

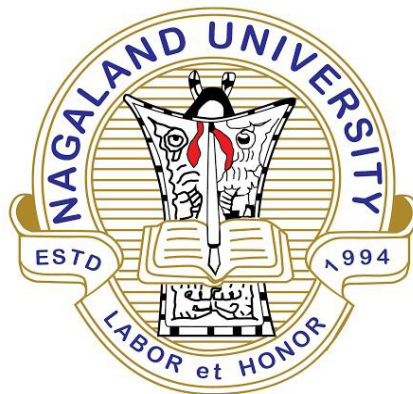
**The Naga Struggle for Freedom:
The Role of the Sumis (1918-1980)**

Thesis Submitted to

NAGALAND UNIVERSITY

In partial fulfilment of requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in History

VIVI SWU



**DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY & ARCHAEOLOGY
NAGALAND UNIVERSITY
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नागालैण्ड विश्वविद्यालय NAGALAND UNIVERSITY

संसद द्वारा पाररत अधिधियम 1989, क्रमांक 35 के अंतर्गत स्थापित कें द्रीय विश्वविद्यालय
(A Central University established by an Act of Parliament No.35 of 1989)

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Department of History & Archaeology

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the research data presented in this accompanying thesis titled **“The Naga Struggle for Freedom: The Role of the Sumis (1918-1980)”** has been carried out by Ms. Vivi Swu, bearing Regd No. 773/2017, dated 24/3/2017 under my guidance and supervision.

The present work is original in its content and has not been submitted in part or full for any other degree or diploma in any other University/Institute.

It is further certified that the candidate has fulfilled all the conditions necessary for the award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History under Nagaland University.

Dated:

(Dr. Chubala Sanglir)

Supervisor

Department of History & Archaeology

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नागालैण्ड विश्वविद्यालय

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DECLARATION

I, Ms. Vivi Swu, hereby declare that the thesis titled **“The Naga Struggle for Freedom: The Role of the Sumis (1918-1980)”** is the record of an original work done by me, that the contents of this 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/Institution.

This thesis is submitted to the Nagaland University in partial fulfillment for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History and Archaeology.

Research Scholar

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Head of Department

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Above all I give praise and thank the Lord Almighty who has protected and guided my path throughout my journey and in all my works.

Date:

Place:

(VIVI SWU)

Ipu and Iza, your lives inspired me to learn more about the lived but unspoken history of our people. May this thesis be a testament of the sacrifices of your generation. I dedicate this work to you.

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MAP OF ZUNHEBOTO DISTRICT, NAGALAND

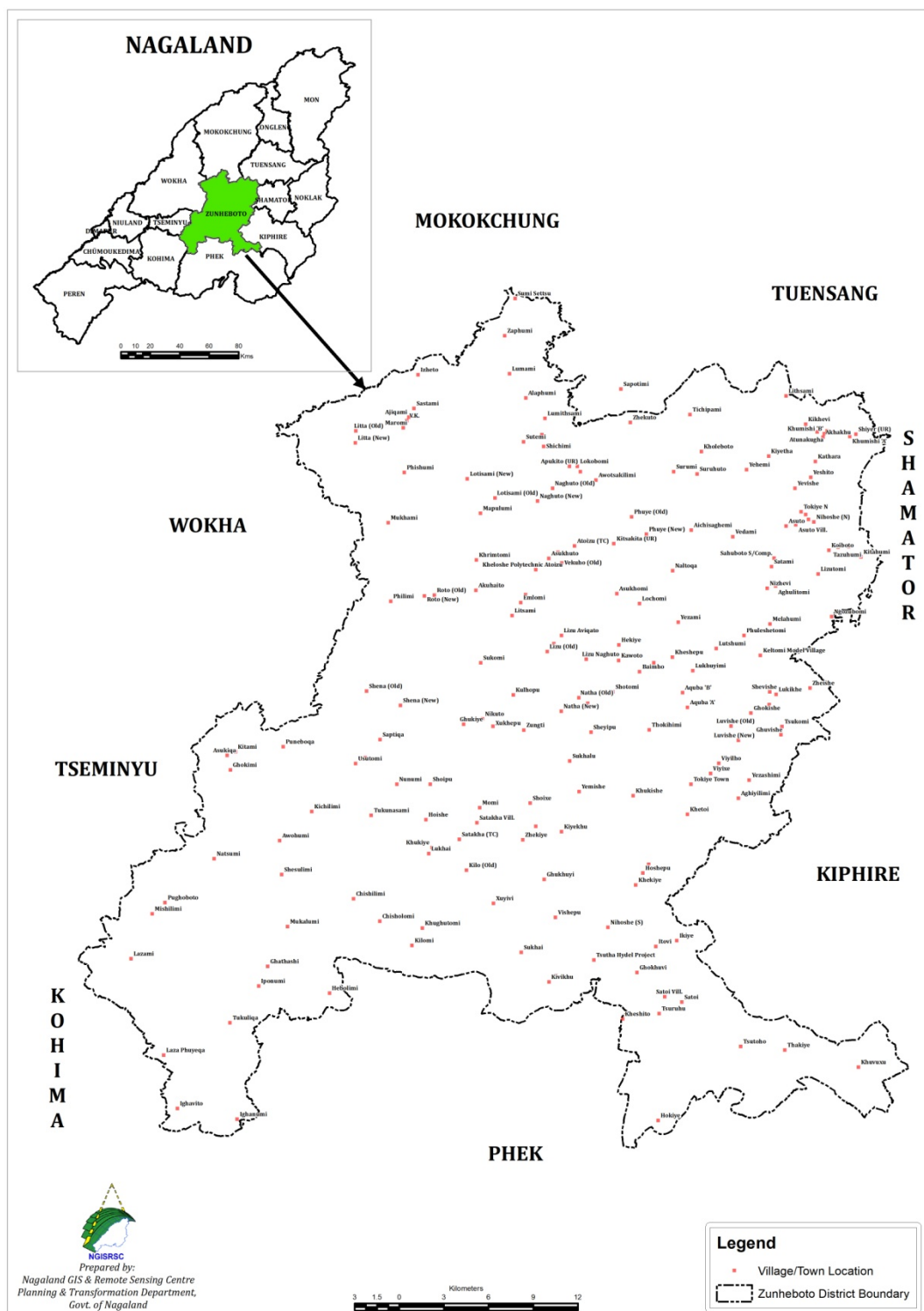


Fig 1. Map of Study Area

Map courtesy: Nagaland GIS and Remote Sensing Center

LOCATIONAL MAP OF HOSHEPU VILLAGE UNDER ZUNHEBOTO DISTRICT, NAGALAND

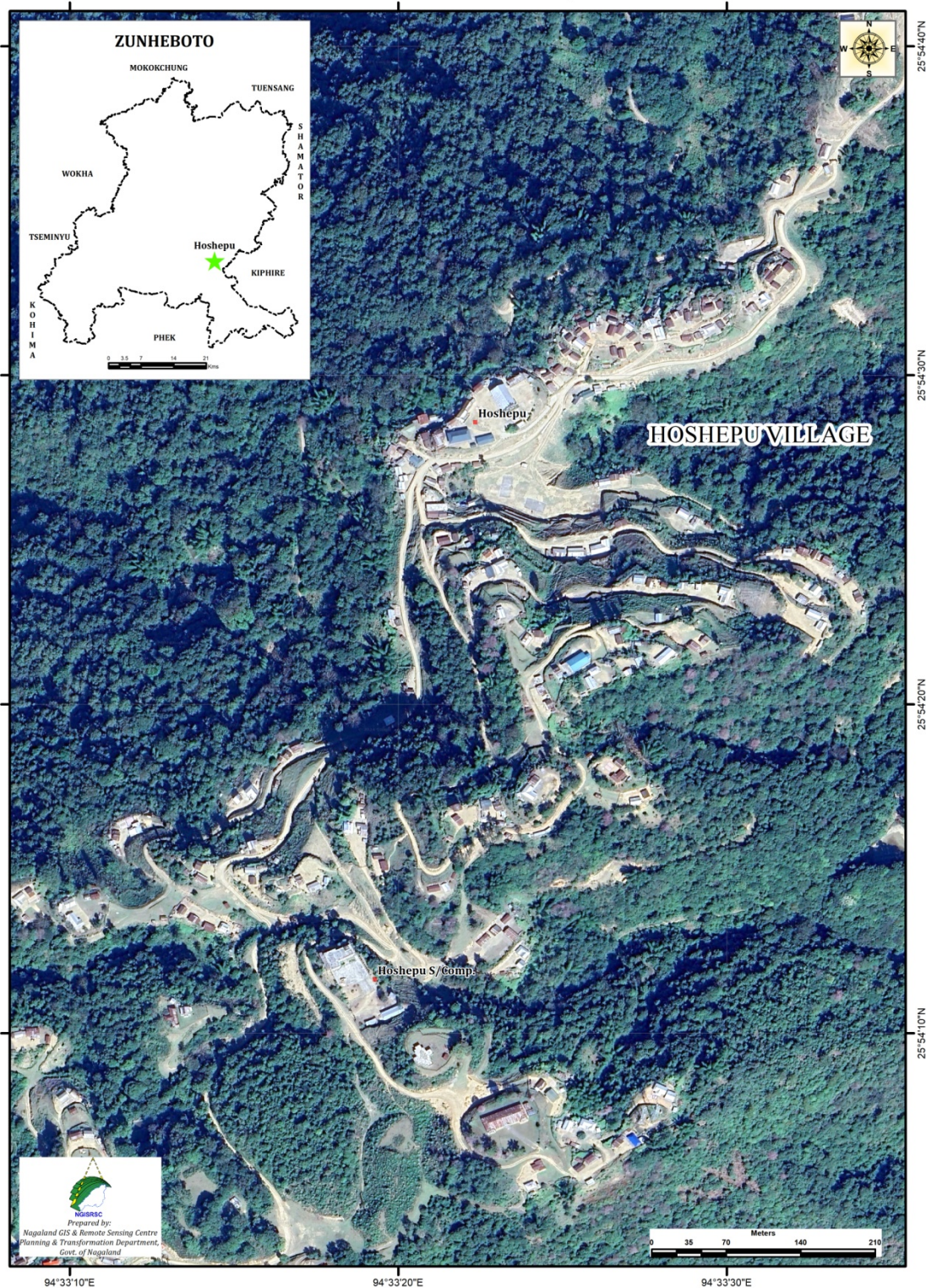


Fig 2. Map of Hoshepu Village

Map courtesy: Nagaland GIS and Remote Sensing Center

LOCATIONAL MAP OF SATAKHA VILLAGE UNDER ZUNHEBOTO DISTRICT, NAGALAND

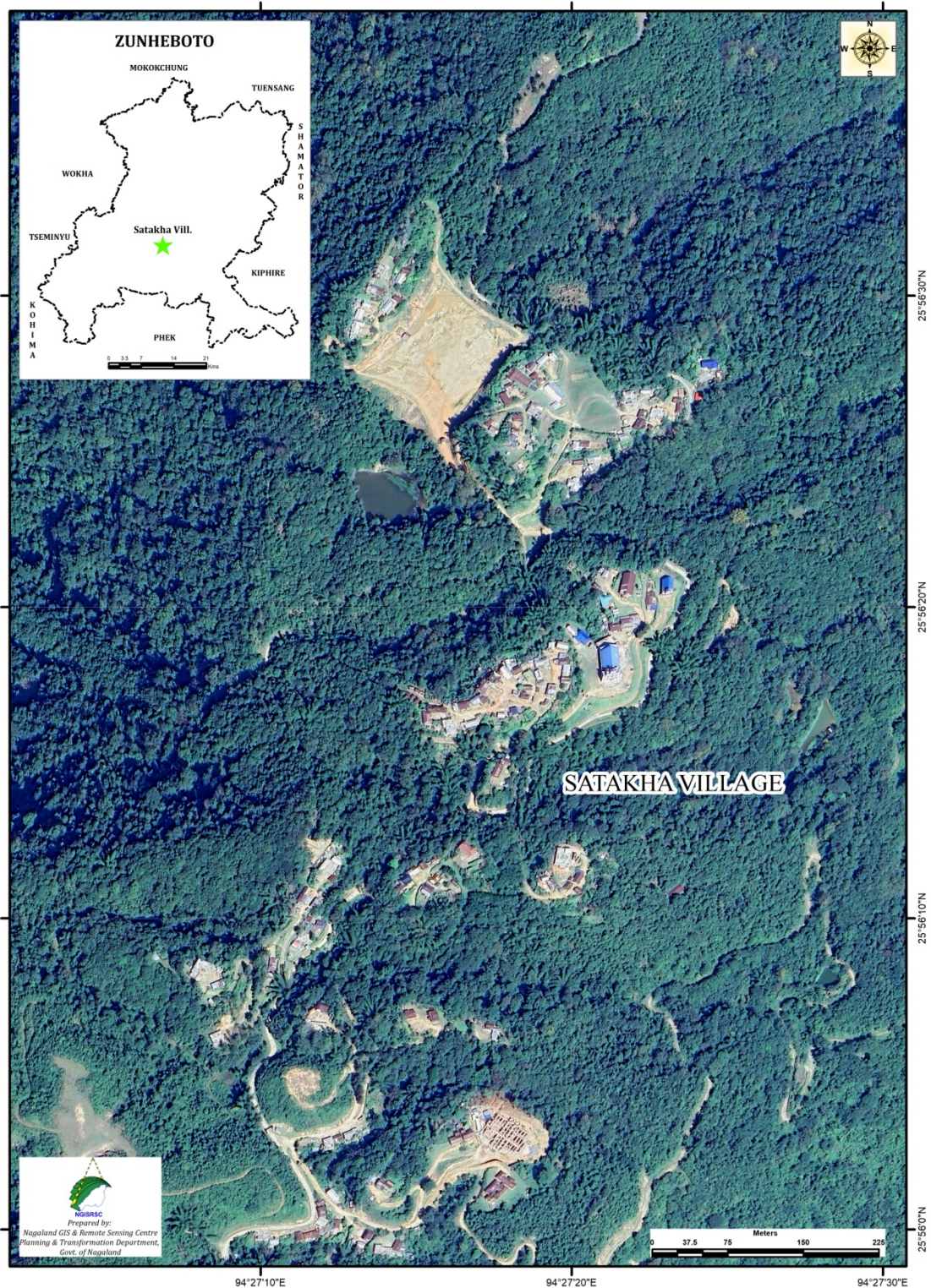


Fig 3. Map of Satakha Village

Map courtesy: Nagaland GIS and Remote Sensing Center

LOCATIONAL MAP OF PHOR VILLAGE UNDER PHEK DISTRICT, NAGALAND

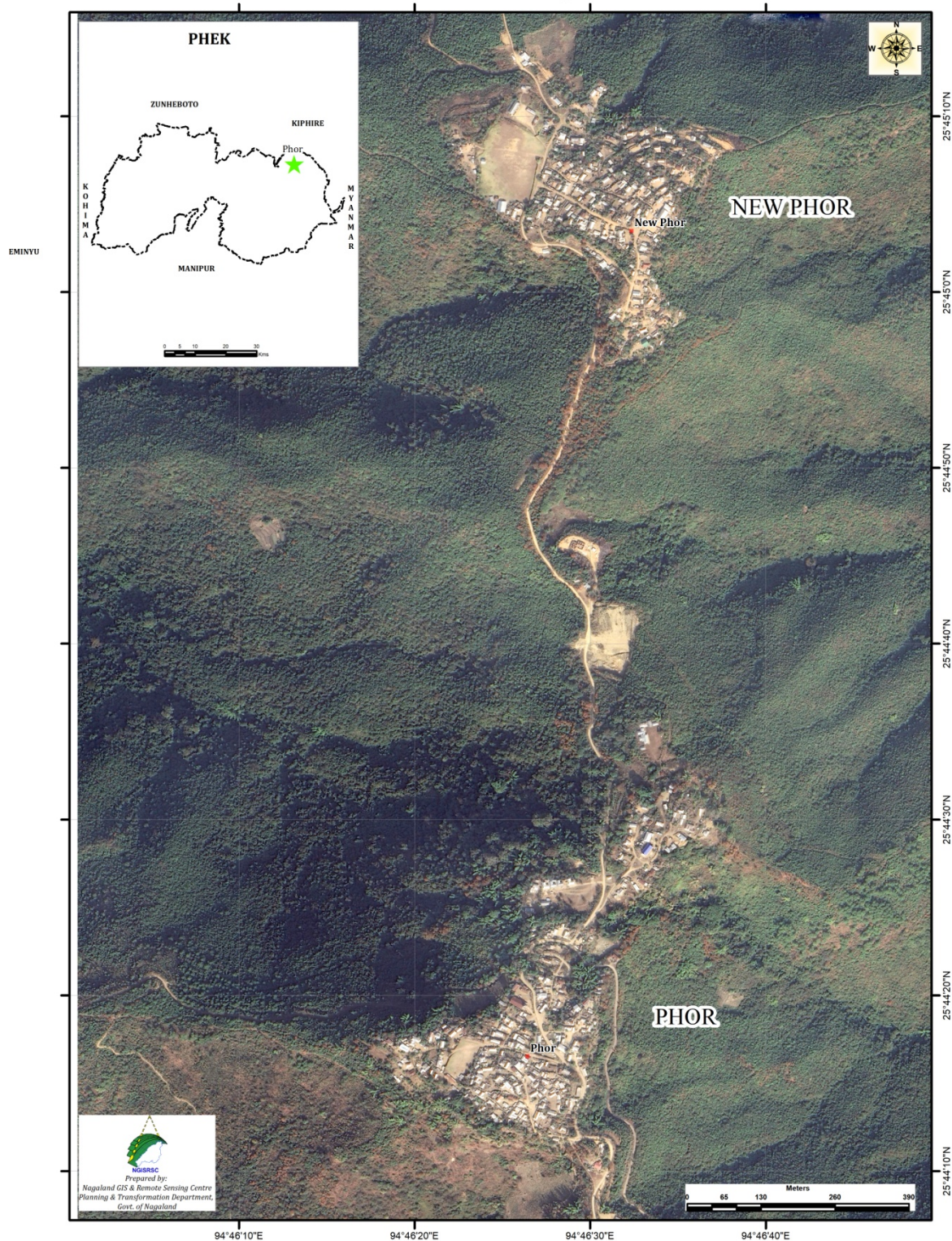


Fig 4. Map of Thuda/Phor

Map courtesy: Nagaland GIS and Remote Sensing Center

LOCATIONAL MAP OF SURUHUTO UNDER ZUNHEBOTO DISTRICT, NAGALAND

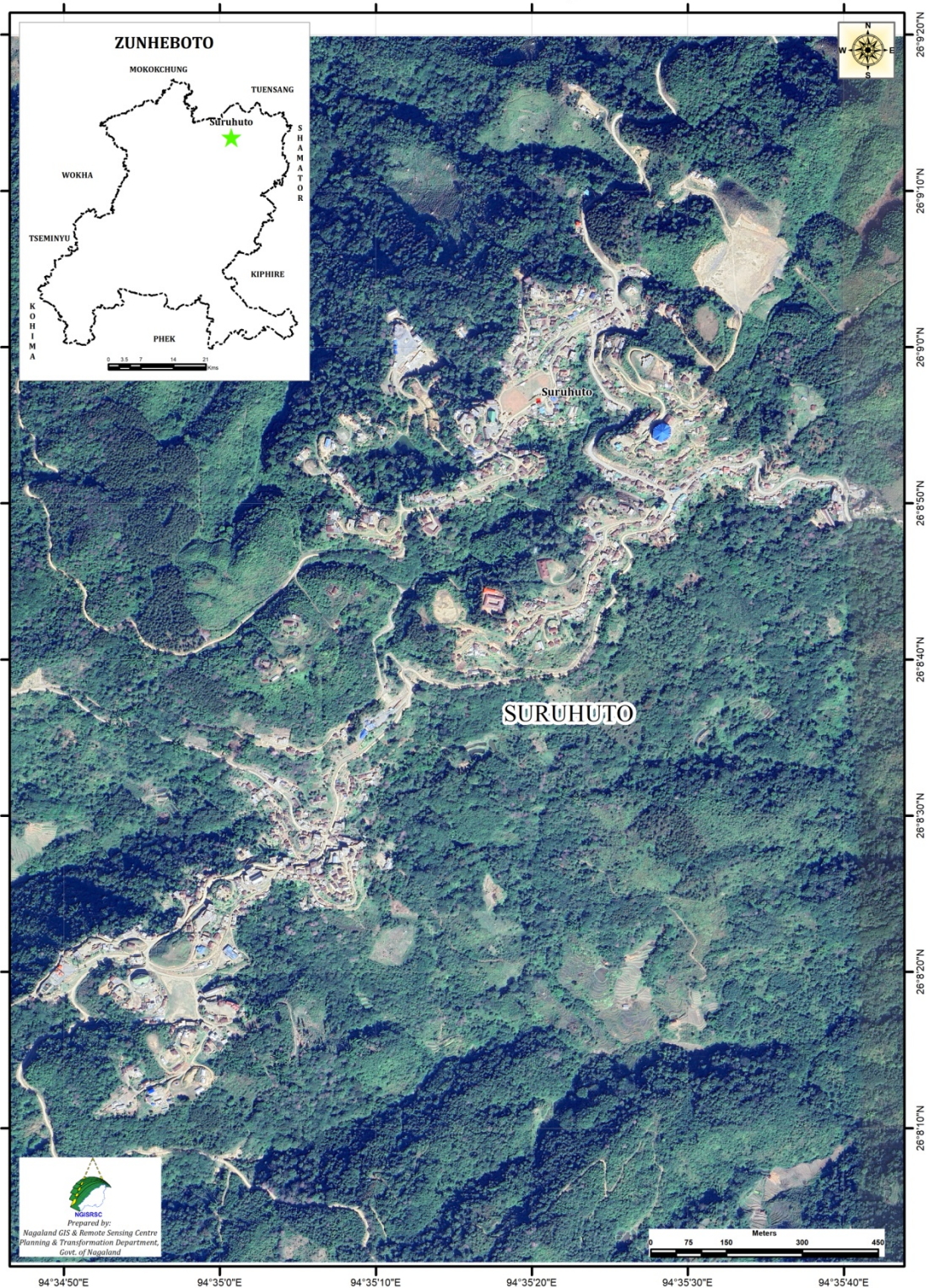


Fig 5. Map of Phizhokita (Suruhuto)

Map courtesy: Nagaland GIS and Remote Sensing Center

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1 Background

Nagaland, in the North East region of India and home to the Nagas became the 16th State of the Union in 1963. Geographically Nagaland is situated between the valley of the Bhramaputra river and the neighbouring Myanmar. It lies between 25°6' N and 27°4' N Latitude North of the Equator and between the Longitudinal lines 93°20' E and 95 °15' E with an area of 16,579 Sq. Km. (Nagaland Statistical Handbook, 2022). The territory of the Nagas has a short but tumultuous history with the Colonial forces that annexed parts of present day Nagaland. The Angami country was the first to experience contact with the world outside when Captain Jenkins and Pemberton's expedition into the uncharted hills in 1832 from Manipur (Allen, 1905).

The Government of India Census (2011) found Nagaland with a population of 19,78,502 and 79.55% literacy rate. The Nagas belong to the Mongoloid stock and they speak the Tibeto-Burman language family (Alemchiba, 1970). They are composed of 17 major tribes. However, these are only the tribes within the political state of Nagaland. The number of Naga tribes living in areas contiguous to Nagaland is significant. Currently there are 16 districts (DIPR Publication, 2022) and the focus of the present study will largely be on Zunheboto¹ district, the home of the Sumis.

¹ See Fig 1

1.2 Overview of Sumis

The Sumis are one of the 17 major tribes inhabiting the state of Nagaland. They mostly inhabit the central and southern regions of Nagaland. While Zunheboto is considered the district headquarters of the Sumis, a sizeable number of Sumis also live in districts such as Chumoukedima, Dimapur, Kiphire, and Niuland. There are also 7 Sumi villages in Tinsukia district of Assam. Thus, there are as many as 390 Sumi villages (Khashito Aye, 1997). The Sumi were earlier known as Sema, a name derived from the Angami word Seme, though its exact meaning remains uncertain. The Angami Naga tribe called Sumi people ‘Seme’, which evolved into ‘Sema’. This nomenclature became the conventional name for calling the Sumi. However, the word Sema holds no meaning for the Sumis. The Sumi Hoho, the highest governing body of the Sumi, therefore, resolved to change the nomenclature from Sema to Sumi (Personal communication: Hokishe Yeputhomi, 11-12-2022, Dimapur)². Accordingly, the government of Nagaland, notified the change vide notification No. HOME/SCTA-16/94 Dated, Kohima, the 30th September 1995, and they are now officially known as Sumi.

The Sumis, are called the martial tribe of Nagaland. They are brave, daring and courageous. During the past days, when the Nagas were headhunters, they were the top-class headhunters and warriors. Davies describes them as thus, ‘Judged by the Naga standard the Sumis are good fighting men, and were much respected by their neighbors’ (Davies in Verrier, (Ed), 1969, p. 376). Again, Hutton in his monograph says, ‘in warfare and hunting the Sema is plucky and daring, at any rate by Naga standards’ (Hutton, 1921, p. 27).

The Sumi practice chieftainship with the chief having absolute control over his village (Sema, J. 2013). Generally speaking, the village was the epicenter of all the social and cultural activities of the Sumis and it was imbued with a lot of customs and practices that

² Hokishe Yeputhomi is the former President of Sumi Hoho, the apex organization of the Sumis.

entrenched the sanctity of the village as a place of importance. Thus, the whole identity of the Sumis, like other Naga tribes, could be said to revolve around the village and the various activities associated with the village (Personal communication: Vikuto Zhimomi, 15-06-2022, Satakha)³.

The Naga struggle for freedom, spanning over more than seven decades, is known to be the oldest armed struggle in Asia. The crux of the issue is that, the Nagas claim that they have never been conquered by the Indian army, or ruled over by the Indian government, although some of their territory had been forcefully annexed by the British. Thus with the departure of British they are claiming their right to be left alone as a sovereign independent state. On the other hand, the government of India, claim that Nagaland was an integral part of British-India and that with the transfer of power to India by Britain, Nagaland automatically became a part of India like other states. In the process of struggle, both the Indian army and the Nagas have lost many precious lives. However, it is the Nagas who have suffered untold miseries. This thesis studies the progression of the political conditions that led to the formation of the state and the involvement of the Sumi in particular.

1.3. Theoretical framework

Keeping in mind of Hans Kohn's (2005) dichotomy between ethnic and civic nationalism, the present work incorporates the concept of ethnic nationalism to study the Naga struggle for freedom as rooted in cultural and ethnic identity and the resistance against perceived threats. The Naga demand for independence stems from their desire to preserve and assert their ethnic identity rather than integrate into larger civic nationalism of India. Kohn's

³ Vikuto Zhimomi is the Chief of Ghukhuyi Village and the former president of All Nagaland Gaon Buras Federation.

theory helps explain why the Naga movement focuses on maintaining their unique ethnic and cultural heritage as a foundation for their political claims. Their sense of belonging to a common ethnic group, rather than to a broader national framework drives their push for self-determination, making their struggle aligned with Kohn's theory of ethnic nationalism.

Ethno-symbolic approach of Anthony D Smith (2001) which tries to analyze nationalism as based on ethnic and cultural factors such as shared memories, myths, symbols and traditions, has been incorporated in the study. In the case of the Naga people, their distinct identity based on shared ethnic and cultural factors has been central to their political aspirations. The movement that began with the desire to protect their unique cultural identity reflects the shift from *ethnie* to a political nation. The movement underscores how a culturally distinct group can aspire for recognition as a political entity, leveraging their shared memories and culture to legitimize their claim to a separate political status. This mirrors Smith's theory where cultural cohesion provides the foundation for political demands and nation-building. The Naga movement exemplifies how a cultural group transforms into a political nation, aligning well with Smith's framework.

1.4. The Sumi Naga Experiences and Contribution

An in depth study has been made to bring to light about the contributions made by the Sumis towards the Naga struggle for freedom. The research explores the experiences and ordeals encountered and underwent by the Sumi freedom fighters as well as the Sumi general public or the villagers and thus give insight into the undocumented and neglected areas in the history of the Naga freedom struggle. The Sumis have contributed significantly towards the Naga struggle for freedom, rendering their valuable services in any way possible. They

formed one of the main fighting forces in the Naga Army. Ramunny⁴ writes, “the Semas deserved the greatest respect and attention. In the armed rebellion it was the Semas who took the lead in Tuensang and then in Naga Hills” (Ramunny, 1988, p. 64). The Sumis also produced capable leaders, both in the army and civil set up, who led the struggle with dedication and efficiency during the most turbulent and crucial times. Besides, the mass of the population, in spite of bearing the brunt of atrocities inflicted by the Indian armed forces, persistently endured and supported the freedom struggle whole-heartedly. However, till date, the body of recorded information about their role in the Naga struggle for freedom is extremely negligible and scanty. This provides a good ground for undertaking research on the topic.

1.5. Research Area

The area of study is delimited from 1918 to 1980 as both the years are landmarks in Naga history. The year 1918 saw the formation of the Naga Club, which was the first ever Naga organization expressing signs of solidarity and nationalism. Therefore, it was the period when the basic Naga political history was born. In 1980 it took a drastic turn with the formation of the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN), consequent to the signing of the Shillong Accord (1975). From the historical point of view, the events that took place after 1980, since it is relatively recent and literature is available in abundance, are quite well known. However, not many people know about events during the period of study as it is relatively remote and the literature available is sparse and unorganized. Moreover, most of the deliberations were based on verbal communications using indigenous knowledge system. The population of the freedom fighters of the period under study is fast declining due to old

⁴ Ramunny was a distinguished member of the Indian Frontier Administrative Service and with his last office being the advisor to the Governor of Nagaland.

age. Thus, it is of utmost importance to reconstruct the history of the period before it is lost forever.

The study explores and reveals the significant roles played by both the freedom fighters and the general public which deserves to be recorded. The study will benefit not only the Sumis but also the Nagas as a whole, as it will enlarge and enrich the literature on the Naga struggle for freedom. It examines the participation of the Sumi general public in the struggle, studies the role of Sumis in the Naga army and looks at the executive and administrative roles played by Sumis in the struggle.

Collecting data through Purposive Random Sampling in the form of interviews, case studies and group discussions with the actual participants of the events comprising of both the national workers as well as the general public, Corroborating the oral sources with the literary sources, the thrust of the research prioritize on the participation of the Sumi general public, the role of the Sumis in the Naga Army, the executive and administrative roles played by the Sumis in the struggle. Thereby, hypothesizing the Sumis played a key role in the Naga Struggle for Freedom.

Analyzing the Naga struggle for freedom for more than six decades since its inception in 1918 till 1980 gives a clear account of the Naga National Movement trajectory. Exploring and relying largely on autobiographical works, archival documents and field interviews for examining the development of national consciousness, the study gives insight into the key moments in giving birth to a sense of a shared national identity. It traces the incipient role of the pioneers and eventual torch bearers of the national cause and how the movement developed and grew leading to the unbridled resistance for freedom. This analysis also gives a significant understanding of the Indo-Naga relationship and the nature of the Naga movement.

To understand the nature of the Sumi involvement in the freedom struggle, a micro analysis has been made by giving a detailed background of the Sumi socio-political organization and their adaptation to their geographical and topographic features co-relating with the development of political consciousness. Also, a significant role played by women and the general public has been brought to light revealing that Sumi involvement was not merely of national workers but a mass movement. This has been studied to assess the extent of the Sumi participation in the national movement and the attributes of the Sumi people standing for a common cause.

Through a thorough examination of the military aspect in its broader spectrum the research gives a noteworthy account of the Sumi involvement in the movement and details of various battles that were fought under the Sumi leadership. The consequences of the battles and the aftermath of the conflicts have been closely studied to understand how the movement progressed. It also brings to light as to how there were particular eras of the movement where the Sumi participation was not only critical to the movement but propelled the national cause from the initial years to when the Indo-Naga conflict was at its peak. It also examines the counter policies adopted by the Indian government as the other party in their quest to suppress the movement and how subsequently it impacted on the movement in general and the Sumi in particular. At the same time, the study also critically analyses the counter policies adopted by the Indian state as the other party in the conflict as a means of suppressing the movement and subsequently its impact on the movement in general and the Sumi in particular.

The role of the Sumis in the executive and administrative areas in the Naga struggle for freedom has been closely studied. The focus was also on the activities of some of the key figures of the Sumi who were involved in the movement with specific references to various events along the timeline of the movement. The military and administrative sides of the

movement where Independence was fought on one hand and for peace on the other are studied to understand how multifaceted the Sumi involvement in these years was.

The study summarizes the argument systematically constructed over the course of several chapters and connects the findings that emerge from the investigation carried out in the preceding chapters. The purpose of the discussion section is to assess the findings as a result of the research and explore any new perceptions that emerged as a result of the study.

1.6. Literature Review

Listed below are some of the works pertinent to the current study which throw light on the Nagas in general and the Sumi in particular as well as the timeline and history of the Indo-Naga conflict. These works also highlight various aspects of the Naga national movement.

The first major work on the Sumis was done by the British administrator, J.H. Hutton, who was also a prominent anthropologist. He wrote the monograph, *The Sema Nagas* which was published in 1921 by Macmillan. This book gives an account of the origin, migration, the chieftainship system and the organization of Sumi village, social structure, customary laws, religious and cultural life of the Sumi tribe at that time but it has completely missed out on their role in the Naga struggle for freedom.

Elwin Verrier (1961) in his book *Nagaland* takes a typical colonial stand. He opines that among a people who had so recently abandoned head-hunting and where there were still inter-tribe and inter-village feuds, India felt that the maintenance of law and order which only she could ensure, was vital for the happiness of the common man. He further says that the Indian army was very popular throughout the hills and have done much to create a climate of

friendliness by their genuine sympathy and many acts of kindness and that they were sent to Naga Hills not harass the people but to protect them from being harassed. Thus, he completely ignores the heavy hand of suppression meted out to the Nagas and their plight.

S.C. Dev's (1988) book *Nagaland the Untold Story* is basically an account of his experiences in Nagaland as an administrator for two about decades since 1960. He narrates about the then volatile political condition in Nagaland and the situations he had to deal with. He also gives an account of the crucial role that he played in successfully persuading Rani Gaidinliu to surrender in 1966 and also the surrender of some of the Naga freedom fighters like Brigadier Kameng and his followers. The author also talks about his involvement in negotiating and the signing of the Shillong Accord in 1975 between the Government of India and the Naga Freedom Fighters. The book also gives a brief sketch on the revolutionary movement in Mizoram under the banner of Mizo National Front (MNF) led by its President Shri. Laldenga.

Hans Kohn's (1944) *The Idea of Nationalism; A Study in its Origins and background*, distinguishes between two forms of nationalism: western and Eastern. He says that Western nationalism originated in Western Europe around 17th to 18th century in countries like England, France and USA. It is civic in nature and inclusive based on shared political values, individual rights and democratic principles. While the Eastern Nationalism developed later in Central and Eastern Europe and Asia in response to external pressures like imperialism and the disintegration of multi-ethnic empires, was more ethnic or cultural in nature and is exclusive, focusing on common ancestry, language and culture. The Naga Movement can be related to the later variant.

This work provides a conceptual framework for understanding how nationalism varies in its expression depending on cultural, historical and political contexts. His distinction

between Western Civic nationalism and Eastern ethnic nationalism is the hallmark of the book.

Anthony D. Smith (2001) in his work *Nationalism; Theory, Ideology, History* delves on the deep historical and cultural roots of nations, blending modernist and primordialist perspectives. His key concept 'ethno symbolism', argues that nations and national identities are not merely recent constructed phenomena as modernists claim, nor are they timeless and unchanging as primordialists suggest. Instead, national identities evolve over time, drawing on myths, symbols, traditions and collective memories that predate modern nation-states. Smith emphasizes on the role of myth-symbol complexes which refers to the collection of myths, symbols and traditions in shaping national identity. He also proposes that nations are often connected to a homeland and a golden age to create a sense of historical continuity and emotional attachment. The work emphasizes that modern nationalism is rooted in the past, drawing on enduring cultural elements for its strength and persistence.

Nirmal Nibedon's (1979) work *Nagaland the Night of the Guerrillas* eloquently describes the activities of what he calls the Naga guerrillas. At the core of the book lies the story of the Naga people's deep seated desire for freedom, their quest for identity and their resistance against an imposition of foreign rule by the Indian state. Nibedon, a journalist, presents vivid descriptions of guerrilla life, the psychology of warfare and the hardship faced by both the national workers and the villagers caught in the crossfire. The Peace Mission and the signing of Cease-Fire between India and the Naga freedom fighters ushering in the several rounds of peace talks has been discussed about. The book also has chapters on the venture into China for arms aid and training under the leadership of Muivah and the formation of the revolutionary government of Nagaland and its dissolution.

A comprehensive work on the Naga struggle has been done by Asoso Yonuo (1974) under the title *The Rising Nagas*. He has made an extensive study on the Nagas right from their origins to the British occupation and the rise and growth of Naga movement for freedom.

Tajenyuba Ao (1993) in his work *British Occupation of Naga Country* has made an extensive study on the British occupation and annexation of the Naga territories such as the areas of Angami, Rengma, Lotha, Ao, Sema, Phom, Chang, Konyak, Moa, Tankhul etc. A chapter has been written on the Nagas of Burma dealing with the Nagas living on the Burma side of the Patkoi range such as the Pyengoo, Kuku, Myimu, Rangpang Nagas. A study has been made on several aspects such as the village settlements, construction of house, religion, ceremonies, marriage system, cultivation, village administration etc. The concluding chapter of the book gives a brief account of the Naga political movement, the Naga Peoples' Convention and the formation of Nagaland state.

Horam (1975) in his book *Naga Polity* has made a comprehensive study of the polity of the Tangkhul, Ao and Angami Nagas. He has also given a brief background of the rise of Naga nationalism. In another book *Naga Insurgency*, Horam (1988) has looked into the genesis of the Naga insurgency, its development and ramifications.

Bendangangshi's (2000) work *Glimpses of Naga History* is informative but as the title itself suggests, it give just the glimpses of the important developments in Naga history focusing on the Indo-Naga conflict till the formation of the NSCN. He gives a fleeting account of the declaration of Naga Independence on 14th August 1947, the formation and activities of the Naga National Council (NNC), formation of the Federal government of Nagaland and its activities, the Peace Mission and the signing of the Cease-Fire, the Naga Peoples' Convention and the formation of Nagaland state. The book also deals with the

introduction of Christianity among the Ao Nagas by Rev. E.W. Clark bringing about the transformation of the Nagas. Regarding the relationship between the Nagas and the Ahoms, the author writes that occasional wars were prevalent between them which could be figured out through folk tales and songs. However, owing to the lack of written documents about the events, exact time and dates cannot be ascertained.

Kaka Iralu's (2000) book *The Naga Saga* takes a typical Naga stand, arguing that it is the birthright of the Nagas to be independent. He postulates the sovereignty and independence of the Nagas basing on the three universal laws governing the origin and existence of the nations, they are, "1. No nation on earth exists without a concrete geographical land. 2. The national identity of a nation is inseparable from the geographical identity of that nation. 3. The national and geographical identities of a nation are indestructible and unchangeable." (Iralu, 2000, p.1). He opines that the war between India and the Nagas is due to the violation of these Universal Laws on the part of India. He gives an emotional detail of the atrocities inflicted on the Nagas by the Indian army in order to crush down the legitimate Naga independence movement.

The Naga Chronicle compiled by V.K. Nuh (2002), is a comprehensive compilation of documents relating to the Naga struggle right from its inception will be of great help to researchers in this area.

S.C. Jamir (2011) in his book *Naga Peoples' Convention and the 16 Point Agreement* gives the background of the formation of the Naga Peoples Convention (NPC) and the details of the subsequent three conventions that were held from 1957 to 1959. The First NPC was held at Kohima from 22nd to 26th August 1957, the 2nd NPC was held at Ungma from 21st to 23rd May 1958 and the 3rd Convention was held at Mokokchung from 22nd to 26th October 1959. It culminated in the drafting and the subsequent signing of 16 Points Agreement in

1960. On the basis of this Agreement, the state of Nagaland was created on 1st December 1963. He claims that the NPC created a favorable political condition for the Nagas and that the 16 Point Agreement was a milestone in the Naga political history as it salvaged the hopes and aspirations of the Nagas. The author was himself, a signatory of the Agreement that was signed between the Naga Peoples' Convention and the government of India.

Biseto Medom Keyho, Home minister in the then Federal Government of Nagaland has written *My Journey in the Nagaland Freedom Movement* which gives the perspectives of the movement from a hard core Naga nationalist point of view.

Thus, the Naga struggle for freedom has received the attention of many scholars, writers, journalists and administrators who have published numerous books on the topic which will provide important secondary source material and guidance for the study. However, while there are works published by Sumi national workers who had been at the forefront of the movement during the relevant time period, it is pertinent to note that no actual research has been carried out so far on the comprehensive role of Sumis in the Naga struggle for freedom. Therefore, this study intends to fill in the gap by focusing on the role played by the Sumis in the national movement from its genesis (1918) to 1980 both by the active national workers as well as the mass civil participation that was markedly characteristic of the Sumi involvement in the movement. Attempt has been made in this study to provide an in-depth analysis of the Sumi participation and its subsequent consequences.

1.7. Brief Overview of the Naga Struggle for Freedom (1918 – 1980)

This is a brief account of the Naga struggle for freedom from its inception (1918) till 1980, highlighting important events as markers to help us understand the development of the

movement. The formation of the Naga Club in 1918 can be said to be the first instance of political consciousness being displayed by the Naga people. Perhaps the credit for sowing the seed of nationalism can be traced back to the Naga Labor Corps who were drafted by the British Colonial Administration during the First World War to serve in France. A total of 2000 Nagas were drafted of which 1000 were Sumi (Reid, 1983)⁵. The Sumi volunteering in majority proves their tenacity, bravery, and willingness to explore new spaces. It is aptly stated by Hutton as thus,

“The Sema’s powers of physical endurance are great. He can carry heavy loads long distances... the Semas, moreover, if thin-skinned metaphorically, is very thick-skinned otherwise, and inured to cold and exposure” (Hutton, 1921, p. 27).

The chosen leader of the Labour Corps was a Sumi, Kuhoi Zhimomi of Sukhai and the next in command was also a Sumi, Hekikhe Awomi of Surumi (WW1 Sema Naga Labor Corps Association, 2018). These Corps would go on to see the outside world and experience the sense of a brotherhood beyond tribal colors during the war which awakened political consciousness and a sense of belonging among themselves and their minds were opened up by nationalistic ideas of Europe (Yonuo, 1974). They felt that they should live as one and this thought naturally inspired the formation of the Naga club in 1918 (Sema, H. 1986).

During their stay in France, the Nagas were occasionally given rations of live cows and pigs to slaughter for their community kitchen which they would relish. This eating habit was offensive to both Hindus and Muslims. “We are looked down upon by the one for beef and other for our pork and by both for our want in education, is not due to any fault of ours”, a point they made in the representation submitted to Simon Commission⁶, can never be made

⁵ Sir Robert Reid was the Governor of Assam from 1937-1942. Nagaland was then known as Naga Hills, a district under Assam.

⁶ Refer Appendix A

up by an inexperienced and unexposed mind. Such a simple yet profound argument of conviction had to be born out of suffering experienced firsthand by the members of the Naga Labor Corps during their exposure abroad (WW1 Sema Naga Labor Corps Association, 2018).

One incident highlights the impact on Naga history made by Labor Corps returnees. On Jan 10, 1929 when the Indian statutory commission visited Kohima under the chairmanship of Sir John Simon, the commission asked the Nagas whether they would like to join the “New Reformed Scheme”. Prior to the submission of memorandum there was a huge deliberation among Naga leaders. Some contended that it is impossible for the Nagas to determine their own future, while others wanted to be left alone. In this meeting Nizhevi Sema, Dobashi of Kohima and a Labor Corp returnee, dressed in traditional attire stated ululating and fluctuated his spear and machete into the air stomping his feet on the ground and proclaimed that Nagas have never been subdued or dominated by any foreign entity and have lived independently over the century and can continue to survive on our own even in the future (WW1 Sema Naga Labor Corps Association, 2018). This obviously became the consensus verdict of the Naga Club when they boldly stated in the representation to leave the Nagas alone and free as they were before, to determine for themselves their own future as and when the British leaves India. It is not necessary that each and every member of Naga Labor Corps should have been involved in the deliberation on that fateful day. It takes just one of them to stand for the rest and leave an everlasting footprint and Nizhevi Sema did that. Furthermore, the chief occasion and significance of the Naga Club lies in the fact that the Club submitted the Memorandum to the Simon Commission representing the Nagas. Had they never done so perhaps we would not place the club in so high a regard.

One outcome of this memorandum was that the then Naga Hills was made an Excluded Area under the Government of India Act 1935 to be directly administered by the Governor of Assam (Sema, P. 1992). However, this was not in line with the sovereign and independent status demanded by the Nagas and thus led to the beginning of a long and tumultuous armed conflict between the two. In April 1945 CR Pawsey, the DC of Kohima established an institution which was thus called the Naga Hills District Tribal Council with the aim of uniting the Nagas and helping the Nagas to have local self government within the province of Assam. On 3rd March 1946 this council met at Wokha and changed its nomenclature to Naga National Council (NNC) with the aim of fostering the welfare and social aspirations of the Nagas, became the only platform for the Naga Movement. The NNC on 14th August 1947, declared the Naga independence, one day before India became independent and information was given to the Government of India and the UNO (FGN Publication, 1968). The NNC on January 25th 1950 informed the government of India and UNO that Nagas do not accept the Indian constitution. Accordingly, it did not accept district autonomy offered by the Government of India and successfully boycotted the elections to the district council, Assam state legislature and parliament of India in 1952 (Horam, 1988).

On 16th May 1951, the NNC launched a voluntary to disprove the notion that the desire for freedom was held only by few educated Nagas. The result of the plebiscite showed a 99.9% vote in favor of a Sovereign Independent Naga state (Government of People's Republic of Nagalim, 1997). The plebiscite forms and thumb impressions were sent to the Government of India and the UNO. These results were, however, ultimately dismissed by the government of India terming it a farce or a stage managed show (Yonuo, 1974).

In March 1953, Nehru accompanied by the then PM of Burma U-Nu visited Kohima. When DC Barkokati forbade the Naga leaders to submit memorandum or to give any speech to restate their desire for political self-determination, the Nagas decided that they would not

hear the Prime Minister if he would not hear them (Horam, 1988). Mullik⁷ (1972) recollects how nearly three to four thousand Nagas unceremoniously exited the meeting, walking out on the Prime Minister. It was after this rebuff that the Indian government unleashed against the Nagas a campaign of physical violence and military coercion in an attempt to make them submit to the Indian Union. As a result, most of the active workers of the NNC went underground as early as 1952 to evade imprisonment at the hands of the Indian government (FGN Publication, 1968).

Various Acts were enacted such as the Assam Maintenance of Public Order (Autonomous District) Act 1953, Declaration of Naga Hills as a Disturbed Area vide Assam Disturbed Areas Act of 1955 and the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFPSA) in 1958 in order to suppress the Naga Movement and the people began to experience severe military oppression (Nuh, 2002). By the beginning of 1956, the Indian army occupied Kohima and Mokokchung divisions of the Naga Hills district. Indian Army officers began a routine of displaying the bullet riddled torn corpses of dead Nagas in town explaining that this fate would overtake any Naga who refuses to accept the Indian constitution (FGN Publication, 1968). Atrocities and acts of immorality increased hideously and the Nagas were driven to take up arms in self defense. In view of the unbearable circumstances the Nagas had no alternative but to declare their own government on 22nd March 1956 (Government of People's Republic of Nagalim, 1997). It unleashed a period of immense turmoil and conflict between the Nagas and the Indian Army where villagers heavily bore the brunt of conflict (Sema, H. 1986).

In such circumstances the Naga People's Convention (NPC) was held thrice from 1957 to 1959 with full support of the Government of India (Mullik, 1972). This convention

⁷ B.N. Mullik was then Personal Secretary to the Prime Minister of India Jawaharlal Nehru and present at the time of the incident.

comprised delegates and representatives of all the Naga tribes of the erstwhile Naga Hills and Tuensang Area. The first meeting was held in August 1957 at Kohima. The Second meeting was held at Ungma in May 1958 and a Drafting Committee was appointed which would formulate their demands (Sema, 1986). According to Jamir (2011), the appointment of the drafting committee was an epoch making milestone in the history of NPC, since it transformed the NPC from peace-maker to an active political organization, thereby hijacking the political agenda and rationale from the Naga underground. The 16 Point memorandum envisaging the creation of a separate of Nagaland within the union of India was drawn up in its third meeting held in Mokokchung in 1959. In July 1960 a delegation of the NPC met the PM at Delhi and signed the 16 Point Agreement⁸ wherein, the government of India agreed to a separate state within the Indian union. Accordingly, on 1st December 1963, Nagaland was inaugurated as the 16th State of the Indian Union by its President Dr. S. Radhakrishnan (Ramunny, 1988).

Scato Swu (2013), former President of FGN contests the justification of the NPC and the illegitimacy of the creation of Nagaland citing historical and socio-political realities. According to him, the NPC is the greatest breakaway group of the NNC. The reason being that prior to it the NNC, and by extension the FGN, was the sole representative body of the Nagas.

Biseto Medom Keyho, former minister of FGN critiques the divisive policy of the Indian state where on the one side, it encouraged some section of the Nagas, who never took part in national movement to start political talks and on the other side it baited out the core resistance fighters by offering amnesty (Keyho, n.d.)⁹.

⁸ Refer Appendix B

⁹ From the autobiography of Keyho, where the date and place of publication could not be found. Keyho was instrumental in the FGN having held the position of Home Minister.

The Political settlement that led to the formation of the State of Nagaland was negotiated with the NPC (who were not involved in the movement) by the Government of India which conveniently chose to ignore the demands placed before them by the FGN (the actual organization bearing the torch of the movement). It goes without saying that the national movement led by the FGN preceded the formation of the NPC, furthermore the motivations for formation of the NPC was caused by the oppressive and divisive policies of the Indian Government to suppress and also lure away public from the freedom movement. Therefore, the creation of Nagaland state was the divide and rule policy put into actual practice. The political settlement that emerged out of the 16 point agreement had signatories who were engineered directly or indirectly by the actions and policies of the Indian Government and furthermore it was done with a view to invalidate the national movement led by the FGN (Mullik, 1972). This agreement was thus never seen as legitimate by the FGN as they were not party to a decision about the land and the people that they were fighting for. Therefore, the movement still continues.

The Peace Mission was initiated by the Nagaland Baptist Church Council (NBCC) with the intention of being a mediating body between the GOI and the FGN at a convention held in Wokha, in 1964 leading to the signing of the cease-fire and the subsequent peace talks (Nuh, 2014). There were two phases of Indo Naga peace talks: the first phase at the governmental level and the second at the ministerial level with six rounds of PM level peace talks from February 1966- October 1967 though it ended in a deadlock (Horam, 1988).

The most infamous of the agreements ever signed between the Indian State and the Naga resistance forces is perhaps the Shillong Accord¹⁰ which was signed on 11th November, 1975. The key stipulation of the Shillong Accord was that the Nagas of their own volition, without condition, accepted the Constitution of India through their representatives, the

¹⁰ Refer Appendix C

signatories of the Accord. The criticism leveled against the Accord is that representatives of the Naga National Workers accepted the terms and conditions set by the Indian State and in effect annulled all the efforts and sacrifices of the freedom fighters. The Accord signaled the death knell of the movement as far as the GOI was concerned. The outcome of the Shillong Accord was the formation of the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN) on 31st January 1980 with the conviction that, the NNC had surrendered their right to speak for the Nagas having signed the Shillong Accord and thus, a necessity arose for the formation of new organization to carry on the Naga movement and reinstate their fight for sovereignty¹¹. This breakaway group founded by Isak Chishi Swu and Th Muivah did not recognize the Accord declaring it a disingenuous engineering of the Government of India. They termed the Shillong Accord as a sell-out and condemned the signatories as traitors in the Naga National Assembly in October 1975 (Government of People's Republic of Nagalim, 1997). The case for the absence of the Sumi in the movement at this point of time being a decisive factor has been made in a later chapter where a critical analysis of the national movement and the role played by the Sumi leadership is carried out.

Thus, we see that the Naga national movement had an organic development and from its inception (1918) up until the declaration of NSCN (1980) we can trace the growth of a national consciousness and the impact of the divisive policies of the Government of India in an attempt to suppress the movement and the eventual derailment of a united Naga effort towards the national cause. An objective analysis of the key events of the movement and the consequence of the involvement or absence of various parties involved with emphasis on the Sumi intervention in the national movement is the purpose of the following chapters.

¹¹ From an undated autobiography of Isak Chishi Swu, published by the Ministry of Information & Publicity, GPRN

CHAPTER 2

Profile of the Sumi Naga: Role of the Sumis in the Naga National Movement

The Sumi are one of the major tribes of Nagaland. Sumi Naga mostly inhabit the central and southern regions of Nagaland, having a population of 300,000 as per 2011 census. The mainstay livelihood of the Sumi is farming and they practice the traditional jhum/shifting cultivation as well as terraced farming. Rice is the staple grain but food crops like maize, yam, potato chilly, oats, millet, beans etc are grown consumption. The Sumi village is typically a self-sufficient village republic (Personal communication: Vikuto Zhimomi, 15-06-2022, Satakha). The chapter gives the symbolic interpretation of the Sumi cultural traditions and values. It also gives insightful view on the history, polity and social structure of the Sumi which in turn helps us understand the nature of the Sumi participation in the Naga national movement.

The social structure of the village is based on the principle of chieftainship which is termed *Akukau* by the Sumi. The village is the epicenter of the Sumi and all their customs, rituals, social norms and mores can be traced back to uphold and regard for the village. Their loyalties fiercely lay with the village and it was the whole ambit of their lives (Personal communication: Zhetovi Yeputhomi, 10-06-2021, Kohima)¹.

2.1. The Migration Trail Through Local Tradition

Hutton states that “Whatever the origin of the Semas was, it is quite clear that the Dayang valley was the route by which they first entered the present Sema country.

¹ Zhetovi Yeputhomi is a Sumi elder who is the chief of Nitoyi village.

Spreading out fanwise.” (Hutton, 1921, p. 6) The Sumis, like most of the tribes in the world do not have written records of their past which makes it difficult to reconstruct their History. They have however, through oral tradition like folktales, songs and genealogy have handed down from one generation to the other their history, customs and culture (Sema, J. 2013). Speaking about the relevance of oral tradition, Vansina highlights on how it should be central to students pursuing the study of culture, ideology of society also, of psychology, of art and finally of history. He further says, “...whether memory changes or not, culture is reproduced by remembrance put into words and deeds” (Vansina, 1985, p.11). Vansina’s argument establishes the legitimacy of the oral traditions and legends that reveal the migratory route taken by the Naga tribes and in our instance, that of the Sumis in particular, by overlaying the similarity of lore shared by the tribes that believe they originate from similar places.

Legend and myth related to origin stories would put the Sumi right at the heart of the Khezhakeno, a village in Phek district and to Makhel, a village in Senapati district of Manipur (Sumi Hoho Publication, 2021). Beyond the Makhel and Khezhakeno origin myths there are speculations and theories proposed that suppose the Sumi to have origins as far back as 700-500 BC from Mongolia and Sichuan through to Yunnan Province in present day People’s Republic of China. With particular reference to the Sumi’s migratory route the Sumi Hoho in *The History of Sumi Migration* trace two probable routes of Sumi Migration which begins in Mongolia and the Sichuan Province in China which would both converge in the Yunnan Province and thereafter follow the Chindwin river route down to Samshok in Myanmar and then to Makhel. From Makhel, the Sumi had migrated to Khezhakeno from where they moved on to their present location (Sumi Hoho Publication, 2021).

2.2. Culture

The Sumi being traditionally an agrarian society have many practices and customs that are centered on both the cultivation of crops as well as cultural practices that emanate from it. The festivals and *Gennas* that were observed were closely tied to the cycle of clearing the land, sowing, and harvest (Personal communication: Hokishe Yeputhomi, 11-12-2022, Dimapur). The cultural practices of the Sumi and their value systems were also deeply entrenched in the social structure of the villages as will be discussed in a latter section of this chapter. The Sumi also have a rich heritage of folklore and music. The Sumi War dance also known “*aphilo kuwo*” is a powerful representation of the Sumi society. The war dance is a vigorous expression of the physicality of the war-dancers and the “*aphilo kuwo*” stands out among the various cultural dances of the Naga tribes for its sheer vigor and the robust conditions required of the war-dancers to carry out the performance (Personal communication: Atomi Swu, 16-10-2019, Chekiye village)². It is a celebration of the tenacity and the courage, the swiftness and agility of the Sumi warriors.

2.3. Festivals

The main festivals of the Sumi are *Tuluni* and *Ahuna*. They have a rich cultural heritage and observe various festivals, but among all, *Tuluni* is the most celebrated one. It was mainly observed to ward off insects, pests and any other natural disaster from destroying the crops in the fields, and for the crops to grow healthy and yield bountiful harvest. Scheduled usually 28 days after the full moon, the first day of *Tuluni* would roughly correspond to the new moon, with absolutely no sight of the moon. That night was called the night when the moon’s mother mourned over the lost

² Atomi Swu is the Vice President of Western Sumi Hoho.

moon (Personal communication: Hotokhu Chishi, 18-11-2019)³. It was also to be observed towards the end of the fourth month of sowing seeds in the field. By that time, some crops have started to flower, bear fruits and some were even ready to be harvested. However, it was a taboo to eat it before the observing of *Tuluni* (Rotokha, 2005, p. 22). Prayers and offerings were given to Litsaba the God of Wealth and fruitfulness for the protection of crops and for bountiful harvest.

Tuluni is a post sowing festival and was observed after the crops had sprouted up and the first cycle of weeding and pruning completed. It cannot begin until the last person completes the weeding of his field. After which the chief of the village called the *Akukau* fixed and declared the day to begin the festival (Personal communication: Hotokhu Chishi, 18-11-2019). Therefore, there was no uniform day but each village fixed the day of festival according to their convenience. Moreover, earlier times, *Tuluni* was celebrated at different periods of time according to the climatic conditions. The Sumi area can be classified into two climatic regions namely, *ghabo* (hot) and *ajo* (cold) (Hutton, 1921). People living in hot region, sow seeds earlier than those in cold region. Thus, they celebrate earlier, somewhere in the beginning of June than those in cold region, who usually celebrate it towards the end of June (Personal communication: Atomi Swu, 16-10-2019, Chekiye village).

It was in 1966 that the Sumi Tribal Council (STC) resolved to fix July 8 as a common day for the celebration of *Tuluni* by all the Sumis irrespective of regions. Thereafter, the Government of Nagaland declared the day as a gazetted restricted holiday for the government servants (Personal communication: K.L.Chishi, 11-12-2019, Dimapur)⁴.

³ Hotokhu Chishi, member Sumi Literature Board, is a Sumi elder who is well versed with Sumi custom and tradition

⁴ K.L.Chishi, is the former Chief Minister of Nagaland.

2.3 (1). *Tuluni*

Tuluni was originally called *anih* which denotes abundance of everything (Yeptho, 1991, p. 23). After a spell of dry season throughout winter, the season of bountiful crops and vegetation had arrived hence the name. *Tuluni* is the most important festival for the Sumis. It is essentially a post-sowing festival. They indulge themselves in merry-making, meat-eating and rice-beer drinking. It is a time to get together with family, friends and near and dear ones, as also a time for reconciliation, mending broken relations and a celebration of togetherness, unity and harmony. Traditionally, the Sumi farmers were organized into groups of workers with around twenty to thirty in a group with a combination of both men and women called *Aloji*, headed by the eldest male leader called the *Alojitou* (Personal communication: Atomi Swu, 16-10-2019, Chekiye village). Though the whole village observe *Tuluni* it was in the form of each *Aloji* celebrating at their respective leader's house. Originally, it was celebrated for seven continuous days, each day having its own significance. They are:

(a) *Asuzani* (Monday)

Asuzani is translated as millet day from *asu-* millet, *za-* to wash and soak and *ni-* day. The first day of the festival on which no villager must, by any means travel, cross the village. On this day, the womenfolk cleaned, pounded and brewed millet beer to be drunk on the main festival day i.e. the fourth day (Personal communication: Zhetovi Yeputhomi, 10-06-2021, Kohima). It was also the spring cleaning day for the villagers of not just the house, household goods, clothes, and to bathe but also clean and clear their surrounding areas (Zhimo, 2018, p. 25).

(b) *Aghizani* (Tuesday):

It is understood as rice day, from *aghi*-rice grain, *za*-to wash and soak *ni*-day; rice beer was prepared and brewed to be used on *anighini* (Thursday). It was believed that rice beer was best drunk on the third day of brewing and therefore brewed that day for *anighini*. (Personal communication: Hotokhu Chishi, 18-11-2019, Thilixu). Preparation of water, firewood, vegetables and other requirements for the festive day are made on this day.

(c) *Ashigheni* (Wednesday):

Ashigheni comes from *ashi*-meat, *ghe*-butcher, and *ni*-day; in other words the meat-cutting-day. The *Alojis* or groups of workers gathered at their respective leader's house and slaughtered pigs, cows and mithuns that they have reared and the meat equally distributed, aside some for the main feast to be held the next day. In the case of *Tuluni*, the head of the slaughtered animal is to be given to the *Alojitou* rather than the chief which was customary (Zhimo, 2018, p. 26).

(d) *Anighini* (Thursday):

Anighini is the main festival day, from *ani*-another term to denote *Tuluni*, *ghi*-from *aghiu* as in chief, and *ni*-day. It was taboo to work on that day because they believed that if any work was done, storm will destroy the crops. The feast would ensue and the villagers ate, drank and made merry singing folk songs and dancing folk dances often with the *Alojis* competing with each other on those arts. (Achumi, 2005)

For those in love, it was a time for getting engaged and making the relationship official which was carried out in much pomp and show. After that event, whoever

retracted on the relationship was compelled to pay the penalty in whatever form it may be (Personal communication: K.L. Chishi, 11-12-2019, Dimapur).

It was also a day of peace making and fostering good relationship with family, friends and even enemies. Meat was gifted to blood relations, then matrimonial relations and friends, in that order. It was mandatory for every household to cook meat and eat otherwise they strongly believed, paddy would not bear grains properly leading to crop failure and ultimately to famine. Therefore, great care was taken to make sure that even the poorest of the poor ate meat that day. The chief and wealthy men of the village usually gave meat to the old, the poor, the widow and orphans (Personal communication: Zhetovi Yeputhomi, 10-06-2021, Kohima).

(e) *Mucholani* (Friday):

This is the fifth day of the festival. The word is derived from *mucho* meaning married man, *la*-road, and *ni*-day. Therefore, *mucholani* translated as ‘married men’s road day’. On this day, men folk would carry rice-beer, eggs and generous lunch packs filled with meat curry and proceeded to the fields, each their respective fields. There, they would share and enjoy their delicious lunch packs with fresh rice beer and then go clearing and cleaning the road on their way back home. Roads were cleared and cleaned so that during harvest, overgrown plants would not hinder the walk to and from the fields and the village water sources were also cleaned. (Rotokha, 2005)

(f) *Tupulani* (Saturday):

It is called youth day from *tupu*-youth, *la*-road, *ni*-day. The youth of the village played and had fun together (Rotokha, 2005), sports competition held *Aloji-wise*. The most popular sport for girls was *puxa kuxu* (jumping competition), while for boys

there were sports like *sulupho kitche* (wild rounded tuber spearing), banana trunk spearing, *angu kupusu* (Spear kicking), high jump, long jump and kick fight (Personal communication: Hotokhu Chishi, 18-11-2019, Thilixu village)

(g) *Tughakhani* (Sunday):

The name can be broken into its component words *tugha*-evil spirit, *kha*-lock, and *ni*-day. No work was to be done and the day observed with great care to shun the evil spirit. The evil spirit *Tughapu* was believed to be locked out of the village by locking its gate and thereby not permitting anyone entry or exit via the village gate (Personal communication: Zhetovi Yeputhomi, 10-06-2021, Kohima). Naturally, travel was taboo and if violated, one would bear the risk of getting injured or their souls being captured by the evil spirits. Therefore, it was compulsory for all to stay home (Yeptho, 1991). The elaborate *Tuluni* festival thus comes to an end after that day.

2.3 (2). Significance of *Tuluni*

Tuluni facilitates the building up of good relations among the people. For the Sumis, exchange of meat during *Tuluni* is significant. It indicated that the parties accept each other as family or friends. It was taboo for the Sumis to refuse the gift of meat, even if it is from a staunch enemy, the belief being that things will not go well with the one who refused. Once the meat is accepted, it was imperative to forgive each other and cease enmity (Personal Communication: Zhethovi Yeputho, 10-06-2021, Kohima).

Feasting together promoted bonding within the family and clans as also harmony and unity in the society as a whole. Social relations like matrimonial

relations; engagement and marriage were usually done during the *Tuluni*. Most probably due to the reason that it was a time of plenty and gifting could be done generously.

Sports, especially for boys, revealed expertise in hunting and warfare skills and the winners were earmarked to be taken along for future hunting and warfare activities. (Personal communication: Hotokhu Chishi, 18-11-2019, Thilixu village). All these sports interestingly could relate to the art of warfare, the art that Sumis excelled and took pride in. For example, *Sulupho kitche* (*sulupho* spearing) was a sport where *sulupho*; a wild tuber, hard and rounded was rolled down a slope and the objective was to spear it as it descended. It is a sport that requires great accuracy of aim and strength to hit a moving target. Similar was the banana trunk spearing where the banana trunk was kept upright to be speared.

In *angu kupusu* (spear-kicking), the objective was to jump high and kick the tip of the spear that was pierced upright on the ground, an act that required great agility and leg strength as well as core muscles. The purpose of this sport was to cultivate the ability to jump high enough to kick off the shield of an enemy in combat. Long jump was another popular Sumi sport played during *Tuluni*. During early times when the Naga society was a warring community, each village was fortified with trench dug around it and staked with sharp bamboo spikes to ward off enemies. A person who could jump long distance clearly was a critical requirement. He could jump across the trench of the enemy to attack and also jump back to safety after the enemy's head was successfully taken. The best players in these events were therefore identified and taken along in times of war (Personal communication: Zhetovi Yeputhomi, 10-06-2021, Kohima).

The festival was full of these games which reflected the value placed on agility and strength. Naturally, there was a relationship between the festivals where strength and physical prowess was celebrated and encouraged the young men among the Sumi to excel in such skills and qualities (Personal Communication: Atomi Swu, 16-10-2019, Chekiye village). Similarly, the womenfolk would admire the winners of these games and thus the festival was a crowning moment that exemplified the ideal qualities ascribed to the Sumi men. *Tuluni* was of great significance and relevance for the Sumi warriors as it provided the right platform for the young boys to be trained up in the art of martial sports and it also gave opportunity to the skillful players to display their talents and be earmarked as potential top-class warriors. Thus, all these sports, either consciously or unconsciously inculcated in the young Sumi boys the traits of becoming promising warriors right from childhood. In the celebration and practice of *Tuluni* we find a representation of the Sumi society and the various customs and values that the Sumi hold dear. By studying the traditional practices of *Tuluni* one is able to have a glimpse of the archetypal Sumi people.

2.4. Sumi Polity Formation

The Sumis have a system of administration governed by the village chief, each village being an autonomous independent body. The Sumi chieftains have autocratic powers and have the final say in any matters pertaining to their village (Personal communication: Vikuto Zhimomi, 15-06-2022, Satakha). Technically almost all the land in the village belonged to him and he is responsible for parcelling them out to his subjects for *jhum* cultivation (Personal communication: Zhetovi Yeputhomi, 10-06-2021, Kohima). Chieftainship was hereditary and usually the eldest son succeeds the father. He was all powerful and his word was law, he was the chief dispenser of

justice, the chief administrator and also the commander-in-chief in times of war and head hunting (Sema, J. 2013). Therefore, the traditional Sumi chiefs have the pivotal position in the village as the guardian of law and the owner of the village.

In administration, the chief was assisted by the council of elders called the *Chochomi* (Hutton, 1921). Though the *Akukau* was an autocratic ruler, he administered the village as per the long standing customs and practices of the community. Hutton observed:

‘The most important reason for forming the village elders was to learn the opinion of the community on any matter which affects the whole community...’

Therefore, it is evident that though the chief had autocratic powers, he ruled over the village in accordance to the customs and practices of the community. This is supported by the findings of Haimendorf who states that “the chief was autocratic as well as benevolent”. (Haimendorf, 1976, p. 161)

In the traditional Sumi village administration there was no concept of village council though a council of elders did exist. The chief was all in all in matters concerning policy decision-making, administration, war etc. The most important reason for forming the informal council of village elders was to learn the opinion of the community on any matters which affects the whole community (Sema, J. 2013). While selecting his assistants called *Chochomi* who would form his village elders the chief usually nominates the leading men of the clan who is well versed in the customary laws of the Sumi and is respected by everyone in the village. Thus, the members are appointed by the chief and hold office as long as they enjoy the confidence of the chief (Personal communication: Zhetovi Yeputhomi, 10-06-2021, Kohima). Thus it was a centralised system of administration centred on the authority of the *Akukau*.

Akukau is the head of the village and its administration. He is assisted by his councillors called the village elders *Chochomi* (Personal communication: Zhutovi Rotokha, 23-10-2021, Dimapur)⁵. The house of the chief was the court of law and the office of administration. The chief is all in all in matters concerning policy-making, administration, law making, war etc., as each village was an independent state, the court of the chief was the final court of justice (Personal communication: Otova Swu, 11-09-2023, Kohima)⁶. Like other Naga tribes, before the occupation of the territory by the British, the Sumis were living in independent village states without interference from any external powers. The village was under the effective control and administration of the chiefs and his *Chochomis* (Personal communication: Vikuto Zhimomi, 15-06-2022, Satakha). The Sumi chieftainship may also be considered as a segmentary unitary type. In segmentary chieftainship, the chief remains an all-powerful entity and is completely independent from outside interference (Sema, J. 2013). The process of succession to chieftainship following primogeniture is hereditary.

Unlike the other Naga tribes, the Sumi chief occupies the unique position in the village. He was the guardian of law and owner of the village to the point that most of the villages were named after the chief. He is the chief executive, supreme commander of army as well as supreme judge and chief dispenser of justice. The customary practice of settling dispute was very simple and there was hardly any instance where the chief failed to deliver justice to innocent victims.

⁵ Zhutovi Rotokha is a Sumi elder and the Gaon Bura of D.C.Hill, Zunheboto.

⁶ Otova Swu is the Vice President of Sumi Hoho.

2.4 (1). Hereditary Chieftainship

The Sumis has got hereditary chieftainship, which they believe in blood relationship that those who were born from the chieftain family would be better rulers. It was not exactly known when hereditary chieftainship was introduced in Sumi society (Personal communication: Hokishe Yeputhomi, 11-12-2022, Dimapur). Thus, Succession of chieftainship was on the basis of primogeniture and all the lands belonged to the chief.

As almost the entire land and properties in the village belonged to the chief, the Sumi had an authoritarian form of government (Personal communication: Vikuto Zhimomi, 15-06-2022, Satakha). The chieftainship system which is linked closely to the economic, political, religious and judiciary has its basis on the proper interpretation of the customary laws and traditions. The institution of chieftainship has been considered to be the fountainhead of all customs and the retainer of tradition (Sema, J. 2013). This is the main reason why the system of chieftainship could not be ignored, despite varied changes all around. Even after Nagaland attained statehood, the village council act 1970 has protected the interest of the chieftainship and empowered them to hold the post of village council chairman in addition to the post of village chief.

2.4 (2). Formation of Village

Hutton explains the village formation in the following manner

“The Sumis had the widespread practice of establishing new villages. The person who establishes the new village will become the chief and the village usually named after him. It is generally the eldest son of the chief who takes a

colony from his father's village to establish a village in a new area." (Hutton, 1921, p.8)

To establish a new village, one had to have various people to tackle different kind of situations be it physical or spiritual. The Sumi polity is particularly suited to colonization, for it is customary for the eldest son of a Sumi chief to take, when he is old enough to manage it, a colony from his father's village and found a new village at a convenient distance in which his authority is all permanent. If the parent village area is large enough, other sons would take other colonies in other directions, leaving the younger brother to succeed their father in the original village.

Hutton also further elaborates the village creation process thus

"The new chief leading the colony always takes with him a subsidiary chief, who may be one of his *Chochomi*, in order that there may be a pair of them to represent the natural unit of nature, which is a pair, male and female; a chief not thus accompanied would be against the order of nature, and the village he founded therefore unlikely to prosper. Also since the secondary chief would be chosen from another clan, there would be two exogamous groups in the village, making internal marriage possible from the start." (Hutton, 1921, p. 448)

2.5. Socio-Political Organization

The typical Sumi village is an independent self-sufficient entity with clear roles diversified among the various members of the village. The village is governed by a chief called the "*Akukau*" and the Sumi have their own socio-political structure at the heart of which is the "*Akukau*". The other important roles in any Sumi village subordinate to the *Akukau* are:

2.5 (1). *Akukau* (The Chief):

The chief administrator of the Sumi village is the *Akukau*. He is the ultimate authority of the village and has all the powers to take all important decisions (Personal communication: Otova Swu, 11-09-2023, Kohima). The chief with the assistance of his *Chochou* and the elders of the clans also looks into all matters relating to issues of orders, rules and other instructions. (Personal communication: Zhetovi Yeputhomi, 10-06-2021, Kohima)

These orders have to be strictly adhered to by the villagers. The discretion of the chief is also final on matters related to the maintenance of the village surroundings such as clearing of inter village path, path leading to *jhum* lands, construction and maintenance of village water tanks. In a similar manner, matters concerning war and peace with neighboring villages were also to be decided by him. Naturally this was more absolute in the times when head-hunting was prevalent as his primary concern lay in the defense of the village since he was the de-facto commander of war (Personal communication: Vikuto Zhimomi, 15-06-2022, Satakha).

Regarding the cultural and religious responsibilities the chief would assign the time and day for observing the traditional festivals such as *Tuluni* and *Ahuna* in consultation with the elders of the village. During the pre-colonial times, the chief was the supreme judge and tried all kinds of cases. By extension the word of the *Akukau* is the law of the land and everyone in the village had to abide by it.

The *Akukau* was always the person who founded the village or a descendent of someone who founded one (Personal communication: Atomi Swu, 16-10-2019, Chekiye village). The chief has sovereign authority in the village and at the same time this power comes with corresponding responsibility. He enjoys executive, judicial and

military powers and at the same time is unequivocally responsible for the wellbeing and welfare of the people in the village. “This made the *Akukau* the chief judge, chief administrator, chief commander.” (Yeptho, 1991)

The wealth and fortune of the *Akukau* was generally used to feed anyone who would come seeking grace, the poor, the needy, orphans, old and infirm and in essence less fortunate subjects. Thus the *Akukau* perennially entertained guests and required great resources to do so. It was a sign of status and honor to have the following said about them “*pano ye akhu-ajukhu putho mokemi*” which literally translated means “their cups and plates are never dry” alluding to the idea that they always have food on the table (Personal communication: Otova Swu, 21-08-2022, Chekiye village). Thus, the *Akukau* was someone who needed to have great wealth and this was also a necessary condition in the establishment of new villages which were usually founded by the *Akukau*’s brothers and/or sons who would be often supported by the wealth provided by the *Akukau* (Personal communication: Hokishe Yeputhomi, 11-12-2022, Dimapur). Technically, therefore, all the land of the village belonged to the *Akukau* and the allocation of the land was at his discretion. This was the chief source of wealth made him a feudal lord in essence. Additionally, the *Akukau* would often have bonded slaves who were considered his property (Personal communication: Zhutovi Rotokha, 23-10-2021, Dimapur).

There is no specific condition that was needed to be met in order to become an *Akukau*, though often they emerged from the same family due to reasons stated above. Generally, it was expected that someone who would be an *Akukau* should be capable and intelligent, brave and warrior-like such that he could command the respect and obedience of those that followed him. Furthermore, the *Akukau* being the chief arbiter of the village was someone who necessarily had to be well versed with the customary

laws and practices (Sema, J. 2013). Often, the *Akukau* was also a good orator. The *Akukau* was also expected to dole out generous portions of their wealth towards the welfare of the village especially the poorer and needier sections. Therefore, the *Akukau* was someone who needed to be rich and ideally married due to the sheer number of responsibilities that the *Akukau*'s house was obliged to shoulder and required the participation of the wife for performing certain rituals and customs (Personal communication: Zhetovi Yeputhomi, 10-06-2021, Kohima).

2.5 (2). *Chochou* (The Chief's Spokesman)

He is the chief's assistant appointed by him to help in administering public affairs (Hutton, 1921). Chosen by the chief on the basis of his knowledge of traditional customs and practices and should be a person capable enough to run the day to day administration (Sema, J. 2013). His duties ranged from assisting the chief in managing the administration, taking decisions in important village matters, making verbal announcements in the village for important activities like the observing of *Gennas*, festivals etc. All orders of the chief were proclaimed by his assistant the *Chochou*. He is the spokesperson and messenger of the chief, the post is still prevalent in the Sumi villages and he is entitled to free one-day labor in a year from the villager (Personal communication: Vikuto Zhimomi, 15-06-2022, Satakha).

2.5 (3). *Awou* (The Chief Priest)

He is the chief priest of the village selected by the chief and his *Chochomi* (Yeptho, 1991). He is responsible for performing all kinds of rites and rituals. No new village can be formed without the *Awou* performing the necessary rituals required for its establishment. Clearing of forest for *jhum* cultivation can begin only after he

performs the necessary rituals (Personal communication: Hotokhu Chishi, 18-11-2019, Thilixu). He had to initiate the sowing of crops and announced all kinds of *Gennas* that had to be observed relating to crops (Hutton, 1921). It was also his duty to ascertain the auspicious time for fixing the day/s to observe the various *Gennas* and festivals which were the integral parts of the village life.

2.5 (4). *Amuthau* (The First Reaper)

Amuthau always inaugurated the harvest season as he must be the first person to reap the crop after performing necessary rituals (Yeptho, 1991). He also has to be the first person in the village to put grain into the barn (Personal communication: Hokishe Yeputhomi, 11-12-2022, Dimapur). Any kind of grain be it rice, millet, oat, corn etc cannot be harvested by the villagers before *Amuthau* first reaps it.

2.5 (5). *Lapu-u* (The Burier)

Lapu-u was the official burier of the dead. His main duty was to be the first person to dig the grave and then to bury the dead body. Sometimes he was also called the *amoshou*. From amongst the smallest clan in the village, he was chosen and appointed by the chief and the elders (Yeptho, 1991). When a new village was established, he must not only be the first person to dig out and clean the water source but also the first one to scoop out water. Only then it was opened to public for use (Zhimo, 2018).

2.5 (6). *Alojitou* (Commander of *Aloji*)

Aloji was a group of cultivators composed of both the sexes which was an important component of every Sumi village (Hutton, 1921). There can be several

groups of *Alojis* in a village depending on its size and population. *Alojitou* was the leader or the commander of the group selected by its members. He was responsible for taking all important decisions for the group, he decided on what day the group would work on whose field (Personal communication: Otova Swu, 21-08-2022, Chekiye village). They also work in other's fields to earn wages for the purpose of purchasing pigs and cows to be slaughtered during the *Tuluni* and *Ahuna* festivals (Personal communication: Atomi Swu, 16-10-2019, Chekiye village).

With the advent of Christianity and western education, except for *Akukau* and *Chochou* all other traditional posts have all but disappeared (Personal communication: Vikuto Zhimomi, 15-06-2022, Satakha). Roles such as the *Awou* or the *Lapu-u* are no longer relevant as they have been replaced by the clergy and the belief systems that sustained the existence of such individuals in the village ecosystem have died out. The establishment of the church in this regard has eroded much of the traditional roles that existed and put to bed the rituals and *Gennas* that governed the day to day lives of the Sumi as much as all other Naga tribes people (Personal communication: Hotokhu Chishi, 18-11-2019).

With the progression of the village society towards a more modernized space despite still being rural in essence, other customary practices and roles such as that of the *Aloji* and the *amthau* have also entered into decline ((Personal communication: Zhutovi Rotokha, 23-10-2021, Dimapur)). Modern agricultural practices with machinery and the removal of the restrictive superstitions as a result of the introduction of Christianity have eliminated the status and importance of the *amthau*. Furthermore, with the constant and steady migration of village communities towards the urban spaces i.e. towns in search of livelihood opportunities, the numbers needed for the perpetuation of groups like the *Aloji* simply is not tenable. While the

cultivating members of the village still cooperate with each other in their cropping practices which is usually in the form of intensive farming along terraced fields in unfavorable terrain, they do not do so in the pattern of *Alojis* but rather as cooperative groups so as to make their farm work efficient as one person alone would fail to complete their field clearing on time (Personal interview: Khutoli Chishi, 11-12-2019, Dimapur).

In this regard the *Kivimi* of the village still remains in practice as it is not a prescribed role like that of the *Awou*, *Amthau* and *Lapu-u*. *Kivimi* being generally understood as the wealthy and respectable members of the village remains a status that is still given to those who qualify socially in their ability to provide for the villagers either through material wealth or the wisdom of their experiences (Personal communication: Otova Swu, 21-08-2022, Chekiye village). The *Kivimi* was a status bestowed upon those who could perform feasts of merit or were deemed by the village people and the elders of the village as someone with the capacity to deliberate wisely on matters of importance (Personal communication: Hokishe Yeputhomi, 11-12-2022, Dimapur). Therefore, in a sense the Sumi custom of regarding and valuing those with such capabilities remain through the use of the status of *Kivimi*.

2.6. Role of the General Public in the Movement

The Naga national movement during the years delineated for the study was largely a mass movement and the general public was very much involved in the activities of the resistance fighters. The public played their role of support mainly through the supply of rations as well as the input of information that the national workers were cut off from, regarding movement of the Indian military forces as well as the developments in and around villages. Some of the chief ways in which the

general public became involved in the movement were: collection of tax and rations, providing information through various means, facing torture, harassment, imprisonment and even death for supporting the movement, giving whole hearted support through supply of manpower and materials etc.

The key contact person between the villagers and the freedom fighters was the *Runa Peyu* (RP) or the village administrator. In every village, the *Runa Peyu* was appointed by the Federal Government who was responsible to organize every matter in the village pertaining to the welfare of the freedom fighters. Each village had society house where the collected rations were kept and, where the freedom fighters were fed and taken care of by the women society workers, whenever they visited.

Various interview sources describe the role of the RP and its indispensable duties. Hekheto Zhimo, a long time national worker recollects the role of RP in the following manner;

“Village affairs were looked after by the *Runa Peyu* who was like the village administrator. He collected foodstuff and kept at the chieftain’s place or at the society house so as to avoid suspicion. Sometimes, to lighten the burden, the cadres were divided into various houses to be taken care of by the host”.

H.S. Rotokha⁷, a former senior National worker explains thus;

“There was RP and society house in each village. RP detailed people for carrying load on rotation basis. For sudden collection of tax he even used to get it on credit and paid it back later. The RPs were our source, they arranged for things for us and did everything as our agent”.

⁷ H.S. Rotokha, a dynamic leader, visionary and intellectual, has worked for the Naga movement notably as secretary to Sumi Angh, FGN, Law Minister, RGN and also in civil society as the President, Sumi Hoho and Chairman, Sumi Literature Board.

Yezheho Yeptho, a former cadre in the Naga Army gives a different account of his interaction with the RP;

“I was in charge of the camp mess so I use to go myself and bring the collected ration from villages. I would leave a note as I crossed each village to inform about when I would come and collect rations. As I returned from the furthest village, coolies arranged by the RP helped us carry it to our camp.”

Another interviewee, Khuzhevi, an RP himself says thus;

“I was made the RP of my village, Lukhai. I collected monthly 1 kg of grains per house and rations consisting of various edible items voluntarily donated by the villagers. I was helped by volunteers who collected in turns. Coolies were arranged by the RP according to the load to be carried away to the camp. The best means of communication for the national workers with the villagers was through the RP. Sometimes rations were taken outside the village and was given away somewhere in the jungle for fear of being caught by the Indian Army.”

(Personal communication: Khuzhevi, 17-05-2017, Satakha).

The contribution of the villagers and the role of the RP is spoken about by Khehoto, a former Major of the Naga Army in the following words;

“In the village, *Runa Peyu* was like the chairman. With him was also the women society. All information by Naga Army was given to RP. Collection of ration, tax or anything in the village was taken care of by him. He was also responsible to send things to freedom fighters, arranged or looked out for security etc. women had society and every time the Naga Army came to village, food was cooked and served by them, arranged for the place to sleep and saw them off to safety. There was society house like banker and women society people worked there for the welfare of the freedom fighters. Society house was usually kept on

rotation basis. We had killed many cows and pigs and eaten which the villagers did not mind. Whatever the villagers had, they shared willingly with us even during the most difficult time of grouping”.

Thus, we can see that the villagers voluntarily contributed towards the freedom struggle with whatever they had. Efficient mobilization was done by the *Runa Peyus* in all the villages to cater to the needs of the freedom fighters.

The general public was also subject to indiscriminate imprisonment for either being suspected of association with the Naga Nationalists or simply for being related with known National workers. One such glaring example was Kuhoto Zhimomi of Ghukhuyi village who was imprisoned 21 times for supporting the movement (Personal communication: Vitoli Hoky, 30-06-2019, Dimapur)⁸. He was a wealthy chieftain and was also the former Head Dobashi of Kohima. His surviving children Vitoli Hoky and Vikuto Zhimomi testified in an interview conducted that their elder brothers *Atto Kilonser* Kughato and General Kaito were leaders of the Naga Movement and that their house was like the head quarters. Many national workers used to camp there for months together being fed and sheltered all at the expense of their parents. Thus it was no surprise that the Indian government would get him imprisoned multiple times. Likewise, his children Vitoli, Vikuto and Phoishe were also imprisoned in 1957 (Personal communication: Vitoli Hoky, 30-06-2019).

Pizhekhe of Chishilimi, the father of another interviewee Tosheli Sema was a village RP. He was arrested by the army thrice for working for the Naga Army and when repeatedly asked to show the Naga Army camp, he would take them to the abandoned camps and never to the actual camp in spite of being beaten up grievously

⁸ Vitoli Hoky is the daughter of Kuhoto Zhimomi.

several time (Personal communication: Tosheli Sema, 15-04-2018, Chekiye village).

He would have lifelong pain from these beatings.

It was not just imprisonment but burning down of villages and barns, the granaries and only food supplies of the villages as well as the apathetic torture and beatings without cause and justification that the general public had to face (Swu Scato, 2013). In a group discussion at Satakha with Bohovi and group, the harsh reality of what the common people had to face was brought up;

“It was in 1956, I was in my village Shoipu at that time when around 50 Assam Police personnel came and surrounded my village and gathered all the villagers together and checked the houses, fit boys were hit with gun butt and with sticks they were beaten up black and blue.” (Personal communication: Bohovi Zhimo, 14-05-2017, Satakha).

In similar tone, Major Khehoto Zhimo narrates his experience as follows;

“Assam Police battalion came from Sukhai and Zunheboto under captain Hazarika and often beat up our villagers. I was at that time studying in Zunheboto. Captain Hazarika took me to my village Kivikhu one day to interpret. He gathered all the villagers in the ground near the church and segregated smart fit boys, girls, married man and checked all the houses. We reached early in the morning so they randomly killed chickens without permission for lunch. The boys were asked to stand up and when they did so, were beaten up with cane stick and gun butt. They were beaten to the point that the cane sticks broke. When the boys cried out, shouting in pain, they were again whipped with nettles and dunked in water. It was such an agonizing experience. The villagers got scared and fled to the jungles. Henizhe and

Zhenivi fled from there and joined the freedom movement” (Personal communication: Khehoto Zhimo, 14-05-2017, Satakha).

We can see that the cruelty towards the people was one chief reason that made them retaliate and join the movement. Thus it had negative kick back on the Indian Government’s policy of crushing the movement by using brutal force. In fact, it invoked the opposite reaction. For example, Nikuto Sema , a Naik serving in Assam regiment had come home on a holiday but was beaten up black and blue on charges of training the villagers and he shares that:

“After this incident in 1956, Gen. Kaito Sukhai asked the villagers to quickly set up voluntary groups and my village became the head quarter for the voluntary group. Ghokheyi and Nikuto were voluntary captains and I became their writer. I joined the movement with my Mac 3 rifle.”(Personal communication: Nikuto Sema, 16-09-2022, Dimapur).

The disregard for the lives of the common public would emerge in these years of conflict and the tenacity of the national workers and their elusiveness frustrated the Indian forces to the point that they resorted to targeting the public with acts of absolute cruelty in the hope that it would either dissuade the freedom fighters from their resistance or cut off the support system in the form of the villagers who helped kept the movement alive by aiding the national workers. The sheer display of nonchalance for the lives of the Sumi was indicative in the manner in which Natohe Vishepu would become the first Sumi martyr to be shot dead by Assam Police inside Zunheboto jail while in custody (Swu Scato, 2013).

Col. Vihoi Tuccu, another national worker, speaks of how the Sumi areas were totally burnt up by 1956-57 by Indian forces. Paddy hidden in the jungle were also burnt if found out. Even then, the villagers continued to help them with whatever little

they had and gave them all important information, especially regarding the movement of the Indian Army (Personal communication: Vihoi Tuccu, 10-05-2017, Satakha).

“At Chishilimi village the Indian Army came and gathered all the villagers in the ground and burnt their houses and took them up to Kilomi for grouping.

After some days, barns and church were also burnt.” (Personal communication: Tosheli Sema, 15-04-2018, Chekiye village).

Hokishe Sema’s work throws light on the dynamics between these three groups during the conflict: the villagers, the Indian Army and the “terrorists” as labeled by the Indian forces.

“The villagers hardly ever betrayed the terrorists. This could be because the villagers were afraid of the terrorists but the fact also remains that there was hardly any love lost between the villagers and the armed forces.”(Sema, H. 1986)

But this can be contrasted with the portrayal of the relationship between the Naga parties when H.S. Rotokha and many other interviewees substantiates what others have stated, that, “Even during grouping, public helped us by sharing whatever little food they had to eat.”

Vihozhe also mentions how;

“Inside concentration camp there were volunteers who collected ration for fighters. Villagers use to let loose outside the camp livestock such as cow, pigs, goats meant for the Naga Army who would come and take it away at night. Womenfolk would bring rice in *azuhu* (a bamboo water pitcher). They contributed a lot even to the extent that they brought rice underneath their garments.” (Personal communication: Vihozhe Zhimo, 16-02-2017, Dimapur).

The Battle of Satakha which is studied in detail in Chapter 3, explicitly displays the support of general public or villagers for the Naga movement. Only a handful of Naga army, in fact, hardly 50 of them backed by hundreds of neighboring villagers who came voluntarily captured the Assam Police Post at Satakha (Personal communication: Ahovi Zhimomi, 14-05-2017, Satakha).

2.7. Grouping of Villages

To understand the severity of the oppressive policies of the Indian Army in order to suppress the Naga national movement one only needs to consider the most tyrannical measures adopted by the Indian army as a means to destroy the support system that was keeping the movement alive which is termed Grouping.

The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary defines Grouping as "A type of prison, often consisting of a number of buildings inside a fence, where political prisoners, etc. are kept in extremely bad conditions."

The Collins English Dictionary defines it as "a concentration camp is a prison in which large numbers of ordinary people are kept in very bad conditions, usually during a war."

In a similar manner The Cambridge English Dictionary defines Grouping as "A place where large numbers of people are kept as prisoners in extremely bad conditions, especially for political reasons."

The term is most strongly associated with the several hundred camps established by the Nazis in Germany and occupied Europe from 1933-1945, among the most infamous being Dachau, Belsen and Auschwitz. Perhaps it is only when the relative comparisons are made between one of the cruelest human experiences of the modern

era in the form of the holocaust that the Indian Army carrying out such a reprehensible policy is left open to criticism.

But it was not only grouping that was executed the Indian army also conducted the Scorched Earth Policy- a military strategy of burning or destroying crops or other resources that might be of use to an enemy's force. For an agrarian society which depended almost entirely on cultivation for their sustenance, such a policy was akin to a death blow. As we dive deeper into how the Grouping and Scorched Earth Policies were perpetrated by the Indian army it should also throw light on the horrible conditions that the Nagas were forced to endure and in many cases succumb to.

B.N. Mullik the then Personal Secretary of Prime Minister Nehru in *My Years with Nehru* explains the rationale behind the introduction of grouping as a measure to contain the Naga national movement. The movement seemed to only gain momentum growing stronger with the increased support of the general public and at some point the Indian army were not only fighting the armed Naga army but facing the fierce resistance of the public. This would culminate in the attack of Kohima by the Naga Army in June 1956, which prompted the army to taking the Nagas more seriously (Ramunmy, 1988). Thus the recruiting of more troops began and many more Assam Rifles and Armed police battalions were inducted into Assam until ultimately nearly two divisions of the army and 35 battalions of Assam Rifles or armed police were in operation in the Naga Hills and Tuensang frontier division and in the adjoining areas (Mullik, 1972). Clearly there was a concentrated effort to snuff out the resistance exerting a maximum of pressure with security forces, but as history would show, this was not enough to force the national movement or as Mullik terms them "rebel Nagas" into surrender.

In light of these developments it was two civilian officers – Kapoor, the Commissioner, and Carvalho, the Deputy Commissioner, working together in the Naga Hills District who would adopt strategies that were successfully implemented in Malaya to cut off the rebels from the civilian population (Mulik, 1972). They got inspiration from the British who tackled the Chinese insurgency in Malaya where the fighters were cut off from the civilian population. And this was how the plan to group the villages was started. It was a kind of concentration camp where the Nagas in the Naga Hills District were kept under most pathetic conditions at several intervals of time from 1957 to 1964

This is how Mulik describes the process of grouping

“By grouping of villages, the residents of several villages were brought to one central village, which was fenced round and kept under protection of strong security forces. The villagers were allowed to go out during daytime and cultivate their fields under escort but before nightfall they had to come back to the grouped village and there was no permit to go out before daybreak. The plan was to break up the supply and intelligence system of the rebels, who, being a guerilla force depended for their supplies and information on the villagers...

Another step taken by the commissioner (Kapoor) was to raise a force of Naga militia (VG). These two steps i.e. the grouping of the villages and the raising of the Naga Militia, really forced the rebels into the defensive.” (Mulik, 1972, p. 313)

Prior to the grouping of villages, the Indian army had used its maximum pressure to bring the Naga freedom fighters to surrender. However, to their utter dismay instead of surrendering, they became even more resilient and relentless in their fight. Therefore, with the hope of suppressing the movement, using repressive

methods successful elsewhere earlier during the British colonial occupation, the then Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner of the Naga Hills District, D.C. Kapoor and Carvalho respectively came up with the plan to group the Naga villages.

From 1957 onwards, the Indian army grouped the Naga villagers in these concentration camps. However, it was most widespread and severely carried out in the Sumi region as they were fearlessly and relentlessly spearheading the Naga struggle for freedom, both in the army and the civil set up (Swu Scato, 2013). Therefore, the Indian government calculated that if the Sumis were subdued, the movement could be crushed down eventually. Murkot Ramunny, the then Adviser to the Governor of Nagaland in his book *The World of Nagas* opines about the Sumis in the Naga movement as thus;

“Of these tribes, the Semas deserved the greatest respect and attention. In the armed rebellion it was the Semas who took the lead in Tuensang and then in Naga Hills. The bulk of service personnel from Naga Hills during the past years came from the Sumi tribe and these ex-servicemen and ex-guerrillas of the last war formed the hard core and spearheaded the attacks of the Naga rebels from the very beginning. By the end of 1956 apart from having a large number of trained veterans among them, the Semas had nearly half the number of the total organized armed underground among them. They also had in possession half the quantity of arms and ammunition. As the armed rebellion spread into the Naga Hills District, the Semas continued to be in the fore-front under General Kaito, Commander-in-chief of the underground Naga Safeguards.” (Ramunny, 1988, p. 105).

The main objective of grouping the villages was to curb the villagers from supporting or sending rations and information to the freedom fighters. Being a

guerilla force, they depended on the villagers for their supplies and information. As such, it was presumed that if all the villagers were locked up in concentration camps under vigilant surveillance, the freedom fighters would be compelled to surrender as they would not be able to go on fighting on empty stomachs.

For the same purpose, during the same time, the government of India had also imposed the scorched earth policy. Scato Swu, former *Kedahge*, notes this in his work *Hails and Blames* that, “The Indian Army stopped the Nagas to cultivate their fields from 1956 to 1957 so as to cut short the food supply to the freedom fighters” (Swu Scato, 2013, p. 36). According to the letter dated 3rd August 1957, sent by the then president of the Federal Government of Nagaland Khriesanisa Seyietsu to the government of India; 79,794 houses, 26,550,000 maunds of paddy rice and approximately 612 out of 852 Naga villages have been burnt down by the Indian Army (Seyietsu in Nuh & Lasuh, (Ed), 2002). Paddy fields were also destroyed throughout Nagaland, for example, the fields in Khehoi and Nikhekhru villages were destroyed by the Indian Army on 10th June 1957. The terrified villagers had to flee to the jungles for safety. They faced immense hardship living like wild animals staying in unhygienic condition without proper shelter or food to eat resulting in loss of many lives Personal communication: Hotovi Zhimomi, 14-05-2017, Satakha).

“When the Indian Army got to know about their jungle hide outs, it was not spared but burnt down and so was the little food grains they managed to hide. The villagers were even killed if found, for instance, Vizhekhru of Jekiye village was killed in one such encounter.” (Personal communication: Ghohuto of Jekiye, 18-05-2017, Jekiye village).

By 1957 the Indian government called out the villagers hiding in the jungles by offering general amnesty for those who returned while stern action was to be taken for

those who refused to come back home (Iralu, 2000). These messages were loudly announced through microphones fixed to Dakotas and helicopters. However, soon after they came back and settled in their respective villages, they were herded to concentration camps and kept under most unhygienic and pathetic conditions resulting in loss of many precious lives owing to starvation and outbreak of epidemics like malaria, typhoid, dysentery, scabies etc.

Grouping was imposed in Sumi area for four times in varying degrees; first grouping, from May 1957 to July 1958, second grouping was from February to June 1959, third grouping was from April 1960 till December 1960, fourth and the last one from July 20th 1963 till May 1964 which specifically targeted the families and relatives of the freedom fighters and was imposed in retaliation to the Naga Army's attack on Indian Army convoy at Bobo river commanded by Brig. Tokhuvi Tuccu in July 1963 (Personal communication: Tokhuvi Tuccu, 26-08-2016, Chekiye village). This time around, only the freedom fighters' parents, wives and children were transported to Ghaspani near Dimapur which was very far away from their native place with the hope that the freedom fighters would surrender for the sake of their kinsmen. However, instead of surrendering they decided to continue fighting even more vigorously than before to bring the Indian government to realize that use of force was futile and that the Naga issue can be settled only through political negotiation (Personal communication: Tokhuvi Tuccu, 26-08-2016, Chekiye village).

The Sumis were grouped village-wise in the following concentration camps:

1. Jekiye concentration camp

(a) Shoixe (b) Kiyekhu (c) Jekiye (d) Ghukhuyi

2. Kiyeshe concentration camp

(a) Vishepu (b) Kiyeshe

3. Kivikhu concentration camp

- (a) Kivikhu

4. Satakha town concentration camp

- (a) Xuivi (b) Kilo (c) Satakha Old (d) Satakha New (e) Khukiye-Lukhayi (f) Hoishe
(g) Shoipu (h) Nasami (i) Kichilimi

5. Shena New concentration camp

- (a) Nunumi (b) Usutomi (c) Shena Old (d) Shena New

6. Mudutsugho concentration camp

- (a) Mudutsugho (b) Khughuto (c) Chisholi (d) Chishili (e) Heboli

7. Zunheboto (Kulubohu) concentration camp

- (a) Sheyipu (b) Shotomi (c) Natha Jimo (d) Natha Yeptho

8. Zunheboto (Khuwaboto) concentration camp

- (a) Asukhomi (b) Lochomi (c) Lizu Naghuto (d) Lizu Aviqato (e) Lizu Old (f) Lizu
New (g) Baimho

9. Sukhalu concentration camp

- (a) Sukhalu (b) Yemishe

10. Saghemi concentration camp

- (a) Saghemi (b) Vedami (c) Yezami (d) Phuye New

11. Suruhuto concentration camp

- (a) Surumi (b) Kholeboto

12. Sapotimi concentration camp

- (a) Sapotimi (b) Tichipami

13. Yangli concentration camp

- (a) Yehemi (b) Kiyetha (c) Lithsami

14. Zungti concentration camp

(a) Zungti (b) Kulhopu (c) Xukhepu (d) Nikuto (e) Ghukiye

15. Litsami concentration camp

(a) Vekuho Old (b) Vekuho New (c) Asukhuto (d) Yesheluto (e) Sukomi (f) Imlomi
(g) Litsami

16. Apukito concentration camp

(a) Lokobomi (b) Naghutomi

17. Awotsakilimi concentration camp

(a) Awotsakilimi (b) Phuye Old

18. Rotomi concentration camp

(a) Rotomi Old (b) Rotomi New (c) Philimi (d) Khrimitomi (e) Mapulumi
(f) Lotisami

19. Lumami concentration camp

(a) Lumami (b) Shitsumi (c) Zaphumi (d) Allaphumi

20. Marumi concentration camp

(a) Marumi (b) Mukhami (c) Phushimi (d) Ajiqami (e) Sasutami (f) Ijeto

21. Akuluto concentration camp

(a) Lumithsami (b) Shichimi (c) Sutemi (d) Alaphumi

22. Litami concentration camp

(a) Lita New (b) Lita Old

23. Satami concentration camp

(a) Satami (b) Lizutomi (c) Ngozubu (d) Koiboto

24. Alato (Pherima) concentration camp

(a) Hovishe (b) Kuhoxu (c) Kiyezu (d) Hozukhe (e) Nikhekhu (f) Nihokhu
(g) Khehoi

25. Pimla concentration camp

(a) Shoxuvi (b) Kiyevi (c) Pimla (d) Ghowoto (e) Lhothavi

26. Dimapur (Air Field) concentration camp

(a) Juikhu (b) Aqaphumi (Lhomithi)

27. Pughoboto concentration camp

(a) Natsumi (Jimomi, 2008, pp. 87-91)

Thus far, we have seen how the groupings were conducted and carried out as a strategy. The lived experiences of the surviving individuals were interviewed, or their narratives studied and the responses and comments about the grouping experience are highlighted below. Jimomi (2008) describes the process of villagers setting up their own concentration camps in the following manner,

“In preparation for the concentration camps, men folk from each village were made to cut down trees and construct the camp and its two layered fence. Each household had to make and provide for the bamboo spikes to be stuck in between the two fences. Some households had to make five thousand to six thousand pieces.” (p. 86)

Hotovi Zhimomi of Khukiye Village supplements this information in a personal communication describing the layout of the camp as “...inside the fence was an all-inclusive village-wise habitation area with long rows of shacks”. His wife Kheholi Zhimomi further describes the arrangements calling it “...a very long house with rows of small rooms each having raised platform made of bamboo meant for sleeping; on the side was the kitchen” (Personal Communication: Kheholi Zhimo, 14-5-2017, Satakha).

However, there were separate arrangements for those who were clearly related to prominent freedom fighters, e.g. the hut for the parents and family of the then Atto Kilonser, FGN Kughato and C-in-C of the Naga Army, Gen Kaito who were brothers. Their sister Vitoli Hoky describes the arrangements stating:

“...the hut for Kuhoto Zhimomi’s family was kept isolated from the rest in order to keep a close eye on them and to monitor their every move because two of his sons were the leaders of the movement viz. General Kaito Sukhai and Kughato Sukhai the Prime Minister of the Federal Government of Nagaland” (Personal communication: Vitoli Hoky, 30-06-2019, Dimapur).

The intensity of the scrutiny and sternness of the discipline is mildly played down by Mulik in his accounts where he mentions that “The villagers were allowed to go out during daytime and cultivate their fields but before nightfall they had to come back to the grouped village and were never allowed to go out before daybreak” (Mulik, 1972, p. 313). There was just one gate for passage and it was strongly guarded by the army personnel. Whatever the case, before going out, the inmates had to take permission through their village chief and explain the reason for the outing. Only then, were they allowed to go out after being stamped on the arm, which had to be shown again before entering the camp. If anyone attempted to go out without permission, he or she would be doing so at their own risk.

This is the recollection of (Personal communication: Zhutovi Rotokha, 23-10-2021, Dimapur) who speaks of the killing of two members of Natha village, “Hokhuyi of Natha Old and Hezhumo of Natha New were shot dead when they went out to see off the freedom fighters” (Personal communication: Zhutovi Rotokha, 23-10-2021, Dimapur). But it wasn’t just those who violated the camp laws that suffered the consequences but the members of the village penalized as a whole in order to curb

any inclination towards dissident. Thus, Hotovi recalls how Bohoyi Zhimomi, GB of Nunumi was imprisoned for going out without taking permission but in one instance, the whole of Khukiye-Lukhai villagers were forced a punishment of digging and leveling out a ground because one of its members had gone out on his own

Life in the concentration camp was miserable with meager food to eat and disgusting sanitation system, long rows of toilets were made inside the fence near the house itself making the stench unbearable (Personal Communication: Katoli Zhimo, 14-5-2017, Satakha). Whenever inmates expired, the mortal remains were also buried inside the fence in the habitation area itself. Such unhygienic conditions led to the outbreak of epidemics like dysentery and sores all over the body. A horrific portrayal of camp conditions and the sufferings and untold miseries of those who were confined within are borne witness by interviews conducted with surviving inmates as seen in the passages to follow.

In a group discussion conducted on 14-05-2017, Kheholi Zhimomi who was an inmate of the concentration camp as a young girl recollected her gruesome experience. Her aunt, whose husband Vighozhe Zhimomi was a freedom fighter went into labor. However, there was no privacy for delivery as the rooms were crowded with people sleeping all in a row without much space. She had to deliver her baby in such a condition and unfortunately, the baby died shortly after birth due to lack of medical care or facility.

Her grandfather fell sick because of all the hardships and ultimately passed away. Not long after, her younger infant sister also fell seriously ill and passed away too. Her father also fell seriously ill but was fortunate to survive. Likewise, many people fell ill with fever, dysentery, malnutrition and sores due to starvation and unhygienic environment. Both the parents of her neighbor from Nasami village had

died of starvation leaving behind their only infant daughter; it was such a heart wrenching situation. She continued to narrate about how an old grandmother who did not have anything to eat went around other's rooms in search of food but everyone refused to let her in, being afraid that she might pass away while in their room. It would have then been a burden for them to bury her. Truly, one day, she died outside in the compound. Too many people died everyday so no one could help the other for digging the grave and burying. Such was the plight of people inside the concentration camps she added (Personal Communication: Kheholi Zhimo, 14-5-2017, Satakha).

Likewise, Hotovi Zhimomi a three-time inmate of the concentration camps at Satakha also recounts his experience as thus;

“From 1956 onwards multitude of Indian Army came to Sumi area and we faced extreme misery that it seemed as if there were no more sun rays in our land. In 1957 all the Sumis were grouped so as to check them from giving ration to the fighters. In the evening, they were gathered village-wise for roll call. If anyone was found missing, the whole of the missing person's villagers were punished. Chiefs were especially harassed and beaten up for letting the person go missing.

Many people died in the concentration camp at Satakha. I remember one Hozhukhe Achumi from Nasami died and before people could finish digging his grave, his 4 year old child also passed away so she was made to lie under her father's arms and were buried together. Sometimes in a day ten to twenty people also died and there was a lot of hue and cry and mourning. People died almost every day. I am a witness to this; I saw it with my very own eyes. People died of starvation and diseases caused by unhygienic conditions with no proper sanitation.” (Personal Communication: Hotovi Zhimo, 14-5-2017, Satakha)

Thus, it is without doubt that the Sumi villagers suffered beyond measure in the concentration camps amounting to gross violation of human rights. Even then, defying all odds and risking their very lives, the villagers continued to support and share what little food they had to eat with their fellowmen who were fighting for freedom. A meager ration of rice, wheat, *dal* (lentils) and utility items like a pot and a blanket per house were occasionally provided by the Indian government (Personal Communication: Yezheho Yeptho, Havildar, 17-5-2017, Lukhai).

In an interview on 17-05-2017, Nizheto narrated that he was a freedom fighter and was responsible for going to the concentration camp to collect yearly house tax of rupees five per house and a ration of one *powa* (approximately 250 gms) of rice or pounded maize per house and whatever edibles or vegetables each wanted to donate. It was usually collected twice a month. All the necessary arrangements were done in advance by the volunteers called the voluntary group from within the inmates of the camp. This group was responsible for collecting the rations, giving information on when to come and collect, taking out bamboo the spikes stuck in between the two fences so that they can come and collect the ration at night and sticking them back after they had left (Personal Communication: Nizheto Zhimo, Naik, 17-5-2017, Khukiye).

Apart from the activity of the voluntary group, many shared whatever little they had in their own possible ways. The most common way of reaching out was when the inmates were allowed to go out for fetching water. It was under that pretext that the elongated water carriers made of bamboo (*azuhu*), filled up with rice grains and other edibles got sneaked out of the camp without suspicion and given away (Personal Communication: Khutoli Chishi, 11-12-2019, Dimapur).

The freedom fighters also often came to meet their parents and family especially in the evening time. Naturally, this had to be carried out in a covert manner under the cover of twilight. So, when the coast was presumed clear, those inside the camp would loudly call out “*suwo, suwo*”, a typical call used by Sumis to call their pigs for feeding but inflected enough that it sounds slightly different to the trained ear. And under the pretext of feeding the swine, the “*suwo, suwo*” also told the freedom fighters it was safe to come and hurriedly meet their families and also take away whatever foodstuff was packed for them. (Personal Communication: Vitoli Hoky, 30-06-2019, Dimapur)

Considering the times and conditions in which the Nagas found themselves during these years it would have been almost impossible to have records of the material contributions donated by the common folk yet against all odds one such document was retained by Village Council’s office of Vishepu village which records in almost meticulous detail the support provided to the freedom movement.

Thus, except for the loss of lives, torture and sufferings the villagers went through, the supply of rations to the freedom fighters could not be effectively checked by keeping them in the concentration camps as the Naga movement was a people’s movement backed by almost the entire population. Murkot Ramunny observed that grouping of villages increased the misery and suffering of the people and made them bitter against the administration (Ramunny, 1988). Instead of curbing the movement, it got the wrath of the public who became even more resentful towards the Indian rule. The grouping of villages had thus miserably failed to bring in the expected desirable result for the Indian government. It had to accept the reality that the Naga movement could never be suppressed by brutal force as it had already been experimented even to the point of extreme human rights violation. B.N. Mullik, aptly states thus;

“Yet it must be admitted that though the grouping of a large number of villages, from which the rebels had been deprived of their supplies ... and though there was nearly one security troop for every adult male Naga in the Naga Hills-Tuensang area, there was never a time when it could be claimed that the Naga guerrillas had been broken into submission.” (Mullik, 1972, p.313)

The only option then, was to settle the matter through a political dialogue. Accordingly, cease fire agreement was signed between the two on 24th September 1964, not long after the dispersal of the fourth and final grouping of the Sumis at Ghaspani. This ushered in the new era of peace talks and political negotiation between the Naga and the Indian government at the prime ministerial level.

2.8. Material Contribution of Communities To The Movement (Vishepu Village: Case Study)

The village of Vishepu can be taken as a sample of the manner in which the general public supported the national movement. This material support came in the form of cash, and kind like livestock and food-grains, as well as weaponry and ammunition. Fortunately, the records of Vishepu village survive and can be referred to as authentic proof of the participation of the general public.

A brief summary of the voluntary donations and support provided by the village during the first call for support is recorded as:

Cash	: 1670 rupees
Livestock	: 24.5 pigs, 11 cattle animals (mithun and cows), 9 chicken
Food grains	: 14 granaries each approximately holding 200 tins of grains
Weapons/Guns	: 12 guns of various bores, 2 crossbows

Ammunition : 475 rounds of bullets, 2 LMG magazines, 1 Sten Gun Magazine,
2 grenades, 5 kgs of gunpowder, 5 kgs of lead pellets, 50 arrows.

The Vishepu village accounts also reveal the massive monetary impact of the involvement of the villagers with the movement both in terms of cash and kind. The records reveal the total amount of material wealth either donated or lost during conflict as a result of the burning of entire villages which was the method employed by the Indian armed forces during the years subsequent to their deployment to the Naga areas. As per the Vishepu Village Council records the total value of the material wealth spent and lost by the village during the conflict from 1956-1973 amounts to Ninety-One Lakh Twenty-Six Thousand Nine-Hundred and Thirty Rupees (91,26,930) adjusted for inflation one can only assume the amount would now be double or triple the quoted amount.

S. No.	Item	Donated	Lost/Burnt	Either Donated or Lost/Burnt
1	Houses	-	64 Nos	-
2	Granaries	-	554 Nos	-
3	Paddy	-	34170 tins	5550 tins
4	Millet	100 Tins	6830 tins	2280 Tins
5	Maize	300 tins	7160 Tins	3500 Tins
6	Rice	15760 Kgs	-	900 Kgs
7	Mithun	22 Nos	29 Nos	17 Nos
8	Cow	54 Nos	44 Nos	32 Nos
9	Pig	211 Nos	100 Nos	54 Nos

10	Chicken	354 Nos	-	51 Nos
11	Cash	69800	-	-
12	Goat	11 Nos	15 Nos	-
11	Guns	1 Nos	0	1 Nos

Table 2.1: Tabulation of the details of donation

The whole village was razed to the ground by the Indian Army on 13th March 1955. A total of 65 houses with 554 Granaries which included Church Building and Granary. In a similar manner Bohovi of Shoyipu shares how his parents killed and fed the Naga Army with 11 mithuns, and also donated 1 barn of maize in 1956 along with 2 guns (Personal Communication: Bohovi Zhimo, 14-5-2017, Satakha). So too Hotovi of Khukiye whose family donated 1 rifle and 500 bullets (Personal Communication: Hotovi Zhimo, 14-5-2017, Satakha) and Ahovi of Satakha who donated 2 World War II rifles to the cause (Personal Communication: Ahovi Zhimo, 14-5-2017, Satakha).

2.9. The Role of Women

It is an indisputable fact that women played an important role in the course of the Naga struggle for freedom. Though they may not have primarily fought on the frontline, they worked continually and tirelessly in supporting their men folk, without which, it would not have been possible for the struggle to go on for so long.

Whenever a battle was fought, it was the women who cooked and provided food for the warriors, took care of the dead body, looked after the wounded and nursed them back to health. During the most difficult times of conflict between the Nagas and the Indian army, when the men folk were tortured, harassed and locked up, it was the woman who took the entire responsibility of taking care of the household; who went

out to the fields for cultivation and brought food for the family, which was the only source of sustenance. The women in Sumi area had an association called the Sumi Women Federation, which was a sub-unit of the Naga Women Federation. The main function of the Sumi women federation was to open up women societies in all the Sumi villages. This society will in turn take care of the Naga freedom fighters' welfare such as cooking and feeding, arranging for their stay and safe passage by guiding them whenever they came to the village. Besides these, women suffered untold miseries bearing the brunt of conflict. However, it is unfortunate that their role has so far been marginalized.

Through the systematic employment of the interview method, especially by interviewing those women who had first-hand experience of working in the Sumi Women Federation during the most difficult times of the Naga struggle, backed up by secondary sources, an effort was made to retrieve from the memories, the impact of women in the Naga struggle for freedom and one of the objectives of this chapter therefore is an attempt to bring out the significance of the role that the women played in the Naga Struggle for Freedom with special reference to the Sema Women Federation as a case study.

2.10. Organization of the Sumi Women Federation (SWF)

Ramunny (1988) cites the genesis of the Naga Women Federation in the mid 50's with the foundation being laid in 1956 in the NNC session held at Sanis. This would give a clear organizational structure and direction to the participation of women in the freedom struggle under the aegis of the Naga National Council. The organization soon became very popular among the Nagas and each tribe established its own unit at a local level. These tribal units functioned as the sub-unit of the

Federation. Thus, in Sumi area, the women were organized under the Sumi Women Federation. It was placed under the civil section hence its members were not armed and would not fight in battles but instead formed the support system for the Naga freedom fighters.

Mrs. Hotoli Awotsakili, the second President of the Sumi Women Federation in a personal interview says thus;

“The Sumi Women Federation was a unit of the Naga Women Federation under the NNC. Each village had a sub-unit called the Women Society. The functionaries of the Sumi Women Federation were the president, vice-president, general secretary and the assistant general secretary. Apart from this, we also selected around ten to twenty helpers to travel and run errands for the federation. These helpers also went from village to village and collected a nominal tax in cash for the federation which was needed for running the office such as purchase of type writer, stationery etc. but no food item was collected for us separately. It was during the time of turbulence so no general conference could be held but the unit members discretely use to go to Kohima to meet the Naga Women Federation office bearers to get information and guidance.”

Mrs. Hotoli Awotsakili joined the Naga Movement in 1955 and served as the first vice-president of the Sumi Women Federation from 1956 to 1957 and the second president from 1958 to 1960.

2.10 (1). Role/Function of the SWF

The chief aim of the Sumi Women Federation was to go from village to village in all the Sumi area and open up Women Societies in all the villages. This objective was soon attained and there was no Sumi village left without its own Women Society.

These Women Societies continued to survive and function actively, even during the most difficult times when the villagers were herded in the concentration camps (Personal Communication: Hotoli Awotsakili, 22-03-2018, Zunheboto). It was thus aptly stated by the then adviser to the governor of Nagaland Murkot Ramunny that the Naga Woman's Society along with the Naga Youth Movement stood the test of all the requirements of a guerilla war (Ramunny, 1988). The Sumi Women Federation played a multi-faceted role of supporting the Naga movement, while all along promoting cleanliness and hygienic way of living, preservation and promotion of Sumi culture, and advocating of women's rights and education.

Hotoli Zhimomi, in a personal interview, attests the zealous efforts made by the Sumi Women Federation in establishing the Women Societies in the villages. In Pughoboto area, she along with her friend Shikhuli joined the movement in 1956. She was made the first general secretary and her friend, the first president of the Pughoboto unit of the Sumi Women Federation with its head-quarters at Mishili village. They went around various villages in Pughoboto area like Kitami, Awohu, Kichili, Natsumi, Ghokimi, Mukalimi etc. to meet women and help them establish women societies in their villages. The response was extremely encouraging and positive and all the villages in the area opened up Women Societies especially meant for catering to the needs of the Naga freedom fighters (Personal Communication: Hotoli Zhimomi, 15-09-2019, Thilixu).

It is to be noted that all the while they travelled exclusively on foot to carry out their duties, and mostly at night, for fear of being caught by the Indian army camps (Personal Communication: Hotoli Awotsakili, 22-03-2018, Zunheboto). They were sometimes led and guided by the Naga Youth Movement (NYM) members but most

of the time had to go on their own in big or small groups depending on the requirement and the nature of their missions.

The members of the Women Societies had several important duties to perform; they nursed and took care of the injured soldiers; took care of the mortal remains of the Naga army personnel killed in action (Personal Communication: H.S. Rotokha, 12-5-2017, Zunheboto); they gathered in safe places and stitched the rank badges and uniforms of the Naga army; whenever the Naga freedom fighters came to the village, it was their duty to cook and feed them, take good care and see them off to safety (Personal Communication: Eustar Chishi Swu, 18-2-2019, Thilixu Village). Thus, the Naga Women's Society worked in the capacity of cooks, tailors, nurses and care-givers of the cadres (Yonuo, 1974, p. 215). Khetoni Yeputhomi, who was an active member of the Women Society, in a personal interview, confirmed that they always took care of the Naga freedom fighters whenever they came to the village, they cooked and fed them properly, guarded and helped them to safely exit the village precincts. The membership was open to all the women in the village and the society leaders would mobilize and work with the required number of volunteers as and when the need arose.

In the event of any battle, women cooked food, packed and supplied it to the Naga fighters. In the case of the Battle of Hoshepu; the first Indo-Naga battle which was fought day and night without ceasing of fire for 7 days from 4th September to 10th September, 1955, women volunteers even dared to go crawling to the battle field itself, risking their lives and hand-fed the brave Sumi soldiers twice a day as they could not afford to free their hands even for eating their meals (Swu, V. 2018).

In another interview with Mrs. Tohuli Yeputhomi, former active member of the Women Society of Vishepu village, she narrates;

“It is still fresh in my memory cooking for the Naga soldiers when the Indian army outpost at Kiyesh village was attacked by them, our village Women Society members cooked and supplied *aghulhe* (war food-pack). We sliced cooked meat and mixed it with rice, making it ready to eat and tied it just once with bamboo rope so that it could be opened up easily. I was the leader of the Society in working for the Naga Army Head Quarter people that was stationed in my village Vishepu, as well as for the fighters attacking Kiyesh outpost. Around 30 of us unmarried women in our village worked day and night to prepare and provide food thrice a day which was to be given in the morning, noon and evening for the Naga army at war.” (Personal Communication: Tohuli Yephthomi, 29-05-2018, Hakhizhe)

Apart from the crucial role played by them in supporting the Naga freedom fighters, the Sumi Women Federation also promoted the preservation of the Sumi culture by encouraging the use of cultural dances, folk-songs and traditional clothes which was basically hand-woven shawls and *mekhalas*. In her own words Mrs. Hotoli Awotsakili said thus;

“We encouraged the use of traditional clothes. The art of weaving clothes was not widespread those days, only a few women knew. Samples of Sumi traditional *mekhalas* and shawls were passed on from village to village to make them learn the design and encourage their use. We did not go to villages to teach them ourselves but, samples of cloth were sent for them to learn. Some women in the village who already knew weaving learnt the design and taught others. *Chekutha qhumu*, a colorful Sumi shawl for women, that has become popular these days was not in widespread use those days so, we passed it from village to village to make them learn that design. Earlier the most commonly

used shawl was the *apu assu qhumu*, the black and red combination shawl commonly worn by men. We also encouraged the use of our traditional folk-songs, folk-dances etc. During turbulent times, when all the men were seized by the Indian Army, women were made to carry load of the freedom fighters from village to village so we objected to this practice. We also promoted hygienic way of living and encouraged women's education as we wanted our girls to be educated".

Thus, apart from its primary role of being the agent of background support to the Naga freedom fighters, the Sumi Women Federation also had a vast program that dealt with various aspects such as the preservation of their culture and the uplift of women. The objection to loads being carried by women can be an indication that women were willing to give in their best to support and care for the men in the war front but at the same time, they were not willing to tolerate exploitation or being taken for granted. They wanted to make sure that they were being treated with kindness and dignity.

It was not only the Federation that proactively worked towards the cause in any given capacity, there are numerous examples of individuals who would recount memories during those years in harsh terms. In an interview with Mrs. Vitoli Hoky she would cite her experiences in this manner:

"As men were not allowed to move about it was mostly women who went and cultivated and shared food with the men and fighters. Visaru of Chozuba use to search for guns from Kohima side and sold to my brother Kaito (who went on to become the C-In-C of the Naga Army) in lieu of chilly, soya beans etc. women were not checked so my brother Kaito made me and Yenili our maid, to carry arms and ammunition. Yenili carried 1000 rifle bullets and I carried 2 muzzle

loading guns and crossed Chozuba gate to go towards our village, Ghukhuyi. My brother Kaito was riding on a horse and after crossing the gate he took the load.

During grouping time when the villagers were kept inside the concentration camps, they hid edibles in the jungle like rice, yam, chilly etc. when it was brought back, womenfolk slid the edibles in bamboo water containers and took it to the fence and in the pretext of calling pigs for feeding signaled to the fighters to come and collect. Only women could do this as men were beaten up.” (Personal Communication: Vitoli Hoky, 30-06-2019, Dimapur)

Another individual who had deep ties with the people involved in the movement and recalls their individual experiences which went beyond the norm is Eustar Chishi Swu, wife of the late Isak Chishi Swu, Chairman NSCN (IM). In interviews with Eustar she speaks of her personal involvements stating that she joined as personal helper on August 25, 1971 to Lhovili, President, SWF, Pughoboto Unit.

Talking about her trip to China in 1975 where they would undergo training as well as to bring arms. She speaks of women being trained along with men and being taught kung fu but realizing the futility of that exercise choosing to go for first aid nursing training as a more practicable recourse.

“Avuli came with Isak. I went with Muivah. We were taught how to throw hand grenade, how to take defense, how to fire gun etc. Women were taught how to bring the wounded soldier and tie the wound, how to give medicine- first aid was taught. We lodged at Molong post but for training, we were taken out in the jungle and trained by Chinese army. Trained on how to ambush, how to fire at enemy coming from above on a rope etc.

We had to come back home as the Shillong Accord was signed by the federal government. All of us came back home with arms load. Women also carried 1 pistol, 1 semi gun, ammunitions etc. we carried hand grenade as well. Load was so heavy. While coming back took us around 3 months, we stayed in eastern Naga (Burma). We all came back together.

Women can do what men can do but Naga people instead of encouraging, discourages women. We kept telling them to take us for war in defense like the Kachins but they never took us. Kachins- menfolk killed enemy and women captured guns, we also wanted to do so but were never allowed. So we use to feel bad. Avuli and I use to say after coming back from China training told them to take us to war come what may, we were willing to even give our lives but they never took us. We use to do nursing, taking care of sick.” (Personal Communication: Eustar Chishi Swu, 18-2-2019, Thilixu Village)

Perhaps there is an element of the Naga men’s perception of women as needing protection and being homemakers in this experience. Her experience would highlight the typical outlook of men and their inclination to be gentler to women and perhaps to a large extent denying the capacities of women to participate in a more vigorous and active role. Despite this the Naga women worked within the limitations of what society traditionally expected of them and would go on to prove that they were not only indispensable but were ultimately the reason why the movement endured and had the longevity it did. In another instance of the special and at the same time disparaging treatment given to women Eustar cites the way in which farewells occurred in the Sumi household as follows

“While going to china elders said “guys are ok but girls have to be given some money to buy edibles”. So we were given small amounts from time to time. I

never used it but collected it and finally had 1000 rupees, the largest amount I had so far. I saved that and got married according to God's plan." (Personal Communication: Eustar Chishi Swu, 18-2-2019, Thilixu Village).

Along a similar but somewhat divergent vein were the families and wives of the freedom fighters. These were individuals who were marked as the vulnerabilities of the unrelenting freedom fighters. They were the only liabilities the Indian Army had as leverage against the revolutionary movement being led by their husbands and brothers. One such instance is of Mrs. Hotoli Swu, the wife of Scato Swu who was actively involved in the Naga freedom movement as the President of the Naga Federal Government. On this account, she had to bear immense hardship and suffering fending not only for herself but also for her young children. The Indian army would regularly terrorize them with gunshots; her house was burnt down to the ground and razed three times and so it was no surprise that nobody wanted to be her close neighbor, for fear of association three of her neighbors would shift houses further away to another place for safety (Swu Scato, 2013).

At Satakha, barely after three days of delivery of her second son Hukato, she was arrested along with her younger sister Vitoli and kept in the lock up the whole day with the young infant. (Personal Communication: Vitoli Hoky, 30-06-2019, Dimapur)

In an interview with Hotoli's eldest son Atom, he recalled how life was for his mother during those years.

"Very frequently the army came to our house, asking father's whereabouts and fired gun shots trying to threaten mother. We used to be extremely scared. One time the Indian army camp at Kilomi was attacked early in the morning around 4 led by Tokhuvi Tuccu. I was a small boy then. I remember I was still asleep

when a young girl, Vikheli Zhimo, who was our neighbor, came running from fetching water and informed my mother that many Indian army soldiers were coming towards our house. So we immediately fled for safety to the neighbouring Chakhesang village, Dzulhami. It was me, mother, my younger brothers Hukato, Otova and our maid Yesali. When we crossed over to the other hillock we could see our house being burned up in flames by the army. We had to take refuge in Dzulhami for few months.” (Personal Communication: Atomi Swu, 16-10-2019, Chekiye village)

This experience narrated by Atomi Swu is also mentioned by Scato Swu in his autobiographical documentary *Hails and Blames* page 87, 88

Often it was the women who became the unfortunate target of the Indian army in an effort to deescalate the revolutionary activities of the menfolk in their family. Perhaps with the intention of serving as a deterrent to the freedom fighters that should they take unwarranted action against the Indian State their mothers and sisters and wives were at the mercy of the army. Generally, though, the obvious targets of such determined efforts were those related to senior positions in the movement thus we have Vitoli, brother of Gen. Kaito and *Atto Kilonser* Kughato Sukhai being imprisoned in 1957 for more than a year at in Nowgoan jail with Mrs. Phizo as her roommate. (Personal Communication: Vitoli Hoky, 30-06-2019, Dimapur)

Another such individual is Gen. Simon Pukhato’s wife who was imprisoned three times. One such instance being hardly a month after delivery of her baby. (Pukhato, 2007)

The Sumi women therefore played a significant role in supporting the cause of the Naga struggle for freedom both under the banner of the Sumi Women Federation and also within their individual capacities.

They took on numerous unglamorous and downright dangerous jobs just so that the freedom fighters, both men and women, could dedicate themselves wholeheartedly to the national cause. They were the nurses, cooks, delivery agents, spies, guides, tailors, farmers, informants, they hid the soldiers, buried them, were tortured and suffered for them, and in some cases body shields even and in the absence of the warrior men they became the caretakers of the village, taking on the mantle of the traditional roles played by men to continue the integrity and soul of the villages. Without their unwavering support it would have been difficult for the national workers to sustain the movement for so long.

CHAPTER 3

Role of the Sumi in Military Affairs: Battles and Strategies

The effective functioning of a government is often dependent on the solidity of its fighting forces. This can be in the form of a standing army, a police force, a coast guard or navy and in the case of modern nations an air force. There is a powerful connection between the military might of a nation and its ability to consolidate power or even conquest. In the case of the Nagas and their national movement the forces that were gathered to contest the occupation of the lands by the Indian government were integral to the movement and the outcomes of the conflict. Military affairs would thus contain the whole gamut of activities revolving around conflict like battles, important leaders and the role they played, the policies involved in the development of the movement and the relationship between the Naga communities and the army with particular focus on the Sumi.

Taking a closer look at the role played by the Sumi in the sphere of military activities we will find that it is difficult to demarcate an absolute distinction between the administrative and military aspects of the leadership of the Sumi. Much of this can be narrowed down to the fact that most of the executive decisions taken were directly or indirectly directed towards military affairs. While the battles were fought by the army or in some cases even had civilian participation, the punitive action taken by the Indian army caused all sections of the Naga people to become embroiled in the movement at all levels on all fronts.

The central military figures from the Sumi community in the course of the Naga national movement and who were instrumental in shaping the development of the Naga national movement by virtue of their larger than life personas or their

dynamic leadership among the Sumi will be given a closer look in the coming sections of this chapter. Many of these leaders were village chiefs or sons of chiefs in their own right particularly Gen. Kaito Sukhai and it was their presence that affected the level of participation and engagements in the early stages where stand-off battles occurred, like the Battle of Satakha and Hoshepu. These military figures rose to prominence owing to their gallantry like Brig. Tokhuvi or Simon Pukhato or Gen. Zuheto and pure tactical acumen. These were men who had their villages laid to ruin by the Indian forces or be continually harassed by the invading Indian Army. Perhaps in any other time and in any other society they would have had the luxury of leading peaceful lives but they answered the call of the hour and responded with bravery beyond compare and in the face of overwhelming odds fought battle after battle against an enemy who outnumbered them and incredibly these men would be so unrelenting in their efforts and their belief that they were fighting for a just cause that nothing the Indian army tried would deter them from doing what they believed. They also had the sympathy and support of the general public who endured untold sufferings for their support of the cause that the national workers were fighting for. In a time when it was easier to be meek and surrender to the crushing power of a far superior aggressor these men led their people to wrestle some justice out of a situation that was hopeless and forced equal terms on a negotiating table through sheer grit and determination.

Therefore, if we are to really appreciate the weight of the military aspect to the cause of Naga national movement we must understand the contribution made by these leaders because, and this is a condition critical to the Sumi, culturally the Sumi are a people who base their society around a central figurehead. Thus, the impact of the Sumi to the movement can directly be correlated to their leader figures. While

there are many men who have led in various capacities there are a few who have been singularly tasked with the responsibility of a military charge.

3.1 Important Sumi Figures in Military

Documented here are the stories, experiences, activities and eye-witness accounts of eminent persons responsible in shaping the movement for the Sumi people.

3.1 (1). General Kaito Sukhai (Henceforth, General will be abbreviated as Gen. when used next to a name)

Kaito was born with genius talent and love of army life and military strategy. The BBC hailed him as the “World’s youngest General” and “the born General”¹. His peers would recall how his childhood time was spent on military-like activities. He organised combatant children of his age group in between ten to twelve years, which he called “Children’s Army” (Zhimomi & Zhimomi, 2022). The mode of his selection for Children Army caused curiosity in others. Naughty, daring, restless and combative natured children were his preferred picks (Swu Scato, 2013). All his recruits underwent training such as tree climbing, running up the hillock tops, tug of war, fencing and crawling. His orders were obediently respected and carried out with disobedience being punished by carrying heavy loads on the back or running continuously for a mile (Personal communication: J.P.Vikugha, 12-03-2019, Dimapur)¹.

The Children Army was divided into two groups. The combat group Commander would lead his army to the appointed battle field, where Kaito himself

¹ <https://sushasan.in/news-detail.aspx?id=61839> Retrieved on 2nd June 2024

would be watching the performance of the fight. The objective of the fight was to conquer the whole area of their battle field and the winners would be declared. The defeated group was encouraged to win in the next field. Fencing, push and pull, wrestling and crawling into the enemy-held land were the methods of fighting (Personal communication: J.P.Vikugha, 12-03-2019, Dimapur). The combating activities of his childhood foreshadowed his adult years of combat against the Indian Armed Forces when he formed the NSG or Naga Safe Guards (Henceforth, Naga Safe Guards may be abbreviated as NSG for brevity) in 1955. He joined the Naga Movement in 1951 and played a dynamic role in the Naga Plebiscite of 1951 by supervising its conduct across the entire Sumi area (Zhimomi & Zhimomi, 2022). He was appointed the Commander in Chief of the Naga Army from 1956 and held office till 1963. (Nekha,1994).

Gen. Kaito was a genius strategist, well versed in combat techniques and operational manoeuvres of the local terrain. With the limited resources of the Naga army his mode of war was to fight the enemy with the enemy's own weapons. He would personally complete the combat plans for the next attack, and would issue the orders to certain NHG officer, to go to the designated places and execute the plans perfectly. The recovery of enemy's arms and ammunitions was often the objective of the attack (Personal communication: Vikuho Zhimo, 23-10-2016, Vikuho village). Every battle would replenish the arsenal of Gen. Kaito, therefore his leadership never experienced weapons shortfall. He frequently changed his combat method and confused the enemy troops (Personal communication: Ikishe Sukhalu, 20-2-2017, Thilixu village). The numerous battles fought under the banner of the FGN and Naga Army were all planned and carried out under his directions until his assassination. Some of the more famous ones are the Battle of Hoshepu and the Battle of Satakha.

Further, it is said that Gen. Kaito used to place his Intelligence Personnel in all the villages next to the Indian Army post and thus created 5 commands of the Naga Army namely: Central, Eastern, Western, Northern and Southern Command with each Command being placed under either one Major General or one Lieutenant General known as GOC (Swu Scato, 2013).

3.1 (2). Gen. Zuheto Swu

Gen. Zuheto Swu was born in 1929 at Ghukhuyi village. During his early childhood the activities of the Children's Army of Gen. Kaito fascinated him. He became an inseparable friend of Gen. Kaito. He joined the Naga National Movement 1955 and took part in the process of the formation of FGN². In 1957, Gen. Zuheto Swu became the GOC, Eastern Command, NHG, he was very fortunate to have very brave, efficient and reliable Brigadiers and Commandants of NHGs under his Eastern Command (Swu Scato, 2013).

The Eastern Command fought almost all the remarkable and famous battles largely under Gen. Zuheto and he was also the chief commander of the Battle of Thuda. The 1963 reorganization of Naga Army reduced Eastern Command, NA and Western Command, NA to Central Command, NA. Gen. Zuheto Swu became the GOC of the Central Command, NA in 1963. Not only with wars but the General also contributed significantly to the Sumi Aid to the Eastern areas during the years 1957-62 with Yimchunger, Pochury, Tikhir and the Burma Naga people being made aware of the Naga National movement through his ground efforts (Khashito Aye, 2000).

The Government of India continued to violate the Cease-Fire agreement in many points. In retaliation, the Naga Federal authorities directed Gen. Zuheto Swu to lead 1500 Naga army personnel to East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) to get army

² <https://nagalandpost.com/index.php/2008/08/21/ex-dig-bsf-zuheto-passes-away/> Retrieved on 22nd July 2018

training and acquire arms. Gen. Zuheto Swu successfully accomplished the assignment with the tacit cooperation of the Burmese Army personnel in both ways of entry and exit from their country (Swu Scato, 2013).

3.1 (3). Brigadier Tokhuvi Tuccu (Henceforth, Brigadier will be abbreviated as Brig. when used next to a name)

Brig. Tokhuvi Tuccu was born in 1937. He joined the Naga National Movement in 1956 and reached the rank of Brigadier in 1961 commanding over the 2nd Brigade, Eastern Command, Naga Army had the three Naga Army Battalions: the 2nd Bn, the 3rd Bn and the 5th Bn under his command and fought a number of battles under his command from 1959-1964 (Souvenir, 50th wedding anniversary of Tokhuvi & Kiyeli, 2015). The battles in chronological order are Doyang Bridge Battle 1959, Mokokchung Battle 1960, Battle Near Lokobomi village 1960, Battle at Shena New Chizo river 1960, Tsaphimi Area Battle 1962, Battle at Asakumuba River 1962, Battle at Bobo River 1962, Battle at Hoishe Village 1962, Battle at Awokupu River 1963, Battle at Kati 1963, Battle at Sungro Post 1963, Battle at Tsaphumi Village 1963, Battle at Wokha-Mokokchung Road Near Doyang Bridge 1963, Battle at Kitsakita 1964 (Khashito Aye, 2000). In the course of his tenure the Brigadier wreaked havoc and successfully conducted many battles killing a large number of enemies and captured a significant quantity of arms and ammunitions as well as supplies and cash (Souvenir, 50th wedding anniversary of Tokhuvi & Kiyeli, 2015).

3.1 (4). Commandant Zukiye (Henceforth, Commandant will be abbreviated as Cmdt. when used next to a name)

He joined the national movement in 1956 and was known as the most

renowned Commandant in the Naga Army in matters of combat, popularly called the “Master of Ambush” and twice awarded Victoria Cross, the Naga Army equivalent of Param Vir Chakra³. He personally commanded about thirty (30) victorious battles. Those battles made him capture a good number of arms and ammunition from the Indian armed forces (Swu Scato, 2013). His constant combat valour and victories in the battles made him renowned both among the Nagas and the Government of India. Courage and defiance of perilous situations was his trademark. He was so integral to Gen. Kaito’s military force that whenever the General intended to initiate a military operation he would ask “Where is my *atsuli*?” referring to Zukiye as his hunting dog/watchdog; in other words his most trusted and reliable warrior (Nibedon, 1978).

There are numerous other individuals like the Lt Gen. Simon Pukhato, Maj. Gen. Hokiye Sema, Cmdt. Vighoto Aye, Cmdt. Zhevishe Aye, Cmdt Toshiho Zhimomi, Captain Ghunakha, Lieutenant Colonel J.N. Khehoto Sema (Henceforth Lieutenant Colonel will be written as Lt. Col. and Colonel as Col. when listed next to a name), Col. Vihoi Aye, Col. J.P. Vikugha, Captain L. Atoi Swu, Lt Col. Kiqheto, and so many others who have contributed massively on an individual scale to the Naga movement and the scale and extent of the patriotic sentiment is evident from the Indian government growing apprehensive with the Naga national movement gaining ground forcing the Indian government at the center finding it imperative to defuse the resistance and thus employing various strategies to quell the rising movement. At the root of all their policies was the deployment of military forces to contain the Nagas; part of the reason why the Indian government utilized military force was because of the threat of external interference which was considered of extreme importance by the

³<https://www.usiofindia.org/publication-journal/the-revolutionary-government-of-nagaland-joins-the-national-mainstream.html> retrieved on 11-01-2023.

center as it meant, according to them, a threat to the sovereignty of India and its borders.

Another reason was because the Indian government knew the Nagas were not yet organized in their claim for independence and they wished to use all means possible to stamp out the resistance, therefore using force was within the realm of consideration. However, this would have strong negative repercussions as the Nagas took very poorly to the coercion thrust on them by the Indian army, and if anything it fanned the flames of resistance. The strong warrior culture of the Nagas and in particular the Sumi were brought to the front by the call to war that the Indian army brought to their doorsteps and their village gates. Among the Nagas, the Sumi in particular took offense to the repressive policies of the Indian army and resisted tooth and nail, man and woman, every villager down to the last child in many cases, to protect their homes from what they believed was a foreign invader. The social fabric of the Sumi, as discussed in the chapters prior, also contributed heavily to the armed resistance taken up strongly by the Sumis to face the Indian army. The Sumi drew together under the leadership of their various chieftains and challenged the might of the Indian army with little more than sticks and stones and some occasional guns and a lot of bravery.

3.2. Formation of the Armed Wing: The Naga Safe Guards

The March 1954 NNC session at Yemishe village had a difference of opinion regarding the formation of armed wing. Most of the NNC members and leaders were opposed to it hoping for the restoration of Naga sovereignty without the use of arms but Kughato Sukhai, Tolhopu, Hopong and Luzukhu convincingly argued that without armed resistance it would be impossible to achieve it. Their reasonable opinion was

thus accepted by the members present and on that very day, Kaito Sukhai was authorized to be the leader and start organizing the armed wing. Accordingly, he started to make selective recruitment (Swu Scato, 2013). A large meeting was convened by the ESTC⁴ on the 15th of April 1955 at Khekiye village (HRPO, 2005). Besides the Sumi, Yimchunger and Sangtam tribes also attended the meeting that was chaired by Lovihe of Lukhuyi. The significant outcome of the meeting was the formation of armed group called the Naga Safe Guards in the ranking pattern of the British army (HRPO, 2005). Though Kaito Sukhai had already begun with the process of establishing the armed wing as per the authority bestowed on him by the Yemishe NNC session of 1954, the formal declaration of the formation of the armed wing; Naga Safe Guards was done at that meeting. After this historic meeting, large scale recruitment drive of the Naga Safe Guards and volunteers was carried out to fight the Indian army.

Gen. Kaito Sukhai, its dynamic and talented chief began to chalk out the war strategy to fight the mighty Indian army. He planned to have a test of the first armed resistance employing the tactics of fortress battle. Accordingly, preparation for war was started with digging of defense line and bunkers. The main defense line was made at Khewoto village which is located to the north of Hoshepu village. Trench measuring 6 feet deep and 8 feet wide and 1 furlong long was dug (NSWON, 2013) with the help of villagers in the area who not only willingly gave their voluntary services but also provided for all the necessities of the Naga Safe Guards. By May 1955, a fantastic defense line was ready, made of huge alder tree trunks in four layers fenced by thousands of bamboo spikes that seemed to be impregnable (Personal communication: Vikuho, 23-10-2016, Vikuho village). To the south of Hoshepu is

⁴ Eastern Sema Tribal Council

Khekiye village which was the general head quarters where the chief of the Naga Safe Guards camped. Below Khekiye is Nihoshe village which was also a defense outpost, in the center is Hoshepu⁵ village which served as a communication center between the general headquarters and Khewoto; the main defense line, where the battle actually took place (Personal communication: Simon Pukhato, 9-8-2016, Naga United village)⁶. The aforementioned four villages were mainly involved in the battle of Hoshepu and they are collectively known by the nomenclature *Aghushito* which literally means the hill of battle (HRPO, 2005).

The Indian army gained insight about the armed camp and wanted to destroy it by all means. When the Assistant Political Officer(APO) of Aghunato; S.D.Ladkhar⁷, dispatched Indian army in small groups to attack, the Naga Safe Guards took the opportunity to lay ambush and snatch away the guns enriching their scanty arsenal which was further used to fight back their enemy. In this manner, according to Ikishe Sukhalu, who was then in-charge of maintaining the record of arms capture, around 16 Indian army guns came in the possession of the Naga Safe Guards prior to the actual battle of Hoshepu. They got the whole-hearted support from the villagers in every aspect. It was the villagers who supplied for all their needs and also gave them prompt information about the details of the Indian army's movement such as; the direction in which they were coming, the number of cadres approaching and the regiment to which they belonged etc. Accordingly, the Naga Safe Guards used to make strategy and lay ambush (Personal communication: Ikishe Sukhalu, 20 -2-2017, Thilixu village). Such incidents took place at Ngozubu, Aquba, Thokihi, Tokiye, Viyixe and Viyilho. Therefore, from May till September 1955, they had several

⁵ See Fig 2

⁶ Simon Pukhato was the Commander of the Naga Army in this battle.

⁷ Ladkhar was the first APO of Aghunato in 1953.

encounters around the defense line but the Indian army was successfully repulsed and could not come to the fortified camp until the 4th of September 1955 when the battle of Hoshepu began.

There were significant battles that proved the mettle of Gen. Kaito's Naga Army. These were the Battle of Hoshepu, Battle of Satakha and the Battle of Thuda. There were numerous battles fought under his leadership and which employed his military acumen for the Naga to often emerge unscathed but these three battles stand out the most for a number of reasons. The battle of Hoshepu was the first and most fiercely fought Indo-Naga battle ushering in a lengthy period of conflict between the two sides and would also shape the way almost all future battles would be fought, the Battle of Satakha on the other hand highlights the nature of the movement in the Sumi region, and the Battle of Thuda is a great example of the quality of the Sumi leadership of the Naga national workers in contrast with the attitude and maliciousness of their Indian counterparts.

3.3. The Battle of Hoshepu

The first major clash to have occurred between the Nagas and Indian army was the Battle of Hoshepu and this also marks the beginning of the Naga armed resistance for freedom. The group of villages comprising of Hoshepu, Khekiye, Khewoto, Nihoshe, Thakiye and Sitimi falling under Aghunato sub-division in the present Zunheboto district is referred to as the Hoshepu range. Tsutha river in the north-east and Tizu river in the north-west form natural boundaries for the range which was a part of the North East Frontier Agency (NEFA) that had never come under colonial rule. Perhaps this would explain why they were called the Free Nagas or the *Azadi* people. In the present context the Free Nagas comprise the modern day districts of

Tuensang, Mon, Kiphire and Longleng as well as the Aghunato sub-division under Zunheboto. It was only when Nagaland became the sixteenth state of the Indian union on 1st December, 1963 that these formerly un-administered regions which were previously subsumed under the external affairs ministry became recognized as a part of Naga territory. Historically speaking however, these people were for the first time brought under some form of foreign administration when the APO was posted at Tuensang in 1948. This was followed by the creation of the Aghunato in 1953 as a sub-division for administrative convenience (Ladkhar in HRPO, 2005, p. 9).

There were a series of skirmishes in the form of attacks and counter attacks beginning from May 1955 and by April 1955, under the command of Gen. Kaito Sukhai, Sumi fighters with a handful of Sangtams and Yimchungs began encampment at Hoshepu area which we now consider the genesis of an organized Naga armed resistance. Having their camps set up and defense line drawn out this armed group laid ambush on the Indian army largely with the intent of capturing guns and ammo whenever possible (Personal communication: Ikishe Sukhalu, 20-2-2017, Thilixu village). The actual battle of Hoshepu was fought from 4th to 10th September 1955.

3.3 (1). Preparation for the Battle

The Naga Safe Guards had little to boast of in terms of weapons and munitions, the little they had largely the outcome of the unceasing efforts of their leader Kaito Sukhai. These guns, mostly rifles, were used weapons discarded by the British and Japanese soldiers, after the Second World War, which Kaito purchased using personal funds. Donations made by the villagers particularly the people of Hoshepu range also contributed significantly to the military resources numbering 72 rifles, 1 tommy gun, 1 sten gun, 72 bullet boxes and 13(thirteen) 2 inch and 3 inch mortars (HRPO, 2005).

With the harsh terrain of the region the local population were frequently hired as labor of by the Indian army sometimes in groups of hundreds or more, to carry heavy loads of ammunition. So, when opportunity struck, these villagers would escape to the camp at Hoshepu area and resupply the Naga Safe Guards instead of depositing the loads at their destined Indian army camps. Gen. Kaito Sukhai got the brilliant idea of sending his own soldiers as coolies for carrying such loads along with the villagers so as to lay hold of the precious arms and ammunitions. In a personal interview with Vikuho Zhimo, a trusted soldier of Kaito, he mentions one such mission where they were camped at Hoshepu area in 1955 and bringing back a load containing twelve grenades and two hundred bullets (Personal communication: Vikuho Zhimo, 23-10-2016, Vikuho village). Ikishe Sukhalu, another associate of the General recounts how he ended up digging up the second world war arms and ammunitions that his father, Hutoi Sukhalu had buried in his room and took away 5 Japanese rifles, 1 LMG and 3000 bullets at the insistence of Gen. Kaito (Personal communication: Ikishe Sukhalu, 20-2-2017, Thilixu village). The General, Kaito Sukhai, despite being limited financially and logistically, exercised all possible avenues to procure weapons through every possible means to raise an army for the cause of Naga sovereignty. It is all the more remarkable that Kaito using this ragtag assortment of worn out, meager, outdated weapons fought on equal terms with the vastly superior military of the Indian army. He used ingenious and pragmatic strategies and meticulously laid plans that reflected tactical military genius which would earn him the respect that bordered on fear from the Indian Army, as his attacks often succeeded with frightening advantages to Kaito's army.

With weapons and ammunition being scarce Gen. Kaito Sukhai gave strict instructions to fire only when a kill was dead certain and one gun with five bullets

was the standard issue per three soldiers with the best shooter among the three using the gun. When an enemy was shot down, the second soldier's responsibility was to collect the gun of the fallen enemy; the third soldier, often armed with the traditional Naga *dao* (machete) would then secure the bullet strip, usually strapped around the abdomen, generally containing fifty rounds. The five bullets each had specific roles, three for the enemy, one to be fired when they were about to be caught and the last was to be kept as a gun guard. Such was the limited supply of bullets that Gen. Kaito actually encouraged his soldiers to kill not one but two enemies with a single bullet. (Personal communication: Vihozhe Zhimo, 16-2-2017, Dimapur). These are testament to the scarcity of arms and ammunitions in the Naga Safe Guards' arsenal. While they knew they were stark outmatched in terms of firepower and the numbers of their enemy the Indian army, they were deeply driven by a strong desire to free their homeland and there was no dearth of courage and determination to resist and assert their natural right. In the first and most brutal of battles at Hoshepu, we see this fierce resolve being evidenced.

3.3 (2). The Battle

On June the 16th, 1955 at 3:30 PM, Simon, who had been serving in the Assam Rifles (Henceforth Assam Rifles will be abbreviated as AR) for close to fourteen years left the AR with his service rifle and 350 bullets and reported to the Naga Safe Guards Chief Kaito. He was the first Naga to join the Naga cause in such a manner and would also command the first Indo-Naga battle. He had planned to serve another year and earn his pension but the repeated urging he heard from God in his dreams to save his people deterred him from active service and he moved to save his own people. His name was changed to Pukhato (one who saves or protects, in Sumi dialect) by the

Chief who was overjoyed with his decision. From then on, he came to be known as Simon Pukhato.

In an interview with Simon Pukhato, he mentioned that the NSG had already established camps and a defense line at Hoshepu range, prepared to fight but had no actual training when he joined the Naga Safe Guards. Therefore, Kaito detailed him eleven Sumi soldiers who he trained for two weeks on the basics of gun handling and defensive positions (Personal communication: Simon Pukhato, 9-8-2016, Naga United village). Here, we can infer the Naga Safe Guards were mostly composed of villagers assembled voluntarily for the cause of Naga independence and much like a militia. They were ever ready to take on the well-equipped enemies without having the bare essentials of warfare, having at best poor decommissioned weapons. One could argue that this is proof of the valor of the Sumis and their commitment to freedom and motherland, willing to give their all, regardless of circumstances.

With the training completed, they were assigned to Khewoto, a well-fortified main defense post, while Kaito was camped at Khekiye. Hoshepu lying between the two was made the communication center. A day before the ambush on the 16th July 1955 Simon Pukhato prayed when he had a vision like experience where God told him to fear not though the Indian army would come. As narrated by Simon Pukhato, the next day, ie. 17th July as they waited in ambush a small detachment of thirteen Assam Rifles soldiers came and he shot them all down. This was near Tokiye school ground and in a similar manner they conducted multiple ambushes and downed plenty of the enemy. On 24th August 1955, he was warned by the post commander at Aghunato that a brigade of Indian army has been commanded towards his capture. The 4th of September saw numerous soldiers of 17th Rajput Regiment calling out their challenges such as “Why are the Nagas very proud? What do you have? We will

finish you” as they faced each other at distance of around a hundred and fifty feet in between them separated by a hillock. The Indian army soldiers shouted that they will abandon their weapons and kill the Nagas with their bare hands. Simon Pukhato then commanded his eleven soldiers to show themselves and provoke the enemy who were then commanded by the Indian army officer to charge and catch them. As approximately fifty to sixty of these soldiers rushed in they were mauled and slaughtered themselves on the bamboo spikes that were fenced around the fort. Those who stayed back watched with amazement. After the bodies were taken back from the spikes as commanded by the officer, the enemy soldiers again shouted “Why are the Nagas so proud? We will peel your skin!” Shortly after the Brigade Major and Simon Pukhato had an exchange that went like this

Major: “*Hum lok ek brigade aya aap bara admi se kya karega?*” (One brigade of us have come what can you twelve people do?)

Simon Pukhato: “Oh Major *Sahib* even if you keep on talking, only one bullet can finish you. You are now saying your last words. There are no other Naga tribes here but I have eleven Sumi soldiers with me. We, twelve of us are going to finish your one brigade. We are only twelve of us but it is equivalent to twelve hundred”.

Major: How can you say such big words?

Simon: I can say it in the name of Lord Jesus Christ.

He told the major that his speech will end now so he can say whatever he wants.

The Major finally asked who Sumi bullet can kill? So Pukhato replied that Sumi bullet will not kill just anyone but he will show now. Saying thus he shot at the major and killed him on the spot.

After shooting the major, Simon Pukhato commanded his soldiers to start firing which began the historic battle of Hoshepu. There were villagers behind them so he

instructed them to evacuate so they don't get caught in the crossfire (Personal communication: Simon Pukhato, 9-8-2016, Naga United village).

The actual battle of Hoshepu lasting from 4th to 10th September 1955 was fought by just twelve brave Sumi soldiers at Khewoto defense post, under the command of Captain Simon Pukhato, using only rifles against one brigade of the Indian army. They are: 1. Simon Pukhato of Shichimi, 2. Honito of Hoshepu, 3. Vitomo of Lithsami, 4. Jehoto of Kulhopu, 5. Ahoto of Hoshepu, 6. Vighoto of Hoshepu, 7. Viniqhe of Khekiye, 8. Khughoto of Hoshepu, 9. Zukiye of Hoshepu, 10. Viniho of Hoshepu, 11. Hakhuyi Awomi of Vedami and 12. Viheto of Khekiye. They occupied six bunkers, each accommodating two soldiers, provided with two bullet boxes containing five hundred rifle bullets each (Personal communication: Simon Pukhato, 9-8-2016, Naga United village).

It was a fiercely fought battle with firing exchanged vigorously throughout the day and night without any break. The Naga soldiers took turns to sleep, firing even at night to deter enemy approach. Not to be outdone the womenfolk of Khewoto village would come crawling to the camp disregarding all safety to deliver food like pre-mixed rice and pork curry in wooden plate and even hand-fed them as they could not afford to leave their guns for eating. One woman would carry the plate of rice and another the water, and thus they fed the Naga soldiers twice a day (Personal communication: Simon Pukhato, 9-8-2016, Naga United village). We must note here that the women voluntarily braved the bullets to provide for the soldiers. The heated battle began producing some casualties as the fight wore on. Simon Pukhato, the commander, was injured on his arm by three inch mortar so he had to leave the battlefield on the 8th of September 1955 at 8 PM. Another soldier, Honito of Hoshepu, was injured. By this time the Indian army resorted to carpet bombing the camp like

rain and on 10th September five Naga patriots were killed viz. Vitomo of Lithsami, Jehoto of Kulhopu, Ahoto of Hoshepu, Vighoto of Hoshepu and Vinique of Khekiye (HRPO, 2005). The Naga army continued to resist but manpower and ammunition had long since depleted. The Indian army, sensing the situation, encircled the camp with reinforcements from different directions. Badly outnumbered and overpowered by superior arms, the Naga army had to decamp on 10th September after seven days of fierce fighting and the Indian army occupied Hoshepu by 11:30 AM. With the continuous shelling of two inch and three inch mortars, the Naga Safe Guards personnel who were camped at *Aghushito* i.e., Hoshepu, Khekiye, Khewoto and Nihoshe villages were forced to evacuate, so they did so on the night of 9th September, 1956 and some, on 10th early morning (Personal communication: Vihozhe Zhimo, 16-2-2017, Dimapur). The casualties on the Indian side were far worse, with around 380 soldiers dead and many more injured. The strategy of the Indian army and the Assam Rifles to corner the Naga Safe Guards from two different angles also backfired on them. The Indian army in the midst of fighting mistook the Assam Rifles for the Naga Safe Guards and started to fire at them, the Assam Rifles fired back in confusion. Their mutual firing caused many casualties (Personal communication: Vikuho Zhimo, 23-10-2016, Vikuho village).

The Naga Safe Guards had camped at Hoshepu area for around six months till 10th September, 1955. After withdrawing, they marched to Ghukhuyi, the village of their commander-in-chief, Gen. Kaito Sukhai, whose parents took on the responsibility of hosting around two hundred soldiers at their home for several months slaughtering cows and pigs on regular basis to feed them to their hearts' content (Personal communication: Ikishe Sukhalu, 20-2-2017, Thilixu village).

In the aftermath of the battle the Indian army rampaged and carried out a mass destruction of the villages in the area. Houses and granaries were razed to the ground. The entire population of the Hoshepu area fled for safety to neighboring villages, many fleeing as far as Khukiye-Lukhayi village near Satakha (Personal communication: Kheholi Zhimo, 14-5-2017, Satakha). Thus, it was not only the soldiers but even the civilian villagers who faced untold miseries, bearing the brunt of the anger of the Indian army who had come to war with Kaito's soldiers but having failed took it out on the local populace.

3.4. The Battle of Satakha

The Battle of Hoshepu is followed by the Battle of Satakha which stands unique in the annals of Naga history as the largest battle won with the least amount of bloodshed. This battle is also indicative of the participatory nature of the movement during the period. The battle was largely won by the mass involvement of the villagers around Satakha and their hugely positive response would contribute towards the conclusion of the battle which eventually became a battle of wills.

3.4 (1). Background

The life of the local populace of Satakha⁸ under Zunheboto district had turned for the worse when a company of Assam Police (Henceforth abbreviated as AP) was posted there. The violence and exploitations of the people at the hands of these personnel were commonplace. The nature of these atrocities meted to the public included the molesting and rape of women which was regularly perpetrated and drove the public to experience an extreme sense of injustice, insecurity and anger (Satakha

⁸ See Fig 2

Qha Kukami Hoho, 2006). Lay citizens being suspiciously targeted as either or both a sympathizer and informer of NSG or without any proof was normalized; with those caught often declared an NSG member and subject to hostile action.

Furthermore, the public was imposed with house tax which was unheard of in the traditional Naga society and an addition to the already unbearable hardships at the hand of the AP forces. These tax impositions were vehemently opposed and rejected by the masses and would lead to direct conflict between the leadership of the opposing groups: the chieftain, the chief head of the area on one side and the Assam Police on the other. According to Sumi customary law, the chieftain exercised sovereign rule over the village (Personal communication: Zhetovi Yeputhomi, 10-06-2021, Kohima). Thus the outcome of clashes between the chieftains and the police resulted in the deterioration of conditions. Some such incidents which occurred were when Toniho, chieftain of Shoipu, arriving at Satakha had his spear snatched from his hand; and Hotovi Zhimomi, chieftain of Nunumi had his machete snatched away (Khashito Aye, 2000). Above and beyond the physical abuse, it was the act of dispossessing the chieftains of their 'spear' and '*dao*' which customarily held place as sacred symbols of hereditary power. They symbolized the authority of the chiefs and affirmed his guardianship over the village and the people.

Hozheshe Zhimomi, chieftain of Satakha Old village, along with 8 elders comprised yet another case when the entire group was arrested for failure to pay the tax (Jimomi, 2008). The imprisonment took place inside a pit which was dug inside the police camp itself (Personal communication: Vihozhe Zhimo, 16-2-2016, Dimapur). The imposition of the house tax was in direct conflict with the authority of the chieftains as well as the way of life of the Sumi folk whose customary law and order vested all authority upon chieftain. Thus one could say that the politics of the

house taxation conflated the right of power and directly led to the contestation of right between the Indian authority and Sumi custom. Not only was the tax insensitive but the nature of its execution severely dehumanized the Sumi people who were subject to indescribable misery and violence as a result of the AP enforcing the tax. With the Sumi being deeply warrior-like, the continued acts of desecration and atrocities would have been perceived as an attempt to annihilate their very culture, history and identity and was thus met with violent responses when they felt that these policies were tantamount to the forcible adoption a new Indian identity and customs and in a sense a cultural exorcism and from an extreme standpoint an ethnic cleansing even, both in the actual physical as well as sociological and psychological senses.

It was Gen. Kaito Sukhai, the chief of the NSG, who the people eventually turned to for help after being led to a point of desperation as the outrage against basic human rights seemed to never abate and the people implored that he attack and evict the Assam Police camp from the area and free its people from such cruelties as they were now being made victims of (Satakha Qha Kukami Hoho, 2006).

Although this battle is an important historical point of reference from the perspective of Nagas' struggle for freedom, no substantial work has been done on this topic so far. Detailed tracing of the Battle of Satakha had necessitated towards documentation of important materials to place into perspective the larger Naga political movement till present day. Archiving such remarkable historic event is aimed at preserving the 'untold stories' of 'first hand encounters and experiences'; to keep intact the authenticity of its cause and effect; to remain critically unbiased and make honest assessment of the event. This research work has utilized the methodological tools based on oral history through an authenticated series of interviews and discussions with the actual participants of the event which further had teamed up with

a case study method. It is therefore the objective of the study to bring out the detailed account of the event and the impact that it had propagated in the formation of Naga Nationalism. It primarily aims towards a clearer understanding of the Naga freedom movement.

3.4 (2). Preparation for the Battle

The chief danger in attacking the Assam Police Station at Satakha was presence of a wireless set which would easily communicate the situation of the station to other areas and thus overwhelming the forces of Gen. Kaito with reinforcements. The priority therefore was in locating the wireless set at the police station, and culling the means of communication with neighboring police posts for information and reinforcement.

Naturally, this strategy would give the edge to the NSG by isolating the AP and making them experience the helplessness of a siege with no possible means of requesting support. Vihozhe Zhimomi and Ghonito Zhimomi were the agents chosen by Gen. Kaito to carry out the mission as the former was the son of a *mohorrier* (supervisor) while the latter was the son of the village chief. Vihozhe, it was also learned was familiar with the police personnel stationed there having visited inside the camp prior. They were given pieces of chalks with instructions that they mark the location of the wireless set clearly on the corresponding wall after confirmation (Personal communication: Vihozhe Zhimo, 6-2-2017, Dimapur). Zhimo would later describe the mission in the following manner:

“The date for the mission was set for the 22nd March 1956. On the day of the operation the two of them under the pretext of kicking and passing the football to each other made entry into the camp. With Vihozhe being familiar with the

personnel it was not difficult for them to strike up a conversation. The unsuspecting police let them loiter around the station, while all along unbeknownst to the AP the two were on the lookout for the wireless set. On the discovery of its location, they marked the spot as instructed but having realized that the wall was whitewashed and that the demarcation of the spot with chalk was not visible at all they needed to think fast and improvise. Vihozhe saw the Subedar sitting near the chula and warming himself so he went over and discreetly picked some pieces of charcoal giving some to Ghonito as well while running a conversation with the clueless Subedar and proceeded to write with the charcoal numbers and a big circle on the wall large enough that they were visible from a distance which the Subedar allowed them to do not suspecting anything otherwise with the handiwork of the two agents of Gen. Kaito. The survey of the camp completed, necessary preparation were made based on their reports and the attack on the Satakha outpost carried out on 24th March 1956.”

(Personal communication: Vihozhe Zhimo, 16-2-2017, Dimapur)

In preparation for the battle, Gen. Kaito Sukhai summoned his men to Xuivi village, the then Head Quarters of NSG. Ahovi Zhimomi, Ghonito and Vishito armed with their guns went to meet the General on 23rd March 1956. The plan devised by Gen. Kaito was to attack the Assam Police camp at Satakha on 24th March 1956 at 12:00 noon sharp and he had on 23rd dispatched people to various neighboring villages to inform them as well as seek their active and full involvement in the operation (Personal communication: Ahovi Zhimomi, 14-5-2017, Satakha).

Accordingly, on the 24th, at 11:30AM, the Naga Safe Guards and the villagers reached the spot designated by Gen. Kaito and unleashed a surprise attack on the AP camp. Hekhetto Zhimomi, a participant of the event as NSG personnel would later

share that there were actually just a few NSG personnel perhaps less than thirty in number. It was the inspired support of the people from all the neighboring villages who voluntarily participated in the operation armed to the teeth with muzzle loading guns, *daos*, spears, and even sticks and tin cans which were noisily beaten and terrified the AP personnel being completely surrounded by the huge numbers of villagers who turned up in solidarity (Personal communication: Hekheto Zhimomi, 20-9-2016, Chekiye village).

The sixteen villages that participated in the event were: Khukiye, Lukhai, Hoishe, Shoipu, Nunumi, Nasami, Usutomi, Shena Old, Shena New, Satakha Old, Satakha New, Kilo Old, Jekiye, Shoixe, Ghukhuyi and Xuivi (Satakha Qha Kukami Hoho, 2006).

3.4 (3). The Battle

The countdown to attack the Assam Police Station as planned by Gen. Kaito Sukhai was 24th March 1956 at 12:00 noon sharp. Vihozhe Zhimomi explained the reasoning behind the time selected by Gen. Kaito Sukhai being strategically chosen because noon was usually a nap time for the policemen after lunch. Since the AP would be least alert at that time, it would add to the element of surprise further bolstering the advantage of Gen. Kaito's forces to catch the enemy unaware and take them as prisoners (Personal communication: Vihozhe Zhimo, 16-2-2017, Dimapur).

Gen. Kaito further instructed those with guns that the first shots should be on the circle which was drawn on the wall as it was the location where the wireless set was kept. The chief objective being the rendering of the wireless set harmless to make communication for any reinforcement impossible (Satakha Qha Kukami Hoho, 2006).

When the attack started gunshots were fired at the target and then the villagers, both men and women, banged on the tin containers with sticks making such a loud noise that it instilled confusion and fear amongst the Assam policemen. The added shouts of the numerous villagers and the noises the women and men made roaring and pounding their tin cans frightened the Assam Police so much that they panicked; and panicking they failed to be composed and in a better position to assess their position which may not have happened had the additional noises made by the mostly unarmed local population not accompanied the gunfire. Considering that the NSG consisted of less than thirty personnel and even among them few had guns; the villagers as well were carrying mere indigenous *daos*, spears, sticks and handmade guns which compared to the semi-automatic guns and better arms and ammunition equipped Assam police would have given the station personnel a field day with their superior weaponry. This is affirmed by Ikishe Sukhalu, a participant of the event, who mentioned that, there were NSG personnel who did not have any guns but were carrying only *daos*. Some names he mentioned being Tochim, Tsapiki and himself, it was thus at great risk to their lives that they rushed the barracks to catch the AP personnel alive (Personal communication: Ikishe Sukhalu, 20-2-2017, Thilixu village). He went on to say thus;

“The secondary objective of the attacking forces was to destroy the fences which were made of bamboo consisting of three layers with sharp bamboo spikes stuck in between.

This fence the villagers had built through forced labor. When the NSG and the villagers had finished taking off two layers of fence and spikes and were on the third, the Subedar blew a whistle saying they will stop firing.

The water and electric connections had been cut off by the attackers essentially stranding the AP. The absolute and total hopelessness on the side of enemy's camp as they were surrounded by NSG and the villagers culminated in the Assam Police finally surrendering to the Sumi Naga forces after approximately four hours (from 12 noon till 4:00pm) of fighting.” (Personal communication: Ikishe Sukhalu, 20-2-2017, Thilixu village)

The Assam Police initially did not give up hope and resorted to numerous attempts at delay tactics according to NSG personnel Ahovi Zhimomi who recalled the desperation of their enemies for the day. They conditionally agreed to surrender on the next day and made a request to allow them to fetch water to cook their meals. The besieging Sumis did not cave in to the dubious request as they recognized the danger of granting such request would allow escapees; furthermore, the longer the battle went on, the higher the chance for reinforcement to arrive therefore the AP were given the simple ultimatum to surrender that day itself or face death (Personal communication: Ahovi Zhimomi, 14-5-2017, Satakha).

Eventually, it became evident to the Assam Police that surrendering was the only option apart from dying at the hands of the hordes of attackers. Captain Yeveto Zhimomi, an ex-serviceman of Assam Regiment, who was fluent in Hindi, was assigned by Gen. Kaito Sukhai to negotiate with the station under siege to take into account the reality of their situation and surrender peacefully and avoid bloodshed (Swu Scato, 2013). Captain Yeveto Zhimomi shouted at the top of his voice in Hindi informing them all the roads were blocked and guarded by the Naga Safe Guards so the AP should quit hoping that reinforcements will ever come to rescue them. Subedar Hazarika, Commander of the police company, ultimately accepted and agreed to surrender, putting an end to the battle (Satakha Qha Kukami Hoho, 2006).

To formalize the surrender a parlay needed to be conducted and an initial confusion ensued as to where they should meet for negotiations. Clearly fearing for his safety and perhaps hoping to secure a hostage Subedar Hazarika wanted the Captain to come inside the camp and naturally Captain Yeveto wanted him to come out with raised hands. The stalemate ended when Gen. Kaito Sukhai suggested they meet at the gate of the camp which could be considered neutral ground and equally visible to all parties. Instructed to go empty handed and shake hands with his counterpart Captain Yeveto Zhimomi held an amicable talk with the commander considering the situation (Swu Scato, 2013). This talk led to the formal surrender of the Assam Police.

Following the surrender, Captain Yeveto Zhimomi ordered the Commander to lift his hands and drop his weapon (a pistol) in the following words '*hat uthao, apna pistol khulo*'. As soon as the pistol was dropped on the ground, Ikishe Sukhalu collected the gun. The Captain then instructed the Subedar to command all his soldiers to drop their guns as well and come out empty handed which they did without any resistance (Personal communication: Ikishe Sukhalu, 20-2-2017, Thilixu village). The attacking forces then surrounded the police personnel shouting and yelling war-cries of victory, then rushed inside the camp and collected all the arms and ammunition (Personal communication: Ikishe Sukhalu, 20-2-2017, Thilixu village).

At final count, total of seventy-eight guns of various calibers and a huge cache of ammunitions were captured (the number of ammunitions could not be counted as it was numerous). Gen. Kaito Sukhai ordered for the captured weapons to be sized up for counting according to caliber (Personal communication: Ahovi Zhimomi, 14-5-2017, Satakha). It would be found that most of the guns were rifles but there were also

some LMG and Sten guns. Altogether seventy eight guns were captured (Satakha Qha Kukami Hoho, 2006).

One LMG and bundles of currency notes were burnt when the thatched barrack it was housed was set on fire (Personal communication: Vihozhe Zhimomi, 16-2-2017). The attack also culminated in the release of the Sumi prisoners who were the catalysts that led to the battle were set free by the villagers from the pit confinement they were holed up in viz. Hozheshe, chieftain of Satakha Old, Qhukiye, Hetovi, Veheshe, Tohovi Z, Ikhevi, Khakhu, Kiyeshe, Lukuto, Hozheto, Pukhato, Qhuhozhe, Kihozhe and Lhokiye all from Satakha Old village (Satakha Qha Kukami Hoho, 2006).

The reports of the battle also revealed that a total of eighty Assam Police personnel were present in the camp on that fateful day; some had gone on holiday, two went for patrolling with Sten gun each and luckily escaped from the ambush though it was later discovered that a lone *jawan* died in the battle. A total of seventy eight Assam police personnel were captured and there was no injury or casualty on the Naga side (Personal communication: Ikishe Sukhalu, 20-2-2017, Thilixu village).

All of the captured arms and ammunitions would be distributed amongst the Naga tribes and regions as decided by the Sumi leaders and not kept as spoils of victory. The reasoning behind it being to instill a strong message of brotherhood in solidarity in the fight against the Indian armed forces and the forced occupation of the homeland and galvanize all sections of Naga society to patriotism and sacrifice. Gen. Kaito Sukhai initiated the mass distribution of arms and ammunitions.

Following is the list of the distribution:

1. Yimchunger region - 4 Rifles
2. Sangtam region - 3 Rifles, 75 Rounds

3.	Ao region	- 3 Rifles,	75	Rounds
4.	Rengma region	- 1 Rifle,	1	Sten gun
5.	Konyak region	- 3 Rifles,	75	Rounds
6.	Chang region	- 1 Rifle,	1	Pistol
7.	Chakhesang region	- 3 Rifles,	1	Pistol
8.	Pochury region	- 2 Rifles,	50	Rounds
9.	Tikhir/Khiamungan region	- 2 Rifles,	50	Rounds
10.	Sumi region	- 42 Rifles, 5 LMG, 6 GF, 3 pieces 2 inch mortar and 12 Sten guns		

(Satakha Qha Kukami Hoho, 2006).

With the surrender of the Assam Police personnel, Gen. Kaito Sukhai conducted a fall-in of his NSG personnel commanding them to call out their respective number series to ensure all the members were safe and alive. With a head count of twenty five NSG members Gen. Kaito Sukhai and his soldiers marched the seventy eight captives to Xuivi village, about four kilometers away from Satakha, that very night (Personal communication: Ahovi Zhimomi, 14-5-2017, Satakha). Zhimomi further narrated that the prisoners were all stripped off their shoes and clothes except for innerwear to prevent escape. Torn blankets were, however, provided for covering their feet. With three to four prisoners tied together by ropes held by the each individual NSG personnel it was a slow and difficult march for both the prisoners and their captors. The reality of the situation was explained by Ahovi Zhimomi, one of the twenty five NSG personnel, who, reminiscing on the battle recalled the march saying thus;

“Each of the NSG soldiers were carrying a heavy load. All the captured guns, the entirety of the ammunition shared between only twenty six of them including the General. Even as they marched the seventy eight prisoners it was a very volatile situation. Were the prisoner to try and fight for an escape seeing as they had the advantage of numbers perhaps the march could have quickly ended in chaos but AP did not make any such attempt and all the marching party reached Xuivi NSG Head Quarters without any hitch by midnight.” (Personal communication: Ahovi Zhimomi, 14-5-2017, Satakha).

The captives were unharmed and treated fairly while still under the custody of FGN. Kughato Sukhai, the Sumi Angh; Scato Swu, Adviser to Sumi Angh; and Gen.Kaito Sukhai, the Commander-in-Chief of the NSG made the decision that Scato Swu, also the Ambassador to India, declared the unconditional release of all 78 prisoners on March 27, 1956 at Xuivi HQ. Three letters with identical contents were written by Scato Swu in English, Sumi and Angami for their safe passage through the Sumi, Chakhesang and Angami areas to reach Kohima, and NSG personnel deputed to guide till Kohima.

The letter in English read thus:

“These captives are being set free by the Federal Government of Nagaland. Nobody will harass or inflict them in any manner. Take care of them till they reach Kohima”.

Scato Swu also wrote another letter addressed to the Government of India under memo No. EIP/4/1, dated 27-3-1956:

“The Government of India is torturing the total population of Nagaland, regardless of innocent and guilty. However, it is not the policy of the Federal Government of Nagaland to commit any inhuman deed towards Indian

captives that may fall within the powers of FGN. The Nagas are conscious enough that both Nagas and Indians are human beings and it is not for us to torture or kill Indian brothers. Therefore, we let the 78 captives go their way home. It may be of interest to note that many Nagas now in the Indian jails may let go too.”(Swu Scato, 2013, pp. 39-40)

Through a display of good will gesture on humanitarian ground as promised in the aforementioned letter, the prisoners were released by the NSG personnel. The seventy eight captives were thus set free unconditionally on 27th March 1956 by the FGN.

3.5. Battle of Thuda/Phor

Another battle of great significance is the Battle of Thuda. It is not so much the battle that remains of importance but what happened after the battle was concluded that paints a picture of the way the Nagas viewed the conflict and their value systems as represented by the decision of the leaders. We contrast this aspect of the Naga leadership with the brutality that the Indian government exacted on the innocent Naga populace which was a violation of every aspect of human right.

3.5 (1). The Background

The outpost of Thuda, at the village of Phor⁹, some 130 Kms away from Meluri town under Phek district was one of the army posts targeted by the Naga Army with an aim to flush out the Indian armed forces from the Naga territories. The attack on the outpost was also a retaliation against the 16 Point Agreement in July, 1960 which completely sidelined the representation of the Naga people by the

⁹ See Fig 4

Federal Government of Nagaland; the body under which the Naga nationalists were struggling for freedom. This was because the signatories of the agreement were the Government of India and the newly formed Naga People's Convention (NPC). Phizo, the then president of Naga National Council (NNC) officially rejected the legitimacy of the agreement three days after it was declared on the grounds that the 19 signatories did not have any mandate of the Naga people who they claimed to represent (Iralu, 2000).

The moderate section of the Naga leaders were instigated by the Indian state to set up the Naga People's Convention (NPC); a platform to facilitate the various Naga tribes to come together and settle the Naga issue 'within the constitution of India'. And this was a clear move by the government of India to sabotage the Naga national movement which had grown from strength to strength despite the horrific coercive policies of the Indian army to crush the movement. B.N. Mullik, the then personal secretary of the Prime Minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru, strongly supports this viewpoint. He writes thus;

Having got the principle of separation of the Naga Hills from Assam accepted, Dutt tried to pick up the old threads and pressed on the moderate Naga leaders his idea of a convention of the representatives of the various tribes to nullify the resolution of plebiscite adopted at the first Naga convention in 1951. ... Dutt worked hard and we gave him our fullest support and both the Prime Minister and the Home Minister as well as the governor were keen that this convention should be held. The commissioner and deputy commissioner of Naga Hills district also gave their full cooperation. (Mullik, 1972, pp. 315, 316)

Like A.O. Hume did for the birth of the Indian National Congress the pivotal role in the formation of the NPC can thus be credited to S.M. Dutt, the then Deputy Director of Intelligence Bureau, Assam. The Battle of Thuda was fought from 25th to 28th of August 1960 with the battling forces being the Naga Army and the 14th Assam Rifles. The massacre of Matikhru men folk for their purported support to the Naga Army emerged as a result of the battle of Thuda. This massacre remains to this day one of the worst punitive attacks against the innocent Naga village public. We will see how the terrible response of the Indian military towards Nagas compares in sheer contrast to the humane treatment given to the Indian prisoners of war (taken from the downed Dakota plane) during the battle of Thuda by the Naga Army.

The Battle of Hoshepu, the first Indo-Naga battle fought in 1955 had sown the seed that planned and coordinated combat against the Indian forces was not only possible but also necessary to send out a message of resistance against the forceful occupation of the Naga territory. The daring exploit of the Naga Army in the Battle of Satakha in 1956 sparked the belief that, ill-equipped as they were, the Nagas stood a chance against the far superior military strength and size of the Indian Army. The Nagas knew that their love for their motherland and freedom cannot be suppressed that easily. The fight for their rights was thus relentless against all odds.

3.5 (2). The Battle

The commander of the Naga forces was Lt. Gen. Zuheto, General Officer Commanding Eastern Command who planned to attack the Thuda outpost, near Phor in Phek district with the help of two Burmese Naga soldiers serving in the Indian army in the outpost as inside men. The company commander of Thuda having some suspicions had the men transferred before they could be incorporated into the attack

(Personal communication: Zhevishe Aye, 27-2-2017, Thahekhu). Nonetheless the attack was given a green signal and the General chalked out plans. First Lt. Col. Zukiye and Capt. Zhevishe Aye were sent as recon units as they had lost valuable insider information with the transfer of the two outpost Naga soldiers. Additionally, the General instructed Cmdt. Vighoto Swu to infiltrate the outpost on the pretext of applying for the post of a teacher in a primary school near the army post. Surveying the layout after conversations with the post commander, Vighoto reported his findings to Gen. Zuheto to supplement information given by the recon units (Personal communication: Vighoto Swu, 10-5-2017, Satakha). The General further deployed various units of the Naga army encircling the camp to properly ambush any potential reinforcements of Indian Army. It is pertinent to note that the battle was thus carried out by the Sema personnel under the command of a Sema General far beyond the Sumi hinterlands¹⁰.

As it was monsoon all the major rivers like Tizu, Lanyie etc were in full spate. Just before launching the attack, the General ordered a coordinated wrecking of all the six bridges over the various rivers to cut off any chance of reinforcements (Iralu, 2000). The Naga army took up positions on four sides of the outpost according to the spy reports and as per the plan the attack on the camp began on the 25th of August at 0400 hrs with fifty eight Naga Army personnel. Kerosene Molotov missiles on the thatched barracks added to the chaos sprung by the four pronged attack. The Naga army were armed with 3 LMGs, 4 Sten Guns, along with quite a few petrol and kerosene missiles (Aye, Z. 2019). The four-day siege on Thuda outpost was possibly one of the heaviest gun fights between the Indian Army and the Naga Army. The Naga army had also cut off the water supply and thus the Indian personnel at Thuda

¹⁰ <https://nagalandpost.com/index.php/2018/09/06/remembering-matikhru-massacre-2/> retrieved on 05-08-2023

were badly trapped. However, they were able to call for reinforcements and thus on 26th August, an airdrop of rations and ammunitions was attempted to relieve the besieged camp but most of these fell in the hands of the Naga Army. Capt. Pikiye Yephthomi one of the Naga army besiegers recalls snagging down a box of bullets from a tree with a stick upon coming across a parachute he found hanging off the tree. Thus, the airdrops resupplied the Naga army who were almost out of ammunition (Personal communication: Pikiye Yephthomi, Hakhizhe village). Likewise, Capt. Zhevishe Aye would attest to the timely and misdirected help provided by the air drops in their effort to alleviate the Thuda outpost and from which they cheerfully collected a good number of rations and bullets (Personal communication: Zhevishe Aye, 27-2-2017, Thahekhu village).

The incident of the Dakota plane that was shot down is referred to by a number of national workers, among whom one is Captain Toshiho Naga, who vividly recollects the heavy firing at the three Dakota planes that came to drop relief materials. Two of the planes would continue to fly on towards Burma after potentially being hit and never return, however the third Dakota flew back and made attempts to drop rations again. This time around, everybody focused their fire on the one single Dakota plane leading to the plane eventually crashing down at *Zatshu* paddy field near Tizu River (Personal communication: Toshiho Naga, 16-5-2017, Xuivi village). Captain Zuhoshe along with a section of the Naga army was stationed near the Tizu river bridge, as a part of the encirclement that would lie in ambush for potential reinforcement. The Dakota crash landed in their vicinity and no sooner did it land, the captain and his squad swiftly and efficiently captured all the nine crew members alive (Aye, Z. 2019). With the situation turning dire Thuda outpost was about to potentially surrender when the army called in eight jet fighters to strafe and rout the Naga army

besieging the outpost. Scato Swu (2013) affirms these events giving further details on the supply plane, Dakota cargo carrier which bore the serial No. H.J.233 (G), along with 9 air crew being shot down around 1400 hrs on 26th August 1960 successfully by the Naga army (Swu Scato, 2013).

The shooting down of the Dakota plane led to more fighter planes being flown in to try and finish off the Naga Army. The Thuda outpost was unable to sustain the attack. With the monsoon all routes were cut off, thus an airborne attack remained the only logical alternative. Capt. Zhevishe Aye narrates the incident stating that on the 4th day, i.e. the 28th of August, 1960, recon jet planes came and surveyed their layout. Food suppliers arranged by Gen. Zuheto from Leshi would also inform the Naga army that the reinforcement forces of the Indian Army had also almost reached there using a makeshift path by tying ropes across the river. With the Indian Army fast approaching escape became an imminent necessity. Thus, they fled to a mountain nearby waiting to see what develops. Not long after two jet planes came and fired continuously at their defences and went away. Another two fighter planes came and flew away only after heavy bombarding. Captain Zevishe confesses that had they been where they were earlier stationed, they would have been unceremoniously wiped out by the jet fighter bombardment (Personal communication: Zhevishe Aye, 27-2-2017, Thahekhu village).

Thus, the early arrival of reinforcement for the besieged outpost prevented the capture of the Thuda outpost but it was burnt down nevertheless and successfully besieged by the Naga Army for four days. When the Naga army moved away on the 28th of August they left with a sizeable number of arms and ammunitions procured from the battle. Major Khehoto Zhimo and Captain Atoi Swu reported that 1000 rounds of 303 rifle bullets, 2 hand grenades, 4 parachutes with full load of ration and

ammunitions, 9 tins of kerosene were taken away by the Naga army after the battle (Personal communication: Khehoto Zhimo, 10-5-2017, Satakha).

The casualty tolls on the Naga Army side, was that one was killed in action and four were injured. Hd. Const. Suhoto of Zhekiye was killed while Major Khughoto of Hoshepu, Corporal Zhekheto of Shoixe, Corporal Izheto of Zungti and Corporal Khehovi of Sutimi were injured. An Indian soldier, Lance Naik Kalu Rai was killed in the battle while another 9 crew members of the Dakota were taken captive (Morung Express Newspaper, 31-7-2015).

3.5 (3). The Aftermath

The battle resulted with both sides taking their prisoners of war like the 9 crew members or the village folk around the Thuda outpost. Five of the nine Dakota crew were released in no time but four officers, namely; Flt. Lt. A.S. Singha, Flt.Lt. Raphil, Flt. Officer Choudhary and pilot Nevason were detained for security reasons till May 5, 1962 (Personal communication: Tokhuvi Tuccu, 26-08-2022, Chekiye village). The captured crew members were kept at Sati camp in the forest towards Pangsa in Somra Tract. In an interview Major Vihoi Aye of the Naga Army narrates;

“I was the camp commander there at Sati camp. Sumis use to fight all around Nagaland but it became over-flooded with Indian Army in order to crush down the movement. So, we went towards safety area to Sati camp in Burma-Naga area.

The flight crew suffered as they had to suddenly adapt to a new culture. They ate corn meal with us which was all we had to eat. They were taken good care of by the Naga Army. They were neither abused nor treated with vengeance or cruelty but, with dignity.

They insisted the plane crashed only due to mechanical failure, totally ignoring the fact that it was shot down by the Naga fighters. This prolonged their release. At last they admitted that the plane crashed because the engine was hit by the bullets of the Naga fighters and they were released without any harm. Later on, when I joined the Border Security Force, I met the flight commander Singha who had then become the Air Field Commander and, he was very glad to see me” (Personal communication: Vihoi Aye, 10-5-2017).

This account is further corroborated by Flt. Lieut. A.S. Singha whose gave an account of his plane being shot down and subsequent treatment by the Naga Home Guards as being of the kindest nature, that they gave due respects on account of them being officers despite being prisoners. They were given the same food that the Naga Army ate. He also specifically mentions that at no time were they treated badly or abused in any other way. When he eventually made a statement he and his crew declared that they had no complaints of any treatment given to them and that the statement was given voluntarily and without duress (Statement by the Indian Air Crew, Flt. Lieut. Singha, 1960).

The four Dakota crew officers were released after being in captivity for 1 year and 6 months under the Naga Army in good health condition on 5th April 1962. Their release order was issued by Scato Swu, the *Kedahge* of the Federal Government of Nagaland which reads:

On humanitarian basis the Federal Government of Nagaland are releasing the four Indian Captive Airmen this day the 5th May, 1962 in sound condition of general health, who were captured on August 26, 1960. They are handed over to Burmese Government to let present them to the International Red Cross Society,

and finally to be handed over to India by the IRCS. We found Flt Lt. A.S.

Singha to be a competent Officer who deserves sympathy and gratitude from the Government of India. His subordinate officers are all efficient as well (Swu Scato, 2013, p. 42).

The FGN perhaps held on to the hope that world would recognize their fight against the massive and superior forces of the Indian state was not one of spite but stemmed from a desire to live free and perhaps it was this hope of letting the world know about their noble struggle that the FGN sought the release of the captives to be done through the custody of the International Red Cross Society (IRCS). The use of military force by the Naga Army was only done so because they felt the necessity to expunge those they felt had unlawfully and coercively occupied the land that belonged to the Nagas. Thus it is noteworthy that the Nagas were never inhuman towards their captives and the respect and recognition of human rights was carried out even to those they considered enemies. In every incident where Indian Armed personnel had been taken prisoners they were in fact treated with care so long as they were in their custody.

This universal recognition of human values and life is sharply contrasted with the Indian Government's response to the battle on the other hand which was horrifying. The Pochury people observes 6th September as 'Black Day' every year because on this day in 1960, the entire men folk of Matikhru village was massacred by the Indian Army by beheading them one by one (PWOK, 2017). Matikhru was a small village of about fifteen houses (Nagaland Post Newspaper, 06-09-2018) located in Phek district. Following the battle, the Indian state declared the whole of Pochury area as a disturbed area and imposed martial law. The draconian Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) 1958 safely shielding the actions of the army from any

repercussions, and the media being either blind or collaborating with the powers that be to the atrocities taking place in the villages of the Pochury people; what followed in the punitive action against the Pochury villagers for their alleged consort with the Naga Army during the Battle of Thuda was a ghastly show of the extreme cruelty that the Nagas faced under the Indian state with the army as its executioner.

The PWOK souvenir in their 25th anniversary publication highlights some of these brutalities at Phor, where 6 village elders were simply mowed down by the sentries on duty with machine guns when they went to speak with the Assam rifles officers. Random passers-by coming to meet their relatives in Phor in particular were also caught and tortured to death (PWOK, 2017).

The worst incident however took place on the 6th of September 1960, when the 16th Punjab regiment surrounded the village of Matikhru in three encirclements around 10:00 AM. All the villagers were called out and the army began manhandling them mercilessly all the while demanding that the villagers reveal where the freedom fighters were hiding or where the weapons were kept. The men of the village were kicked and butted with the guns and tortured the whole day¹¹. Zhiwhuotho Katiry a survivor recalls how a victim Pongoi, lying half dead on the ground, ribs broken even had the container of water brought by his wife kicked away and another man who pleaded in the sparse Hindi he knew had his folded hands smashed with a wooden block while he entreated for mercy¹². The women and children were eventually chased out of the village as evening fell but one kind soldier woke up a man called Risapa as he lay unconscious and urged him to flee. The village chief Thah, and eight other men Muzitso, Pongoi, Eyechu, Pogholo, Kezukhwelo, Zasituo, Thitu and

¹¹ <https://nagalandpost.com/index.php/2018/09/06/remembering-matikhru-massacre-2/>

¹² <https://easternmirrornagaland.com/living-eyewitness-pochury-black-day-and-massacre-of-matikhru-village/>

Kekhwezu were all pitilessly beheaded and their bodies burnt by the army (PWOK, 2017). Among the men that remained who were being herded into the chief's house at gunpoint one managed to miraculously run past the door to escape and despite being assailed at by a barrage of gunfire lost just a finger blown away by one of the hundreds of bullets. A commonly held belief among the Nagas is that in times of peril, there is always one that survives to tell the tale to those living, and perhaps such was the destiny of that man Kekhwezu, the fated man who succumbed to his injuries days later but only after sharing his harrowing experience to others.

Rev. Katiry spoke of how the pitiless Indian army jawans did not even allow the bereaved families to perform the last rites or give decent burials. The bodies of the dead were dumped inside the houses and set on fire¹³. In this way all the houses and granaries of Matikhru were razed to the ground. The women and children who had been chased away to the jungles as if excusing them from the horror of the torture would come back the next morning to the worse horror of finding heaps of ashes where their homes once lay and within the ashes the burnt bodies and remains of their loved ones. One of the victims Thitu, would be found in semiconscious state among the debris and ashes waiting perhaps only to utter some final words to his wife. The unfortunate visiting Pastor Zosituo also lay dying on the ground with fatal wounds breathing his last as his mother put him on her lap. The women buried whatever they could of the dead they found and escaped into the jungles, fearing that the soldiers would come back to torture them. And they were right in doing so for after a few days the Indian soldiers came back, exhumed the bodies buried once again and burnt them to ashes (PWOK, 2017).

¹³(<https://easternmirrornagaland.com>, retrieved on 11-03-2022).

3.6. Battle of Phizhokita (Suruhuto)

The battle of Phizhokita was archetypal of the military tactics that Gen. Kaito decided to implement post the previous battles which had shown the disadvantageous nature of a head on confrontation with the superior numbers and firepower of the Indian army. As such this battle was essentially a guerilla raid carried out by the Naga Army on the Indian Army. Ambushing would be the most effective and prevalent guerilla tactic frequently employed by the Naga fighters to overpower the off guarded Indian army. A successful ambush usually ended in the seizure of arms and ammunitions of the fallen enemy. This went a long way in replenishing their meager arsenal. The knowledge of the rugged terrain of their homeland was an added advantage to the Naga fighters. Numerous ambushes were perpetrated on the Indian army successfully. In an interview, Brig. Tokhuvi Tuccu who had successfully led several ambushes himself stated that the Naga army was such deadly experts in this technique that the entire episode of shooting and capturing arms and ammunitions could be accomplished with great swiftness lasting barely for five to ten minutes. Thereafter, they would slip away to safety at lightning speed and would meet up at an appointed place they had pre-decided upon (Personal communication: Tokhuvi Tuccu, 26-8-2016, Chekiye village). This indeed not only perplexed the Indian army but also made it very difficult for them to suppress the Naga Movement. The following event that took place at Phizhokita¹⁴ under the present sub-division of Suruhuto in Zunheboto district; homeland of the Sumis, under the command of Gen. Kaito is one such example.

Ikishe Sukhalu, who was the lead shooter and arms capturer of the ambush at Phizhokita in an interview narrated that in December of 1957, he was at Nasa HQ as

¹⁴ See Fig 5

Angh Kughato's body guard but since he heard about the Indian army's plan to attack Gen. Kaito's camp at Lochomi village near Zunheboto, he had decided to go there protect him. However, to his utter dismay, when he reached there, the Indian army had already attacked the previous evening and Gen. Kaito along with his soldiers had barely escaped (Personal communication: Ikishe Sukhalu, 20-2-2017, Thilixu village). This was substantiated by another interviewee, Bohovi Zhimomi, who was present on the spot with Gen. Kaito during the incident. He said that on the evening of 17th December 1957, the Indian Army at Zunheboto came and attacked their camp. They were taken by surprise and could barely flee. Their bodies being fully scratched by thorns while darting through the jungles. It was during chilly winter season and he remembered shivering with cold at night as they could not even take their clothes or beddings as they had to flee for their lives.

The next day after the incident while they were resting at Tizu river valley fully exhausted and hungry, Ghunakhe of Yezami brought food and fed them. Often the national workers in these dire straits always found themselves the beneficiaries of the generosity and support of the villagers who had sympathy towards the movement and Ghunakhe was one such individual. In the attack, two Naga soldiers were unfortunately killed and sixteen of their precious guns were captured by the Indian army (Personal communication: Bohovi Zhimomi, 14-5-2017).

Further, Sukhalu states that, they moved on to Suruhuto and began to lay out strategy for the ambush as they had received information about the army convoy going from Suruhuto to Zunheboto to see off the commandant who was going away on promotion (Personal communication: Ikishe Sukhalu, 20-2-2017, Thilixu village). Gen. Kaito had found the right opportunity to recoup their losses at Lochomi and it was too precious to be missed.

23rd December 1957 was the D-Day for the ambush at Phizhokita, located at the present day hospital site at Suruhuto. Captain Ikishe Sukhalu narrates the incident as thus;

“It was a hairpin bend and we strategized that I would be stationed just above the road that is hardly 10 feet away while Captain Tsapiki was positioned a little far up on the mountain to give covering fire and was not in the position to capture arms. I was placed in the main position to shoot and capture arms. Amongst us, only Captain Tsapiki and I were armed with LMG. As we were waiting, twelve vehicles arrived. The strategy made was that six vehicles will be let off peacefully to be taken care by Tsapiki as they reach the curve of the road. Then, I fired at the last six vehicles, resulting in dead bodies rolling down the road. Gen. Kaito himself was in defense so I exchanged my LMG with his rifle to go and capture the precious guns. As I approached, I saw two of them were still alive; one Havaladar major was injured in the arm and the other a captain, seriously injured. The Havaladar major shot at me slightly grazing me on my brow; but I quickly fired back and killed both of them instantly. I then jumped up the truck armed with a bayonet and was again fired at by one injured but surviving captain, but luckily the bullet missed me this time. After taking him out with bayonet and taking his pistol, I collected the rest of the guns that were strewn around. A total of 17 guns were captured; 1 pistol, 2 LMG, 2 sten, 12 rifles and also 6 rounds of ammunition.” (Personal communication: Ikishe Sukhalu, 20-02-2017, Thilixu village).

Bohovi Zhimomi, who was also a participant of the event said that he was placed in the same position as Ikishe Sukhalu and that after the vehicles were fired upon, he also went charging with him to capture the guns. Apart from that they also

took away rations, lunch packs and beddings which they were in dire need of (Personal communication: Bohovi Zhimomi, 14-5-2017). In this ambush, 37 Indian Army personnel were killed, while Captain Ikishe was awarded VC (Victoria Cross), Captain Tsapiki was awarded MC (Military Cross) for their sacrificial deed in this war (Khashito Aye, 2000).

This battle is illustrative of how most of the guns were captured under the leadership of Gen. Kaito. The unpredictable nature of guerilla ambushes meant that the defensive fortifications for supplies and ammunition needed to be heightened which increased the workload for the Indian forces protecting the camps. At the same time the increased numbers of guard patrols also made them more susceptible to the methods now employed by the General. It was a tactic that yielded tremendous results with minimal loss on the part of the Naga forces who were far fewer in number and thus more mobile as a fighting unit and the technique was a nuisance and an impediment to the Indian army.

3.7. Village Guards (VG)

Retired IAS Officer TN Manen cites in an article posted on the Morung express Newspaper that the establishment of the Village Guards (VG) as an institution was on the 1st of March 1957. The VG was given formal recognition by the Government of India vide the External Affairs Ministry letter No.F64/1/59-wn. Dated 26th February, 1959, New Delhi ¹⁵. Manen, the former commissioner of Nagaland also mentions in the same article that while initially 300 village volunteers were recruited supposedly to protect the life and property of the villagers, the main reason for its creation was as a check against the freedom fighters.

¹⁵ <https://morungexpress.com/the-nagaland-vgs-the-neglected-heroes>

Local home guard units would know who lived locally and thus any strangers to an area were easy to identify. The VG was also made responsible for taking down any signs and clues that would potentially help the freedom fighters. In retaliation, the freedom fighters attacked them and their posts as and when opportunity arose. The rationale behind introducing the system was that it would be helpful to the Indian army to have an additional force of people who knew the region and the language in order to assist in military operations against the Naga nationalists. The composition of the force was purely voluntary. Mullik mentions thus;

“...another step taken by the Commissioner (Cavalrho) was to raise a force of Naga militia. There were several instances in which the militia fought the rebels and, though there were a couple of cases of betrayal, on the whole the militia acquitted itself well... These two steps, i.e. the grouping of the villages and the raising of the Naga militia, really forced the rebels into the defensive.” (Mullik, 1972, p. 313)

Of the incidents relating to the VG was the VG post at Satakha which was attacked on 9th September 1959 and a good number of arms, ammunitions and an amount of rupees two thousand captured by the Naga national workers.

3.8. Satakha VG Post Raid

During 1959, the Naga Army was in much need of arms and ammunition. Gen. Kaito therefore had an ingenious plan of capturing it from Satakha VG Post without actually having to fight a battle. For this purpose, he asked Lieutenant Vikuho Zhimo of Nunumi to surrender to Indian Government and join the VG (Jimomi, 2008). Vikuho Zhimo was a daring and loyal soldier of Gen. Kaito. He was one among

the few who was handpicked by the General to begin the combat against the Indian Army. He narrates the incident as thus:

“I remember, it was before the battle of Hoshepu of 1955, and Gen. Kaito had begun to prepare for that battle. Around 27 of us were encamped with him in between Ghukhuyi and Kiyekhu village. One evening during roll call, he told us to be on the alert as the enemy would surely come and attack. The next morning Gen. Kaito himself caught us unawares by firing on our camp to test our courage. Almost everyone fled for their lives at the sound of gunshots, except for seven of us who laid down in positions to fight back the enemy, with unwavering resolve. After a while, Gen. Kaito came checking and commented his admiration and vested confidence on us. He told us that we would be accompanying him to Hoshepu after which he took us with him to Hoshepu” (Personal communication: Vikuho Zhimo, 23-10-2016, Vikuho village).

Such was the confidence that the General had on Vikuho Zhimo that he was chosen for an extremely important but at the same time risky mission of looting the VG post at Satakha. In an interview Zhimo further said,

“Gen. Kaito had great faith in me, he kept on telling me to surrender and join VG so as to capture their guns without much difficulty. I replied that if it works out fine, it is well and good but if it does not, it is dangerous. I then asked him to let me surrender with a gun so as to convince the Indian Army about my sincerity in surrendering. He agreed to this proposal and I surrendered accordingly. I then joined VG as *havalder* and took the necessary training and had served for around 6 months. Nikhahe of Shena was then the VG commander at Satakha” (Personal communication: Vikuho Zhimo, 23-10-2016, Vikuho village).

On 9th August 1959, the awaited D-Day had come and so he sent information to Gen. Kaito through Vihozhe Zhimomi, to send 40 unarmed Naga Army soldiers to capture the camp that night itself. Before their arrival, Vikuho had already taken the 303 rifles and musket guns while checking the camp. He then brought the people on duty to one room, gave them alcohol, then locked up the ones drinking, took their guns and as well as the guns from personnel on duty outside. They handed the weapons over without hesitation and suspicion as Vikuho happened to be the duty commander for that night. Thus, all the guns were collected without much commotion and complications (Personal communication: Vikuho Zhimo, 23-10-2016, Vikuho village).

Vikuho Zhimo continued to narrate that the Naga army, led by Vighoto Swu and Vihozhe Zhimomi, came from hospital side, entered the gate after saying the correct password. The password for both VG and army was *anguthi* (finger ring in Sumi) for that evening. Every evening, VGs were given password during roll call to make each other identify their comrades. It kept changing every evening for security reasons. He had already sent the password to the Naga Army who had come to take them away. They actually wanted to capture army camp also and take their guns as it was adjoining the VG post. They could actually enter the army gate, uttered the password to the gatekeeper and had entered but he said that they backed out because of lack of manpower. Vikuho had actually asked Gen. Kaito to send 40 people empty handed but less than 20 of them came so they could not carry much. Therefore, the plan to attack the army camp was abandoned. They took away a total of 33 guns, 2000 bullets and 2000/- rupees. Most of the guns were 303 rifles besides some musket guns. Pistols were not taken. (Personal communication: Vikuho Zhimo, 23-10-2016, Vikuho village).

In another interview with Captain Vihozhe Zhimomi, who was a participant in this event, narrated thus:

“VG came to Satakha in 1958. They kept harassing not only Satakha people but also the neighboring villagers like; Nasa, Nunu, Shoipu, Hoishe, Kilo Old etc. They even took off women’s clothes and took away money that was hidden inside. Further, an instance was cited where Zhimo said, Visheli Zhimo, wife of Yeghoto Zhimo of Khukiye-Lukhai’s *mekhala* (lower garment worn by Naga women) was taken off and rupees 1000 that was hidden there was taken away. Nikhahe of Shena was the VG commander and he was responsible for perpetrating harassment to the villagers. During the attack, our attempt to kill him failed but his hand could be chopped off with a *dao*. Capt. Vighoto and I waited for three days as the VGs had gone to Chishili for operation. On that fateful night, we first met Vikuho Zhimo who was the commander for the night. Lhotovi Zhimo, who went away with us to join the movement, was on duty and said everything was all right. Khuzhevi Kinnimi, another VG personnel to go away with us, was line commander in the camp that evening and said it was okay there as well, so we went inside the camp after saying *anguthi*; the password. Sixteen of us went including Capt. Vighoto and me. (Personal communication: Vihozhe Zhimo, 16-02-2017, Dimapur).

While there were some VG personnel loyal to the Indian government, carrying out their assigned duties with sincerity, there were also many personnel who were loyal and inclined towards the Naga movement. The attack of VG post at Satakha is a typical example of how the cadres of the village guards themselves ironically connived and supported the Naga Army, whom they were actually employed to check and suppress. This can be an indication that many of them joined the Village Guards

because they were selected to represent their villages which was made compulsory by the order of Indian government. Otherwise, deep down their hearts, they held the cause of Naga freedom struggle dear. An interview with Khuzhevi Kinnimi of Lukhai village on 17-05-2017, one of the VG cadres who went away that night with the Naga Army to join the movement, would support this opinion. Kinnimi narrates,

“I am from Lukhai village. In 1959, our villagers selected me, Vikheto and Yeqhuzhe to join VG at Satakha Post. Thus I was a VG personnel by compulsion but deep down my heart, I was always a Naga patriot by choice. I was also there when Vikuho Zhimo went away with VG guns at Satakha. Vikuho and I planned and captured VG post at Satakha. Capt. Vighoto Swu, Capt. Vihozhe Zhimo, and group came and took us away. We took away a lot of guns, 2000 bullets and 2000 rupees. 12 of us VG personnel at Satakha post, went away and joined the movement. I gladly seized this opportunity to go away from the obligation of being a VG and instead joined the Naga movement which I held dear.” (Personal communication: Khuzhevi Kinnimi, 17-5-2017, Satakha).

In yet another interview conducted with Vighoto Swu on 10-5-2017 at Satakha, he said that at Heboli Camp, he was given the order to capture VG post at Satakha so he went as the commander. 12 soldiers were assigned to him for the mission but he felt that it was too less so he included some more from Khukiye village, Vihozhe Zhimo being one among them.

“Capture was done successfully around 11’o clock at night. VG Commander Nikhahe of Shena could not be killed but was injured on the head and his arm was chopped off with *dao*. They not only took away their guns and bullets but also twelve VG cadres who followed them voluntarily and later joined the Naga

Army. After capturing the arms and ammunition, we went to Kilo Old, then proceeded to Chisholi and finally arrived at Heboli HQ where we reported to Gen. Kaito” (Personal communication: Vighoto Swu, 10-5-2017, Satakha).

The twelve VG personnel that went away with the Naga Army that night were:

1. Inalho of Chishili, 2. Khuzhevi of Lukhai, 3. Vikheto Awomi of Lukhai, 4. Yexuzhe Zhimo of Lukhai, 5. Lhothayi of Lukhai, 6. Luheshe of Lukhai, 7. Lhotovi Zhimo of Nasa, 8. Lhoxeche Assumi, 9. Hevishe Tuccu, 10. Alhozhe Shohe of Hoishe, 11. Zuhovi of Vishepu and 12. Vikuho Zhimo of Nunu (Personal communication: Vighoto Swu, 10-5-2017).

To avenge the capture of arms and ammunitions from Satakha VG post spearheaded by Vikuho Zhimo, VG Subedar Zhevishe of Ustomi commanded the mission to capture Vikuho Zhimo from his village, Nunumi, but when he could not be found, his elder brother Hotovi Zhimomi, who was the village chieftain, was shot dead instead on 22nd November 1959 (Jimomi, 2008).

The first three battles (Hoshepu, Satakha and Thuda) highlighted are critical timestamps in the course of the Naga freedom struggle as they revealed various facets of the Indo-Naga relationship as well as influencing the course of events to come. It will also not be an exaggeration to conclude that these three were some of the most significant events that marked the transition of the Naga freedom movement into the armed struggle for self-determination, a status that is in place even today with the Naga freedom movement being one of the longest armed resistances. There are other numerous clashes that have peppered the longstanding conflict but these have often been guerrilla in nature and do not quite qualify as extended battles but more like skirmishes. Nevertheless, the signing of the Cease-Fire led to an almost complete halting of any kind of armed standoff of any kind.

The battles are not just important from a military standpoint but they were also key to rallying people around the movement and instilling a sense of self-preservation among the Nagas. Thus, the battle of Hoshepu is a significant landmark in the history of the Naga struggle for freedom. The message the battle sent out across to the perceived invading Indian forces as well as the local populace was that Nagas would no longer remain passive but would rise up in arms to protect their freedom at any cost. For one thing, this battle marked the beginning of the Naga armed resistance for freedom. While it revealed the severe shortfall of inventory of the defenders it also highlighted a number of remarkable qualities. The battle of Hoshepu showed how the Sumi who fought in the battle, and by extension the Nagas, though poor in terms of arms and ammunitions had the most essential qualities of a fighter; courage, determination, and self-sacrifice; and blessed with a capable leader in Kaito Sukhai, developed into a formidable force.

Another significant outcome of the battle was that the Gen. Kaito Sukhai realized with his acute military acumen that such a type of battle was disadvantageous for the smaller, poorly equipped force that the Nagas had. The fortified battle strategy as experimented in Hoshepu proved to be both expensive and impractical. Gen. Kaito Sukhai duly shifted all subsequent military action to guerrilla warfare taking advantage of the superior knowledge of terrain and local conditions. After this battle, the Indian army also realized that the Nagas, especially the Sumis, were not an easy force to reckon with, when it came to warfare. Ramunny asserts the effectiveness of this tactical change made by Gen. Kaito and how he “reorganized Sema NSGs into 3 or 4 main groups”. These groups were split up into small bands of soldiers and were used purely as guerilla forces. “They had no fixed headquarters, and no defended

bases. These tactics made the task of the security forces more difficult.” (Ramunny, 1988, p.106)

The battle of Phizhokita is quintessentially how the Naga army transitioned their engagements with the Indian army after the battle of Hoshepu. Though some large scale battles did occur even after Hoshepu the typical clash between the two forces was often a short explosive exchange of fire rather than long extended standoffs with heavy exchange of fire and loss of life. The inclusion of Phizhokita is to highlight the tactical adaptability of the Naga army under Gen. Kaito to using the guerilla methods that best suited them despite the heavy disadvantages of factors.

This brings us to the Battle of Satakha which had its own impact on the movement. While it was not necessarily a battle of attrition where the winning side is the one left with the most manpower it was a success which boosted the morale of the youth, and we find that there was a mass movement especially among the Sumis who left their schools and colleges *en mass* and voluntarily enrolled themselves to fight against for the defense of their motherland. This led to an enormous increase in the strength of Naga Safe Guards. In fact, by the month of May 1956, barely one month after the battle, multitudes of volunteers came flocking in to Shena Old, the new NSG Head Quarters. It was only out of consideration of management being impractical to accommodate everyone that led to selection purely on the basis of merit. This was carried out carefully screened by the Public Service Commission with Scato Swu as the chairman. As a result, many disqualified candidates went back disappointed (Swu Scato, 2013).

The battle also saw the capture of 78 Indian army personnel who were eventually released unharmed. This action portrays the humanitarian quality of the leadership of the Nagas which was consistent and value centric as also showcased in

the aftermath of the battle of Thuda where the comparisons between the Naga army and the Indian army would come to the forefront. Regardless the most important outcome of the battle of Satakha was that it instilled a sense of unity and shared responsibility towards defending the motherland triggered by a resounding victory over the Indian military through the participation of even non-combatants which ushered in an overwhelming wave of national duty not only in the Sumi region but also in other areas through the distribution of the captured arms from the battle. Thus, the battle of Satakha is a significant event in the history of the Naga struggle for freedom.

Finally, we have the Battle of Thuda, which is one of the many clashes fought between the Naga army and the Indian forces. The significance of this battle was not so much the clash itself as much as the subsequent actions and developments that followed. The aftermath of this battle brought into stark contrast the treatment of war survivors by the respective sides. The Nagas fought the battle with the intention of flushing out the Indian army and personnel stationed in Naga territories. For the Nagas the fight was fought for their freedom and independence which was their birth right and which they felt was unequivocally due to them. Despite the fact that the prisoners they captured were members of the military directly responsible for the pain and suffering their people were facing there was no malice in the treatment of the prisoners from the fallen Dakota, if anything; Flt. Lieut. Singha's statement is an irrefutable proof of how the Nagas treated even their oppressors.

Not long after the battle, Gavin Young (1962), a British Journalist and foreign correspondent for *The Observer* of London, visited Nagaland and wrote the pamphlet "*The Nagas: An Unknown War*". For the first time the world outside of Nagaland and beyond the censorship of the state control was the inside story of the Indo-Naga

war presented in its true state since India had censored the press from the Naga territory.

On the other hand, we find the treatment of the Matikhru villagers a representative example of how the Indian military force was simply reinforcing the threat of retributive action by the Indian army in case the Nagas continued their support of the FGN's activities. The Naga villagers were dehumanized to the point where they were simply viewed as pawns in the game of power that the Indian state was contesting with the Nagas. The impartial journalism of Young threw light on the atrocities being committed by the Indian armed forces as well as the actual nature and sufferings of the Naga Army and the Naga public found fair representation. The battle of Thuda stands testament to the belief that the Nagas had in their worth and humanity, that they respected and valued human lives, even those of their enemies despite the terrible sufferings and treatment their innocent families and friends suffered at the hands of those very same aggressors; while the Indian side of the story exposed the duplicity and colonialist outlook of the very same people who had themselves fought centuries and had only just thrown off the yoke of foreign rule.

3.9. *Alee* (Foreign) Command

The war between the Indian Army and the Naga Army had escalated so severely by early 1960s, that the latter had no option but to find a way to seek foreign aid in terms of training their cadres and supply of arms and ammunitions so as to combat with the well-equipped and well trained Indian Army. Thus in 1962, Gen. Kaito ventured out to the erstwhile East Pakistan with 150 Naga Army personnel that is also known as *Alee* (foreign) command. The choice of their ally was obvious considering India's uneasy relationship with Pakistan. Phadnis and Ganguly opines regarding

seeking foreign help, “A more obvious target of lobbying will be those states that are staunch enemies of the central government; military and diplomatic support from such states may be more likely since they may want to exploit the situation for their own gain”(Phadnis & Ganguly, 1989, p. 57). The maxim ‘An enemy’s enemy is a friend’ holds true to this situation and the Naga fighters wisely took full advantage of the situation. Another factor would have been its geographical proximity to India, making it more accessible than a country far away. Therefore, by the end of 1961, Gen. Kaito had made up his mind to go on this challenging mission. His plan had been given a green signal by the then top FGN leaders; Scato Swu, the President and Kughato Sukhai, the Prime Minister and the former had signed on the official letter of approval (Zhimomi & Zhimomi, 2022).

Accordingly, Gen. Kaito began the preparation for the expedition. In the spring of 1962, he gave order to all the divisional commands to select their best soldiers and send them to the 5th Brigade Naga Army Headquarter at Zubza riverbank, Niuland Dimapur. After gathering the soldiers, it was on 21st March 1962 that they began their journey (Aye, Z. 2019). On 11th April, they reached the Naga Army camp at Barak riverbank that was under the command of Brig. Daigon Zeliang. They waited here for Maj. Gen. Mowu Gwizantsu’s group to join in. He arrived with 43 soldiers including two women. Combined together, the total number came up to around 150. Of these 69 were Sumi, 43 were Angami and Chakhesang combined, 12 were Lothas, 2 Ao, 12 Zeliang, 11 Yimchunger and Sangtam (Zhimomi & Zhimomi, 2022, p. 113). Thus, the majority of the army were Sumis and under the command of none other than Gen. Kaito Sukhai, who was a Sumi himself.

According to the record meticulously maintained by Toshiho Naga and Zhevishe Aye, the command was formed as follows;

1. Mission Commander: Gen. Kaito Sukhai C-in-C (Sumi)
2. Second Commander: Maj. Mowu Gwizantsu (Angami)
3. Major General: Maj. Hokiye Swu (Sumi)
4. Mission Quarter Master: Brig. Tsemomo (Lotha)
5. Camp Commander: Lt. Col Zukiye Mishili (Sumi)
6. Mission Security Officer: Lieut. Toshiho Naga (Sumi)
7. Head Chaplain: Maj. Ahokhe Saghemi (Sumi)
8. Mission Secretary: Maj. Saniba (Ao)

The group was further divided into 3 companies; Company A was commanded by Maj. Khutovi Swu, Company B by Maj. Zhevishe Aye and Company C by Lt. Col. Depralie (Zhimomi & Zhimomi, 2022). In an interview with Toshiho Naga who went as the security officer of the command said that on the evening they were to cross through Ditokchera railway station near Halflong in Assam, the two contact persons who were supposed to show them the way turned out to be CIDs. Due to the information given by them, train had brought the army in large numbers and had surrounded the railway station to finish them that night. When they arrived at Ditokchera village there was not a soul around, everyone had fled. Gen. Kaito went searching around the place and could at last locate an old man who informed about the plan of the Indian Army to annihilate them that night. Accordingly, the villagers were asked to evacuate but he had decided to stay back come what may since he was too weak to move about (Personal communication: Toshiho Naga, 16-5-2017, Xuivi village).

In another interview with Zhevishe Aye, also a participant of the event, and Commander of B Company of the mission said that the Indian Army had kept the train with flash light on to detect them while they cross the rail tract which was an inevitable route. They started out around 9 to 10 at night. It was a bright moonlit night and so they wondered as to how they could get across under the watchful eyes of the Indian army. It was a do or die situation as they had to cross the place that night itself if at all they had to go to East Pakistan. Their plan would have otherwise been shattered, the longer they lingered the more advantageous it would be for the Indian Army to close in on them. Once they got across that plain area, the hilly forested terrain would begin and so it would be easier for them to slip away without much difficulty. When they were thus in that predicament, divine providence came from above in the form of heavy thunderstorm. All of a sudden, the bright moonlit night turned into a pitch dark stormy thunderstorm; God was on their side (Personal communication: Zhevishe Aye, 27-2-2017, Thahekhu village). The interviewee continued to narrate in his own words;

“It was absolutely dark so we could see only for a brief while when the lightning struck. We ran quickly holding each other’s hands when we could see during lightening and then stopped, looked far ahead when the lightning struck again and quickly ran till the place we had seen and so forth. At last we could cross the rail tract without being detected by the Indian Army only because of the sudden unexpected thunderstorm which was divine providence otherwise, it was impossible for us to cross that place. Surely, many of us would have been shot dead while doing so. On reaching East Pakistan we were told that the Indian army was determined to intercept us from there as it was the last place where we could be effectively checked; beyond that place was the mountainous

region where we could escape easily”. (Personal communication: Zhevishe Aye, 27-2-2017, Thahekhu village)

B.N.Mullik, who was one of the key persons in formulating policies towards the Nagas during that time wrote about the plan to intercept the Naga Army going to East Pakistan in his book *My Years with Nehru* as thus;

“Kaito started for East Pakistan with about 150 rebels. Intelligence came to know about the intention and the exact route and the various dates on which this group would pass through various points in transit. The route was through Tamenglong subdivision, then through North-Cachar hill into Khowai subdivision of Khasi hills district to Sylhet district of East Pakistan. A company of army was posted at Ditokchera, which is a railway station on the Halflong-Badarpur section, to intercept this Naga contingent, but due to some misunderstanding this unit left the place a day before Kaito’s group was due to arrive. Kaito and his party stayed at this place for 3 days and then proceeded towards East Pakistan. The army unit came back later when the Nagas had departed. A good opportunity of smashing Kaito’s gang was lost.” (Mullik, 1972, p. 332)

Thus, Mullik represents the Indian side of the story who lay under the belief that they had mistimed their ambush not aware that the ambush had failed despite their targets being present right where and when they were calculated to be. The Indian army remained oblivious that the Naga Army had actually slipped away miraculously in front of their very eyes under the cover of the sudden raging thunderstorm. One must also note how Mullik repeatedly uses a variety of common terms to refer to Kaito’s forces but only uses the military terms to refer to the Indian army; it is a

clever use of narrative to establish the illegitimacy of Kaito's army while reinforcing the recognition of the Indian army.

After more than a month of tedious marching, they finally reached the Surma River, which marked the border between India and East Pakistan. Once they got across that river, they would be in Sylhet district of East Pakistan. Toshiho Naga narrates;

“It was around 4 AM that we got ready to cross over the river. Hardly 100 meters away from us happened to be an Indian army post. While the group was crossing the river, I kept aiming at the army post to retaliate to any eventualities of gunshots from the army side. I was standing still to let others cross and decided for counter attack only. As soon as I heard a gunshot, I fired my LMG immediately not giving them chance to fire more. Just then the 2-inch mortar carriers Col. Tsemomo Lotha and Lieut. Jehoto Muhumi also began to fire. Thus, all of us could cross safely into East Pakistan.” (Personal communication: Toshiho Naga, 16-5-2017, Xuivi village)

Toshiho Naga, Tsemomo Lotha and Jehoto Muhumi were awarded Victoria Cross (VC) by Gen. Kaito for this feat (Jimomi, 2008). According to the first-hand account of Maj. Gen. Mowu, Second-in-Command of the mission, written in his autobiography, he said the most awaited day for them came on 1st May 1962 when they crossed the Surma River and entered the soil of East Pakistan. They were warmly welcomed by the armed forces as well as the local people, receiving them as state guests and provided them with all the required facilities (Mowu, 2020).

They were taken to a place called Khadimnagar near Sylhet where they were put up in a college which was on holiday. After all the necessary discussions had taken place between the Naga army leaders with the Pakistani leaders, they were flown to

Dacca, from where they were taken to a forest some hundred miles away to begin the much awaited training program. The Naga Army named the place as Urro Western Training Camp. They were trained by these officers:

1. Training Commander: Maj. Kamal
2. Training Second in Command: Capt. Khalot
3. Demolition Master (Explosives): Subedar Jordar
4. Weapons & Tactics Instructor: Hav. Maj. Allauddin (Personal

communication: Zhevishe Aye, 27-2-2017, Thahekhu village).

Along with them many others came and trained the Naga Army very sincerely. Tents were propped up impromptu for them to stay. Classes were taken subject wise continuously from morning till evening. They were trained on gun handling, firing, demolition training on how to destroy RCC, bridges etc. judo, guerilla tactics, map reading, detection; e.g. Differentiating between army and civilian, detection of robbers etc. simulation method of teaching was also used (Personal communication: Toshiho Naga, 16-5-2017, Xuivi village).

While the Naga army was being trained, Gen. Kaito and Maj. Gen. Mowu joined by Khodao Yanthan and Yonkong at Karachi left for London in September 1962 (Zhimomi & Zhimomi, 2022). The purpose of the trip was to create awareness among the English and the outside world about the Naga political issue and also to get in touch with people sympathetic towards the Naga cause (Mowu, 2020). After almost four months of stay at London, Gen. Kaito and Maj. Gen. Mowu returned to East Pakistan on 17th December 1962. They were delighted to see their soldiers being so well trained and encouraged them to make good use of it as they got back home (Zhimomi & Zhimomi, 2022).

After nearly eight months of stay at East Pakistan, the Naga Army bade farewell to their training camp in January 1963. They were transported to Dacca airport by army trucks, and then flown by military aircraft to Chittagong; from there they were taken by vehicle to Bandarban town at Chittagong Hill Tracts. They had to ferry through Bandarban to Thanchi across river Sangu by means of local boats that had been arranged for them (Mowu, 2020). Thenceforth they had start walking on foot. Pakistani army along with Col. Khan accompanied them till the last village bordering Burma and bade them goodbye (Aye, Z. 2019). The route of their return journey was skirting through the Burmese territory of about six hundred to one thousand miles entirely on foot (Mowu, 2020). It would be an arduous and backbreaking task as each had to carry 60 to 70 pounds of arms and ammunitions supplied by East Pakistan but they did it gladly for the national cause (Mowu, 2020). On 11th March 1963, the Naga Army could arrive at their headquarters at Thawati-Chikhung mountains that was in the Indo-Burmese border (Zhimomi & Zhimomi, 2022).

Thus were the sacrifices made by the Naga Army to not only enriching their depleted arsenal but also to get trained by professionals in various areas of warfare in order to resist the occupation of their homeland by the Indian Army. They in turn, imparted training on what they had learnt to the Naga army at home which proved to be very effective in their fight against the opponent (Personal communication: Zhevishe Aye, 27-2-2017, Thahekhu village). This was the first but not the only *alee* command that the Naga Army would undertake, it was followed by at least eight such trips not only to East Pakistan but also to China (Swu Scato, 2013).

The first trip to East Pakistan studied as the archetype of the *alee* commands is therefore a significant event in history of the Naga movement. It provided a sense of security to the Naga Army in terms of being able to tackle the situation more

proficiently with the training they had received abroad. Moreover, the arms and ammunitions brought back home by the *alee* command replenished their depleted arsenal which went a long way in boosting the morale and confidence of the newly trained Naga Army in their fight against the Indian army. The training also gave the soldiers a proper exposure to contemporary military training and tactics which would be passed on to the next generation of soldiers thus making the Naga army more proficient in their military exercises. For soldiers who had developed the situational awareness and conditioned towards guerilla warfare such a structured training exercise was crucial to reinforcing the discipline needed to stay as a cohesive force. Thus, the strategic consequences of the *alee* command exercise both immediately then and subsequently afterwards cannot be understated.

CHAPTER 4

Role of Sumi in Administrative Affairs

Administrative affairs are essential for the smooth operation of any organization, enabling it to achieve its mission and objectives efficiently and effectively. The chapter studies about the management and organization of the operational and logistical aspects of the Federal Government of Nagaland. The administrative structure is highlighted with the intent to project the involvement of the Sumi people and role played by the eminent Sumi leaders in the Naga Movement. The role of the Sumi in the Naga struggle for freedom cannot be understated and while the Sumi have always been a part of the movement there have been significant eras where the greatest burden of carrying on the banner or resistance was taken forward by the Sumi and they made tireless efforts to rejuvenate the movement as well as spark the spirit of nationalism among the Naga people in general. While the argument behind the importance of the military setup and the armed resistance is laid out and defended in the conclusion, this chapter brings to light about the role played by the Sumi in the initial years post 1947 when the Indian state at the center were trying to destabilize the movement and subsume the territory that the freedom fighters were contesting as their birthright into the union of states that now constitute the nation called India.

The Federal Government of Nagaland is headed by the *Kedahge* (President), assisted by a number of functionaries such as the *Kedallo* (Vice President), *Atto Kilonser* (Prime Minister), *Kilonser*s (Ministers), *Tatars* (MPs), *Anghs* (Governors), judges, *Midan* (Commissioner), *Pangtongs* (Deputy Commissioners), *Raju Peyus* (Civil SDOs), *Khapurs* (EACs) and *Runa Peyus* (Village Chairmen). (Swu Scato, 2013)

This chapter demonstrates how the Sumi were involved in the movement not only to monopolize power or to dominate the Naga cause by overwhelming all positions of power, as some might claim history shows, but also shed light on the movement's widespread nature, the public support of the national workers, and its mass voluntary nature of the movement itself. The significance of the involvement of the Sumi in the movement, the consequences of their participation and the extent of the role played by the Sumi national workers in the administrative sectors of the government is addressed. Emphasis has been made on some major personalities who were instrumental in propelling the participation of the Sumi in the Naga national movement and thereby, the extent of the Sumi participation in the Naga movement may be accurately assessed. However, before delving into the analysis of the key personalities, it is imperative that we understand the nature of the Sumi society and their culture to comprehend how these figures were as influential as they were and how their involvement in the movement gave a thrust that may have otherwise not occurred.

The chapter highlights the counter policies employed by the Indian government at the center to derail the Sumi leadership as well as dividing the freedom fighters amongst themselves in order to let the movement implode on itself. Attempt is also made to showcase how the Sumi were not only invested in the movement to monopolize authority or dominate the Naga cause by overwhelming all positions of power, as some might claim history shows, but to throw light on the widespread nature of the movement, the public support of the national workers and the mass voluntary nature of the movement itself. The role of the Sumi in this chapter as in the previous will continue to build the case of the significance of the involvement of the Sumi in the movement, the consequences of their participation

and the extent of the role played by the Sumi national workers in the administrative sectors of the government. The chapter highlights the counter policies employed by the Indian government at the center to derail the Sumi leadership as well as dividing the freedom fighters amongst themselves in order to let the movement implode on itself.

As mentioned earlier, the nature of Sumi society is hierarchical with strong community ties to their village leaders. The authority and command of the chief is deeply revered and respected. This authority is exhibited in some manner by the head of a family, the eldest in an age group. Generally speaking there is a very powerful cultural phenomenon that determined the actions and behaviour of the Sumi as a community during these tumultuous times which implied that the decisions of the leaders were followed en-masse; that is not to say that the participation was not voluntary because it was very much the case. It would be more apt to say that these leaders, who may be identified as the village chief, head of the family and eldest of an age group were the sparks that lit the fire within the Sumi to engage with the contestation for independence with a fierce zeal. This can be validated because the times when the Sumi were at the helm of the National movement also happened to be the most fiercely fought period of the Indo-Naga conflict. Thus, the credit for the sustained national movement can be considered the outcome of the tremendous and fearless leadership of the Sumi. These were leaders at different levels, from top federal government leaders all the way down to the battle hardened officers, the village leaders and the women representatives.

To list every individual who led the movement at appropriate moments would be an unattainable feat. Nonetheless, there are certain towering individuals whose names prominently stand out for the iconic roles they played and for bringing

significant outcome of the Naga movement. Also, it should be noted that in order to bring out the true picture of the Naga movement, the study is not confined only to the military activities of the Naga army. A balanced study has been made by acknowledging and incorporating the administrative division of the national workers. The relentless efforts made by this division in negotiation by chartering peace talks to reach a political settlement are noteworthy.

We must not be mistaken that just because these were the most militarily active years of the FGN it was only the Naga army that contributed to the movement. The administrative division of the national workers was relentless in their efforts to try and reach a political settlement, to negotiate an honorable conclusion to the conflict, charter a peace treaty through talks and usher in peace and security to the Nagas who had been in turmoil for so long. Furthermore, the many battles that the Naga Army was able to conduct were thoroughly supported by the administrative wing of the FGN which catered to the logistical and financial needs of the military. This was an ongoing struggle and both the military and administrative divisions of the FGN were powerfully entwined, each looking out for the other in a symbiotic relationship with both sectors of the movement aiming to achieve similar goals using different means.

4.1. Important Sumi Leaders in Administration

Below are some of the most influential leaders in the administrative sector of the Naga movement from the Sumi tribe:

4.1 (1). Scato Swu

A Graduate of St. Edmund's College, Shillong, Scato Swu was preparing to go for higher studies in Law but the Gaon Buras of 33 villages of Satakha Range tasked

him with the responsibility of being the Head Master, Government Middle English School, Satakha in September, 1954 during which time he witnessed the Assam Police committing horrible crimes against the Nagas from 1954-1956. His conscience urged him to close down the school on the 19th March, 1956 and join the Naga Independence Movement on the same day (Swu Scato, 2013). He was the first graduate to join the Naga National Movement. He was a scholarly statesman with a powerful command and diction and he used it to represent the Naga people in his communication with his counterparts. His involvement in the movement also went beyond the office as he often exercised his God given abilities to persuade and reassure his Naga brethren in the Naga cause. He led the movement as the President FGN for almost 8 years during the roughest times before the cease-fire was signed in 1964 of which he was a key figure. Thus, his era of leadership ushered in an eventual period of relative peace through long concerted efforts at negotiating and peace talks. The following are the offices held by Scato Swu in the FGN:

Ambassador to India, March–April 1956,

Adviser to Sumi Ahng (Governor), May–June 1956,

The Speaker, Tatar Hoho (Naga Parliament), July 1956-1957,

The Kedallo (Vice President), 1958,

The Kedahge (President), 1959 – September 1967 (Swu Scato, 2013, p. v).

The Federal Government of his time entered upon the Cease-fire agreement with the Government of India on the 6th September, 1964. He directed *Atto Kilonser* Kughato Sukhai to conduct Prime Minister level political settlement talks with Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in New Delhi for 6 Rounds. For the first time Naga Army was sent on *Alee* (foreign) command to get trained and bring military supplies and assistance from neighbouring countries like the erstwhile East Pakistan and China

during his time. He was the Prime Minister of the Revolutionary Government of Nagaland from 1968-73(Personal communication: Atomi Swu, 16-10-2019, Chekiye village).

4.1 (2) Kughato Sukhai

Kughato Sukhai had an inborn talent for leadership and courage beyond compare. He was the first to hoist the Naga National Flag when the FGN declared sovereign independence on 14th August 1947¹. He proved himself to be the most powerful and versatile *Ahng* (Governor) of the Federal Government of Nagaland. He was a remarkable organiser, a shrewd politician and an excellent civil administrator (Swu Scato, 2013). He practiced no power abuse and kept the people together. He would, with his brother Kaito, in fact take on the title Sukhai instead of his surname Zhimomi lest the question of clan supremacy undermine their concentrated efforts to instil national spirits among the Nagas and the Sumi in particular. (Zhimomi & Zhimomi, 2022).

Along with 9 other Naga representatives and A.Z. Phizo, he met Mahatma Gandhi in Delhi on 19th July 1947 to deliberate on the Naga issue. When the Nagas declared independence on 14th August 1947 Kughato Sukhai was the first person to hoist the Naga flag at Kohima. He was the Sumi Tribal Council President from 1946-52 and administrated over the plebiscite of 1951. He sanctioned an *azha* (order) during his tenure as the Sumi Ahng (1956-58) to establish villages on the foothills of Dimapur and also declared amnesty with Fazl Ali the Governor of Assam and protected the villages from any interference from the Assam government. He also had the singular merit of establishing a week long truce with the Indian Army General KS Thimayya

¹From the biography of Kughato Sukhai where the date, place and publisher could not be found.

long before the Indo-Naga peace talks transpired (Khashito Aye, 2000). The Federal Authorities elected Kughato Sukhai to the office of the *Atto Kilonser*, in November 1959.

Prime Minister Kughato Sukhai conducted 6 Rounds of Prime Minister Level political settlement talks with the Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in New Delhi. On the last round of talks Prime Minister Indira Gandhi said, “Mr. Sukhai, you take everything but not sovereignty” Prime Minister Sukhai retorted, “I shall not take everything but sovereignty.” (Swu Scato, 2013). He would later go on to help establish the Sumi Hoho as the founder President from 1979-1983 (Personal communication: K.L. Chishi, 11-12-2019, Dimapur).

4.1 (3) I.K. Zuheshe Chophi

I.K. Zuheshe was the first among the Sumis to matriculate in 1942; he was also the first President of Sema Tribal Council, holding the post from 1944 to 1949; joined NNC in 1946 and later became the Tatar (MP) of the Federal Government of Nagaland (Personal communication: Kanili Sema, 12-02-2024, Chekiye village)². He went on to be the second *Angh* (governor) of the Sumi who would afterwards be appointed as the Governor of Patkai State after the reconstruction of states, its jurisdiction of Patkai State consisting the whole area of Sumi, Lotha, Rengma, Chakhesang, Pochury, Sangtam and Yimchunger regions with some part of Burma Naga and some parts of Assam was also under its jurisdiction (Khashito Aye, 2000).

Both as a tribal Governor and State Governor after reconstruction of states, his performance was exceptionally outstanding. He was the most hardworking Governor. He kept the records of the office of the Governor in full detail. His official contact with the Federal authorities being very regular he had the appreciation and admiration

²Kanili Sema is I.K.Zuheshe's daughter.

of the Federal authorities (Swu Scato, 2013). When the Revolutionary Government was formed in 1968, he became its Kilo Kilonser (home minister) and was a team member that went to New Delhi to have “talks” with the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in August 1973 (Personal communication: Kanili Sema, 12-02-2024, Chekiye village).

4.1 (4). Isak Chishi Swu

Isak Chishi Swu joined the National service in 1958. He was appointed as the foreign secretary on 1st March 1959. After seven years of service, he was elevated to the post of Finance Minister³. He was a member of the Prime Minister’s level talks with Indira Gandhi and was sent twice to China as an envoy and part of a delegation to conduct diplomatic missions which was a perilous march on foot (Swu, I. n.d.). The second time he went he would later return and subsequently form the NSCN with his compatriot and fellow leader T.H. Muivah as a result of the Shillong Accord not being renounced by the NNC President Phizo and by extension NNC (Government of People’s Republic of Nagalim, 1997). Almost 50 years after the conflict began he was the first Naga to be heard at a global platform when he delivered an address sharing the plight of the Nagas at the World Conference of Indigenous People at Geneva on 27th July, 1993 (Personal communication: Eustar Swu, 18 - 2- 2019, Thilixu village)⁴. He dedicated his entire life in service of the Naga cause until his death in 2016.

Scato Swu, former President of the FGN, elaborates in his book *Hails and Blames* regarding the dispensation of the leadership of Kughato, Kaito and Scato in

³ From an undated autobiography of Isak Chishi Swu, published by the Ministry of Information & Publicity, GPRN.

⁴ Eustar Swu is the wife of Isak Chishi Swu.

the following manner:

“The leadership of Sumi showed not in words but in action. As their leadership allegiance to the country they brought their all to the national altar, and suffered destitution, fortitude and peril for years.

The growth of progressive way to national consensus being perceivable everywhere that re-strengthened the solidarity of Nagas. This dispensation offered extraordinary supreme sacrifices, created unparalleled official contacts with the 1st world and with the 2nd World ... the captives (personnel of Indian Armed Forces, captured by Naga Army Personnel) usually released with official letters, forced Government of India to make their political confession through Cease-Fire agreement with the Federal Government of Nagaland on September 6, 1964 and forced the Government of India to realize the issues of Nagas as political and not of law and order.” (Swu Scato, 2013, p. 154)

4.2. Sumi Aid Campaign (SAC) Initiative to Other Tribes

With the establishment of the Federal Government of Nagaland in March 1956, the parliamentary form of government was introduced with the President as the supreme head assisted by the prime minister and council of ministers. However, it was a decentralized system of administration where each state took full responsibility of the administration of their respective states. The administrative tier reached down till the village level that was headed by *Runa Peyu* (RP) or the village chairman. With the introduction of the new system of administration, many Nagas living in the far flung areas found it difficult to set up their own government and therefore came forward to Sumi area seeking aid to help them out establish and make functional their own local self- government. It was under these circumstances that the office of the

Sumi Aid Campaign (SAC) was compelled to be established though the Sumi themselves were in times of great difficulty and Gen. Zuheto Swu was appointed the Chairman of the Sema Aid Campaign (Swu Zuheto, 2006). This is also documented in Scato Swu's *Hails and Blames* which states:

“According to the requirements of the Yimchunger Local Government, several able Sumi officers were sent to them, and the reports on their performance being up to the mark till 1958. Our financial help to Yimchunger was no small amount. As desired by them, Gen. Zuheto Swu was empowered... to take all possible responsibilities in the interest of their better administration.” (Swu Scato, 2013, p.75)

Angh Zuheshe's Sumi Local Government Report for 1963 highlights how despite their economic limitations and struggle the Sumi Local Government also bore the burden of looking after the following tribes viz Yimchunger, Pochury, and Tikhir both with fair amount of cash and a good quantity in kind. (Swu Scato, 2013)

4.2 (1). Sumi Aid to Yimchunger

The Sema aid to Yimchunger is also highlighted by Gen Zuheto in *Sumi Kumla Pasu* where he describes the Yimchunger *Angh* Hopong requesting Sumi *Angh* Kughato Sukhai to give them aid. This was duly approved by the Sumi Local Government and authority given to Gen. Zuheto Swu as Chairman (Swu Zuheto, 2006). Accordingly, the newly appointed Chairman then sent educated Sumis to survey and at the same time he himself would also go and assess the situation in these areas personally. Having discussed with *Angh* Hopong, the immediate plan resolved was to let the educated Sumis lead in every branch of the local government and raise the conditions to a level where self-governance became a possibility. To this end,

Nitovi Sholho of Litsami was made the secretary of *Angh* Hopong with the responsibility to establish governance and to uphold *Angh*'s office. Along with this he was also duly given the authority to take care of judicial aspects (Personal communication: H.S. Rotokha, 12-05-2017, Zunheboto). These details were authenticated in an interview with Nitovi Sholho on 5-12-2021.

Nitovi Sholho who joined the movement on 19th July 1956, was given the rank of captain and made the clerk in C-in-C office. On 23rd October 1956, he was sent as the first Sumi to Yimchunger area as Sumi Aid and appointed as the secretary to *Angh* Hopong. In the interview, Nitovi Sholho highlighted about the absolute lack of any system of governance or educated people and while he was sent to help them establish local self-governance, alone it was a difficult task so he asked for more people to be deployed and Hevikhe Sapoti was sent in November 1956. Yevishe Chophy and Khukihe Jakhalu joined in December the same year and appointed as clerks in the *Angh*'s office. At the same time Khukihe Surumi was made to represent Yimchunger as *Tatar* (MP) in the Federal Government for the simple reason that there was just no qualified Yimchunger then who could take up the responsibility. With the continued efforts of the SAC the post of *Tatar* for the Yimchunger would later be taken over by Samphu, a Yimchunger.

The major achievements of the Sumi Aid under Nitovi Sholho's secretaryship were:

1. The Yimchunger Tribal Council was made functional; Lakhum was elected as President and was given the responsibility to organize the council.
2. Established the Yimchunger Women's Organization where Tsukhemla was made the President and Tsusho the general secretary. They were briefed about the role and functions of the organization and were given the responsibility to set up the organization and to set up women society in each village.

3. Yimchunger Youth Organisation was established. Shokhemba was made the President and was entrusted to set up the office (Personal communication: Nitovi Sholho, 5-12-2021, Dimapur).

Thus the objective of the Sumi Aid Campaign was successfully met in the Yimchunger area. They would also go from village to village meeting the villagers and mobilizing them to join the movement with the sincere belief that Nagas will get independence soon and so to support the cause. According to Nitovi, the villager's whole heartedly supported the movement and they were given full support whatsoever. RPs (*Runa Peyus*) were appointed in all the villages but logistically not everyone could come to their camp in the jungle. Thus only the Hukir (*Angh Hopong's* village) RP was given the sole responsibility to come to their camp. In this way a network of RP was also established and the Yimchunger people mobilized to the movement.

In the area of military tactics, the Yimchunger people also already had the army personnel but it was not systematically organized therefore, Lt. Col. Tokiye Hozukhe was sent with several Naga Army personnel on August 1956 to help them organize it (Swu Zuheto, 2006).

In another interview with Hekhetto Jimo, who had gone as team member of aid campaign, informed that on September 25th 1957, the following people were sent by the SAC to Yimchunger area:

1. Phuheto (Team leader)
2. Bohovi of Shoipu
3. Hotoshe of Ghukiye
4. Heqheto Jimo of Nunu
5. Latoyi of Khukishe

6. Yeshikhe of Ghukiye (Personal communication: Heqheto Jimo, 20-9-2016, Chekiye village)

Some like Phuheto and Heqheto would stay on till 1963. Hekheto reaffirmed the descriptions found in various sources about the SAC stating how they taught their hosts the efficient ways to cultivate, cook etc. The Yimchunger in those days did not wear any clothes other than traditional wear, so the SAC taught them about the benefit of wearing clothes, how to communicate with other tribes-people and build friendships, and host guests etc. The SAC also found that cultivation of rice was not known as they mainly grew maize, millet and oats and so rice cultivation methods were taught. Heqheto also reiterated in the interview that one of their missions was to spread the message of Naga nationalism. But their words had to be interpreted by Hopong's people who knew Sumi fluently. Tsungthroba Hukir who later on became a reverend was their interpreter. This was a necessary arrangement as Yimchunger were still warring tribe so *Angh* Hopong told them to work based from their camp at Hukir and not to reside with the villagers as a safety measure. The Naga camp was at Hukir and Indian Army was stationed at neighboring village Chessore. For security reasons they could not stay for long at one place, they stayed for two to three days at the most in one place, for fear of being caught and so would relocate to various locations such as Shiponger, Kiutsukiur, Ayiponger, Rurur, Y Anner, Chare, Sotokur, Alisopor, Kuthur etc. This incidentally aligned with their goal of spreading their message of nationalism and laying the groundwork for the uplift of the Yimchunger people and their knowledge systems. (Personal communication: Heqheto Jimo, 20 – 9 – 2016, Chekiye village)

The most significant developments that emerged out of the Sumi Aid Campaign was the dissemination of agricultural practices which would improve and increase the

yield and knowledge systems of the Yimchunger people. While maize, millet and oats were grown, rice was rare. They did not know how to cultivate it correctly. So they were taught about the seasons for sowing, harvesting etc. Also seeds were brought from Sumi area and distributed in the Yimchung villages (Personal communication: H.S. Rotokha, 12- 5-2017, Zunheboto).

An interview with Bohovi, who went to Yimchunger area in August of 1956 along with Heqheto, said the Yimchungs did not know about rice cultivation and used only corn, millet and oats. Rice seeds were brought from Sumi villages for propagation. His parents had also donated 2 tins of *Matsaku* and 3 tins of *Mathape* which were varieties of rice used in Sumi area (Personal communication: Bohovi Zhimomi, 14- 5-2017, Satakha).

Thus we can see through the records and interviews with multiple individuals that a large number of Sumi were sent to help the Yimchunger people despite their own shortage of numbers and had experienced great hardships which they endured simply with the hope that their efforts would bear fruit and thus worked with full dedication facing all kinds of odds.

It is important to note that the genesis of the Sumi interaction with the Yimchunger essentially emerged from the SAC policy which was altruistic in nature. The objective of the SAC was to elevate the living conditions of the people living in the Yimchunger area and to mobilize their people for the Naga movement (Personal communication: H.S. Rotokha, 12- 5-2017, Zunheboto). Zuheto Swu the Chairman of the SAC has explicitly stated that the Sumis never had the intention of turning Yimchunger into Sumi but only to help them come at par with other Nagas both in lifestyle and government (Swu Zuheto, 2006).

This is validated by the fact that when most members returned by 1963 with the state reconstruction, their own local government was successfully established, and a Yimchungru, Samphu, being appointed as *Tatar* to the FGN. The Yimchungers, Zuheto claims, eventually were trained up to take care of their own local government (Swu Zuheto, 2006).

All of these would be affirmed by the *Angh* Hopong in an interview conducted on 5 June 2017, where he acknowledged the selfless service rendered by the Sumis towards the Yimchungers. He said that the Sumis did so much for the Yimchungers which is never forgotten and that he and his people are ever grateful to them for their invaluable help given to his people when they were in dire need of it (Personal communication: Hopong Yimchung, 5- 6-2017, Old Showuba village).

4.2 (2). Sumi Aid to Pochury

The Sumi Aid Campaign also extended to the Pochury people who were the other chief beneficiaries of the project. It was *Angh* Leshimo, along with Lt.Col. Azuzhu and Zakhaso who came to Sumi area seeking aid. Gen. Zuheto representing the Sumi *Angh* welcomed them warmly. (Swu Zuheto, 2006)

Specifically, the request made by Leshimo Nyushu, Pochury *Angh* and his contemporary leaders to the Sumi Local Government was that they extend civil administrative staff, to supply agricultural seeds along with demonstrators for the cultivation methods, as well as financial grant-in-aid. The Pochury representatives asserted that if the Sumi did not come and initiate the setting up of government in Pochury area there was no hope for them (Swu Zuheto, 2006). Considering the ongoing resistance against the Indian army occupation the Sumi were themselves in no position to do much and yet the Sumi Government readily agreed to grant all their

immediate needs as demanded such as; supply of seeds, financial aid and civil administrators (Swu Scato, 2013).

On 19th January 1957 as Chairman, Sumi Aid Campaign SAC, Gen. Zuheto conducted a meeting with the Pochury representatives where it was resolved to start Sumi Aid to Pochury and the same sent to Sumi *Angh* for approval who directed that Sumi will give aid even though they are also in want.

The following people were then sent to survey the place ahead of the SAC Chairman;

1. Lt. Col. Yeshito of Ghukiye
2. Major Vishito of Xuivi
3. Captain Ihovi Zhimomi of Litsami
4. Lt. Vihoje of Shoixe
5. Lt. Kiyelu of Litsami
6. 2nd Lt. Yahoto of Nunumi (Swu Zuheto, 2006, p.35)

Besides NCOs and 45 sepoy. March 3, 1957 Lt. Kughaho of Mudutsugho with 12 NHG sent. On 25th March, 1957 Chairman Zuheto reached Pochury HQ Hutsuri. On this day met and made the Sema-Pochury Pact of 1957 (Swu Zuheto, 2006). These are the details:

Agreement No. 1

- a) Resolved that there will be a great friendship between the two Provinces forever more to come.
- b) Resolved that the two Provinces will help each other whether in time of war or peace though it is in great trouble.

- c) Resolved that there will be a proper communication between Sema and Pochury provinces to have exchanging of goods (exports and imports) at original prices.
- d) Sema aid to Pochury does never mean to be a Sema but to lift them till they become a proper government.

Signed by

- 1. Leshimo President, Pochury Tribal Council on behalf of Pochury Public
- 2. Gen. Zuheto K. Swu (Chairman) Chief Sema Delegation on behalf of Sema Local Govt..

Dated Hutsuri

The 27/3/1957, at 3;00 P.M.

With the agreement signed, on 28-3-1957, the Chairman SAC went on a tour and found many things that needs to be changed so as to bring forth advancement. (Swu Zuheto, 2006, p. 37)

On completing the tour and reaching the Sumi area the Chairman Gen Zuheto delegated Khuoto of Mudutsugho who was chosen as a person fit for the task accordingly and he journeyed in April, 1957 to the Pochury region (Personal communication: H.S. Rotokha, 12-5-2017, Zunheboto). This is corroborated by Scato where he mentions about the deputation of Khuoto Swu in aid of Pochury, as *Raju Peyu* (Civil SDO) in April 1957. 'Khuoto was eventually promoted to *Pangtong* (DC) by December 1957 and made to look after the affairs of Pochury till 6-6-1963. (Sumi *Angh*'s report cited in Swu Scato, 2013, p. 75)

The existing conditions of the Pochury at the time when the Sumi Aid was carried out is described as said by H.S. Rotokha

“Those days the Pochury people did not even know how to cultivate. All the seeds like paddy, millet, corn, oats and so on were thrown in together in one field at the same time and thus the yield was less. When Khuoto Swu was deputed there, the traditional sowing months of the Pochury were found to be June and July which was far too late in the year to yield a good harvest for rice. Thus, a new directive was sent out that the proper months of sowing would be April and May after the clearing of fields which was to be completed by February and March. The SAC group taught them how to cultivate all the crops in their proper seasons particularly that of rice but when the new cultivation system was employed it was found that the Pochury did not have sufficient seeds which may have accounted for the mixed cultivation pattern. Thus, good quality seeds were collected from Sumi area and shown the proper cultivation methods. They taught them about the seasons and when to sow the seeds, harvest etc.

The Sumi shawls of the varieties of *abophi*, *aqhumu* were given to the chiefs and the women taught how to weave the same. Guns, money and manpower were provided. He further informed how Khuoto carried out the difficult task proficiently. Also, it was found that there were no educated people among the Pochury community. Therefore, Vishito of Xuivi was temporarily assigned as secretary to their *Angh*.” (Personal communication: H.S. Rotokha, 12-05-2017, Zunheboto)

The seeds mentioned by Rotokha are also described in Gen. Zuheto Swu who writes about varieties of rice, maize, millet, yam, cucumber and beans that were introduced in the area (Swu Zuheto, 2006). There were other seed types but the aforementioned were the chief seeds that were chosen to be sown in the fields with

the SAC members themselves being instructed to personally work and demonstrate the cultivation methods with the project led by the *Pangtong Khuwoto*. The result of these efforts was that the yield increased drastically to the point where Gen Zuheto claims that the Pochury from lacking food began to live in prosperity (Swu Zuheto, 2006). Apart from those already mentioned other key individuals who served the SAC with sincerity is Hoshivi, an Inspector was sent to Pochury Aid on January 10, 1958. His commendable service earned him a double promotion to the rank of Superintendent (Khashito Aye, 2000). Vihoshe was another SAC member sent as Intelligent Inspector to verify the works of Sumi officers posted to Pochury. He was there from February 15, 1959 to February 18, 1963. A man of strong character he stayed at Avakhung for two years, which then was an isolated and remote place. Vihoshe was called back to be *Raju Peyu* under Sumi Government in 1963. (Swu Scato, 2013, p. 75)

With agricultural advancements being a key sector, Viyito Tuccu of Vishepu who was then serving in the Agri department of the FGN was sent to assist the members of the SAC already in Pochury area in April 1957. His wife Viyili was later be sent in June of the same year to start the Pochury Women's Organization (Swu Zuheto, 2006). These details which are mentioned by Zuheto were verified in a telephonic interview with Viyili where she fondly recounts how the SAC were loved by the Pochury people and that they gathered at her house every evening. She further informed how SAC members taught the Pochury people to cultivate crops according to seasons, to live a hygienic life, and how to cook food, to weave etc. (Telephonic communication: Viyili Tuccu, 17-07-2020). In another telephonic interview with Ghokheto Zhimomi who was sent to Pochury are by SAC in 1858, he reaffirmed that

they worked with utmost dedication to teach the Pochuries about the agricultural practices (Telephonic communication: Ghokheto Zhimomi, 10-01-2021).

These are some of the introductions, additions and amendments to administrative, customary and legal aspects of the Pochury region made along with Pochury *Angh* on the basis of facts found out by the Chairman during his initial tour which began on 28-03-1957:

In Sumi Aid area use of poison was banned, the practice of drying dead body in the fireplace was banned with a fine of rupees 10 to 100 being imposed on those who violate the rule; earlier the villages were very dirty, so a rule was made to clean the village month-wise promoting hygiene and good health; in agriculture, the traditional months of sowing were abandoned and February and March would be the months for clearing the jungle and preparing for sowing. By May sowing should be completed. Crops were to be sown according to the fertility of the soil; cutting down of forest for cultivation was banned; in language, Angami was earlier used as common language. After Sumi aid, Meluri dialect was encouraged to be used as common language for Pochury people. Second language would be Saphury and Phoisa dialect (Swu Zuheto, 2006).

It could be said that the Sumis helped in the formation of Pochury identity by encouraging the use of their own dialect. In the first place the Pochury leaders came seeking Sumis aid with the aim that they will not be overtaken by Chakhesang culture. Their leaders had this apprehension in them of slowly losing their identity.

With most of the objectives achieved, it was decided that the Sumi Aid to Pochury would be formally terminated in a meeting at Phor village in October 1966 with *Angh* Leshimo Nyushu, *Kilonser* Azuzu, Pochury Tribe President Jekhaso, as well as *Angh* Zuheshe, *Pangtong* Khuoto, *Pangtong* Kheghoto, *Raju Peyu* Kheghoi,

Gen Zuheto, Comdt. Honizhe, Lt Visheto, Lt. Hozheshe as the chief members of the meeting.

These details mentioned above are documented in great detail from pp.33 to pp.63 of *Sumi Kumla Pasu* by Gen. Zuheto Swu (2006) and also finds affirmation in the personal notes of former *Kedahge* FGN Scato Swu as well as the Annual Administrative Reports of Sumi Local Government to the office of FGN by *Angh* I.K. Zuheshe and show the extent and objectives of the Sumi Aid to the Pochury people and how the sincere intentions of the Sumi were the uplift of the Pochury tribespeople. The personal efforts of the SAC to improve the harvest yield of the Pochury farmers, improve the general health and hygiene of the villages, the sanitary conditions of the households, help establish a local self-government, affirm and develop the Pochury culture through the use of their own dialect, mitigate problematic practices like the use of poison and forest fires, and finally pushing the Pochury to represent themselves at the national governmental level were some of the breakthroughs of the SAC intervention.

In an interview with Siemiirhii Nysou, son of *Angh* Leshimo Nysou, the accounts of the SAC Chairman Zuheto Swu were validated by the interviewee who stated that the Sumis helped the Pochury beyond compare. He spoke of how the Sumi taught them how to cultivate crops according to seasons, banned the practice of using poison, banned the practice of drying corpse in the fireplace, and most importantly encouraged the use of Meluri dialect instead of Chakhesang and thus inadvertently helping preserve their culture (Personal communication: Siemiirhii Nysou, 10-02-2022, Dimapur).

4.2 (3). Sumi Aid to Tikhir

Tikhir area was also one of the areas that were covered by the SAC. A landlocked region it was bounded on the North by the Khiumungan, to the West by Yimchunger and Sumi, the Patkai mountains to the East and a Southern border with the Pochury and the Tizu river. As of February 2022 the Tikhir tribe has been officially recognized as a separate Naga tribe vide Home Dept. Notification No HOME/SCST-30/TIKHIR/2022 dated 20-01-2022 and Shamator district, home to the Tikhir, carved out from Tuensang district and created on 19th January, 2022 and officially inaugurated on 4th March 2022. Tikhir area was one of the most backward regions that was in need of aid (*Sumi Angh's Report* cited in Swu Scato, 2013, p. 76).

One of the main reasons why the SAC to Tikhir happened was due to repeated requests by the Tikhir leaders to the Sumi Local Government (Khashito Aye, 2000). Differences had come up between Tikhir and Yimchunger people. Tikhir leaders who approached the then *Sumi Angh* Kughato Sukhai claimed that smart and intelligent Tikhirs were being killed (Swu Zuheto, 2006). The Tikhir gave a variety of taxes to the Yimchunger, along with kind in a variety of food items, while also supporting them wholly in times of war. But apparently the Yimchunger were still not satisfied. Some Tikhir leaders therefore could not tolerate and reported the matter to the *Sumi Angh* three to four times but the *Angh* could not believe these complaints, largely because even the Yimchunger themselves were beneficiaries of the Sumi Aid (Personal communication: H.S. Rotokha, 12-05-2017, Zunheboto).

At last on 26-11-1957, to investigate the situation first hand, the *Sumi Angh* Kughato Sukhai sent as his representatives Gen. Zuheto Swu and *Tatar* I.K. Zuheshe to Yimchunger and Tikhir area. In this tour, details of the ensuing conflict between Yimchunger and Tikhir were revealed and the truth of the reports to *Angh* Kughato

about activities of Yimchangers against Tikhirs were verified as being genuine (Swu Zuheto, 2006).)

On investigation, it also emerged that Yimchunger and Tikhir were different tribes with the Yimchunger's insistence that Tikhir should become Yimchunger being the main cause of the problem between the two since the Tikhir staunchly rejected this proposition (Personal communication: H.S. Rotokha, 12-05-2017, Zunheboto). Gen. Zuheto Swu describes the rationale behind the Sumi Aid to Tikhir in the following manner;

“Thus it was seen first-hand that Tikhirs were suffering and were earnestly seeking Sumi aid. If we do not help our Naga brethren it will be a mistake...Therefore, to let the Tikhirs catch up with the rest and to help them set up their own local self-government the Sumi *Angh* issued the order No. 44-48/1011 dated December 8, 1957. Suqhevi of Vishepu was appointed as *Raju Peyu* (Civil SDO) to Tikhir to lead them. He was to head the department and all other offices were to be started with his initiative. To run these offices there was a need to get people from Sumi area, manpower as well as arms and ammunitions aid was sought. Accordingly, SAC office sent the needful.” (Swu Zuheto, 2006, p. 169)

The intervention of the SAC in the Tikhir region did not go without consequences. Some Yimchunger on 21 January, 1958 captured a number of Tikhirs namely Khuingki of Wongphongle, Tomusu of Yangkole, Muzungchung and Mikheba of Yangkingle. Even then the SAC Chairman Zuheto Swu stopped Tikhir people from taking revenge because both were communities that the SAC was trying to uplift and thus fighting amongst them could not be allowed (Personal communication: Heqheto Jimo, 02-09-2016, Chekiye village). This led to the Sumi

federal workers being seen as antagonistic to the Yimchunger interests and therefore it would culminate in negative relations between the SAC and the Yimchunger. This was clearly documented by Gen Zuheto in his autobiographical work where he describes the deteriorating relations between the SAC and the Yimchunger in the following manner:

“On 3rd March 1958, Yimchunger people tried to kill *Raju Peyu* Sukhevi but he narrowly escaped and fled to Sumi area... Sukhevi could not go back so Qiusumong was made the *Raju Peyu* on 30th April, 1959. Sumis worked with dedication for the upliftment of Tikhir people. Many even gave up their lives in the process. Eg. Nijeto of Shothu, Lakhuje of Natsa, Jeto of Yezutu, Kheto of Yemishe, Shihuto of Xuivietc were killed by Yimchunger people in the conflict that emerged out of the intervention of the SAC in the Tikhir region” (Swu Zuheto, 2006, p.170).

The relations between the Yimchunger and the Tikhir have remained historically poor and Morung Express dated 11th May 2023 finds the Governor of Nagaland, L.A. Ganesan visiting Shamator district on 10th May, 2023 and addressing the gathering, urges the Yimkhiung and Tikhir communities to forget and forgive past issues and conflicts because peace is required for growth and progress of society.

Thus, to some extent it might be argued that the efforts of the SAC and the Sumi leadership has a role no matter how marginal in the perpetuation of the Tikhir community and the preservation of the Tikhir identity. The Tikhir have come a long way from being protected by the Sumi Local Government to being recognized as a tribe in their own right having their own identity and their own district Shamator.

Thus the Sumi Aid to Campaign was not just a program aimed at the temporary aid and relief of the afflicted Naga people and territories but a concentrated

effort to improve the living conditions of the Naga people in the long term. The efforts of the FGN under the SAC were to incubate a local self-government, promote education, facilitate the development of the traditional knowledge systems like agriculture and languages, and in the long run foster a sense of common identity with other Nagas and perhaps mobilization of like-minded individuals for the national cause.

To do this the Sumi local administration set aside and pumped in funds from its already strained budget eg Rs. 47,279/- (Pochury), Rs. 23,800 (Yimchunger), Rs. 30,077/-(Tikhir) as attested by Swu (2006, p. 211) We must understand that for its time and in those circumstances these amounts were simply astronomical. However, it was not only the supply of cash but the Sumi Aid was largely characterized by the highly motivated and energetic Sumi who went to different areas for the purpose of seeing to the success of the Sumi Aid program. The hands on involvement of the Sumi Aid Campaign can be considered the major reason behind its significant success as a humanitarian project.

4.3. Reconstruction of Federal States

Scato Swu the then President of FGN explains the rationale behind the reconstruction of the states under their government as a curative step towards the growth of “segregative tribalism” entertained by a number of governors that had crept into the system. This was evident in the existence of 14 tribal governors which was facing heavy criticism and resentment from the Youth and Naga Army Wings of the FGN. Thus, the leaders decided to purge and overhaul the government to reinvigorate the national movement and put to bed dissenting voices which were justified in their appraisal of the situation prevailing then. Scato also observed that there was an

increasing disconnect with the government at the center and the governors in their respective territories, which perhaps led to the decline in competency and failure to carry out the responsibilities delegated to them (Swu Scato, 2013).

Another national worker, H.S. Rotokha who worked in the capacity of Law Minister, in an interview elaborating on this move by the FGN rightly perceives that the FGN was “compelled to carry out a reconstruction” of states. The status-quo had deteriorated to the point where one Naga governor would disallow the entrance to his state by the federal workers under another Naga governor. Ultimately this impeded the smooth working and the administration of the federal government (Personal communication: H.S. Rotokha, 12-5-2017, Zunheboto). The genesis of this problem, Scato Swu infers, could be traced to the extreme tribal autonomous power given by the authorities of NNC at the very outset when they thought it best to allow every tribe have its own governor and general. This policy of appeasement very soon led to tribal misunderstanding and conflict with its short lived usefulness and long term politically impracticable outcomes as it undermined the very fabric of unity.

The growing disquiet continued where after 1960, the Nagas instead of working together for Naga Independence, became more concerned about their own tribal welfare. With the situation reaching the point where members of one tribe could not enter into another tribe’s area Scato Swu exercised his authority as the President of FGN to initiate the reconstruction of states on a priority basis. Therefore an emergency meeting was called by him on September 1962 to be held at Chazu camp above Dzulhami village and attended by all top ranking federal leaders and officials, with the reconstruction of states as the chief agenda (Swu Scato, 2013).

The historic meeting had all the representatives participating in a two day free and open discussion and finally passing a resolution in favor of immediate reshuffling

of the federal workers. In accordance with the resolution, 11 governors were dropped. Scato submits that this act was evidence that Nagaland gained political ascendancy by rejecting tribal barriers and ushering in indestructible inner unity. The 14 existing petty states were reduced to 3 states namely; Japfu state, Patkai state and Dikhu state (Personal communication: Brig. Tokhuvi Tuccu, 26-8-2016, Chekiye village).

Effectively the reconstruction eliminated the individualistic approach towards territory and integrated various tribes and regions under one banner. The reconstruction decisions were binding on the federal workers. The new States took on important geographical landmarks as its defining attributes rather than be shaped along the lines of tribal affiliations (Personal communication: H.S. Rotokha, 12-5-2017, Zunheboto).

Many top ranking leaders voluntarily chose to forgo the existing positions and either sought out for fresh appointment or retirement for the greater good of the national cause. Furthermore, a good number of officers both from the civil and army were either reduced in ranks or transferred (Swu Scato, 2013).

In matters of Defence the Naga Home-Guards was re-formed as the Naga Army with 3 commands; Southern Command, Central Command and Northern command. Thus, 4 commands of Naga army were reduced to 3. *Anghs* and Generals were given other assignments while some retired. Reconstruction became effective on 3rd January 1963⁵. Ultimately it was the Federal Government that gained more unity and greater power.

The public at large also welcomed the reconstruction for the simplified federal government administration removed the tribal barrier and every Naga, patriot or otherwise, had the freedom to move about anywhere in Nagaland on national duty or

⁵ Notification of FGN dated 4th Oct. 1963, Refer to Appendix E

personal work (Personal communication: Brig. Tokhuvi Tuccu, 26-8-2016, Chekiye village).

4.4. The Peace Talks

The longstanding conflict between the Nagas and the Indian state drove both parties to the table to try and negotiate a solution for their respective parties and the effect of this perspective can be found in the culmination of Peace Talks from 1964-1967 between the two sides which was advocated by the Peace Mission and endorsed by the parties involved. In the following section we take a closer look at the genesis of the talks and the outcomes that emerged as a result of the talks.

4.4 (1). Formation of Peace Mission

In the midst of uncertainties, the leaders of the churches in Nagaland thought that they should not remain spectators, but should do something to bring peace which the Nagas needed most after continuous hostilities for a decade. The Nagaland Baptist Churches Council (NBCC) therefore held a convention at Wokha from February 2 to 4, 1964. In this convention, a resolution was adopted to bring about peaceful settlement to the Naga political issue (Nuh, 2014). Significant outcome of the convention was the constitution of a Peace Mission consisting of Shri. Bimala Prasad Chaliha (the then Chief Minister of Assam), Rev Michael Scott (Missionary and Social Activist, spokesman of United Nations in Apartheid Policy of South Africa) and Shri Jayaprakash Narayan (Veteran Freedom Fighter) as members (Sema, H. 1986). At first there were lots of misgivings about the inclusion of a foreigner in the Peace Mission as a member but the Government of India in their anxiousness to settle the Naga issue peacefully accepted the resolution and the Peace Mission was

constituted. (Alemchiba, 1970). The church Leaders officially appointed at the time by the NBCC to work closely with the Peace Mission were Rev. Longri Ao, Rev. Kijung Ao, Rev. Ahamo Patton, Rev. Shihoto Swu, Rev Litsase Sangtam, Mr. VK Nuh, Mr Kenneth Kerhuo, and Mr Toniho Chishi. In this manner the church leaders became stakeholders of the peace mission. (Nuh, 2014). The then Prime Minister Nehru gave his consent and blessings to the formation of the Peace Mission (Sema, H. 1986). Sema further stated that

The Peace Mission was expected to serve as an impartial mediating body which would bring the contending parties together around the conference table and help them to solve their problems and differences through reasoning and understanding (Sema, H. 1986, p. 107).

The President of FGN, Scato Swu appointed a 7 member team viz. Zashei Huire, Khrisanisa Seyitsu, Seletsu, Khruzalie, Biseto Medom Keyho, I. Zhenito and Hokiye Swu to be the FGN representatives to talk with the Members of the Nagaland Peace Mission to be held on 24th May 1964 at Sakraba in Phek district (Swu Scato, 2013). In this meeting it was resolved that cease-fire should be declared between the Government of India and the Federal Government of Nagaland with immediate effect and that the message was to be conveyed to the Prime Minister of India on 25th May by B.P. Chaliha (Keyho, n.d.). The FGN President then authorized and appointed Zashei Huire, Governor of Japfu State, Biseto Medom Keyho, Agri. Minister and L.I. Zhenito, Member of Parliament, to work out the modalities and sign the cease-fire agreement (Swu Scato, 2013). The Terms of Agreement for Cease-fire on Cessation of Hostilities in Nagaland was signed on 10th August 1964, by the aforementioned three FGN delegates. It was then forwarded to the Governor of Nagaland Shri. Vishnu Sahay who signed it on behalf of the Government of India on the 14th of August 1964

(Keyho, n.d). Cease-fire came into force on 6th September 1964 and the day was celebrated as thanks giving day. President of India conveyed the hope that it would be the beginning of the era of reconciliation and the Prime Minister expressed gratitude to the Peace Mission for bringing in peace (Ramunny, 1988).

4.4 (2). Indo-Naga Peace Talks

The Indo-Naga peace talks were inaugurated on 23rd September 1964 at peace camp Chedema which is near Kohima (Keyho, n.d). It was carried out in two phases; the first phase at the governmental level and the second was at the ministerial level (Horam, 1988).

Swu (2013) summarizes the Peace Talks in the following manner

“Both sides seemed to have been thoroughly convinced of the futility of the ongoing armed clashes. Start we must, the peace talk. Then, the inclusion of P. Shilu Ao, the Chief Minister of Nagaland as a member of the Peace Talk became an issue. He being a Naga, his membership was rejected by the Federal Government of Nagaland. Eventually, he was allowed attend the talks as a delegate of the Government of India and not as the representative of the Government of Nagaland State.

The “Key words” of the first peace talks were:

“Let us forgive to forget, Let us agree to disagree.”

This specific expression was the foundation stone of the peace talks.

Thereafter, everything had been working on the basis of this philosophy (Swu Scato, 2013, p. 128).

The Government of India was represented by Y.D. Gundevia, Foreign Secretary, Brigadier D.M. Sen, Advocate General to the Government of Nagaland and

Shri Uma Nath Sharma, Chief Secretary to the Government of Nagaland and Shilu Ao, the Chief Minister of Nagaland. The Federal Government of Nagaland was represented by Zashei Huire, Governor, Japfu State, Isak Swu, Foreign Secretary, and Brigadier Thinoselie Medom, the Peace Mission members were also present (Sema, H. 1986). The Naga delegates reiterated the political identity of the Nagas as a separate nation, while Shri Y.D. Gundevia made a claim that, Nagaland had been inherited by India from the British Government in 1947 and that Government of India through its constitution of 1950 has done everything possible for the Nagas and the tribals (Ramunny, 1988).

The representatives sent letter to their President Shri Scato, seeking his advice on how to counteract that claim. The FGN President directed them to cite the provisions of Article 2 and 3 of the Atlantic Charter (Swu Scato, 2013). The Article provides for the territorial adjustments to be done as per the wishes of the people, the people's right to self determination must be respected and the sovereign rights and self government must be restored to whom it has been forcibly deprived⁶. Ramunny also mentions that the Naga delegates spoke about the Atlantic Charter and that according to them, their demand was exactly the same as what India itself had demanded from Britain (Ramunny, 1988).

In the second session of the Indo-Naga Peace Talks held on Oct 12 1964 at Chedema, the Naga Federal delegation suggested to the GOI

- a) To close down all concentration camps in Nagaland
- b) To release all Naga political prisoners from Indian jails and

⁶ <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1937-1945/atlantic-conference> . The Atlantic Charter was a joint declaration released by US president Franklin D Roosevelt and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill on August 14, 1941 where both nations claimed a commitment to supporting the restoration of self-government for all countries that had been occupied and allowing all peoples to choose their own form of government.

- c) To withdraw the Indian Armed forces from Nagaland so as to establish a “peace period” in place of Cease-Fire Period in Nagaland and to open up avenues for political negotiations between the Nagas and the GOI.

The move was however, turned down by the Government of India. The third round of peace talks was held on October 23, 1964. The Peace Mission raised the point of laying down arms in order to solve Indo-Naga differences peacefully (Swu Scato, 2013). The fourth round of talk was held on November 28, 1964 without the participation of Peace Mission members.

Meanwhile, the Peace Mission framed some suggestions and proposals presented to all parties in a non-partisan manner on the 20th of December 1964. It was considered prudent and essential to the smooth conduct of the peace talks and aimed to provide a ground for compromise so as to enable a settlement (Longchar, 2011, p 97). They proposed 17 points which were put forward keeping in mind the demands and conditions of both sides with the hope that the disputing sides could find common ground which would develop in lasting peace for the people. Gundevia, the leader of Indian delegation stated that the Indian representatives welcomed the proposals and reiterated that the Nagas should join the Union of India on their own volition, while the Government of India, on their part, should see what further readjustments could be made with regard to autonomy of the State of Nagaland (Gundevia, 1975). The chief concerns of the peace mission, it could be thought, lay with establishing and maintaining peace in the region as attested by Hokishe Sema as under;

“The Peace Mission, repeatedly, made fervent appeals to both the parties to make a serious consideration of the suggestions and proposals contained in their paper and also that all such actions be taken expeditiously as is required for the maintenance of peace in the area.” (Sema, H. 1986, p. 123)

As many as 9 peace talks were held in the first phase of talks but breakthrough in the settlement could not be arrived at as neither of the side would budge from their stand. While the Indian delegates pressed on the Nagas joining the Indian Union on their own volition, the Naga representatives insisted on their right to self determination and suggested that the negotiations should be raised to a higher level to enable more concrete negotiations (Scott, 1966). Thus the raising of talks to Prime Ministerial level was largely because of the inconclusive outcome of the Secretary level Talks. This was despite the Peace Mission acting in all sincerity and the Government of India yielding to several demands of the Nagas and yet sidestepping the key demand of sovereignty. However, one thing that became apparent during the peace talks was that the Nagas were reluctant to resume hostilities and with the efforts of the Peace Mission the mutual suspicion that had built up out of years of conflict diminished and some degree of normalcy emerged (Alemchiba, 1970).

The second phase of talks was carried out at the Prime Ministerial Level between the Government of India and the Federal Government of Nagaland at New Delhi. The Naga delegation led by the FGN Prime Minister Kughato Sukhai composed of Imkongmeren Ao, vice President of NNC, Isak Swu, Foreign Secretary (also a Sumi), S. Angami, Secretary to Prime Minister, Tsohie Chase, Secretary to the Peace Mission and Dalinamo, FGN pressman (Ramunny, 1988). The first talk between Indira Gandhi, the then prime minister of India and Kughato Sukhai, the *Atto Kilonser* or Prime Minister of the Federal Government of Nagaland, took place in New Delhi on February 18, 1966. The talks continued for six rounds in New Delhi in the following order:

1st Round: February 18, 1966

2nd Round: April 9 to 12, 1966

3rd Round: August 10 to 11, 1966

4th Round: Oct. 27 to 29, 1966

5th Round: Jan 2 to 5, 1967

6th Round: Oct. 7, 1967 (Swu Scato, 2013)

A newspaper report from The Hindu⁷ on the 3rd of January 1967 details the reiteration of the Prime Minister towards the Indian Government's willingness to grant autonomy to Nagaland to the greatest possible extent to the point of amending the constitution provided that Nagaland comes within the broad framework of the Indian Union as an integral member. On their part, the Nagas were reported in the Hindu as expressing hope for peaceful conditions for the Nagas and the settlement of the problem in a peaceful manner.

The Prime Ministerial level talks however were just as inconclusive even up to the final interaction between the two Prime Ministers representing their various Governments where Atto Kilonser Kughato Sukhai made a 14 point Statement⁸ on the Naga stance on the ongoing political issue. Scato Swu (2013) sums it up in the following manner:

The key words used by both the Governments during the talks were: “without the Union of India” and “within the Union of India”. Thus the parallelism between the two rigid stands forecast the shadows of deadlock between the Government of India and the Federal Government of Nagaland.

During the 6th and the last round of talks on October 7, 1967, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi offered, “Mr. Sukhai, take everything but not sovereignty”. Prime

⁷<https://www.thehindu.com/archive/From-the-archives-dated-January-3-1967/article16978956.ece>

Accessed on 23rd August 2024

⁸ Refer Appendix D

Minister Sukhai's response to the offer was, "I shall not take everything but sovereignty". (Swu Scato, 2013, p. 146)

Thus, a conclusive settlement to the Naga Political issue could not be achieved even at the highest level of talks. Meanwhile, the activities of Rev. Michael Scott were beginning to attract vehement criticism from all quarters as it was felt that he was taking advantage of the hospitality extended to him by the government while at the same time abusing his free access to the underground and holding secret meetings with the Nagas by himself which was evident in his proposals which favoured the Nagas (Sema, H. 1986). The public statement of J.P. Narayan claiming that the Nagas wanted a status similar to Sikkim or even Bhutan met severe opposition from both the Nagas and the GOI. All in all the Peace Mission members ended up complicating matters and eventually rarely worked as a team. After the resignations of B.P. Chaliha in early May 1966 and J.P. Narayan on 25th February 1966 and with the expulsion of Rev. Michael Scott on 3rd May 1966 the activities of the Peace Mission died a natural death (Sema, H. 1986).

However, Sema says that there is much that can be credited to the efforts of the Peace Mission; it provided a neutral platform where the two conflicting parties could sit to perhaps try and settle the political matters through dialogue. It also ushered in a period of peace and calm and gave the Nagas time and space to rebuild their lives which had been destroyed by decades of conflict and oppression. Ramunny echoes similar sentiments when he highlights the achievements of the Peace Mission and talks about the three areas where the mission impacted the Naga Socio-Political conditions he credited the Peace Mission with the cessation of hostilities firstly, and secondly for the formulation of the objective "Peace Mission Proposals" which was viewed as not only the fairest but also the most practical

solution to the Naga issue, and thirdly and perhaps most importantly for helping launch the dialogue between the two parties at the highest level. (Ramunny, 1988).

4.5. Revolutionary Government of Nagaland (RGN)

While the Sumi leadership of Kughato, Kaito, Scato had successfully challenged the efforts of the Indian state to crush the Naga national movement and compelled the Indian government to come to the political table to negotiate with the Nagas, there were a number of other developments in the late 60's which were cause for concern. Prior to the cease-fire the only way to resist the aggressive military policies of the Indian state was to fight back with disregard for life and instill apprehension and distaste for conflict with the Nagas in the far superior army of the Indians and give them reason to consider peaceful means. The Sumi circumstantially were equal to it and responded *en masse* to the clarion call raised by the eventual leaders of movement, which naturally placed them at the helm of affairs (Swu Scato, 2013). However, the cease-fire had led to a number of years of relative ease where representation of the Nagas was no longer a life threatening condition but a privilege where one can sit equal with the leaders of a nation like India (Swu Scato, 2013). The conditions that led up to the formation of the RGN can be traced to a number of events which throw light on the need to create a separate agency of resistance. Thus while all seemed calm on the surface, a political storm was brewing and at the heart of it was the growing ambitions in some quarters and propaganda of dissatisfaction with Sumi leadership, in other words, tribalism (Personal communication: Rotokha, 12-5-2017, Zunheboto). Scato had already been impeached and Kaito assassinated in August 1968. According to Scato Swu, two core issues birthed this "disunity" and "divided the house into two vertical lines:

1. The question of whether to switch over to the Presidential form of Government or to continue with the existing Parliamentary form of Government.
2. The question of whether to continue or discontinue the Cease-fire Agreement of 1964.” (Swu Scato, 2013. P. 171)

The manner in which these two issues were addressed by the members of the house (who were present) was a major cause in the formation of the RGN. The proposition to switch over to a Presidential form of government had little merit to it. There were no convincing arguments supporting the transition other than as an experiment which was detrimental to a movement that was already strained as it were. It was also argued by those who opposed the transition that concentration of power in a single individual was unsuitable to the idea of a Naga democracy. It could be argued that the Prime Minister in a Parliamentary system has similar authority. Thus, for all intents and purposes it appeared a political move to remove Kughato Sukhai, the incumbent, from power (Swu Scato, 2013). This occurred on May 24, 1964, at a meeting at the Chedema Peace Camp where 18 votes polled against 17 in favor of Presidential form of Government (Keyho, n.d.). Critically, this was not a Parliament in session, nor did the votes fulfill the quorum set by the FGN’s own constitution which states a two-third majority for such a decision (Personal communication: Brig. Tokhuvi, 26-8-2016, Chekiye village). Mhiasi took reins as President dissolving the cabinet led by Kughato Sukhai who coincidentally chaired the meeting since the Speaker was absent.

Again, The *Kedahge* Scato Swu was impeached by the house on the grounds that he had violated the *Yezahbo* by keeping in abeyance a Defence Budget Bill passed by the *Tatar Hoho* for 105 days (Swu Scato, 2013). On his part Scato states

that he had deferred the Bill considering the severely impoverished economic condition of the general public, the hope that certain friendly nations were supposed to lend financial aid, and most importantly the fact that the government was currently in a state of peace ergo negating the need for a defence budget which was not a practice even in times of war. However, all attempts at reason failed and despite the process being unconstitutional Scato Swu was removed via impeachment by a simple two vote majority and not the two-thirds majority as prescribed in the *Yezahbo* (Swu Scato, 2013). Even though this was a clear violation of the proper procedure we can only conclude that this was the manifestation of the overwhelming sentiment of apprehension from the negative propaganda being spread that the Sumi were dominating the FGN for quite a long time and must therefore be removed one by one (Personal communication: Tokhuvi, 26-8-2016, Chekiye village). In fact Nibedon states that “Phizo asked the leaders of the NNC to pull Scato down from the Presidentship” (Nibedon, 1978. P. 157). He continues “Scato’s ouster from the post of *Kedahge* of the rebel set-up was viewed as a tactical victory of the Phizoites... the ouster of Scato was a brilliant move from London, but it was too swiftly executed. Had Phizo made a mistake?” (Nibedon, 1978, p.158). Horam also stated, “Tribalism was to undo what nationalism had done after years of toil and bloodshed” (Horam, 1988, p. 143). Thus, there is no denying the fact that tribalism had raised its ugly head and disrupted the fabric of Naga unity.

Secondly on the matter of cease-fire, the battle veterans with a rich experience in warfare actually voted in favor of a Cease-Fire having come to the conclusion that war no longer served a “useful purpose” and, furthermore, now that the Cease-Fire had been hard earned it should not be abrogated. This was not only a matter of principle but also a question of the lives of innocent civilian Nagas. Thus, they sought

early political settlement in lieu of conflict, a process that had already begun at the Prime Ministerial level between Kughato Sukhai and Indira Gandhi. There had always existed a belief, a hope promoted by the NNC that some nation/a third party would support the Naga cause but this was never to come. Added to this was the confusion due to sudden upheaval in governmental system and leadership. The sudden turnaround of the FGN and its direct disregard for the Cease-fire alarmed the common people while at the same time derailed all progress made on a political front through dialogue at executive levels of government as the President led FGN dropped all ties in favor of military policies once more with increased import of arms. Ramunny substantiates this in his book where he mentions,

“The split in the underground was complete. Kughato said that from the time he had been ousted from power, the federal leaders had one full year. What did they do to bring settlement? He asked.” (Ramunny, 1988, p.278)

On 1st November 1968 a declaration was made at Satakha near Zunheboto that a new organization called the Council of the Naga People (CNP) had been formed. In a 6 point declaration they mentioned that

- a. The chapters of federal government and the army government declared closed
- b. The reasons for creating a new party was the failure to bring about negotiated political settlement of the Naga political problem by the NNC
- c. The theme of the new organization was peaceful solution of the Naga political problem, continuance of cease-fire and the resumption of talks with the government of India, unity of the Naga people, upholding principles of democracy.

On 2nd November, 1968, a new government called the revolutionary government of Nagaland was formed (Horam, 1988).

Thus, the unconstitutional processes that the President led FGN used to set up government as well as the persistent disregard for the safety of the public and sustaining the process of political discussions initiated after much conflict resulting in a cease-fire were key factors that led many displaced members of the FGN to establish a new government who declared the following policies following its institution:

1. Cease-Fire agreement would continue
2. Political dialogue would resume.
3. Import of Arms would stop forthwith.
4. Naga Army personnel would not open fire unless fired upon.

4.5 (1) Chief Officials and Leaders of the RGN

Kughato Sukhai, President, Council of Naga People's Party (CNP).

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Leshimo Nyushu | President |
| 2. S. Huskha | Speaker |
| 3. Scato Swu | Prime Minister |
| 4. I.K. Zuheshe | Home Minister |
| 5. H. Aphuk Tangkhul | Finance Minister |
| 6. H.S. Rotokha | Law Minister |
| 7. Gen. Zuheto Swu, | Commander-in-Chief, Naga Army |

(Personal communication: H.S.Rotokha, 12-5-2017, Zunheboto).

Thus, there were two separate movements being led by different groups of Naga leaders each with the intention of bringing about a solution. However, the RGN laid its basis on the multiple years of engagements with the Indian state both in the spheres

of conflict as well as dialogues at the political tables to seek political solutions with the government of India.

However, this bifurcated position gave too much leverage to the Indian state and pitted Nagas against one another. Therefore, numerous attempts were made by the RGN to reconcile the two governments together and reposition the Naga representation as a united front which was however met with poor reception by the newly led FGN (Swu Scato, 2013). In a desperate attempt to bring reconciliation, on 30th October 1968 Zuheto, under the advice of Scato Swu and Kughato Sukhai, brought Mhiasi, President FGN, Z. Ramyo, Advisor to the President and Kuhovi Zhimo, Cabinet Secretary to RGN camp called Mura camp at Satakha. Next day 31st October they were received with 21 gun salute. (Swu Zuheto, 2006)

The two leaders came to an agreement which reads thus,

“We have come to a perfect realization that unless the Nagas are politically united, the Naga political struggle shall prove to be in vain. And therefore, the Nagas will act by being together again. Till the leaders take the vow to be one, the present set ups shall remain to be so, namely the federal Govt and the Revolutionary govt. the line of work shall be FORGIVE and FORGET – the mediators being Mr. MHIASIU and Mr. SCATO. This pledge of being one is taken under the witness of Gen. Zuheto.” (Swu Zuheto, 2006. p. 99)

The Revolutionary Government of Nagaland was development that was unprecedented in the Naga national movement but felt thoroughly necessitated by the developments that emerged within the political circles of the upper echelon of the FGN due to contrived personal or other vested interests.

In a manner of speaking it was a loud and clear statement to those that would wish to ride the national movement for interests that did not keep the wellbeing of the Naga people at its core. As stated by its Prime Minister Scato Swu (2013), the RGN did not shed a single drop of Naga blood as espoused by its desire to uphold the cease-fire and promote political dialogue.

The main difference of opinion between the RGN with the FGN was on the issue of negotiation through peaceful means facilitated by cease-fire which was a process strongly supported by the RGN (Personal communication: Tokhuvi Tuccu, 26-8-2016, Chekiye village). The majority of the RGN members were individuals who had gone through years of relentless armed resistance and under the Sumi leadership the Nagas had made their position very clear to India. The unyielding nature of the resistance movement brought the Indian leaders to the realization that no amount of coercion could change the Naga mind. Furthermore, a protracted military confrontation would benefit neither side, if anything the Nagas would be at a loss in a battle of attrition. Therefore the RGN pressed for negotiations and political discussion to settle the Naga problem as they believed that their earlier resistance had made it clear that if needed the Nagas would take up arms willingly for the cause of the Naga nation which would be to the detriment of all parties involved and the Indians also understood that to be the case. Therefore, the Naga problem was not be viewed as a law and order situation but a political one and could be settled only through negotiation.

On the 11th of August 1973, Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India and Scato Swu, incumbent to the seat of *Atto Kilonser* RGN met in New Delhi for talks and negotiations. In the discussion that followed the *Atto Kilonser* pressed on the abysmal conditions of Naga territories and how the Indian government neither

recognizes the sovereignty of the Naga people nor fulfils their moral obligations to improve the circumstances of the Nagas. In response Indira Gandhi accepted the proposition of the RGN that the Indian government create districts for the purpose of job creation and development and economic growth. Thus four new districts were created as proposed viz Mon, Wokha, Phek and Zunheboto as per the discussions. (Swu Scato, 2013)

The RGN also chose to withdraw from the national movement since they saw that the tacit policy of the India government was to pander to both groups acknowledging their legitimacy and sowing discord, at the same time multiple attempts at reconciliation by the RGN had failed as the vision of the national movement was categorically different for the two governments (Personal communication: H.S.Rotokha, 12-5-2017, Zunheboto). The RGN therefore unequivocally dissolved the government on the 16th of August 1973 with the intention of letting the FGN carry on the movement in the manner it felt best. In the words of Scato Swu, *Atto Kilonser*, RGN

“...the dissolution of the RGN on the principle of “Economic development without political commitment” and in order to facilitate the FGN to exercise full power the RGN had to be ceremonially dissolved on August 16, 1973 at Zunheboto.

The RGN has a clean record of not shedding a single drop of blood of a Naga brother” (Swu Scato, 2013, p.186).

CHAPTER 5

Discussion and Conclusion

The nature of the Sumi and the social structure that was built around the authority of the Chief/*Akukau* is a characteristic that we have taken a close look at in the second chapter of the thesis. This is a feature of the Sumi that was very consequential to the outcomes we find in the development of the national movement during the severest years of the Indo-Naga conflict. The powerful social pull of the chiefs rallied the villages around the call of the chiefs who represented the full expression of the Sumi people's desire to be free of any rule and govern themselves as their ancestors had before them.

5.1. Chapter 1 Findings

The introduction to the thesis has hypothesised that the Sumi played a key role in the Naga struggle for freedom. This necessitated that we take an overarching view of the movement and the factors that went into the development of the movement. To do this the study was conducted systematically tracing the growth of the movement from its genesis to the delimited time frame. The research also took a closer look at various facets of Sumi participation and determined that the role of the Sumi came not only in the form of active members of the resistance force both in the executive and military wings but also the mass participation of the community. Therefore, the research was sectioned into parts where each aspect of the Sumi role would be carefully documented, studied and deliberated upon. This was carried out through the means of interviews with purposive randomized sampling as the primary method of data collection with clear determinants for inclusion into the sampling. However, this

was supplemented with secondary sources and literature that presented the perspective of the Indian government both at the local and national level.

The evidence of the literature is an explicit and unambiguous expression of the significance of the involvement of the Sumi in the movement especially from an outsider perspective, particularly from that of the side trying to suppress the Naga national movement. One of the key outcomes of the literature review was that there was a lacuna as far as the Sumi participation in the movement was concerned. Therefore, the research was not only justified but clearly necessitated as the surviving members who partook in the events of the struggle and subsequently included in the sampling were ageing and the frailties of time would soon overcome them.

It was necessary to understand the history of the Naga national movement, the scope of the movement, the impact it had on Naga society and major events that shaped the development of the resistance. Part of the reason for this was because by understanding the major events we would also be able to assess how impactful the participatory elements were in determining how they affected the outcomes that came about. Were the Sumi critical in the policies of the Indian State? Did they play a role in the propagation of a national sentiment? Did they force the Indian government to reassess their stance and finally come to the table to consider political settlement? How did the movement survive? What were the factors that led to its origins?

Some things become clear as we look at the history of the Naga national movement. For one, the period during which the Sumi participation was the heaviest were also the years where the conflict was fiercest and the most battles fought. Another characteristic that emerges is that this period, secondly, is marked by a clear unified leadership and undivided, unpolluted political vision. There was only one government viz FGN which represented the people's will. The fragmentation of the

Naga movement emerged as a result largely of the divisive politics of the Indian state which played favourites with a minor section of the Naga people to whom they gave legitimacy i.e. the moderates of the Naga People's Convention who curried favour with the Indian government to set up a local self-government within the Indian Constitution with the signing of the 16 Point Agreement between the GOI and the NPC validated by the Indian government and eventually led to the formation of the state of Nagaland. The Shillong Accord that was infamously signed thereafter led to an even greater breakdown of the movement with the signatories of the Accord accepting the constitution of India thereby singularly undermining the very cause that the Naga national movement had been continuously struggling for. In such a scenario the dissenting voices unerringly chose to not recognize the legitimacy of such an agreement which would usher in the formation of the NSCN and further down the line similar breakaways from the now divided Naga national groups.

Thirdly, this is also the period where the Nagas as a people participated and supported the movement unwaveringly. This is due to the fact that the movement had popular support. We see this exemplified in the Naga Plebiscite of 1951 where an overwhelming majority of 99% voted for independence. It should be noted that the nation of India is a Union and formed of the voluntary merging of territories and people to create a nation. Therefore, the plebiscite remains evidence of the desire of the Naga people to be a sovereign state. The participation of the people making it a mass movement rather than a small organization of anarchical revolutionaries who were trying to destabilize the formal state of Nagaland as depicted by the Indian government is a narrative that is closely studied in the second chapter.

Fourthly, the period also saw the transition of the policies of the Indian state from despotic, punitive, and repressive to calculated divisive moves disguised under

reparative and conciliatory tones. Logically speaking, one can infer that the reasons for such a change came from their inability to break down the unshakeable military resistance that was characteristic of the Sumi involvement in the movement. Despite being a mass movement, the Naga national movement suffered from being a cohesive effort due to the extreme levels of suppression tactics employed by the Indian army to snuff out the resistance. There were clear gaps in communication and this led to the breakdown of the struggle which was already weighed down by the sheer difference in firepower and manpower as well as the superior transport and communication technology of the Indian army. It was only after the ceasefire was signed that the Nagas could safely convene and organize themselves in a manner befitting of people with basic human rights. Thus we find that the emergence of a government from a political body namely the NNC is an organic development that came about as a result of the Indian government's refusal to recognize the Naga people's wish to remain free and separate.

5.2. Chapter 2 Findings

The socio-political structure and culture of the Sumi are key to understanding how their involvement in the Naga national movement was tantamount to keeping the movement alive. The Sumi, as we see in the chapter are culturally and historically warlike in nature and do not shy away from battle. The village structure with a firmly rooted centre in the *Akukau* is an attribute that would factor in massively in the early years of the movement. As we learn about the village power structure we find that the authority of the village is vested absolutely in the chief and he is only supported and obeyed by all the members of the village regardless of position or role. In a sense this

makes the *Akukau* the identity of a village. In him we find the representation of the village and a microcosm manifest of the Sumi society.

Thus, we find a rationale behind the scale of the involvement of the Sumi people in the Naga national movement. With the leaders of the movement being the chiefs of the major villages of the Sumi area there was unprecedented participation because the impetus came from the centre of the Sumi social structure. Kughato and Kaito were sons of Kuhoto, the chief of Ghukhuyi village and Scato Swu was the son of the chief of Kilomi village. Thus, with the heads of the movement being major figures in the Sumi social sphere it was inevitable that the people would support and follow their leaders both from a cultural perspective and also due to the sentiment of the people being motivated by the belief that the national movement was an effort to protect and sustain the ownership of land and culture that was ancestral to the Sumi.

We see evidence of this aspect of the Sumi involvement in the national movement from the role played by the general public and the women as components of the movement from civil spheres. The villages organized themselves around the various roles that the support system needed them to carry out. The creation of the position of *Runa Peyu* or RP as the mediating agency and liaison between the national workers and the villages is the best example of the symbiotic relationship that emerged during this conflict. Not only were the RP designated by the village heads but they became in effect representative officers of the FGN in the villages where they were stationed. Furthermore, the position was both voluntary and delegated; thus we find plenty of instances of the RP organizing resources for the national workers from the assets available among the villagers and beyond that the RP would also act as intermediaries who designated people to aid with the task of ferrying supplies to the point where they sometimes carried out the tasks themselves. The manner in which

the RP functioned indicated the clear reliance of the national workers on the support system of the village communities and is evidence that the movement was driven by public support then.

The role played by the women is also another factor that supports the argument that the Naga national movement, particularly in the Sumi region, precisely during the time period under study, was a community driven exercise with the national workers simply being the outlet that the villages employed to express their desire for freedom and sovereign statehood. The women, as individuals and in the form of the Sema Women Federation (SWF), exemplified the voluntary and patriotic spirit of the community and their support for the national movement. If the illustration of how the women risked severe punishment and consequences to smuggle out food and basic supplies to their soldiers, under their garments no less, or the ingenuity with which they used village customs like the calling for feeding livestock as a signal for a clear coast. The courage and fortitude of the women who never shied away from what they believed to be their moral duty to support the soldiers and the men in whatever way possible is testament to the role played by women in the movement.

5.3. Chapter 3 Findings

We have already deliberated on how the military and the administrative aspects of the national movement were closely intertwined particularly because the movement was largely an armed resistance during this period. Thus, a large portion of the administrative decisions and policies were centred around the raising of funds for the military, deployment and organizational aspects of the military as well as diplomatic actions following the military moves of the army and so on. The clashes which were numerous in number, ranging from skirmishes, all out battles lasting days on end, and

the combing-out-operations to which the FGN and its various wings were subject, were a mainstay occurrence during this period. The military presence of the Naga nationalists were a significant force during this period and it can largely be credited to the overwhelming presence of the Sumi and the mass participation along with active members that made the armed resistance a consequential factor in the movement.

Much of the credit for the development of a major military force goes to Gen. Kaito who was instrumental in strategizing and mobilizing the limited resources and recruiting large numbers through the inspired victories he achieved in battles. We have seen how the culture of the Sumi leaned naturally towards martial prowess and it is no surprise therefore that the Sumi turned up in massive numbers to boost the numbers of the Naga army. From humble beginnings with the Naga Safe Guards which Gen. Kaito established personally and eventually to his appointment as the Commander-in-Chief of the Naga army we see a continuous growth of the military acumen of the general.

The manner in which he adopted and adapted various war tactics to become more effective is a testament to his understanding of the need of the Naga people. The choice to transition to guerrilla manoeuvres to combat the superior forces of the Indian army and then resupply his weapon and ammunition stocks from these battles would ensure that the national movement was kept alive. Not only did this reduce the burden of finances on the FGN it also made the Naga army near impossible to fight against, thus ensuring that their numbers were preserved. Furthermore, the battles chosen were not random skirmishes but planned attacks that ensured the greatest outcome for the least losses. Much credit also goes to his subordinates, most of whom were Sumi; the likes of Gen. Zuheto Swu, Brig. Tokhuvi Tuccu, Comdt. Zukiye, Major Gen. Simon Pukhato, mostly handpicked and personally trained by him who

were no less in battle and carried out operations and battles where they punished their adversaries heavily.

Some of the battles we have taken a look at are the battles of Hoshepu, Satakha and Thuda/Phor among others. Primarily because these three battles represent the various war tactics employed by the General. Hoshepu stands out as the first major battle where the Indian army faced the full force of the resisting Naga army beyond the small skirmishes that had been the norm before. The 6-day battle proved that the Naga army was not just an armed outfit but a well-organized unit of soldiers who could carry out military operations despite their obvious lack of quality arms and ammunition. However, General Kaito would eventually forsake siege type warfare which was advantageous for the enemy for a more appropriate tactic he later made the army conduct ie guerrilla warfare and which made them feared and a deadly threat in the region for the occupying Indian army forces which we see employed in the likes of the Battle of Phizhokita which took place in present day Suruhuto town in Zunheboto district, a Sumi stronghold, and which has been included as archetypal of the military tactics that General Kaito would eventually introduce and employ ever so successfully much to the displeasure of his counterparts in the Indian army.

The battle of Satakha is a testament to the participatory nature of the movement and the fact remains that it is the largest battle won on Naga soil with the least amount of bloodshed. The involvement of the people from the villages around Satakha was the determining factor that ultimately ensured victory as the besieged company of the Assam Police surrendered when they realized it was a lost cause. A major reason behind the people giving support for the battle lies in the regular violence and exploitation they faced at the hands of the Assam Police (AP) and the sense of injustice and anger they felt at the insecurity to their lives at the hands of the Indian

forces. The addition of the house tax was another factor that added fuel to the fire and pushed the local populace to raise the banner of resistance behind the chiefs who the people felt were wronged by the AP. We can conclude that the Naga army provided the impetus and led the way as champions against the oppression of the people.

Thus, the battle of Satakha is another example of how armed resistance became the only resort for the aggravations that were being imposed on the Nagas by the Indian forces with the power of their military behind them. The imposition of unacceptable and foreign customs intrusive to the way of life of the Sumi like the House tax and the disrespect meted out to the chiefs of the village was insult to the Sumi which could only be answered by a show of might regardless of the consequences. The distribution of arms and ammunition following the battle also reveal the desire of the leaders of the movement to propagate the spirit of brotherhood and a sense of national identity among the various sections of Naga society. The victory of the battle was made tangible by the fact that the spoils of war; the precious arms and ammunition were to be shared by all the Naga patriots across the nation rather than only the unit that won the battle.

The third battle of great consequence or the Battle of Thuda/Phor remains the greatest act of benevolence that a government could carry out towards the oppressors of their people and the cruellest act of tyranny by a government towards innocent people it claimed as citizens in retaliation for kindness shown by their contending equal as the FGN were. The crew of the downed Dakota that was shot down during the battle were released on humanitarian grounds by the FGN for they bore no ill-will against the captives but fought only for the cause of independence and not out of malice. Therefore, the Naga government recognized the human rights of the crew and thus released them with an official statement to that effect. However, the massacre of

Matikhru which followed the battle of Thuda was a severe violation of the human rights of the Naga people. The Pochury villagers of Phor and Matikhru and even random passers-by were accused of allegiance with the Naga army and tortured and gunned down mercilessly by the Indian forces. This event alone can be taken as an illustration of how the Nagas were treated even though it is merely one among thousands of such stories. The aftermath of the Battle of Thuda and the response of the respective governments in the conflict highlights the difference in the perception of the other party between the FGN and the GOI.

5.4. Chapter 4 Findings

While we find that the general public played a significant role in the Naga national movement the participation of the Sumi in established positions within the active body of the FGN cannot be relegated to the background. It goes without saying that this period was marked by significant military activity on both sides of the conflict and therefore the role and importance of the Naga army takes primacy in the general narrative. However, the activities, policies, programs and vision of the administrative and executive sections of the FGN under Sumi leadership in this period also deserve just as much credit if not more considering the severe conditions in which they had to endeavour to bring normalcy to the situation prevailing within the region despite all factors going against their labours.

The proposal to create a lingua franca¹ as envisioned by the then Speaker, *Tatar Hoho* Scato Swu is a shining example of how the FGN believed that a unified people was the need of the hour and therefore an attempt made to bring about a common platform to encourage commonality, all the while understanding that such efforts can

¹ Refer Appendix F

be introduced officially before it becomes common parlance. The Sumi Aid to Yimchunger, Pochury, and Qucile/Tikhir is another example of the far thinking percept of the Sumi leadership of the time as well as the unified and unequivocal support given by the public who consented to the decisions made by the leaders knowing full well that it meant they would have to get by on less than what they already had.

In matters of administration the report of the *Angh* of the Sumi Governor I.K. Zuheshe, which has been included as indicative of the work conducted by the Sumi National workers and which should also be considered an ideal specimen of the nature of the governmental machinery of the time, shows that the Sumi leadership was broadminded and inclusive in its attending to the needs of the people within its limited means. The Sumi Aid Campaign is one of the brightest illustrations of the positive leadership of the time. Of note were the Sumi Aid to Yimchunger which helped set up the Yimchunger Tribal Council, Yimchunger Womens Federation and the Yimchunger Youth Organization which gave a structure to the way the Yimchunger people could function.

The Sumi Aid to Pochury was another project and carried out under the specific request of *Angh* Leshimo and his contemporaries that the SAC lend civil administrative staff, along with agricultural seeds to the Pochury as well as the methods of cultivation. The Sumi, we can conclude, made the government function not just as a political organization and a military empowered body but as a welfare regime. The Pochury were taught by the Sumi volunteers and officers under the ambit of the SAC to cultivate, cook, weave, develop critical hygiene habits, and also to govern themselves. The Sumi Aid to Tikhir is another major project that was undertaken as per the report. Primarily the SAC acted as a mediating and governing

agency to protect the rights and interests of the Tikhir from its larger neighbouring tribes namely the Yimchunger. One must understand that all of these Aid Campaigns came at the cost of lives and sanction of finances from the already meagre funds of the FGN. Regardless, there were sincere attempts made during this period by the administration to improve the lives of citizens.

Another major issue that was taken on by the Sumi leadership during this period was the rising threat of tribalism and regionalism, with one of the key causes being the existence of unnecessary numbers of governors per tribe which led to individualism and threatened the fabric of national unity. The FGN, under the direction of the President, therefore chose to reconstruct the states disregarding tribal colours into three main territories of Dikhu, Japfu and Patkai. This was a paradigm shift in the way the Nagas organized themselves and introduced the notion of a nation in a tangible way. Separating the idea of a people from their tribal dissimilarities and ushering in the system of a union of people working towards a common identity.

Thus, the Sumi leadership worked towards the ideal of the nation state and acted on policies that promoted such an environment. It was, of course also an opportunity to bring about a more organized structure to the government and a step towards political maturity. The reconstruction of the states also necessitated the reorganization of the military wing and this would effectively channel the resources of the FGN in a more linear and cohesive manner by reduction of the huge numbers of rank and file that only added to growing hierarchical complications.

Foremost among the administrative works carried out for the welfare of the people during this era were the Peace Talks which was advocated by the church leaders. By being supportive of the Peace Mission the FGN of the time made it clear that despite the chaos and the strife that came with the conflict as a result of the

demand for sovereignty, it was still always the welfare of the people that was foremost. With the Cease Fire Agreement signed on the 25th of May 1964 by the representatives of the FGN a new era would be ushered in which held promise of a solution via the means of political talks or as they were termed Indo-Naga Peace Talks. The terms of the Peace Talks proposed by the FGN were clearly seeking justice for the Nagas as we see below:

- a) To close down all concentration camps in Nagaland
- b) To release all Naga political prisoners from Indian jails and
- c) To withdraw the Indian Armed forces from Nagaland so as to establish a “peace period” in place of Cease-Fire Period in Nagaland and to open up avenues for political negotiations between the Nagas and the GOI.

However, as we would learn from a study of the development of the peace talks we find that the GOI continued to consider Naga territories being an inheritance from the British when they departed in 1947. The response given by Scato Swu, the then President citing provisions of Article 2 of the Atlantic Charter² silenced YD Gundeia which we see below

“..., they desire to see no territorial changes that do not accord with the freely expressed wishes of the people concerned..., they respect the right of all peoples to choose the form of Government under which they will live, and they wish to see sovereign rights and self-government restored to those who have been forcibly deprived of them.”

Thus, we find that the leadership of the time were astute in their response to the statements fabricated by their Indian counterparts.

² Atlantic Charter, 1941

More Peace Talks were held and ultimately the talks were escalated to the level of Prime Ministers of each respective government, six in total, with *Atto Kilonser* Kughato Sukhai representative for the FGN. The talks would eventually end in a stalemate as the *Atto Kilonser* did not waver in his representation of the will of the people in demanding sovereignty and the Indian government led by Indira Gandhi offered everything but sovereignty.

Nonetheless, we find that the leadership of this period specifically the Sumi leadership were capable and expressly conducted themselves in a manner that demanded to be treated with respect and firmly stood their ground in the face of extreme disadvantage and maintained the dignity of the Naga people simply because they knew their people stood with them. This aspect of the Naga National movement singularly forced the GOI to try and negotiate terms with the FGN and would never have been possible if the Naga movement was not as unified as it was then.

The particularly strong wave of popular support that the Naga national movement enjoyed during this period despite the brutal conditions they were subject to, especially the Sumi who faced the brunt of all the punitive actions the Indian army could mete out, led the GOI to forsake aggressive tactics for destabilizing policies intended to crush the movement from within.

As history would reveal, they eventually succeeded in their efforts and broke the movement by using the very same colonial policies of divide and rule and setting up a local government by declaring statehood and promising political power and authority to those that would align with them.

5.5. Conclusion

A clear truth that emerges from this study is that the GOI did not then view the Nagas as deserving of basic human rights or the freedom to dictate for themselves the right to live their lives or own their lands. The fact that the Naga territories did not have any value for the Indian government other than its perceived strategic importance would mean that nothing the Nagas did in resistance would affect the outlook of the Indian government. For all the claims of Indian unity in diversity, the Nagas could disappear and as long as the land remained within the control of the Indian government it would appear that such an outcome was perfectly acceptable and history corroborates this claim.

The chief difference between the English Crown's occupation of India and the Indian occupation of Nagaland is that the Empire was purely motivated by financial/economic gains. Two hundred years of colonial rule was ultimately paralyzed by the passive resistance of the Indians which led to huge economic losses. With the British Empire struggling to douse the flames of revolution losses began to accrue as administrative systems crashed and trade and commerce became risk involved; India had become a liability for the English crown and cutting loss and departing made sense.

However, in the case of the Nagas the Indians are not motivated by economy but due to the strategic significance of the region and its proximity to China. Therefore, the reason for Indian occupation is least affected by passive/peaceful resistance of the Nagas unlike the English whose profit margins were severely affected by the economic backlash of movements like the Quit India Movement, Non-Cooperation Movement and all other mass movements and *Satyagrahas* that affected production. In short, India's occupation was never for economic gains and no amount

of passive/peaceful resistance by the Nagas compels India into yielding their control over Naga soil.

The only recourse for the Nagas then remained active resistance in the form of armed resistance which was what the Sumi excelled at. Therefore, the role played by the Sumi in the Naga national movement is indispensable and the Sumi leadership can unquestionably be credited for keeping the movement alive by leading the national cause during the years when the Indian oppression was at its worst and pulling their people ahead with them in the process of demanding basic human rights of freedom and liberty which is owed to every living human being.

A question that may be raised is if the Sumi presence was as radical for the Shillong Accord, as is claimed in this thesis, why did the NPC emerge and how could the Sumi leadership have allowed the creation of the state of Nagaland?

To respond one has to contextualize the actions and policies of the Indian Government and the prime targets of their oppressive policies. During the 50's and till the 60's the NNC and the FGN under the collective Sumi leadership of Scato Swu as President Kughato Sukhai as Prime Minister and Kaito Sukhai as Commander in Chief, Naga army, the Nagas fiercely resisted the army occupation of the Naga Hills and regardless of how severe the punitive action was, the resistance did not abate. Serious efforts were made to crush the resistance; Rammun notes that by the "Beginning of 1956, army made an all-out effort in the Sema area. The plan was to strike a really effective blow, break the back of their resistance, before monsoon." (Rammun, 1988, p. 90) Thus, the aggression was then directed towards the villagers and the non-combatants to destroy the support system that made the Naga national movement thrive.

To the lay Naga during the 50's and 60's where torture, rape, hunger, death, and perpetual fear for life, was a normalized state of affairs, any promise of peace would have been tempting. Further, the narrative that the common people were suffering because of the terrorist/anarchical/underground activities of the freedom fighters meant that beyond a certain point it was possible to crush the will and hopes of society through sheer coercion and make them resent the ones who were being painted responsible for their suffering. In that manner the GOI subverted the narrative to turn the Nagas against each other and destroy the movement by taking away its main support system- the people who believed in the movement.

It was only through the comprehensive extinguishing of the mass support through the ruthless imposition of terrible policies like Grouping, Scorched Earth Policy, and the draconian AFSPA which made the Indian Army virtually unstoppable tyrants; abusing and destroying the rights and lives of the Naga civilians that the Indian government was able to contain the Naga national movement and promote the emergence of an alternative solution in the guise of the NPC who negotiated statehood in a bid to secure a respite from the despotism of the army occupation. In essence the GOI had terrorized the Naga public using the tyrannical power of its Army and justified the representative decision of some Nagas, who they legitimized, to bargain away the natural rights of all Nagas in exchange for a peace the GOI took away in the first place by their forceful occupation of Naga soil against the wishes of the Naga people.

The nature of the Sumi being bold and adventurous is similar to all the other Naga tribes perhaps with more active expression among the Sumi with their willingness to establish and venture to uncharted lands to set up new villages and defend it against any and all invaders. In this context the Indian occupation of the

Naga areas was viewed by the Sumi leadership and by extension the people who followed them as an encroachment into their lands. This was especially possible within the context of the Sumi who traditionally practiced a powerful system of chieftainship and whose words were equal to the law of the land. Contrasted with other tribes in the vicinity like the Aos and the Angami who were perhaps equally patriotic, if not more, but their social structure which was very democratic in nature supported the choice of the individuals to not become engaged with the movement whereas the Sumi were necessarily bound as a community to fight alongside their chiefs/leaders/rulers. Coincidentally it so happened that the protagonists of the movement during these years were Sumi chieftains of very prominent villages and their participation held a lot of impetus and far reaching impact.

In the post RGN era where the Sumi were no longer core members of the National movement as a result of all the reasons we have already discussed, we will observe that the Indian Army directed all their focus against the NNC, forcing them with no other alternative but to become complicit with the Shillong accord and sign.

By the logic of deduction and inference it is clear that there is one factor that determined the actions and policies of the Army and the Indian Government: The Sumi presence. Thus, we can conclude that the Sumi and their involvement in the Naga National Movement was of significant proportions and without their participation the movement may have taken a very different trajectory, one which was favourable to the GOI's intentions and which was detrimental to the Naga Movement.

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Personal Communication Details with Dates and Location

Ahovi Zhimo, 87 yrs, Lieutenant Naga Army, 14-5-2017, Satakha

Atomi Swu, 64 yrs, Vice- President Western Sumi Hoho, 16-10-2019, Chekiye
village

Bohovi Zhimo, 84 yrs, Lieutenant Naga Army, SAC member to Yimchunger, 14-5-
2017, Satakha

Eustar Chishi Swu, 72 yrs, member SWF, President CNC, NSCN, 18-2-2019, Thilixu
Village

Ghohuli Zhimo, 78 yrs, Women Society worker, 15-5-2017, Vishepu

Ghohuto Zhimo, 75 yrs, Lieutenant Naga Army, 18-5-2017, Jekiye Village

Ghokhevi Assumi, 76 yrs, Havaldar, Naga Army, 18-5-2017, Jekiye Village

Hekhetto Jimo, 86 yrs, SAC member to Yimchunger, 20-9-2016, Chekiye

Hokishe Yeputhomi, Ex-President Sumi Hoho, Member Sumi Literature Board, 11-
12-2022, Dimapur

Hokiye Zhimo, 75 yrs, Naik Naga Army, 18-5-2017, Jekiye Village

Hopong Yimchunger, 101 yrs, Angh FGN, 5-6-2017, Showuba

Hotoli Awotsakili, 79 yrs, President SWF, 22-03-2018, Zunheboto

Hotoli Zhimomi, 76 yrs, SWF Member, 15-09-2019, Thilixu

Hotokhu Chishi, 65 yrs, Member Sumi Literature Board, 18-11-2019, Thilixu

Hotovi Zhimo, 74 yrs, eyewitness, 14-5-2017, Satakha

H.S. Rotokha, 83 yrs, Secretary to Sumi *Angh*, FGN, Law Minister RGN, Ex-
President Sumi Hoho, Member Sumi Literature Board, 12-5-2017, Zunheboto

Huskha Yepthomi, 80 yrs, Captain Naga Army, 15-7-2016, Kohima

Ikishe Sukhalu, 85 yrs, Captain Naga Army, 20-2-2017, Chekiye

J.N. Khehoto Sema, 84 yrs, Lt. Col. Naga Army, 10-5-2017, Satakha

J.P. Vikugha, 80 yrs, Col. Naga Army, 12-03-2019, Dimapur

Kanili Sema, 60 yrs, Daughter to Angh Zuheshe, 12-02-2024, Chekiye Village.

Katoli Zhimo, 75 yrs, eyewitness, 14-5-2017, Satakha

Kheghoto Muru, 80 yrs, Naik Naga Army, 15-5-2017, Vishepu

Kheholi Zhimo, 63 yrs, eyewitness, 14-5-2017, Satakha

Khetoni Yeputhomi, 77 yrs, SWF member, 12-5-2017, Zunheboto

Khutoli Chishi, 86 yrs, eyewitness, 11-12-2019, Dimapur

Khuwoto Zhimo, 87 yrs, Captain Naga Army, 15-5-2017, Vishepu

Khuzhevi Kinimi, 87 yrs, Runa Peyu FGN, 17-5-2017, Satakha

Kiyelho Achum, 83 yrs, Secretary To Sema Angh, 15-3-2017, Dimapur

K.L.Chishi, 76 yrs, ex-Chief Minister Nagaland, 11-12-2019, Dimapur

Nikuto Sema, 85 yrs, Naga Army, 16-09-2022, Dimapur

Nitovi Sholho, 78 yrs, SAC member & Secretary to Yimchunger Angh Hopong, 5-12-2021, Dimapur

Nizheto Zhimo, 89 yrs, Naik Naga Army, 17-5-2017, Khukiye

Latovi Zhimo, 88 yrs, Captain Naga Army, 18-5-2017, Shoixe Village

Otova Swu, 65 yrs, Vice-President Sumi Hoho, Member Sumi Literature Board, 21-08-2022. Chekiye village

Pikiye Yepthomi, 85 years, Captain, Naga Army, 29-05-2018, Hakhizhe

Siemiirhii Nysou, 67 yrs, son of Angh Leshimo Nysou, eyewitness, 10-02-2022, Dimapur

Simon Pukhato, 95 yrs, Major General Naga Army, 9-8-2017, Naga United Village

Tohuli Yepthomi, 80 yrs, Women Society Worker, 29-05-2018, Hakhizhe

Tokhuvi Tuccu, 85 yrs, Brigadier Naga Army, 26-8-2016, Chekiye

Tosheli Sema, 84 yrs, Daughter of Runa Peyu Pizhekhe, eyewitness, 15-04-2018,
Chekiye Village

Toshiho Naga, 83 yrs, Major Naga Army, 16-5-2017, Xuivi Village

Vighoto Swu, 81 Yrs, Cmdt. Naga Army, 10-5-2017, Satakha

Vihoi Tuccu, 81 yrs, Col. Naga Army, 10-5-2017, Satakha

Vihoi Zhimo, 75 yrs, Raju Peyu FGN, 18-5-2017, Jekiye Village

Vihozhe Zhimo, 93 yrs, Captain Naga Army, 18-5-2017, Shoixe Village

Vihozhe Zhimo, 84 yrs, Major Naga Army, 16-2-2017, Dimapur

Vikheho Swu, 77 yrs, eyewitness, 16-5-2017, Satakha,

Vikuho Zhimo, 86 yrs, Major Naga Army, 23-10-2016, Vikuho Village

Vikuto Zhimomi, 86 yrs, eyewitness, brother of Kughato/Kaito Sukhai, Ex-President
All Nagaland GB Federation, 15-06-2022, Satakha

Vitoli Hoky, 84 yrs, eyewitness, sister of Kughato/Kaito Sukhai, 30-06-2019,
Dimapur

Yezheho Yeptho, 76 yrs, Havildar Naga Army, 17-5-2017, Lukhai

Zhekhuvi Chophi, 79 yrs, Lieutenant Naga Army, 15-5-2017, Vishepu

Zhesuho Aye, 78 yrs, Major Naga Army, 10-5-2017, Satakha

Zhetovi Yeputhomi, 90 yrs, Chief of Nitoyi Village, 10-06-2021, Kohima

Zhevishe Aye, 84 yrs, Lt. Col. Naga Army, 27-2-2017, Thahekhu

Zhutovi Rotokha, 83 yrs, GB of DC Hill Zunheboto, 23-10-2021, Dimapur

Telephonic Communication During Covid

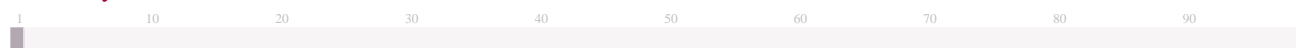
Ghokheto Zhimomi, 96 yrs, SAC member to Pochury, 10-01-2021, Satakha

Viyili Tuccu, 83 yrs, member SAC to Pochury, 17-07-2020, Dimapur

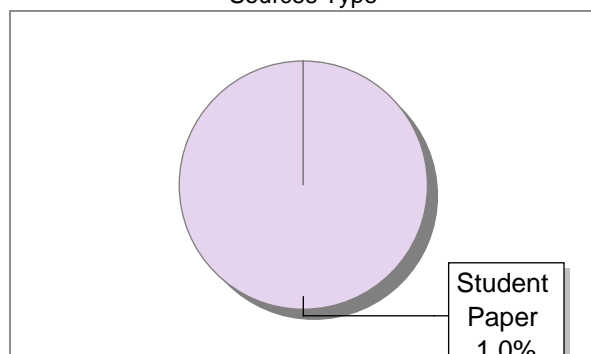
Submission Information

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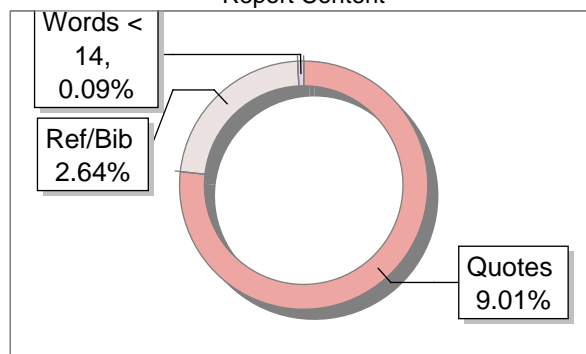
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APPENDIX A

Memorandum Submitted to the Simon Commission by the Nagas, dated 10.01.1929

The Indian Statutory Commission,
Camp India.

Sir,

We the undersigned Nagas of the Naga Club at Kohima, who are the only persons at present who can voice for our people have heard with great regret that our Hills is included within the Reformed Scheme of India without our knowledge, but as administration of our hills continued to be in the hands of the British officers, we did not consider it necessary to raise any protest in the past. Now, we learn that you have come to India as representatives to the British Government to enquire into the working of the system of Government and the growth of education, and we beg to submit below our view with the prayer that our Hills may be withdrawn from the Reformed Scheme and place it outside the Reforms but directly under British Government. We never asked for any reforms and we do not wish for any reforms.

Before the British Government conquered our country in 1879-1880, we were living in a state of intermittent warfare with the Assamese of the Assam valley to the North and West of our country and the Manipuries to the South. They never conquered us, nor were we subjected to their rule. On the other hand, we were always a terror to these people. Our country within the administered area consists of more than eight tribes, quite different from one another with quite different languages which cannot be understood by each other, and there are more tribes outside the administered area which are not known at present. We have no unity among us and it is only the British Government that is holding us together now.

Our education at present is poor. The occupation of our country by the British Government being so recent as 1880, we have had no chance or opportunity to improve in education and though we can boast of two or three graduates of an Indian University in our country, we have not got one yet who is able to represent all our different tribes or master our languages much less one to represent us in any council of a province. Moreover, our population numbering 102,000 is very small in comparison with the population of the plain districts in the province, and any representation that may be allotted to us in the council will be negligible and will have no weight whatever. Our language is quite different from those of the plains and we have no social affinities with Hindus or Muslims. We are looked down upon by the one for our 'beef' and the other for our 'pork' and by both for our want in education which is not due to any fault of ours.

Our country is poor and it does not pay for its administrations. Therefore, if it is continued to be placed under the Reformed Scheme we are afraid that new and heavy taxes will have to be imposed on us and when we cannot pay them all our lands will have to be sold and in the long run we shall have no share in the land of our birth and life will not be worth living then. Though our land at present is within the British territory, Government have always recognised our private rights in it, but if we are forced to enter the council of the majority, all these rights may be extinguished by unsympathetic council, the majority of whose number is sure to belong to the plain districts. We also have much fear the introduction of foreign laws and customs to supersede our own customary laws which we now enjoy.

For the above reasons, we pray that the British Government will continue to safeguard our rights against all encroachment from other people who are more advanced than us by withdrawing our country from the Reformed Scheme and placing it directly under its own

protection. If the British Government however, wants to throw us away, we pray that we should not be thrust to the mercy of the people who could never have conquered us themselves and to whom we were never subjected; but to leave us alone to determine for ourselves as in ancient times. We claim (Not only the members of the Naga Club) to represent all those tribes to which we belong: Angamis, Kacha Nagas, Kukis, Semas, Lothas and Rengmas.

Signed by/-

1. Nihu, Head Interpreter, Angami
2. Nisalie, Peshkar, Angami
3. Nisier, Master, Angami
4. Khosa, Doctor, Angami
5. Gepo, Interpreter, Kacha Naga
6. Vipunyu, Potdar, Angami
7. Goyiepra, Treasurer, Angami
8. Ruzhukhrie, Master, Angami
9. Dikhrie, Sub-Overseer, Angami
10. Zapuzhulie, Master, Angami
11. Zepulie, Interpreter, Angami
12. Katsumo, Interpreter, Angami
13. Nuolhoukielie, Clerk, Angami
14. Nizhevi, Interpreter, Sema
15. Apamo, Interpreter, Lotha
16. Resilo, Interpreter, Rengma
17. Lengjang, Interpreter, Kuki
18. Nikhriehu, Interpreter, Angami
19. Miakrao, Chaprasi, Angami
20. Levi, Clerk, Kacha Naga

Source: Nuh, V.K. & Lasuh Wetshokhrolo. (2002) *The Naga Chronicle*. Pp 111-112

APPENDIX B

THE SIXTEEN- POINT AGREEMENT

(The Sixteen – Point Agreement arrived at between the Naga Peoples' Convention and the Government of India in July 1960)

The point placed by the delegates of the Naga Peoples' Convention before the Prime Minister on 26 July 1960, as finally recast by the Delegation in the light of discussion on 27 and 28 July 1960 with the Foreign Secretary.

1. The Name

The Territories that were hitherto known as the Naga Hills Tuensang area under the NHTA Act, 1957, and any other Naga areas, which may hereafter come under it shall form a state within the Indian Union and be hereafter known as the Nagaland.

2. The Ministry-in-Charge

Nagaland shall be under the Ministry of External Affairs of the Government of India.

3. The Governor of Nagaland

- (a) The President of India shall appoint a Governor for Nagaland and he will be vested with the Executive powers of the Government of Nagaland. He will function from the Headquarters of the Nagaland.
- (b) His administrative secretariat will be headed by a Chief Secretary, stationed at the Headquarters with other Secretarial Staff as necessary.
- (c) The Governor shall have special responsibility with regard to Law, Order and Police during transitional period and for so long as the law and order situation continues to remain disturbed on account of hostile activities. In exercising this special responsibility, the governor shall after consultation with the Ministry, act in his individual judgement. This special responsibility of the Governor will cease when normalcy returns.

4. Council of Ministers

(a) There shall be a Council of Ministers with a Chief Minister at the head to assist and advise the Governor in the exercise of his functions. (b) The Council of Ministers shall be responsible to the Naga Legislative Assembly.

5. The Legislature

There shall be a constituted Legislative Assembly consisting of elected and nominated members as may be deemed necessary representing different Tribes (Further, a duly constituted body of Experts may be formed to examine and determine the principles of representation on democratic basis).

6. Representation in the Parliament

Two elected members shall represent Nagaland in the Union Parliament, i.e. one in the Lok Sabha and one in the Rajya Sabha.

7. Acts of Parliament

No Acts of Law passed by the Union Parliament affecting the following provisions shall have legal force in Nagaland unless specifically applied to it by a majority vote of the Naga Legislative Assembly.

- (i) The Religious or Social Practices of the Nagas;
- (ii) Naga Customary Laws and Procedures;
- (iii) Civil and Criminal justice so far as these concern decisions according to Naga Customary Laws. The existing laws relating to administration of civil and criminal justice as provided in the rules for the administration of justice and police in the Naga Hills district shall continue to be in force, and
- (iv) The ownership and transfer of land and its resources.

8. Local Self-Government

Each tribe shall have the following Units of Law-making and administrative Local Bodies to deal with matters concerning the respective tribes and areas-

- 1. The Village Council
- 2. The Range Council

3. The Tribal Council

These Councils will also deal with disputes and cases involving breaches of Customary Laws and Usages.

9. Administration of Justice

- (a) The existing systems of administration of civil and criminal justice shall continue.
- (b) Appellate Courts:
 - (1) The District-cum-Session Court for each district, High Court and Supreme Court of India.
 - (2) The Naga Tribunal (for the whole of the Nagaland) in respect of cases decided according to Customary Laws.

10. Administration of Tuensang District

- (1) The Governor shall carry on the administration of the Tuensang District for a period of 10 (ten) years until such time when the tribes in the Tuensang district are capable of shouldering more responsibilities of the advanced system of administration. The commencement of ten-year period of administration will start simultaneously with the enforcement of detailed workings of the constitution in the other parts of Nagaland.
- (2) Provided further that Regional Council shall be formed for Tuensang District by elected representatives from all the tribes in Tuensang district, and the Governor may nominate representatives to the Regional Council as well. The Deputy Commissioner will be the Ex-Officio Chairman of the Council. The Regional Council will elect members to the Naga Legislative Assembly to represent Tuensang District.
- (3) Provided further that on the advice of the Regional Council, steps will be taken to start various Councils and Courts, in those areas where the people feel themselves capable of establishing such institutions.
- (4) Provided further that no Act or Laws passed by the Naga Legislative Assembly shall be applicable to Tuensang district unless specifically recommended by the Regional Council.

- (5) Provided further that the Regional Council shall supervise and guide the various Councils and Courts within Tuensang District, and wherever deemed necessary depute the Local Officers to act as Chairman thereof.
- (6) Provided further that Councils of such areas inhabited by a mixed population or which have not as yet decided to which specific Tribal Council to be affiliated to, shall be directly under the Regional Council for the time being. And at the end of ten years the situation will be reviewed and if the people so desire the period will be further extended.

11. Financial Assistance from the Government of India

To supplement the revenues of the Nagaland there will be a need for the Government of India to pay out of the consolidated fund of India as Grants-in-aid as follows:

- (1) Lump-sum as may be necessary each year for the development programme in the Nagaland; and
- (2) A fixed recurring sum (Annual Subvention) for meeting the cost of the administration of the Nagaland.

12. Consolidation of Forest Areas

The delegation wished the following to be placed on records:

The Naga delegation discussed the question of the inclusion of the reserved forests and of contiguous areas inhabited by the Nagas. They were referred to the provision in Articles 3 and 4 of the Constitution, prescribing the procedure of the transfer of areas from one state to another.

13. Consolidation of Contiguous Naga Area

The delegation wished the following to be placed on records:

The Naga leaders expressed the wish for the contiguous areas to join the new state. It was pointed out to them on behalf of the Government of India the Articles 3 and 4 of the Constitution provided for increasing the areas of any state, but that it was not possible for the

Government of India to make any commitment in this regard at this stage.

14. Formation of Separate Naga Regiment

In order that the Naga people can fulfil their desire of playing a full role in the defence forces of India, the question of raising a separate Naga Regiment should be duly examined for action.

15. Transitional Period

(a) On reaching the political settlement with Government of India, the Government of India will prepare a Bill for such amendment of the Constitution as may be necessary, in order to implement the decision. The draft Bill, before presentation to Parliament, will be shown to the delegates of the NPC.

(b) There shall be constituted an Interim Body with elected representatives from every tribe to assist and advise the Governor in the administration of the Nagaland during the transitional period. The tenure of office of the members of the Interim Body will be 3(three) years subject to re-election.

16. Inner Line Regulation

The Rules embodied in the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation, 1873, shall remain in force in Nagaland.

Appendix C

Shillong Accord

The following representatives of the underground organisations met the Governor of Nagaland, Shri L.P. Singh, representing the Government of India, at Shillong on 10th and 11th November, 1975:


1. Shri I. Temjenba
2. Shri S. Dahru
3. Shri Veeniyi Rhakhu
4. Shri Z. Ramyo
5. Shri M. Assa
6. Shri Kevi Yallay

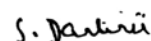
2. There were a series of four discussions. Some of the discussions were held with the Governor alone; at others, the Governor was assisted by the two Advisers for Nagaland, Shri M. Ramunny, and Shri H. Zopianga, and Shri M.L. Kampani, Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Home Affairs. All the five members of the Liaison Committee, namely Rev. Longri Ao, Dr. M. Aram, Shri L. Lungalang, Shri Kenneth Kerhuo, and Shri Lungshim Shaiza, participated in the discussions.

3. The following were the outcome of the discussions:

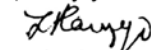
- (i) The representatives of the underground organisations conveyed their decision, of their own volition, to accept, without condition, the Constitution of India;
- (ii) It was agreed that the arms, now underground, would be brought out and deposited at appointed places. Details for giving effect to this agreement will be worked out between them and representatives of the Government, the security forces, and members of the Liaison Committee;
- (iii) It was agreed that the representatives of the underground organisations should have reasonable time to formulate other issues for discussion for final settlement.

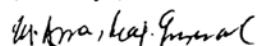
Dated Shillong,
November 11, 1975.



(I. Temjenba) 11/11/75


(S. Dahru)

(Veeniyi Rhakhu)

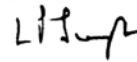

(Z. Ramyo)


(M. Assa)


(Kevi Yallay)

On behalf of the representative
of the underground organisations.

Representative of the
Government of India


(L.P. Singh)

On behalf of the Government
of India

APPENDIX D

14 Point Statement of Atto Kilonser, Kughato Sukhai During Prime Ministerial Talks with Prime Minister of India Indira Gandhi, Oct, 1967

1. Between 1837 and 1879 Britain sent military expeditions into Nagaland territory.
2. In 1880 Nagaland agreed to Great Britain having military bases in a limited area which area was given the name of "Naga Hills". Nagas refused to enter into any written agreement or treaty giving up their sovereignty over "Naga Hills" and there has never been any written agreement between Nagaland and Great Britain of Nagaland or British India to surrender their sovereignty over "Naga Hills".
3. The civil and criminal administration over the people of the "Naga Hills" has been in the hands of the Nagas from 1880 to this day.
4. After coming into force of the British "Government of India Act 1935" the Naga Hills territory was named "Naga Hills Excluded Area" in 1937 to make it clear that "Naga Hills" had to be excluded as demanded by the Nagas.
5. In May, 1947 the Constituent Assembly of India sent a delegation to Naga National Council and made an offer for Nagaland to join the Union of India.
6. A modified form was repeated in June 1947 in the form of a "Ten Year Agreement". Negotiations continued. India broke the negotiations.
7. On 14th August 1947, the Nagas declared Independence of Nagaland which was declared by a referendum in May 1951.
8. On March 22, 1956 Naga National council and Free Nagaland united as Federal Republic of Nagaland.
9. From March 1956 till September 1964 there was a continuous fighting between the Armed Forces of Federal Republic of Nagaland and Union of India.
10. On September 6, 1964 Cease-Fire arrangement made between the two forces by Nagaland Peace Mission.
11. On December 20, 1964 Nagaland Peace Mission made a proposal that the leaders of Naga Federal Government should advise the people to agree to join the Union of India "on their own Volition".
12. Nagaland shall never yield its Sovereignty Independence to any state.
13. Nagaland has always been an independent territory adjoining the territories of Assam and Burma.
14. The final question still remains to be answered, would India rather exterminate the Naga Nation?

Source: Horam, M. (1988). *Naga Insurgency*. Pp. 130-131

APPENDIX E

TRUE COPY.
THE KEDAHGE:
FEDERAL GOVERNMENT OF NAGALAND.

"DECLARATION FOR RECONSTRUCTION OF GOVERNMENT"

The reconstruction of Government will be effectively enforced on Friday January 3, 1964, indefinitely.

State: Till we achieve our political freedom, administration of our country will be carried out through three states. This organisation may be changed when the state Reorganisation Commission consider it necessary.

Name of the names of the states will be known as "Japfu state", the state "Patkai state" and "Dikhu state".

"Japfu state" consists of Angami, Chakhesang, Zeliangruang, and the unsettled Pomai and Mao.

Sub-unit of the state: "Patkai state" comprises, Lotha, Tengma, Sema, Sangtam, Yimchunger, Pochury, and Khemununga.

"Dikhu state" counts Ao, Kongyak, Phom, Chang, and the Northern Nagas.
There will be six Portfolioed Kiloners, namely Kilo-Kiloner, Kiloner: Chaply-Kiloner, Justice-Kiloner, Lota-Kiloner, Keya-Kiloner and Alee-Kiloner.

Tatar: Representation of the States in the Tatar-Hoho will be in the nation of ever 25,000 (twenty five thousand) people.

Court: There will be one Mayam Riyam (Supreme court) three Achang Riyam (High court).

Service: Service exchange and transfer will effect according to merit and necessity.

INF: One Directorate of information will take the charge of publicity of current affairs.

Defence: Naga Home-Guards will be changed into "Naga Army". There will be three commands of Naga Army known as Southern command, Central-command and Northern command.

One General alone will directly control the Commands.

Memo No. IN/XIV/2591-2625/
Dated Oking: 4-10-1963.

Sd/- Scato Swa,
Kedahge,
FEDERAL GOVERNMENT OF NAGALAND.

Copy to:-
All authorities, for information.

Kedahge.

APPENDIX F

COINED WORDS

Till 1930s conversation among Nagas were full of cryptic expression for the absence of qualified inter-tribal language. As late as 1956, there were sectors in Nagaland where the people did not speak any other language or dialect save their own mother tongue.

This gave rise to difficult occasions for heart to heart talks among the Nagas. In the given situation I (Speaker, Tatar Hoho) thought of selecting one particular minor tribe dialect and build upon it the Naga lingua Franca. It was viewed inappropriate to select the dialect of a major tribe as a base-language as the minor tribes, who forms the majority, would oppose it. This problem prompted the Tatars, the idea of developing Naga lingua-franca as early as possible through parliamentary process by selecting the most appropriate words from all Naga dialects, though it was a tedious job. The selected words were debated upon and put to vote. The words voted through were assented to by the President and thereafter notified for immediate use for all official purposes.

Some of the coined words are:

Ahng	Governor	Konyak
Ahza	Order	Sumi (Sema)
Alee	Foreign	Pochury
Atto	Prime	Sumi
Chaplee	Finance	Ao and Sumi
Hiyam	Office	Yimchunger
Riyam	Court	Yimchunger
Illi	Miss	Sumi
Inoli	Mrs.	Sumi
Ino	Mister	Sumi
Kedahge	President	Rengma
Kedallo	Union Vice President	Rengma
Khandan	Jail	Lotha
Khapur	Junior Judge	Yimchunger

Keya	Defence	Angami
Kilonser	Minister	Yimchunger
Kilo	Home	Angami and Sumi
Kimhao	Upper House	Lotha
Kippo	Lower House	Lotha
Kuknalim	Victory Nagaland (coined by NSF and later adopted by the FGN)	Angami, Sumi and Ao
Lashika	Ambassador	Sumi
Leacy	M.L.A	Chakhesang
Lota	Agriculture	Chakhesang
Raju	Sub Division	Angami
Raju Peyu	SDO (Civil)	Angami
Rally-wally	Information	Ao
Runa Peyu	Villager Administrator	Angami
Tatar	M.P	Ao
Oking	Head Quarter	Lotha
Pangtong	Deputy Commissioner	Lotha
Urta	Our Country	Angami
Yehzabo	Constitution	Sumi

Source: Scato Swu (2013), *Hails and Blames*, pp 21-23