. So, the Nagas lost their literature, and as far as authentic history goes, the Nagas had no written literature.

Having lost their script, written form of any script was unknown to the Nagas. As a result, they adopted other methods of education/schooling, quite different from that of the rest of the world. They depended exclusively on informal education. Every household was in itself a teaching institution, educating the children in the way they should grow up, to be good and successful warriors and housewives. Home schooling was supplemented by the dormitory (*morung*) system, where both boys and girls learned the social customs of their own. Learning process was simple, yet practice oriented.

The '*morung'* may be identified as resembling a formal educational institution, where the boys of the village learnt the love, tradition and custom of the people, the religious practices, marital process and discipline. The Nagas had different types of

[185] . Alemchiba, M., op.cit, p.156.

morungs, and from these *morungs* emerged the perfect citizens of the village state, who could shoulder social responsibilities. The *morungs* were the practical schools where the students were taught methods. At *morungs*, habits and manners were shaped, characters built up and discipline imparted. *Morungs* thus formed and built the character of the Nagas in the earlier days, which is what Herbert Spencer called as the object of education.

There is no appropriate or corresponding terminology in English for the *morung*. However, many writers called it 'dormitory', where many boys slept together. But in reality, it signified something much more. So, perhaps, its local name would be more befitting here. The Angamis call it '*Kichüki*', the Aos call it '*Arriju*', the Lothas call it *'Jambo'*, the Semas call it *'Dakha Chang'* and the Tangkhuls call it '*Longshim'*. Generally speaking, it was known as *morung* for boys and dormitory for girls. *Morung* has its origin in Assamese language.[186]

Morung in the real sense of the term means a big hall built separately for young men to sleep and keep a vigil at night against enemies. The term is now used in general for all the boys' dormitories. *Morung* is common to all the Naga tribes. It was either located in the house of the village chief or a rich man's house or built separately.

Morung or dormitory system was found not only among the Naga tribes, but also in many tribal communities of India. According to Dr. Webster, dormitory system was found in Australia, Africa, Polynesia, etc. Dr. Verrier Elwin spoke very highly of the '*Ghotul*', and called it 'the unique dormitory' of the Murias of Bastur (MP). Other

[186] . Shimray, R.R., op.cit, p.192.

comparable institutions were the *Dhumkuria* of the Juangs of Orissa.[187]

For the Nagas, the *morung* was the pivot around which the social, religious, educational and cultural activities of the young people revolve. According to R.R. Shimray, the *morungs* and the ladies' dormitories can be called as the Naga schools.[188] It is now accepted in function, as the equivalent of a school. Traditional education thus appears like a broad process of socialisation in the indigenous traditions through what the *morung* imparted to the youth. It is expressed that the *morung* ultimately promoted the maintenance of social cohesion and group solidarity within the villages.

Every village used to have one or more *morungs* according to the size of the village. Some big villages had more than four or five *morungs* and ladies dormitories. All the young boys, as soon as they reached a certain stage, between 10-15 years were compulsorily sent to the *morung*. They slept in groups and spent their times there when they were not engaged in the farm or any other activities. They had to sleep there till they were married.

The *morung* institution was common to all the Nagas, but its working differed from tribe to tribe. Among the Aos, Changs, Konyaks and Lothas, a big building was constructed on a commanding location of the village, and used as the *morung*. Among the Semas, Angamis, Tangkhuls and Maos, the house of the village chiefs or influential persons or warriors served as *morungs*. It is a fact that *morungs* played an important role in educating the young people among all Nagas, unlike the view of J.H. Hutton that it was not important among the Angamis and Semas. The form of the

[187] . Op.cit., p.193.
[188] . Ibid.

morung might have differed from tribe to tribe, but its main objective was the same, i.e. to impart education in war and in peace.

All the young men were compulsorily required to become members of the *morung* and sleep there together. The seniors generally carried on the administration of the *morung* on the advice of the village elders. Functions of the members were divided according to age groups. The junior group was generally entrusted the task of running errands in obedience to their seniors and collected firewood from the jungle for use in the *morung* at night and rainy days. The intermediate group had the important function of helping the distressed people in the village. They were expected to assist the senior group in the administrative work. The senior group had the over all control of the members of the *morung.*

Among the seniors also, functions were divided. Some were made in charge of discipline, and some of distribution of work for day-to-day affairs. If anybody failed to fulfil the work allotted to him, he was forced with punishment varying from double labour to expulsion from the society for a period to be specified by the administrators of the *morung.* Obedience and discipline were the watchwords.

The new entrants were taught manners, obedience and discipline. The difficult boys were dealt with severely. They were given public beating and scolding. Family pride and personal arrogance had no place in the *morung*. Everybody was equal in the membership of the *morung* in particular and of the society in general.

Besides discipline, various other arts ranging from basket making and wood carving to war tactics were taught. *Morungs* produced many fine sportsmen and tough wrestlers. War dances were also taught along with war tactics. *Morung* members were

tested not only for physical strength but they were also put to intelligent tests by sounding mock alarms or a peculiar noise which would indicate the direction from which enemies were coming. Sometimes, they were sent out to the jungle to bring particular leaves for minor surgery or for treatment of injuries. Thus, they were also trained in first aid.

On rainy days, the old and young men alike moved to the *morung*, some with flutes, some with Naga violins, some with baskets or wood carvings to be worked on, some without any work in hand, perhaps to help others or learn something from them or to discuss some problems. Flute and violins played an important role in the life of the *morung*. Almost every night and especially on festival days, the *morung* members listened to the talks given by the village elders and the old men on war, discipline, manner and love and to the stories of brave warriors and sometimes to the descriptions of some natural calamity that had over taken the village-state in the past.

Disciplined by the iron rules of the *morung* and elated by the teachings of the elders, the young people turned out as perfect citizens. They were always willing to volunteer their services and sacrifice their personal interests for the welfare of the people of the village when called for. They were always ready to sacrifice their lives for the defence of their village. In the days when war and raids from neighbouring villages were frequent, an institution like *morung* was very vital and essential for the security of the village-state. The youth kept vigil by turn throughout the night, guarding the village against enemies. A huge war drum carved out of a gigantic single log was placed at every *morung.* In the event of alarm or victory at war, the war drum was sounded, varying in sound according to the event of the hour.

In those tribes, which built separate *morungs* for boys, no womenfolk were

allowed to enter into the boys' *morung*. Important decisions of war and peace were taken in the *morung* and the captured enemy heads were brought to the *morungs* for rites. *Morung* was a necessity not only for war and education, but also for bringing understanding and reconciliation of different shades of opinion. Coming to the same *morung* every night, young people could understand one another better. It provided an opportunity to the young men to talk face to face and talk out their differences and reconciliate matters. Thus, the *morung* was also a house of reconciliation.

The *morung* was the place where boys got all the useful lessons of community living. The *morung* gymnasium brings out skilful sportsmen, wrestlers and warriors. Here, the youth receive valuable lessons in leadership. They also get acquainted with the history, culture, folklore, songs and dances of their villages. The activities of the *morung* do not only constitute work, because playing, singing and dancing were regular, if not daily features of this institution. The *morung* is therefore, both a training school in the arts of life and war, and a club for entertainment and fun.[189] It acted as a hostel, a public school and a military training centre.

In the absence of schools, especially in the olden days, the *morung* thus served as a training ground for all lessons that a youth must learn before starting to live independently. Here, they were taught the independent and invaluable lessons of discipline, hard work and the spirit of services. A *morung* is a microcosm of the village and it has its own council, reminding one of a public school with its prefects.[190]

Morungs had their romantic side too. Here, the young men learned the art of love

[189] . Horam, M., op.cit, p.67.
[190] . Mills, J.P., The Ao Nagas, 1926, p.181.

from the experienced senior people. Conversations about love and sex would produce laughter in the *morungs*. The giant wooden bed could accommodate about seventy-five persons. Cleanliness was not considered that important in the past. Security was more important. If not for the *morung*, in case of emergency, community work or help, much time might be wasted in going from door to door, waking up the young people. When somebody called for help, the *morung* young men, like the army in emergency, could immediately respond to the call for a social service, help to the weak or poor, surprise attack or raid.

With mind so alert and physique so robust there was no room for idleness and idle thought. Individual differences melted away in the common cause for defence of the village through the easy contact provided by the *morung* institutions. No service of even a single man was wasted. Life within the *morung* was a continuous and long process of testing the young people till they get married and accepted social responsibility. The young men became more self-reliant, with common sense and better discipline. Their loyalty and sense of service to the corporate body is well developed (Bower:1950).

If a *morung* was well disciplined and suited well to the nature of the stronger sex, ladies dormitory was equally well organised and suited to the requirements of the weaker sex. In every village, there used to be at least two or three ladies dormitories. Big villages were generally divided into several parts called '*khel'*, and in each *khel*, there was one or two ladies dormitory. While some tribes provided separate buildings for ladies dormitory, some used the house of rich men for the purpose. Usually the owner of the house was the patron. Wherever the institution was, it was compulsory for every young girl to take membership of the dormitory as soon as she attained

puberty and sleep there till marriage.

While the boys learned about the art of life and war in their dormitories, girls too learned various arts like cotton ginning, spinning, spindling and weaving. Weavings of various kinds, embroidery and design work, and the handicraft work were taught in the dormitories at night. The nature of handicrafts differed from tribe to tribe, and from region to region. In those areas specialising in weaving, girls brought to the dormitory, weaving materials like indigenous spinning wheels, raw cotton, threads and finished clothes for stitching. In areas where weaving was less prevalent, the girls took up embroidery works, and other handicraft works such as head-dress and necklace, etc. These were some of the important items of work that the young girls learned from their seniors. The most important value of this institution however lay in the moulding of the girls' future, building up their character, and facilitating selection of partners.

The young girls learned social behaviour, manner and obedience in the dormitories. They learned many other things from the seniors, which their parents could not teach them. A young girl arriving at the dormitory had to adjust herself to the changed environment, from a smaller family to a much bigger family of groups of girls, who would be there till marriage. The moment she reached the dormitory, her life changed. She might have been leading a secluded life, or a disappointed life due to family affairs. But she forgets all her woes and sufferings within the community life in the dormitory. The dormitory paved the way for her future responsibility as a mother.

The dormitory played a vital role in the moulding of love and marriage. It provided the best meeting ground, which afforded girls the opportunity to select their

life partners. Every night, the *morung* boys would come to the ladies dormitory with flutes and violins to accompany the group singing. They would sing, talk and laugh with stolen looks every now and then. Boys and girls studied and understood each other during this long period of wooing and courting, which become the basis of marriage.

The coming of Christianity adversely affected the *morung* institution in some areas. It was interpreted as not keeping in tune with the spirit and principles of Christianity. In some areas, however, the new religion brought still bigger re-enforcement for its continuance with greater vigour. This institution was found to be a very important agency through which the Bible could be taught and through which group-singing practice could be arranged easily. Perhaps, this institution reached its climax when Christianity was at its best in Naga areas.

For about half a century after the British came, the dormitory institution was running with varied life. Modified and rejuvenated with the changed environment and Christian spirit, the activities of the dormitory now covered almost all the social activities of the youth. In addition to the improved weaving and embroidery work done, the dormitory became the centre of learning of modern education through night schools in the villages and for teaching Bible. Young boys and girls were taught Roman letters and Christian music.

Whatever good impact the new religion might have brought upon the institution of the dormitories, it gradually died down as young boys and girls were sent to schools and colleges, and the few remaining uneducated ones stayed in their own homes. The heydays of *morung* and dormitories are gone. What is left are some fragments, the last remains of *morungs* and ladies dormitories here and there in isolated villages, but the

charm and vigour of the institution are gone forever.

5.2: COLONIAL EDUCATION

Education began with the Christian missionaries and it was an important agency of British administration. It was the missionaries who first introduced western education through schooling. The British colonial administrators felt that education works along with religious activities, and therefore there was little interference. It was used as an instrument of pacification as well as civilisation. The objective of introducing modern education in Naga Hills was to train the natives for the service of colonial administration. With this purpose, the administration encouraged the establishment of schools in Naga Hills. Although the administration was keen in opening schools, initially they did not directly shoulder the responsibility. The Naga education was left to the care of the American Baptist Missionaries. However, later in the first decade of the 20th Century, the government gradually took over some of the mission schools and opened new schools on its own. Consequently, the number of missionary educational institutions decreased and correspondingly, the numbers of government schools increased.

While the proclaimed intent of education and the gospel was to humanise the rude Nagas, its primary purpose was to help the administration in the maintenance of law and order in the colony, the task that the administration had been endeavouring to accomplish for a long time.[191] It was with the expressed motive of affecting slow and indirect change that the government encouraged the Christian missionaries to preach the gospel along with the introduction of western education.

From the very beginning of their contact with the Nagas, the British officers

[191] . Census of Assam, 1951, Naga Hills District, p.111.

considered the need to introduce Christianity and education among the Naga tribes, for they considered education as the best agency to bring the Nagas to order and civilisation. With this viewpoint, the colonial educational policy was mainly directed to the extension of money grants to the Christian mission in Naga Hills.[192] Prior to the coming of the mission, a few schools were opened by the government. In 1876-77, only children of the British officials attended a school at Chumukedima headquarter station, as the local Angamis then were indifferent to any system of education.[193] In 1879, three more government schools were started.[194] The first primary school was established at Molungyimsen village in 1878. Most of the early government schools were in primary level.

In 1884, Rev. C.D. King opened a school at Kohima after much opposition.[195] He put down Angami to the Roman alphabet and taught school children to read and write in their language. King left Kohima in 1886, and the mission charge was taken over by Dr. Rivenburg. Rivenburg was a highly qualified medical man, and he was greatly gifted as an Orthographer and educationist also. It was he who successfully adapted Angami to Roman alphabet by which he produced Angami alphabets, arithmetic and some versions of the Bible for the use of school children.

However, not withstanding the Naga Hills District, the government had not made adequate efforts for the development of education in Assam province as a whole. In 1904, it is noted that the primary education in Assam province in general was still in an experimental stage. In 1903-04, 60% of the students in schools were classed as

192 . Quinquennial Review of the progress of Education in Assam, 1912-17, p.99.
193. Bareh, H., Gazetteer of India, Nagaland, Kohima, 1970, p.190.
194 . Ibid.
195 . Bareh, H., op.cit, p.191.

illiterate, as they were unable to read and write.[196] The government attributed slow progress in education in the province to the lack of funds.

Although government largely depended on mission schools for the education of the tribes, it also gradually opened more schools on its own. In 1904, the district had six lower primary schools, which were receiving grants-in-aid from the government.[197] The six primary schools maintained by the government were located at Mokokchung, Wokha, Henima, Khonoma, Jakhama and Cheswejuma, and the sixteen mission schools were situated at Molung, Yagong, Sirsemen, Womaken, Merangkong, Akoia, Asangma, Warammung, Chungliyimsen, Changki, Nametong, Longkum, Ungma, Lungsa, Lungpa and Lungsang. In 1908-09, there were 21 government schools, in 1909-11 there were 25 and in 1911-12 the number dwindled at 22. In 1913-14, schools went up to 24 in number again. The public was enthusiastic about having more schools of higher standard. In 1931, there were 42 schools at Kohima.[198]

Thus, it was initial policy of the government to leave the responsibility for education to the Christian missionaries with its annual financial aid. But during the first decade of the 20th Century, the government made a significant change in its educational policy.[199]

Several factors influenced the new educational policy of the government. In the first place, it saw that education was not the primary object in which missionaries were engaged. Education went hand in hand with their religious works. It was considered that when the interests of the two clash, education would be made second

196 . Imperial Gazetteer of Assam, 1906, pp.71-72.
197. Gazetteers of Naga Hills & Manipur, Vol.IX, 1905, pp.67-68.
198 . Bareh, H., op.cit, pp.191-192.
199 . Quinquennial Review of the Progress of Education in Assam, 1901-09, p.108.

to religious mission. Secondly, it was observed that the mission schools were understaffed, and often faced with the lack of qualified teachers. Thirdly, in view of the teaching of the gospel in mission schools and the subsequent conversion of pupils, animists were reluctant to send their children to missionary sponsored schools for fear of conversion.

Under these circumstances, the government felt its moral obligation and responsibility towards their animist subjects, even though it had no objection to conversion. It realised that animist Nagas should not be deprived of modern education, simply for fear of conversion. In consideration of all these aspects, the government modified its educational policy in the district, and accordingly started taking over more and more village schools, which were in fact mission venture schools.

The missions did not quite approve of the government's initial attempt to take over the village schools. Nevertheless, Christian missionaries still continued to establish schools with the grants-in-aid they received from the government.

With the government's annual grants-in-aid, the mission established many venture schools. In 1922, the number of government primary schools and aided venture schools had risen to 42 each.[200] However, during the 1930s, the general policy of the government was to take over the responsibility of education from the missions as early as possible. In 1937, the government stated its view on missionary schools as: "while acknowledgement must be made of the debt owed to the missions for their work as pioneers in the field of education, it must also be recognised that the mission have interested themselves in education solely with the object of Christianising the

[200] . Quinquennial Review of the Progress of Education in Assam, 1917-22, p.99.

children. Portions of the hill tribes have refused education because it brought Christianity with it, and it is unfair that they should be deprived of education because they are unwilling to abandon their tribal customs."[201]

Meanwhile, during the 1930s, government schools had significantly increased though there were still considerable numbers of mission schools also in the district. In 1938, out of 167 educational institutions, 115 were government lower primary schools, 10 governments aided lower primary schools, 36 missions aided lower primary schools, 1 government Middle English school, 2 government aided training schools, and 2 mission aided upper primary school and 1 government industrial school. In trying to take over the responsibility of education in the districts, the government in 1939 further decided to take over 10 schools annually for a period of 5 years.[202] This step was directed to reduce the number of mission schools in the district. As a result, the number of government schools increased year by year. The government however did not keep up its policy of taking over 10 schools a year.[203]

The Deputy Commissioner was in charge of education, which was a subject of colonial administration.[204] On his recommendation, government schools were opened from time to time. The schools were under his close supervision. In 1912, giving a report of education in district, he stated: "… the Nagas as a rule failed to appreciate the advantages of education, so that year by year, the number of private schools and scholars dwindled, until from 32 schools with 787 pupils on the rolls on the 31st March 1907, the number has fallen to 22 schools with 327 pupils on the 31st of March

201. Quinquennial Review of the Progress of Education in Assam, 1932-37, p.63.
202. Quinquennial Review of the Progress of Education in Assam, 1937-62, p.109.
203 . Assam Education Report, 1882-1948, p.109.
204 . Assam Education Report, 1891-92, p.25, 1912-17, p.102.

1912."[205]

The government became concerned by the declining aspects of schools and students in the district, and took measures to study the situation. The nature of the educational system was considered the main reason for the decline by the Deputy Commissioner, and he was supported by other officials according to whom since the Nagas had a very practical turn of mind, they would do well if given education that would be of practical use.

The government also identified the heavy language burden in the school curriculum as another case for the decline of enrolment. The government was compelled to re-examine the system of school education due to the large scale of drop out students and the dwindling number of schools in the district. It was perceived that the practical type of education would be more suitable for the Nagas. Accordingly, in 1907, an industrial school called the 'Fuller Technical School' was opened at Kohima for training the Naga boys in carpentry and blacksmithery.[206] This institution offered a three-year training course for the pupils. In the beginning, the school admitted 3 students annually, but increased the annual intake to 7 students per year during the 1930s. In 1941, the school was brought under education department and amalgamated with the first government high school of the district, located at Kohima.

In determining the medium of instruction in schools in the district, a lot of difficulties arose due to the diversity of tribal languages. At the initial stage, students were taught in their local vernaculars, Assamese and English. Since two of the three medium of instruction were foreign languages for the tribes, it was proved by

[205] . Report on the Progress of Education in Eastern Bengal and Assam, 1907-1912, Vol.I, p.121.
[206]. Quinquennial Review of the Progress of Education in Assam, 1912-1937, p.118.

experience that the course was difficult for the beginners in modern education. Subsequently, in order to remove the linguistic burden, it was decided that Assamese would be dropped as a compulsory subject, and the vernacular and English would be taken as the medium of instruction, with English acting as the medium for higher classes. The educational policy of the British was thus partially guided by the response of the tribal subjects in adapting to the system.

Nevertheless, Assamese was still retained as a compulsory subject, though it was made a non-examinational subject, in consideration of the fact that the Nagas needed to learn it for their commercial transactions with the people of the plains. In 1931-32, it was pointed out that "the disadvantage of having to learn a second language in all classes at the primary stage and to pass Assamese from the Middle English and High School examinations handicaps the Naga pupils in their race for higher education."[207] Eventually, in the mission schools, Assamese was excluded from the school curriculum but it was still taught in the government schools.

The missionaries and the newly converted Nagas translated some of the textbooks used in schools. In view of the language difficulties involved in translation work and the absence of a script in tribal language, the government readily accepted the available books for use in schools as textbooks.[208] The gospel of St. John and the Acts of the Apostles were taken as textbooks for lack of printed books in tribal languages.

No vernacular books could be used as uniform school textbooks in the district due to diversity of language. Accordingly, each tribe had to use books translated or written in their own local language. For example, books written in Angami could not

[207] . Census of India, Progress of Education, 1931, Vol-II, Part I, pp.185-187.
[208] . Allen, B.C., Assam District Gazetteer, Naga Hills & Manipur, 1905, p.68.

be used as textbooks for the Sema students and vice-versa. Consequently, the government closely cooperated with the missionaries in the publication of school textbooks. Textbooks translated into tribal languages were mostly published at the expense of the government, although Christian mission also partly met the cost of some publication.

Scholarships were provided for the Naga students to encourage the prosecution of post-primary school studies. In 1942, there were 3 primary scholarships of Rs. 3/- each and 3 Middle English scholarships of Rs. 10/- each available to the Naga boys. In 1946, the number of scholarships increased to thirteen, which was a significant development. These scholarships were to the value of Rs. 3/- a month, each tenable for 3-4 years for post-primary education.[209]

The government followed a very cautious policy in the promotion of education for the hill tribes. While welcoming the increase of primary education, it expressed doubts regarding the expansion of secondary school education. Hill education failed to provide employment opportunities due to its backwardness. The government discussed the problems of hill education at a conference in Shillong in 1935 and again in 1938 and decided that education up to class eight should be given to the Naga boys in their home hills, and that they should then be given opportunities for training in mechanical pursuits or agriculture, and that facilities for high school and college education should only be given to exceptional boys.[210] The backwardness in hills education, which was partly the direct effect of government policy, not only restricted the scope of higher studies, but also gave no scope for employment.

Thus, though the primary elements of education were laid down in the district, the

[209] . Quinquennial Review of the Progress of Education in Assam, 1901-07. p.118.
[210] . Quinquennial Review of the Progress of Education in Assam, 1932-37, p.63.

government was yet to make efforts for higher education. With the exception of taking over of a high school at Kohima in 1941,[211] and the introduction of another M.E. School at Mokokchung,[212] no further notable measures were taken for the improvement of education in the district. It was just on the eve of their exit from India that the government agreed to the idea of granting financial aid to the high schools at Kohima and Mokokchung.

On the whole, education as a colonising instrument was to a great measure successful, especially as it was an agent of peaceful change. Initially, the response of the natives to education was of mixed nature, but eventually the people became more open to the idea since upon observation, they witnessed that their reservations against it hold no ground. The advantage and importance of education gradually dawned on the people in a very significant manner. Earlier, children were not sent to school for various reasons like the need of man-power that necessitated the sending of children to the field, either to work or to tend to the ancestral family cattle, or to tend to their younger siblings. Fear of conversion and corruption of the mind also made many animist and conservative Nagas to hold their reservation against sending their children to school for a long time. However, all these reservations are broken down today, and whether one is rich or poor, animist or conservative, sending one's children to school is considered the only natural thing to do. This became possible only because Nagas have acquired the awareness of the awakening and liberating influence of education.

5.3: IMPACT

The introduction of modern education produced very significant results among the hill tribes. It caused the indigenous system of learning to decline, yet redirected the

[211] . Quinquennial Review of the Progress of Education in Assam, 1942-47. p.109.
[212] . Alemchiba, M., op.cit, p.160.

tribes to the new pattern of modern education. With the increasing acceptance and spread of modern education, the indigenous system was gradually neglected. Modern education had a substantial influence on the socio-cultural life of the Nagas. Education was largely entrusted to the American Baptist Mission, and it had a revolutionary impact on the Nagas. It affected their religion, behaviour, customs and habits.

Education led the Nagas to a new dimension of valued system of life, and revolutionised their entire cultural ethos. With the progressive propagation of modern education, the outlook of the people, which formerly remained narrow, significantly developed. Application of modern education received further momentum, when the development of a broader and healthier outlook of the people enabled them to accept the new trend of change in their society. As a consequence of the growth of modern education, the Naga society witnessed a gradual tendency for social cohesion, the characteristic of which was conspicuously lacking among them in the pre-colonial period.

The education of the Nagas formed one of the major themes of the process of conversion and laid down the basis for all future developments. It was as a result of education that the Nagas began to differentiate their past and future and chose to advance their careers in various branches of learning. The spread of education proved to be a new avenue for any aspirant for a new life, free from the prohibitions and limitations of tradition and custom. It is popularly described as an entrance to a ‘brave new world’, where survival would be based on the elements of education.

It is felt by many that modern education has erased community co-cooperativeness and social cohesion as taught in the old *morungs* of the village

society. It is evident that the education imparted to the Nagas fostered individual hybridisation, coupled with the urban spirit of competition, which opposed the communal comparativeness of the old village society. Nevertheless, western education gave the Nagas, who were hitherto without a common language, a common means of communication with the introduction of the English language. It gave access to absorption of many new methods of learning, a sense of unity out of being able to understand each other with a sense of change from tradition. English coupled with their native language provided a sense of differentiation in which roots of Naga inability to relate to the larger India becomes evident.[213]

Modern education, which was introduced to the Nagas along with Christianity, played a very vital role in the Naga society. Most educated Nagas were also converts, and there were no notable events when this class of people opposed or renounced Christianity or questioned its belief. Instead, they readily accepted Christianity and largely became responsible for the native conversion by acting as pastors, schoolteachers, and native evangelists. The impact of education on the socio-cultural life of the Nagas was in fact the impact of Christianity. Christianity penetrated the Naga culture through the agency of colonial education, the missionaries being the harbingers of education in the district.

The spread of education among the Naga tribes is thus seen in conjunction with the spread of Christianity. In the growth of the Christian church was rooted the spread of formal education.[214] It is historically evident that formal education, coupled with Christianity preceded the actual and formal take-over of the hills by the British. The spread of education meant more of a transformation then a development for the

[213]. Imo, Lanutemjen Aier., Contemporary Naga Social Formations and Ethnic Identity, 2006, p.50-51.
[214] . Yonuo, A., op.cit, p.155.

Nagas, and it greatly replaced the very mental frame and idea of the traditional world. Education opened up the frontiers of knowledge to the Naga people and helped them to cross over from the dark past to a bright future. It enabled them to shed their superstitious beliefs and get over their complexes, arising out of an isolationist existence.

With the availability of educated Nagas, a silent movement began which could make possible the generation of new occupations hitherto non-existent in the Naga society. It was the educated Nagas who spearheaded the formation of the Naga Club. The Club consisted mainly of government officials and a few leading headmen of the neighbouring villages. The formation of the Naga Club by the Nagas reveals the growing awareness among them regarding their identity and their historical roots. They decided to settle their own political future. Such strong realisation and decision would not take place without the advantage of education. In the absence of a common dialect, English and Assamese became very helpful in communicating ideas among themselves.

Educated Nagas, who provided both leadership and the spirit to start the Naga movement, also led the tribal councils and the Naga National Council. Education thus led the Nagas towards a new dimension of a system of life. Nagas witnessed a gradual tendency for social unity at a higher level, which was obviously absent among them during the pre-colonial period. The impact of education among the Nagas is thus very significant. It transformed the very thinking and outlook of the Nagas who refused to remain static in a rapidly changing world. Their culture, however vigorous and colourful, gradually gave way to the impact of modern civilisation and education. The Nagas became conscious of the changes around them and the need for assertion of

their rights and identity, and they rose to the occasion. They realised that their interest and outlook should go beyond the limits of the village and the tribe, in order to move ahead. This realisation could dawn on them only because education reached them. The impact of education in the emergence and construction of Naga identity is thus highly crucial.

CHAPTER-VI

COLONIAL RELIGION AND IMPACT

6.1: NAGA TRADITIONAL RELIGION

6.2: COLONIAL RELIGION

6.3: IMPACT

6.1: NAGA TRADITIONAL RELIGION

The Nagas were originally animists. Animism was the traditional religion of their forefathers. Till the end of the 19th Century, the great mass of the Nagas was still faithful to the religion of their forefathers. Even as late as 1901, 96% of the Naga population was described as 'animistic'. Tuensang did not come into the early census, but there were no Christians in Tuensang till 1933.[215]

Sir Edward Tylor defined Animism as, "the belief in spiritual beings". So, as far as that goes, most of us are animists. But Sir James Frazer in, 'The Golden Bough' lays down that when definite deities with specific names and functions are recognised, the animist has become a polytheist, and the term 'animism' is no longer strictly applicable. Whatever be the differences of opinion, animism implied by the Nagas is that there is an invisible benevolent creator of the earth and the disposer of all events, conventionally known as God.[216]

The Nagas believe in the existence of a supreme being who is the creator and dispenser of all good things to man. Prakash Singh wrote that the Nagas' idea about

[215] . Gundevia, Y.D., War & Peace in Nagaland, 1975, p.42.
[216] . Yonuo, A., op.cit, p.22.

the Supreme Being were however hazy and confused.[217] But according to R.R. Shimray, there was an element of fetishism indicating animism in Naga religion that shows that Nagas had clear ideas about God, soul, death and here after.[218] The Nagas believe that there is something in man that survives the death of his body. But what it is, or where it goes, they are not able to explain. It is a kind of primitive belief in the immortality of the soul.

Different tribes call their God by different names. For the Angamis, it is *Ukepenuopfü,* Semas-*Alhou,* Aos-*Tsungrem*, Konyaks-*Gawang*, Maos-*Ara,* and so on. It is the fear of God that made the Nagas honest and straightforward. It was the conception of God and their life after death that presented to the Nagas a great social harmony and successful community life in the entire political and social fabric of the Naga village states.

The Nagas believe in the existence of evil spirits, whom they attempt to pacify by offering sacrifices and observing *genna.* All misfortunes are attributed to the malignant influence of the evil spirits. The Nagas, therefore, like to consult omens before embarking on any important project like starting sowing operation, going on a hunting expedition, or going on a journey. A common method is to throttle a fowl and observe how its legs lie when dead, if the right leg crosses over the left, the omen is favourable, but if the left leg twitches over its right, the person prefers to wait for an auspicious occasion. Certain birds' songs, when heard from the right side of the path, are considered lucky, but unlucky if heard from the left side. Large war party turning back just because a deer crossed their path (considered as an unlucky omen) was not uncommon. Live roosters were used for sacrifice for the whole village once in a year,

[217] . Singh, P., Nagaland, 1972, p.179.
[218] . Shimray, R.R., op.cit, pp.223-224.

called '*vüta*' by Angamis and Chakhesangs. These types of traditional belief exist even today in one form or the other especially in the villages, and sacrifices are still made in cases of conflicts, misfortune or sickness.

The Angamis believe that the abode of the benevolent God '*Ukepenuopfü*' is the sky. The spirits are called '*Terhuomia',* a term in all probabilities equivalent to gods till the coming of Christianity. In fact, the term *Ukepenuopfü* emerged only after the coming of Christianity, when the Bible concept 'maker/creator of heaven and earth and all beings' was translated as *Ukepenuopfü*. Prior to this, all rites and rituals, prayers and petitions were addressed to '*terhuomia*'.[219] People who die an unnatural death are said to have met *'terhuomia'* though all '*terhuomia'* may not be evil. The missionaries however taught the Angami converts to regard all '*terhuomia*' as evil, and mission-taught Nagas got into the habit of translating the generic '*terhuomia*' into English or Assamese as '*satan*'. But not all these Satans possess qualities traditionally associated with the devil, because some of them were definitely benevolent. Chief of the benevolent ones is '*kepenuopfü'*. This spirit is sometimes spoken of as the creator of living beings. The word *'kepenuopfü'* literally means 'birth-spirit' and *'kepenuopfü'* indeed is regarded the ancestor of the human race. Sometimes, *'kepenuopfü'* has been called the ancestress of men, rather than the ancestor because though many think and speak of '*kepenuopfü*' as a male being, the termination '*pfü*' is a feminine termination, carrying a feminine sense.

Stone is an important object of worship for the Angamis. Some spirits are believed to reside in them and most villages have a spirit stone called '*Kiputsie*'. The god of stones is called '*Kitsierhuo*'. The names of some other popular *terhuomia*/*gods*

[219] . Vilhouzhalie Dzüvichü, 57, of Kohima Village gave this information. (While the word *Ukepenuopfü* is not used in the traditional invocation prayers/blessings by elders, <phichüja>, the word *terhuomia* is used.)

known to and feared by the Angamis are:

Rutshe - Dreaded spirit (which kills all those who encounter it)

Keshüdi - Dreaded spirit (rival of *Rutshe* with equal powers, which also kills)

Telepfü - Tempter spirit (a spirit which entices, attract or persuade people to stray and makes victim invisible to human eyes)

Temi - Invisible spirit (which cause fear and scare people especially in forests, jungles and fields by moving trees and branches violently even when there is no wind or storm)

Rapu - God of nightmare (a dreaded spirit of two types, one without thumbs which appears in villages and do not kill, the other one with thumbs which appears in forests and known to kill)

Meciemo - *Gat*ekeeper to valley of the dead *(kezeirü)*

Miawenuo - Benevolent goddess (a goddess with backward feet who grants boons to people—if one asks for paddy she would give cattle and if one ask for cattle she grants paddy)

Dzüraü - Guardian of eatable water creatures/ *nhakuo*(she is known for always providing eatable water creatures when Angami women go for collecting it from paddy fields, in return for which women put back little of what they collected as her share)

Chükhieo - God of wild animals (known as the spirit that guides animals

to hunters)[220]

The religious ceremonies of the Angamis are conducted by the community priest called '*kemevo*' who is normally a descendant in the direct line of the founder of the village or the clan for which he act as *kemevo.* Sometimes he is also one of the oldest men in the village. Every village has a priest who is regarded as a saint. The priest acts as a mediator between the Supreme Being and the villagers. He is the custodian of the village calendar. He counts the days of the month and declares all public holydays. He fixes all festival days. He opens the ceremony of the seed sowing. He begins the harvest of all crops.

All the Nagas tribes observe *gennas*. In a limited sense, the word '*genna'* means something prohibited or taboo. The word *genna,* though by derivation from the Angami word *'kenyü'* means forbidden, has become regularly used in the Naga Hills for the various incidents of a magico-religious rite. This may suitably be dealt with under '*kenyü', 'penie'* and '*nanyü'*. *Kenyü* means prohibition laid down on a unit of the community. *Penie* is the prohibition laid on the whole community. Supplementary to *kenyü* and *penie,* we have *nanyü,* the whole rite, the active side of the observance as well as the negative and passive sides exemplified in *kenyü* and *penie*. *Nanyü* is also used as the term for the whole *genna* in which *penie* is observed by the community or by the individual, accompanied by *kenyü,* and followed by a period of similar abstention from work in which *penie* has not been actually proclaimed by the priest.

In a general sense *'genna',* when observed by a whole village, would imply that its people would not go to work and all movements, outward or inward from or to the village, would be suspended. An outsider, if at all allowed entry, would not be

[220] . Vilhouzhalie Dzüvichü, 57, of Kohima Village gave this information.

entertained. Such a *genna* may be observed on the occasions of a village festival or any event of unusual importance. There are also *gennas* involving only a particular *khel* in the village or only a single family. *Gennas* that are observed for each phenomenal change and calamities may thus be referred to as a public worship. The list of *gennas* is followed by additional details among the Angamis, with regard to *Sekrenyi, Kirunyi, Thezukepu, Titho* and *Terhuonyi gennas*, which are fairly typical of the observance of *gennas* in general. *Sekrenyi* is observed with five days *kenyü* and *penie* and five more *nanyü* days. The ceremony is to ensure the health of the community during the coming year.

The Angami regards the supernatural in general from a sublimely vague point of view. So vague is his point of view of the deities and spiritual beings in which he believes that he makes no attempt whatever to reproduce in carving or in picture the mental image that he forms of them. However, he has a very clear idea as to how gods should be served, and that who so serves them otherwise shall die, if not physically, at least socially. Much of the services that he offers seems to be proffered to no god in particular, to no personal beings, but is associated merely with such supernatural force as may influence his destiny or his daily life. However, while he does not naturally classify and departmentalise his notions of the supernatural, he does recognise some sort of distinction between souls of the dead and the living, or between deities and vague spirits of the jungle, stream and so on.

The Census of India and official authority conveniently label the religion of the Semas as 'Animism'.[221] The spirits that are revered by the Semas are divided into three distinct classes. First, there is *'Alhou'*, who seems to be regarded as a beneficent but somewhat remote creator. Secondly, there is the spirit of the sky, the '*Kungumi'*.

[221] . Hutton, J.H., The Sema Nagas, 1921, p.191.

Thirdly, the '*Teghami'*, the spirit most in touch with man, the spirit of earth. '*Alhou'* is the name used to mean God, the supreme deity or creator. Omniscience, omnipotence and even omnipresence are vaguely ascribed to him.

The religion of the Ao is not a moral code.[222] It is a system of ceremonies and strives to do that which is lawful and right in the moral sphere. If the sacrifices are omitted, there can be no prosperity because the unappeased deities would spoil the crops and bring illness. Deeply implanted in the Ao is a mysterious sense against which he often sins. But he cheerfully performs the necessary sacrifices and hope for the best. When the inevitable day comes at last, on which offerings for sickness are no longer of any avail, he meets his end with resignation and joins his forefathers.

At big sacrifices, prayers begin with an invocation to the moon and the sun, the spirits of the village and fields, and the fate of the sacrifice-givers. The worshipping of sacred boulders is regarded as characteristic of the Ao by other tribes. A yearly ceremony is performed in every Ao village in honour of all spirits in general. It takes place in July/August. Longsa performs it first, followed by Ungma and then by Mokongtsü, from where it spreads along the ranges. Of the spirits, mention is made of *Lichaba*, who is regarded as the greatest of the spirits, to whom the creation of the world is attributed. Among the minor spirits, the most important is the house spirit. The Ao belief regarding the soul is a curious one. It is believed that every human being has a fate (*tiya/tiyaba*), which lives in the sky. This is in no sense a soul. Apart from the fate, a man has three souls and his fate also has three souls.

There is no word for that part of the man, which passes into the next world after death. The soul is not an ethereal personality, cumbered on earth with a body from

[222] . Mills, J.P., The Ao Nagas, 1926, p.215.

which it is only freed at death. The Ao souls are very troublesome appendages of the real ego.[223] These appendages require a great deal of looking after, for though the temporary absence only causes illness, its permanent loss involves its owner's death. Rarely does an Ao regard illness as due to physical causes. He blames all the evils that happen to him on the spirit. The Ao knows nothing of priestly caste or priesthood upon which special powers have been conferred by consecration.

Rengma religion is without priests and almost without prayer. For many ceremonies, a man is his own priest, and for others, he calls in an old man, whose only qualifications are age, membership of the right clan and knowledge of the proper formulae. Spirits are believed to be everywhere, and offerings are made to them and to the souls of ancestors, but they are rarely asked to intervene for the good of the offering giver.[224]

In general, the Nagas had their own concept of heaven where everyone would go after death except those who had unnatural death. The concept was a force, which tempered the hearts of the Nagas and made them thoroughly sincere and straightforward in their social life. The Nagas had their own version of eternal life. They believe that all the worldly riches would go to heaven along with the dead person and that they would meet with all those who were already dead and would pass on the news of their respective families when he met them and would make some presentations, which were sent by the living.[225]

The animistic religion of the Nagas implies that God created all things, including man, down to the ants, trees, stones, etc, in the universe, put divine souls in them,

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223. Op.cit., p.227.
224 . Mills, J.P., The Rengma Nagas, 1937, p.164.
225 . Shimray, R.R., op.cit, p.230.

connected them with the natural laws, and appointed a number of white good gods (angels) and even black gods (devils) to rule over mankind, the homo-sapiens, according to his laws in a hierarchical structure just like a government in temporal sense, apart from the gods of the earth, sun, sky, light, fire, wind, water, streams, mountain, and inanimate objects.[226] These gods maintain everyday records of the works and deeds of man for reward of good and punishment for evil deeds, and for resolving the chain of births and deaths on earth, and forgive the innocent sins of those who pray upon them. There are also some other good and evil spirits and other godheads dwelling in rocks, forests, groves, streams and rivers. The malignant demons are very fond of doing harm or killing men intentionally.

In order to pacify and exorcise these demons, the Nagas usually offer efficacious things like egg, fowl, in some cases, its giblets, spirituous liquor, pig, cattle, mithun, cloth, pieces of iron, etc, in case of sickness, mania, ill-luck and a variety of other calamities for which they are sometimes called devil worshippers. There are also other rituals, ceremonies, prayers, incantations, taboos and *gennas* that are preformed by the Nagas to have a religious moral and philosophical life, to prolong life, to ward off evil, to obtain children, and to destroy or harass sworn enemies. Even to devils, they are not supposed to use bad words with disdain. Individuals pray to God to avert bad luck, cure sickness, promise victory in life and assure a propitious passage from this world into the next. But one has to follow certain human laws so that he or she would not go astray and be destroyed before he or she transforms into another form after a definite period of immortal life.

There is no worshipping place like the temple, church, etc, in the religion of Naga

[226] . Yonuo, A., op.cit, p.22.

animism. They pay due respect and reverence to their God even in open air, at home, or in the jungle. The Nagas have no established worshipping places and images for the simple reason that God sees everything and every happening on earth. They also believe that religion is for inspiring goodness in man and repression and elimination of evil, aggressiveness, and killing, as part of the instinctual endowment in men by following God's laws in spirit and in words in order to receive his blessing, protection and love. In spite of the presence of good divine laws, the life of the Nagas in practice is not committed to non-violence as an absolute way of life.

Oath taking is a common thing in all the tribes, though the form of oath may differ. It is generally resorted to in the event of a dispute. The Semas are considered reckless in taking oaths and not much sanctity is attached to their oaths. A common form of oath used is to bite the tooth of a tiger or a leopard, meaning thereby that if the person swore falsely, a tiger or a leopard might devour him. In the case of a land dispute, the usual method of taking an oath is to eat a little of earth from the field in question. Within the next thirty days, if either of the parties has a misfortune, it is presumed that he had taken a false oath, and he loses his case. Another form of oath is for the parties to take hold of a fowl, one man holding it by the head and the other by the legs, and then pull it asunder implying thereby that the defaulter would merit the same treatment in the event of breach of agreement. All oaths must be taken between sunrise and sunset so that the sun is a witness to the ceremony.

According to M. Horam, the real religion of the Nagas is ancestor worship.[227] The evolutionary history of ancestor worship has been very much the same in all

[227] . Horam, M., Nagas: Old Ways & New Trends, 1988, p.13.

countries, and that of the Naga culture offers remarkable evidence in support of what Herbert Spencer referred to as exposition of the law of religious development. Spencer calls the earliest ancestor worship as the root of all religion.

In the case of the Nagas, there are two stages of ancestor worship. The first stage is that which existed before the establishment of a settled tribal life, when there was yet no village or tribal chief, and when the unit of society was the great patriarchal family, with its elders or war chiefs for leaders. Under these conditions, the spirits of the family ancestors only were worshipped. Later on, as the patriarchal families become grouped into tribal clans the custom of tribal sacrifice to the spirit of the rulers started, constituting the second stage of ancestor-worship.

The Naga worship of ancestors in the form of worship of the family cult and the tribal (clan) ancestors are purely of Naga origin.[228] The first is the religion of the home and the second is the religion of the local divinity. It is found noteworthy that the Naga mythology never evolved the idea of a heaven or a hell. There appeared to have been no difference between gods and ghosts and no ranking either among gods or ghosts as greater or lesser. These distinctions were gradually developed.

The traditional Naga religion was thus based on various beliefs and cults, rites and rituals, ceremonies and festivals, differing from tribe to tribe and region to region. The concept of God, heaven, life after death, worship, etc, is all so varied and profound among the Nagas. The traditional religion today is however of academic interest only, especially with almost all the Nagas (99%) embracing Christianity as their religion.

6.2: COLONIAL RELIGION

[228] . Ibid.

Closely interlinked with colonialism in Asia and Africa, Christianity made its mark as the religion of imperial Britain, and its contribution to Britain in her global quest for colonies was amazing.[229] In 1897, Babington Smith (private secretary to the Viceroy) wrote to Richmond Richie, (private secretary to Secretary of State for India) that in many places the Christian missionaries are the most effective agency for doing what is wanted.[230] The contribution of the Christian missionaries to the consolidation of the British Empire thus proved very effective.

The British introduced Christianity both in Asia and Africa along with their territorial expansion. The introduction of Christianity and imperialist expansionist policy went hand in hand. Spread of Christianity was thus seen as a major factor in Britain's world power and prestige. The machineries of colonialism such as Christianity, education, and other natural by-products of colonial administration assumed the role of 'white-men's burden in civilising the backward people'. As elsewhere, the British motive in the introduction of Christianity in Naga Hills, thus, inevitably formed a part of their policy of territorial expansion.

The British colonialists invited the American Baptist missionaries to work among the Nagas, and the missionaries gladly accepted the invitation of the government, taking it to be a God sent opportunity for the prospects of winning the tribes of the Northeast frontier of India to Christianity.

Rev. Miles Bronson of the American Baptist Mission was the first missionary, who laboured with the Nagas. Bronson made contacts with the Nagas from his Jaipur station as early as 1836. In the same year, he opened a school at Namsa Naga village

[229] . Shiva Ram, V., Comparative Colonial Policy With Special Reference to the American Colonial Policy, 1926, p.10.
[230] . Elgin Papers, MSS, Eur-F, 84/19.

(now in Arunachal Pradesh) and continued his schoolwork among the Nocte Nagas with a monthly grant of Rs. 100/- from the government.[231] In June 1838, Bronson wrote to Captain Francis Jenkins, expressing his joy and delight over the encouraging progress of his mission especially in his relation with the Nagas.[232] After one year, however, he discontinued his work. The death of his sister and his continued ill health compelled him to retreat to the plains.

In spite of the contact made with the Nagas from this outstation, nothing was done to preach the gospel to them till 1871. In 1871, Rev. E.W. Clark, an American Baptist missionary, who came to Sibsagar in 1869 induced Godhula, a fervent Assamese Christian, known for his tact and Christian zeal, to learn Ao language from one Subongmeren, who was then residing at Sibsagar. Rev. Clark had learnt about the Nagas from Subongmeren who was from Molungyimsen/Deka Haimong village. He learnt about the people and place where the British had not so far extended their authority. Godhula proved himself an excellent liaison by establishing friendship and meaningful contacts with the Nagas. His missionary work with the Nagas was not confined only to Sibsagar but took him further into the interior Naga villages, when Rev. Clark sent him with Subongmeren to Deka Haimong to preach Christianity. He thus distinguished himself as the first Christian evangelist to the people of the Naga Hills.

During the intervening period of 1871-1876, with the help of his vernacular teacher Subongmeren, Godhula visited Deka Haimong village a number of times. During this period, he had already converted some Nagas, who as a consequence came to Sibsagar and nine persons received baptism, leading to the foundation of the

[231] . Foreign Department Pol-A May 1840,no.128.
[232] . Foreign Department Pol-A June 1828, no.42.

first church on the soil of Naga Hills by the new converts. Godhula had thus made the way possible for Rev. Clark's smooth entry into the hills. Rev. Clark entered the hills in 1872 (18th December) and baptised fifteen more Nagas.

By 1874, the policy of non-interference had failed and gradual annexation as and where necessary had been decided upon. Rev. E.W. Clark sought permission from the government to enter Naga Hills, after Godhula's initial spadework in evangelistic thrust into the interior parts of Naga Hills was made. However, in view of the murder of Captain Butler by the Lotha Nagas at Pangti village in December 1875, the British government was cautious in granting him permission to go beyond British territory. Nevertheless, Rev Clark's request was granted with one injunction from the government. On 2nd March 1876, Rev. Clark entered Naga Hills as the first American Baptist missionary among the Nagas. With the help of Godhula, Rev. Clark established a missionary station at Molungyimsen, north of Mokokchung. In October 1876, a new village station was established at Molung, from where Rev. Clark established considerable contacts with the neighbouring villages of the Ao Naga tribes.

The work of Christian mission started off with dynamism with the arrival of Clark in the Naga Hills, who exerted a determining influence in laying down the initial missionary network and strategy in Naga Hills. On his initiative, in 1878, the American Overseas Missionary Board at Boston appointed Rev. C.D. King as a missionary to Naga Hills. Rev. King arrived at Calcutta on 19th December 1878, and on 25th December, he proceeded on his journey to the Naga country.

Kohima was considered the most favourable place for missionary labour since it has got the establishment of the civil government and the presence of British army.

Accordingly, Rev. King wished to proceed to Kohima to establish the mission station there. However, in consequence of the unsettled condition of the people, the government refused him permission. As a consequence, Rev. King established himself at Samaguting, the station formerly occupied as the headquarters of the Queen's troops. With the help of one Assamese teacher known as Punaram, the school works commenced at Samaguting. In October 1879, however, on account of Naga attacks on the British, they had to escape to Sibsagar. On the restoration of peace, Rev. King received permission to enter the hills, and he proceeded directly to Kohima where he established a new mission centre in March 1880. Similarly, in early 1885, the government granted permission to the American Mission to open another centre at Wokha, under Rev. W.E. Witter.

The Christian missionaries generally enjoyed a great deal of protection and moral support within the British Empire from the imperial authorities. The openings of mission centres at Kohima in 1880 and Wokha in 1885 were in fact sequels to the establishment of British civil and military station. The government and the mission's mutual needs are clearly recognised when in 1882, C.A. Elliot, Chief Commissioner of Assam declared his willingness to assist any missionary efforts to establish schools at Kohima with government grants-in-aid.[233]

The motive of co-operation between the British officials and the American missionaries both at official and private levels exhibited their smooth coordination. The schools run by the missionaries received grants-in-aid from the government, and the district authorities inspected the schools from time to time. The official visits of villages went hand in hand with the inspection of schools all over the district.

[233] . Linlithgow Papers, MSS, Eur, F.125-30, P.26.

Moreover, at the private level, the British officials enjoyed the personal friendship of the Christian missionaries. Evidently, the Christian missions and the government administrative machineries functioned together smoothly for the promotion of their mutual interests.

In this way, according to colonial policy Christianity was introduced with Rev. Clark in the Ao hills, Rev. King and subsequently Rev. Rivenburg in the Angami Hills, and Rev. D.E. Witter in the Lotha hills. Christianity was introduced and allowed to spread, to soften the aggressive nature of the Naga tribals, particularly directed to the foreigners and conveniently bring them under British control.[234]

Christianity spread and developed in different ways in different places. In the Ao region, in the thirty years after its introduction in Molung, the church had admitted only 569 Ao Nagas to its fold. But by 1926, it is claimed that almost every Ao Naga village has a Christian community (Downs:1971). By 1951, more than 80% of the Aos were Christians, and by 1961, the percentage went up to 94.4%.

In the Angami area, the spread of Christianity was slow, right down to the 1930s. In 1936, there were said to be only 650 Angami Christians. In 1961 Census, however, the number of Christians in the Kohima sub-division is recorded at 41,740 out of a total population of 1,08,924 in the area.

The conversion to Christianity of the Konyak villages in Tuensang district was spectacular. In 1932, Longnak became the first convert in Tamlu village, west of Dikhu River. In 1933, he persuaded six others to embrace Christianity, and eventually the first Baptist church in the Konyak area was established in this village. In 1936, a

[234] . Alemchiba, M., op.cit, p.53.

second church was established in Kangching. Ten years later, fourteen more Konyaks were baptised in Wanching village, an important village in the area. By the end of 1947, there was mass conversion of half of the inhabitants of Wanching to Christianity. These instances showed the rapidity with which Christianity spread among the tribes once its introduction was established.

The British administrators were averse to the continuance of Naga religion and culture. They had very less regard and respect for the traditional belief of the Nagas. Sharing the thoughts of some British officials in a notable manner, Verrier Elwin wrote that A. Gait perceived tribal religion as simply the "superstitions of their forefathers" and "demon worship," and to John Butler, the Nagas were "so thoroughly primitive, and so independent of religious prepossessions," while J. Johnstone opined that Nagas had no religion and that "they would sooner or later become debased Hindus or Mussulmans."[235]

The missionaries used different ways and means to preach Christianity so that the Nagas would give up their traditional animism and embrace Christianity. They took up the study and use of the local languages. They followed simple preaching methods. They made use of student groups and gospel teams. They translated the scripture and other literary works. They made use of village schools and boarding houses. They took the help of native evangelists. They started medical missions. Their lives became living witnesses. They also made use of the Naga's love for music and songs. In short, the missionaries made their impact through evangelistic, educational and medical relief works.

The other factors that reportedly influenced the American Baptist Missionary work

[235]. Elwin, V., op.cit, p.513.

in the area were the extension of the British rule in the neighbouring areas, the nature of the tribals and their ready response to the Christian message, Dr. Clark's role as the mission strategist and the moments of revival. Christian converts educated in missionary schools were financially well placed as they got jobs and status. Among the Aos, the conversion was mainly due to the expectation of miraculous results and the fear of hell fire.[236] In fact, the fear of hell fire troubled most of the non-Christian Nagas, and many Nagas continued to follow their traditional faith throughout their life and convert to Christianity in old age to avoid burning in the hell fire.[237] The fear of hell fire thus made many Nagas to embrace Christianity.

Till the end of the 19th Century the great mass of the Nagas were still faithful to the religion of their forefathers. The Census of 1901 records only 579 Christians while over 96% of the population remained animists. But today, Christianity is an important factor in the life of the Naga tribes, with 99% of the population having become Christians.

6.3: IMPACT

The spread and growth of Christianity was slow and only after the Second World War, did greater conversion begin. Christianity as a case of transformation and development had various consequences. It became a force, which had positive as well as unproductive aspects.[238] Examples of its positive aspects were control of head hunting, tribal village wars and administrative control. An important example of its unproductive aspects was the disturbance of the traditional tribal social aspects of corporation and cohesion in the villages, within the respective tribes, which was largely based on the rituals of their age-old religion. As most Naga social practices

[236]. Mills, J.P., The Rengma Nagas, 1937, p.412.
[237]. Kumar, B.B., Naga Identity, 2005, p.134.
[238] . Aier, I.L., Contemporary Naga Social Formations & Ethnic Identity, 2006, p.47.

and customs were based largely on religious beliefs and rituals, their disappearance can be described as having demoralised Naga communal life.

Whatever religious practices and custom the forefathers had are mostly gone with the coming of Christianity.[239] As religion played a strong role in all ceremonies of the Nagas, and as that religion was not Christianity, the Christian missionaries felt that every ceremony should be abolished. Ceremonies like the 'Feast of Merit' had been totally abolished among the converts. Since Christianity remained to be a force in total opposition to what the old religion and practices stood for, many elements of the cultural institution of the tribals gradually faded away. This contemporarily explains for the internal dilemma of cultural expression of the Nagas, of projecting themselves as a people, considering that cultural elements by perpetuation and practice provide a sense of identity to the people.

In another dimension, the fact of sharing an organised religion on a larger scale of Christianity provided a basis for Naga tribal unity. As much as Christianity disrupted communal corporate structure based on the old religion, that much it ushered in a social cohesion at a higher level. This consequently magnified the awareness of social differentiation between the hill tribes and the people of the plains who were mainly Hindus and Muslims. This may largely explain contemporary social tension and the often-expressed inability to properly relate the Naga tribes to the people of India as a nation and a social system.

The introduction of Christianity in Naga Hills resulted in social-political instability in the villages. Christian gospel largely dominated the social-religious life of the Nagas during the colonial period creating social and administrative problems.

[239] . N. Yeshito Chishi, 73, Dimapur, shared this information.

The Christians, in their endeavour to be faithful to the new religion often came into confrontation with the village administration, which was under the ancient chiefs. Christians refused to pay customary contribution of meat to their headmen, who had not turned Christian. But the government intervened and on its order they had to pay as usual.[240]

The coming of Christianity created an order of the government that the village headmen turning Christian were not to continue as headmen on the ground that the converts would not be able to serve the interests of the ancients on whose welfare and obedience the government put great emphasis. In such cases, the authority of headship had to devolve to any ancient, who might be in the direct line of succession. Although a *dobashi* had nothing to do with succession problem as in the case of the headmen, the nature of cases to be dealt with prompted the government to prefer a non-Christian for the post. This was because ancient customs were often matters of dispute between ancients and Christians.

Nonetheless, the activities of the Christian missionaries greatly strengthened the identity formation of the Nagas in various ways.[241] Christianity promoted unity among the Naga tribes by supplanting the various animistic religions of the tribes and by giving the Nagas a common religion, and thus giving them a common font of culture and philosophy.

A major way in which the missionaries contributed towards the formation of identity consciousness, was the standardisation of their language. The creation of a standard language was closely related to the mission and church controlled

[240]. D.C's Standing Order No.8, D.R.O, Kohima, March 1938.
[241] . Frederick Downs., "Study of Christianity in Northeast India", NEHU Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities, July-Sept, 1991, pp.1-76.

educational system that promulgated it and the incipient literature that was being created. With the spread of education and administration, the standard language gradually became widely used, especially among the literates.[242] As the Nagas became more educated, they saw that the world around them, such as Manipur, Burma and Assam were organised on common ethnic and linguistic basis. They realised that the individual Naga tribes were far too small to stand politically on their own, and they felt the need to strengthen the unity of the Nagas.

The government schools spread the knowledge of the standard language, thus making meaningful communication possible among the various dialect groups. They also established an educational network based on the village primary schools from which the best students went on to the middle schools located in the mission centres. For the first time, the most able students came into contact with members of their tribal areas with which they had no previous association. These schools also created tribal elites, who later became the leaders of the solidarity movement.

Equally important is the ideological and organisational contributions of the Christian church to the tribal identity. The conviction to a common religion helped the Nagas in moulding their sense of unity leading to the present Naga identity formation. The Christian evangelists, who were the first persons to establish contact with the traditionally hostile tribes, were in the very real sense, the first agents of tribal solidarity in the Northeast states, under whose impact and influence, the Christian unions described Hinduism as a threat to tribal

[242] . Sajal, Nag., "Naga Identity Formation, Construction & Expansion", in C. Joshua Thomas & Gurudas Das (ed) Dimensions of development in India, 2002, p.144.

solidarity.[243] As the number of Christians from all sections of the tribes increased, a sense of distinctive tribal identity began to emerge.

There were certain features of the new faith that brought about changes and contributed to the development of tribal identity. The most important element of the new faith was perhaps its comprehensive nature. The traditional tribal religions had generally been perceived to be relevant mainly to the village or group of villages, whereas Christianity was proclaimed as relevant to the whole tribe. The comprehensive or universal nature of Christianity was reinforced by an emphasis on evangelism and service to all people including those for whom traditional relationship was hostile. This made it easier for Nagas to embrace the cause of their identity.

Another important way in which Christianity contributed to the tribal identity was the creation of ecclesiastical structures.[244] When members of a tribe become Christians, they were organised in the form of local churches. When these local churches were numerous enough, they were the first to bring together the representation of the whole tribe, which went a long way to strengthen the tribal identity. Church organisations used to bring together thousands of people from the entire tribal region for annual meetings at which they carried out common business as well as sought inspiration and fellowship. Long after politically oriented organisations promoting tribal solidarity appeared on the scene, tribal level churches provided a much longer and more comprehensive experience of tribal unity.

Christianity had its impact on the Naga society in various dimensions. The Christian missionaries made the deepest impact on the Naga society since they were

[243] . Chaudhury, Rabijit., Religious Undertones in Ethnic Issues in Northeast, Administrator, Vol.XXXIX, No.14, p.27.
[244] . Sajal, Nag., op.cit, p.146.

most closely in contact with the people. In fact, the forerunners of change in the beliefs and ways of the Nagas were the missionaries and not the administrators. However, while the Christian missionaries made great impact on the Naga society, they were also responsible for the disappearance of many aspects of Naga culture and tradition. The missionaries had scant understanding of the Naga culture and traditions. They acted against the Naga culture and traditions as totally heathenistic and undesirable. They caused immense damage to the tribal culture, and many institutions received deathblows at their hands. The disappearance of the young men's house or *morung* is due to the fact that from the very beginning, the missions frowned on these as dens of vice where singing, dancing, drinking and sex were the only pre-occupations.[245] Due to its disappearance, the Nagas suffered immense social, cultural and architectural loss. Naga folk music, folk-lore, folk-dance, festivals and many other social activities were considered to be part of the animistic society and purposely undermined.[246]

The missionaries lacked the capacity to differentiate between animism and culture. They mixed together animistic beliefs and aspects of culture, resulting almost in the extinction of some unique aspects of Naga culture. The Baptist missionaries, like missionaries throughout the world were in the habit of translating the animist gods into English as 'satan'. This has been done in the case of the Nagas also. It however, needs mention that many animist gods are far from having the qualities of satan, and rather than being malicious, are definitely benevolent.

Two factors influenced the working of the early missionaries, namely

a) a distorted impression about the indigenous culture due to their colonial mind

[245] . Horam, M., Social Change in Nagaland, The North Eastern Research Bulletin, Vol.6, Dibrugarh, 1975, p.14.
[246] . Kumar, B.B., op.cit, p.135.

set, and

b) their pre-occupation with the increasing number of converts.

Due to the first factor, everything related to the Naga culture and society was considered savage and barbaric. For Dr. Clark, the new surrounding appeared no better than "a leap out of the world and a plunge into barbarism."[247] The first impression of Mrs. Clark was not different. She wrote that when they entered, the darkness seemed impenetrable. With such frame of mind, naturally they thought it to be their Christian duty to put a stop to all the heathen practices.

The missionaries banned local beer, dress, folk-songs, folk-tales, local festivals, *gennas, morungs* and most of the items of the local culture, considering them to be part of the heathen religion and practices. "More clothes" was advocated at the very first rally of the Christians. The Naga converts used Assamese costumes of jacket and body cloth.[248] According to Mrs. Clark, the Naga dress was "the exhibition of taste so degrading and repulsive".[249] Perrine, the American missionary refused to baptise a certain Kilep Ao for not obeying the dress prescriptions. The latter, however, became active and started a 'Christian Reform Movement' with the help of the village and was baptised later on.

As a step to reform the church, the American missionaries Perrine and Haggard brought total prohibition of liquor in 1894. But it was difficult for the Nagas to go without the same. The question of drinking occupied a central place in the Baptist communities. It was observed that the missionaries were accused of meddling with the people's food, and that the great question of ninety-nine of the hundred converts was that of giving up rice-beer and not a question of choice between the old faith and

[247] . Ao Baptist Church Centenary Album, p.1.
[248] . Mills, J.P., The Ao Nagas, 1926, p.421.
[249] . Ibid.

the new. The Baptist missionaries banned many things, but nothing loomed as large in the Naga mind as that of *'madhu'* (local liquor, made from rice/job's tear).

The Molung church voted in favour of drinking and was officially disbanded on 19th August 1894. Clark stated that he had never approved of, or had any hand in the disbandment of Molung church, but that for certain reasons, he withdrew all oppositions. Even some missionaries disapproved of the total rejection of Naga culture. Supplee, a missionary himself wrote that it should be borne in mind that it was not the Gospel message that met the Naga way of life, but the American Baptist missionaries.

Taboos and *gennas* were common features of all traditional religions, including that of the Nagas. Sabbath replaced *gennas*. The old food taboos were substituted by prohibition. The issue involved total rejection of a culture. According to Professor William. C. Smith, Assistant Professor of Sociology in the University of Southern California, and a former member of the American Baptist Mission in Ao area who had personal experience of the local situation, there was entirely too much negation, too much taboo and too little positive.[250]

The prohibitions of drinking rice-beer, sleeping in the *morungs*, working on Sundays and participation in sacrifices were the very anti-thesis of Naga way of life. According to Prof. Haimendorf, the Christian missionaries were responsible for the adulteration of Naga culture. The discontinuance of the feast of merit, the loss of the knowledge of wood carving as an art and means of subsistence, replacement of the rice-beer with tea, were all negative developments.[251]

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[250] . Op.cit., p.418.
[251] . Haimendorf, C. Von. Furer., The Naked Nagas, 1934, pp.51-55.

The old clan solidarity was weakened. The clan and not the family was the real binding factor in the Naga village. It was compulsory for the individual to obey the clan elders. The individuals had no other way than to put up with all the curbs imposed on them by the clan elders. This accounted for the stern discipline and unity within the clan. With the growing individualism, placing personal interests over those of the clan has resulted in disintegration and indiscipline. The spirit of sacrifice and unity at all costs has disappeared and with those are vanishing some of the noblest traits of Naga character.

Frequent cases of internal division and tension were reported soon after the inception of Christianity among the Nagas. Dr. Clark himself founded a new Christian village to settle converts from Molungyimsen and Merangkong villages.[252] Rengma Christians founded 'New Temenyi' village.[253] In the Chang village of Chingmei, two camps developed, one made up of obstinate clansmen, who stubbornly adhered to the customs of their ancestors, for fear that if they give up, they would lose favour with their tribal gods, and the other camp made up of believers of the new faith. These enthusiasts, along with their pastor did their best to increase the number of Christians, gain majority in the village, and thus forced their heathen relatives to allow them to demolish the *morung* and replace it with a church.[254]

Among the Ao Nagas, where the American Baptist Mission carried on the education of girls, the conservative members of the tribe complained that educated girls would not work in the fields and that consequent idling in the village has increased immorality. Moreover, the mission teaching tended to undermine the

[252] . Sema, Hokishe., op.cit, p.52.
[253] . Op.cit., p.53.
[254] . Ganguli, Milada., A Pilgrimage to the Nagas, 1984, p.193.

structure of the tribe,[255] said Mills, the Deputy Commissioner. A council of elders, some of whose functions were religious, governed each Ao village and Christians often refused to serve in the council. As such, there was the official concern that the tribe might be left without a proper social organisation.

Among the Sema Nagas, the preaching of the gospel influenced the cessation of warfare. It had, however, adverse effect on the authority of the village chiefs. The chief could no more wage war for annexation of further areas for his sons to find separate villages. This led to intrigues among the brothers on the consequent dissolution of authority.

In spite of causing a lot of negative aspects, the introduction of Christianity also brought a lot of good changes in the Naga way of life. One may wonder how the Nagas, who had hated outsiders for centuries, received the first foreign missionaries. The answer was that the behaviour of the missionaries impressed the Nagas in the first place. They found them simple, humble and prepared to live like them in the village, and climbed the inhospitable forest and hills along with them. The Nagas had at last found some friends who treated them as human beings and children of one and the same God.[256] For centuries they had met only people who had either harassed them or despised them. The Hindus hated them for eating beef and the Muslims despised them for eating pork. They were also despised for their ignorance and illiteracy. The early missionaries did not have or at least did not show any problem towards the Naga way of life. Once the missionary won the confidence of the Naga, and his credibility was established, his advice was welcome, and his instructions were accepted.

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[255] . Census of India, 1921, Assam, Chapter XI.
[256]. Ramuny, Murkot., The World of Nagas, 1993, p.10.

The missionaries made their impact mainly through three aspects, i.e. evangelistic, educational and medical relief works. But the primary objective of the missionaries was evangelistic, i.e. to spread the teachings of the Christian religion among the Naga people. Along with it, they also had the strong idea of bringing change and development through education and medical relief works.

The coming of Christianity had shaken the traditional roots of the Naga culture and society. Nevertheless, it helped to forge a common identity among the Nagas. Prior to Christianity, different tribes had different gods. They had their own beliefs and practices. But with the introduction of Christianity, the message of one God was preached, and the Nagas generally came to believe in one God. Ideologically, this helped in bringing the Nagas together as one family, one people, and children of one and the same God.

The progress of Christianity among the headhunting Nagas was slow but steady. Headhunting gradually disappeared from the fully administered areas where Christianity had taken root. Peace was gradually restored between clans, villages and tribes. Peaceful life consequently nurtured feelings of unity, oneness and solidarity from where emerged the concept of a modern Naga identity.

The missionaries, who were unarmed and even otherwise powerless, brought the gospel to the headhunting Nagas. The question has often been asked as to how far the Christian missionaries from foreign countries were responsible for the movement for independence in Nagaland. There has never been any direct evidence of any subversion by missionaries. However, the earlier administrators and the missionaries

felt that the Nagas were not Indians.[257]

The Nagas had no common cultural, religious or traditional traits with that of India. During the visit of the Simon Commission, the administrators had pointed out that since Nagas were not either Hindus or Muslims, they were not Indians.[258] This was what the missionaries also believed, which confirmed the belief and conviction of the Nagas that they are different, and that they have a separate identity. The Nagas' concept of India and Indian was from the few people of the valley they met in the adjoining bazaars, by whom they were invariably cheated and despised. The attachment and relation of the Naga tribes with India and Indians were thus very limited and often rather negative. There are many other factors that define the separate identity of the Nagas, besides not being Hindus or Muslims, as observed and pointed out by the early administrators and the missionaries. Nagas have an entirely separate background and history in many aspects like culture, tradition, faith, etc, for which they claim the state of being the same among themselves to assert their identity, while proclaiming their difference from others in terms of the same aspects.

Despite the tremendous damages done to the Naga social institutions and culture by the Christian missionaries, a wider humanising and civilising influence was brought to the Nagas by the same agency. New avenues of the modern world were opened up for the Nagas, who eventually showed their right to self-determination as a people. The coming of Christianity thus contributed to the emergence of a separate identity in the mind of the Nagas, who gradually evolved a common unified movement for the recognition of their solidarity and self-determination.

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257 . Op.cit., p.11.
258 . Ibid.

CHAPTER-VII

EMERGENCE OF NAGA IDENTITY

7.1: EMERGENCE OF NAGA IDENTITY (ETHNIC, SOCIAL & POLITICAL)

Before the advent of British rule, the primary units of identity among the Nagas were the clan, family and village. Each village had its own culture and often its own religion, besides dialects. One would be hard-pressed to look for commonalities to identify Nagas as members of a single tribe or what constituted a tribal level as distinct from a village level community. In the pre-British period, most of the tribes were mostly confined to their family, clan, *khel* and village. The term 'Naga' was given to tribes by non-tribal plains people. Even the major tribal groups such as Ao, Angami, Lotha, and Konyak got their names from other tribes.[259] Therefore, like most identities, the Naga identity is also exogamous to the Nagas themselves. Most Naga tribes identified themselves with their tribal/sub-tribal name. The name that was used in general for hill people by the neighbouring plains people of Brahmaputra and Barak valley was popularised and enforced by the British colonial authorities during the introduction of their rule in the Naga areas.

[259]. Dubey, S.M., "Inter-Ethnic Alliance, Tribal Movements & Integration in North-East India," in K.S. Singh (ed), Tribal Movements in India, 1982, p.4.

Being given by outsiders, the term 'Naga' was therefore quite foreign to the Nagas themselves till recently. They had no generic term applicable to the whole race, but they used specific names for each particular group of villages. For example, the men of Mezoma, Khonoma, Kohima and Jotsoma and their allies called themselves *Tenyimia*. Others, when asked who they are would reply simply that they were men of such and such village, and seem to be quite ignorant of any distinctive tribal name, connecting them to any particular group of villages. This fact accounted for the state of constant war and consequent isolation in which they lived till the introduction of British administration.

The Nagas even defy a common nomenclature. This is because there are no composite Naga people, and among them, there are many distinct tribes having more than thirty dialects, with almost every tribe constituting a separate language group. Moreover, the cultural and social set up varies vastly from tribe to tribe. Even their physique and appearance differ from group to group, and place to place.

The name 'Naga' was known and used by the people of Assam to describe the Naga people much before the Nagas themselves came to identify with it.[260] For long, this appellation of 'Naga' was resented by the Naga people till political expediency caused it to be accepted as describing their separate identity, as distinct from other ethnic tribal people, and also from the people in the country at large. Hokishe Sema wrote that the very term 'Naga' was given to these people even before they migrated from Burma.[261] Hence, this name is not derived from the name of the place 'Nagaland', where the Nagas live, but the place of habitation got its name from the common nomenclature of the tribes.

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[260] . Mills, J.P., The Ao Nagas, 1926, p.ix.
[261] . Sema, Hokishe., Emergence of Nagaland, 1986, p.2.

The different tribes, which now constitute the Naga people, are rigidly distinct from one another. In many cases, these tribes existed in complete isolation. Their contact with one another was restricted to headhunting and warfare. Headhunting was not confined to one tribe against the other, but was carried out even within the same tribe. This shows complete lack of tribal unity among the Nagas in the pre-British period.

In spite of the lack of unity among them in the past, the Nagas eventually developed a common identity during the British rule, and the term ‘Naga’ has retained the function assigned to it, in spite of its foreign origin. It served the function of identifying the Naga people as distinguished from other hill people in the neighbouring Assam. The term ‘Naga’ thus gradually came to represent and identify the various tribes of Nagaland, among whom due to internecine warfare, during the pre-British days, there was no unity or feeling of oneness, and there was no common term to denote all the Naga tribes collectively.

Till the advent of the British, the Nagas who had not ventured beyond the borders of their hills were not familiar with the name ‘Naga’, and as such their identity during this time was not attached to the collective identity, but to the clan and village identity. This is attested with the information gathered from the interviews, which reveal the unfamiliarity of the term ‘Naga’ till very recently, and was therefore not responded to for a long time.

For a long period of time, the majority of Nagas were not aware of the name ‘Naga’. Many became aware of the collective identity only after the formation of the

NNC,[262] and yet many more woke up to the solidarity movement only during the time of A.Z. Phizo.[263] For many, only after the British came and went, the name 'Naga' and the Naga movement became known.[264] At the same time there are some who said to have heard of the name 'Naga' during the late 1930s.[265] It is evident that the educated Nagas first identified with the term 'Naga', and they started and led the Naga Movement under its banner. Yet, the uneducated Nagas also fought and supported the movement, for which their awakening to the collective identity is very significant.

In the Naga Hills itself, the term 'Naga' was known by and responded to or identified with only a small number of Nagas, who lived either near the Naga Hills, the Assam border and those who visited Assam, and had been called 'Nagas' by the Assamese. But since the annexation of the Naga Hills to the British India Empire, and the coming of the British to Naga Hills in 1878, the term 'Naga' was increasingly used within Naga Hills by the foreigners, who, coming from Assam, subscribed to the popular notion that the Nagas belonged to a single tribe. Consequently, this newly annexed hilly tract was named Naga Hills District,[266] and in all the official documents and administrative proceedings, the Nagas were regarded as a tribe. This became a crucial administrative step that moulded the Naga feeling of oneness.

The increasing use of the name 'Naga' and the presence of people of different race and cultural origins in turn made the Nagas to think in terms of 'us' and 'them'. Once the Nagas began to think of themselves as a people, distinct and separate from the

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[262] . Keriu Morü, 86, of Khonoma Village gave this information.
[263] . Thezhavilie Chüsa, 83, Visebei Dolie, 83, Neingukhoü Pierü of Khonoma Village gave this information.
[264] . Miakonyü Thou, 91, of Khonoma Village gave this information.
[265] . Kevimedo Rutsa, 84, of Kohima Village gave this information.

[266] . Mackenzie, A., op.cit, p.133.

foreigners that had just come, they readily accepted the notion of themselves as belonging to one tribe, composed of several sub-tribes. Similarly, various words in Naga dialects point to a common language and origin. Oral tradition and legends of all the Naga tribes contain stories of a bygone age when all the Naga tribes lived in a common habitat at Meikhel, a place between the Mao and Maram areas in Manipur.

There was a general awareness that a group of villages living in a particular geographical area were somehow related to each other. There were similarities of myth, religion and social custom and language. J.P. Mills described the individual Lothas of Kyong Village as essentially independent of each other, but notes that the Lothas like the Angamis have traditions about the common origin of the various clans of the tribe.[267] Thus, there was rudimentary sense of identity, but it was strictly non-functional except in matters of marriage, which had to take place outside the clan, but within the tribe.

During the pre-British period, tribe was not a primary reference point for identity among the Nagas, but in the British and post-British periods, it became increasingly so. British bureaucracy needed to classify and name the people they governed. There were complications for the census reports and other official documents. In the process, it was these bureaucrats who first systematically assigned names to the tribes often using names given to the tribes by their neighbours or names apparently arising out of understanding or even misunderstanding of the informants. Indirectly, the administrative procedures had contributed to the development of consciousness among the tribals when they themselves adopted the description given to them by the rulers, census reports and so on.

[267] . Mills. J.P., The Lotha Nagas, 1922, pp.96-97.

Colonial rule brought certain cohesion of the Naga tribes as an ethnic group. The maintenance of law and order, introduction of 'civilising' agencies such as Christianity and education, development of modern means of communication, and above all, the invasion of the Nagas, a stagnant society so far, with all progressive forces of change both within and outside the district, inevitably brought about gradual transformation in Naga Hills. Changes in economic, social and religious dimensions influenced the corresponding changes in the socio-political life of the people. As a matter of fact, historical events of the period strongly suggest that material and social changes and socio-political changes went hand in hand.

The modern Naga identity was being created, i.e. a more general sense of being Naga, as opposed to Angami, Ao, Sema and so on, and hence Naga political ambitions, interests and rights. This identity had its origin among the Nagas just recently, who, deprived of their early history, which was filled with conflicts, had only the memorised information that could not go very far back. Nagas could only retain the synthesis that had started developing under the British rule. The glowing realisation of a common origin, background anthropology, culture and history, quite different from other Indians, gave the Nagas the first indication of being a separate group.

The Nagas had been living in their ancestral tribal areas for as long as they could remember. The Nagas owed as much loyalty to their clan and village as to their home. No family could survive unless the villages are inter-dependent under the same umbrella of the entire tribe. Therefore, the tribal authorities generated considerable cooperative efforts and voluntary contribution, by driving away the local differences under the dictum of one for all and all for one. Thousands of Nagas from a number of

villages of one tribe are known to have combined under joint leadership to meet a common threat in the past. Episodes of Nagas venturing on daring missions over a hundred kilometres away to avenge old losses are not uncommon. A sense of unity, cooperation and discipline was thus present which forged to preserve liberty, freedom, and safety, without challenging the suzerainty of the supreme British authority. This sense of unity had kept growing unhindered.

The dynamic development of a Naga identity, which resulted from the process of uniting discrete tribes into that of one collectivity, forms a significant aspect in the emergence of a stage of social formation in contemporary Naga society and economic situation. This development reflected its frame in the light of the British colonial establishment and later, with that of the Indian Union.[268] It altogether geared the Naga ethnicity in political terms with its own ideology.

With its own distinct identity within the Indian union, the Naga situation has reached a point in which their relation may be termed as a case of 'center-periphery syndrome'. This is evident in terms of demography, economy and politics besides its physio-geographical placement at the extreme end of the Indian union. As such, the ethnic character of the Naga society and its reflection as opposed to the Indian social system gains prominence in the frame of multi-ethnic plurality. As a case of ethnicity, the Naga society is an example reflecting community membership as a matter of identification within its mountainous geographical boundary.

India represents a classic example of plural society determined by diverse ethnic groups, where the Naga society on its cultural basis attains qualification of an ethnic status. The ideology or sociology of dependence approach to ethnicity equally

[268] . Aier, Imo Lanutemjen., op.cit, pp.79-80.

qualifies the case of Naga ethnicity. The case of Naga ethnicity is a magnified situation as a result of several dimensions. The political movement is one that is generated in search of solidarity in contra-distinction to the Indian political process and the constitutional arrangement. In addition is the economic structure, which in reflection of traditional Naga subsistence economy now is a case of being pushed as a viable entity, clearly a case of sponsorship by the Indian economy.

Consequently, the Naga social reaction in various forms attains a note of social interest in terms of its claim of own rights and assertion through constitutional arrangements and other social mechanisms. There are actions in the light of self-appraisal and reflection of its place as a constituent in the generation of Naga identity. This merits study in the light of political and economic dimensions, the expression of its ethnicity in the light of shared historical experiences. Such a derivation in analysis would be clearer in examining contemporary social formations, discerned in the form of class and political elites. This further garners discussion eventually, as to the nature of Naga social group and the matter of its social identity.

While the process of formation of Naga identity was going on autonomously, the political situation in the sub-continent necessitated the political expression of a pan-Naga identity. After the World War I, the Nagas realised the importance of protecting their socio-political identity and realised the importance and need to live together under one banner to achieve their common goals. As a result, they unanimously decided to live together, united as brothers. They formed the Naga Club in 1918, which was the first common organisation ever to be formed in Nagaland. The representatives of the Naga tribes consisting of village headmen, elderly people, *dobashis*, government servants and the World War I heroes formed it. It was a club

based on socio-political interest with a view to bring all Naga tribes together into a common platform. It was the first organisation that attempted to foster a pan-Naga identity.

The Naga Club's primary objectives were:

a) to consolidate the socio-political identity of the Nagas,

b) to make a distinct Naga nationality above the scattered tribal identity,

c) to develop fraternal feelings of various Naga tribal communities, and

d) to look after the welfare and unity of all Naga tribes.

The Naga Club submitted a memorandum to the Simon Commission, which represented the Naga case and stated that the Nagas were not conquered by their neighbours at any time in history. The memorandum expressed that the Nagas do not wish to come under the reforms to be proposed by the Commission. The formation of the Naga Club paved the way towards establishing the most needed organisation with political motives as expressed by them. This was the first socio-political organisation formed by the representatives of tribal nations in the form of a 'common wealth of tribal nations'. Thus the club brought all the isolated Naga tribes together with a common goal and a common political identity. It created a sense of 'we feeling' among themselves ever experienced by the Nagas. Before the formation of the Naga Club, the Nagas did not know the presence of each other fully. The Naga Club brought the Nagas together to fight unitedly for their common cause to achieve their desired goal.

The solidarity and unification movement developed at two levels in Nagaland, one at the level of each sub-tribe and the other at the level of all the tribes in general. At the sub-tribe level, organisations like Angami Students Association, Ao Students

Association, Lotha Student Association, etc, were already in operation. As back as 1923, the Lothas had their tribal council formed, and ever since, the same had been continued. The Ao Tribal Council was founded in 1928, but dissolved in 1930, and reorganised in 1939. Most of the other tribal councils were organised in the middle of the 1940s. At the next level, the movement to organise all the sub-tribes into one general unit, under one organisation took shape with the initiative of the educated Nagas.

The Naga identity and Naga movement are so closely interlinked that it is not possible to make any complete study of the emergence of Naga identity without reference to the latter. In fact, the Naga movement arose as a response to what Nagas perceived to be a threat to their cultural and ethnic identity.

The British, who invited leaders from all the tribes for group meetings, initiated the Naga unity mobilisation process. The British found the Nagas different from the other people they have so far encountered, and therefore attempted to unite them.[269] Prior to this, group meetings and discussions among all the Naga tribes in general were unknown.[270] These meetings played a signicant role in moulding the identity consciousness of the Nagas.

With the aim of uniting the Nagas, C.R. Pawsey, the last and then Deputy Commissioner of the Naga Hills established an institution in April 1945, called 'The Naga Hills District Tribal Council' (NHDTC). It was the first ever Naga political organisation.[271]

The original objective of the NHDTC was to reconstruct the war ravaged Naga

[269] . Merang Jamir, 82, Mokokchung gave this information.
[270] . Supongmeiba Jamir, 94, Mokokchung gave this information.
[271] . Yonuo, A., op.cit, p.161.

Hills. But a closer reading of the name of the fledgeding Naga political organisation reveal the political ideal, i.e. local self-government through the District Council, which was later embodied in the Indian Constitution, and called the 6th Schedule by the framers of the Constitution, for which the author of the organisation created it, and towards which he wanted this organisation to strive.

In the first meeting of the NHDTC at Wokha in February 1946, a conference of representatives of individual tribal councils changed the original name of the NHDTC to Naga National Council (NNC), which was to spearhead the Naga movement. The NHDTC was considered unsuitable to be the name of a political party for two reasons:

a) the name reminded one of the small and humble administrative position of Naga Hills in the state of Assam, it did not evoke Nagas' pride, and

b) the name also limited the area of the organisation within the Naga Hills alone, and excluded from the purview of its operation, the Nagas living in the surrounding areas, such as free Naga area, or Tuensang Frontier, Manipur, Burma, Arunachal and other districts of Assam.

The scope of Naga identity was widened with the emergence of the NNC, which led the Nagas to the path of self-determination. In 1947, the NNC adopted the draft constitution drawn in 1946. The aims and objectives as set forth in this constitution were:

i) to forge peace and agreement between all the Naga tribes,

ii) to preserve and develop good elements in the Naga culture, and,

iii) to promote the growth of democratic self-government.

As regards the membership and composition of the NNC, the constitution said that all Naga tribes are eligible for membership. Any tribe wishing to become a member of

the NNC should apply for membership through its tribal council. The number of representatives of a tribe to the NNC would be determined by the size of its population. A representative's term of membership was three years, and he was eligible for re-election. The NNC, representing the Naga tribes would speak on behalf of the entire member Naga tribes in all matters, pertaining to their welfare and interests.

The original aim of the NNC was thus to foster the welfare and social aspirations of the Nagas. According to Verrier Elwin, the NNC's original political objective was to achieve local autonomy for the hills within the provincial of Assam and to train the people for self-government. It encouraged the tribal councils already set up by individual tribes and started to administer their own local affairs and consider possible reforms.[272]

The first political act of the NNC was the drafting of a memorandum, which was issued on 19th June, 1946, wherein, the NNC declared that it stood for the solidarity of all Naga tribes. Early in 1946, the Labour Party came to power in England. This party was committed in principle to grant India her independence. In March 1946, the Labour Government sent a Cabinet Mission to India to explore ways and means of instituting a viable authority, acceptable to both the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League. The Cabinet Mission arrived in India on 15th March 1946. On 16th May, on the eve of its departure for England, it issued a statement in which to save the unity of India, it recommended grouping of provinces.

The prospect of Assam, as also Naga Hills, (as it formed part of Assam) was grouped with Bengal, which alarmed the NNC. Bengal, by the sheer size of its

[272] . Elwin. Verrier., Nagaland, 1961, p.51.

territory, as well as by the overwhelming number of its population could dominate every aspect of life. The NNC foresaw that placed in such a situation, small minorities, like the Nagas, would become politically non-entities, too small and too weak to defend their rights in any way. Therefore, the NNC referred to the above in a memorandum, and strongly opposed the proposed suggestion of grouping Assam with Bengal. The memorandum pleadingly concluded that the Naga Hills should be continuously included in an autonomous Assam in a free India, with autonomy and safeguards for the interests of the Nagas and that the Naga tribes should have a separate electorate.

A year later, in 1947, in its memorandum issued on 20th February, the NNC changed its demand of local autonomy to a ten-year interim government. The concluding paragraph of the memorandum is reproduced below:

"This memorandum is placed with the authority for setting up of an interim government of the Naga people, with the financial provision for a period of ten years, at the end of which the Naga people will be left to choose any form of government under which they themselves choose to live".[273]

The nineteenth paragraph of the same memorandum gave the following reasons for the inability of the Nagas to live under the Indian Constitution. "A Constitution drawn up by a people who have no knowledge of Naga Hills and the people will be quite unsuitable and unacceptable to the Naga people."[274] Besides, the NNC feared that "thrown among fourty crores of Indians, the one million Nagas, with their unique system of life, will be wiped out of existence."[275]

[273] . Yonuo, A., op.cit, pp.161-65.
[274] . Ibid.
[275] . Ibid.

Sir Hyder Ali, the Governor of Assam came to Kohima in June 1947 on a fact-finding mission.[276] The fruit of the discussions during his stay in Kohima (26th June-29th June, 1947) was the Nine-Point Agreement. Ironically, the Nine-Point Agreement, which was expected to provide the basis for future negotiations between the government and the NNC on the Naga question, instead immediately became the cause of distrust, suspicion and dissension between them.

The NNC entered into negotiations with two objectives in view, namely:

i) a ten-year interim government for the Nagas, and

ii) the right of the Nagas to decide their own political future.

As such, the NNC was satisfied thinking that the Nine-Point Agreement had conceded these two objectives. However, the official interpretation of the Government of India was that there was never any admission of the right of the Nagas to independence, and that the meaning of the concluding sentence of the Nine-Point Agreement, i.e. ("…at the end of this period, the NNC would be asked whether they require the agreement to be extended for a further period or a new agreement on the future of the Naga people arrived at …") was interpreted by the Nagas to mean right of the Nagas to decide their political future freely, independently, while it simply meant freedom of the Nagas to suggest improvements or modifications within the Indian Union, and there was never any question of Nagas having the right to terminate the agreement and opt out of India (Stracy:1968). According to V.K. Anand, "it was only the freedom to suggest mere modifications."[277]

The understanding of the Naga National Council and of India, of the meaning and implications of the Nine-Point Agreement was so different and wide that parties

[276] . Anand, V.K., Conflict in Nagaland, 1980, p.64.
[277] . Op.cit., p.65.

involved in this affair began to accuse each other of wilful and deliberate misinterpretation of the terms of the agreement, leading to a long drawn struggle and conflict.

The NNC received official patronage as a unifying and moderating influence. Gradually, its sphere of activities extended to the field of politics, and it worked for the achievement of the solidarity of all Nagas and the satisfaction of their political aspirations.[278] By 1947, the NNC had become the nerve centre of Naga tribes, not only in the Naga Hills, but also in Manipur and Burma, as an all Naga political organisation. The rapidity with which the NNC gained acceptance of the Naga tribes is an outward manifestation of the inner feeling that is already existing in the minds of the Nagas. It is an indication that the Naga tribes, which had come under the same administration as strangers during the end of the 19th Century, who were developing a consciousness of oneness as belonging to the same group at the beginning of the 20th Century, had by 1947, fully developed the higher consciousness of being one people. Today, the Nagas have a distinct ethnic, social and political identity, which is deeply rooted from within. A modern Naga identity with political ambitions, interests and rights had emerged. The Naga identity had emerged. For a people who just recently did not even recognise a collective name, it is a very significant step to have developed a common identity among themselves as a manifested form of their movement towards self-determination.

7.2: CONCLUSION

The Naga identity emerged and expanded under the elaborate administrative, economic, religious and educational policy of the British, which forged to develop

[278] . Alemchiba, M., op.cit, p.165.

a feeling of solidarity and unity among the Nagas. The colonial administrative policy immensely contributed to the emergence of Naga identity, which was further enhanced by the colonial economic policy, which produced a deep impact on the Nagas towards a shared system. Further, the colonial educational policy also has its own sphere of importance in promoting the emergence of Naga identity and in moulding the Nagas towards unity and broader vision. At the same time, the colonial religious policy is studied and understood in a new way, as a policy that created a harmonious life, which eventually fostered the development of unity. Naga identity emerged and got constructed as a result of the various policies and developments within the colonial state.

The colonial administrative arrangements, namely, the unification of most of the Naga tribes under a single centralised administration and the inclusion of the various Naga tribal areas under the greater Naga Hills District, the establishment of peace and of administrative headquarters, construction of roads and opening of markets all together promoted inter-mixture of the Naga tribes leading to the development of a feeling of oneness among the Nagas, and also the rediscovery of their common past. Peaceful co-existence under British administrative rule brought cohesion and resurgence to the Nagas as one people. Thus, the administrative procedures had contributed to the development of consciousness among the tribals who appropriated and adopted the name and identity given to them by the rulers and census reports to forge a separate identity.

The economic policy of the British led to the construction of link roads, opening of markets and trading headquarters, which resulted in the

intermingling of people. Construction of roads and markets facilitated and encouraged the development of closeness among the various Naga tribes, which helped the various tribes to know and learn of each other better. The introduction of cash economy promoted various sectors and developments in the traditional Naga economy. Nagas were introduced to a new way of life, security, peace, accessibility and change under the British rule, creating favourable conditions for the tribes to enhance their unity and solidarity. With a common related economy, it became favourable for the Nagas to unite as one people, under a common name, to create a new identity for themselves.

The introduction of Christianity and western education awakened the Nagas to new beliefs, ideas, possibilities and thoughts, and showed them the means and spirit to strive for congregated solidarity and to assert their identity. Just recently, they had very little and vague idea of themselves and were subjected to headhunting and rivalry within the clan, village and tribe. Christianity and education made the Nagas to realise that they should give up their differences and come together in order to achieve their goal of oneness and solidarity.

The Nagas have come a long way today. They are known as a people to possess great sense of self-discipline, spirit of sacrifice for their village and tribe. They also have deep love and respect for their customs and traditions. They are straightforward and have dignity and self-respect. Everybody treats voluntary labour for community very personal. The enthusiasm to work collectively for the good of the community as a whole and their spirit of adventure evoke in them a feeling of oneness, solidarity and unity, and this

became a very crucial component in the emergence of Naga identity. These quality feelings guided the Naga tribes towards the realisation and pursuance of their separate identity. Similar considerations along with Naga culture, history and tradition made the British to encourage the unity of the Nagas tribes. Thus, with or without independence, identity was very much present among the Nagas in a distinct manner. In fact, the Nagas in general had no/clear idea of independence till the departure of the British and subsequent Indian independence.

For a people who just recently did not even recognise a collective name, it is a very significant step to have developed a separate identity for themselves, a common Naga identity indicating their common aspirations and goals in the modern world. In the past, the name 'Naga' may have been a derogatory name, meaning simply 'naked' or 'ear-pierced'. However, with the emergence of Naga identity, the name 'Naga' has come to signify an ethnic group of people with political aspirations, interests and rights. Though the name was given to the Nagas, not out of merit, but because they were either naked or with pierced ear, the same name has been taken as an identity to strive for cultural, political and social merits in the modern context. It is important for every Naga to know what the name 'Naga' stood for in the past, and more important to understand what the name signify today, and in what way he is connected to it before accepting it as the general term to identify himself or to relate to it when he is identified as a Naga. As such, this study reveals the importance, process and significance of the emergence of Naga identity, the meaning and reason of attachment of the Nagas to their name and their deliberate consciousness to assert and forge their identity, self-determination and solidarity. With the emergence of Naga identity, the

tribes became more determined to prove their efficiency and worth. The cause that made an alienated people to strive and rise to the occasion is manifested in the emergence of Naga identity. A unique Naga identity has emerged with full force blended with the equally unique and rich cultural and traditional ethos of the people.

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Liphanpfü Apon, 90, Head GB, Kandinu Village, Tsemenyu

L.K. Tsanglao, 65, Pastor, Lotha Baptist Church, Wokha Town, Wokha

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Yijamo Murry, 80, Retired Government Servant, Orchid Hill, Wokha

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