



**A STUDY OF THE EVOLUTION OF MODERN NAGA SOCIETY:  
A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE**

**THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE  
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF  
PHILOSOPHY**

**By**

**THUNGCHANBENI KITHAN**

**Ph.D/HAR/852/2019**

**DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY**

**SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**

**NAGALAND UNIVERSITY**

**KOHIMA CAMPUS, MERIEMA**

**KOHIMA, NAGALAND-797004**

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**By**  
**THUNGCHANBENI KITHAN**

**SUPERVISOR**  
**PROF. Y. BEN LOTHAN**

**SUBMITTED**  
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**HISTORY OF NAGALAND UNIVERSITY**

**APRIL 2025**



# नागालैण्डविश्वविद्यालय

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Hqrs: Lumami, Dist. Zunheboto (Nagaland), Pin Code – 798627

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Kohima

The ...<sup>30<sup>th</sup></sup>..... April, 2025

  
(Prof. Y. Ben Lotha)

Supervisor

Department of History & Archaeology

Nagaland University

Supervisor  
Kohima Campus, Meriema  
Deptt. of History & Archaeology  
Nagaland University  
Kohima Campus : Meriema



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### DECLARATION

I, Thungchanbeni Kithan, hereby declare that the thesis titled “A Study of the Evolution of Modern Naga Society: A Historical Perspective” 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 basis 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 fulfilment for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History & Archaeology.

  
Research Scholar

  
Supervisor

  
Head of Department

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This work is the result of the collective blessings, support, and sacrifices of my family, husband and Children. I humbly dedicate this to the glory of God, who made it all possible.

  
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Name and Institutional Address of the Supervisor/Co-Supervisor	Prof Y. Ben Lotha Department of History & Archaeology Nagaland University Kohima Campus , Meriema	
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 Supervisor  
 Dept. of History & Archaeology  
 Nagaland University  
 Kohima Campus : Meriema

Name & Signature of the Co-Supervisor (if any):  
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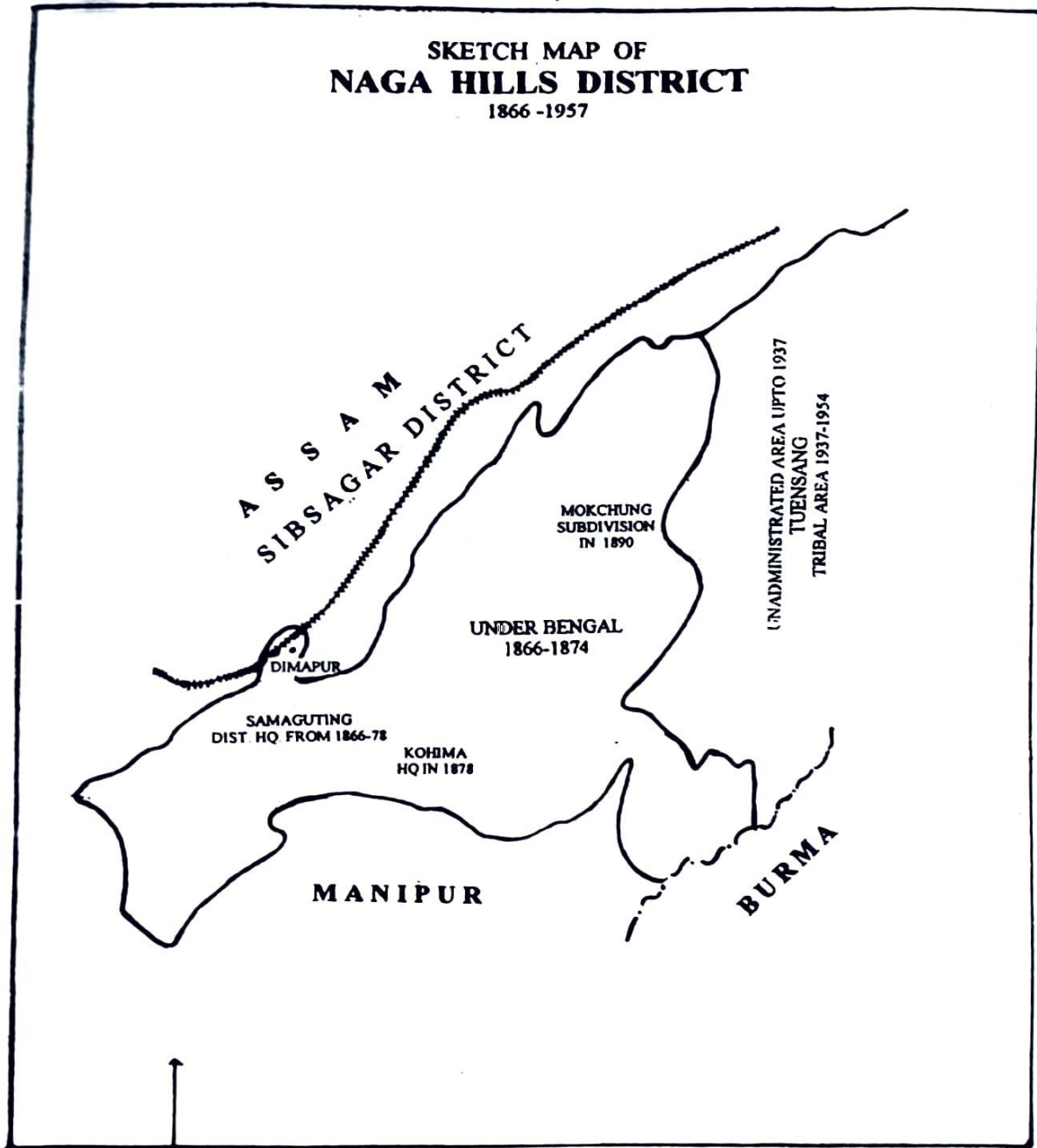


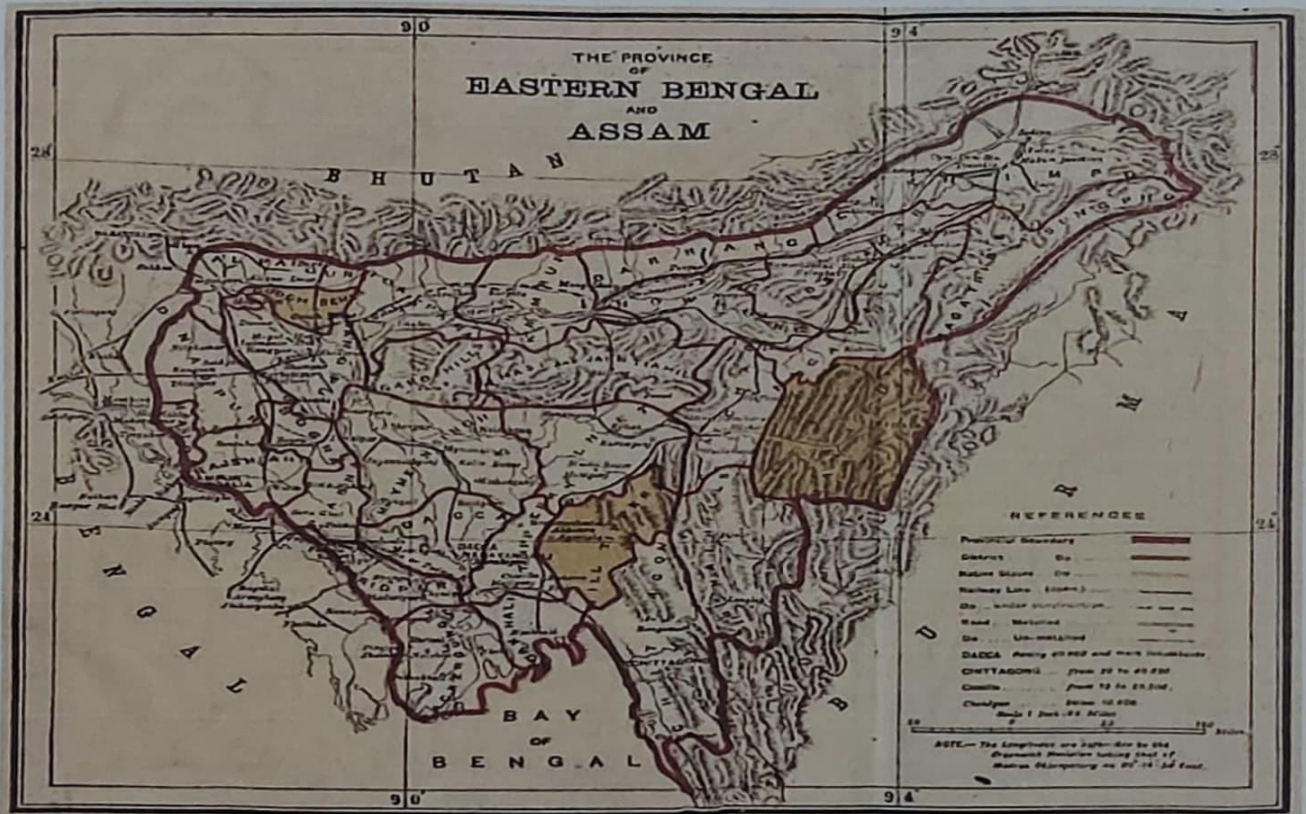
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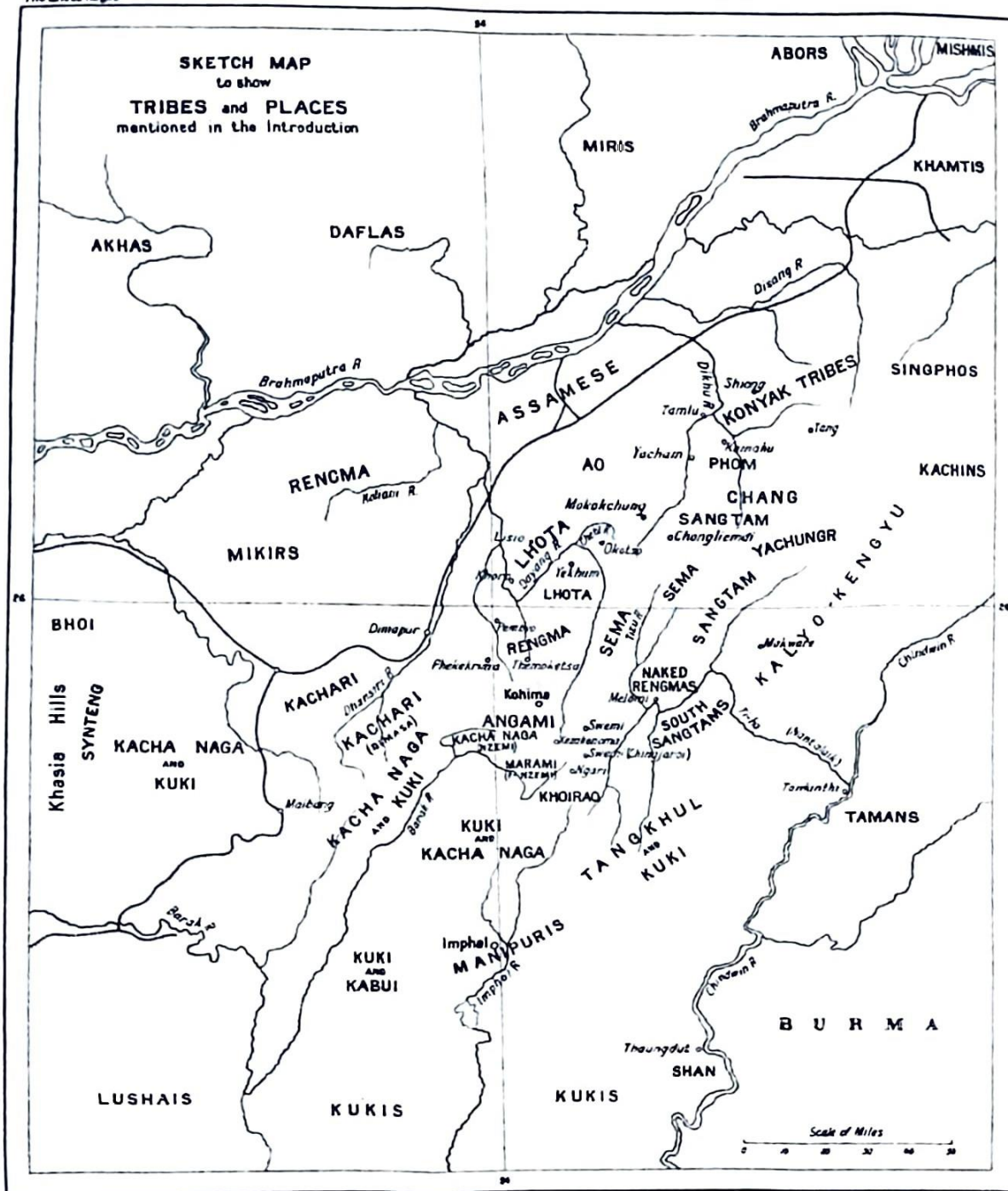
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## **CHAPTER-1**

### **Introduction**

#### **Background**

The Nagas are a distinct ethnic race inhabiting the Northeastern region of India, settled in the State of Nagaland, parts of Manipur, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh and Northwestern Myanmar. Ethnically, they belong to the Tibeto-Burman stock of mongoloids, and comprise of more than forty tribes, all of whom have different languages and dialects classified as Tibeto-Burman language group. The different Naga tribes occupy the hills between the parallels of longitude 93° on the west to longitude 96° on the east, an area extending from the valley of the Kapili on the west to the interior of the Patkai hills on the north-western border of Burma (Myanmar) on the east (Barpujari.2003). The state of Nagaland lies in the extreme Northeastern part of India, occupying the narrow strip of mountainous country between Burma and the Brahmaputra valley of Assam, bounded in the west by Assam, in the east by Myanmar and Tirap district of Arunachal Pradesh, in the north by Assam and Arunachal Pradesh, and in the South by Manipur. Before attainment of Statehood within the Indian Union on December 1. 1963, Nagaland, which was the Naga Hills District of the province of Assam since its formation in 1866 till the Independence of India in 1947. There are today seventeen recognised indigenous tribes in Nagaland State, out of which fifteen are major Naga tribes, viz., Angami, Ao, Lotha, Sumi, Rengma, Chakhesang, Konyak, Chang, Sangtam, Phom, Khamniungan, Yimkhiong, Zeliang, Pochury and Tikhir. The other recognised Indigenous tribes are kachari and Kuki. The physical features of the Naga Hills with its difficult and insurmountable terrain, dominated by steep mountain ranges and valley topography have always influenced the life and character of its people. The remoteness of the hills, the rugged terrain and the dreaded image of the highland Naga warriors that was already well known to the people in the plains had combined to establish the environment of isolation in which the Naga tribes remained from the outside world as well as from one another. This had led to the development of the fiercely independent village communities, generally termed as 'Naga Village Republics'. Other than their reputation as a fierce martial tribesmen, the Nagas also have a rich cultural heritage and traditions that are deeply embedded into their socio-economic and political structure.

Historically, the Nagas are a close-knit kinship group that had arrived in different waves of migration and finally settled down in their present habitats by establishing their Independent Village republics. Each of the Tribes remain rigidly distinct from one another, existing in almost complete isolation with their scanty encounters, quite often restricted to incidents and bouts of headhunting tales of village raids and warfare. Despite all the existing diversities, including their linguistic variations which was incomprehensible to other tribes, along with peculiar inherent character traits displayed by each tribe, differences in social and political institutions, there exists some similarities which binds them to a common ancestry. Their warrior legacies, traditional customs and rituals, subsistence economy, animistic beliefs, festivals, customary laws, festival, strong bonds of clanship and village- centric tribal identity are some of the characteristics that project a common lineage among the Naga tribes.

The geographical location of the Naga Hills, lying in the almost inaccessible mountain tracts of the borders of India and Burma had kept the Nagas to live in isolation and seclusion for several centuries; undisturbed and undiluted, preserving and protecting their traditional society to remain intact, unaffected by the neighbouring and other external forces, down to the mid- nineteenth century. Thus, the Nagas are one of the earliest and distinct ethnic communities in Northeast India whose migration had possibly occurred from somewhere in China or Mongolia into Southeast Asia, and taking the Burma corridor had entered the present Naga settlements in Nagaland and the adjoining regions. The Headhunting practices led to the development of strong village fortifications for defence against enemy raids. This explains the state of seclusion and isolation that existed even within villages of the same tribes and the lack of a cohesive community. Till the later part of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, most of the Naga Villages were found to have survived following their pre-colonial primitive stage of existence and prevailing in their traditional ancient practices, allowing the early British administrator-historians and ethnographers the opportunity to witness and record first hand about the Naga villagers whom they encountered, while still untouched by the outside cultures.

With the extension of British Colonial administration over the Naga Hills in the nineteenth century, the process for the evolution of Naga society from an ancient traditional tribal existence into the vestiges of a modern society had been set in motion. The British rule introduced a new system of administration and one of the first transformation was the cessation of the dreaded practice of Headhunting. Thus, an early merit of the British intervention in the Naga Hills was the considerable decline of violence and warfare among the Naga tribes and the raids on the border villages in the plains.

The Christian missionaries' contribution can be seen not only for their evangelization activities, that led to the gradual conversion of almost all the Naga tribes to Christianity, but also for the introduction of the formal system of education in the Naga Hills, which automatically activated the mechanism of social and political transformations in Naga society from an ancient society to the modern era of civilization.

The new system of governance introduced under the colonial Government further redefined the social and political structure of Naga society. In the following decades, through the interaction and exposure with the outside World, enhanced by the rise of educated Nagas, political awareness and modern thoughts and philosophy seeped into the core of Naga Society. When the World War 1 broke out, a huge Naga contingent recruited from various tribes as the Naga Labour Corps, sailed to Europe to serve in the War, where they got directly exposed to western ideas and became strongly imbibed with feelings of unity of the tribes. In the aftermath of the War, mounting political awareness and increasing ideas of Naga Nationalism were developing in the Naga Hills which culminated in a series of political events for the assertion of Nagas political rights. In the post -Independence era, the Naga political movement intensified into a broad struggle for Nagas self-determination and Identity politics. Thus, the Naga Society has undergone profound socio-political transformations in its journey of transition to a modern Society, spanning a short period of about a century, symbolising an epoch of unprecedented transformations in the Society.

For centuries, the Nagas had held on to their traditional tribal existence, with intermissions of warfare and headhunting, passing down their vibrant traditions and rituals through oral narratives which consists of tales, legends and songs. But they suddenly found themselves in the throes of modern imperialism with the consequent occupation by a mighty colonial world power and administration by foreign white rulers. These sudden developments in their history, along with the conversion to the new Christian religion and the outburst of political awareness at the same period together culminated in an almost volcanic explosion of the Modern Naga Society.

In this research study, attempts have been made to extensively trace and analyse select key areas from the pre-colonial to the contemporary times which are instrumental in the Evolution of the Modern Naga Society. By doing so, it is aimed to provide crucial findings from the inquiry to understand how historical events of the past have influenced and determines Naga Identity and socio-political aspirations that has shaped the Nagas' present realities. The historical interpretation of these transformations seeks to show the resilience of the Naga people in preserving their culture while embracing the changes that modernization has brought about.

### **Terminology of the word Naga: Origins and Migrations**

The diverse ethnic peoples inhabiting the Indo- Myanmar region came to be known as 'Nagas'. There has been a great deal of assumptions and speculations on the origin of the word 'Naga', over which the Nagas themselves had not much inkling as to how the people of the plains and outsiders started calling them using this generic term. The Nagas themselves relates their identity only by their respective tribes, and in fact, it is more often their village identity that takes precedence over the tribe too. The Nagas did not know about this word, as they were known and identified themselves only by the name of their villages or tribes but never by any such common name for all the tribes. As has already been asserted, each Naga village and tribe was an independent state or Independent Village Republic. The term Naga came to be known and applied to the tribes only during British rule. Even in the present times, the usual norm followed by the Naga tribes of Nagaland while introducing themselves is always by way of firstly mentioning their name followed by their tribe which may be as Angami, Ao Lotha, Sumi, Rengma, Chakhesang, Konyak, Chang, Sangtam, etc. Not only that but tribes like the Ao and Lotha, they identify and

address themselves as 'Aor 'and 'kyon', translated as 'man', in discussions among themselves. Even in the decades as recent as the period of attainment of Statehood, the tribes of Tuensang District, lying in Eastern Nagaland were still presenting themselves only as Konyak, Chang, Phom, Sangtam rather than as Naga (Alemchiba, 1970). Hence, it is not surprising that the origin of the word Naga has been a subject of interesting speculations in academic circles. For this reason, in all the works on Naga history, starting from the early colonial historians down to the post-colonial authors have made attempts to bring out valuable discussions concerning the subject. Now it can be simply put that the word 'Naga' is a generic term used by outsiders, particularly the people of the plains while referring to the tribesmen inhabiting the majestic, blue mountains looming high above the Brahmaputra valley of Assam.

In this research work, a great deal of extensive research and analysis of available written records and oral history has been undertaken in order to arrive at some clarity and understanding of this terminology of Naga and the pattern of migrations of the Naga tribes. The earliest reference to the Nagas is found to be mentioned in the records of the Greek geographer, Ptolemy who writes in the first century A.D, about 150 A.D of the 'Nangalog' or naked people in approximately the area which they occupy (Geographia, VII, II,18). In the seventeenth century, Mir-Hussaini, the historian of Mir Jhumla, during the Mughal expedition to Assam in 1662, wrote of them as 'the Nagas'(Goswami,2012). Captain Pemberton in '*The Report on the Eastern Frontier of British India*' mentions that the western Naga tribes called Kabuis residing on the ranges between Manipur and Cachar were known in Bengal by the term 'Naga'. Johnstone comments in '*My Experiences in Manipur and the Naga Hill's*', Naga is a name given by the inhabitants of the plains, and in the Assamese language means 'naked', as some of the Naga tribes are seen habitually in that state and the name was arbitrarily applied to them all (1896).

The earliest recorded references of the word 'Naga' is found in the Buranjis. Here there are significant references to the Nagas repeatedly, for not less than 89 times or even more, making the Buranjis the most relevant and direct source of written record available on the Naga Tribes. The Ahom chronicles dating back from the thirteenth century provides a vivid account on how the Ahom commander

Sukapha and his men marched through the boundary of the Naga Country and fought with the Nagas whom they call “Kha” or hill people. The Buranjis provide a descriptive information on the fierce resistance and battle encounter of the Ahoms with the Patkai Nagas living in the Tirap Frontier, identified as Nocte, Wanchoo, Tangsa konyak Naga group, while the Ahoms led by their leader Sukapha were enroute towards the Brahmaputra valley. In this first encounter, the Nagas are known to have heavily resisted the Ahoms but they were defeated, their villages were destroyed and they were subjugated. A great number of Nagas were killed and many were taken as captives. The Ahoms are known to have committed the most gruesome acts of horrific cruelty on the Nagas in their attempt to bring them under their authority, unleashing unimaginable brutality (Baruah, 1985). The Ahoms went on to establish the Ahom Kingdom and ruled over Assam for over six centuries. In the various references to the Nagas, the Buranjis mentions about warfares, political and trade relations of the Ahoms with the Naga Villages bordering their kingdom. The Naga tribes are mentioned as ‘kha’ in the original Ahom script, a word used by the Tai speakers of Burma, Laos, Thailand, Vietnam, and South China referring to ‘hill people’. Prof. J. N Phukan, a noted Ahom scholar throws light on this derivation of the word ‘Naga’ mentioned in the Buranjis (Phukan, Presidential address, NEIHA, 1989). In a much later date in the sixteenth century, we come across the emergence of the Assamese term ‘Na-ka’ in its Ahom corrupted form, referring to the different groups of Nagas in the Ahom chronicles. This shows that in the beginning of their earlier encounters, in the thirteenth century the Ahoms did not know the Nagas as ‘Naga’ but knew them as ‘KHA’. Which is why the thirteenth century Buranjis call the Patkai Nagas as Kha. But towards the end of the eighteenth century, the Ahom ‘Na-ka’ was changed to Noga and Naga in the Ahom chronicles (*Ibid.*) Thus, since the Assamese who were their immediate neighbours called them ‘Noka’, it must have been relayed to the Bengalees as Noga or Naga and transmitted to the British and finally transcribed as Naga by the British. When Rai Sahib Golap Chandra Barua wrote the English translation of the *Ahom Buranji* (1930), he had translated the word ‘Kha’ as Naga wherever it appears in the original Ahom script. Gradually, this name Naga was extended to a greater number of the tribal people inhabiting the Hills till it became a generic term for many ethnic groups settled in Nagaland, Assam, Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh and Myanmar.

From the available records in the Buranjis, it is observed that none of the Naga tribes having frequent contacts with the Ahoms were known to the Assamese by their traditional names but rather by villages to which they belonged. Not only that, but the tribal names and villages in common use by the Ahoms was not what the people call themselves. For instance, Hatiguria was for long used as a synonym for the ‘Ao’ tribe. The Lhota also is a term applied by the Assamese though the Lothas call themselves ‘Kyon’. Similarly, the Angami Nagas were totally ignorant of the term which is found to be a term given by the Cacharees to all Independent Nagas, signifying in their language “unconquered” (Assam Secretariat Files No.137-J.of 1881).

The accounts of contacts with the Nagas in the Ahom chronicles also indicates the important and close association of the Ahoms with the Nagas, which were based on political, economic and commercial reasons. To the Ahoms, the areas inhabited by the Eastern Nagas was essential for the rich salt wells in the area. The Nagas manufactured the salt and brought it to the ‘ghats’ or weekly markets of the plains in exchange for essential commodities (Devi, L, 1968). Some Nagas were referred to by the Duars or mountain passes through which they came down to the plains for trade. The Nagas living between the Doyang and Dikhu rivers were known as Paniphotias, Torphotias, Doyangias, Hatigorias, Assiringias, Dopduarias and Namchangias. These names are references to the Naga tribes adjoining the Assam boundaries namely Ao, Lotha, Phom, konyak etc. The Nagas inhabiting the tract between the Dikhu and the Buridihing rivers were known as Taplungias, Jatktoongias, Mooloongs, Changnois, Jobokas, Banpheras, Mootons, Paniduaris, Borduaris and Namsangias. The Namchangia Nagas were also known as Jaipurias. Most of these Nagas inhabiting Arunachal Pradesh are said to belong to the Konyak Naga division (Barpujari,2003). Since the Nagas do not have any other written records prior to the arrival of the Ahoms in 1228 A.D, nothing is known beyond these available references in the Buranjis about their contact with the outside World.

From the views discussed above, it can be clearly inferred that the word Naga was given to them by the people living in the plains calling them the ‘hill people or the naked hill people’. It can be traced to the Ahom word “Kha” which in later centuries

corrupted into the Assamese term 'No-ka' or "No- Kha" and later used as "Noga" and "Naga" by the Bengalees and the British (Baruah Rai , 1930; Phukan, 1989 *NEIHA Proceedings*).

### **Origin and Migration**

The Nagas who settled in the Naga hills have various theories of their migration, many of it have been forwarded by colonial writers, while each of the tribes also have their own legends and tales of their migration to their present homelands preserved and transmitted through oral tradition. We shall analyse some of the theories first and then co-relate with the oral narratives on Naga Migrations. Precisely how the Nagas came to occupy and settle down in their present location is unclear. But the oral tradition of the tribes gives some indications about the course of their migrations.

There is no doubt that there had been successive waves of migrations from different directions, and it is probable that a large contingent of tribes passed through from the South to the North, which included the Lotha, Sumi, Rengma, Angami and Mao (Alemchiba, 1970). The Sumis occupying the central region of the present Nagaland point to the Japfu Mountain as the place from where the tribe spread. According to one source, the Sumi trace their origin from Swemi village. There are also other versions of their migrations. The Lothas say that they once occupied the region which is at present settled by the Angamis, it was under the pressure of new waves of migrating tribes that they had to push forward towards the northern side. The Rengmas point towards the Mao area from where they spread, they believe that one group was allied with the Angami group, while another group moved west ward to the kaliani river and became the western Rengmas, allied to Lothas, Sumi and Zeliangrong of western origin. The Chakhesang are assumed to be made up of a composition of several Naga tribes such as Mao, Sumi, Angami, Sangtam and Tangkhul (Shimmi,1988). The Zeliangrong comprises of the Zemi, Liangmai and Rongmai tribes. They are said to have travelled through the impassable mountain ranges along the Barak River and avoiding conflicts with other tribes had made their homes in the Western Mountain tracts. Pemberton, has also stated that the kabuis, a sub- tribe of the Zeliangrong were settled on many hill ranges between Cachar and Manipur.

Scholarly discourses on Naga migrations link their origins to ancient human dispersals across Southeast Asia. Linguistic studies categorize the Naga languages within the Tibeto- Burman language family which is regarded to have originated in the region around the upper Yangtze and Yellow Rivers and migrated southward and westward, with later migrations spreading into Southeast Asia and North East India (Van Driem, 2012). Hall provides a comprehensive overview of the movements of diverse populations throughout Southeast Asia, citing the early waves of migration of Austroasiatic and Tibeto- Burman speaking groups from regions in present day China and dispersing southward into various parts of Southeast Asia (1955). The Naga tribes, classified as belonging to this language group, may have been a part of this migratory trend, moving through the Irrawaddy and Chindwin before arriving in present-day Myanmar and the Naga Hills in Northeast India. One of the factors that propelled the migration within Asia was due to the expansion of the Chinese Han people pushing southwards as population grew in the Cradle area of the valley of the Yellow River. They filled up sub-tropical and tropical China and the pressure triggered the momentum of population movement which set off great ripples of migration that affected the whole of Asia (Gerald,1972).

A similar view is shared by Buchanan, “ Over hundreds of years the pre-Chinese peoples of Central Asia were displaced into the upland areas of Indo- Chinese lands far to the South and their pressure in turn triggered tribal movements which affected the whole of mainland Southeast Asia and the adjoining Island Worlds”(Buchanan, 1967). The immigrant tribes took different routes, some trekked through the Himalayan section which extends down through the Patkai, Arakan, Yoma and Banda arch towards Sumatra and Java, and some took the Pacific section which extends from Formosa through Phillipines, Borneo and on to Japan”(Smith, 1925: Hall, 1958). Visier Sanyu argues from this premise, “ that perhaps the Nagas were among those tribes who migrated from China through the Patkai section and settled on the way in the Naga Hills”( Sanyu, 2016). During the migrations, there are strong indications that the tribes broke away and settled down enroute; the indigenous groups found in regions like Borneo, Formosa and hill tribes of vietnam are living illustrations reflecting the same traditions, culture, socio- religious organizations, dress and food habits as the Nagas in the Naga Hills (*Ibid.*)

In Southeast Asia, the earliest settlers were Paleolithic or pre-Paleolithic food-gatherers, hunters, fishers and folk who had not made the transition to a stone-using culture (Watson, 1961). This social organizations seems to have been small units comprising of clan group or kinship group that were nomadic and moved in a defining hunting territory. The labour division was already in existence, with men concentrating on hunting and women and children in collection of insects and foraging of wild vegetables for food. By and large, the people could be labelled as primitive (Marshall,1960). Yet, the beginnings of rudimentary agriculture was visible in the practices of many of these nomadic communities.

The archaeological findings corroborate these migratory movements of the Nagas and other early races of Southeast Asia revealing material cultures that share similarities with those found in parts of Southeast Asia. Megalithic structures found in the Naga Hills bear close resemblance with those found in Southeast Asia, where megalithic culture associated with religion can be found, comprising of grinding stones with magical significance, troughs in which skulls were preserved, menhirs which may have been phallic symbols, dolmens at burial places, burial chambers of long flat stones are evidenced in the cultural practices of many Naga tribes. The presence of stone tools, of burial practices, and pottery styles show remarkable parallels in cultural exchanges or a common origin. (Bellwood, 2004). The headhunting practices of the Nagas, animistic beliefs, traditional attires and cultural life all provide strong connections with several ethnic communities in Southeast Asia. These artifacts indicate that the Naga ancestors may have migrated through Southeast Asia in various waves taking centuries of movement, and some of the groups of Nagas may have undergone assimilating various cultural elements before settling down in their current region.

That the Naga tribes belong to a very early human race that entered the Northeast region may find strong probabilities when cross cultural analysis of early racial elements in southeast Asia is taken into consideration. Hall for instance, mentions the theory forwarded by Von Heine Geldern, that “The Neolithic oval-axe culture found in northern Burma, among the Nagas of Assam, in Cambodia and in the eastern Islands of the Archipelago is connected with the use of a plank-built canoe, and that both represent a development of Mesolithic culture.” (1955). Many scholars

have postulated the ethnic similarities between Nagas and the ethnic tribal groups of Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines and Formosa etc. The Naga scholar Horam remarks, "There can be little doubt that at one time the Nagas must have wandered about before they found their permanent abode; from their myths and legends, one gathers that there is a dim relationship with the natives of Borneo, in that the two have a common traditional way of headhunting. With the Phillipines and Formosa through the common system of terrace cultivation. With the Indonesians, as both use the loin loom for weaving cloth, the embroidery on the Naga cloth resemble the kind done on Indonesian cloths"(1975).

In these Islands, the Indonesians or the Austronesians believed to be the last great racial group that entered Southeast Asia in the Neolithic times, formed the basis of the population. Today, the main population of the Indo-Chinese mainland are the Austronesians commonly known as Indonesians and most of the ethnic groups of Northeast India have racial and cultural connections with them. Additionally, genetic studies indicate racial connections between Naga groups and Southeast Asian tribal communities, reinforcing the hypothesis of an early movement from the east into the Naga Hills. Evidently, Southeast Asia already possessed a civilization of its own before it came into contact with Indian culture. Kautilya's Arthashastra mentions deporting of surplus population to a new country, which is taken as the early wave of Indian immigrants to Southeast Asia before the Christian era. By the time of the arrival of Indian cultural influence, the great waves of pre-historic migrations of early human groups to Southeast Asia had ended.

The migrations had generally proceeded by the narrow valleys of the rivers starting from China and the borders of Tibet, drawn by the attraction of deltas and the sea. Another point to be noted is that, unlike other human migrations of later centuries across the World, the migrations of these pre-historic times were very slow and long-drawn-out movements of people, experiencing much admixture of cultures, sometimes with assimilation of conquerors and conquered. In due course of time, the older inhabitants adopt the language and customs of the immigrants. The same context may be applied to the Naga migrations which occurred over several centuries along with the movement of early primitive tribes of Southeast Asia. Thus, in the pre-historic times, for a period of thousands of years, a succession of different

human types followed one another down from continental Asia through mainland Southeast Asia and the Islands. The pre-historic racial groups that entered Southeast Asia were the Australoid who were the earliest and first human habitants of the region, the next group is identified as the Negritos, followed by the Melanesoid people, all three races were in Mesolithic stage. The stone tools, weapons and implements in the Mesolithic had made some advancement in quality, also notable is the fishing tackle and the dug-out canoe with paddles. Some of the Mesolithic stone tools and celts have been discovered in Vietnam, Thailand, Malaya, Sumatra and Philippines, known popularly as Bacsonian and Hoabhinian (Harrison,1966). The Log-drums found in almost every Naga Village till today, show indication of resemblance with the dug -out canoes, and it was probably the canoes which their ancestors must have used during the course of their early migrations. The Nagas even today dearly uses marine shells as ornaments, pointing to a bygone settlement near the sea (Alemchiba,1970)

An examination of the last great group of pre-historic peoples, the Indonesians or Austronesians, who came to Southeast, probably between 2500 and 1500 B.C makes a highly intriguing study due to the striking similarities with the culture of the Naga tribes. The descendants of these people presently make up the basic population of Malaya, Indonesia, Philippines, the Indo-Chinese peninsula and Southern China. Since the mass of the Southern Chinese belong to this Indonesian physical type with mongoloid admixture, it is very clear that the dispersal centre of the Indonesian people was in South-west China. The Neolithic age in Southeast Asia is considered to have begun with the arrival of the Indonesian people. The striking similarities that exist between the Indonesians and the Naga tribes helps in unravelling the layers of obscurity and assumptions that have surrounded the question of ethnic origin of the Naga tribes.

The Neolithic age signifies the period when man upgraded from hunting and food gathering to food cultivation, started domestication of animals and making of pottery. Brian Harrison's description of the Indonesian people helps in drawing a clear comparison between the Naga tribes and their ethnic cultural ties with the Indonesian stock of people in Southeast Asia. The arrival of the Indonesian people is known to coincide with the Neolithic age, yet they seem to have also engaged in

hunting, fishing and carrying out agricultural activities, which follows the same subsistence pattern followed by the early Naga village tribes. Rice and millet were crops that were widely cultivated, following shifting cultivation known as *Ladang* system and also permanent irrigated fields (or the *sawah* system). These same practices of cultivation, by cutting down the jungle and burning it and cultivating the field for one year or two years commonly known as *Jhum* cultivation was also carried out by the Nagas like Lotha, Ao, Sumi and all the Nagas residing in the Eastern Naga Hills, while the Naga tribes like the Angami, Chakhesang and other southern tribes practiced the more advanced techniques of irrigated terrace farming. The Indonesians used rice and millet for food and also for brewing wine; the same method was done by the Nagas, whose staple food is rice and millet and rice beer was a popular drink among the Nagas of every tribe. Further parallels are seen in the housing structures, the Indonesians lived in wooden houses raised above the ground by bamboo or wooden piles. This same type of housing architecture, with dwelling houses built on posts and piles was followed by many Naga tribes.

The Indonesians are known to have domesticated animals like buffalo and pig, made clothes from the bark of trees, they were animists, believing that a life-force or soul substance was contained in all natural objects and their plants growing crops. The life force of the rice-field was a goddess, the rice-mother and they carried out complex rituals and prohibitions to appease and preserve the life-force. Similarly, the Indonesians were head-hunters, cherishing the head where the soul is believed to reside. The agricultural life made possible a settled community life and the development of social custom and behaviour. The peasant village community became the basic social under a priest or priestess. Traditional, social and religious customs, various social regulations and conventions, privileges, penalties, rights and duties, agricultural rituals were handed down by word of mouth from generation to generation. One aspect of Indonesian community life is represented by megalithic or large stone monuments- they were tall stone menhirs or dolmens, stone pyramids and terraces, probably connected with ancestor worship or sacrificial ceremonies. Some of these monuments were carved with simple magical symbols such as circles or rosettes (Harrison,1966). Many of these cultures are still alive in Islands of Sumatra, Java, Bali etc. This Neolithic age in southeast Asia lasted from roughly 1500 to 300 B.C.

Therefore, the Naga Migrations might also have taken place around the same timeline though whether they had arrived in Northeast before the beginning of Christian era or not is not fully established. However, if it is true that the reference made in 'Geographia' by the Greek geographer Ptolemy, in about the year 150 A.D, about a wild people 'Nangalog' or naked people with indications of residing around the hills, this may be the first recorded reference to the naked Nagas. According to the Burma census Report, successive incursions of so-called Tibeto-Burman peoples came from a region in western China, between the sources of the Yangtsekiang and Hwang-ho rivers. The early home of the peoples of eastern Asia was in the upper reaches of the Hwang-ho or Yellow River of China, and that from this centre the Tibetans moved westward; the early tribes of Indo-China southward; and the Chinese, south-eastward. According to this view, the progenitors of the Karen probably formed a part of the southward migration (Alemchiba,1970). From the analysis of all these observations, it is amply clear that the Nagas came from the Mongolian stock who migrated from China before the Christian era, and that the migrations did not take place in one wave but continued in various groups for some centuries. The possibility of racial admixture in the course of these migration also cannot be ruled out and also influences of the races they came across.

### **Oral Traditions and Legends on Migrations**

Due to lack of written records, the ancient history of the Nagas and their origin still remains vague, but there exists a rich repertoire of oral history passed down orally from one generation to another. These oral narratives help contemporary scholars to reconstruct and preserve the varied cultural traditions and remote past history of the Nagas. The informations from oral sources, folklores, legends and traditions makes a strong suggestion that all the Naga tribes did not split up into different tribes only after reaching Naga Hills itself. Based on oral traditions, many Naga tribes trace their origin to *Kezakenoma*, a village in Chakhesang area near the Nagaland- Manipur border. The legend of Kezakenoma is generally accepted by most of the Naga tribes, such as, Angami, Chakhesang, Rengma, Sumi, Zeliang, Lotha, etc, other tribes also have their own versions and legends( Sanyu, 2016). A branch of the mongoloid race after taking the Patkai section must have reached Manipur area first after crossing Burma. This assumption can be drawn in the light of many Naga tribes of Manipur referring to *Makhel* as their original homeland. At the *Makhel Mao*

Village, a stone is found erected at a place from which it is held that the common ancestors had emerged, and Makhel is regarded as the centre from which migration took place ( Hodson, 1911). After entering Manipur, they might have settled around Makhel and some groups had left for Kezakhenoma. Here one finds the remnants of the legend of rice multiplying on a Sacred stone which was used for threshing or drying grain, indicating the fertility of the land around there. This sacred stone is seen in the form of a raised platform of stones on top of which is placed a dolmen. Not only the Tenyimia group, but the journey of many Naga tribes are linked to Makhel and then on to Kezakhenoma, which were both possibly the centres of migration , before the tribes scattered and continued the onward movement into the far distant directions into the Naga Hills. Colonial sources have recorded that among Naga tribes that emerged from Khezakenoma were Lotha, Rengma, Sumi, Zeliang, Mao, Maram and Angami (Mills, 1922;1937; Hutton, 1921; Bowers, 1950; Hodson,1911; Hutton,1921). Among these tribes, a further division of Nagas who branched out from Khezhakenoma are clubbed together as Tenyimia, which includes the six tribes of Angami, Chakhesang, Rengma, Mao, Maran and Zeliang; these tribes share common traditions, culture, attires and the men wear kilted skirts, and practices terrace cultivation.They consider the other Naga groups as Mezhamia, who represent the group that are classified by Jhum cultivation and scantily clothed or semi- nakedness ( Sanyu, 2016). Verrier Elwin has drawn a cultural line of classification by referring to the Naga tribes on the basis of the kilted and the non-kilted tribes(1969). This is an interesting reference and it also points to the fact that the non -kilted groups of Nagas follow the pattern of subsistence on ‘slash and burn’ shifting nomadic cultivation and they must have arrived at a much more earlier period than the kilted tribes who practiced the advanced, settled method of terrace cultivation. Another diverse trait is that the practice of tattoing was widely practiced among some of the non- kilted tribes while tattoing is not visible among the kilted groups of Nagas.

Though the historical account of how they precisely came to occupy their present settlements is not fully ascertained, from a close examination of all these oral history, it is believed that the Nagas may have entered the Naga Hills before the Christian era. The Nagas did not migrate in one massive wave but through a gradual and slow migration covering several centuries, moving in various groups. The oral traditions

also provide narratives of the routes of migration and settlement, and it points out that the Naga tribes moved in kinship groups and some tribes migrated at different waves taking different routes. Each tribe has its own legends that provide insights on the course of their migrations and origin. The classification of Naga languages and dialects as belonging to the Tibeto- Burman group has also greatly helped in opening up new avenues of investigation for researchers and scholars in the quest of Naga origins. It was G.A Grierson who traced the origin of the Nagas to that of the Tibeto- Burman on the basis of language (Grierson, 1903). The Burma- group of Tibeto- mongoloids include the Naga, Kuki -Chin, who came down to Burma and turned towards westwards, and the Kachins, Singphos, and the Lolos who have remained in Burma.

The legends of most of the Burma groups have narrations indicating association with the Neolithic age. Many of them also refer to caves or Earth-holes, narrating that their ancestors came out of the Earth, suggesting their habitation in caves. Admixture of the earthborn hordes occurs in the folklore of many Naga Tribes. The Angami legend speaks about their descent from two brothers or cousins, who came out of the Earth. The elder brother led the way through the jungle, cutting down plantain trees to clear the path for the other members of the group to follow. Soon the banana trees had regrown very quickly and as a result the tribesmen in the rear group lost track of their earlier kin and proceeded towards another direction. It is possible that the early migrants have followed the course of the Chindwin river which flows southwards towards Manipur where it meets a tributary flowing down from Tammu, a village in the present Manipur- Myanmar border( Sanyu, 2016). It is probable that different groups might have taken different directions from this intersection, some heading southwards, others settling down in the confluence or followed northwards through Manipur and onward to Nagaland. The theory of following the Chindwin river course is supported by an Angami legend of crossing ‘ big waters; before arriving at their present homeland (*Ibid.*,)

Some Lotha and Rengma oral narratives claim that they emerged from the earth-hole, situated somewhere in the East. The Tangkhuls also claim the earth-hole tradition of emerging from Miurlung earth hole at Hundung and the legend of Southern Tangkhuls claim that the ancestors came out of the earthhole somewhere

beyond the Ningthi river. The Ao tradition claim that their ancestors emerged out of the earth from six stones called Lungterok, sometimes called Ungterok. The ancestral site is located at the pre-historic Neolithic site Chongliyimti, lying on top of the spur on the right bank of the Dikhu, just opposite Mokongtsu, presently it falls in Sangtam area (Mills,1926) The six stones represent the source of the Pongener, Longkumer and Jamir Clans. The Mongsen group of the Ao tribe believe that their ancestors came out of the earth or cave, and settled at Kubok, a site running down from Mokongtsu towards the Dikhu. The Changki group of the Ao tribe are believed to have arrived in the Ao region before the dispersion of the Chongli- Mongsen group. J.P Mills assumes that the Aos arrived in three separate waves in which Mongsen and Chongli are later arrivals, and places the Changki as the earliest.

Like other western Nagas, the Sumis point to the south as the direction from which they came. Their folk-tales relate to the Kezhakenoma stone common to Lotha and Angami. However, they do not trace their origin from Mao but point to Tukah mountain ( Japvo) as the direction from where their ancestors came and the Sumi Villages spread from a village named Swema or Sumi village located near Kezabama. There are several versions of their migration and settlements. A folktale speaks about a great battle with the Angamis near Swema, after which the Sumis retreated westwards until they reached Zubza river(Hutton,1921). It is generally held that the Sumi tribe originally inhabited the areas occupied by the Tengima, Chekrama and Kezama Angamis and migrated north under the pressure of Angamis coming from the southern side of the Barail. Whatever their origin, it is quite clear that they first entered the present Sumi territory by the Doyang valley route. It appears that the invading Sumis went on to occupy areas of the Rengma, Sangtam and Ao villages, this process of migration and expelling the earlier settlers was going on till the time of the annexation of the Ao country by the British Government ( *Ibid.*,)

The Sangtams also came from the South along the Tizu river and in the course of their wanderings they might have been ancient companions of the Aos or lived in close proximity with the Aos. The Chakhesang is composed of three smaller tribes – *Chakri*, *Khezha* and *Sangtam*.The Chakri are settled next to the Khezha to the west, while third tribe, Sangtam is the smallest and call themselves as Puchori, which

again comprises of three tribes- *Pu, Cho, Ri*. Puchory is now one of the recognised tribe of Nagaland. The Zeliangs consisting of Zeme and Liangmai have various versions of their migrations. They say that they came through the Japfu Mountain near Mao country. The Zeliang tribe are referred to as Kacha Nagas in many of the colonial historical accounts which Hutton has mentioned that it is derived from the Hindustani word, *Kacha* (Hutton, 1921). According to the Zeliang version of this derivation, when a British officer asked the name of their tribe, an Angami interpreter is said to have stated that they were all 'Ketsa' (ketsa meaning forest in Angami) dwelling inhabitants; their village settlements being in thickly wooded deep forest (Sanyu). The local word was possibly understood and interpreted as 'kacha' by the early Britishers and the Zeliang tribe came to be known as the 'Kacha Nagas' in all the British accounts.

The Yimchungru tradition cites their emergence at Moru, in the East. Both the Yimchungru and the Khiamniungan formed another wave of immigrants who came to their present home from Burma by trekking directly westward. The Changs are believed to have migrated along with the Sangtams. The Phom legends mentions that at one time they stayed together with the Sangtams. It is assumed that they entered directly from the east forming a different wave and some of them settled as far as the Aoarea in the west. The Konyaks, unlike other Naga tribes had entered their present areas from north-east of the Naga Hills from Burma, and their kinsmen are found settled in the adjacent tracts of Burma and Arunachal Pradesh. What is worth noting is that, these men already had knowledge of the use of metal as seen in their weapons and tools. The legends of some tribes show that the people coming out of caves used spears and arrows and they had blacksmiths (Shimmi, 1988). Johnstone states that the Nagas were skillful iron-workers, producing sturdy spears. Their women weave substantial and pretty coloured cloths, and every man knows enough of rough carpentering to enable him to build his house, and made use of pestles and mortars for husking rice. They made pottery without the potters wheel (1896). The Konyaks had already learnt the art of gun making and gun-powder when the British arrived in the Naga Hills.

To sum up, in the search for Naga origins and migrations, Dr W.C Smith has classified Nagas as culturally similar to Indonesians by identifying and comparing

the cultural traits and traditions of several ethnic groups like the Dayaks and kayaks of Borneo, Igorots and Ifugao of Philippines, Battak of Sumatra and certain groups of Formosa (Smith, 2002). Taking all these aspects into consideration, we may quote Alemchiba, “that the original stock starting from the centre of dispersion in China had reached the Irrawady and Chindwin rivers, bifurcated in different directions, ultimately leading to Tibet, Assam, the hill ranges between Assam and Burma. Another wave came from the Southeast Asian islands, taking a north westerly direction and entered the Naga Hills using Burma as a corridor (1970).

The Naga language classified as belonging to the Tibeto-Burman family has also opened up a wide range of scope to study and analyse their close racial similarities and cultural parallels with some ethnic groups in Southeast Asia. These ethnic connections are widely observed with inhabitants of the Indonesian archipelago, Malaya, Philippines, Formosa and Oceania. Sir George Grierson’s contention that the Nagas, a Tibeto- Burman language group had come with the second wave of migration from Northwestern China between the upper waters of the Yangtse- kiang and the Hwang-Ho Rivers offers a logical proposition on the origin of the Naga Migrations. Linguistically, the Sino- Tibetan languages have two branches, viz., Tibeto Burman and Siamese- Chinese. The Naga languages and dialects which belong to the Tibeto- Burman group might have probably dispersed from an area, somewhere in the province of Sikiang in China from where they set out to spread towards the east and south. From this centre of dispersion, some of the Tibeto- Burman tribes took up the trek along the Brahmaputra River west-wards. The Assam- Burma groups of the Tibeto -Burmans include the Nagas and Bodos, who came down to Burma and entered Assam and Brahmaputra valley in fairly early times (*Ibid.*,)

The close racial and cultural similarities of the Nagas with some of the early ethnic groups of Southeast Asia like the Dayak and Igorot and other primitive tribes brings to light an almost identical culture that exists amongst them. With the Dayaks of Borneo, the resemblance lies in their common head-hunting practices, method of Jhum cultivation, practice of tattooing on feet, thighs, chest and temple, use of double-cylinder forge and using loin loom identical to the ones used by Nagas, hexagonal shield, aversion to cow milk by Nagas as well as these groups. From

among these ethnic groups of Southeast Asia, one tribe which seems to exhibit exceedingly close ethnic connections with the Nagas and the Dayak are the Bontoc Igorot of the Philippines, from an array of practices and customs like head hunting, Bachelors House where young boys from three to four years and all unmarried men sleep and is a taboo for women to enter, tattooing is quite common, the blacksmiths use of double-cylindrical vertical forge, exchange of *palay* or unthreshed rice as medium of barter exchange which is a common practice of the Ao Nagas. The similarities extend into political organization, the Igorot have no conception of tribe or Nation but it was a very close kinship group, thoroughly democratic and controlled by elders, which is almost identical with the social and political affairs in the Ao Naga villages. The Ifugao, the Kalinga, the Illangao or Ibalao, all belong to the Igorot group and portray the same cultural traits with very few differences in their culture, for example, all the other groups build their houses on raised posts or piles several feet from the ground, while the the Bontoc Igorot do not build houses on posts. The Bontoc Igorot did not practise platform burial but place the corpses in hewn coffins and bury them. The Ifugao sometimes bury the dead in small houses specially constructed for the purpose. Some of the Igorotes followed the practice of drying the dead bodies over a fire which resembles the smoking of the dead by the Ao Nagas.

The Bontoc Igorot followed an elaborate system of terracing the hillsides of Luzon where rice was grown through irrigation, such type of agriculture is still found today in Luzon, Java, Formosa, Japan and in Burma which are a survival of a very early culture. The Angami Nagas practice this kind of terrace-cultivation which is almost identical to the Igorot (*Ibid.*) Another marker that supports these connections is the Nagas' extensive use of cowrie shells in all their ornaments and traditional attires. This value and attachment to marine shells indicate their bygone settlement near the Sea. The log drums of the Nagas found in every Naga village could be probably linked to the canoes that their ancestors might have used during the course of their migrations. Such canoes are found to have been widely used in the course of migrations by different ethnic racial groups entering the Philippines in the pre-historic times (Hall, 1981). On these outstanding cultural similarities that exists among the Dayaks, the Igorot and the Nagas, Dr W.C Smith, the American christian missionary and sociologist agrees in his '*Ao Naga Tribes of Assam*', that "these

groups belong to the same ethnic group, and as they migrated from their primeval home, they carried these cultural elements bodily with them (2002).

To deal with the origin of the Nagas and their early course of migrations is not a very simple investigation as the Nagas are composed of several tribes and each tribe has oral traditions of their origins. But in recent times broad researches are ongoing by scholars from various disciplines. However, in the present academic discourse, it might be concluded that they had travelled in successive waves of migration from the centre of dispersion in the Great East through the South China sea and while some branches of the kinship group had moved to the Islands of Southeast Asia through the mainland and the Indonesian archipelago, the Naga ancestors had also taken different routes of migration and entered the Naga Hills from the Burma corridors in successive waves of migration.

### **Theoretical framework**

Since the topic of this research work necessitates a strong theoretical framework, that accommodates both the structural transformations induced by modernization and the subjective experiences of the Naga people, an attempt is being made here to find a suitable academic approach to manoeuvre and integrate this study on the process of Evolution of Modern Naga Society in the lines of studies that are being undertaken globally. A brief discourse on the theories of Modernization will lead us to find some of the most appropriate characteristics of modernization which will help arrive at a balanced historical perspective of the forces of transition in the Naga Society.

Modernization and modernity are key concepts in history and the social sciences, from their origin in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and throughout the late twentieth century, especially after the World War II. Modernization is the process of transformation from traditional to pre-modern to modern societies, often characterized by urbanization, industrialization, education and technological advancement. The transformations that are brought about on account of modernization carries the meaning of a movements away from the traditional pattern. Originating from the ideas of the German sociologist Max Weber, and developed by the Harvard sociologist Talcott Parsons, Modernization theory was a dominant paradigm in the social sciences and much of this interest in modernization was

prompted by the decline of the old colonial Empires. Modernization theory is used to explain the process of social evolution and transformation that have occurred within a society as it transitions from a pre-modern or traditional to a modern one. The theory tries to identify the social variables that contribute to social progress and development of societies.

Modernization maintains that traditional societies will develop as they adopt more modern practices. Supposedly, instead of being dominated by tradition, the societies undergoing the process of modernization typically allow their traditional religious beliefs and cultural traits to become less dominant as modernization sets in. Historians link modernization to urbanization and Industrialization and the spread of education, taking strong cognisance from the European countries where modernization is directly linked to the tremendous transformations that ensued from the phenomenal urban growth. Focussing specifically on a type of modernization thought to have originated in Europe from the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, which brought technological achievements into a new epoch. Thus, in Europe with the diffusion of Industrialization from England to other parts of the European Continent, it was possible by 1914 to divide Europe into two regions- industrial or 'black' and the other agricultural or 'green', reflective of the States whose economy were still based on traditional farming and the new powerful industrialised modern States of Europe and also America (Mathias, 1978: Postan, 2013). Modern scholars have critiqued the earlier classical expositions of Modernization theories as a purely Euro-centric approach.

Modernization theory provides a broad framework for understanding the transition of Naga Society from its predominantly traditional, kinship-based structure to a more complex and stratified modern society. This theory posits that societies progress through various stages of development driven by technological advancements, institutional reforms and cultural shifts (Walt W. Rostow, 1960); (Samuel P. Huntington, 1963). In Naga society, the dawn of modernization does not coincide with technological advancements as it has occurred in many modern societies, as that of, in Europe and America, whereas, the introduction of colonial administration, Christianity, western education and urbanization during and after British colonial rule marked the landmark junctures in the transformation of Naga society. The

adoption of modern political Institutions, formal Education systems and the new market-based economies exemplifies how external innovations gradually permeated Naga Society, setting it on the path of modernization (Lerner, 1958) ;(Rostow. 1960)

However, Modernization in the Naga context did not follow the uniform path. Scholars like Harold C. Conklin (1957), B K. Roy Burman (1993) have noted that tribal societies often adopt selective aspects of modernity while retaining core elements of traditional practices. This dynamic process of selective adoption and adaptation is particularly evident in the modern Naga society, which continued to retain several features of their pre-modern traditional systems alongside the changes effected by modernization. Their Tribal and village councils, customary Laws, various traditional practices and customs continued to coexist alongside modern western cultural adaptations and governance Institutions. The theory clears the cloud over how new external forces and ideological innovations in the form of contact with the western World through colonial occupation and the christian missionaries' activities has acted as a catalyst for societal change though it has been done without entirely dismantling traditional social structures.

Complementing the structural lens of modernization theory in understanding the course of Modern Naga society, a touch of subaltern interpretations (Ranajit Guha 1982; Partha Chatterjee, 1986) helps in producing a counterpoint by their emphasis on the agency of marginalised communities in shaping their own historical narratives. The Nagas, as an ethnic indigenous community, were historically positioned on the periphery of colonial and post- colonial state structures, when they were experiencing modernization not merely as passive recipients but as active participants. This approach highlights the way in which the Naga people negotiated, resisted and reinterpreted external influences. (Guha, 1982) Thus, even though the Nagas adopted Christianity, adoption of the new faith did not, for example, completely erase indigenous practices and beliefs but led to syncretic forms of belief systems where elements of traditional customs and even some of the superstitious beliefs continued to prevail (Horam,1988).

Modernization has brought both opportunities as well as challenges to Naga Society. Under a new political administration, the Naga tribes were brought out of their

centuries-old isolated existence, made possible due to decline and cessation of warfare and hostilities among villages and tribes, through stringent laws under colonial rule. The next important step in the process of modernization was education and the laying down of infrastructure and improved technology like roads and bridges for transport and communication, which are the basic pre-requisites for the improvement of living standards in a modernised society. With all these socio-economic and political changes, it has also posed challenges to traditional ways of life and led to cultural shifts and socio-political tensions that swept across the Naga society by the new socio-economic divides and growth of modern principles of political awareness in the twentieth Century. The Modernization process has significant implications for tribal societies, both positive and negative. On one hand, it has brought in improvements in education, healthcare and economic opportunities. On the other hand, it can lead to cultural erosion and social disintegration. Moreover, rapid pace of modernization often creates generational divide, with younger members embracing modern values while older members cling to tradition. Modernization can become a tool for preserving, rather than erasing the unique identities of tribal societies. In the evolution of modern Naga society, it was the Christian missionaries who played the role of transformation in the social and economic sphere by empowering the tribal people through education and spiritual awakening. The Colonial government introduced centralized governance, monetized economy and infrastructure such as roads and administrative centers. Simultaneously, Christian missionaries, supported by the colonial regime, played a pivotal role in introducing western education and Christian ideals into Naga identity. The period also saw the gradual erosion of animistic practices and the decline of traditional culture and practices of the Nagas. The historical evolution of modernization in Naga Society reflects a dynamic interplay between tradition and modernity. While western influences have significantly shaped this process, the resilience of Naga cultural identity remains evident. Understanding this history offers valuable insights into the broader challenges faced by the Nagas today as a community navigating modernization in the context of globalization and the quest for its identity. Therefore, an integrated approach would aid in restoring the centrality to the Naga people in the narrative of its modernization process. To ensure sustainable and inclusive modernization, it is essential to adopt an approach that respects and preserves the tribal traditions and helps empower the communities.

Since in the Evolution of Modern Naga Society, by not only highlighting external forces but reflecting the crucial role of indigenous agencies in determining the course of social transformation will make the research work a more inclusive and decolonized narrative, allowing voices of those that has been traditionally sidelined and relegated to the margins .

### **Review of literature**

The existing literature on Naga History generally consists of the contributions of the British administrator- historians, anthropologists and the works of Christian missionaries to the Naga Hills. Most of these works are centred on British administrative policies, measures and Government reports. The general social life and culture of the Naga tribes can be gleaned from the accounts and narrations of the Christian missionaries. Among the early written records, an iconic anthology can be seen in the works of Verrier Elwin, who compiled together a collection of administrative reports, tour diaries and ethnographic descriptions on Naga tribes in *The Nagas in the Nineteenth Century*, first published in 1969 is an important reference on the Naga colonial history. Alexander Mackenzie' s *Northeast Frontier of India* is a voluminous book that contains detailed official reports and letters, it gives a descriptive background on all the various Naga Tribes settled across Northeast India and detailed accounts of British annexations of Northeast and gives clear records on the laying of boundaries between Naga hills and Manipur and Naga Hills and Assam. With the expansion of British colonial administration into the deeper interiors of the Naga Hills, there emerged intense interest and attention on the customs and culture of the Nagas by the British officers who took on the role of administrator- anthropologists. J.H Hutton published the *Angami- Nagas* where he not only provides almost every aspect of the Angamis from their domestic life, laws and customs, religion, language and folklore; and *Sema – Nagas*, Hutton mentions the same details on the Sema or Sumi as he has done on the Angamis. This early monographic works was followed by J.P Mills publications *The Ao- Nagas*, the *Lotha- Nagas*, *The Rengma- Nagas*. J.P Mills description on the various Naga tribes whom he followed closely as subjects of his extensive research will remain priceless, he recorded all details of their domestic life, tattooing, trade, currency of Aos, the religion and customs of all the tribes under his scope of study. Later, other works followed on the Nagas, *The Ao Nagas* by W.C Smith (1925) is one of the earliest

works on the Ao Naga tribe by an American missionary; R.B. Pemberton, Report on the Eastern Frontier of British India, 1835 is a comprehensive work which provides a detailed account of the Northeastern Frontier region of British India; History of the Frontier Areas Bordering on Assam from 1883-1941 by Sir Robert Reid (1942); The Naked Nagas (Furer Haimendorf, 1939), The Naga tribes of Manipur (Hodson, 1911), Manipur and the Naga Hills (Johnstone, 1896), and Naga Path written by Ursula Graham Bower (1952). There is no doubt that the colonial writings have tremendously enriched the knowledge and understanding of the Naga society and the world of the Nagas was made known to the intellectual circles of the west, through the presentations and discussions of the ethnographic reports on Nagas in the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland.

After the withdrawal of the British rule from the Naga Hills in 1947, there was not much literary scholarship on the Nagas. In the post-colonial period, there emerged few Naga indigenous scholars who brought out publications on the Nagas, including the outstanding work of M. Alemchiba (1970), A Brief Historical account of Nagaland; H. Bareh (1970), Nagaland District Gazetteers; Tajenyuba Ao's Ao Naga customary Laws (1980); Tajenyuba Ao (1993), British occupation of Naga Country. The works of both Tajenyuba and Alemchiba are outstanding contributions which has greatly enriched in preserving historical landmark events in Naga History. Other pioneers include P.T Philip (1976), The Growth of Baptist Churches in Nagaland; B. B Ghosh (1981), Tuensang District Gazetteer; M. Horam (1988) Nagas old ways New trends; Y.L Roland Shimmi, (1988), Comparative History of the Nagas; Bendangangshi (1993) Glimpses of Naga History, are all local authors.

After a considerably long void, several contemporary writers have contributed a number of publications on Nagas, Kaka. D. Iralu (2000), Nagaland and India: The Blood and the Tears; S.K Barbujari(2003), The Nagas, a documentary study ; Hokishe Sema, (1986), Emergence of Nagaland ; Piketo Sema (1992) British policy and Administration; Nagaland Baptist Churches Council (1997), From Darkness to Light; Verrier Elwin,(1997), Nagaland; A. Bendangyabang Ao( 1998), History of Christianity in Nagaland- A source Material; Imo Lanutemjen Aier (2006), Contemporary Naga Social Formations and Ethnic Identity; Visier Sanyu,( 2016) A History of Nagas and Nagaland;S.C Jamir (2017), A Naga's Quest for Fulfillment;

Charles Chasie,(2017),The Naga Memorandum To The Simon Commission ; Charles Chasie (2017),The Road to Kohima.

There have also emerged some foreign scholars who have taken keen research interest on the Nagas and brought out some recent publications adding to the existing scholarship, of which mention may be made of Julian Jacobs The Nagas , Jonathan Glancey (2011), Nagaland A Journey to India's Forgotten Frontier; Jelle J P Wouters & Michael Heneise ed., (2017), Nagas in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century; Jelle JP Wouters, (2018), In the Shadows of Naga Insurgency.

### **Significance of the study**

- The study is dealt from a historical approach of tracing the evolution of Naga society across different periods from Pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial eras. This method allows for a chronological understanding of how social structures, political institutions and cultural practices have changed and evolved in response to external and internal forces.
- To provide a heightened discourse taking into consideration numerous views on the basis of records enumerated by early colonial historians, official government reports, the views of local intellectuals and different scholars on the role and impact of the British colonial rule, the Christian missionaries and the spread of western education, as external agencies contributing to the transformation of the Naga Society within a specific period of time.
- By examining the internal dynamics of the Naga communities alongside external influences, the study undertakes a critical and detailed understanding of the processes involved, bridging gaps in existing scholarship and highlighting invaluable accounts from indigenous natives' experiences.
- This research will provide an understanding of how past historical events have shaped the Naga Identity with focus on the resilience of the Nagas in preserving their cultural heritage. Further, the study shows how Nagas have not passively assimilated external influences but have redefined their cultural identity in response to the changing socio-political realities.
- This study will be useful for upcoming researchers on Naga History in general, and create avenues for further exploration. It is hoped that it will provide

valuable contribution to historical scholarship on Naga History in particular and Northeast in general, since all the states of Northeast India have a shared history from the ancient, remote past as well as, under the British colonial rule. Therefore, this study on the Nagas will be an added relevance to the historiography of Northeast India as well by exploring the socio- cultural and political history of one of the earliest ethnic communities in this region.

- The research will highlight how Tribal indigenous societies have negotiated modernity without completely severing ties with their traditional roots. While modernization has often been viewed as a process of replacing traditional structures with modern institutions, such a linear approach which is applied to industrial societies of the World does not seem to be the case with the Naga Society. While Christianity and western education were widely embraced, many indigenous customs such as traditional governance system, customary laws and social norms associated with tradition continued to thrive alongside modern Institutions. This dynamic process reveals the complexity of modernization in Naga society, where tradition and modernity often co-existed rather than being fully replaced by the other.
- The study, therefore seeks to transcend the binary of tradition versus modernity by demonstrating that modernization in Naga society unfolded as a process of negotiated change, where indigenous agency played a crucial role in determining the course of social transformation. This approach helps in understanding how Naga society evolved and also contributes to a more inclusive historical narrative that gives space to the voices of those traditionally relegated to the margins of historical discourse. It allows the study to examine both the structural forces of modernization and the subjective experiences of the indigenous Naga tribes.

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### **Hypothesis**

The study hypothesizes that the Evolution of Modern Naga Society was significantly shaped by colonial influence, which brought the socio- political transformations. The hypothesis is structured around the following key arguments:

1. The earlier hypothesis which was underlined in the synopsis of this research work on the premise that British Colonial rule altered and disrupted the traditional systems of Naga traditional governance by introducing a centralized political administration has been proved to be not fully substantial and has been

modified by the new findings on the matter. The introduction of British administration weakened the autonomous and village- centric political structures that had governed the Naga tribes for centuries.

2. The Colonial government facilitated the entry of Christian missionaries, who played a dual role of evangelization and introduction of western education replacing indigenous knowledge. This shift led to the complete Social and Economic changes and Political upheavals that followed in Naga society.

### **Methodology**

1. This study adopts a historical research methodology combining qualitative and interpretative approaches to analyse and interpret the historical events and the process of evolution of Modern Naga society. The work has incorporated an interdisciplinary approach from other branches of social sciences as well while striving to contextualize a proper and complete historical picture and chronology of events. The research draws on both primary and secondary sources to construct a comprehensive historical perspective.
2. The study employs descriptive and analytical historical approach, which involves examining past events, socio- political structures, and cultural transformations to understand their impact in contemporary times. The research also integrates subaltern elements to highlight indigenous voices and lived experiences to ensure a decolonized approach to the modern Naga History. The study follows a thematic and comparative framework focussing on –Colonial and post-colonial transformations, evaluating the role of British administration, Christian missionaries and Indian State politics in the growth and development of modern Naga society. Further taking assessment of the role of external influences, viz., modernization/ westernization on various aspects of Naga society. The highlight of the work will be the focus on indigenous perspectives and identifying persisting traditional and evolving aspects of Naga society in present times.
3. The research work relies on both primary and secondary sources to construct a comprehensive historical perspective:

### **Primary Sources**

- Archival records including British colonial reports, administrative documents, and proceedings of official records.
- Missionary accounts and church records detailing early mission activities, census data.
- Oral narratives of the Naga Tribes, collection of oral histories and interview of Naga elders, community leaders and intellectuals to capture indigenous perspectives.

### **Secondary sources:**

- Published books, journal articles and research papers relevant for the research study.
- Ethnographic studies and monographs and studies on Naga social structures and customs. Analysing oral narratives of the Naga Tribes, collecting of oral histories and interview of community elders and intellectuals.
- Field work and ethnographic observations
- Visit of Naga villages to document traditional socio- cultural practices and their transformations over time.
- Examining similarities and differences between Naga society and Southeast Asia to trace the routes of migration and cultural exchange patterns. Observations by comparative analysis of oral traditions and narratives among the Naga tribes too.

### **Limitations:**

While the study is focussed towards a general view of Naga society's evolution, a few limitations may be pointed out as follows –

- Oral histories are valuable but they can be subject to memory lapses and subjective interpretations.
- Some of the colonial era records and ethnographic studies are not be publicly accessible.
- The socio- political dynamics within contemporary Naga society is ongoing, making definitive conclusions challenging.

**Chapterization**

Chapter 1 Introduction

Chapter 2 Nagas and British Colonialism : Resistance and Adaptation

Chapter 3 Agents of Change: Christianity and Western Education

Chapter 4 Isolation to Engagement: The Naga experience  
between the Wars

Chapter 5 Modernization and Urban growth

Chapter 6 Conclusion

## CHAPTER – 2

### **Nagas and British Colonialism: Resistance and Adaptation**

The beginning of the nineteenth century marks the period of change and transformation among the Nagas. It was a crucial period of changing political alignments and social conditions in the North Eastern region. The Ahoms had lost their supremacy over the Assam valley, opening the way for the Burmese imperialistic tendencies. The Burmese invaders marched through the Patkai range to the Assam valley receiving help from tribes of Arunachal like the Singpho and Khampti in Tirap and Lohit. The British in India at that time were busy in the Napoleonic wars in Europe and did not pay attention to the Northeastern Frontier and the expansionist endeavours of Burmese. The acquisition of the Diwani of Bengal in 1765 brought the English East India Company into direct contact with the Ahom kingdom when Robert Clive, the Governor of Bengal set up a Society of Trade and it was given monopoly of trade in Assam on some trade items like salt, betel nut and tobacco (Goswami, 2012). In the initial years of contact, the importance of Assam was for its strategic location, as it shared border with Tibet and Burma. Trade with Tibet was of high priority since the East India Company needed the gold from Tibet for its growing China trade and finding an alternative route to Tibet through Assam was an urgent prospect (*Ibid.*)

The signing of the Treaty of Yandabo on 24<sup>th</sup> February, 1826 brought to an end the First Anglo- Burmese war (1824-26) laying the foundation of the British colonial foothold in the Northeast marking the emergence of a new socio- political scene in the region. It was a very important landmark in the history of Assam as it witnessed the final collapse of the Ahom monarchy and marked the entry of the British who availed the opportunity to fill in the political void in the region. Following the conclusion of the Treaty, the Burmese king of Ava renounced his claims on Assam and the contiguous states of Cachar and Jaintia, paving the way for the English East India Company to emerge as the *defacto* ruler of Assam. Prior to the British occupation and annexation, Assam had been under the Ahom kings for nearly six centuries. The Ahoms had entered the region through the Patkai range and under their leader Sukapha had established a kingdom around Sibsagar (which is now

known as Sivasagar). By the end of the seventeenth century, the Ahoms emerged as the unchallenged masters of the entire Brahmaputra valley with many tributary chiefs and princes owing allegiance to them. The Moran and Barahi tribes were the earliest tribes subdued under their authority, followed in the later centuries by bringing under their control the powerful Chutiyas and the Kacharis by 1536, emerging as the supreme power (*Ibid.*) The acquisition of the Diwani of Bengal in 1765 brought the English East India company into direct contact with the Ahom kingdom. In 1765, a Society of Trade set up by Robert Clive, Governor of Bengal was granted monopoly of trade in salt, betel nut and tobacco and allowed to carry on trade from Bengal to Assam. Initially the importance of Assam was for its strategic location sharing borders with Tibet and Burma (Bhuyan, 1949)

The apprehensions of renewed Burmese invasion loomed large and the British decided to stay in the region initially for strategic considerations and for the security of the frontier. The annexation of lower Assam by the British in 1828 provided a firm foothold that enabled them to extend their suzerainty in the region. Within a decade, the entire Brahmaputra Valley and the neighbouring principalities of Cachar and Jaintia and the Khasi hills were subdued. Next followed the control of the routes to Bhutan, Tibet, China and Burma. The Ahom king Purandar Singh was installed as Raja of Upper Assam in April 1833 by concluding the Treaty of Gauhati, recognising him as the ruler of Jorhat region, while the rest were directly annexed by the British (*Ibid.*) R.B Pemberton in his *Report on the Eastern Frontier of India*, 1835 had given out details of the commercial and military routes that connected Bengal with Bhutan, Tibet, Sikkim, China and Burma through Northeast India. Jenkins, the Agent to the Governor-General cited, "There is every prospect of bringing all the races of hillmen bordering on this province under the same control as our Assamese subjects and at no distant period of opening out through them, a direct route with the Tibetan and Chinese province from which we are divided by narrow ranges of hills" Ignited with high expectations, the company embarked on this determined venture of infiltration into a region that had remained in isolation from the rest of the Country for centuries. By the end of nineteenth century, the Naga Hills, the Garo Hills and the Lushai Hills and adjoining areas were all brought under British control. The British concentrated on consolidating their position in lower Assam, which they did by 1828. They set up their headquarters first at Rangpur and

later shifted to Jorhat in 1838 when the English annexed upper Assam from Purandar Singh on the plea of political instability and default in revenue payment. The British East India company now started to expand their holdings in upper Assam, particularly their tea gardens. Hence, expanding and safeguarding their investments was a matter of topmost concern. Most of the inhabitants had settled along the fertile banks of the Brahmaputra or on the banks of its tributaries. Beyond these alluvial plains lay the inhospitable and impenetrable jungles (M'Cosh, 1837). These forests in the foothills were easily accessible to the Nagas as the lands belonged to them (Hokishe, 1986). Thus, the British came into contact with the Nagas inhabiting the Hills surrounding their commercial undertakings in the plains. In order to safeguard their interest in these areas, the Britishers were forced to take serious note of the activities of the Naga tribes, who had not been conquered or subjected to any kind of control, either by native or by any outside powers. The Ahom rulers had no intention of conquering the Naga Hills and they never regarded the Nagas as a whole as their subjects. When there were raids by the Nagas, the Ahom kings punished them by sending expeditions. Few border villages recognised the supremacy of the Ahom kings temporarily but it was never in the form of ruler and ruled. The relations were mainly for trade purposes, the Nagas were allowed to trade in the plains and in turn they had to refrain from committing outrages in the plains ( Alemchiba, 1970). In this respect John Butler has commented in A sketch of Assam, "Under the ancient Assam Government, some of the tribes may have been more dependant upon the government than they are now, but the Naga territory was never considered an integral portion of the sovereignty of Assam"(1847). To quote Edward Gait," the hilly tract inhabited by the various tribes known to us collectively as Nagas had never been subjugated by the Ahoms, and it was no part of the British policy to absorb it" (1963).

### **Nagas Resistance to early Colonial Intrusion in the Naga Hills (1832-1838)**

The first British intrusion to the Naga Hills took place in January 1832, when a British survey party led by Captain Francis Jenkins and Lieutenant Robert Pemberton with a party of 700 soldiers and 800 coolies or porters carrying baggages and provisions marched from Manipur to Assam. This crucial undertaking was to survey the strategic hills in order to find the shortest road communications from Manipur to Assam. The route taken was through *Sengmae*, *Myung khang*, *Mooram*

*khoohoo, Mohee Long, Yang, Papoolongmai, Tiriamah, Sumooguding, Dhunseree river, Mohong Dejoa, and Ramsah*, which latter place they reached about the 23<sup>rd</sup> January, 1832(Elwin, ed.,1969). Marching through Angami and Zeliang territory, their goal was to establish a direct line of communication between Manipur and Assam. However, all along the way the Naga tribesmen attacked the British troops and they had to fight their way through out the whole kacha and Angami Naga country. The party suffered much from want of provisions, and marched the whole day through heavy dark forest till they arrived at Dejoa, where their wants were supplied. They had undergone heavy opposition and attack from *Yang* to *Popoloongmai* by the Angami Nagas who had then no idea of the devastating effects of fire arms carried by their intruders. Rolling down stones from summits of hills, throwing spears and yelling war cries to intimidate and obstruct the advance of the force. The village of Papoolongmai consisting of 300 or 400 houses was occupied by the troops and repeated firing was the village was burnt, there was loss of some lives and several were wounded (Mofatt Mills Report, 1854) Having never before encountered such a foe armed with modern fire-arms the Nagas put up a stiff resistance against the British troops at every place they passed through.

In the winter of 1833, Raja Gambhir Singh of Manipur, accompanied by the Manipur Levy under Lieutenant Gordon conducted the second expedition into the Angami Naga Hills by a route twenty-five miles east of Jenkins' track. They had to fight almost every step of their march ahead. The Nagas had formed a powerful coalition to resist them and it was due to the use of fire-arms that they managed to be pass through to Assam. Facts came to light that Gambhir Singh had the plan of permanent conquest of the Naga Hills. The British Government felt uneasy over the prospect of having an ambitious Manipuri neighbour which could be dangerous for their Vassal ruler Purander Singh in upper Assam. Therefore, he was forbidden to come down to the plains of Assam. In 1833-34, when reporting on the North-East Frontier with Pemberton, Captain Jenkins proposed to give up to Manipur all the hills between the Doyang and the Dhansiri. They did not receive formal approval, yet it was generally understood that Manipur exercised some authority over the southern portion of the Naga Hills. In 1835, the forest between the Doyang and the Dhansiri was declared as the boundary between Manipur and Assam (Political proceedings,11<sup>th</sup> February,1835, No-90).

From 1835, the Nagas were constantly carrying out raids and exactions on the villages of north Cachar. The British called upon the Kachari Chief Tularam Senapati and the Raja of Manipur to adopt measures for controlling the hostile Nagas as both the powers held some jurisdiction over some portions of the hills. These hill men were not subjected to any kind of control either by organised native authorities or by any outside power. Unable to control the occurrence of the frequent Naga raids in Cachar and Manipur frontiers, Tularam openly stated his inability to shoulder the responsibility of checking the Naga raids. As for the Manipuris, their action was more barbarous and they meted out harassment on the Nagas, as a result of which it only aggravated the situation and brought down the Nagas upon the border villages. Since the Manipuri troops employed to control the hills got no pay and had to live on the plunder of the Naga Villages they occupied, it only managed to exasperate the tribes. The commissioner of Assam, Jenkins who knew of the real position of the Manipuris in the hills, urged the Government on the impropriety of encouraging the Manipuris in a career of aggression against the Nagas. In 1837, due to persistent remonstrances by the Commissioner, the invitation given to the Manipuri Raja to control the Nagas was at last abandoned. An officer was ordered to occupy an outpost, near the Naga country, to bring the Chiefs to terms. In 1838, the renewal of raids by the Nagas on the borders of Cachar and Nowgong, prompted the government to depute an English officer to deal locally with the Naga problem. The situation during these times was critical and a fresh war with Burma was being anticipated. As such, a small Cachari Levy was sanctioned to be raised for assisting in this assignment. Not only that, North Cachar was transferred to Assam and attached to Nowgong District, with the belief that the officials in Assam can deal more effectively with frontier subjects than those of Dacca to which Cachar belonged. From early times, the Angamis had carried on frequent raids into the neighbouring villages of Mikirs, Kacharis and other tribes of Nagas. Captain J.S Burns, commissioner of Dacca and Lieutenant Thomas Fisher, Superintendent of Cachar ascribed 'the feuds between the Nagas and the Kacharis to the spirit of retaliation and revenge'. Captain Jenkins, Agent to the Governor- General in the Northeast Frontier since 1834 presumed that "the attempt of the Kacharis to subject the Nagas to slavery and for the possession of the salt- springs near Semkhor were at the root of much of the troubles on the frontier". Captain Henry Bigge, Principal Assistant, Nowgong, believed that scarcity of provisions in their hills forced the

Nagas to come down to the plains in search of food, if these were not supplied willingly, they seized it by force. Others considered that the restless and predatory character of the Angamis was responsible for the raids on the plains. H. K Barpujari holds that it was the British occupation of Cachar in 1832 that emboldened the kacharis to resist the Nagas which had in consequence invited retaliatory raids on themselves” (Barpujari,2003)

### **The first British Military Expedition to the Naga Hills (1839-40)**

The first British military expedition to the Naga Hills set out in January, 1839 to the Angami Naga hills led by E.R Grange, Sub-Assistant at Nowgong. He marched into with a detachment of the First Sebundies, 50 Cachar Levy and a group of the Shan Militia. The Jorhat Militia was also directed to join him and Captain Gordon, the political Agent of Manipur was asked to advance with a party of Manipur Levy but they all failed to arrive. Grange’s mission had been to investigate the causes of the raids and punish the chiefs of Khonoma and Mezoma, which were the large villages implicated in various border outrages. His campaign marched from Asaloo. In the North Cachar Hills through Doboka along the Zeliangrong route and entered Southern Naga territory reaching Berema, and marched to Dimapur where he was shown the remains of the Fort built by Raja kishen Chunder of Cachar. Throughout this journey, the force underwent hostilities and violent resistance by the natives, suffering fatalities on the sentries. By the time Berema was reached, the troops had weakened by contracting sickness from the cold and the expedition was cut short into a hurried march through the hills. From a military point of view, Grange’s expedition was not a success. It failed to punish and secure the principal offenders, namely Impuji, the Chief of khonoma and Ikari, the Chief of Mezoma, who were found out responsible for the raids into the border. Independent Naga villages received them well, including the brother of the Chief of khonoma and the powerful chief of Mezoma, Ikari, who had led most of the raiding parties to Cachar. Several smaller Chiefs, however tendered their submission. The Nagas agreed to respect British territory and not to commit raids and violence outside the jurisdiction of the hills. Grange induced Ikkari to take an oath of not to molest the English. Grange alleged the discovery of a great trade in slaves carried on by the Angamis with Bengali merchants and that, the main objective of the raids was to procure supplies of such slaves. The capture of captives as slaves was carried out by all the Nagas, in

times of raids and warfare. Grange's claim that in Papolongmai there were also Kachari Nagas living along with the Angami villagers in a subservient position to Angamis could hold true and they might have been captives or progeny of captives captured and brought from Cachar. The villages most frequently attacked were small settlements of Naga stock in North Cachar Hills, which was in the south of Tularam's hills. (Political Proceedings, 9<sup>th</sup> Jan 1839, Nos, 160-163). After ascertaining the Naga villages that committed the raids, Grange found his way out of the hills to Assam via Samaguting. By then, the British company's acquisition of Cachar was already underway. In 1830, Govind Chandra, the ruler of Cachar was assassinated, and he had no descendants, either natural or adopted. In the absence of any definite law of primogeniture, several claimants advanced their claims to the throne, namely Govinda Chandra's widow Indra Prabha; the hill Cachar chief Tularam Senapati and the Manipuri ruler Gambhir Singh. However, the British government was not satisfied by the claims made by the claimants and the plains of Cachar was annexed to the British dominion on 14 August, 1832. North Cachar which was a separate principality which was earlier ruled by Tularam, was also annexed in 1854 after his death (Pemberton, reproduced 2000)

Grange set out on a second expedition to the Nagas on 24<sup>th</sup> January, 1840, reaching Samaguting on 23<sup>rd</sup> January with the goal to receive submission of the Angamis, and to put a stop to the outrages especially by Mezoma and khonoma. The objectives were crystal clear, the Nagas had to be given the clear message that the British Government had no wish of interference in their internal affairs but only sought peaceful co-existence with them and as a sign of acknowledging British authority they have to submit a small tribute admitting to their terms. Meanwhile, instructions had already been sent out to the Manipur Raja to send a deputation from Manipur to meet Grange at Papolongmai village.

At Samaguting village, Grange set up camp for his party and had sensed the unwelcoming attitude of the Nagas. That night, they attacked the sentries, Grange reacted by seizing their grains and destroyed it. The force then marched up the Chathe Valley via Razephema and Grange met and talked with the Village Chief Karebee. From Razephema, the column climbed the western slopes of the Burrail Mountains through Lemhama and Chama over the Paona ridge at an altitude of 8,000

ft and crossing the Zulhain valley reached Papoloongmai, situated at 6000 ft altitude, in the Burraill Mountains, in between the two peaks of Japfu 9,900 ft and Kaho 8,700 ft, which were covered with thick forests up to their summits. All along their journey, the Nagas were unwilling to receive them but by show of military superiority, he induced them into compliance. At Papoloongmai, Grange had expected to meet the Manipuri party but they had already left. He also found out to his surprise that the Nagas were hostile and not on friendly terms with Manipur, as the British had earlier been made to believe by that State. With great disappointment Grange decided to return, but the Nagas suspected that they were allies of the Manipuris and would inflict harassment on them just as it was meted out by the Manipuris. As the party proceeded towards the Typhime valley, the people of Papoloongmai, Tzukquama, and Togwama villages attacked them. The Nagas were careful enough knowing that the British firearms were deadly. They attacked the marching party by setting fire to the jungles and rolling down boulders on them along the hillside paths they were trotting. On the night of February 6, while the column set up camp to halt for the night, the Nagas set fire in all directions compelling the column to retreat to safety. They retreated taking the route to Papoloongmai and then took possession of that Village, a part of which was already left burned by the Manipuri troops earlier. Half of Papoloongmai was inhabited by Angamis and the other half by Cachari Nagas subservient to the Angamis. As they continued their retreat by a narrow pass below this village, the combined forces of Chekwama, Popoloongmai, Tzukquama and Togwama villages ambushed them and a fierce fight took place. Grange's men suffered casualties by the Nagas with spears, Daos and fire. The four villages were destroyed with all the grain that could be found. After this violence, the British troops returned to the safety of the plains in March. Since Grange did not meet the Manipuri detachment on time, the Manipuris waited for some days and left the place, the effect of inability to meet Gordon and the Manipuri troops as planned made it impossible for Grange to march against the habitual Angami raiding villages.

Leaving the wounded in Dimapur, Grange with his force marched to punish the hostile Nagas at Piphema and Sephima, going further towards the east to Jakhama. Jakhama village was composed of 300 to 400 houses and it exerted strong influence over the small neighbouring villages. The villagers were fully prepared against the expedition, they had hidden their grains in pits and in rock crevices in the jungles,

the roofs of the houses were burnt. As they halted for the night, the Nagas pelted stones into the stockade. The water spring was also poisoned with poison roots which caused giddiness and swelling eyelids of the sepoys. They remained in the stockade for some days and after much difficulty Grange induced the Nagas to provide for conveyance of the sepoys. On reaching Samaguting, Grange finding the villagers showing threatening behaviour captured eleven Nagas of Samaguting and took them down to Nowgong as hostages (Ao Tajenyuba ,1958). Later two chiefs of Samaguting came expressing their desire to be friendly with the British and a wish to settle in the plains. They entered into a written engagements with the government upon which the release of the captives was secured. Lands east of Mohung Dijoa were promised to them but it does not appear that any active step was taken to induce a Naga immigration to the plains (Mackenzie,1989). For the protection of those that offered willing submission and for encouraging interaction between the hills and the plains as well as security of the frontier, military outposts were established at Semkhor, Dimapur and Mohondijua.

#### **Peace Mission of Lieutenant Biggs (1841- 42)**

The Principal Assistant, at Nowgong, Lieutenant Henry Biggs volunteered to go on a 'peace mission', to the hills, with a small troop to negotiate with all the Naga chiefs to enter into agreements to abstain from attacking the British subjects and to open up friendly relations with them. The Government of India approved the peace plan and accordingly, Biggs left for the hills in 1840. On the way, he halted at Golaghat In 1841, Lieutenant Biggs carried out his tour and recommended immediate deputation of an officer against those Nagas indulging in slave-trade. He suggested that the officer so deputed should also visit the Lotha Nagas areas and negotiate with the chiefs to open the ways for commercial relations with the people of the plains. Further he insisted on early settlement of the Naga Hills and Manipur boundary which was the main cause of Naga pillages on the Manipur Frontier (Biggs to Jenkins,1842,7 June, No.104).

#### **a. Significant results –**

1. Opening of a Salt depot at Dimapur.
2. The Dhansiri is fixed as the boundary between the Angami tracts and the British Districts.

3. The Government to curb the slave traffic carried on by some of the Nagas with the Bengalis of Sylhet.
4. Settlement of the boundary line between the Angami Hills and Manipur.
5. Nominal tribute to be collected from the Nagas as soon as they consented.

**b. Settlement of Naga Hills- Manipur Boundary (1841-42)**

The boundary lines between the Angami Naga hills and Manipur was laid down by Biggs and Captain Gordon, the Political Agent of Manipur, in the winter of 1841-42. “Commencing from the upper part of the Jeerie River in the western frontier of Manipur, the line of boundary was formed by the –

1. Dootighur Mountain, or that range of hills in which the Mookro River takes its rise, east on to the Barak River;
2. By the Barak River up to where it is joined by the Tayphani River, which flows along the eastern line of the Popolongmai Hill;
3. By the Tayphani River up to its source on the Burrail range of Mountains; and
4. By the summit or water-pent of the Burrail range on to the source of the Mow River flowing north from that point towards Assam, was the best boundary between Manipur and the Angami country”

**c. Reasons for demarcation of Naga Hills boundary with Manipur:**

1. The Angami Nagas and all the smaller tribes under its influence occupy the Mountainous part North of the boundary. Together they engage in the acts of pillage in both Manipur and Cachar.
2. Along the western portion of the boundary proposed, the whole of the villages in its south used to be near this frontier, but having been from time to time destroyed by the tribes from the north, their inhabitants were compelled to locate themselves for safety towards the further south. Hence, it has resulted in the considerable tract of mountainous country that lies completely deserted.
3. Along the portion of the boundary proposed to the east of the Popolongmai, the Angami tribes are separated from the Nagas of Manipur

by a lofty range of Mountains across which little, if any, communication takes place.

4. The Manipur government not having at present any control or authority over the villages to the north, and the Angamis not possessing any influence over those to the south of this proposed boundary throughout its whole extent, its adoption would not disjoin connected tribes or separate any village from a jurisdiction to which it has long attached, as would be the case were any portions of the country north of the line suggested made over to the Manipur Government. ” (*Ibid.*,)

The Northern boundary of Manipur eastward of Telizo was not settled and it was only in 1878 that a line was laid down which was finally accepted by that State( Assam Proceedings, March and June 1878)

At this time the Angami Nagas seemed anxious to cultivate friendly relations with the authorities at Nowgong. They agreed to pay yearly tribute and to abstain from internecine feuds. No expeditions were sent to the Angami Naga hills in 1843 but the Nagas raids on the plains continued.

#### **Nagas defiance and Non-payment of tribute-Eld’s Expedition (1844).**

In April 1844, when a British Assistant was sent up to collect the first year’s tribute, the chiefs refused to pay the tribute. This defiance was followed by a series of daring raids and in one such raid in October 1844, a Shan outpost was attacked killing three Shan Sepoys and a boy in the north Cachar Hills, at a stockade at Hosang- Hajoo near Lunka which used to check and obstruct the Naga incursions (*Tajenyuba,1993*).The Nagas had also marched into the Rengma Hills and killed three persons in the first foray and six were killed in the second incident after which the raiders fled to the hills carrying the booties .In retaliation, Captain Eld, Principal Assistant and Mr wood, Sub-Assistant with 50 sepoy set out from Nowgong on 10<sup>th</sup>December 1844, and burnt down several of the guilty villages. Asaloo village was burned down hearing that it had given shelter to the Angamis although they did not join the raid. Other villages punished were Beremah, Mezoma and khonoma. The khonoma men returned four muskets which they had carried off from Lunka but since they did not surrender the men, a part of the village was burned down. They

also found out that some Manipuri troops had been helping one Naga clan to attack and destroy another. As soon as the detachment left the Hills, Khonoma aided by seventy Manipuris burnt down the village of Mezoma which had become friendly with the British. The Manipuris were dissatisfied with the boundary settlement and had started to directly encourage and help pro-Manipur Naga factions against the British. Such intrigue and active interference by the Manipuris adversely affected the British position in the Angami Hills.

### **Butler Expeditions (1844 -1847)**

In November 1848, Captain Butler made an uneventful promenade in the hills. He managed to move peacefully in the Angami country, conciliating the tribes and mapping the topography. The Naga villages eagerly sought British protection and seeking help against other villages. He succeeded in even getting some chiefs including Khonoma and Mezomato pay the tribute in ivory, cloth and spears. But the guilty offenders of the past plunders were not handed over, the chief of Khonoma admitted it was beyond his power to let the villagers agree to surrender their own men. But after Captain Butler's expedition left the hills, fighting commenced between the tribes and the raids on the plains resumed. Butler concluded that setting up a strong permanent post in the hills was the only way to maintain order.

During the ensuing winter, November 1846-47, Captain Butler was again deputed to the hills and went through the same farce repetition of agreements, oaths and presents. However, this tour led to execution of some important steps -

- Opened road from Mohundijoa to Samaguting
- New stockade and grain godowns built at Mohondijoa near Dimapur
- A post and market established at Samaguting and placed under a Sajwal named Bhogchand with authority over the whole Angami tribe.

As a result of these measures, the next year over a thousand Nagas had visited Nowgong for trade in 1848. Thus, the first period of 'Control from without' came to an end.

### **Establishment of the First British outpost at Samaguting (1848)**

The first permanent outpost of the British in the Naga Hills was set up in Samaguting, present Chumoukedima. An Assamese police officer Bhogchand Darogah was appointed to hold charge of the new advanced post. He was intelligent, brave and a fearless man found to be well qualified for the job. Earlier he had drawn the attention of the British Government in 1847 by courageously extricating his small Shan sepoy force when attacked by an overwhelming number of Nagas. But this success emboldened Bhogchand and made him careless of his personal safety as well as reckless. In 1849, he visited Mezoma overstepping his mandate and tried to interfere in the internal feud of Zievilie and Nihulie, two warring chiefs of Mezoma over land dispute. Before he set out for this duty, sometime in April 1849, he received a letter from one Huridas, claiming to be a Darogah of the Manipur Government and called on him to arrest some culprits of an Angami Village which had attacked a Manipuri Village. Since Huridas seemed like a doubtful character with antecedent record of serving jail time in Nowgong Jail in 1843, it was necessary to ascertain his claims. Captain Mc Cullock, the Agent in Manipur replied that Huridas had been an employee of Manipur but he was evading summon order to the capital on allegation of malpractices. Bhogchand went to Mozema in 1849 to enquire into a dispute which was in progress between two powerful leaders of respective clans in the village. Both the chiefs met him on his arrival and the inquiry into the quarrel revealed that one of Zievilie's men had been murdered by Nihulie's men. It also came to light that Zievilie had been aided by the Kacharis sent by Huridas and Nihulie was helped by Khonoma.

Bhogchand proceeded to arrest the culprits from Nihulie's group. Bhogchand had a firm belief in the prestige of a British constable, and conducted the entire proceedings exactly as he would have done in the case of a riot in the plains. In a spirit of complete impartiality, he also seized seven Kacharis of Zievilie's party and proceeded to escort the arrested prisoners to Samaguting. His severe impartiality did not please either group and it resulted in such dire consequences which Bhogchand had not intended or anticipated. He was even warned by the friendly Nagas that Nihulie might attack him at night in the village where he was headed, but he had neglected all ordinary precautions, disbelieving utterly in the possibility of the Nagas venturing out to attack them. In a surprise twist, the two feuding parties combined

together to attack their common adversary Bhogchand. When they attacked him at night at Piphemah, his guards dispersed in panic. Bhogchand and thirteen of his sepoy and porters were speared to death (Hokishe,1986) This outrage infuriated the British and drove them into a frenzy of revenge. It was impossible for them to condone the murder of their local officer and strong repressive measures had to be initiated.

### **Expedition to avenge the killing of the Darogah (1849)**

In November 1849, an expedition was despatched led by Lieutenant F. F. Vincent and Lieutenant R. Campbell with 150 sepoy to avenge the Darogah's death. The whole column in two divisions reached Mezoma in December. Vincent with one division went ahead to meet the political agent of Manipur but he fell sick on the way. Campbell occupied Mezoma and found the Neilhoulie and his men were entrenched on fort inaccessible to his troops. While Campbell and his troops were attacking Jotsoma, the Nagas burnt down Mezoma along with the provisions for the troops. Consequently, the expedition was forced to return to Dimapur. The Nagas celebrated the retreat by conducting a series of raids all around the border.

In march 1850, Vincent along with Campbell and Butler established a stockade at Samaguting and re-entered the hills and recaptured Mezoma and burnt down a portion of khonoma. He established himself in a stockade at Mezoma with his men, remaining there during the rains, punishing villages including Jakhama and receiving submission of some of the Chiefs. After holding on, in his own for months fearing the harassment by the hostile Khonoma youth, wherein he even issued orders to his sepoy not to leave the stockade even for drawing water except in groups of twenty men, Vincent finally called for assistance from the plains. Finding out that Vincent was in imminent danger, the Government sanctioned a large-scale operation against the Nagas.

### **Vincent's observations on the Angami- Naga Question**

After the Expedition to the Naga Hills, Lieutenant Vincent submitted an interesting account on the whole Angami Question:

- First of all, they had two parties, one inclined towards Manipur and another towards the British, each working on an alliance to get aid in crushing the

other. Though aid was not openly given by the Raja of Manipur, there was no doubt that the Manipuris helped the tribes. The attacks on British districts and villages were always made by the Manipuri factions, and never by those who looked to the British as allies.

- Secondly, he observed that any English officer entering the hills and taking up his post at a Naga village was merely looked upon as an ally of the “Teppremeh” or Assamese (Angami term for plain dwellers) and not as the representative of any paramount power. Hence, an officer to the hills should not locate inside a Naga Village but should take up an independent post.
- Besides the ‘grand clans’ in each village, there were many sub-divisions adhering to one side or the other; hence, indiscriminate burning of Villages was to be avoided as it could harm both friends as well as foe.

Many other additional informations on the social and economic condition of the Angamis have been provided by Vincent, where he observes that a Naga tribe from Birema (Peren) to Asaloo in North Cachar were not the same of Khonoma and north-east of it, the former being called as *Majehma* and the latter as *Tenyimah*. The Angami people knew the Manipuris as Mukhireeman (Miakreema), the journey from either Angami or Zeliang territory to Manipur took four days journey. Paddy was grown in abundance, so there was surplus annually. Local dals, kesee (used for brewing) and cotton were other crops grown extensively in modern Chumoukedima, Razephema, and Medzephema. Mithuns were reared in Mezoma, and other animals like cows, pigs, dogs and fowl were reared. Women wove cloths, each village having their own stripes and colour systems. Salt was an essential commodity of great demand. For the purpose of cultivation, they used a pointed stick, a crooked hoe and dao.

The road to Golaghat via the hills took eight days’ journey, the Angamis called the Assamese Deppraema (Tephriema). The Lotha country was within two days reach from the Angami area, the Lothas were the renowned head-hunters in the Sibsagar plains (Gazetteer of India, Nagaland, May 1970)

### **The First Battle of Khonoma and Battle of Kekhrima (1850-51)**

The Tenth British Expedition marched into the Naga Hills in December 1850. This was a retaliation measure against the Nagas and was made up of a strong force of 500 men picked from the First and Second Assam Light Infantry Battalions, 200 personals of the Nowgong Police Militia and some irregulars under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Henry Foquet with Captain David Reid of the Artillery and Lieutenant Henry Bivar of the Assam Light Infantry with all kinds of arms and two three-pounder gun splus two four-inch mortars. Major John Butler led the party as officer- in -charge of civil duties.

### **The Battle of Khonoma (1850)**

On the morning of 10 December 1850, the British launched an attack on khonoma. After a fierce- fighting and siege of sixteen hours, Khonoma, which is considered as 'one of the strongest Forts in the North East was captured. But the villagers were already evacuated during the night. They captured Khonomah fort with the greatest difficulty, even though the guns were fired from seventy-five yards of the fort, they did not inflict an appreciable damage. The attempt to scale over the walls of the fort was prevented by the presence of a deep trench around the walls. Finally, on 3<sup>rd</sup> December, when the force managed to break in and entered the village, they found that the village had been abandoned the night before. The troops destroyed it and exacted a fine (FPP, 21 March, 1851, No.245).

### **Battle of Kekhrima (1851)**

As a measure of intimidation and display of their strength, the troops under took a demonstration march through the hills; Villages that opposed their progress, and those that refused to give them supplies were all burnt. When the force reached the village of Kekrima, the villagers were not about to submit easily. Kekrima was said to contain 1,000 houses and was a very feared and powerful village. On February 5, 1851 Vincent was approached by two messengers of kekrima who delivered a solemn message challenging them to an open combat, declaring that they have spears and shields as their weapons against the guns of the soldiers.

The challenge was not going to be ignored by the British, who were confident of their might with their superior arms and ammunitions over the primitive weapons of

spears and arrows that the villagers possessed. Thus, the British force of about 150 sepoys, armed with sophisticated fire-arms and supported by about 800 Nagas armed with spears fought alongside the British. Four Villages came to support Kekhrima and one was the most war-like village of Kidima. The defence was strong and was equally contested at the start but the superior arms and weaponry of British soldiers gave no chance of survival to the Naga warriors. The British defeated Kekhrima villagers in a most terrifying and bloody Battle ever fought in Modern Naga History. This unequal battle, considered as ‘The first Battle of Naga Independence’ and rightly so, as no Naga Village had ever dared to challenge and take on the mighty British army with superior fire arms as this valiant and courageous Naga Village had boldly stood up, in heroic and honourable resistance against the foreign aggression. Thus, the result was the complete destruction and annihilation of the Naga warriors from the village of kekhrima. More than a hundred Kekhrima Warriors, young men and old lay dead on the bloody hill sides of the battle field. For the British they suffered a loss of just three dead, of whom were two Nagas and one was a camp follower (Hokishe, 1986). The village was burned and the grains destroyed. It has gone down in British- Naga history as one of the bloodiest battles which occurred in the Eastern Frontier hills regions. The sacrifice of the Kekhrima villagers did not go in vain. After this harrowing experience, the Britishers withdrew their troops from the hills and determined that in future they will not interfere with the Nagas.

### **Dalhousie’s Minutes and the Non- Intervention Policy**

The Government considered the various proposals put forward by the frontier officials concerning the future British Policy towards the Nagas. Lieutenant Vincent urged the policy of retaining British control on the hills while Captain Butler called for the immediate and complete abandonment of the hills leaving the Nagas to themselves. To quote *Butler*, “Our interference with the internal feuds of the enemy having proved a complete failure” the proposal of Captain Butler was adopted by the President in Council and ordered immediate withdrawal of the troops to Dimapur and abstain ‘entirely and unreservedly’ from all concerns of the Nagas. These orders were duly approved by Lord Dalhousie, the Governor- General (1848-56) in what is famously known as “Lord Dalhousie’s Minute” of February 20, 1851.

(See Appendix)

Undoubtedly, this new policy of total non- intervention was also opted under the realization of counter- productivity and the risk of incurring high financial implications over an administrative area which would bring unproductive returns. To quote the remark of justifying the new policy by Captain Butler in 1852, “Since our withdrawal from the Angami Hills, the general conduct of the tribes towards us has been very satisfactory, they have been travelling as far down as Goalpara and they have shown every desire to cultivate an intimate acquaintance with us”.

### **Non- Intervention Policy (1851-1866)**

Accordingly in March 1851, the Government withdrew its troops from Dimapur in the southern edge of the Hills. The government on its part had put in all possible efforts to pursue the policy already laid down. To consolidate their defence, the Government further withdrew its forces from Dimapur to an area in North Cachar Hills and appointed a European Officer to take charge of North Cachar, where Border police were set up at Asaloo, Semkhor, and Linglo and patrol lines were maintained to check the infiltration of Nagas (For. Deptt. Pol- A, March 1880, nos.657-663, K.M, No-2). The Government’s determination to follow the policy of non-intervention in the hills in 1854. Twenty-two villages requested the Government for interference and protection from Manipur but the Government following their new policy regarded Naga Hills as being outside their jurisdiction. The Government had resolved to do nothing beyond the British Villages. During this period the Nagas freely raided the British subjects by evading the defence lines, thus rendering in vain the government’s policy of effective control. The British subjects in Cachar continued to bear the brunt of Naga pillages. According to Mackenzie, “North Cachar suffered the most from the effects of this policy” (1989).

In view of the ineffectiveness of the measures of defence, the local officers of the frontier and the Court of Directors urged the Government to change its policy of non-interference. However, the government did not move from its resolve and the policy of non- interference continued even though Naga raids were increasing (Dihingia,1980). The Court of Directors also accepted that their absolute withdrawal would only encourage the Naga tribes to become more aggressive, they preferred the plan of settling colonies of Kukis and other self-reliant races as buffers in the British protected villages and the Angami Nagas. They also tried the plan of enlisting

Angamis in the military police, but this idea failed as the Nagas recruited did not remain under discipline for long. Out of 37 Angami recruits, they could provide their services for barely eight months. In 1862, the Commissioner of Assam brought up the matter before the Lieutenant -Governor. He said that it was not creditable to let such atrocities recur annually, with unvarying certainty, and to remain powerless to protect the British subjects. In typical administrative politeness, he nonchalantly quips in, "The Non- Interference Policy is excellent in theory, but Government will probably be inclined to think that it must be abandoned." It was thus, quite certain that the British -Naga relations could not have been on a worse footing. The pacifist policy had failed and the Naga raids continued to intensify during the period 1853-1862. The views of the Commissioner did not fall on deaf ears. Sir Cecil Beadon, the Lieutenant- Governor of Bengal (1862-67), reviewed the whole situation in Naga hills and found the policy of non-interference unsound. To him, the best way to make the Nagas answerable to reason and order was by convincing them of the advantages of trade and friendly relations. He directed the Agent to remove the prohibition on trade and directed that an officer stationed at Nowgong should immediately contact the Naga Chiefs on the border and make them responsible for the good conduct of their Villages. If they performed it well, they would be given an annual stipend for this police duty. This suggestion of Cecil Beadon was not brought into operation for some time as delays occurred while going through official consultations. However, Colonel Hopkinson, the Chief Commissioner of Assam also expressed a similar opinion, suggesting the posting of a British officer at Samaguting and make peaceful contacts with the Nagas without taking direct control of their country (Piketo,1992). Colonel Hopkinson pointed out that it was not possible "to devise any military device for protection and defence at every point against adversaries for a country which has interminable hills , filled with vast swamps, covered with dense forest, with occasional clearance of Mikiri or Cachari villages appearing like a speck in this ocean of wilderness having no roads, supplies against a foe for whom hill, swamp and jungles are not at all obstacles' (Mackenzie,1989). Meanwhile, in 1864-65, the policy to be followed towards the Nagas again came under review and the concurrent opinion of the local officers, Commissioner Colonel Hopkinson, and the Lieutenant Governor, Sir Cecil Beadon was that it was necessary for the prestige and credibility of the British administration to advance into the hills.(Barpujari,2003). Thus, the Non-interference Policy was a total failure. As the raids continued, in

march and April 1866 brought out again the discussions surrounding the Naga Question.

**Several Naga outrages occurred during the Period of Non-Interference :-**

1. March 9, 1854- Angami attack on Mikir Village of Kodgaon.
2. May 12, 1854- Attack on Kerrung Rengma Village by Phekerkrima. Towards the close of 1854, Phekerkrima alone launched three raids, first in Dimapur- Golaghat road on 30 November; second on a Mikir Village near Dimapur on 18 December; and the third was carried out on 19 December near Golaghat.
3. April 12, 1855, 4. A combined party of Razaphema and Chumukedima ravaged the Longpher area in North Cachar.
4. November 7, 1855- Razaphema perpetrated raid on Dimapur- Dhansiri side.
5. December 16, 1855- Angamis assault Dimapur.
6. February 4, 1856 - Razaphema raided Leondah Mikir village in the north Cachar, caused loss of seven lives. Mikirs retaliated against the intruders and successfully defended themselves.
7. 1856 - Khonoma and Mezoma carried out raids on two villages, Longpher on March 18 and Aguroo (Asaloo) villages on 5 April in North Cachar.
8. An attack took place on Asaloo (Agaroo) Post in North Cachar manned by the Nowgong Police militia, 4 muskets, 150 packets of ammunitions and explosives were carried away. 9. March 10, 1858 – The Zeliangrong near Birema raided another Zeliang village of Rungai in north Cachar and carried off 26 persons. The second Assam Light Infantry immediately pursued the captors but only 21 could be rescued and the rest carried away.
9. May 10, 1858 –Khonoma warriors raids another post in North Cachar.
10. March 1859- Nine kikrima Naga prisoners detained at Kherani reportedly escaped.
11. November 1859 –Lothas crossed the Dhansiri and launched a surprise attack on a Rengma Village near Borpathor.
12. In December - The village of Alunki was attacked by Angamis.
13. In March 1862 – Attack carried out on the Borpathar guard post; four persons lost their lives. One Angami and two Zeliangs were imprisoned in this connection.
14. The Angami – Zeliangrong feuds raged in this frontier and the incursions extended to as far as Kutha Kuthing near Borpathar, kidnapping 6 elephant tamers and a boy by the Mezoma Nagas in alliance with Jakhama at the behest of their Chief Nipu.

15. May 25, 1862- Borpathar guard post attacked again; on 29 June an adjacent village was plundered where 8 persons were killed and two carried off.
16. May 25, 1864 – The Zeliang Nagas of Imapaimee got into a fight with the Asaloo village leading to two deaths.
17. March 26, 1865- Angamis raided a Kachari village of Maipongdisa. The Asaloo police sought the perpetrators but failed.
18. April 18, 1865 –Razaphema warriors raided the Mikir hamlet, Linagur (Mehal Rongelapur), Razaphema also reported to have fought with Sargamcha.

“To check these continuous aggressions, the British Government imposed an economic blockade on the Naga hills and imposed Prohibition on Naga travellers without permits from coming to visit the markets in the plains. But it was not successful and by 1862, this policy was withdrawn allowing Nagas to visit the plains for trade pursuits.

Conciliatory measures towards the Nagas were undertaken: -

1. Opening of salt market in the frontier
2. Distribution of agricultural implements to Nagas living near the foothills.
3. Development of the means of communications on the frontiers, but this was done mainly to extend the tea plantations towards their hills” (Bareh, 1970).

### **Formation of Naga Hills District (1866)**

In 1866, the British Government established the Naga Hills district with Samaguting as the district headquarters and Lieutenant Gregory as their first Deputy Commissioner. The new district consisted mostly of the present Nowgong District of Assam (Alemchiba, 1970); (Barpujari, 2003). At Samaguting, the first school and dispensary for the Nagas was opened followed by the extension of trade and construction of roads to the plains. A plan was sanctioned for receiving at Samaguting Residentiary delegates from the various communities and they were trained to be interpreters and messengers to their respective clans. The headquarter had road connection with Dimapur, where a market was set up. The Deputy Commissioner appointed residentiary delegates from various communities and Naga villages, they were granted small stipends for assisting as interpreters and messengers and as tour guides during surveys in the hills (Mackenzie, 1989)

### **The Boundaries of the Naga Hills District fixed in 1867**

**Eastern Boundary** – The “*Doyang*”, or ‘*Rengmah*’ River

**Northern Boundary** – A line from the confluence of the “*Doyang*” and the “*Dhunseery*” river along the “*Dhunseery*” for a distance of six miles, then up the “*Nambar*” Nulla to its source and across country to a point on the “*Doegooroong*” Nulla, thence along it northwards for a distance of 7 ½ miles, from which point it takes a due westerly course across to a point on the “*Kolleeanee*” river along which it runs for a distance of 28 miles.

**Southern Boundary** - A line along the crest of the *Burrail* range from the source of the “*Rengmah*” or “*Doyeng*” river to the small western feeder at the source of the *Dhunseery*” river.

**Western boundary** - A line from the crest of the “*Burrail*” range down the “*Dhunseery*” river for a distance of 26 miles, thence across the Hills to a point on the “*Loongteng*” river and along it to its confluence with the “*Doyeng*” river; across the “*kopilee*” and “*Doyeng*” rivers; along the *Kopilee* for three miles, from whence in an east by south direction it extends for eight miles to a point three miles east of “*Deeklem*”, thence in a N.N.E. direction crossing the “*Longboomlong*”, “*Ranga Jan*”, “*Long-koi Noi*”, and “*Dikreng-kong*” Nullah, to a point on the “*Kakee- Noi*” which form the boundary till its confluence with the “*Tereh Langsoh Jan*”, from which point with a semicircular line it touches the “*Jumoona*” Nuddee about a mile above the confluence of the “*Boreegunga*” with the “*Jumoona*”, which forms the boundary to the “*Sessah Jan*” nullah, from whence it crosses to the “*Meekir*” and “*Rengmah*” Naga Hills in a northerly direction till it strikes the “*kolleeanee*” river.” (*Ibid.*,)

### **Notification of the Boundaries of the Naga Hills District -The Gazette of India and Assam 1882**

In 1881, the boundaries of the Naga Hills District were definitely settled and a Notification defining them appeared in the *Gazette of India and Assam* (Assam Proceedings, November 1882).

- a) South and North - These were identical with those laid down in 1875, with the exception of the portion between the Doyang and the north-east corner of the district, which had then been left unsettled;
- b) West - They are also the same as were determined seven years ago, with a slight modification whereby a triangle inhabited by kookies and Cacharis , and bounded on the south by the Langting and Langreng Rivers,
- c) North-east - By the Lunding,
- d) North-west - By the Doyang has been transferred from the Naga Hills to North Cachar.
- e) East - The Frontier is that proposed by Sir Stewart Bayley in march 1880 and follows generally the course of the Doyang to where that river abandons its northward direction and flows south-west;
- f) Then the line is drawn to the Sibsagar border in such wise as to include all the villages of Lotha Nagas, and exclude all those of Hathigorias, who are here the neighbours of the former.(Mackenzie, 1884, p-142)

#### **Naga Hills District comes under the Chief Commissionership of Assam, 1874**

In February 1874, Assam was brought directly under a Chief Commissionership under the Government of India, and the Naga Hills District was placed directly under the Chief Commissioner of Assam. When Captain Johnstone was taking charge as officiating political Agent for Butler (on furlough) at Samaguting in early part of 1874, he had formally extended British protection to two Naga Villages, Medziphema and Seithekema, under threat of attack by their neighbours sought British assistance on conditions of their allegiance and payment of house-tax. Captain Johnstone brought them under British protection and incorporated the villages pleading to the Government that he could not allow massacre of innocent people, men, women, children and burning of houses within hearing distance of Samaguting station (Political Proceedings India, December 1875, No,70).

Since the Government policy at that time was not to incur 'further responsibility or expense beyond offer of advice and remonstrances', the action incurred the displeasure of the Governor- General in Council. In their view. "Captain Johnstone ought not to have taken this step without consulting superior authority....And so far as the step, if approved, may involve us in the reduction of the country by degrees to

a regular system of Government regardless of expense, to that extent it certainly expresses a policy to which His Excellency in Council does not assent.” Keatinge was, therefore, advised to ascertain whether such an authority was necessary for maintenance of order in the frontier. If these villages were worth protecting in the interest of the British territory and they could be conveniently protected, Johnstone’s action may be approved. On the other hand, if the cost and consequences had been miscalculated and no adequate advantage is gained, he was to retrace his steps forthwith ( FPA, 1875, Proposed Extension of British Protectorate in the Naga Hills, No.45; secretary, Government of India, 30 June).

The Inter-tribal feuds and outrages were on the increase and this inevitably led to the extension of British protectorate over the Independent Nagas. Johnstone had taken the village of Pherima also under British protection. By the end of 1877, over a dozen Naga villages were brought under protection and the Government of India granted its ‘reluctant approval’ (FPA, 1878, October, Nos, 7-51, K.W.1,pp,5-10). This opened the way for the extension of British Government control over the Naga areas lying eastwards of the Naga Hills.

### **Expansion of Effective British Political control into the Naga Hills**

In 1873, the Inner Line Regulations had been passed which demarcated the British administered areas in the plains and the hills , to protect the native tribals from exploitation by outsiders. The Inner Line indicated the limits of the administrative area and no way defined the boundary of British possessions (Barpujari,1981). When Lord Lytton assumed the office of the Viceroy of India ( 1876-80), the views of the Government underwent a radical change. Lord Lytton advocated strongly the Forward Policy in concurrence with the authorities in England. Salisbury wrote on 23 August, 1877, “In the opinion of His Majesty’s Government, an attitude of indifference to the internal feuds amongst the Nagas, which result in wholesale massacre of women and children, would no longer be maintained without discredit to the British Government. The facts now reported show that both the interest of our own subjects and for the sake of the Nagas themselves, a more active policy than has hitherto been pursued should be adopted towards the tribes inhabiting the south-east

corner of Assam” (FPA, 1877, October, No.468; Secretary of State, 23 August, 1877).

The Chief Commissioner Colonel Keatinge proposed in march 1875, the survey of the Hills for gradual political occupation and issued on 28th July 1875 the shifting of the Headquarters from Samaguting to Wokha. Samaguting was to be maintained as an outstation and police post. The Government at Bengal favoured moving the post to a site more nearer to the chief Naga tribes, this move to Wokha was to extend British influence on the Lothas, Hatigorias (Ao) and other neighbouring Nagas as well as Nagas on the Sibsagar border. Since the days of the Ahom monarchy, Lothas were well known in the plains, they came to the plains for trade, and enjoyed rent free lands at Nogora and Jamuguri (in the Golaghat division) and fishing rights in the river Doyang. They were also responsible for committing outrages on the Kachari and Ahom Villages near Borpathar (Barpujari, 2003).

When the early British survey tour parties arrived in their villages, the Lothas exhibited hostility from the beginning. In 1875, Captain Butler and Lt. R.G. Woodthorpe with a detachment of 43 Native Infantry and 8 Frontier Police left Samaguting for survey of the Lotha territory. On 4 January 1875, while the party was encamped from near about Wokha, a sudden war-cry was heard and some Lothas attacked the camp leaving a number of non-combatants killed. At dawn, Butler with forty men attacked Wokha Village; the Village was destroyed and forty lothas were killed (General Report on the Topographical Surveys of India for the Season, 1874-5, Appendix, pp 53-63). In December 1875, while leading a survey party enroute to the Ao region, Captain Butler was mortally injured in an ambush near Pangti Village, beyond the Doyang. He was carried to Golaghat where he succumbed to his injuries on 7 January 1876 (FPA, 1876; April, No.326; Woodthorpe., The Death of Captain Butler, in a letter to Captain W.F. Badgley, Shillong, 15 June 1876, *General Report of the Topographical Surveys*, 1875-6, pp 56-8). Lieutenant Woodthorpe promptly burnt down Pangti Village and carried on the work of the survey to completion (Mackenzie, 1884).

In March 1878, the Chief Commissioner ordered the transfer of the Headquarter to Kohima as it provided better command over the Angami villages and the Manipur

frontier. A sub-division was established at Wokha in 1875 for the control of the powerful Lotha villages (Sema,1992). It was left in the charge of Savi and Pugh and Inspector Mema Ram with 150 frontier police constables and 50 rifles and a house tax of Rs 2 was taken. All the Lotha villages on the left bank of the Doyang river were annexed (Tajenyuba, 1993). But later on, after the tribes became acquiescent to the control of the British, it was shifted to Mokokchung for the control of the trans-Dikhu tribal wars ( Assam Secretariat, 1888, File No.676)

In 1878, due to the continued inter-tribal feuds and outrages by the Angami villages, especially by Khonoma and Mozema, the Headquarter had to be transferred to Kohima with Guybon Henry Damant as Political officer of the Naga Hills (Barpujari,1981). Meanwhile, the reports came of khonoma village acquiring fire arms, ammunitions and fortifying their village and Damant decided to undertake an expedition against it, before undertaking a proposed tour to the Ao country. However, he was killed on 14 October 1879 and almost the whole party who accompanied him were killed or wounded by the Nagas. This banner of uprising led by Khonoma soon engulfed the whole Angami area. The Kohima garrison was besieged by thousands of Naga warriors, until the arrival of reinforcement of British troops from Manipur under Colonel Johnstone with two thousand troops, and saved the garrison from being run over by the Nagas.(Barpujari,2003)To avenge Damant's killing, on 22 November, a large party of British forces from the 44<sup>th</sup> Sylhet Light Infantry, 43<sup>rd</sup> Assam Light infantry, and two mountain guns under Brigadier General JL Nation launched an attack on the Khonoma Village at nightfall. The fort was impregnable and the severest fighting ever known in the hills followed. After a prolonged assault, on 28 March, 1880, Khonoma surrendered, the village and her allies were punished with heavy fines and made to surrender all fire-arms (*Ibid.*,)

Effective administration in the Naga Hills as a district was established in 1881. The earlier designation of Political officer was now replaced by Deputy Commissioner. In 1882, Robert McCabe was appointed as the first Deputy Commissioner of Naga Hills. He set off on an extensive tour of all the outlying areas lying beyond the district headquarter, visiting all Angami, kacha Nagas, kukis in his jurisdiction and marched to the eastern Angami villages, everywhere there were no resistance now (*Ibid.*,)

### **British occupation of Ao area**

In his letter on 22 August 1884, the Chief Commissioner of Assam, Elliot proposed a military promenade along the borders of the Districts of Naga Hills, Sibsagar and Lakhimpur; he suggested that a party of 150 Frontier police under the command of McCabe should march through villages beyond Lakhuti towards Bura Haimong and should be met at Molong (Molungyimchen) or Dekahaimong by a party under the Deputy Commissioner of Sibsagar. They should continue their march along the border to other villages up to Jaypur, where they will be joined by another party of Frontier police under the Deputy Commissioner of Lakhimpur. The Political charge upto the River Jhanji (Milak river) or till Burahaimong was to be placed under Deputy Commissioner, Naga Hills, and further east should remain under the Deputy Commissioners of Sibsagar and Lakhimpur. The Deputy commissioners should not interfere in offences committed beyond the ' Inner Line' excepting murder and his protection would be restricted to villages that entered into engagement ( FEA. 1884; October, No. 389, op.cit).

A list of villages, thus brought under control would be prepared and kept under the Deputy Commissioner. The penalty for disobedience by the villages would be prohibition from visiting the plains in the first instance , followed by punitive expedition( Barpujari, 2003)

The viceroy Lord Ripon concurred with the Chief Commissioner that demonstration of the might of the British would be useful to some extent, but he was not agreeable to enter into engagement with these tribes as suggested. After careful consideration, the government advised the Chief Commissioner to follow the existing method of checking and punishing border offences, and the political control over the Naga country as far as Jhanji was to be made over to the Deputy Commissioner, Naga Hills.

Interference in inter- tribal feuds was to be limited to only cases involving –

1. Outrages on British subjects;
2. Violation of Inner Line;
3. Danger to the interests of people dwelling inside the borders by reason of the proximity of disturbance outside.

(FEA ,394 in Nos. 389-94, Secretary , Government of India, Foreign Department to Chief Commissioner, 20 october, 1884)

Accordingly, the Chief Commissioner abandoned the scheme of military promenade, and directed the Deputy Commissioners of Naga Hills and Sibsagar to undertake friendly expeditions through the Naga Villages. This marks the beginning of the British survey tours beyond the administered territory . On the eastern side of Wokha sub-division, the Sumis were unsubdued and the Ao area was not incorporated , this was the region where the American Christian missionary E.W. Clark was entrenched and carrying out missionary work at Molungyimsen from 1876. Till 1886 the Naga tribe inhabiting the region on the north of the Lothas and south of Jorhat were known to the plainsmen as Hatiguria and it was only later that their actual name came to be known to all as “Aor” or “Ao”. In the census of 1921, the Aos numbered 30,599 and occupy the portion of the Naga Hills bounded on the south-east by the Dikhu, in the north-west by the edge of the plains, the Konyaks on the north-east, and the Sumis and Lothas on the south-west( Mills,1926). The Aos are an old tribe formerly occupying a large portion of what is now Sumi territory, and extended to the Wokha-Bhandari bridle path. The Sumi expansion was putting hard pressure on the the Aos when the British first came into contact with them.

Though the area inhabited by the Ao Nagas was not yet incorporated in the British territory, Reverend Edward W. Clark of the American Baptist Mission had established a Mission centre at Molungyimsen and was actively engaged in missionary works. The spread of christian teachings had exercised a sobering civilizing influence on a section of the Ao Nagas who favourably responded to the appeal of the missionaries to become law abiding people. However, there were reports of feuds and raids among the Nagas of Sibsagar frontier. In 1884, the Government agreed to extend the area of ‘ Political Control’ in the Naga Hills beyond the administered territories.

The first British contact with the Aos can be traced to the extensive tours of the Naga country by Colonel Brodie, the Deputy Commissioner of Sibsagar District from January 1844 to the Namsang and Nagaon (Merangkong) Ao Village; Larayun (Yaongyimsen) village, Sangtung (Changtongya) village Burahaimong (Yimchenkimong), Dekahaimong (Molungkimong) village and marched to

Assiringya (Nokpu) Village . He was met by the chiefs of several villages, some of which included, Moonsingh (Mongchen), Kolabari (Lakhuni), Samsa (Longsemdang), Jaffo (Japu), Karee, Longkong etc. (Brodie's Report; Hill Tracts between Assam and Burma). Brodie found the existence of six dwars or hill passes between Dikhu and Doyang .

After the passing of the Inner Line Regulation in 1873, no outsiders were allowed to enter the Naga Hills without a valid permit. Thus, the only contact of the Naga villages with outsiders comprises of the British reconnaissance tours and retaliatory military expeditions on reported offences. The report of Lieutenant R.G Woodthorpe from his survey of 1874-5 provides a clear insight into the early attempts of the British in extending their interest beyond the administered areas. Thus, in 1874 after passing through the Lotha villages of Lakhuti and Changsu, they came into contact on 21st January with the first Hatigoria village of Nunkum (Longkhum) which was a large and friendly village; from there they proceeded down to Mungatong (Mangmetong); on 24th January crossing the Chebi River halted at Aliba village about midnight. The next day they reached Chanki (Changki) and set up camp there before marching to Mekula (Mekokla) on the 26th. After returning back among the Lothas, the party marched to Lakhuti where they found huts had been built for them, and coolies had arrived. Joined by the reinforcement from the Detachment of 44th from Golaghat, the party proceeded on 30th January to Boragaon and Jampang, crossing Lungitang. From Jampang could be seen the valley of Disoi (Tsurang Valley), it was a broad flat valley, bounded by the high ranges on the east, and a long low range to the west, bordering the plains. From the view up in the Hills, the whole valley looked densely wooded, untouched by even a single patch of cultivation, and no paths whatever existed through it, the only road that exists was following the Disoi river itself (Elwin, 1969, pp-263)

After a day long march along the 'above the knee deep' Disoi stream , they went to Lungmi Khaba. Japu and crossed the valley to Chotemsen, halted at Assingria on the 7th and visited Chang-chang and Lakhu and completed the tour of the range towards Japu. On the 8th, the party went to Kampungia and on to Dekahaimong. Here the news of Holcombe's killing by the Eastern Nagas was received from three young planters who had come from Amguri. Since the tour had to go on, they marched from

Mekukla to Lakhuti, passing through Akuk, a moderately sized village. From there, the group went to tour from Pangti to Nankam, passing through Okotso, a small village with half Lotha and half Hathigoria speakers. On 5th March after completion of the work on which they were despatched, they returned back to Wokha (H.M Hinde, Letter to Lieutenant R.G. Woodthorpe, dated Jaipur, 7 may,1976)

The reports of the expeditions showed that they were received with friendliness and cordiality by the Nagas. Woodthorpe also mentions in his report that after crossing the Lotha Nagas, there were three tribes, Hatigoria, Burdorias and Assiringias.

The Deputy Commissioner of Naga Hills McCabe suggested the conduct of annual Promenade or establishment of an outpost in the heart of the Ao country to exercise the same control as was followed in the case of the Angamis and Lothas. The Chief Commissioner also forwarded the step for amalgamation of a considerable tract of territory within the British dominion. Thus, a tract of territory west of the Dikhu, north and east of the Naga Hills came under the control of the government. The outrages committed by trans- Doyang and trans- Dikhu Nagas led to the despatch of a series of punitive expeditions. On the plea of several trans- Dikhu villages to the government to take them under control and protection from aggression of their neighbours and willingness to pay revenue to the government, McCabe, in his letter on 16 March, 1885 wanted to take in a few villages under protection of government. Porteous was also in support of bringing under the Government the triangular tract of Lotha villages- Are, Are Yanthamo, Okotso and Pangti, and the Ao Villages Nankum and Mungatung and few Sumi Villages which would increase government influence on the Ao and Sumi Naga tribes and bring in a small revenue. The proposal did not receive serious consideration from the Government. (FEA, 1887; November, No. 64; Officiating Deputy Commissioner to Secretary, Chief Commissioner, 17 August)

However, in July 1888, when the Reverend Clarke reported the dreadful news of the attack made by the trans-Dikhu Nagas on the Ao Village of Mongsenyimti and Longkong, Denis Fitzpatrick, the Chief Commissioner wrote a recommendation to the Government of India on 14 November 1888 soliciting the Government to despatch an expedition against the offending Villages and to incorporate the Ao territory forming the Northern part of the area of control (Barpujari, 1981). In

December, Alexander Porteous, McCabe's successor as Deputy Commissioner, with 130 Frontier Police under Macintyre accompanied by Lieutenant Maxwell reached Mongsenyimti where it was found out that the atrocities were committed by a combined gang of several Eastern Naga villages. Marching through volleys of attacks with spears and arrows, they marched through the Villages of Noksen, Litem, Santak and reached on 12 January 1890 the chief culprit Mazungjami but found the village completely deserted. The perpetrators could not be inflicted the punishment they deserved since all of them had escaped when the British reached their Villages. On 24th December, 1888, the Foreign Department, Government of India accorded approval for incorporation of the Ao Country to the Naga Hills as a Sub- division with headquarters at Mokongtsu (Mokokchung).

With the formation of this sub-division, the areas of Political control extended to cover the eastern Angamis and Sumis beyond the south-eastern boundary of the district. No other area of political control was to be formed beyond the Dikhu which was laid down as the present boundary.

## CHAPTER-3

### Agents of Change – Christianity and Western Education

#### **Naga Religion before Christianity**

The religion of the Nagas before the coming of Christianity was basically animistic and all the natural forces, Sun, Moon, trees, lakes, stones, hills were worshipped. They generally believed in the embodiment of spirits in all of these elements. Nagas had their own concept of gods, demons, spirits and the supernatural. Their faith, beliefs and worship were simple. Their religious practices revolved on following certain rituals like offering of sacrifice to appease the spirits to ward off sickness and misfortunes or calamities and fear of the supernatural. The Nagas believed that these spirits were extremely hostile to the human beings (NBCC,1997). There was no fixed place of worship nor any graven images. Some Naga tribes had priest to perform sacrifices whereas in some tribes “a man is his own priest” (Mills,1937) Usually, an elder or older man of the clans also acted as the priest among tribes like the Aos where every Village had a ‘*Puti Ungr*’ or religious head who conducted the sacrifices.

The Nagas believed in the existence of a Supreme God, the Angamis believed in ‘*Ukepenopfü*’ as the supreme god, Aos believed in ‘*Lijaba*’ as the creator God to whom the creation of the world is attributed, who is also the greatest of all the gods; the Konyaks had ‘*Kawang*’ as the almighty God. For Sumis, ‘*Alhou*’ was the God they believed in and Lothas believe in ‘*Potsow*’. The Aos believed in a God above all creatures. An Ao would go on naming several gods and their jurisdiction and finally conclude by saying “but there is one invisible God from whose eyes no one can be hidden”. (Imchen, 1993). The Religion of the Aos is not a moral code but a system of ceremonies, and no matter how much a person strives to do what is lawful and right in the moral spheres, he will not prosper if he omits the sacrifices due to the deities around him (Mills,1926). Generally, all the Nagas believed that sickness and death were caused by malevolent spirits, and their religious actions often involved appeasing the spirits by offering sacrifices like hen and eggs during sickness, calamities and other misfortunes. Nagas observed ‘gennas’ by abstaining from anything forbidden and keeping oneself pure. ‘Gennas; are generally religious

restrictions or taboos which are observed during certain occasions like birth, death, sowing, harvesting, festivals, etc, by avoiding certain forbidden acts. They are also observed following natural calamities, heavy rainfall, unnatural deaths, etc. Non observance of 'gennas' was believed to bring a curse upon the individual, or the family or community. Strict adherence and observance of the 'gennas' was necessary for the well being of the individual, the family and the community at large. The Nagas therefore kept their faith and belief system in sincerity, with utmost reverence so that no misfortune or curse may befall upon them by not keeping the restrictions, and also for the benefit and blessings of the individual, family or the village. Apart from all these animistic practices, Nagas also believed in augury, divination and dreams, which dominated a great part of their daily life in deciding their future actions. Besides, the Nagas also followed some form of ancestor worship. Forefathers' spirits were invoked to comfort and bless the living during times of trouble. Ancestral spirits are believed to influence the harvest, prosperity and general wellbeing of the community. Thus, sacrifices were offered to appease the spirits of the ancestors with the faith that their spirits will carry away their fear, problems and troubles. Nagas also believed in life after dead. They concurred that the soul of the deceased goes to the land of the dead. Different tribes had different ideas about the abode of the dead; some believed that stars are the souls of the dead while certain tribes believe that the rainbow is the breath of the souls of the deceased. Some Naga tribes believe and say that the soul goes onward by a narrow path guarded by a spirit with whom it must struggle. While some others think that the soul finds its final home below the ground. Many again believe that it takes the form of insects such as butterflies, birds or stars. Some say that a good man's soul goes to a village of the dead towards the sunrise, while a bad man's soul goes to a less pleasant place towards the sunset (Elwin, Verrier, 1961). Though there were no codes or rules of religion, the Naga religious beliefs were very organized and systematized through oral traditions.

### **Christianity in North East India**

William Carey came to India in 1793 and set in motion the spread Christianity with much zeal and vigour. He set up his headquarter at Serampore and began his mission work. Initially he began work in Burma, but ended up spending much of his time in India and is responsible for introducing Christianity in several provinces of India.

Carey looked eastward towards Assam to further his mission work. In 1819, he translated the New Testament into Assamese language and later he completed translating the whole Bible in Assamese in 1833. Since this translation incorporated too much Sanskrit as it was written with the help of Hindu Pandits, who had no knowledge of Christian theology, it was rendered intelligible by ordinary Assamese people.

Carey's first convert was Krishna Chandra Pal (1764 – 1822), the first Indian Convert to Baptist Christianity. He received training from the English Baptist Mission in Calcutta and became the first missionary to the Khasi Hills marking the entry of Christianity to North East India in general and the Khasi Hills in particular. He was a carpenter by profession in Serampore and was responsible for the evangelization of the Khasi people. He was sent to Pandua, a trading outpost at the foot of the Khasi Hills, in 1813 by William Carey to begin his evangelization work among the Khasis. During his short stay of eight months, he baptized two Khasis, Duwan and Anna who became the first Baptist converts in the Khasi Hills (Sword, V.H, 1935). Later, Pal moved to Namsang in the Naga Hills and carried out the work of evangelization and conversion among the Namsang Nagas.

Rev. John Mack, (1797- 1845) a Scottish Missionary working at Serampore saw a commercial possibility in Assam, particularly in tea cultivation and also the possibility of Assam becoming a highway of commerce between China and the East India Company. Alongside commercial prospects, it would open up the opportunity for evangelization (*Ibid.*) The missionaries envisioned the spread of the Gospel in Assam and paving inroads to China.

In 1829, the first definite mission work in Assam was undertaken. A young Englishman named James Rae, a government servant who worked at the public works as a superintendent, got into the mission work while being stationed at Dacca. He began to devote his time to mission work but he realized that he had very little experience in this field. So, he decided to join the Serampore College to train as a missionary during the year 1827 and 1828, preparing himself for the ministry. In 1829, Rae was ordained into the mission and in July reached Gauhati along with his wife and their child. Rae was also entrusted to oversee the Khasi Hills after

Krishna Chandra Pal's stint with the Khasis. In 1830, twelve young people, three Khasis and nine Garos joined Rae to continue the task which Krishna Chandra Pal had started. The progress of the work in Assam was slow and tedious. In 1836, Six individuals were baptized and the first Christian church was established at Assam valley. The church comprised of twelve members which included the converts along with the missionaries. After much plea, Mr William Robinson joined Rae as the second missionary. He toured and covered Nowgong. However, after a short time, the Church could not progress, when some of its members were suspended for immorality and some had lost interest in Christianity. When American Baptist missionary, Bronson visited Gauhati on his way to Sadiya, he found that there were no Indian Christians in the church. Later, Rae went to join teaching at a government school and Robinson left for Bhutan (*Ibid.*,)

The English Baptist occupied Assam for seven years from 1829 till 1836, after which they left it to the American Baptist Mission to continue the work in this part of the world. Thus, with the coming of the American Baptist Mission, on the invitation of Major Francis Jenkins to the North East India, the strategy and plan of evangelization was re-chartered. Rev Nathan Brown and his wife and Rev. O.T Cutter and his wife were the first American Baptist missionaries to enter Assam. They reached Sadiya on March 23, 1836, after a strenuous journey of 800 miles along the Brahmaputra. After a while Miles Bronson arrived in Sadiya on July 5, 1837 and later on moved to Jaipur in 1838 (Philip, 1976).

Due to the hostility of the Kamptis, the missionaries could not stay long at Sadiya. When the Kamptis attacked Sadiya in January 28, 1839, Colonel White and eighty other soldiers were brutally killed. The missionaries heard the warcries of the Kamptis and fled with their families towards the river, taking all their belongings and hid in the boats (*Ibid.*,). They abandoned Sadiya and relocated to Jaipur in 1839, where the British established a new headquarter. The early missionaries had to endure immense hardships and tragedies while working on this front. Jacob Thomas and Miles Bronson travelled from Calcutta to Sadiya on April 26, 1837, and when they were within an hour's reach to Sadiya, tragedy struck when trees from the river bank fell on the boat they were travelling in, crushing and drowning Jacob Thomas. In September 1838, Reverend and Mrs Nathan Brown

suffered the loss of their daughter Sophia Brown. Again, in December 8, 1840 Miss Rhoda Bronson, Miles Bronson's sister, succumbed to the fever she contracted in the hills and died in Jaipur. But the missionaries were not disheartened and they carried on their work with much vigour.

Edward Payson Scott came to Assam in 1863 and was stationed at Nowgong. One day, he encountered a Mikir village chief and his men who nearly killed him. But he played his violin and sang songs for them, which moved the heart of the wild people and his life was spared. He gradually won the hearts of the Mikirs and continued to work among them (*Ibid.*)

### **The First Naga converts.**

The missionaries who were originally designated to the department among the Nagas were Rev and Mrs. Cyrus Parker and Miss Rhoda Bronson, sister of Rev. Miles Bronson, who came to Jaipur, on May 14, 1840 (Gammel, 1850). Earlier, Rev. Miles Bronson toured among the Nagas a few times and his visit on December 21, 1839, made him decide to work among the Nagas as he found them to be responsive. He began a mission among them and started learning their language. Bronson moved his family to the hills and commenced missionary work among the Nocte Nagas at Namsang, in the Tirap Forntier Division on March 1840. Soon after, Rhoda Bronson also joined his brother, and Rev Parker and his wife opened a school. Unfortunately, Bronson's family were afflicted with severe illness due to which reason they had to abandon Namsang and moved to Jaipur. There were no converts at Namsang and Bronson ceased work among the Namsang Nagas and settled at Sibsagar.

The first Naga convert was Hubi from the nocte tribe, who was baptized on September 12, 1847 by Nathan Brown at Sibsagar. But he died shortly after his baptism on October 10, 1847. The second convert among the Nagas was Longjanglepzuk, an Ao Naga from Merangkong village who was christened with the name, Lungsang Francis William. He was baptized on September 7, 1851 by Rev. S.W. Whiting. Three years later, when he went back to his village to get married, his village was raided by a konyak village during which he was unfortunately killed in the assault. This first two converts were members of the Baptist Church at Sibsagar.

The third Naga to be baptized was Yahukonsi Sarah Caldwell who was baptized on January 4, 1852 and became a member of the Nowgong Church (*Ibid.*,)

Later in 1855, two Konyak men, Aklong Konyak and Amlai Konyak of Namsang Village were baptized at Sibsagar by Dr Brown. (Yaden,1970). They returned to their village to proclaim the gospel but were eventually killed by their villagers. They were blamed for confusing the minds of the villagers by their new religious teachings and therefore, they were killed to maintain order. Thereafter, there was no progress of evangelization works among the Nagas (*Ibid.*,)

Miles Bronson was the first missionary to take keen interest in the mission to the Nagas. He sought permission from the Board of Baptist Missions to send them help (Sword, 1935). Bronson's prayer was answered by the arrival of Dr E.W. Clark. The missionary resolved "to abandon the comparatively fruitless works among the Assamese and devote himself specially to work for the Naga tribes" (Merriam, 1900)

### **Mission to the Ao Nagas**

After a gap of thirty years after the Namsang Naga mission was abandoned, from 1840 to 1870, Rev. Edward Winter Clark came to Sibsagar in 1869, as the superintendent of the mission press and restarted the mission work in another region called Dekhahaimong or Molungkimong in the Naga Hills. With the help of Godhula Rufus Brown, an Assamese Evangelist, he started contacting the Nagas to venture out to evangelize the Naga hills. Subongmeren, an Ao Naga from Dekhahaimong used to go to Sibsagar for barter trade, he came in contact with Godhula Brown and was befriended by him. Subongmeren stayed with Godhula at Sibsagar from December 1870 to October 1871. He accepted Christ and Dr Clark baptized him in early 1871 at Sibsagar. Godhula learned the language and the customs of the Aos from Subongmeren, and made plans to go to the hills. In the winter of 1871, Godhula finally ventured out to Dekhahaimong (the Ao village Molungkimong) with a group of men along with Subongmeren.

Dr Clark warned Godhula not to go beyond the tea gardens since it was extremely risky and he was also discouraged by the villagers because not one of them was a 'Tatar' or member of the Village Council. But Godhula was not discouraged and

proceeded on the journey. On reaching Dekhahaimong, the Nagas suspected Godhula of being an 'idangiter' or a spy of the white men. But he narrated that the purpose of his visit was to share the gospel of Christ to the Naga Villagers. They kept him in confinement near the village gate. It is said that he kept singing and praying during the entire period of confinement, and the villagers gathered around him to watch. He won many hearts and the villagers became friendly after realizing his actual intentions. After a few days, when he decided to return to Sibsagar, the villagers felt sad. During his departure, women and children wept. On his return journey, he was escorted by about forty warriors (NBCC, 1997). Thus, the inauguration of Christianity among the Nagas was successfully laid by Godhula Brown, the Assamese Evangelist. Godhula made several trips to Dekhahaimong during the winter of the same year. Then on April 6 1872, he took his wife along with him to Dekhahaimong and they stayed in the village for some time, teaching, preaching and working with the people. Godhula's labour during the summer was not in vain. Nine men of the village declared their desire to become Christians. Godhula brought down these nine men to Sibsagar and were baptized by Dr Clark on November 11, 1872. Their names were entered in the membership of the Sibsagar Baptist Church since there was no church in the Naga Hills. The first converts from Dekhahaimong were namely, Imnapokym, Torokmangyang, Imnokekba, Eedeezoongba, Adiba, Mangyang, Meotongnuken, Ongshiba, and Bendangnoken. (Bendangyapang, 1998) The new converts after having baptized in the River Dikhu returned to the village the next day and constructed a chapel. The new converts requested Dr Clark to visit their village one day. On December 18, 1872, Dr Clark, Godhula and a member of the Sibsagar Church travelled on a trip to Dekhahaimong. There was another group of fifteen men who professed the Christian faith and they were baptized by Dr Clark on December 23, 1872. This was the first recorded Baptism in the Naga soil and the humble beginning of Christianity among the Naga people of the Naga Hills. With the baptism of the first two group of men from Molungkimong, the Christianization of the Nagas began and it marks the beginning of planting of churches in the Naga Hills.

In February 9, 1876, Dr Clark made his second journey to Dekhahaimong, while his wife Mary Mead Clark went on furlough to America. He made the final preparations to settle in the Naga hills and left the work of the printing press and the work in

Assam to the care of Rev. and Mrs. H.K. Gurney. Along with his Assamese servant he left for Dekhahaimong on March, 2 1876. Clark wrote “I left on the first of March expecting to see no more white faces for months and bidding good bye to nearly every comfort – a leap out of the world and plunge into barbarism” (Missionary Magazine, 1876).

At Dekhahaimong, Dr Clark and his Bengali helper stayed in the house of a widower named Bendangnukshi for eight months (NBCC,1997). They rented the place for about thirty cents a month. Clark worked hard in learning the Ao dialect and started regular Sunday worship service. Even though the growth of Christianity had already started, there was constant fear of being attacked by warring neighbouring villages besides expectation of getting persecuted from within the village itself. Therefore, Clark started negotiating for a plot of land for the construction of a church and a school building with the village elders but the new converts decided to establish a new village instead. Thus, on October 24, 1876, Dr Clark and his helpers, along with fifteen Ao christian families left Dekhahaimong to establish a new village known as Molungyimsen. The new village was located on a mountain top about three miles west of Dekhahaimong. The founding of the new village was not bereft of the dangers of being attacked, and therefore, they sought protection and friendship from the powerful and large Ao village of Chungtia. Till today a stone monument stands outside the Baptist Church at Molungyimsen declaring the ties with their foster-parent village Chungtia (*personally visited Molungyimsen*).

Molungyimsen became the new Baptist mission station for the whole of the Nagas and Clark began his ministry systematically and earnestly in a widespread scale. Despite, the looming uncertainty and the dangers of attack by enemy warriors, Dr Clark travelled around the nearby villages and made numerous friends. He travelled widely, winning the confidence of people and made peace with many villages; this contributed towards making his mission work very successful. The travels were not light and easy, as gleaned from his wife’s diary, they travelled “with evangelistic helpers, servants, carriers bearing chairs, bedding, pots and pans, dishes, lanterns, kerosene, food in numerous bundles” (Mead,1907).

As the mission work at Molungyimsen expanded and became more organized, more people got involved in the Mission. Godhula was also ordained in 1881 and was sent

to the Assam plains to start a new mission station. When Mrs Clark returned from America in March 1878, she immediately founded a school for girls. Thus, establishing the first school in the Naga hills. In 1879, the Assamese preacher Zilli and his wife joined the mission in Molungyimsen. Other new missionaries, the Rev. and Mrs. Rivenburg also joined them in January 18, 1885 as the missionary reinforcement to the Naga mission and they took over charge when Clark left on furlough to America in May 1885. During his nine years ministry, Dr Clark wrote and published a dictionary, an Ao primer, a catechism, life of Joseph, A hymn Book, The Lord's prayer, and the translation of the Gospels of Mathew and John (Alemchiba,1970)

The same year, when Dr Clark left for America, village after village accepted Christianity. The Assamese preacher Zilli preached in the neighbouring village of Lirmen, a day's journey from Molungyimsen, where many villagers got converted. There was also conversion in the nearby Yajang village through Zilli's efforts. In Molungyimsen, eight people were baptized that time. An Assamese preacher Robi and his wife were also sent to the Lotha area for further expansion of the mission field. The year 1885 was a very notable period in the history of the Church in the Naga hills, for the fact that the church was growing and there were already seventy-nine members that were Baptized by then. Also, the British India Government assumed political power over the Ao area and it was formally annexed in April 1889.

By 1888, there was a lot of expansion taking place in the growth of the church. The Molungyimsen church was served by Zille, the Assamese preacher and the church at Merangkong and Yajang were also growing. By then eight day schools had been started in different villages of the Ao area run by the Mission, being tutored by the Assamese teachers, who also preached the gospel side by side.

### **Impur Mission Centre**

Dr Clark had the dream of evangelization farther into the hills and decided to move the mission centre to a new location. With this vision to expand the field and to reach out to more villages and tribes, 'Tzudem Lenden' was selected as

the new station, situated between the two large villages of Sungratsu and Mopungchuket and about ten miles from Mokokchung. This new site was almost at the centre of the Ao area. The new location was approved and purchased and it was named Impur, meaning son of the soil. There was great difficulty in taking possession of the newly acquired land because of the fierce opposition from the villagers. But the Naga converts appealed to the British authorities at Kohima and permission was granted to take possession of the land (Bendangyapang,1998)

More missionary reinforcement had arrived in Molungyimsen to strengthen the mission work. Rev. and Mrs. Samuel Alden Perrine (1892) and Rev. and Mrs. Fred Porter Haggard (1893) Joined Clark at Molungyimsen. On November 1,1894, Rev. Haggard and his family moved from Molungyimsen to Impur, heralding a new dawn in the history of Ao Church. A month later, Rev. and Mrs S.A. Perrine also went to Impur to join the Haggards. Dr Clark stayed behind at Molungyimsen for some time “partly because trained pundits were available at Molung for the compiling of an Ao-English dictionary and partly to render some assistance to the Assamese preacher in trying to revive the church here” (83<sup>rd</sup> Annual report,320). The new mission at Impur was finally established after much hardships and efforts by the missionaries, and it became the Centre for propagating the gospel to other Naga tribes.

After the setting up the Impur mission centre which catered to the needs of spreading the gospel to the Ao areas and to the immediate adjoining areas, Dr Clark set his mind on going further to the other tribes of the Naga Hills. Through his relentless efforts and fervent appeals to the Home Mission Board to send men to the other neighbouring tribes, Rev. C.D. King and his family were sent to the Angamis in 1878. After a few years, again, at the request of Dr Clark, Mr. and Mrs. W. E Witter began the mission work at Wokha on April 9, 1885 (*Ibid.*,)

### **Mission to the Angamis**

When Kohima became the headquarters of the Naga Hills District in 1878, Dr Clark and the other missionaries of Assam thought that Kohima could be a strategic location for mission work among the Angami Nagas, for it was the largest and most central of the Angami Villages. At the request of Dr E.W. Clark, who was working

among the Aos, the Home Board of American Baptist Foreign Missionary Society appointed Charles DeWitt King as the missionary to the Angamis on 11 July, 1878. During the arrival of C.D. King to Kohima, the Angamis were at war with the British and the government refused to give him permission to settle at Kohima. He was not discouraged but he started to work from Samaguting, which was also not safe from the attacks. They had to flee to Sibsagar when the Angamis rose against Europeans and started the massacres in October 1879. Thus, it was only on 22 February, 1881, that C.D. King reached Kohima with Punaram Saikia, an Assamese teacher as his associate and started the mission work. In the beginning, the attitude of the Angamis towards the missionaries was very hostile and the process of conversion was very slow (Allen, 1905). A station school was underway but both King and Punaram did not know Angami dialect. Hence, they conducted the school in Assamese. Mrs. King left for America in 1880 on health reasons and Rev. King constructed a house for himself at Kohima besides a school. But the government ordered him to vacate the place and so he shifted to a new site. But the biggest handicap for King was that, he could not find time to learn the Angami language and he regretted not being able to communicate with the natives. Henry Goldsmith, an Assamese Christian from Nowgong, and Sarbey, a Mikir Christian also joined King as teachers in the school, which had eleven Naga boys as their first pupils. Later a Garo preacher named Robin joined the school and Mrs King returned from America in 1882. Afterwards students from various tribes started attending the school. On March 29, 1883, the first Baptist Church in Kohima was organized by Rev. C.D. King with the four Assamese Christians and their families as the founding members, though there were no local converts as yet. On July 29 of the same year, Robi's wife was baptized, which was the first baptism in Kohima.

The first Angami to convert was Lhousietsu who was baptized by Rev. King on June 21, 1885, closely followed by Lhouselie, Zierietsii and Sieliezhii Sorhie, who was baptized on August 30, 1885. The first convert, Lhousietsii became a Dobashi under the government and assisted in the propagation of the gospel during his spare time. In 1887, Rev. C.D King left Kohima due to health problems in his family. He was the first missionary to the Angamis and had started the first school. In January 1887, Rev. Sidney White Rivenburg succeeded King and he worked with the

Angamis for more than thirty years. Rivenburg did a lot of literary work. He wrote the Angami dialect in the Roman script and translated portions of the scripture - Mathew, John, Acts and wrote a hymn book of 100 hymns, an Angami primer and an arithmetic book (NBCC, 1997).

The missionaries who served in the Kohima field were, Rev. and Mrs. C.D. King (1879-1886), Rev. and Mrs. S.W. Rivenburg (1887-1823), Rev. and Mrs. H.B. Dickson (1906-1908), Miss Narola Rivenburg (1908 -1910), Rev. and Mrs. J.E. Tanquist (1913-1947), Mr. and Mrs. G.W. Supplee (1922 -1947), Rev. and Mrs. H. Houston (1950), Rev. and Mrs. B.I Anderson, (1929 – 1933, 1951 – 1954) and Rev. and Mrs. R.E. Delano (1954)

The missionaries with firm determination worked consistently providing education and medical care to the Nagas despite facing resistance and persecution of early converts by their fellow clansmen. When the Angamis realised that the Baptist missionaries had no motive other than to render service to humanity in the name of God, they voluntarily came forward to the new faith (Sanyu, 2016). In 1885, there was only one Angami who was baptised. However, by 1936, there were 1,534 baptized members. The church membership rose from 2,882 in 1955 to 11,000 members in 1981. This increase was the result of decades of relentless efforts carried out by the Baptist Missionaries in Nagaland in general and the Angami area in particular (*Ibid.*) The seeds of modern education was sowed by C.D King and Rivenburg but the real pioneers were the Supplees. The school started by King in 1882 closed down after his departure and it was revived by Rivenburg in 1889. The school had an enrolment of forty-six students in 1895. On Rivenburg's retirement, the Supplees got transferred from Impur and they were responsible for upgrading the mission school to a full fledged High school.

### **Mission to the Lothas**

The Mission centre to the Lothas was the third Centre to be established by the American Baptist Mission in the Naga soil. Wokha was situated between Molungyimsen and Kohima, the first two centres and it 'formed a grand trunk line of missions to the Nagas' (Mead, 1907). The work among the Lothas was initiated by Rev. Dr. William Ellsworth Witter. Dr Clark from Molungyimsen had requested the

American Home Board to send a missionary to the Wokha station several times, which was unheeded and it was only when the Church of Scotland Mission targeted the Lotha area that the Home Board was alerted (Bendagyapang,2004). But Dr Clark, Mr. P.H Moore along with Rev. Rivenburg, at a meeting at Molungyimsen, had already decided that Rev. W.E Witter should be sent to the Wokha centre from Sibsagar, sensing that some other denominations were entering the area. Rev C. D King at Kohima was given the task of taking the permission of the Deputy Commissioner for establishment of the mission centre which was granted favourably. Mr. Moore returned to Sibsagar to make preparations for sending the Witters to Wokha while Witter remained in Molungyimsen and returned on March 30, 1885. The journey to Wokha began on March 31 and Rev.Witter escorted by British sepoy and about 100 Naga coolies reached Wokha on the evening of April 9, 1885. After settling in Wokha, Witter began to learn the Lotha dialect and set to work, while Mrs. Witter started Sunday School. Because of their earlier stay at Sibsagar, they could communicate in Assamese. Children were taught Assamese songs and they would go singing until the evening. A day school was also opened on August 25, 1885 with three boys as their first students. Though there were no converts, the Witter's stay at Wokha was very eventful and profitable. However, due to failing health, Dr Witter and his family had to leave Wokha in 1888. After the Witters, there was no missionary who resided in Wokha till 1947. During that time, the work in the Lotha area was supervised from Impur, Kohima and sometimes from the plains from Furkating. It is generally believed that one of the earliest Lotha convert was Mhomo of Wokha village who became a Christian in the 1880s but he was baptized only in 1902. The earliest record of baptism in the Lotha area is Nkhao of Yikhum and Shanrio of Tsungiki, they were baptized by Rev F. P Haggard of Impur on October 1898. Both of them were students at the Impur Mission School. In the following two years, four more Lotha boys were baptized at Impur. One of them was Shanchamo Kithan, who played a vital role in the history of the Lotha church. He went to Palestine and later to America to pursue his studies. In 1904, Rev. Robert Bell Longwell initiated and organized the first Lotha Baptist Church in Okotso. Thus the propagation of Christianity in the Lotha area began till it got firmly rooted in the Lotha region. The Church membership grew up to 257 in 1922 and the need to have a separate Christian Association was felt. Till that period, the Lothas were a part of

the Ao Christian Association. Finally, the Lotha or the Kyong Baptist Association was formed in 1923. (Phillips,1976)

### **Mission to the Sumis**

Mission work in the Sumi area could not start early since no missionary was designated to these areas. Moreover, the area was not accessible and the British government and the Sumi leaders prevented them from doing any mission work. The missionary Victor Hugo Sword remarked “Without the work of a missionary or the preaching of a native evangelist, people became Christians and organized themselves into churches” (1935). Dr Clark had suggested the opening of a mission as early as 1885, but could not do so. With no foreign Missionaries to cater to the Sumis at that time, the Aos from the north and the Angamis from the south influenced them in turning to Christianity. The first Christian contact came from the Angamis. Sporadic visits of the Naga christians from Impur and Kohima laid the foundation and later the Sumi students at both the centres helped in the spread of the gospel and the conversions. Rev. Dickson was appointed as the missionary to the Sumi stationed at Kohima in 1906 and was sent to approach the southern Sumis and the Sumi students at Kohima School. Dickson’s ministry was short lived but within this short span of time, he wrote the first Sema Reader with the assistance of Ivulhe of Ghokimi, the first Sumi convert around 1906 (Anderson, 1913). The 93rd report of the American Baptist Missionary Union mentions that Rev. Dickson baptized forty-seven converts in three Sumi villages during his short visits from the Kohima centre. Jekique of Sutsumi Village (Mokokchung area) was also converted in 1918. Ivulhe and Jekique proved to be very powerful evangelists. Despite threats, persecutions and fines, the Sumis kept on converting to Christianity.

As the Christian members multiplied and churches started to grow, the first sub - mission Centre was established at Chishilimi under the leadership of Rev. Yemhi in 1931, although an Association had been already formed in 1912 by the native evangelists. The same year, the mission school was also started and the following persons were appointed as teachers and pastors: Suluho of Chozubami as a pastor and a teacher, Visalhu of Chozubami as evangelist, Hokhui of Vidami as a pastor and a teacher, Lhivixe of Sapotimi as a pastor.

In 1936, Rev. Bengt Ivar Anderson was sent as the missionary to the Sumis and he supervised the mission work for the Sumis from Impur between 1936 and 1948. Rev.

Anderson initiated to pen the mission Centre at Aizuto in 1937 and opened a Bible School for the Sumis in 1949. However, Anderson and his family stayed only two years in Aizuto and was eventually succeeded by Rev. R. F. Delano, who resided there till 1955. Aizuto became the Mission Administration Centre for all the Sumi Baptist Churches till 1980. Since the Sumi community were scattered too far and wide, the location of Aizuto proved to be inconvenient. This led to separation of the Western Sumi churches from Aizuto leading to the formation of Western Sumi Baptist Akukuhou küqhakulu Association (WSBAK) with headquarters at WSBK Mission Centre Aküvuto, in Dimapur.

### **Mission to the other tribes**

When the major centres of the Naga hills were evangelized by the American Missionaries, the native preachers and evangelists along with the new established church associations took up the task to further propagate the gospel to their immediate neighbouring tribes, with great zeal. The Aos were already burdened to shoulder evangelizing the trans-Dikhu area and the unadministered Areas of the Tuensang Frontier Division of the North East Frontier Agency (NEFA), while from the Kohima centre the Angamis were ministering to the southern Sumis, Chakesangs, Pochurys, Liangmais, Zemes, and Kukis.

Sekyuling was the first Sangtam converted and baptized by Dr J.R Bailey at Impur Mission Centre in 1912, who worked with Bailey as a gardener for several years. He went back to his native village Chare and started a church on June 14, 1918. Among the Phom tribe, a gospel team from Merangkong led by Chubanungsang Ao, went to Kangching village and evangelized Imkum Phom, Imkongnokdang Phom and Longe Phom who eventually became the first Phom Christians and thereafter was baptized by Rev. Wikstrand at Impur on September 22, 1929.

Among the Changs, Loyem of Yaongyinti was converted by an Ao evangelist and was baptized by Rev. L Kijung Ao on September 5, 1936. Yimchungru area was evangelized by the Aos and the Sumis. On March 15, 1947, Lhovixe Sumi of Tichipami village who was a Sumi evangelist, converted and baptized two men, Pungji and Rukiumung of Huker village. Also, among the Khamniuungans,

Rev. Onenleptden an Ao evangelist baptized four people on May 18, 1947, who were the first converts among the Khamniungans.

Sielliehzii, one of the first Angami convert and the evangelist helped three persons, Ngakhra, Huluyi and Swuzumo of Chozubami Village to embrace Christianity, giving rise to the first church at Chozuba among the Chakesangs in the year 1895 under the Kohima field. The first Zeme to be baptized was Heizielung from Benreu village by an American missionary in 1897. In 1938, Lishemo Nyusuo, a 17 year old, also decided to become a Christian. Though the date of his conversion could not be ascertained. Nevertheless, he was considered the first among the Pochury tribe. Among the Liangmais, Rev. Ngulpu, a Kuki evangelist performed the earliest recorded baptism on March 31, 1925. The baptized members were Tasibo, Phichai, Ramtungbo and Kaithiule. The mission work among the Kuki community was started in 1899, but the spread of Christianity was very slow. Ngulhao Thomsong was the first convert, baptized in 1908. Rev. Niesier Angami and Krunieze Angami under the supervision of Rev. Rivenburg were instrumental in planting the first church in Sirhuna village in 1912 and the second at Chalkot in 1918 in the Kuki areas. Thus, the evangelization of the whole of the Naga Hills areas was almost completed by the mid twentieth century (Downs, 1965)

### **Coming of the Catholic Mission and other Christian groups**

Until the Indian Independence in 1947, except the Baptist denomination and the traditional Naga religion, no other denomination or religion existed or attempted to make their presence among the Naga people. Incidentally, some Mohammedans on business motives had ventured to the Naga Hills during the British rule but the British had sent them off as they felt that their lives might be endangered (Bendangyapang,2004). Other Christian denominations like the Church of England and the Church of Scotland made attempts to establish in the Naga areas but could not succeed. After the Indian independence in 1947, other Christian's denominations like the Catholic, Pentecostal, Assembly of God, Jehovah Witness etc came and began mission works (*Ibid.*)

The Church of Rome or the Roman Catholics as they are generally known began their evangelization works in India since the early fifteenth Century. They later made their foray into the North East India in 1889 and established centres in Shillong and Guwahati. The attempt of the Catholic Church to establish their Mission in Nagaland goes back to as early as 1908, when Fr. Marcellinus Molz came to Tamlu. But he failed to make much headway there. Later, at the behest of the Governor of Assam, Sir Akbar Hydari, a request was sent to the Bishop Stephen Ferrando of Krishnagar, who was a Salesian, to send nuns and sisters to work in the Naga Hospital, Kohima. The Bishop then invited a team of sisters from Spain, the *Missioneras de Cristo Jesu*, to work among the war patients at Kohima. The first Chaplain Monsignor Fr. Emmanuel Bars, SDB, along with two nuns, Margarita and Guadalupe reached Kohima, with a Naga student as guide from Shillong on December 31, 1948. They were restricted from engaging in any religious duties (Symlieh, David 1990)

On the other hand, the development of Catholic mission took an exciting turn among the Lotha Baptist Church members, when the Lakhuti Baptist Church took a disciplinary action against five of its members. As a result, they were excommunicated from the Lakhuti Baptist Church. These members went straight to the nearest Catholic Church at Golaghat and met Rev. Fr. Bollini on December 28, 1950. After some months, since they did not want to remain excommunicated, on April 11, 1951, they requested Rev. Fr. Bollini to accept them once again. The next day, the three Lakhuti villagers, namely, Chenisao Humtsoe, Yantsao Yanthan and Shampano Humtsoe were accepted into the Catholic Church. The First Naga Catholic church began with them and the first religious service was held on May 1, 1951.

In 1952 Mgr. Fr. Bar was replaced by Fr. Marochinno SDB. He build a hut of his own in Kohima village as he had to quit the hospital premises to conduct services. The first Angamis to join the services were Paulus Keviprale, Louis Nezo, and Philip Sousahe.

Fr Marocchino baptized John Keviprale, son of Pualus Keviprale on December 11, 1952. In this way, the Catholic Church was gradually established in Nagaland (*Ibid.*).

Besides, the main Christian denominations of the Baptist and the Catholics, other sectarian denominations like the Pentecostal Church, Assemblies of God, and the Nagaland Christian Revival Church came into existence in the later years, through various influences from within and outside sources (Bendangyapang,2004)

### **Missionaries and their role in literature**

The missionaries gave much importance to education and wherever the gospel went, the tool for propagation was aimed at arming the people with education. Evangelization and education thus went hand in hand everywhere. The missionaries made the spoken language into writing because that was the only effective way of teaching God's word and hymns for worship. The education of the tribes which forms one of the major themes of the process of conversion laid down the basis for all future developments. Wherever they set foot, the first thing the missionaries did was to learn the native language and begin the task of putting it into writing so that the people would receive their first education in their vernacular. Dr Clark, during his stay at Molungyimsen upto his furlough in 1885, had already written a number of books. Thus, it is evident that the Naga literature has grown out of primers, grammar and translations. Dr Clark and his wife were the pioneers in Ao literature. The first work in Ao was a Hymnal compiled by Godhula, the Assamese assistant of Clark which appeared in 1879. In 1885 Clark had translated the book of Mathew, John and Acts from the New Testament. Another primer was published by Mrs Clark in 1891. The Ao Naga Grammar and the First Reader by Mrs Clark was published in 1893, in 1895 an Ao Catechism, a Hymn Book, the First Primer and the life of Joseph written by Dr Clark were printed. Soon after that, an Ao vocabulary and Arithmetic came out, followed by an Ao-English dictionary in 1911, which stands as a testament of Clark's valuable contribution and the result of his long hours of hard work. The Bible translation took much longer time and the New Testament was published in 1927. The full Bible was published only in 1964 (Alemchiba, 1970)

Rev. S. W. Rivenburg was considered as the father of Angami alphabet, who made remarkable contribution in transcribing the Angami language to the Roman script. Rivenburg followed Clark in literary works, the first Angami book was the

translation of the Book of Mathew, published in 1889. In 1892-93, the book of John, Acts, a Primer, an Arithmetic, and a Hymnal were published in 1904. The book titled 'A way to health' and another publication on 'Angami-English Phrases' are Rivenburg's important works. Rivenburg also undertook the translation of the Bible into Angami. In 1927, his translation of the New Testament in Angami was published (*Ibid.*)

Rev. W.E. Witter was responsible for the literary works published in Lotha. He wrote a book on Grammar and vocabulary, which is the first book in Lotha language and it was published in 1888. Other publications followed, a Catechism and a Primer were also published in the same year. The book of Mathew was translated by Perrine and it was published in 1906. Shortly it was followed by the publication of the gospel of Mark. In 1927 a hymnal was also published. A few years later, in 1937 the gospel of Luke was also ready for publication. Finally, the New Testament in Lotha was printed in 1947.

The Publications in Sumi came out more later than the other tribes. The Sema Primer was authored by Dickson in 1908 which was followed shortly by a hymnal. In 1928 was published the gospel of Mark in Sumi and another Sema Hymnal were published. The first Sema reader was published in 1931 – 1932 and in 1939 the Four Gospel books, namely Mathew, Mark, Luke, John and the book of Acts was published (*Ibid.*)

Thus, the Missionaries were the first scholars in their mission fields to bring out literary works that were either translations or authored by them. These literatures aided them in teaching, preaching and evangelizing and also gave the converts the primary education and knowledge to civilize them.

### **The First Schools**

The missionaries worked facing immense difficulties, challenges and stiff resistance. But wherever they set their foot and started a centre, they also started a school in those same locations. Besides the evangelistic works, the most valuable contributions that the first Missionaries to the Nagas, Rev E.W Clark and his wife made for the Nagas was education. Every missionary in their own ways did much to

educate the Nagas so that the evangelization will be more effective and productive. The Clarks reduced the Naga dialect into Roman script. He was strong in his conviction that 'if the gospel should take root in Naga soil, they needed the word of God in their own dialect' (NBCC,1997). It was indeed a tremendous work for him. When Mrs. Mary Mead Clark returned from her furlough from America in 1878, she started a school for Women in Molungyimsen. Thus, the first School for Women in the Naga Hills was started by Mrs Clark. She encouraged the Ao women to learn English. Until the first Ao primer was printed there were no books and they learned through phonetics. Some notable and bright students of Mrs. Clark were Tongpangkoka, Noksangla, Jungmayangla, Purla, Punayangla and Taripisu. The classes were held in the evenings, Bible stories, songs and lessons from Ao primer was taught besides hygiene and cleanliness. In the evenings, prayer meetings were also conducted. Thus, the first formal school began at Molungyimsen under Mrs. Mary Clark. When the Mission centre was shifted to Impur, a mission training Centre was opened there in April 1895. It was run in a hut with nine pupils under the leadership of Rev. Perrine and Rev. Haggard., which is presently known as the Clark Memorial Higher Secondary School. This training centre attracted many young people from all over Mokokchung district as well as neighbouring areas. Many young people walked long distance to reach the school carrying rations that would last for a month. The missionaries formulated the curriculum for all round development. Church attendance was also strictly adhered to. Many key Naga leaders came out of this school, namely, P. Shilu Ao, Hokishe Sema, Dr T. Ao, Sashimeren Aier. Dr. and Mrs. E. W. Clark, Dr. and Mrs. Haggard and Dr. and Mrs. Perrine were the American missionaries who taught in the centre. The first Naga headmaster of the school was G. Meru (1915 -1917) from Zeme tribe and was succeeded by Vihelie Angami (1918-1919), Kumbo Angami (1919 – 1927), and Mayangnokcha Ao (1927-1940). Mayangnokcha was the first Ao graduate and he introduced the Assam curriculum system in the school. He served as the headmaster for a long time and was later on absorbed by the government (*Ibid.,*)

Meanwhile, the Missionaries in Kohima started works to establish a school. Rev. C.D King started the first school which was run in Assamese as there were no books in the local dialect. Later Rivenburg changed the medium to English on King's departure. He also reduced the Tenyidie language into written form using the Roman script, as

done by Clark in Ao. The arrival of Rev. Supplee from Impur to Kohima field was very beneficial to the Angamis. He was instrumental in upgradation of the mission school up to class seven in 1926. The government appreciated the upgradation and stipends were given. The curriculum included a range of subjects. Besides the general subjects, there was Bible class, teacher training, carpentry, blacksmithy, agriculture for boys and weaving for girls. Kohima DC Lambert was pleased for the progress made. Thus in 1941, the Government high school and Mission high school was officially amalgamated into one and Rev. Supplee was entrusted to take care of the school. Finally, the missionaries handed over the school to the government in 1942. Today it stands as the Razukhrie Government Higher Secondary School in Kohima.

Meanwhile in the Lotha area, Rev. R.B. Longwell established a school in Furkating, where Naga teachers like Imtisosang, (father of Rev. I Anang), helped in teaching. The Christian missionaries were the harbinger of modern education to the Nagas, teaching them how to read and write, taught the scriptures, songs and the ways of life, and alongside secular education. Thus the Christian missionaries laid the foundation for the formal education (Bendangyapang, 2004)

Education as a subject of colonial Administration was placed under the general control of the Deputy Commissioner. Accordingly, the government also opened Schools from time to time on the recommendations and under close supervision. Although initially, the government's policy was to leave the responsibility of education to the Christian missionaries with its annual pecuniary aid, in view of the necessity of providing healthy competition to schools run by American Baptist Missionaries, it made a significant change in this policy. The factors which chiefly influenced the government was that, education was not the primary objective for which the missionaries were engaged, rather education went hand in hand with their religious activities. It appears that the missionaries did not approve of the government's initial attempt to take over village schools. Regardless, the government took over the village schools and leaving the missionaries in charge. The Christian missionaries continued to establish schools with the grant they received from the government (Sema, NEIHA proceedings, ninth session, 1988). Thus, the

government had made considerable progress in imparting the rudiments of education in the district.

### **The Impact of Christianity**

The coming of Christianity to the Nagas brought about a complete transformation in the lives of the people. The primary object of the missionaries was to spread the teachings of the Christian religion among the Naga people, but along with it they had the strong conviction of bringing the same group of people to the enlightenment of knowledge through education. Since the Nagas had no written literature of their own, Dr E. W Clark, took recourse to use the English alphabet to transcribe the Naga spoken words. He made use of card-board paper cuttings for the twenty-six alphabets. A Naga girl was trained in the art of using these paper cuttings. The missionaries managed to get a small printing machine from the mission station in Sibsagar, and the first Naga primer was printed. With the assistance of the Naga girl whom they had earlier trained and was also assisting as a teacher, the missionary and his wife gathered around a few boys and girls as pupils and started the work of teaching these pupils the three R's – reading, writing and recording. Subsequently, some bible stories were translated in the Ao language and the Gospels of the New Testament were also translated. The Naga boys and girls who had received the first education were sent out to the neighbouring villages as teachers, and the missionary undertook frequent itinerary visits to those villages. This is how initially the task of dissemination of education to the Nagas was started by the Christian missionaries (Alemchiba, 1970)

The ancient religion of the Nagas has been termed as Animism by social scientist and scholars. To underestimate the religion and culture of a people is to miss the proper understanding of that race. Both literate and illiterate societies find elements of moral strength in their religion. Durkheim maintained that, in simple societies, codes of social behaviour are necessary religious rule, the moral constraint of society and its religious systems were not the same (1915). Mills observes that the religion of the Aos has no element of a moral code and that it is a mere system of ceremony. But for many of the Naga tribes, their religion was the guiding principle of the moral, ethical, cultural and social life of the people in terms of an individual's immediate relation to society and a cohesive force for the whole community

(Imchen,1993). The question as to how the Naga people gave up their old religion and the society deeply entrenched in numerous customs and rituals, embraced Christianity is a query worth understanding. Hokishe Sema makes a clear inference to this, “The life of a Naga was full of superstitions and fears. Moreover, the process of the propitiation of fearful spirits was very costly and beyond the means of most people. On the other hand, the lack of such appeasement always invited vengeance and calamities from the wild spirits. Against such a background, the Christian message of freedom from fear, superstitions and above all from the wild sprits did appeal strongly to the Naga minds. The second approach was that the religion of the Nagas were nothing more than heathenism which was the religion of ignorant and barbaric people. Nagas were told that there is a true God and they must worship the true God. They must give up all their pagan-like characteristics of drinking wine, sexual laxity, stealing, and above all head-hunting, instead they must love one another and they must enroll themselves as soldiers of Christ. The most effective way of attracting the simple villagers to Christianity was by telling them about Hell-fire. All persons who were not Christians would be burnt for ever in an undying fire after their death.” (Sema, H, 1986). The transformation and the contrast in their new ways of lives after embracing Christianity was tremendous and spontaneous.

The change was so rapid that it also brought about some sort of degeneration in their socio-cultural practices. When a person was made a member of the Christian church, he had to change from the old ways to the new one in all his actions, adhering to the Biblical principles and ethics. They were made to discard their old habits, practices and lifestyle. The marked change that was brought about by the evangelizations was firstly, the change in their faith, from the old Naga religion to the Christian faith. The Nagas had to abandon their practice of worshipping the forces of nature, the spirits of stones, water bodies, forest and so on. The observation of ‘genna’ and taboos were also put on hold and they stopped observing their cultural festivals. The missionaries treated various aspects of tribal ceremonies and festivals were ‘pagan’ and considered them incompatible with Christian teachings. As a result, traditional Naga practices such as head-hunting, adorning houses with animal skulls as symbols of valour and display of Mithun horns, as sign of wealth were destroyed. Intricate wood

carvings on house pillars were also burned. The traditional method of weaving with bold patterns, dyeing techniques, and other age old customs declined as the Nagas started wearing shirts, short-pants, sarees and dresses. Valuable traditional ornaments like cowries, ivory, scarlet hair, and hornbill feathers were considered to be associated with spirit worship and were consequently burned. Furthermore, traditional dances and vibrant social rituals were altogether abandoned (Alemchiba,1970)

The most striking change in their way of life was giving up the practise of head hunting and the observance of the feast of merit. This factor tremendously impacted in bringing the head hunting raids and inter-village feuds to a complete halt. The Nagas who were earlier feared as dreadful warriors were now transformed into peaceful Christians. It brought about not only peace among the warring people but the feeling of oneness and unity among the Christian populace.

One of the major vice of the Nagas was the habit of drunkenness. Rice beer was the beverage that was savoured by the Naga tribes and every gathering or festival was incomplete without it. The Christian missionaries considered it as a major concern for social and familial harmony. This also hampered the individual to maintain the Christian discipline and Biblical ethics. So, the missionaries put a stop for all the converted members through various resolutions to abstain from drunkenness. Beside the missionaries also discourage betel nut chewing and the use of opium which was prevalent among some Naga tribes. Another notable change in the social practice of the Nagas was the disposing of the dead in the open or drying of the corpse inside the living quarters. The Nagas had the custom of putting the corpse on an open raised platform outside the village fence, especially prevalent among the Aos. With the introduction of Christianity, this mortuary practice was also abolished and Christian burial in organized graveyard was started.

The pioneer missionaries besides their proselytization work gave attention to providing medical services, humanitarian work and above all in providing enlightenment. The contribution of the American Baptist Missionaries with medical facilities and other activities also worked as a potential mechanism in bringing the Nagas under British authority because the Nagas at that time could not make a

distinction between the British administrators and American missionaries, but saw them both as the 'white man'. The trust that the missionaries instilled in them was therefore fostered towards the British as well. (Sanyu, 2016)

Among the Aos, tattooing of Ao women was a part of their social and customary practice marking the coming of age or the feast of merit. In the winter months when all the works relating agricultural work had ceased, the tattooing activities began, where in some cases it resulted in disfigurement, or infection and death as well. This painful primitive practice was stopped and the Christian women ceased to go through the rituals of tattooing. New ways of dressing and covering the body were taught along with instructions on personal hygiene. The men were made to wear Dhoti and shorts while the women were made to wear sari in place of traditional attires. The missionaries made all the converts keep their body closed and covered. The most significant change brought about was the access to formal education and the opening of schools. The missionaries instructed all the children to attend school.

Thus, Christianity's largest contribution to the Nagas was the complete transformation from their centuries old lifestyle to a new life based on Christian temperance and ethical living; forging love and unity among the tribes; ceasing hostilities and inter village and inter-tribal feuds; developing a sense of belonging and brotherhood among the Nagas and ushering in a new modern outlook in Naga Society. Christianity ushered in a transformation from animistic traditions based on superstitious practices to a more orderly society where the guiding principle was based on Christian laws of love and forgiveness and compassion for fellow human beings. Christianity transformed the fierce spear wielding, head-hunting Naga society to become a Christian state, and today the state of Nagaland has more than 85 percent of its total population as Christians.

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## CHAPTER-4

### Isolation to Engagement – Naga Society in the Inter-War Period

#### Naga Village Republics to Colonial District

For centuries, the Nagas had lived in isolation in the hills in village-States, each village living independent of the others without any outside control or interference in their own ways of life, from generation to generation. Surviving entirely as self-sufficient and self-generating village communities as well as having its own popular government, the councils of the villages being democratically represented by every clan of the village. The requirements of the villages were few, which were supplied by the people themselves. Within the village community, the patrilineal Naga society generally had no marked class distinctions. However, wealthy people were acknowledged when they observed the Feasts of Merit, by which they become entitled to certain social privileges and status with differentiations in their traditional attires or by way of installing commemorative stones or posts etc. Naga society is a patrilineal society and women occupy a significant and high position in the family with equal social status within the society. In Naga society, while the father is the head of the family, the mother is considered as the backbone of the family, on whose shoulder the entire family responsibility rests and functions. The Naga women are one of the most hardworking and industrious women in the region, working from dawn till dusk. From getting up at the break of dawn to prepare food for the family and leaving early to work in the fields alongside the men, their days are filled with never ending chores, carrying head loads of firewood on their way back to the village from the fields, fetching water from the village springs, pounding rice to separate the husks from the grain, cooking and brewing rice wine, looking after the children and taking care of old parents. Weaving was also an important household industry of the Nagas and this work was also done by women. The girls learned cotton ginning, spinning, spindling, etc in the girls dormitories and from their elders (Gazetteer Nagaland Mokokchung district). All the Naga girls had great skill and dexterity in weaving of shawls and they produced cloth requirement for the whole family, which was usually done during the post- harvest season in the winter. Most of the local traditions agree that fibres of bark of certain trees and shrubs and other wild species were used for making cloth before the Nagas learnt about the use of cotton. The

amount of labour and resources required for weaving even a small piece of clothing or shawl was high and it was not an easy task that could be finished right away. The process starts with harvesting the raw cotton grown in their fields in patches along with rice and grain cultivation. It was then spun into cotton yarns followed by the dyeing process which was undertaken by the indigenous method of drawing out colour from various natural plants, some of which are the *Indigo dye* for deep blue or black hues (*Strobilanthes flaccidifolius*) called 'osak' by Ao Nagas as they used this extensively, another vital colour used by many Naga tribes is the red dye, again citing the method of the Aos, it was derived from a plant which in their language is called 'Aozu' or aowali which was mixed with 'tangshi' (wild berry) and 'tangmo' (*sumak*), turmeric for yellow colour (*curcuma longa*). Finally weaving the cloths in the traditional loin looms, which are informations gathered from firsthand accounts of J.P Mills (1926). Today as we look at these productions, they stand out as products that are of high aesthetic value. Starting with the selection of an array of vibrant combination of colours and patterns, each Naga tribe displayed intricately woven designs and attires, which are distinct, and each of the numerous patterns ascribe to the various tribes and clans. These attires of the tribes are not only distinctive markers of the tribes, but many of them are also symbolic indication of the social standing of the wearers, their clan, their acts of merit and signs of valour.

The Naga Villagers were also engaged in a number of traditional crafts which has come down to the present times, like bamboo baskets, cane works, carpentry and wood works, pottery, blacksmithy, brass works, though some of these industries were carried out mostly by tribes and villages who specialised in such crafts like the Konyaks, who are well known as specialist for their knowledge of gun-making and gun powder, unheard of by other tribes. The Naga tradition of gifting their local manufactured daos and spears as a gesture of friendship and cordiality can be recorded from the Ahom period by exchanging such gifts, and this tradition has continued. As the practice of headhunting was prevalent, the villagers lived in fear of outsiders and wary of enemy attacks. In every village, there were one or two smiths who produced tools, implements and weapons to meet the requirement of the villagers.

Trade existed by barter though some of the Naga tribes are known to have their own currency from the pre-colonial period. The Nagas reared domestic animals like pigs, cows, fowls, Mithun, dogs, etc. which was important in Naga economy serving as purpose of diet and medium of exchange. The Aos used the “Jabili”, which were strips of thin iron, ranging from 6 to 8 inches long, known to be a unique Ao traditional currency. The Aos regarded the value of one *Jabili* as equating to one day labour or 4 annas of the British Indian currency. Hutton mentions that *Jabili* used by the Aos were also known by the Sumi though their calculation of the value is not known. Thus, in a short time with the arrival and establishment of Britishers and the Foreign Missionaries, the Nagas’ life of complete isolation was broken as they came suddenly into direct contact with the outside modern civilization. The interaction with the outside World happened through the visits of the tribesmen to the plains which is mentioned in Ahom records and later, in the nineteenth century through the penetration of the white people into the hills.

The British survey tour through the hills in 1832 had culminated in the establishment of their colonial administration in the hills in 1866. The annexation of the Naga Hills by the British brought together the different warring Naga villages and tribes uniting them for the first time under a uniform political administration. Around the same time, the Christian missionaries who entered the Naga hills brought the gospel of peace and love and several civilizing transformations in Naga society. Thus, all these factors combined together led the Naga tribes to break free from the shackles of their centuries of Isolation. The social confinement and solitude of the archaic Naga Villages came to an end with their direct contact with the foreign soldiers and the arrival of Christian missionaries. The Christian missions spread Christianity to the Nagas and managed to make conversions of all the Naga tribes by the late nineteenth and twentieth century. The Naga villages who had very less contact even with their fellow neighbouring villages of the same tribes were now liberated from their erstwhile existence in isolation as feuding principalities. One of the enlightening effects of the British administration in the Naga hills had been the suppression of the practice of headhunting and slave trade. In other aspects, the government did not interfere in the social and cultural lives of the Nagas. “In dealing with the new subjects, the British did not attempt to establish their own culture by destroying prevailing customs and local practices. The British did not introduce any significant

changes in the administration of the Nagas, allowing the Nagas to continue to rule and administer their villages according to their respective customs and traditions. The government was involved only in maintenance of law and order and collection of annual revenue of Rs 2 per household, no other tax was charged. The British introduced a system of administration which left the responsibility of local administration to the native village chiefs, thus allowing the Nagas the freedom of governing themselves in their own traditional ways. Thus, the responsibility of internal village administration was left to the village headman or gaonburas by the government, they were entrusted by the British Government with the power to maintain and administer law and order of the village as per the laid down customary laws. This system of governance was uniformly established all over the British administered areas in the Naga Hills. What the government attempted and succeeded in doing was that it sought to modify some aspects of Naga cultural practices which did not conform to the interests of colonial administration” (Piketo,1992) The Naga Hills which was first formed as a separate district in 1866 to check the Naga raids into the plains of Assam, with headquarters at Samaguting under the jurisdiction of the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal who acted as agent of the Governor- General and governed through the Chief Commissioner of Assam. It was decided to shift the headquarters from Samaguting to Wokha in 1876 and duly set up the headquarters in the central region of the Naga Hills at Wokha. However, it was shifted to Kohima for the control of the principal Angami Villages in 1878. Wokha was set up as a subdivision to control the powerful Lotha villages of that area, who had recently killed captain Butler in an ambush carried out by Pangti Lotha Village, while undertaking a survey tour of Lotha and Ao areas. In 1874, Naga Hills was transferred to Assam as a District under the Chief Commissionership of Assam, the same year it was declared a ‘Scheduled District’ under the Scheduled Districts Act, 1874. Under this Act the Nagas were safeguarded from the laws prevailing in the rest of the British Indian Empire. As a result, the Naga Hills came to be exempted from the Codes of Law, and Civil and Criminal procedures, also curtailing the jurisdiction of the Calcutta High court to only criminal cases involving British European subjects, while the Deputy Commissioner settled disputes between the tribes during his tours. This regulation enabled the government to administer the Nagas in a simple and more personal manner. The responsibility of administration continued to function under their chiefs and headmen.

### **Constitutional Changes**

The next constitutional change in status occurred under the Government of India Act of 1910, which categorized the Naga Hills as 'Backward Tract' and Governor of Assam governed it as agent of the Governor- General. Since the Act provided for gradual transfer of administrative responsibility to the provincial government, the Governor administered through his administrative agencies, the Deputy Commissioner and his assistants and local functionaries such as Gaonburas and Dobashis. The Last constitutional change concerning Naga Hills came with the passing of the Government of India Act of 1935, under which the Naga Hills, Lushai Hills and NEFA tract were classified as 'Excluded Area' of the government of Assam, coming directly under the Governor of Assam. This constitutional position continued till 26<sup>th</sup> January 1950, though from 15<sup>th</sup> August 1947, the powers of Governor also got divested. Hence, the British rule did not seriously change the basic structure of the Naga Society and it continued to retain its traditional character. All disputes and offences within the village were dispensed by the village chief and councils through Naga customary laws and conventions. The positions of the native administrative institutions like village Chief or headmen/elders had existed from pre-colonial times and some like Dobashis were created after the inception of British rule. Therefore, owing to the important position and role they played in Naga society, a highlight of these local administrative agents is being incorporated here.

### **Native Administrative agencies- Village Chiefs & Gaonburas**

Under the Colonial administration, the Government enlisted the services of Village Chiefs in the administration of the Naga villages. Hereditary Village chiefs of Naga tribes such as Chiefs of Sumi, Chang, Konyak tribes were recognised and given the responsibility of continuing their traditional functions and supervising the maintenance of law and order within the village and assessment and collection of annual house tax. But in other Naga tribes where the practice of Chieftainship did not exist, such as among the Angami, Ao, Lotha, Rengma and other tribes, the Government appointed Headmen or Gaonburas in accordance with the customs and local practices of those communities in selecting their Village Elder or Head. Both the hereditary chiefs of various Naga villages and village elders or headmen in those tribes among whom chieftainship does not exist were tasked by the government in village governance. With the extension of their administration, the Government

started appointing Village chiefs from 1882, recognising the existing headmen or elder in the villages. Hutton mentions that in some Angami Villages even though chieftainship did not exist, there were '*Pehumas*' or chiefs who seem to have a similar authority as vested in the Gaonburas by the Government. Although it is most unlikely that their influence was hereditary, Khonoma villagers speak of two of their chiefs by the name of Dopule and Pelhu, and a descendant of the latter, Fezherr becomes one of the Gaonburas of the village (Hutton, 1969). Thus, it can be seen that the heads appointed to assist the Government in local administration were probably men of influence and good standing among their villages.

The evolution of leadership in Naga society is often extended to the eldest member of the family, and in cases where there are two brothers in contention for the same status or position, the seniority factor always takes precedence. From family headship a person could rise to clan head and village head. Among the Sumi, the founding of a new village would automatically invest the position of Chieftainship on him. Apparently, the Chiefs were the most influential and powerful individuals commanding an undisputed position in their respective villages (Hutton, 1921) The functions of the chiefs were collection of annual house tax for the government, settling of civil and criminal cases by applying customary laws, maintenance of law and order in their respective villages. Thus, aside from carrying out administrative roles, the village chiefs were also tasked with the responsibility of carrying out police work in their village.

### **The Dobashis**

Along with the Village Chiefs and Gaonburas, another native agency which assisted the British government in the administration of the Naga Hills was the Dobashis. The Dobashis or native interpreters were the right-hand men of the colonial administrators in the district. The Dobashis were the chief means through whom the British administration was able to establish successful relations with the various Naga Tribes. Since 1840's, the British had been searching for all ways and means to befriend the Nagas and had started the work of befriending the Nagas by allowing Naga visitors to stay with them as residentary delegates at Nowgong and Sibsagar. When they established an outpost at Samaguting, the British continued with the same policy of keeping residentary delegates and granting them stipends. The object was

to use these Nagas to assist them in settling and checking the feuds among the hill tribes. They also acted as guide or escorts and intelligence for the government. In course of time, even villages which had 'formerly stayed aloof from the government wanted to have the privilege of having their own representative with the political agent 'and thus become the residentiary delegates (Foreign Deptt, Pol-A, May 1873). In 1881, the system became permanent. However, it was laid down that to be accepted as resident delegate, the main criteria were the ability to translate one's tribal language to the British officers and vice-versa, and the native representatives to the government were thus known as interpreters. The Naga interpreters came to be more popularly known as 'Dobashis', a hindi term literally meaning 'two languages. Later on, the position of Dobashis got classified under 'superior services and more Dobashis were appointed representing all the tribes. The criteria of their selection were made on the basis of individual resourcefulness and authority at the level of their village or tribe they represented, they also needed to have knowledge to interpret broken Assamese, now known as Nagamese, the common lingua-franca which the British government used while communicating with the tribes. They were paid by the government a monthly pay of Rs.10 in the early years but the Dobashis were upgraded to Superior services category and from then on, from 1918, their monthly pay was also doubled. Hence, we can see the important role they played while assisting government by acting as agents of communication and disseminating the government orders to the tribes.

The British administration in the Naga Hills had initially faced a lot of difficulties and hardships. The fact that the Nagas constituted numerous tribes and did not have a unified administration or a single language or a common land-mass, prevented them from falling into a state of conquests and subordination from early times. For the Nagas, they had never had a unified centralised system of government nor kingship whose fall or surrender could have forced the nation to surrender. Every Village had to be subdued in order to establish supremacy, and every tribe had to be fought. The lack of unity and the absence of a single political system amongst the Nagas, in the end proved to be a boon in maintaining their independence. It was only under British occupation that the unity of the tribes could be gradually forged as they came into closer interaction with one another.

## **Social and Political developments during the inter- war period**

### **(The Naga Labour Corps ,1917 )**

The nineteenth century was a period of tremendous upheaval in the history of the World, a period that witnessed the ravages of two World Wars causing death and destruction of unprecedented, immeasurable, astronomical proportions, with an estimated death of 10 million military, 20 million wounded, over 10 million civilian dead and financial losses running as high as 147 billion by the Allies and 61 billion by the Central powers. Sometimes, to fully understand the destiny chalked out by the Almighty for the course of human civilizations is indeed unfathomable, but to imagine even once that the half-naked and still unclothed tribes of Naga Hills were pre-destined to encounter such a phenomenon as the two Global Wars in World History in their own remote abode and that the Naga Hills became the stage of one of the fiercest Battlefields of the Second World War would have seemed beyond the comprehensive capacity of every Naga , but the tales and stories carried by those who were spectators and participants in the War jolt us into the reality of this catastrophe that happened in Naga soil. The period between the Wars therefore, occupies a significant part of Naga history, as it was in this period that events unfolded rapidly steering the future course of the State of Nagaland. In 1914, the British Empire extended over several Colonies spread out across all Continents of the World. The Naga Hills had also become a part of the British Indian Dominion, as a District of Assam. When the Great War broke out in Europe, Britain was the leader of the Allied forces (Entente) and marched to the war with 700,000 soldiers, the number rising to over 4 million men with the introducing of mandatory conscription by the Military Service Act in 1916. As the War progressed, the British War committee or the War Cabinet realised the shortage of labour as combatants could not be spared for non-combat roles. There was an urgent need for unskilled labour for building roads, railway tracks, carrying ammunition, docks, forest clearing, quarries, trench and grave digging among the long list of works. This labour had to be brought in from its Colonies abroad Including from China. From India, soldiers in great numbers had already been drafted from the big provinces of Punjab, United Provinces, Madras, Bombay and the burden of providing labour fell on Assam, Bengal, Orissa, and the North western Frontier province. Archdale Earle, the Chief Commissioner of Assam came forward promising to sign up eight to ten thousand able bodied hill men in the labour force. The British recruited a strength of 21,000 strong Labour force from the

tribals of present day Eastern and North Eastern India in 1917. A strong force of 50,000 labour troops were drafted from all over India. The Labour corps. Organization was responsible for providing essential services to the army such as cooking, laundry, moving supplies and stores, loading and unloading ships, trains, repairing roads, railways, carrying the wounded and burying the dead. Large number of recruits and volunteers from the Northeast joined to serve as paid labourers and porters in France on the western front. At first it was carried out on volunteer basis but later regional recruitment drive was undertaken, which led to the formation in 1917 of the Naga Labour Corp., along with Khasi, Garo, Lushai, Manipur and also Chin Labour Corp., from the Chin state of Burma, which was then a part of British India. While for millions across the World, the Great War was a theatre of pain and grief, for the thousands of tribal men from the Northeast region who had limited contact with the outside World, it was an epic journey of adventure and exploration. But they embarked on this mission, unaware of the perilous trials and tribulations that awaited them in an unknown land far away from the hills, never expecting that for most of them this was going to be their first and last journey and would not be returning home.

For the Nagas, this was a period when the Naga territory had been brought under British administration by means of annexations and pacifications. The most recent annexation was the Tuensang region in 1903. By enlisting the services of the Village heads or Gaonburas, the British were able to recruit 2000 Nagas, comprising of 1000 Sumis, 400 Lothas, 200 Aos, 200 Rengmas, 200 Changs and other Trans- Frontier tribes under the designation of 21<sup>st</sup> Naga Labor Corp. The criteria for the recruitment were that, the Nagas were not enlisted as combatants but they would be disciplined like soldiers and must be agile and strong; a leader had to be chosen among them who must be a person capable of commanding and controlling them and he was to be assisted by a host of Naga interpreters and British veterans; they were paid monthly pay of Rs. 15 within India, Rs.20 beyond Indian territory, extra wage equivalent to one month wage of 20 to be added when they board the ship; they were to be given remission from house tax; compensation for injury; if they get killed or die during the War, their family or clan shall be compensated with one-time ex-gratia of rupees 300/-; only those who can serve till the end were to be recruited. With these solemn agreements, Kuhoi Zhimomi, mentioned as Ko Ho Sema Naga, the warrior son of

legendary Sumi Warrior Chief Sukhai Zhimomi was chosen to command over the Naga Labour Corps. The Nagas were asked to carry a set of traditional attires and their daos and spears. They marched out on 21 April 1917, and arrived in France in two groups. The first group of 688 Nagas reached on 21 June, 1917; the second group numbering 992 men reached on 2 July, 1917. The reason of the late arrival is not specifically known, however some Naga returnees narrated that they encountered a ship wreck on the way, but with their customary fortitude the Nagas were not shaken and carried on undeterred with equanimity braving all the odds. There were also more than four hundred who came but could not be enlisted for the journey to France, probably on account of health or other related reasons. The Deputy Commissioner H.C Barnes went in command with a number of clerks and Dobashis. These Naga men initially were divided into four Units of 15<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> Naga Labour companies and were again renumbered as the 35<sup>th</sup>, 36<sup>th</sup>, 37<sup>th</sup>, and 38<sup>th</sup> Naga Labour Companies. The Nagas were drafted to assist the Allied forces, on reaching their foreign destination, the Naga men worked hard, carrying out heavy manual labour works. The British could also observe this that they required sufficient food and diet for energy and strength. However, the Nagas were not provided sufficient food and clothing in that severely harsh cold climate where they had landed. The Nagas expressed that they were not treated well, at par with others, they faced discrimination. An article published in Nagaland Post, the popular news daily, documents that one of the Lotha leader, Wonimo Murry belonging to Okotso Village had stepped upto ask for food and clothes for his team members, he had requested the British officer Herbert Charles Barnes to provide them with sufficient food and clothing. But the officer felt insulted that a mere labourer dared to ask him for such things, Barnes was the officer in charge and SDO and later Deputy Commissioner of Naga Hills (Nagaland Post, Oct 8,2019) The Nagas undertook road repairing, and salvage works etc., in Mametz, Le Transloy, Haute Avesnes, Contalmaison and Guillemont. The Naga men had good and brave leaders, many of them including the Sumi Warrior Kuhoi Zhimomi ended up sacrificing their lives in a foreign land. Kuhoi Zhimomi has his grave laid in Mazarquez Cemetery at Marseilles, engraved on his epitaph is salutation address of “Mate”, (not seen in any of the others) followed by ‘Kuhoi took 24 heads and was present at the death of 130 enemies at Battle’(Nagaland Post, Nov.25, 2018). His two sons who accompanied their father on this gallant Naga sojourn returned home without their brave father. The same tale

echoes the fate and narration of all the Naga heroes and the many brave souls from the hills of Northeast whose destinies were sealed together as they embarked on this journey under the Indian Labour Corps., a very large number of them died in France, many of them due to illness and some were killed in the war front.

Back home, a batch of 817 Naga Labour Corps. from Naga Hills were enlisted and waiting to go to France, comprising of 120 Ao, 60 Lotha, 90 Sumi, 480 Angami, 60 Kuki and Kacha Nagas but this batch was diverted and engaged in the Kuki Rebellion in January 1918. The Nagas on their return from France quickly realised the need to organize and unite themselves, some of them along with some interpreters and other Nagas in government services formed a Socio- Political Association in 1918 called the Naga Club ([http:// hiddenhistorieswwi.ac.uk](http://hiddenhistorieswwi.ac.uk)).

### **The Role of the Naga Club, 1918**

The first Naga Public Organization to be formed in Nagaland was the “Naga Club” which was founded in 1918 in Kohima. It was initially formed as a social club soon after the return of the Naga Labour Corps. Lately, there has been counter claims on this issue, however the truth is that it comprised of both the then government servants and some of the Labour corps group members. After a few years, its branches were started in Mokokchung and Wokha, covering all the three colonial administrative centres of the Naga Hills. The founders of the Naga Club in Kohima mostly comprised of government employees and staffs of the Deputy Commissioner’s office in Kohima. It is widely known that the Naga Club was formed by the Naga Labour corps. after they returned from the War in 1918. The Naga Club founders in Kohima being mostly government employees and village heads must be true but in other sub-division branches, the Naga Labour corps. returnees were probably actively involved in the Naga Club’s set up, the fact of the matter is that, it was from these tribes and immediate adjoining tribes that major portion of the recruits were enlisted. No doubt, there was a second batch of the Naga labour Corps. waiting to travel outside but they were sent to the Kuki Rebellion in Manipur. So this distinction is also being highlighted to maintain proper historical records. Hence, with this strong assumption that the Naga Club members in the two sub-divisions must have comprised of returnees of the Naga labour Corps. and government employees, teachers and doctors

etc., it is surmised that the Naga Club members comprised of a mixture of both government servants and the Naga returnees from the World War-1.

The first President of the Naga Club was Rheichalie Pienyu, a Peshkar in the Deputy Commissioner's office, Kohima, Naga Hills, he served as the President, Secretary and Treasurer of the Naga Club from 1918 to 1942 (<https://nagaclub.in>). The Club members consisted of Nagas in Government services and a few leading village headmen from neighbouring villages (Alemchiba, 1970). The Naga Club was formed with the objective to promote among the Nagas unity and harmony, economic upliftment, political consciousness and socio- cultural activities. On the lines of the British officers Club, the members of the Club who were also mostly the more educated among Nagas at that time wanted to establish a club where they could meet and have quality interactions. It may be understood that the Naga Club members comprised of a mixture of government servants and the Naga returnees from the World War 1, who though popularly referred to as Labour Corps. members were actually the interpreters or Dobashis, clerks and other government servants who had accompanied them. It is well known that during those days, Nagas in Government services were all men of influence in their village communities and tribes and were the rich and powerful class. The Labour corps received high salary for their sacrificial service to the War effort and when they returned home, they came with not only their high life changing experiences and knowledge of the outside World but also financially enriched. These men had now become the most influential members of the village and the tribe. Other educated Nagas including teachers and Doctors etc also joined the Naga Club cutting across tribal lines. Charles Chasie mentions that the Naga Club is "Dubbed as first-generation Naga Elites" (2017) which can be appreciated as a veracious fact. Thus, the Naga Club emerged as the first Naga Public organization with members drawn from the intellectual and the influential section of Naga Society in that period. In Kohima, the first Naga Club building was in Chotobosti after the World War 1.

The Naga Club units were also formed in Mokokchung and Wokha sub-divisional towns. During the same time, the Lothas formed their Council in 1923 and the Ao Tribal Council was founded in 1928, the other Tribal Councils were mostly set up in the 1940's. The objectives of the Club by now had extended to taking up the general

welfare of the Nagas, promoting unity, fraternity and understanding among them and to facilitate the different Naga tribes to get to know each other. The Naga Club, Mokokchung unit had its office building in the location which is presently occupied by the Office of the State Bank of India, main branch (nagaclub.in). The first Ao Tribal Council Office also operated from the same Naga Club building in Mokokchung, which had two buildings with a spacious compound utilised as badminton court and other games. The Naga Club ran a Co-operative store in Mokokchung which was one of the first commercial enterprise to be opened in the Naga Hills, which continued as the Ao Trading Co-operative Store.

### **Demand for Self – Determination to the Simon Commission**

In 1927 the British Government under the Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin appointed a Statutory Commission to report on the working of the Indian Constitution established by the Government of India Act, 1919, known as the Montague-Chelmsford Reforms, and to recommend reforms. Seven members were appointed with Sir John Simon as the Chairman, thus popularly known as the Simon Commission. Sir John Simon, was an acclaimed legal luminary in Britain, the other members were representatives of different political parties, including:

- 1) Sir John Simon (Chairman)
- 2) Donald Howard, Conservative party
- 3) Clement Attlee, Conservative Party
- 4) Edward Cadogan, Conservative party
- 5) Vernon Hartshorn, Labour Party
- 6) Harry Levy Lawson, Liberal Unionist Party
- 7) George Lane-Fox, Conservative Party.

The Indian National Congress opposed the Simon Commission for its non-inclusion of even a single Indian member. When the Simon commission led by John Simon with Clement Attlee and Edward Cadogan visited Kohima on 10 January, 1929, the members of the Naga Club submitted a Memorandum.

(Refer Appendix 1)

The Naga Memorandum to the Simon Commission was the first official document of the Nagas expressing their distinctness from the Indian people and asserting that they wanted to be left alone. They expressed that they preferred to be under the British

instead of being with any part of India, and if it was not possible, they wanted to be left alone. The 1929 Memorandum laid the foundational step in the Nagas quest for political self-determination.

The Members of the Commission were impressed by the Naga claims. Speaking before the special committee of the House of Commons in May 1935, Cadogan mentioned that he considered himself honoured to be one of the few in the House who have had a conversation with the head-hunters in their own jungle, and that these little tribesmen were more sophisticated than they had imagined, and they already have a shrewd suspicion that their immemorial rights and customs were in danger. When the British Government passed the Government of India Act of 1935, as per the demand of the Naga Memorandum, the Nagas were left outside the Reformed scheme of India and placed under the Excluded Area category in 1936, within the special power of the Governor. The Act was introduced in 1937, Robert Reid became the first Governor of Assam and the Naga Hills Excluded Area came directly under his charge. For clarity on the title of 'Excluded area', Robert Reid mentions to the Anthropological Society of England, that the title of "Excluded Areas" is an official phrase replacing the earlier phrase of "Backward Tracts" and the areas under this category (Excluded, Partially Excluded) were not to be brought within the purview of the said Act but directly administered by the Governor (*Chasie, 2017*) The Simon Commission instead of Backward proposed for the establishment of two categories of Excluded areas which is again divided into Excluded and Partially Excluded for mainly administrative convenience.

### **The Rise of Naga Nationalism - The Naga National Council**

The Second World War broke out and Kohima became one of the battlefields, where the fiercest battles were fought. Thousands of men fell in the battle of Kohima. Today, the Commonwealth War Cemetery stands there as a grim reminder of the War which has left a tremendous impact on the Naga society.

- After the end of the Second World War, the then Deputy Commissioner, C.R Pawsey established an institution called the Naga Hills District Tribal Council in April, 1945, with a view to bring the Nagas together. The following year, on February 2, 1946, the Council held a Conference in Wokha for all the Tribal Councils and changed the nomenclature to 'Naga National Council'(NNC). It was

the only political organisation in the Naga Hills with the aim to foster the welfare and social aspirations of the Nagas and it received official patronage. Its sphere extended to political aspirations and played a definitive role in the growth of Naga Nationalism. The Naga National Council was composed of 29 members representing the various tribes based on proportional representation of 1-member representing 10,000 people of his tribe. Every Naga citizen was by virtue of birthright a member of the Naga National Council. From its early formation. It was a Naga People's Political organization supported and financed by the Villages. It had no paying membership and voluntary contributions were made for the maintenance of the Council, ranging from rupee 1 to 100. The NNC was closely knitted through the Central Council, Tribal Councils, Regional Councils and Village Councils. Right from its inception, the policy of the Naga National Council was to establish an Independent Naga Country and to safeguard the Indigenous Naga customs and culture (Nuh, The Morung Express, 7 Aug, 2012) The office bearers were elected from amongst the members, following are the names of Nagas who served as President of the Naga National Council:

- First Chairman (sessional)- Mayangnokcha, chairing meetings before August 1947
- First President -T. Aliba Imti, elected in August 1947office bearers were elected from amongst the members.
- Second President -Mhondamo kithan, November 1948
- Third President -Visar Angami, 1949 to1950
- Fourth President – A.Z. Phizo, December 1950 to 1990

By now, the Indian National Movement led by the Congress was already approaching the final stages of freedom, and talks were already rife about India's complete separation from Britain. During the closing years of British rule, when the Independence of India became a concrete reality, some of the British officers began to pursue various proposals of continuing the British administration over the hill areas. The proponents envisaged a merging together of the tribals of the Assam area and the tribals in Burma in order to form a 'Crown Colony'. Robert Reid, the then Governor of Assam forwarded the Crown Colony proposal for amalgamating the hill tribes of Northeast India and the frontier regions of the Northwest of Burma into a

single British Colony. This secret plan was conceived and discussed at the highest circles for a Crown colony, also supported by British administrators in Naga Hills like James P Mills and his successor Philip F. Adams. The crown colony proposal was aimed to retain British control over certain areas of Northeast and Burma by establishing a separate colony, even after India's anticipated Independence. The Nagas had already heard of the news of this supposedly discreet proposal that the British were proposing a scheme to map out a 'Trust territory' comprising of the Naga Hills, the areas under the North East Frontier agency (NEFA) and the tribal areas of Burma. This suggestion of forming a new State had been in essence a Crown colony, which would be separate from India and directly administered from London. Later, on the lines of this proposal, Reginal Coupland also came up with a similar idea referred to as the 'Coupland Plan' in 1940, but suggesting that the Government of India and Burma sign a Treaty with Britain wherein each will take shares of responsibility for the new area. But the educated Nagas did not lend even the slightest support to these plans. Sir Andrew Clow, who succeeded Reid as Governor of Assam, the various tribal leaders of Assam and the Indian National Congress all rejected the proposal. The Viceroy, Lord Wavell, also discouraged the idea. If the educated Naga leaders had supported the efforts by the local British officers to push through this suggestion instead of rejecting it in utter haste, publicizing fear of the British colonising their Country, the Naga story might have been completely different today. The fears encircling the Naga Society then were more or less unfounded in reality since the Naga Hills was already directly under British rule even then. Here, brief mention of the political status of Hongkong may be a suitable example. The British had established its control over Hongkong since 1841 to 1997. After the second World War, the process of decolonization of Britain's Imperial Empire and also the other European Colonial Countries was taking place, granting former Colonial Nations Independent status. But for Hongkong, it continued in its status as Crown Colony of the British, and it was a dependent territory till 1997, when it was finally handed over to China. The Indian National Congress had already launched the clarion call of Quit India Movement. The fear of British colonialism spread quickly among them and the educated Nagas made a firm decision that "the British must go".

**Nehru's letter to the NNC (1946)**

Meanwhile, Jawaharlal Nehru, the President of the Indian National Congress had written a letter to T. Sakhrie, Secretary of NNC on 1<sup>st</sup> August, 1946 giving his views on the question of Naga Integration. Nehru stated that the Naga Hills was much too small to stand by itself politically or economically, being positioned as it was between India and China part of it consisting backward people in need of considerable help. The British Government would not be able to hold on to the Naga Territory after Indian Independence. The Nagas would be isolated there between India and China, and therefore, Naga territory must become a part of India and Assam with which it has developed close associations.

He further added that they believed in the policy that “tribal areas should have as much freedom and autonomy as possible to allow them to live their own lives according to their own customs and desires. Thus, he laid down that Naga Hills should constitute an integral part of Assam Province with local autonomy and due safeguards for the interests of Nagas.

Nehru also wrote that Nagas should not remain as excluded area but was to be controlled under an elected Naga National Council, and at the same time have representatives in the Assam Provincial Assembly. If Naga territory is granted some autonomy, arrangement for proper representation would follow. Nehru's plan was to have all the excluded areas incorporated with other areas with certain special provisions for their protection. On question of common language, it was to be decided by the Nagas themselves, with more suitable options being Assamese or Hindustani.

While some of Nehru's suggestions in his letter were favourable contents offered to the Nagas, it also gives the strong impression that Nehru had already worked out the formula for the integration of the Naga Hills to the Indian Union by bringing it as a part of Assam.

**NNC's declaration of Independence, 1947**

After making the decision that the British must leave them, the Nagas were faced with the decision of whether or not the Naga Hills should be immediately constituted

into an independent sovereign State. In June, 1947, the NNC issued an ultimatum that the Naga Hills should cease to be a part of India when Independence was attained. The NNC's ultimatum drew a great deal of controversy and exposed that there were people in the NNC who were short sighted in their political vision for the future of the Nagas. At this stage, the NNC members were divided into three groups-

- One group favoured immediate Independence.
- One group, mostly moderates favoured the continuance of Governmental relations with India in some modified form, until such time the Nagas were sufficiently trained in the art of running a modern State.
- Yet another group existed, who were minority and they wanted to bring Nagaland into a category of Mandatory State under the British Government for a specific period of time.

After considering all these views, the plan was made for the formation of an Interim Government with the British Government and the Indian Government acting as guardian power over the Naga Hills for a period of ten years, at the end of which the question of their political future would be left to the Naga people themselves to decide. In 1947 a Naga delegation went to New Delhi and submitted the proposal to Lord Louis Mountbatten, the last British Viceroy of India citing that the Naga Hills should be left outside the Indian Union. But the request received no direct reply and the Nagas were told to make their wishes known to the Sub-Committee of the Constituent Assembly ('Advisory Committee on the Aboriginal Tribes') which was scheduled to visit Konia.

### **Proposal for Interim Government**

The members of the 'Sub-Committee of the Advisory Committee on Aboriginal tribes', visited Kohima on 20 May, 1947. The Naga National Council proposed the Ten years Interim Government to the Committee under the following terms:

1. The Interim Government will be governed by the Naga People having full powers in respect of Legislative, Executive and Judiciary.
2. Nagaland belongs to the Naga People and will be inalienable.
3. The Interim Government of the Naga People will have full powers in the matter of raising revenue and expenditure, an annual subvention to cover the deficit being given by the Guardian power.

4. For defence and for aiding civil power in case of emergency, a force considered necessary by the Naga National Council will be maintained in Nagaland by the Guardian power. That force will be responsible to the Naga National Council who will in turn be responsible to the Guardian Power.

The Committee's purpose was to persuade the Nagas to join the Indian Union. The NNC submitted their proposal for the Ten years Interim Government and the Bordoloi Committee raised several questions to the NNC delegates about Nagas participation in the Provincial and the Central Legislatures, the areas and extent of autonomy, financial delegation and management of land by the Nagas, pointing towards the direction of a joining the Indian Government. However, for the NNC delegates, the decision and proposal of the Nagas had already been made and their wishes were clearly embodied in the memorandum submitted to them. So, when the Committee raised all these points, the Naga National Council categorically maintained that the Sub-committee's queries and concerns could have been seriously considered if the Nagas Hills was going to become a part of India. But the Nagas had never entertained the idea of Naga Hills joining India and hence, they refused to be dragged into discussions on that line (Alemchiba,1970) The visit of the Advisory Committee ended in a deadlock, the Nagas stood firm on their demand.

#### **Nine-Point Agreement (Hydari Agreement)**

Immediately on the heels of the Sub-Committee visit, in June 1947, Akbar Hydari, the Governor of Assam came to Kohima and negotiated with the Nagas, holding week long meetings with the Naga National Council on June 27,28 and 29,1947. This meeting led to the Nine Point Memorandum, known as the Hydari Agreement. (Refer Appendix 2)

For more clarity, some additional points on the above are being furnished. Regarding point number one, cases arising between Nagas in the Naga Hills were to be settled according to Naga Customary laws or such laws to be introduced with the consent of the duly recognised Naga representative organisations. In cases of severe sentence of death or transportation, an appeal could be made to the Governor. Regarding the executive powers vested on the Nagas in point two, while the district officers were to be appointed on the discretion of the Governor, the sub- divisions of the Naga Hills

were to be administered by sub-divisional councils with full-time executive Presidents, paid by the Naga National Council. The Naga National Council was to exercise all the powers earlier vested on the district officers, they were to take full control of PWD, and to pay for all the services of staffs in Education and Forest Departments. A few more provisions were laid down to preserve and protect the individuality of the Nagas, in the legislative part of the Agreement contained in point three. With the goal to protect the natural habitat and resources of the Nagas from control by outsiders, the agreement says that Nagas land with all its resources was not to be alienated to non – Naga people without the consent of the Naga National Council. Regarding boundaries of the Naga Hills, this agreement explicitly agreed on restoring back to the Nagas the forest transferred to Sibsagar and Nowgong for easier administration and all these to become a unified under one administration. Regarding the boundaries of the districts, the Naga National Council added an annexure to the agreement. In this annexure, it laid claim to a number of Tea gardens and forest reserves in Assam. Citing all the historical references to the district, the annexure says that the ancient boundaries with the Ahom Kingdom, which ran from the Dikhu river in the vicinity of Naganimara and Nagachari should be restored. The Government had accepted this representation in principle that the boundaries should be modified by saying “The present administrative divisions should be modified” (Hokishe,1986)

The last provision i.e., clause 9 of the Nine-point Agreement generated a lot of controversy surrounding its interpretation. The intentions of Assam Governor Hydari Ali and Prime Minister Nehru, who had blessed and accepted this Agreement, obviously was that after a period of ten years the Nagas would be free to choose for themselves the precise pattern of administration, within the Constitution of India, which was yet to be formulated. However, the provisions of the Ninth Point created great confusion. The Naga extremists claimed that the provision of the Ninth Point gave to them the right to even secede from India and to establish for themselves a sovereign Independent State (*Ibid.*)

The wording of the last point was rather ambiguous and gave rise to misinterpretations and confusion. The Nagas who opposed the agreement were dissatisfied with the wording of this last point as it dealt with Nagas Right to self-

determination at the end of the agreement period but the members of the Naga National Council were made to understand that the wording of this point fully met the aspirations of the Nagas. Appeals seeking further time for discussion of the point among themselves was reported to have been refused. The Nine-point Agreement was rushed through in the face of opposition from one side of the NNC. Sir Charles Pawsey put up the issue on vote, the Agreement was approved by a small majority. The minority members declared the Agreement as null and void (Alemchiba,1970).

The whole concept of the idea which had originally been submitted to the Indian Government by the Naga delegation had been taken out of context by the negotiating group. *Elwin Verrier* states “The intention, of course, was that, at the end of ten years the Nagas would be free to suggest, if they so wished, changes in the administrative pattern to suit their special character and to ensure a greater measure of autonomy within India. Some of the Nagas, however, misinterpreted the Article to mean that they would have the liberty to demand complete separation” (*Elwin,1961*) Under all the cloud of uncertainty, a year later a Naga delegation called on the Governor of Assam seeking clarification on whether the Nine-point Agreement would actually be implemented. Both the Governor Akbar Hydari and Gopinath Bardoloi, the then chief Minister of Assam made it clear that Article 9 had never borne the interpretation the Nagas had put upon it, the Article had always meant that after ten years more acceptable arrangements could be considered, if necessary, and more developed system of autonomy worked out, but within the Indian Union (*Ibid.,*)

The Nagas had agreed to the Agreement with the intention of deciding their future political aspirations by the end of ten years of guardianship rule under the Indian Government. This point was clear enough from their memorandum. In fact, there was to be no room for the supposed confusion to arise if it was not already pre-planned or a ‘staged confusion’. However, it only points towards the division of the members of the Naga National Council themselves on the interpretation issue of clause Nine. It may be recalled that, when the NNC had made a declaration of complete Independence, the schism within the Naga National Council had already started and it had now an ideological divide of moderates and extremists.

### **Naga delegation meets Gandhi**

A delegation of six members from the minority group that had earlier rejected the Agreement, went to Delhi in July 1947 and proposed the view that when India gets Independence, the Naga Hills should be left outside the Indian Union. On July 19, 1947 the Nagas met Mahatma Gandhi at his Bhangi Colony residence, and Gandhiji told the Naga delegation that the Nagas have every right to be Independent. Also, the Nagas seem to have informed him that they wish to become Independent by August 15, to which declaration Gandhi replied to them “Why not now? Why wait for August 15? I had become Independent long ago”. With all this unexpected cheerful and heartwarming response, the Nagas got worried if Gandhiji had taken them seriously or not, they also informed Gandhiji about Sir Akbar Hydari’s threat to them in Kohima that in the event of the Nagas becoming independent and declaring themselves Independent, military would be used against them. Gandhiji suddenly became serious and said, “Sir Akbar Hydari is wrong. He cannot do that. But if he does, I will come to Kohima and ask him to shoot me before they shoot one Naga”. Gandhi also told the Nagas who went to meet him, ‘I believe in the brotherhood of men but I do not believe in force or enforced union. If you do not wish to join the Indian Union no one will force you to join the Union, no one will force you to do that. The Congress will not do that. (Alemchiba,1970) After Gandhi was assassinated, no other Indian leader arose who could equal Gandhiji in his love of freedom and his sympathy with a people whose freedom and independence were being suppressed.

Gradually, the extremist became stronger within the Naga National Council. A delegation of Nagas who had supported the Nine Point Agreement went to meet the Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru in Delhi to inform him that the Nagas would exercise their right to Self- determination. It has been described as a very stormy interview.

### **Naga Plebiscite – The Naga Peoples mandate for Self-rule**

There was a division even in the Naga National Council on the issue of Naga Independence. At the end of the year 1949, Mr Zapu Phizo was elected the president of the Naga National Council. After his election the view of the NNC changed in favour of Independence. From January to May 1951, the NNC leaders toured all the

Naga inhabited areas explaining to the people, the purpose and implications of the national plebiscite. The inaugural function of the plebiscite was held in Kohima on May 16 1951 attended by around 7000 people. All Naga adult males and females above the age of fifteen were asked to give their thumb impressions on either one of the two columns in a paper indicating 'for' or 'against' joining the Indian Union.

When all the thumb impressions were collected, the verdict was a resounding 99.99% for Naga Independence and refusal to join the Indian Union.

Tuensang district was not included in this plebiscite because at that time they were under a different administrative set up different from the Naga Hills District. However, though they did not participate, they nevertheless sent their representatives to observe the whole exercise from the beginning till the end.

In the following weeks, the political situation mounted in tension all over the Naga Hills as people showed favour for Naga Independence and resentment of Indian administration or interference in Naga affairs. Payment of house taxes was refused. Government servants resigned and government schools closed down. Private schools were set up through local efforts. All these events culminated with the boycott of the first Indian general election which was held in 1952.

### **Nehru's visit to kohima**

The Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru along the Burmese Premier Thakin U (U Nu) on March 30, 1953 visited Kohima for the first time. It was his first and last visit. On his arrival, the Nagas gave him a rousing welcome with all the tribal Councils and Public leaders from all over the Naga Hills gathered in Kohima to hear him. Unfortunately, the DC of Kohima, Shri. Satyen Barkatoki issued order preventing the Naga leaders to give any speech or representations to the Prime Minister. The Nagas wanted to pronounce their desire and aspiration for freedom to the Prime Minister and thought it was an opportune time. But they were greatly were offended since they were denied and obstructed to voice out. Eventually, they decided they will also not hear the Prime Minister either. Thereby, they walked out of the meeting.

Despite the walk out, the Prime Minister address the gathering comprised of few government officials and non local attendees. Immediately after the visit, it was

rumoured, the police made a list of persons to be arrested. To evade the arrest all the Naga National leaders went underground. The police raided the house of Mr.T. Sakhrie, the secretary of the NNC and several other places, including villages of Viswema, Jakhama, Kigwema, and Phesama. In may 1953, they raided the Khonoma village and seized all the guns and ammunitions. By then all the NNC leaders had gone underground.

The government had to deal with the law-and-order situations with firm hands as the underground people became more active and violent, the few people that were in the government were intimidated and threatened, while some were killed and kidnapped for ransom. Transport and communications were also disrupted and the situation in the hills went out of control. There was terror, suspicion and anxiety all over.

It was a hard time for the Village Gaonburas, as they were intimidated and denounced by the undergrounds terming them as government agents. They were threatened not to collect house tax and to receive the red blankets. Thus, the gaonburas were caught up in between the Government and Naga leaders, most of whom had to quit their positions fearing retribution for the undergrounds.

Similarly, it was a very difficult time for many young people for they were kidnapped and made to join the underground forcefully while some out of no choice had joined voluntarily. The rest who refuses to join the movement were made to do forced labour and were kept engaged in carry arms, ammunition and rations. In September 1953, The Government of Assam promulgated a regulation in the Naga Hills to requisition the service of porter in any emergency and many young people were engaged in carrying loads of military personnels, clearing of foot tracks etc. Many of the young people fled to the urban areas or joined the underground since they could withstand the pressures of both the military and the undergrounds.

### **Boycott of General Election**

The Naga National Council called for the boycott of the first General Elections of 1952 as a act of not accepting the constitution and no Nagas exercised their right of voting. However, government went ahead with process of the election though no Naga sought election to the parliament or the Legislative Assembly.

In the second General Election of India, three Nagas, namely, Kheloshe Sema, Mr Chubatemsu and Subedar Satsuo Angami filed for the three assembly seats for the Naga hills District. They were elected unopposed to the assembly. Mr Khelhoshe was elected as Deputy Minister but after six months all of them had to quit because Naga hills District had to be separated from Assam on the December 1, 1957.

Even though the NNC never officially approved the policy of violence, they were frustrated by the failure of the complete boycott and the extremist element got more violent and resorted to arms. Therefore, in March 1956, the Naga Federal Government was formed and its flag was hoisted on the March 22 of the same year.

### **Naga People's Convention**

Due to the violence and turmoil in the Naga Hills and the surmounting suffering of the normal populace of the Naga hills, in the middle of 1957, some Naga leaders convened an all tribes meeting at Kohima to have discussions, in order to mediate between the Government of India and the rebels. That was the beginning of the Naga People's Convention. It was held from the August 22 to August 26 in 1957. More than 1,760 delegates and over 2000 visitors attended the convention coming from all the tribes. For the first after the trouble began, the Nagas, led by Dr Imkongliba Ao as the President and Shri J.B Jasokie, declared their opposition to the violence, in this convention. The rebels did not participate in the deliberations of the convention. The main resolutions of the Convention were to bring about a negotiated Settlement of the Naga issue through peaceful negotiation, and then a final political solution, The then Naga hills district of Assam and Tuensang district of North East Frontier Agency be constituted into a single administrative unit under the ministry of External affairs. The Naga rebels did not join the convention and so the resolutions that was passed in the convention as an interim demand leaving the final political settlement to the rebels, until such times when the rebels would join hands with them in negotiating with the government of India.

A nine-member delegation of the Naga Peoples' convention under the leadership of Dr Imkongliba Ao met the Governor of Assam in Shillong and later the Prime minister in New Delhi to present their resolutions. As a result, a separate administrative unit known by the Name Naga Hills Tuensang Area, under the Ministry of External Affairs of the Government of India came in to being which was

to be administered by the Governor of Assam acting in his discretion as the agent of the president of India from December 1, 1957.

The full text of the Naga Hills Tuensang Area (Administration) Regulation, 1957, promulgated by the President of the Republic of India is as follows:

In exercise of the powers conferred by article 240 of the Constitution read with sub-paragraph (2) of paragraph 18 of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution, the President is pleased to promulgate the following Regulation made by him: -

1. (1) This Regulation may be called the Naga Hills-Tuensang Area (Administration) Regulation, 1957.
- (2) It extends to the whole of the Naga Hills-Tuensang Area.
- (3) It shall come into force on such date as the Central Government, may, by notification in the Official Gazette, appoint.
2. In this Regulation,
  - (a) "appointed day" means the date appointed under sub-section (3) of section 1 for the coming into force of this Regulation;
  - (b) "Law" means any law, ordinance, regulation, order, bye-law, rule, scheme notification or other instruments having the force of law in India or any part thereof.
3. The Naga Hills-Tuensang Area shall be divided into three districts to be called Kohima district, Mokokchung district and Tuensang district, each comprising the areas respectively set out against it in the Schedule.
4. (1) The administration of Naga Hills-Tuensang Area shall be carried on by the Governor of Assam as the agent of the President.
- (2) The Central Government may appoint a commissioner for the Naga Hills-Tuensang Area to assist the Governor of Assam; and the Governor may appoint a Deputy Commissioner for each of the districts therein and the Deputy Commissioners shall perform their functions under the supervision and control of the Commissioner.
5. Without prejudice to the provisions of section 4 and to the powers of the Central Government to appoint from time to time such officers as may be necessary for the administration of the Naga Hills-Tuensang Area, all other officers who, immediately before the appointed day, were exercising lawful functions in the

Naga Hills-Tuensang Area or any part thereof shall, until other provision is made by the Central Government in this behalf, continue to exercise in connection with the administration of the Naga Hills-Tuensang Area, their respective powers and jurisdiction and to perform their respective duties and function in the same manner and to the same extent as before the appointed day.

6. Save as otherwise expressly provided in this Regulation, all laws in force in the Naga Hills District or the Tuensang Frontier Division of the North East Frontier Agency immediately before the appointed day shall continue in force in the districts of Kohima and Mokokchung or, as the case may be, in the Tuensang district until repealed or amended by a competent Legislature or other competent authority.
7. All taxes, duties, cesses or fees which, immediately before the appointed day, were lawfully levied in the Naga Hills Tuensang Area or any part thereof shall continue to be levied and to be applied to the same purposes, until other provision is made by a competent Legislature or other competent authority.
8. For the avoidance of doubts, it is hereby declared that all property and assets within the districts of Kohima and Mokokchung which, immediately before the appointed day, vested in the State Government of Assam shall, as from that day, vest in the Central. Government.
9. All rights, liabilities and obligations of the State Government of Assam in relation to the districts of Kohima and Mokokchung shall, as from the appointed day, be the rights, liabilities and obligations of the Central Government.
10. (1) Any territorial references in any law to the Naga Hills District, the Naga Tribal Area, or the Tuensang Frontier Division shall be construed as references-
  - (a) in the case of the Naga Hills District, to the districts of Kohima and Mokokchung; and
  - (b) in the case of the Naga Tribal Area or the Tuensang. Frontier Division, to the Tuensang District.
- (2) In the Rules for the Administration of Justice and Police in the Naga Hills District prescribed by the Governor of Assam, in his No. 2530 (b) A.P. dated the 25th March, 1937, as in force in the districts of Kohima and Mokokchung, and reference. To the Inspector General of Police, Assam, shall

be construed as a reference to the Superintendent of Police, Naga Hills-Tuensang Area.

- (3) In the Assam Frontier (Administration of Justice) Regulation, 1945, as in force in the Tuensang district, any reference to Political Officer, Additional Political Officer and Assistant Political Officer shall be construed as a reference to Deputy Commissioner, Additional Deputy Commissioner and Assistant Commissioner, respectively.
11. For the purpose of facilitating the application of any law in the Naga Hills-Tuensang Area, any court of other authority may construe any such law with such alterations, not affecting the substance, as may be necessary or proper to adapt it to the matter before the court of other authority.
12. (1) If any difficulty arises in giving effect to the provisions of this Regulation or in connection with the administration of the Naga Hills Tuensang Area, the Central Government, may, by order, make such further provision as appears to it to be necessary or expedient for removing the difficulty.
- (2) Any order under sub-section (I) may be made so as to be retrospective to any date not earlier than the appointed day.
13. The Central Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, make rules to carry out the purposes of this Regulation. (Alemchiba, 1970)

### **Sixteen Point Memorandum**

The second Naga Peoples' Convention was held at Ungma, the largest Ao village in the Mokokchung district in May 1958, amidst intimidation and threats from the rebels. This convention appointed a Liaison committee to contact the underground people but there was no favourable response from the underground people, and so the Ungma Convention appointed a drafting committee to draw their demands. Thus the 16-point memorandum was prepared for the formation of a separate state called 'Nagaland' within union of India.

The third Naga Peoples' Convention was held at Mokokchung from October 22 to 26, 1959 and passed the 16-point draft after deliberation with Government of India, with various recommendations of the subcommittees, to form the basis of the negotiations with the government of India for the final settlement of the Naga political issue.

The full text of the sixteen-point memorandum is as follows:

1. **The Name:** The Territories that were hitherto known as the Naga Hills- Tuensang Area under the Naga Hills-Tuensang Area Act 1957, and any other Naga Area, which may hereafter come under it shall form a state within the Indian Union and be hereafter known as Nagaland.

**2. The Ministry-Incharge:**

The Nagaland shall be under the Ministry of External Affairs of the Government of India.

**3. The Governor of Nagaland:**

- (1) The President of India shall appoint a Governor for Nagaland and he will be vested with the Executive Powers of the Government of Nagaland and he will function from the Headquarters of the Nagaland.
- (2) His administrative secretariat will be headed by a chief Secretary stationed at the Headquarters with other Secretariat Staff as necessary.
- (3) The Governor shall have special responsibility with regard to Law, Order and Police during transitional period only.

**4. Council of Ministers:**

- (1) There shall be a Council of Ministers (Viz. Six Ministers and Three Deputy Ministers) with a Chief Minister as the head to assist and advise the Governor in the exercise of his functions.
- (2) 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:**

Three elected members shall represent the Nagaland in the Union Parliament, i.e. Two 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.

- (1) The Religious or Social practices of the Nagas.

- (2) Naga Customary Laws and Procedure.
- (3) Civil and criminal justice so far as these concern decisions according to Naga Customary Laws;
- (4) 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.

**9. Administration of Justice:**

(a) Each tribe shall have the following Courts of Justice: -

- (1) The Village Court.
- (2) The Range Court.
- (3) The Tribal Court.

(b) Appellate Courts:

- (1) The District Court cum-Sessions Court (for each District), and Supreme Court of India.
- (2) The Naga Tribunal (for the whole of the Nagaland) in respect of cases decided according to Customary Law.

**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 the Nagaland.
- (2) Provided further that a 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-Officer Chairman of the Council. This 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 working of 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;
- (2) A fixed recurring sum (Annual Subvention) for meeting the cost of the administration of Nagaland.

#### **12. Re-Transfer of Reserved Forests**

All the Reserved Forests and other Naga areas that were transferred out of Naga area will be returned to the Nagaland with a clearly defined boundary under the present settlement.

#### **13. Consolidation of Contiguous Naga Area:**

The other Naga Tribes inhabiting the areas contiguous to the present Nagaland be allowed to join the Nagaland if they so desire.

#### **14. Formation of Separate Naga Regiment:**

In order that the Naga people can fulfill their desire of playing a full role in the defense 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 Naga People's Convention shall appoint a Body to draft the details of the Constitution for the Naga- land on the basis of the settlement.
- (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 Protected Area 1958, shall remain in force in the Nagaland.

The following Special Resolutions were also appended to the 16-point Memorandum.

1. The Naga Peoples' Convention records its deep appreciation to the Administration for the various welfare activities and the progress made in the administration of the area.
2. The Naga Peoples' Convention further requests the Administration to extend the following amnesty in order to expedite restoration of peace in the Nagaland and to effectively implement the provisions of the Political settlement arrived at with the Government of India.
  - (i) To consider favourably the release of the Naga Political prisoners;
  - (ii) To extend further, general pardon to the underground people coming overground;
  - (iii) To relax Military patrolling, Operations and other restrictions to enable free contact between overground and underground people during the amnesty period.
3. The Naga People's Convention further appeals to the Naga People in general, and the aggrieved families in particular, to extend the same general pardon to the underground people coming overground and also, we appeal to all underground Nagas to stop all sorts of violent activities from now on.

4. The convention further requests the co-operation of every tribe to take effective steps to bring normalcy in the country.
5. The Naga Peoples' Convention once again invites the under- ground people to come overground and to participate fully in the running of the New Government of Nagaland.
6. Formation of Working Committee:
  - (a) A Working Committee with three representatives from every tribe be formed to see to the implementation of the decisions of the Third Session of the Naga Peoples' Convention held at Mokokchung in October, 1959.
  - (b) The Working Committee be entrusted to select a body to be called the Negotiating Body who will make such contacts and negotiations, both with the Government of India and the underground people, to arrive at an amicable political settlement, and by all means, representatives of the underground people could also be taken 'in as members of the Negotiating Body. The formulation and the process of arriving at a conclusion out of these negotiations should be done within one month of its inception.
  - (c) The Negotiating Body be fully authorised to make such minor changes in the course of the negotiations, if deemed necessary, unless when the question of fundamental principles and policies are involved.

The delegation of the Naga Peoples' Convention with Dr. Imkongliba Ao as its leader met the Governor of Assam in Shillong for preliminary discussion in April, 1960. Later the delegation consisting of 15 members and four consultants representing all the Naga tribes met the Prime Minister and presented their case to him in July, the same year. The Government of India in this meeting accepted in principle-Nagaland State to come into being.

The third Convention turned out to be a great occasion. There was an air of excitement and hope. The NPC claimed to command the support of 75 percent of the mass people.

In the meantime, Mr. Phizo, the President of NNC who by then had already reached London, declared that he did not recognise New Delhi pact for Naga political

Settlement. The underground military forces were also reorganised into stronger and more efficient columns; their schemes were revised and revitalized (*Ibid.*,)

In April 1960, the delegation of the Naga Peoples' Convention with Dr Imkongliba Ao as its leader met with the Governor of Assam in Shillong for preliminary talks. In the month of July, the same year a delegation comprising of 15 members and four consultants representing all the Naga tribes met the Prime Minister and present the case to him. The government of India in this meeting accepted in principle for the state of Nagaland to come into being.

The Naga Peoples' Convention members that went to Delhi, were, Dr Imkongliba Ao, Jackie Angami, Chubatoshi Jamir, R.C. Chiten Jamir, Kelhoshe Sema, Etsorhomo Lotha, Sentsi Rengma, Lakhimong Yimchunger, Litingsi Sangtem, Pauthing Phom, Pudemo Chakhesang, Imtichuba Chang, Thanwang Konyak, Thinuowholie Zeliang, T.N. Angami, Sashimeren Ao, H. Zopianga, Goyiepra Chakheasang, and P.Shilu Ao. The Indian side were represented by D.C. Dutt, Foreign Secretary, K.L. Mehta, Joint Secretary (E), N.M. Rustomji, Advisor to the Governor of Assam, M. Ramuny Commissioner NHTA, R. Khating, DC Mokokchung, T.S. Krishnamurthy, Private Secretary to the Governor of Assam and Hamandar Singh, Deputy Secretary (N).

The third convention turned out to be a great occasion, with lots of air of excitement, expectation and hope. Most of the populace supported the move. In the meantime, Mr Phizo who was already in London declared that he did not recognize the New Delhi pact for the Naga Political settlement. The underground military forces were reorganized and strengthened, more people were conscripted, more funds were mobilized and they began to seek arms and ammunition from foreign countries.

### **Formation of Interim Body**

As a precursor to the formation of Nagaland state, an interim Body consisting of 42 members was constituted on February 18, 1961 and was inaugurated by Gen. S.M. Shrinagesh, the then Governor of Assam. The interim body was to act the legislature for a tenure of 3 years, with a five-member executive Council headed by Mr. P. Shilu Ao as the Chief Executive Councillor and Dr. Imkongliba Ao, as the Chairman of the

Interim Body. A caretaker government with P. Shilu Ao as the Chief Minister and four other members, namely, Shri Hokishe Sema, Shri. Akum Imlong, Shri R.C. Chiten Jamir and Shri J.B. Jasokie.

However, the Naga National Council strongly condemned the acts of the Naga Peoples' Convention terming it as the selling out of the Rights of the Nagas. Dr Imkongliba was shot at on August 20 1961 at Mokokchung when he was returning home from his works and succumbed to his injuries on August 22,1961 at an Army Hospital. Later, Shri T.N Angami succeeded Dr. Imkongliba Ao as the Chairman and Shri. M. Kithan as Deputy Chairman.

During this time, the interim Body and the elected councilors acted as the Cabinet. Efforts to bring the rebels to the mainstream was futile since they remained adamant on their demand for a Sovereign Naga State and they pursued their activities more intensely by strengthening their Naga Federal Government.

However, the Interim Government functioned successfully under the leadership of P. Shilu Ao such that the Government of India was satisfied to grant the Naga people a fully fledged state. Two bills were prepared, the constitution Amendment Bill 1962 and the Nagaland Bill 1962 to be incorporated in the Article 3 of the Constitution. This was approved by the Assam Legislature on August 6 1962, under the then Chief Minister of Assam, Shri. B.P. Chaliha and gave the consent for the formation of Nagaland State. On August 21, 1962, Nehru introduced the bill in the Lok Sabha.

### **Formation of the State of Nagaland**

The 13<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendment Bill and the Nagaland Bill were adopted by the Lok Sabha on August 29, 1962 and the Rajya Sabha approved them on September 3 1962. Finally, the Bill received the Assent of the President of India on the September 4, 1962 and thereby becoming an Act. Thereafter, the Sixteenth State of the Indian Union was born as the state of Nagaland. The Inauguration of the state of Nagaland was done by Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan on December 1, 1963 amidst much fanfare, rejoicing and enthusiasm, marking a special day in the political history of Nagaland. The new ministry headed by Shri. P. Shilu Ao as the caretaker Chief Minister was sworn in the same day by the then Governor of Assam and Nagaland, Shri Vishnu Sahay. All this were the results of the untiring and consistent

deliberations, engagements and supplications of the Naga Peoples' Convention and the agreement, endorsement and support of the Government of India, that converted the Naga Hills Tuensang Area and the Naga Hills District of Assam to merge in to become the state of Nagaland on December 1, 1963.

With the formation of the state, certain constitutional measures were also adapted to provide safeguards for some specific conditions that prevailed in Nagaland. The article 371 'A' of the constitution of India was amended to provide the safeguard for the Religious and Social practice according to the traditional and customary law and usage of the Nagas.

The General Elections were held in Nagaland for the very first time after the boycott of the previous elections. The elections were held across the state in 1964, from January 6 to January 16, in all the 213 polling stations in the 40 Assembly Constituencies in the District of Kohima and Mokokchung, while Tuensang District sent six nominated members to the Assembly representing their 20 Constituencies. There were two political parties in the fray, the Naga National Organisation (NNO) and the United Democratic Front (UDF). The NNO emerge victorious over the UDF in the first ever General Election of Nagaland and went to form the first democratically elected government. For the first time in the history of Naga people, Naga women exercised their franchise in electing their representatives. The election result was published in the Extra Ordinary issue of the state Gazette on January 31, 1964 and a fully fledged politically established State called Nagaland became functional.

## CHAPTER -5

### Modernization and Urban growth

Modernization theories explain the socio- economic and cultural transformation of societies from traditional to modern systems. Modernization is a complex and multi-dimensional process involving the transformation of traditional societies into modern societies through the process of socio- economic, political and technological changes. The Nagas, as an indigenous village-centric society were historically positioned on the periphery of colonial state when they experienced modernization. The adoption of the new political institutions, formal education system introduced by the Christian missionaries and adaptation with market- based economy exemplifies how external innovations gradually permeated into Naga society setting it on the path to modernization. While classical theorists present modernization as a universal linear process driven by technological advancement, economic growth and institutional development, in the case of tribal and indigenous societies, modernization unfolds through a negotiated process involving both assimilation and resistance. In tribal societies, modernization is rarely a simple replacement of tradition by modernity, rather it results in multiple co-existing social layers where indigenous practices adapt to external influences without entirely relinquishing their original essence. This phenomenon is best understood through the Hybridization theory of Modernization, which articulates on the premise that cultural transformation is not a linear process but rather a dialogical negotiation between global forces and local traditions (Nederveen,1995).This theory suggests that modernization often produces hybrid cultural forms , where elements of traditional customs merge with modern institutions, resulting in new and dynamic social configurations (Appadurai,1996).In the context of Naga society, this process manifests in the simultaneous co-existence of pre-modern practices and modern societies, demonstrating that the Nagas have not merely assimilated external influences but have selectively redefined them to suit their own cultural framework. The modernization of Naga society represents a negotiated change where traditional customs and social structures have been selectively redefined in response to external forces demonstrating the adaptive resilience of Naga society.

The transition that Naga society has undergone can be attributed to key external factors, the chief agents being colonial administration, Christian missionaries' civilizing initiatives, spread of education and urbanization. All these factors combined made up a significant component and acted as a catalyst for ushering modernization in the Naga Society, it reshaped traditional customs and governance. Since modernization is known to encompass all aspects of society, even in Naga society it can be seen in reshaping traditional customs and governance methods ; in its economic form it can be seen to have evolved directly from subsistence farming to government employment, wage workers, urban settlements and entrepreneurship; politically, it is manifested in the shift from village administration under village councils and village chiefs to a unified colonial administration, followed by becoming one of the States under the Indian union. The course of political developments in modern lines and the problems as well, are legacies that have developed during the colonial occupation and relevant in understanding societal shifts and issues of tensions. Christianity and western education have brought drastic transformations in Naga Society as discussed in the earlier chapter as well. The Colonial rule brought the isolation of the tribes to an end and it brought the cessation of headhunting practices among the Nagas. The opening of new roads for transport and communication opened the Nagas to the outside World. The new modern education and the new infrastructure have improved the living standards of the people. For the first time, the Nagas were brought under a unified central administration, urban settlements catering to cosmopolitan society comprising of all the tribes, came into existence. With the exposure to new culture and political administration, the concept of a modern economy centred on money economy, salaried government employment, new professionals, market, trade, entrepreneurship were also developed. All these transformations brought the various Naga tribes into closer association with one another. However, modernization with all its merits and opportunities has also has brought challenges to the Naga society, they have also led to cultural shifts and socio- political imbalance.

### **Political changes during British rule**

After the assuming of control over the Naga Hills, the British Government administered it as a frontier district of Assam from 1881 till 1947. To consolidate their rule, a few basic changes were brought about under their administration but in

political affairs no significant changes were introduced. However, the Government took several strict actions and launched punitive repression against Naga villages that committed head hunting raids, most of the which involved massacre and loss of lives and abduction of captives. Otherwise, the Britishers choose not to interfere in the affairs of the Nagas. Thus, the Nagas were mostly left alone and allowed to rule and administer their villages according to their respective customs and traditions. Under the new set up, the British introduced a system of administration in which native chiefs and leaders were appointed to assist in the administration of the villages. The traditional village chiefs and elders were recognised and appointed as chiefs and *Gaonburas* who were integrated into the system of Colonial administrative framework. The main functions of the *Gaonburas* included taking responsibility for village administration, maintenance of law and order in the village, and collecting the annual house tax of Rs,2, they were allowed a commission of twelve percent from the collection. Thus, while consolidating their rule, the British based their administration primarily on the existing native system. This system of administration was uniform all over the district under their control and protection from raids. The village Headmen became the agents of the colonial administration who carried to the tribes the government orders. Thus, the British administrative structure consolidated their rule in the Naga Hills through a system of colonial administrative structure which Richard Allen terms as a 'colonial equilibrium' in his description of such method of recognising and integrating the native administrative agencies by colonial governments to assist in administration of the villages, and carry back to the government grievances of the people or other pressing matters (1970).

Under the British Government, the practice of head hunting was banned and the frequent Naga raids on the villages in the border areas of Assam was controlled. The British also found that the practice of slavery was extensively practised by the Aos. The Deputy Commissioner, Hills Greer made a proposal for prohibiting slavery in Ao country but the Government preferred not to interfere into it citing that it was a domestic institution. But the killing of offsprings of female slaves was stopped and was to be punished wherever it was detected (Alemchiba, 1970). The Naga raids were not only carried out on the villages in the plains but also within the Naga Hills. The British administered areas were put under their firm control from deterred from

committing the raids. However, even outside their approved jurisdiction, inter-village raids were going and when such raids occurred, the British officials felt the need to venture out in pursuit of the attackers and organised punitive expeditions to punish the offenders, which often led to punishment by burning down the villages. During the British tour of the Ao country in January 1885 under colonel Clarke, the trans-Dikhu Ao villages had begged to be taken over by the Government to end the raids suffered by them in the hands of their neighbours, but the government did not concede (*Ibid.*) Later, in need of wider administrative control and protection over the entire area the government decided to incorporate the Ao Country and established a sub-division in Mokokchung in 1888. Thus, there was gradually virtual elimination of inter-village and tribal warfare within the district, and the checking on practices of head-hunting, slave female-child infanticide, and slave trade (Sema, 1992) Such raids and warfare had been common occurrences and quite rampant from the pre-colonial period and that was the main reason for the defensive and isolated Naga villages, who are described as living in fear of attacks by neighbouring villages. Though the government's policy of non-interference did not allow the British officials to venture outside the areas of their control, the officials most of the time acted on their own to seek punishment for the offences committed by individuals or groups outside their control. The object of the government had been merely maintenance of peace in the borders, no attempt had been made to civilize the Nagas, or to maintain order among them till 1877(Alemchiba, 1970).

### **Inner Line Regulation, 1873**

One of the significant changes which the British introduced in the Naga Hills is the Inner Line Regulations in 1873, which is in force till now. It was passed in order to prevent the recurrence of troublesome disputes between the hill people and the plains people. In order to maintain law and order within the district and seeking to protect the Nagas from exploitation by outside people, the British government sealed off the Naga Hills District by the introduction of the Inner Line Regulation. 'The unrestricted intercourse which formerly existed between British subjects in Assam and the wild tribes living across the frontier frequently led to quarrels and sometimes, to serious disturbances. This was especially the case in connection with the traffic in rubber brought down by the hillmen, for which there was great competition. The opening of tea gardens beyond the border-line also at times

involved the government in troublesome disputes with the frontier tribes in their vicinity. To prevent the recurrence of these difficulties, the Inner Line Regulation of 1873 was passed to prohibit British subjects generally or those of specified classes from going beyond a certain line laid down for the purpose without a pass or licence, issued by the Deputy Commissioner and containing such conditions' (Gait, 2003).

The first law promulgated in Assam was the Inner Line Regulation under Act XXXIII Vic.Cap.3 Section, to be applicable to the districts of Kamrup, Darrang, Sibsagar, Lakhimpur, Garo Hills, Khasi & Jaintai Hills, Naga Hills, Cachar and Cheetagong Hills, giving the executive government of India a power of summary legislation for backward tracts, the Regulation coming into force from the 1<sup>st</sup> November 1873 (*A.S.R. File No.521 of 1873*). The main object was protection of plains settlers from Nagas, and protection of Nagas from plainsmen. The Inner Line Regulation made it difficult for money lenders, land realtor and traders to exploit the ignorant Naga tribesmen. Piketo Sema has maintained, "For the Nagas, the colonial policy of keeping the Naga Hills isolated benefitted the Nagas as it helped to preserve the Naga identity with all its consequences. As a result of the Inner Line Regulation, the Naga Hills was a district of Assam but it was never under the normal administration of the Province of Assam as Nagas lived within the reserved parameter of British district of Naga Hills without having any administrative connection with Assam" (Sema, 1992).

### **Transfer of Tracts from Naga Hills**

One aspect of colonial rule which has caused serious geo-political implications on the Nagas is the redrawing of boundary lines by the British frontier officers. This has initiated a deep under- current socio-political problem in inter-States relationships till present times. The system of arbitrary transfer of tracts of land and redrawing of traditional boundaries of the Naga Hills during the period of British rule has impacted the future history of the Nagas in several ways. In 1852, the Naga areas were constituted into a sub- division under the Nowgong district, with Asaloo as its headquarters, which was inhabited by the Zemi Nagas called Aroongs. These Nagas, and the large area they inhabited were separated from the mainstream of Nagas and carved into a sub- division, and called north Cachar and in 1870, placed under the Cachar district (Sema, 1986). Initially when the Naga Hills District was formed in

October 1866, with headquarter at Samaguting, it was constituted with a part of present Nowgong district of Assam, which lay on the right bank of the Doyang river (Barpujari,2003). The headquarter of the district finally got transferred to Wokha in 1876 and shifted to Kohima in 1878, with a sub-division at Wokha. In 1888, another new sub-division was added to the Naga Hills district at Mokokchung. In 1891, the Deputy Commissioner of Naga Hills represented that the size of the district has increased considerably and physically impossible to look after the plains area of the district, and recommended that the whole of the Mikir and Rengma Hills should be transferred to the adjoining districts of Assam. The transfer of Mikir and Rengma Hills took place only later on in 1898. Taking into account considerations that since Railway line has been extended, the plains portion of the Naga Hills may be opened up and settled with plains people as it was not advisable to administer the plains portion of the district from Kohima which was far off. It was also proposed to extend the normal laws to the area when it got settled with the plains people, and the Tea Estates, etc., were established. A notification was issued on 9 December,1898 transferring very large tracts from the Naga Hills to Sibsagar and the Nowgong Districts. It was decided that the new Railway line should pass through the heart of the Nambhor Reserved Forest in addition to the areas recommended for transfer originally in 1891. The area transferred from Naga Hills to Nowgong was approximately 856, sq. Miles and to Sibsagar was approximately 1929sq. Miles. The Question of redrawing the boundaries and defining them more clearly was taken up in 1902 and a fresh Notification slightly altering the earlier Notification of 1898 was issued in 1903. Thereafter, Dimapur with the small areas adjoining it was retransferred to the Naga Hills by a Notification dated 18 November, 1930. Digar Mouza was transferred from Naga Hills to North Cachar Hills Sub-division on 26 Sept, 1923(Alemchiba,1970), All these documents prove that the original plan of the British was only for the benefit of their government and for the protection of their settlers in the foothills from the Naga raids. As a result, in the course of their colonial occupation, the British officials took the liberty of arbitrarily transferring Naga territories on reasons of administrative inconvenience for administration from Kohima. See appendix for Letter from the Chief Commissioner of Assam Valley dated, 3<sup>rd</sup> August, 1898 & Letter of Chief Commissioner of Assam to Commissioner of Assam Valley. The Nagas had never compromised on this transfer of their lands to Assam, and they have been agitating for restoration of the areas (*Sema, 1986*). The

first negotiation was taken up by the NNC delegation with the representatives of the British Indian Government headed by Akbar Hydari, then Governor of Assam in Kohima in the meetings held on 27<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup> June, 1947. The meetings had led to the 'Nine- Point Agreement'. In this meeting, the demand was made and included in the agreement for modification of the then administrative division by restoring all the forests transferred out of the Naga Hills and bring all the Naga inhabited areas under one unified administrative unit. Furthermore, on the basis of the Resolution passed by the Naga People's Convention in August, 1957 in Kohima, a sixteen-point Memorandum was presented by a delegation of the Naga Peoples Council to the Prime Minister of India. Under point 12 of the Memorandum, the Nagas demanded the return of all the reserved forests transferred to Assam during the British rule. Under point 13, the Nagas demanded return and merger of the contiguous Naga inhabited areas to form a part of a separate State for Nagas.

### **Development of Roads and Communication**

The British rule introduced a number of measures including means of communication, taxation, education, judicial system and Public health. The colonial control could be carried out only with proper communication linking the important outlying areas with the administrative headquarters. The development of roadways for transport and communication in the Naga hills developed only during the colonial period. Even in the plains of Assam the mode of transport before the British was primitive. The only mode of transport was by elephants and sailing in the local boats, the Brahmaputra was the only regular waterway that connected Assam to the rest of India. Wheeled transport was unknown and even the bullock cart came into use only after the advent of the British (Goswami, 2012).

To enable colonial administration to be carried out efficiently, building of good roads was a necessity. Linking all the outlying areas with the administrative headquarter. With the extension of British occupation, a network of roads was gradually constructed linking all the important outlying villages with the headquarter. Initially, the roads were built to enable British military control over the tribes and carriage of provisions.

- The construction of roads had begun with the establishment of administrative post at Samaguting in 1866 when a road was constructed from Mohondijua to Samaguting. Other roads were made connecting Samaguting with Golaghat, Papolongmai, Mezoma and Wokha.
- In the administrative report on the District of Naga Hills 1878-79 it is recorded that the only good road that exist in the district was the 67 miles road from Golaghat to Samaguting, which is passable for horses and elephants throughout the year, and for carts during winter.
- Apart from that road, Dimapur was already connected by land and waterways from Golaghat.
- When Wokha was established as the district headquarters in 1875, a bridle-path was constructed with the alignment starting from Samaguting to Piphima, and then a cart road leading up to the hills to keruphema and Merema.
- There was also a road from Golaghat to Wokha, which was about 62 miles in length, but it was a mere track and it was possible for travel on elephants as far as Merapani covering a distance of 19 miles only. From there, only ponies could travel till Wokha.
- In 1880- 1881, the authorities took up the improvement of transport and communication.
- On the suggestion by Stuart Bayley, the Chief commissioner of Assam in 1881 for the need of a cart road between Kohima and the Plains, a road was opened through the Nambhor forest to Nichuguard.
- In 1885, a bridle- path was made through khonoma to Henima out post, and from there to Semkhor and Gunjong (Report on the Adm. Of province of Assam, part 11B, pp.8-9)
- After the incorporation of the Ao area as Sub-division in 1889, the British government began construction of bridle- paths from Mokochung to Nakachari in the plains to Mokha, Longsa, Tamlu and from Tamlu to Galeki at the foot of the Naga Hills.
- The next bridle -path was made from Kohima eastward to Cheswejuma and forward to Shitsumi in the Sumi area.

- The Manipur rebellion in 1891 led to the construction of the cart road running from Nichuguard to Imphal through Kohima covering a distance of 122 miles.
- Gradually, road connectivity by good bridle- path were laid, linking all the outlying outposts with Kohima.
- The roads extended into the Sumi area with comfortable rest-houses known as 'Dak Bungalows' were built each at an approximate distance.

The responsibility of road maintenance was the Deputy Commissioner of the district, who assigned the duty to the villages for maintenance of the section of road that passed through its land. For road maintenance twice a year, the villages were given Rs.30 per mile per annum (Allen, Assam District Gazetteer, Naga Hills and Manipur (pp.56-7)

At the early years, of the twentieth century, by 1909 there existed a total length of 621 miles of bridle-path in the Naga Hills.

One of the most significant developments of road and transport in the Naga Hills was made at the end of the World War II, when two hundred Miles of motorable road were added to the existing network before the War (Elwin, 1997).

The Government spent large amount of money on the development of Public works. The total amount was as much as Rs.92,730. Besides building roads, these works included the construction of the Kohima garrison and water supply arrangements etc. Rs.9000 was spent on the construction of 33 miles of the new bridle- path from Henima to Khonoma (*Chief Commissioner's Memo. on Naga affairs, 29 Jan, 1881*) ;(*Report on the Adm. Of the district of Naga Hills 1878-79, pp.10-11*)

### **Socio-Political changes during colonial rule**

The Nagas had been living in their independent village-Republics without any contact with outsiders lived in seclusion from contact with the outside influences. Whenthey came under colonialrule, the British neither tried to implant their own culture by destroying the prevailing customs and local practices of the Nagas nor

imposed its civil and political systems on the Nagas. Henry Balfour wrote in the foreword of 'The Sema Nagas', "Lack of ethnographic knowledge has been responsible for many of the misunderstandings and fatal errors which have tarnished our well-meant endeavours to control wisely and equitably the affairs of those whose culture has been evolved under environments which differ widely from those of civilized peoples"(Alemchiba, 1970). One of the main reasons why the British could establish a stable administration in this area of steep hilly jungles, inhabited by hostile tribes and why the new administration became popular was due to their knowledge and awareness about the realities of the native population. In this context, a policy statement made by the Lieutenant -Governor of Bengal in 1866 states, 'The only course, left us consistently with the duty we owe to the inhabitants of the adjoining frontier districts as well as to the Angami Nagas themselves, who are torn by intestine feuds for want of a government, and unable to exercise any general self-control, or to restrain independent action on the part of any villages or even of a section of any of the numerous villages inhabited by the tribe, is to re-assert our authority over them, and bring them under a system of administration suited to their circumstances, and gradually to reclaim them from habits of lawlessness to those of order and civilization' (Elwin,1997).

The secret behind the successful rule of the British colonial government was mainly because the officers posted in the Naga Hills tried to understand the people by studying their way of life, culture, customs and manners. They lived with the people, ate with them, walked with them, worked with them and sometimes even tested their temperament. What the government attempted and succeeded in doing was the modification of certain aspects of Naga culture and practices which did not conform to the interests of colonial administration. The most pressing concern of the Government was banning the practice of headhunting which was declared as a punishable offence. A significant social change that came about under British rule was the cessation of the headhunting practices of the Naga tribes, brought through the stern repressive punishments inflicted on the offenders and the raiding villages as a whole, by the British government. The colonial administration did not hesitate in taking stern action against barbarous practices of killings as well as slave-trade and slave killing and child infanticide of slave women existing in some tribes. Through these law and order measures and the spread of Christianity, the practice of

headhunting raids and other social evils were declared as punishable offences within the Naga Hills district boundaries. All those practices declined and quickly disappeared. The inter-village and tribal raids came to an end and the Nagas settled down to a peaceful life of cultivation and trade.

### **Prohibition of practice of Head-hunting, Infanticide of slaves, Human sacrifice**

Though the Government did not make any direct social reformation steps, which was left mainly to the Christian missionaries, it adopted strong measures to put an end to existing social evils and practices. Some existing customs were also modified on the lines of rationalization aimed to reform the society. Efforts for minimal interference was made in the life and activities of the subjects who were left alone to carry on with their lives undisturbed by the changed political situation. The British Government relentlessly tried to put an end to the practice of head-hunting raids carried out by the Naga tribes. The British also found that the practice of slavery was extensively practised by the Aos and human sacrifice among some Naga tribes. There was prevalence of the practice of slave-child infanticide among the Ao community (*Sema, 1992*). The slaves were bereft of any rights, they were not allowed to marry nor to possess property (For.Deptt. Extl-A, February 1890, No.156) The Deputy Commissioner, Hills Greer made a proposal for prohibiting slavery in Ao country but the Government did not interfere into it citing it to be domestic institution. But the murder of offsprings of female slaves was stopped and was to be punished wherever it was detected (*Alemchiba,1970*). Thus, the British government did not fully abolish the system in adherence to their non- interference in traditional affairs of the tribe but it directly checked the practice and the killing of offsprings of female slaves was to be punished (*Alemchiba,1970*). The practices of headhunting and other social evils like slavery were checked successfully by the officials.

Headhunting, slave trade and human sacrifice were all interlinked in a circle of savagery and barbarism. Hutton in his letter to the editor of 'The Englishman' has spoken out that headhunting, slave trade and human sacrifice were practically interlinked (1923). The captured people from raids were treated as slaves and slaves sold for economic gains were often sacrificed by their own masters. Sometimes, the captured people were also released to their relatives or friends who got them back by

paying ransom prices in cloth, conch shells, beads, cows or pigs. The main motive behind Slave trade was economic profit, slave trade was carried out with pricing ranging from one cow and 3 three conch shells to 3 cows and four or five conch shells Male slaves were acquired at a lower rate than female slaves (Hunter, in Statistical Account of Assam, p.181). The practices of headhunting and other social evils like slavery were checked successfully by the officials (*For.Deptt. Extl-A, February 1890, No.165*). In the unadministered areas, these practices continued arising out of tribal and inter-village warfares. The last of such action taken by the British administration for headhunting and capture of innocent captives as slaves was done in 1936 when a British operation was launched between November 13 and December 13, 1936, to Pangsha, a Kalyo Kengyu village (Khamniungan) responsible for 200 deaths in six months: they had raided Kejuk within the British area and taken 53 heads; they had raided Saochu, also within area of control and taken 188 heads; they had been selling captives as slaves. The expedition completely achieved its objects and was able to release several slaves taken as captives and punished Pangsha for indulging in slave trade and its headhunting raids on its neighbours. The captives were restored to their relations. (Legislative Assembly Debates, vol. IV,1938, p.801). Reports of other villages, Sanglao, Nokhu, Pesu keeping slaves were reported, the government warned them to release the slaves but they remained obstinate. An expedition left Mokokchung on 1<sup>st</sup> November, 1937 and freed all the slaves in the unadministered area. In 1939, the last British military expedition to stop and punish headhunting raids against Pangsha and some of the neighbouring villages, Yungkao, Tamkhung and Ukha who had committed brutal headhunting, Pangsha was burnt, Yungkhao which surrendered unconditionally was fined, Tamkhung was fined, Ukha was burnt (Reid, 1997)

Although with British occupation there was peace in the Naga Hills, the Naga tribes of the trans-Dikhu area continued to commit outrages. Four villages across the Dikhu belonging to the Tuensang tribe, namely Yajim, Jesu, Noksen, and Litem continued to raid the western or the British side of the Dikhu. To stop them, McCabe went over the Dikhu and burnt down their villages. The men of these villages were not to be cowed down by such punishments, they looked for ways of retaliation and revenge (Hokishe,1986) In June 1888, they found the opportunity and a combined force of several villages belonging to the Mazung tribe from across

the Dikhu raided and committed one of the deadliest massacres of headhunting raids on the Ao Villages of Mongsemdi and Lungkong killing 207 people including women and children. In this attack, they killed 148 people of Mongsemdi and 40 in Lungkung. The raiders who took part in this attack were the Mazung tribe inhabiting the villages of Noksen, Litam, Lungra, Yarr, Champiyatong, Lakstang, Sontak, Langtam and Mazung- Jami. The British immediately set up a strong stockade at Mongsemdi with 50 guards. After its establishment, the Tuensang Nagas attacked this stockade at night, but they were beaten back. Before this, the Ao villages had begged to be taken over by the Government, to end the raids suffered by them in the hands of their neighbours, but the government had not conceded (*Ibid.*) Following this massive raid, the Government finally decided to annex the Ao Country and established a sub-division in Mokokchung in 1888.

In a direct action of repressive response to the Ao villages raid, the Deputy Commissioner, A. Porteous with 200 men marched across the Dikhu to punish the offenders. But the Nagas seeing that the troops were too strong to be opposed, retreated without much resistance, burning down five of their own villages and fleeing to far-off hills. In this expedition, a total of ten villages, including Tuensang was destroyed and five or six Nagas killed. None of the captives who were reported to have been carried away from the Ao villages could be recovered. But the expedition instilled fear and respect for the British power, which helped in controlling their behaviour. The Deputy Commissioner returned and had to again cross the Dikhu to punish Tangsa and two khels of Yongnya for murdering two British subjects which ended in failure to capture the actual murderers but burning down the houses of the guilty communities. Another incident where the British officers crossed beyond their area of administration was in 1892 for episode of 'Yongphang village'. An Ao who had entered a Sangtam village for trading purpose was killed by a native of that village, who fled to Yongphang (Phom) village. The Deputy Commissioner demanded from Yongphang to surrender the man but the villagers could not comply as he had fled. Therefore, they were ordered not to shield the man in future and did not inflict any punishment on the villagers as they were not a party to the murder. The Yongphang Nagas misunderstood the motives of the leniency of the Deputy Commissioner to the view that he was afraid of them. They got emboldened and attacked the villagers who had furnished the British troops with

supplies. Hence, the Deputy Commissioner returned back to tackle the villagers. Yongphang resisted his advance and finding it difficult, they evacuated their village. The offender refused to surrender nor pay fines, and so, the DC set fire to their houses. Similarly, when the trans-Sumi village of Suromi committed outrages against Longsa village, Porteous left the temporary stockade at Mongsemdi and passing through Ungma and Longsa, marched to Suromi where he was received by the villagers and were fined ten cattle for taking ten heads. Litsami and Chesami villages were visited and ordered to stop head-hunting. Likewise, in 1890, the British meted out punishment to two Sumi villages outside the area of political control to the east of Wokha - Suromi and Ghovishe and imposed one with fine and another was burnt down. Thus, these incidents are examples of the steps undertaken by the government using the most stringent punishments to stop head-hunting practices in the Naga Hills, even in areas which did not fall under their direct administrative control. These measures were eventually successful in virtually eliminating inter-village and tribal warfare within the district (*Sema, 1992*) The Naga raids and warfare had been common occurrences and quite rampant from the pre-colonial period. This was the main reason for the defensive and isolated nature of Naga villages, which lived in fear of attacks by neighbouring villages and it also highlights the important position of the Village Youth and warriors in guarding and defending the independent Naga Villages; and the role played by the Institution of the Morung or bachelors' dormitory, in which all the young men of the Village were trained.

## **Economic Changes**

### **Traditional Agriculture patterns and changes**

Agriculture is the mainstay of Naga economy, with rice as their staple crop, which makes up their main food requirement. Other crops like millet, maize, ginger, chillies, taro, gourds and varieties of fruits and vegetables were grown. Cotton was cultivated, for the purpose of household requirement and for trade item. The Nagas practised two methods of cultivation, shifting cultivation or jhum cultivation and terrace cultivation. The jhum method of agriculture was largely practised by the Ao, Lotha, Sumi, Rengma and the tribes in the trans- frontier territory. The method of terrace cultivation was followed by the Angami, Chakhesang, Zeliang of the Tenyimi group. Nagas practiced Jhum cultivation by cutting down forest and jungles and burning them after the allowing it to get dry for around a month, during which the

felled trees are cut and carried to the village and stacked for use as firewood. After that the village clan elders set a date for setting the freshly deforested jhum fields on fire. Every precaution is taken by all the households to contain the fire within their own demarcated cultivation area by making a clearing around the boundary to control the fire from spreading. In this way, farming commences in the freshly burnt Jhum fields, by removing from the fields all the debris and building a small farm hut with bamboo and thatch roofing. Food is cooked inside the hut and water is collected in large bamboo vessels. The sowing of seeds follows, all kinds of crops like millet, maize, yam, ginger, chillies, maize, pumpkin, gourd and all kinds of local herbs are cultivated along with rice. However, after all the hard work, the Jhum field thus cleared and cultivated is abandoned after the harvest season and the next year, the village council of elders would decide on cultivation in another forest. The old field is seldom cultivated for more than two years, and it is left to fallow for years. This method of shifting cultivation resulted in great wastage and required large areas of cultivable lands at the disposal of every village community.

The Second type of farming followed by the Nagas was the more technologically advanced method of terrace cultivation. In this method, the land was carefully terraced so that proper irrigation canals will circulate the water in the entire field. Usually, this kind of making new terrace fields were done with the joint labour of the village community or by the entire clan members. Though it involved greater labour input, it saved the land for cultivation and led to conservation of forest resources, which was not possible under jhum (*Sema, 1992*). Noticing the visible disadvantage of jhum cultivation causing large scale devastation of forest and entailing wastage of land, the authorities proposed to restrict jhum cultivation and popularise terrace method of cultivation among all the Naga tribes. Sir Charles Elliott, the Chief Commissioner of Assam issued instructions to the district officials to encourage the tribes to practice terracing as an alternative to shifting cultivation. He also advised them to introduce cultivation of potatoes and other staples. Free distribution of seeds and instructions were made to the Naga villagers (For. Deptt, Pol-A, January 1882, No.135). To encourage terrace cultivation, after the establishment of their headquarters at Kohima, the Assam Agriculturists' Loan Act XII of 1884 to Naga Hills District was extended, sanctioning grants of agricultural loan to villagers (Assam Agricultural Deptt. Report, 1886). The other measure adopted by the

government was issue of guns to suitable persons in the villages to protect the fields from wild animals. The government encouraged the villages to have at least one gun each. (S.D. O's Diary, D.R.O., Mokokchung, March 1912). Although the government was keen to promote terrace farming, it remained second to jhum cultivation. On the whole, the government's efforts for promotion of agriculture in the district did not lead to any transformation in the agricultural economy of the Nagas (Ghosh, Nagaland Gazetteer).

### **Trading activities**

The introduction of colonial government in the Naga hills has been followed by encouragement of trade between the Nagas and the plains. In the past, the Nagas also carried out trade in a limited scale by barter and some local currency was also in use among few tribes. The Naga villages living in the border are known to have come down to the plains for commercial purposes since early times. Both traditions and available records show that the Nagas used to take down to the plains, chillies, vegetables, cotton, ginger, areca nut and betel leaves etc., From quite times, the Lothas used to visit the markets of Jorhat, kacharihat, and Golaghat, carrying cotton and chillies which was their chief article of trade. Many Ao villages in the border areas with Assam carried out trade with the plains, by carrying down Betel leaves and areca nut, ginger, cotton etc. The Nagas also carried out barter of necessities among themselves. The Aos also went down to the plains during the dry winter season, when their agricultural work was done to work as wage labourers in the tea plantations, engaging in jungle cutting and clearing manual labour works. The Rengmas also had profitable trade in cotton and rice. The Zeliang Nagas traded with Cachar and Manipur, ivory, and bee-wax was their chief items of trade. The Colonial government had also made endeavours from the beginning to encourage trade between the hills and the plains. The establishment of weekly markets in the foothills, opening of roads to connect with the plains, posting of police guards near the markets, abolition of duties earlier imposed by the Ahom government, gave fillip to trade of the eastern Nagas with the plains. The Sumis who had no contact with the plains nor know the use of money before British conquest, were fast catching up with trading activities (Barpujari, 2003) Along with simple barter system, involving exchange of items of utility between themselves, some items which were commonly used as medium of exchange in trade included, the cow, pig, Mithun, fowl, etc.,

which came to be regarded as the standard units of exchange. On the authority of Mills (1937), the Angami medium of barter was as follows -

1 Male slave	- 1 cow and 3 conch shells
1 Female slave	- 3 cows and 4 or 5 conch shells
1 Cow	- 10 conch shells
1 Pig	- 2 conch shells
1 Goat	- 2 conch shells
1 Fowl	- 1 packet of salt

A conch shell was taken as Re.1 of the currency used in the plains. Currency also existed among some Naga tribes. With the Rengmas, the currency constituted of a specially made large spear-heads, daos and iron digging hoe. With the Angamis, it consisted of conch shells, small iron hoes. The Aos used round brass discs and strips of thin iron, known as 'Jabili'. The Sema currency comprised of small flat cakes of salt, narrow blades of worn -out daos, strings of conch – shell beads, and bits of bamboo. The Chang currency consisted of brass metal gongs. The denominations of the local currencies were known orally to the people of the area. The Ao 'Jabili' currency represented a day's work or 4 annas which was the amount paid to wage labourers during the colonial period. This is based on Hutton's assertion on the smaller sized 6 inches Jabili, so it may be understood that the longer ones must be of much higher value.

The Chang had an elaborate currency, classified into three categories viz.,

Lah, Namshou, Shapshem. The value in their own terms is said to be –

2 Namshou = 1 Lah; 2Shapshem = Namshou; 4 Shapshem = 1Lah. Thus, Lah was the highest currency. Hutton has mentioned the Chang currency as flat metal gongs, brass gongs, bell metal gongs and worn-out blades of daos (Hutton, 1969).

Under British rule, a new money economy was introduced among the Nagas through various developmental activities that accelerated the growth of trade and commerce in the Naga hills. The British authorities made attempts to encourage the Nagas to trade with the plains. This policy resulted in increased traffic of the Nagas with the plains even before they were brought under British rule. The life security and the improved means of road communication under the British made it possible to undertake business trips to the Nagas. All these measures monetized the economy and

now the commodities could not only be exchanged for other commodities but gradually for money. Developing roads and bridle paths throughout the district further increased the trade and commerce within the district. Now goods could be carried over long distances.. Each of the Naga household practically produced whatever it required and there was very little surplus left for disposal. The only commercial products the Nagas could do trade in were rice, cotton, ivory, wax. Thus, there was no sizable amount of trade business, except in local transactions chiefly in goods consisting clothing, foodstuffs and domestic animals (Sema,1992). The trade with the plains was carried out by the tribes living in close proximity to the border areas of Assam than the tribes inhabiting the interior parts of the Hills. The chief commodities of exchange were cotton, cloth, ginger, pepper and areca nuts, betel leaves, salt, rice, cattle, poultry, medicine, dry fish, iron implements, utensils, thread, oil, beads, kerosene, umbrella, and Manipur liquor (Assam Administrative Report, 1881-82, p.2). The Nagas mainly traded in Dimapur, Golaghat, Manipur and Silchar.

Within the district, a few shops had opened in Kohima, Samaguting and Dimapur by Marwari and Muslim traders. The development of Samaguting and later, Kohima as headquarter of the district opened opportunity for the Nagas to get involved in cash economy through earnings as labourers as the government paid their wages in cash (*Sema, 1992*). Within the district, apart from few Marwari shops in Kohima, Dimapur, Mokokchung and Wokha from where the basic necessities could be bought, Nagas still had to go to the plains to sell their products. But trade in the hills was restricted to outsiders due to the enforcement of the Inner Line Regulations.

### **Urban Growth**

Urbanization is essentially a social process by which urban centres emerge and grows, while urbanism is the life or living condition that arises from this process.

The British occupation of the Naga Hills in the late nineteenth century is tentatively accepted as the period of the beginning of the urbanization process in the Naga Hills, the administrative settlements adjacent to villages as district headquarter and subdivisions and out-post gradually expanded to form Towns and emerging townships. Thus, the early centres of urban growth in Nagaland may be traced to the establishment and growth of administrative outposts which were the first to evolve

into rural and urban market centres. The first commercial centre was Dimapur, where on the request of Nagas, the British established a salt depot and it had land and water transport connection with Golaghat in Assam. As such, there were Marwari traders mostly running wholesale business from Dimapur, When the Inner Line Regulation was passed, there was already fears circulating in the official gossip that the Marwaris in Golaghat might enter the Hills. Samaguting (Chumoukedima) established as the first headquarter in 1866 and the development of Dimapur also started at the same time; Kohima became the headquarter in 1878, Wokha in 1876, Mokokchung in 1888. The eastern part remained unadministered in the early decades of British occupation, Wakching became an administrative post in 1913 and Tuensang was established only after Independence, earlier being included under the North East Frontier Agency.

These early urban centres acted as market centres, having started as small administrative settlements, that attracted villagers from adjoining areas to visit for commercial activities and to procure items of daily requirements as well as for seeking education. It also served as collecting centres for adjoining villages to bring their agricultural items and household products for sale. Besides as centre for trade and commerce, the early urban settlements generated occupations which were urban in character. The Nagas appointed by the British officials in various categories, sweeper, peon, clerks, dobashis and other workers such as mason, carpenter, labourers etc, some receiving monthly pay and others engaged on daily wages constitute the first urban settlers among the Nagas. All these categories of government employees lived in the new town areas where the Government outposts were established. Thus, government jobs and salaried economy and private sector livelihood sources induced people to shift from agrarian village environment to the new administrative sectors. Not only that the towns also expanded due to the modern facilities, like schools and hospitals too. Towns like Kohima, Dimapur, Mokokchung, Wokha, Tuensang particularly, started to rapidly expand as people started to flock to these towns seeking education, healthcare, and employment.

Townships also became the early symbols of adaptation of Naga people belonging to various tribes to develop a sense of unity and closeness among themselves which was possible only by the new phenomenon of converging together in a common place of

settlement under the aegis of British administration. The development of roadways and communication under the colonial rule is a significant factor which has contributed to the urban phenomenon, as it brought closer connectivity by linking all the important out-post and villages to the district headquarter.

However, the pace of urban growth in the Naga Hills was slow and it has increased significantly only in the post-Independence period. Since, the formation of the State of Nagaland in 1963, the small administrative blocks and headquarters have been steadily growing in population, as more people migrate from the surrounding villages in search of jobs, education, health care and various other lifestyles which were different from their life in the villages. Subsequently, the small townships and hamlets began to expand in growing complexity to accommodate the increasing population. Even a little less than a decade after the attainment of Statehood, according to the Census of 1971, the population was 90% rural, which can be observed from the statistics of Kohima town –

<u>No. of Villages</u>	<u>No. of Towns</u>
966	3
<u>Total population</u>	<u>Urban Population</u>
5,16,449	51, 394

(Highlander, Vol 111, No.2, Sept, 1975)

### **The Rise of new Social Class in Naga Society**

The evolution of Naga Society into a modern society under external influences have affected various aspects of life. While these changes have brought about development and modernization in society, they have also posed challenges to the preservation of traditional identities and practices. The rise of the Naga Middle class is an example of the new class that emerged in Naga society as a direct result of the colonial rule and the civilizing efforts of the Christian missionaries. The result of combination of colonial administrative changes and the missionary education contributed to the rise of a Naga middle class. This group comprise of individuals who occupied positions in the colonial administration, engaged in professional activities, or benefitted from western education. The new schools began to attract the Naga youths to modern education, they even started travelling long distances from far flung villages on foot, carrying heavy loads of rice and food to study in the

schools. It was through education that socio-political awareness among the Nagas had grown. One of the biggest attraction to education was that it opened the doors of employment opportunities in government service as well as in mission schools and churches (Assam Baptist Mission conference, report of 25<sup>th</sup> session, Golaghat, Nov 23<sup>rd</sup>,1927, p.68), with the increasing shift to new professions and seeking new norms of livelihood, the Nagas from a moneyless economy was turning into a money-dependent society.

There was now an increasing migration from the village agrarian life to the new emerging urban towns in search of modern facilities available only in the towns, such as, market, school, hospital, earning opportunities, etc. The emergence of this middle class brought about social stratifications within Naga society, as individuals began to distinguish themselves based on occupation, education and on economic status. The middle class became economically better off through their earning opportunities as job holders. Thus, through the western education introduced by the missionaries, there sprang up a native class of ‘intellectuals’ – Gaonburas, Dobashis, teachers, government servants, pastors, and all other educated people (Sema,1992). It was also from among the new modern class of intellectuals that political consciousness seeped in to Naga Society and led to the rise of Naga Nationalism. The emergence of Naga elites became evident by the beginning of the twentieth century.

Apart from the contribution of modern education towards the emergence of the new intellectual class in Naga society, the impact of the first World War was also greatly responsible for the changes in the Naga social structure, when the British government recruited a large number of Nagas from various tribes in the Naga Labour corps, which sailed to France to serve in the War. Another large batch of Naga labour corps. were also sent to Manipur in 1918 during the Kuki rebellion of 1918-19. These exposures were life changing experiences for the Nagas and it contributed to feelings of oneness and unity among the tribesmen who ventured out together on the same mission. When they returned home, they came back with huge monetary benefits which led to the upliftment of their lives, classifying them under the new ‘moneyed class’ in modern Naga society, along with the other Nagas already in government pay roll. Many of them are said to have become landlords and many

of their descendants also went on to become prominent members of their tribes (Sanyu, NEIHA, Ninth session). The members of the Naga Club were also made up by the educated middle class and the class of government employees, whom Charles Chasie mentions as, 'The first Naga Elites' in Naga Society (2017). In the same lines, it was the Naga middle class intellectuals who submitted the Naga Memorandum to the Simon Commission, the Naga National Council also consisted of representatives from all Naga Tribes and they also symbolise the new social class of Naga educated middle class and the elites in modern Naga society.

The emergence of the Naga National council, the Naga District Tribal Council are all seen as symbolising the rise of the new Naga middle class intellectuals. Apart from these groups of emerging modern middle class, another factor that affected the evolution of Naga Society into modernization was the second World War when the arena of the War shifted to Kohima which became the battlefield for British and the Japanese forces. Admiral Lord Mounbatten commented, "The Battle of kohima will probably go down as one of the greatest battles in history"(Swinson, 1966). Field Marshal wavell speaks about this battle as, "When the history of the war comes to be written, the fight here will be put down as one of the turning points of the war...when the Japanese were routed and their downfall really began"(*Ibid.*,)

After the Battle of Kohima, thousands of houses had been reduced to rubble and needed to be rebuilt. The war had also left the people displaced and had to be provided rations. The War resulted in much inflow of money into the Naga Hills, this resulted in some Nagas obtaining the utmost advantage of carrying out these contract works of war time constructions, supply of military goods and all other necessities. As a result, it brought into being a rich class of contractors among Nagas, creating a neo-rich class in Naga Society. Chaube has also observed that the greatest contribution of the Second World war on the Naga society was the creation of a tiny middle class among Nagas (Chaube,1973). The second World war has dramatically affected the transition of Naga Society in two extreme opposites. The War led to devastation and destruction of property on one hand and on the other, some Nagas bagged the advantages in the war. The sudden war-time construction activities, posting of military supplies and other necessities brought a lot of money into the

Naga Hills. This led to the creation of a new rich class of contractors, thus creating a small class of wealthy Nagas (Sanyu, NEIHA, Ninth session)

After the formation of Statehood, a new phase started for development of Nagaland. Huge funds were sanctioned by the Centre for the purpose of development. The resources got concentrated in Kohima, the Capital of the State. Corruption made an early debut in the State among the officials responsible for handling it due to lack of any strong mechanism for accountability of these funds (Sanyu, 2016). There was influx of non-local business men and the Marwaris in Dimapur setting up shops and godowns. Transport and communication increased along with constructions of Government buildings. These developments accentuated the growth of the elite wealthy class in Naga Society. After Statehood, the social structure emerged to be widely uneven. The developments did not reach the rural population who comprised of 80 percent of the population depending on cultivation. From the urban population there emerged the new middle class. The offshoot of the new business community is the emergence of the diverse bourgeoisie class in Modern Naga Society.

## CHAPTER-6

### Conclusion

The evolution of Naga society from a traditional to a Modern society has undergone various stages of resistance, conflict and adaptations. The transformation of Nagas from the state of isolated village communities to a unified tribal and nationhood identity is a significant aspect of their socio-political evolution. Historically, the Naga tribes were strong independent village-republics based on kin-ship tribes following distinct customs and had no contact with the outside world. When British military officers entered the Naga Hills in 1832 to explore possibilities of opening a road from Assam to Manipur, they encountered for the first time the fierce and independent Naga tribes. From the beginning, the Nagas' response to the British incursions reflected their strong resistance and resilience to external intrusion and invasion. The Nagas resistance against these expeditions bears testimony to their strong opposition to external interference. Whether in the form of exploratory surveys or military advances, these intrusions were perceived as unwelcome intrusion into the hills inhabited for centuries by warrior tribes untouched by outside influences, whether native or foreign. Some truth underlies the maxim of 'History repeating itself' as can be witnessed from the experiences during the Ahom intrusion and the British intrusion into the territory of the Nagas. Both the encounters exhibit the innate martial spirit of the Nagas and their fierce reaction and indomitable defiance to any form of intrusion into their territories by outside forces. The defensive reaction demonstrated by the Nagas during the Ahom Commander Sukapha's intrusion into the Naga territory in the Patkai hills during the thirteenth century and the Britishers intrusion in the nineteenth century through the Naga Hills reflect a historical parallel revealing the similar pattern of inherent warrior traits of the Naga Tribes. Thus, it took several years for the British to consolidate their authority in the Naga Hills.

In this research study, extensive research analysis has been undertaken to understand and analyse the various dynamics of change and transformation that the Naga society has undergone in the last two centuries, between the first quarter of the nineteenth century to the middle of the twentieth century, till Nagaland attains Statehood under

the Indian Union on December 1, 1963. These changes have taken place as a result of the sudden contact and interaction with the external forces- the British colonial Government and the Christian missionaries.

### **Findings of the study**

The study provides a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted changes within Naga Society in its evolutionary process from a pre-modern, village-centric society to a modern society. With the extension of British occupation, the Naga tribes were brought out of their centuries of isolation and for the first time the Naga tribes were unified under a central administration under a powerful central government. The whole Naga society was divided into various tribes and each tribe was Independent of the other. There was no centralized political structure and each tribe was governed by its own chiefs or elders under various customs. Thus, under the British rule their most significant contribution was bringing all these various Naga tribes under a centralized government. Secondly, the Colonial rule was responsible for opening up the tribes from centuries of isolation and seclusion. Thirdly, under British rule, the Nagas forged the spirit of Naga unity across tribes and common National identity and aspirations.

The beginning of the nineteenth century marks a crucial turning point in the transformation of Naga society. The first contact between the Nagas and the outside world occurred through the expansion of British colonial rule into the Naga Hills, which brought about profound changes in their political and social structures. British administrators, in their efforts to maintain law and order, and to curb the frequent Naga raids on the plains, sought to suppress and banned the long-standing practice of headhunting. These interventions led to significant administrative changes among the Nagas. Traditionally, the Nagas lived in self-sufficient, independent village republics, resilient and protective tribal units, largely isolated from external influences. The intrusion of the British military officers into the Naga Hills in 1832 to explore, survey to find an alternate and more accessible route between the newly extended tea gardens of Assam with Manipur, brought them into their first encounter with the fierce and autonomous Naga tribes. The Naga response to these expeditions bore testimony to their strong resistance to external interference. Whether in the form of exploratory missions or military advances, these intrusions were perceived as

violations of territories that had remained untouched and unchallenged for centuries by any outside power, native or foreign.

Afterwards, the extension of British colonial administration over the Naga Hills in the nineteenth century set in motion the great wheels of the transformation of Naga society from an ancient traditional World into the vestiges of the modern World. An early merit of the British intervention in the Naga Hills was the decline in violence and warfare among the Naga tribes and the cessation of the headhunting raids which was proclaimed as a punishable offence. The new system of governance introduced under the colonial Government redefined the social and political structure of Naga society. In the following decades, through the interaction and exposure with the outside World, enhanced by the rise of educated Nagas, political awareness and modern thoughts and philosophy seeped into the core of Naga Society. As a result of their independent historical past, the Nagas did not join the Indian independence movement. Instead, the Naga National Council declared their own independence a day before India did. This struggle for independence persists till present times.

Under the British rule, the Nagas were left to continue to rule and administer their villages according to their respective customs. The government did not interfere in the local affairs of the Nagas, they intervened only in some of the customs like headhunting practices and slavery which were banned and strict measures of retaliation were enforced. A harmonious relationship began to develop among the warring tribes and the spirit of reconciliation became apparent by the absence of further internecine conflicts in the district. On the whole, along with headhunting, other social evils such as child marriage, slave trade and human sacrifice were brought to an end. Thus, colonial rule led to development of harmony and unity of the Naga tribes as an ethnic group and the awakening of political consciousness.

Since the colonial rulers refrained from interfering in the local traditions and Naga ways of life, it appears that many of the tribes retained their traditional lifestyles till the twentieth century. To quote *Elwin*, "Up to the time of Japanese invasion in 1944, the Nagas had lived in an age of almost uninterrupted continuity with the past. The Nagas made a leap, as it were, from a distant past into the glare of the present century with the advent of the Japanese and found their World greatly changed"

(1997). The British authorities had in fact, helped from the early years of their contact with the tribal people, in the preservation of many elements of the native culture by imposition of Laws like the Inner Line Regulations of 1873. This had kept the Nagas isolated from interaction and exploitation from outsiders. In general, the British policy towards the Nagas was characterised by great caution and reluctance to interfere with their customs and beliefs, and whatever changes were sought to be introduced were done slowly and indirectly. Because of this cultural isolationist policy, the Nagas could preserve many of their indigenous customs, yet, at the same time they received influences of western culture through other interactions and avenues. Thus, western and colonial culture did gradually impinge on the Nagas.

The American Baptist missionaries made a profound impact in the transformation of Naga society; they were the main harbinger of change in the beliefs and ways of life of the Nagas. The spread of the gospel and the conversion of the Nagas, the establishment of mission schools and development of literature of the tribes, all combined to make a contribution towards the new changes that took over Naga society. The schools which were established with the primary purpose of communicating Christian gospel were successful and produced trained evangelists, pastors and school teachers from among the local populace (Downs, 1971) Prior to the colonial administration, written form of any script was unknown to the Nagas. It was the American Baptist Missionaries led by Dr E.W Clark and his wife Mary Mead who began the works of translating the Bible and published many other literary works for the Nagas in the Roman script. This immense contribution made by the Christian missionaries by evangelization of the Nagas, drawing them out of an existence shrouded in darkness and superstitious fears to modern civilization are positive aspects that will go down in the annals of Naga History.

The contributions of the Christian Missionaries can be seen not only for their evangelization activities, that led to the gradual conversion of almost all the Naga tribes to Christianity, but also for the introduction of the formal system of education in the Naga Hills, which automatically activated the mechanism of social and political transformations in Naga society from an ancient society to the modern one. Their contribution further extended to the provision of basic medical care and community welfare activities to the Nagas, which is often sidelined by the emphasis

on civilizing impact of formal modern education. In the interior villages, it was the American Baptist missionaries who provided basic medical care to the Nagas even before the British administration did. Christianity's largest contribution to the Nagas was the complete transformation to a new life of Christian temperance and ethical living; forging love and unity among the tribes; ceasing hostilities and inter village and inter-tribal feuds; developing the sense of belongingness and brotherhood among the Nagas and ushering in a new outlook in Naga Society. Christianity transformed the fierce spear wielding head-hunting Naga society to become to one of the Christian dominated states in the world with more than 85 percent of the total population of the State as Christian.

One set back of the arrival of christianity to the Nagas was that, the new converts had to disassociate themselves from observing their ancient rites and customs as Nagas were taught by the missionaries that it was sinful to take part in traditional cultural practices. Everything done in connection with the tribal ceremonies and festivals was regarded as an act against christianity. The house decorations and adornments with animal heads, valued by Nagas as trophies of valour, and the Mithun horns which were symbols of their prosperity as well as a large number of objects of art were all destroyed. Even wood carvings on the pillars of houses were burnt . The weavings with conspicuous designs and natural colours and dyeing processes and attires for religious ceremonies were all discouraged. The beautiful ornaments of great artistry, made ewith cowrie shells, ivory, scartlet hair and hornbill feathers were all burnt as they were considered as ornaments used for worshipping the spirits( Sema,1986). The art of dancing, traditional songs, colourful social ceremonies were all given up. Instead only the clothes of the plains like saree and dhoti or half pant and European dress were encouraged to be worn. All these led to degeneration of the traditional socio-cultural practices of the Nagas, and Nagas now neglected their own talents in weaving, sculptures and other talents, and diverted to western culture and outlook. With the increasing acceptance of modern education there was also disruption of the indigenous system of learning. In the past, the Nagas society had depended exclusively on informal system of education which was transmitted orally from the parents at home and elders of the village in the Morung which served as the traditional learning institute in all the villages. Learning process was simple and yet practice oriented. Every household was itself a place of learning,

educating the children in the way they should grow up, to be good and responsible housewives and warriors. Home schooling was mostly supplemented by their dormitory experience where both boys and girls learnt social customs of their own. The introduction of colonial education however, disrupted this traditional indigenous system of learning and redirected it toward a new model of modern education. As colonial education gained wider acceptance, the indigenous system of knowledge fully declined.

The new system of governance introduced by the colonial Government redefined the social and political structure of Naga society. In the following decades, through the interaction and exposure with the outside World, along with by the rise of educated Nagas, political awareness and modern thoughts seeped into the core of Naga Society. When the World War 1 broke out, a huge Naga contingent recruited from various tribes as the Naga Labour Corps, sailed to Europe to serve in the War, where they got directly exposed to western ideas and became strongly imbued with feelings of unity of the tribes. In the aftermath of the War, mounting political awareness and increasing ideas of Naga Nationalism were developing in the Naga Hills which climaxed in a series of political events for the assertion of Nagas political rights. In the post-Independence era, the Naga political movement intensified into a broad struggle for Nagas self-determination and Identity politics. Thus, the Naga Society has undergone profound socio-political changes in its journey of transition to a modern Society, within a short period of about a century, symbolising an epoch of unprecedented transformation in the Society. Earlier the Nagas had been entrenched in their close village-kinship identity. But now, tribal affiliation became magnified under colonial rule and stronger tribal identities were formed as the British administration also focussed on tribal groups while consolidating their rule. Groups of villages based on tribe had been grouped together to form the new sub-divisions or out-post which led to strengthening of tribal identities among the Nagas. This process of identity formation of the Naga society from village identity to tribe identities further culminated in the form and status of the Naga Nationhood Identity by the early nineteenth century.

The colonial government introduced monetary economy in Naga Society as a medium of exchange, though the traditional barter system existed. This resulted in a

significant shift from the indigenous standards of wealth from those of land and cattle to those who were now earning salary and wages in money. Many Nagas were employed as Government servants under the British government, helping in administration as Interpreters or Dobashis, Gaonburas, clerks, teachers, medical staffs, soldiers, guards etc. With the establishment of Tea plantations in Assam, the Nagas in the border areas got opportunities to visit the plains for earning wages working as labourers in the Tea plantations during the off-season in the winter months, when their harvest was over in their village fields. The Nagas were mainly employed in clearing of thick jungles for Tea garden extensions. Similarly, opportunities for wage labour became available for the Nagas in several works including road construction which was being undertaken on a large scale in many areas to connect the British controlled areas.. This shift of wealth to accumulation of money intensified when a number of Nagas who had acted as carriers in the Abor Expedition returned with large sums of money over several months. The same happened when the Naga Labour corps returned from abroad in 1918 with high sums of accumulated salary. In both cases, the transactions and expenditures of money after their return led to inflation of prices in the local markets. *The Times* of December 29, 1944 highlighted that the Tamu Road open for Field Marshal Alexander's retreating army in the rains of 1942 was by the Naga Labourers. Nagas also served in the Assam Rifles and Assam Regiment (*Alemchiba, 1970*)

In the analysis of social transformations carried out in this study, it has been observed that there exists marked Social stratifications in the Naga Society which is the outcome of not only the forces of modernization but has been in existence from the ancient times. Therefore, Naga Society may not be termed as an Egalitarian society. The emergence of elite and class in Naga Society represents a case of the existence of social inequality and class divisions in the Naga Society from the ancient period and the class diversity may be identified on the basis of occupation. Contrary to popular belief, traditional Naga Tribes cannot be termed as classless. The existence of inequality was rampant among all the tribes. The traditional social stratification among all the Naga tribes and the existence of the institution of slavery indicates the social inequality that exists in Naga traditional society. The political structures were stratified on unequal distribution and there were stratification even among the clans in the villages on the basis of founders of the village social

formation. The performance of the celebrated Feast of Merit is an indicator of the existence of social differences and glorification of class structure between rich and poor classes.

The evolution of Naga Society into a modern society under external influences have affected various aspects of life. While these changes have brought about development and modernization in society, they have also posed challenges to the preservation of traditional identities and practices. The rise of the Naga Middle class is an example of the new classification that emerged in Naga society as a direct result of the colonial rule and the civilizing efforts of the Christian missionaries. The combination of colonial administrative changes and the missionary education contributed to the rise of a Naga middle class. This group comprised of individuals who occupied positions in the colonial administration, engaged in professional activities, or benefitted from western education.

Finally, the British incursions and land encroachments for plantations in the borders had been acts of intrusion and encroachments into Naga territories. Although, the British had recognised the traditional boundary between the Ahoms and Nagas as the political boundary, after consolidating their rule in Assam, they subjugated large tracts of Naga territories in the border areas. In 1852, Naga areas were constituted into a sub-division under Nowgong district, with Asaloo as headquarter. When the Naga Hills was constituted as a district in 1866, it comprised of this sub-division of Naga territory earlier attached to Nowgong. However, starting from 1898, citing reasons of administrative convenience large portions of the Naga territory were transferred to the Assam in 1898, 1901, 1902-3 and 1923 (Sema, 1986). The partition of Naga-inhabited areas into multiple administrative divisions across different states remains one of the enduring historical legacies and arguably a profound blunder of British Colonial policy, the consequences of which continue to persist in the unsolved boundary problems of the states. A great deal of the problems that plague the Hills till date are legacies of British colonialism in the region. The partition of Naga inhabited areas into various administrative regions spread over various States of Northeast and Myanmar. On the plea of administrative convenience, the Colonial officials have created arbitrary boundary lines and carved out large areas from the Naga Hills. On this issue of re-transfer of forest lands that have been carved out

from the Naga Hills and placed under the boundary of Assam, Nagas have sought earnestly by submitting memorandums and petitions of prayer but those pleas had fallen on deaf ears of a series of successive Government committees to whom it has been brought for consideration. To this day, the Naga people live divided in different areas within Myanmar, Manipur, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland.

The issue of restoration of these transferred Naga territories to Assam was one of the cores demands of the Nagas in the Memorandum to the Simon Commission. This point was again strongly reiterated by the Naga National Council in their memorandum of the Nine Point Agreement. Finally, the same demand was made in the Sixteen Point Agreement granting the Statehood to Nagaland. Naga territories were divided into different areas within Burma, Manipur, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland. The Nagas continues to demand integration of Naga inhabited areas into a single unit.

In conclusion, the Nagas hitherto rooted in their indigenous socio-political structures, were abruptly drawn into the orbit of modern Imperialism through the occupation of the Naga Hills by one of the World's foremost Colonial powers. The establishment of a new administrative order, coupled with the transformative forces of Christianity and western education constituted a watershed in the historical evolution of Naga society. While these developments displaced the traditional order, the Nagas were brought under a central authority for the first time, signifying a major shift from their earlier independent system of Village Republics. Furthermore, the infrastural growth of roads and communications under the British rule connected the various villages of the Naga Hills, which previously had little or no contact with each other. The spread of Christianity and modern western education further deepened this transformation, fostering literacy and political consciousness among the Nagas all of which have contributed to the emergence of a Common Naga Identity. These profound and interlinked developments created a heightened political consciousness which laid the foundations of modernity and has culminated in a dynamic and unprecedented transformation that gave rise to the Modern Naga Society.

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## APPENDIX-1

### The Naga Club Memorandum to the Simon Commission

Original letter dated 26.3.28/March 26, 1928

To,

The Indian Statutory Commission,

Camp India,

Memorandum of the Naga Hills    January 10, 1929

Sir,

We, the undersigned Nagas of the Naga Club at Kohima who are the only person at present who can voice for our people have heard with great regret that our Hills included within the Reformed Scheme of India without our knowledge, but as the 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 learn that you come to India as representatives to the British Government to enquire into the working of the system of Government and the growth of the education and we beg to submit below our view with the prayer that our Hills may be withdrawn from the Reformed Scheme and placed outside the Reforms but directly under British Government. We never asked any reforms and we do not wish for any reforms.

Before the British Govt. 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 Manipuris in the South. They never conquered us, nor were we ever subjected to their rule. On the under 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 really 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 chances 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 on yet who is able to represent all our different tribes or master our language much less one to represent us in any council of province, Moreover, our population numbering 1,02,000 is very small in comparison with the population of the plains districts in the province, and any representation that may be allotted to be 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 one of our 'Beef' and the other for our 'Pork' and 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 administration. The reforms, if it is continued to be made placed under the Reformed Scheme, we are afraid that new heavy taxes will have to be imposed on us and when we cannot pay them all our land 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 them. Though our land at present is within the British territory, Government have always recognized 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 District. 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 encroachments 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 subjugate us, but to leave us alone to determine for ourselves as in the ancient times. We claim (not only the members of the Naga Club) to represent all these tribes to which we belong: Angami, Kacha-Nagas, Kukis, Sumis, Lotha and Rengmas.

Signed by:

Nihu, Head Interpreter, Angami

Nisale, Peshkar, Angami

Nisher, Master, Angami

Khose, Doctor, Angami

Cepo, Interpreter, Kacha Naga

Vipunyu, Potdar, Angami  
 Gyiepra, Treasurer, Angam  
 Ruzukhrie, Master, Sub-Overseer, Angami  
 Dikhrie, Master, Angami  
 Zhapuzulie, Master, Angami  
 Zepulie, Interpreter, Angami  
 Katsumo, Interpreter, Angami  
 Nuolhoukielie, Clerk, Angami  
 Luzevi, Interpreter, Sema  
 Apamo, Interpreter, Lotha  
 Resilo, Interpreter, Rengma  
 Lengjang, Interpreter, Kuki  
 Nikhriehu, Interpreter, Angami  
 Miakrai, Chaprasi, Angami  
 Levi, Clerk, Kacha Naga  
 (The Naga Republic, Oct 9,2017)

## **APPENDIX-II**

### **The Nine Point Agreement (Hydari Agreement June 1947)**

The preamble of the Hydari Agreement recognised the right of the Nagas to develop themselves according to their freely expressed wishes.

1. It established that all cases, civil or criminal cases between the Nagas were to be settled by Naga customary laws in a Naga court.
2. On the executive level, the general principle of ‘what the Naga National Council was prepared to pay for, the Naga National Council would control’ was followed.
3. No laws passed by the Provincial or Central legislature would affect the terms of the agreement or the religious practices of the Nagas shall have legal force without the consent of the NNC.
4. It asserted that Land with all its resources in the Naga Hills should not be alienated to a non- Naga without the consent of the Council.

5. An agreement was also arrived on the matter of taxation proposing that the Naga National Council would be responsible for the imposition, collection and expenditure of land revenue, house tax, and other taxes imposed by the Council.
6. An important feature of the Agreement was on question of the boundaries; it was agreed to modify the administrative divisions so as to restore into the Naga Hills District all the forests transferred to Sibsagar and Nowgong districts in the past.
7. There was to be one unified administrative unit for all the Nagas, and all such areas so included would be within the scope of the proposed agreement.
8. No area were to be transferred out of the Naga Hills without the consent of the NNC.
9. The Governor of Assam was to be the agent of the Government of the Indian Union for a period of ten years to ensure the due observance of this Agreement. At the end of this period, the Naga National Council will be asked whether they require the above agreement to be extended for a further period or a new agreement regarding the future of the Naga people be arrived at.

### **APPENDIX-III**

#### **Naga Hills Tuensang Area (Administration) Regulation 1957**

In exercise of the powers conferred by article 240 of the Constitution read with sub-paragraph (2) of paragraph 18 of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution, the President is pleased to promulgate the following Regulation made by him :-

1. (1) This Regulation may be called the Naga Hills-Tuensang Area (Administration) Regulation, 1957.  
 (2) It extends to the whole of the Naga Hills-Tuensang Area.  
 (3) It shall come into force on such date as the Central Government, may, by notification in the Official Gazette, appoint.
2. In this Regulation,
  - (a) "appointed day" means the date appointed under sub-section (3) of section 1 for the coming into force of this Regulation;
  - (b) "Law" means any law, ordinance, regulation, order, bye-law, rule, scheme notification or other instruments having the force of law in India or any part thereof.

3. The Naga Hills-Tuensang Area shall be divided into three districts to be called Kohima district, Mokokchung district and Tuensang district, each comprising the areas respectively set out against it in the Schedule.
4. (1) The administration of Naga Hills-Tuensang Area shall be carried on by the Governor of Assam as the agent of the President.  
(2) The Central Government may appoint a commissioner for the Naga Hills-Tuensang Area to assist the Governor of Assam; and the Governor may appoint a Deputy Commissioner for each of the districts therein and the Deputy Commissioners shall perform their functions under the supervision and control of the Commissioner.
5. Without prejudice to the provisions of section 4 and to the powers of the Central Government to appoint from time to time such officers as may be necessary for the administration of the Naga Hills-Tuensang Area, all other officers who, immediately before the appointed day, were exercising lawful functions in the Naga Hills-Tuensang Area or any part thereof shall, until other provision is made by the Central Government in this behalf, continue to exercise in connection with the administration of the Naga Hills-Tuensang Area, their respective powers and jurisdiction and to perform their respective duties and function in the same manner and to the same extent as before the appointed day.
6. Save as otherwise expressly provided in this Regulation, all laws in force in the Naga Hills District or the Tuensang Frontier Division of the North East Frontier Agency immediately before the appointed day shall continue in force in the districts of Kohima and Mokokchung or, as the case may be, in the Tuensang district until repealed or amended by a competent Legislature or other competent authority.
7. All taxes, duties, cesses or fees which, immediately before the appointed day, were lawfully levied in the Naga Hills Tuensang Area or any part thereof shall continue to be levied and to be applied to the same purposes, until other provision is made by a competent Legislature or other competent authority.
8. For the avoidance of doubts, it is hereby declared that all property and assets within the districts of Kohima and Mokokchung which, immediately before the appointed day, vested in the State Government of Assam shall, as from that day, vest in the Central Government.

9. All rights, liabilities and obligations of the State Government of Assam in relation to the districts of Kohima and Mokokchung shall, as from the appointed day, be the rights, liabilities and obligations of the Central Government.
10. (1) Any territorial references in any law to the Naga Hills District, the Naga Tribal Area, or the Tuensang Frontier Division shall be construed as references-
- (a) in the case of the Naga Hills District, to the districts of Kohima and Mokokchung; and
  - (b) in the case of the Naga Tribal Area or the Tuensang Frontier Division, to the Tuensang District.
- (2) In the Rules for the Administration of Justice and Police in the Naga Hills District prescribed by the Governor of Assam, in his No. 2530 (b) A.P. dated the 25th March, 1937, as in force in the districts of Kohima and Mokokchung, and reference to the Inspector General of Police, Assam, shall be construed as a reference to the Superintendent of Police, Naga Hills-Tuensang Area.
- (3) In the Assam Frontier (Administration of Justice) Regulation, 1945, as in force in the Tuensang district, any reference to Political Officer, Additional Political Officer and Assistant Political Officer shall be construed as a reference to Deputy Commissioner, Additional Deputy Commissioner and Assistant Commissioner, respectively.
11. For the purpose of facilitating the application of any law in the Naga Hills-Tuensang Area, any court of other authority may construe any such law with such alterations, not affecting the substance, as may be necessary or proper to adapt it to the matter before the court of other authority.
12. (1) If any difficulty arises in giving effect to the provisions of this Regulation or in connection with the administration of the Naga Hills Tuensang Area, the Central Government, may, by order, make such further provision as appears to it to be necessary or expedient for removing the difficulty.
- (2) Any order under sub-section (1) may be made so as to be retrospective to any date not earlier than the appointed day.
13. The Central Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, make rules to carry out the purposes of this Regulation.

## APPENDIX-IV

### The Sixteen-Point Memorandum

#### 1. **The Name:**

The Territories that were hitherto known as the Naga Hills- Tuensang Area under the Naga Hills-Tuensang Area Act 1957, and any other Naga Area, which may hereafter come under it shall form a state within the Indian Union and be hereafter known as Nagaland.

#### 2. **The Ministry-Incharge:**

The Nagaland shall be under the Ministry of External Affairs of the Government of India.

#### 3. **The Governor of Nagaland:**

(1) The President of India shall appoint a Governor for Nagaland and he will be vested with the Executive Powers of the Government of Nagaland and he will function from the Headquarters of the Nagaland.

(2) His administrative secretariat will be headed by a chief Secretary stationed at the Headquarters with other Secretariat Staff as necessary.

(3) The Governor shall have special responsibility with regard to Law, Order and Police during transitional period only.

#### 4. **Council of Ministres:**

(1) There shall be a Council of Ministers (Viz.Six Ministers and Three Deputy Ministers) with a Chief Minister as the head to assist and advise the Governor in the exercise of his functions.

(2) The Council of Ministers shall be responsible to the Naga Legislative Assembly.

#### 5. **The Legislature:**

There shall be a constituted Legislative Assambly 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:**

Three elected members shall represent the Nagaland in the Union Parliament, i.e.

Two 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.

- (1) The Religious or Social practices of the Nagas.
- (2) Naga Customary Laws and Procedure.
- (3) Civil and criminal justice so far as these concern decisions according to Naga Customary Laws ;
- (4) 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.

**9. Administration of Justice:**

(a) Each tribe shall have the following Courts of Justice :-

- (1) The Village Court.
- (2) The Range Court.
- (3) The Tribal Court.

(b) Appellate Courts:

- (1) The District Court cum-Sessions Court (for each District), and Supreme Court of India.
- (2) The Naga Tribunal (for the whole of the Nagaland) in respect of cases decided according to Customary Law.

**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 the Nagaland.

(2) Provided further that a 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-Officer Chairman of the Council. This 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 working of 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;
- (2) A fixed recurring sum (Annual Subvention) for meeting the cost of the administration of Nagaland.

**12. Re-Transfer of Reserved Forests**

All the Reserved Forests and other Naga areas that were transferred out of Naga area will be returned to the Nagaland with a clearly defined boundary under the present settlement.

**13. Consolidation of Contiguous Naga Area:**

The other Naga Tribes inhabiting the areas contiguous to the present Nagaland be allowed to join the Nagaland if they so desire.

**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 Naga People's Convention shall appoint a Body to draft the details of the Constitution for the Nagaland on the basis of the settlement.

(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 Protected Area 1958, shall remain in force in the Nagaland.

The following Special Resolutions were also appended to the 16-point Memorandum.

(1) The Naga Peoples' Convention records its deep appreciation to the Administration for the various welfare activities and the progress made in the administration of the area.

(2) The Naga Peoples' Convention further requests the Administration to extend the following amnesty in order to expedite restoration of peace in the Nagaland and to

effectively implement the provisions of the Political settlement arrived at with the Government of India.

- (i) To consider favourably the release of the Naga Political prisoners;
  - (ii) To extend further, general pardon to the underground people coming overground;
  - (iii) To relax Military partrolling, Operations and other restrictions to enable free contact between over ground and underground people during the amnesty period.
3. The Naga People's Convention further appeals to the Naga People in general, and the aggrieved families in particular, to extend the same general pardon to the underground people coming overground and also we appeal to all underground Nagas to stop all sorts of violent activities from now on.
  4. The convention further requests the co-operation of every tribe to take effective steps to bring normalcy in the country.
  5. The Naga Peoples' Convention once again invites the under- ground people to come overground and to participate fully in the running of the New Government of Nagaland.

#### **6. Formation of Working Committee:**

- (a) A Working Committee with three representatives from every tribe be formed to see to the implementation of the decisions of the Third Session of the Naga Peoples' Convention held at Mokokchung in October, 1959.
- (b) The Working Committee be entrusted to select a body to be called the Negotiating Body who will make such contacts and negotiations, both with the Government of India and the underground people, to arrive at an amicable political settlement, and by all means, representatives of the underground people could also be taken 'in as members of the Negotiating Body. The formulation and the process of arriving at a conclusion out of these negotiations should be done within one month of its inception.
- (c) The Negotiating Body be fully authorised to make such minor changes in the course of the negotiations, if deemed necessary, unless when the question of fundamental principles and policies are involved.

## Glossary

### A

<i>Ahom</i>	The Ahoms are a Tai speaking ethnic group and Dynasty that rule over Assam for over 600 years.
<i>Alhou</i>	Word used for 'God' by the Sumi Nagas
<i>Anüngtsüingba</i>	The Sky God of Ao Nagas.
<i>Assiringia</i>	Name given by the Assamese for the inhabitants of the Nokpu Village

### B

<i>Borhat</i>	A place near present Sivasagar, well known for its Salt Depot during the British period.
<i>Burahaimong</i>	Yimchenkimong
<i>Buranji</i>	The Ahom Chronicles.

### C

<i>Changki</i>	It is a village in the northern ranges of the Ao area. It also denotes the third group of the Ao migrants.
<i>Cholimi</i>	The name used by the Sumi for Ao Nagas
<i>Chongli</i>	The name by which the Lotha Nagas call the Ao people.
<i>Chowumi</i>	The name by which Lothas are known by Sumis.

### D

<i>Dao</i>	A machete used by the Nagas
<i>Dekha Haimung</i>	Or Molungkimong, the Ao village where Christianity came for the first time in the Naga Hills
<i>Dhoti</i>	A strip of broad muslin cloth wrapped around the waist, drawn between the legs worn by men, especially of Bengal and Assam.
<i>Disoi river</i>	Tzürang river
<i>Dobashi</i>	Interpreter, appointed by British. They held position as leaders amongst the Naga people.
<i>Duar/Dwar</i>	A mountain Pass or a trade gateway.

**G**

*Gaonbura* Village Headmen who are appointed by the Government or the Village Chief who can be hereditary

*Genna* Word referring to observation of a period of prohibition or taboo, often observed during religious rituals.

**H**

*Hatigoria* The name given to Aos by the Assamese

*Henima* Tenning

**J**

*Jabili* The currency used by the Ao Nagas

**K**

*Khel* Popular Assamese word for division or section/ ward of a village, derived for Ahom Revenue Collection.

*Kawang* Konyak word for Almighty God

**L**

*Lijaba* The Creator God of Ao Nagas, who is also considered supreme of all beings.

*Longterok* The six stones from which it was believed that the Ao Nagas emerged. Found in existence in Chungliyimti till today.

**M**

*Madhu* Rice beer

*Meyütsüngba/mojing* The bad spirit or the god of the underworld, by the Aos.

*Mithun* *Bos Frontalis*, A bovine animal of high value to the Nagas

*Mohondijua* Diphu

*Molutobia* The Aos of Mopungchuket village were known by this name by the Assamese

*Morung* Bachelor's Dormitory

*Mungatung* Mangmetong

*Mukhireeman*

( *Miakreema*) Name given by Angamis to Manipuris

**N**

*Naogaon* Merangkong

*Namsangia* The Nocte Nagas or the Patkai Nagas were called by this name by the Assamese

*Nunkam* Longkhum

**P**

<i>Peshkar</i>	The Clerks in colonial times, under the magistrates. The revenue Officers were also called by the same name.
<i>Potsow</i>	The word for 'God' by the Lothas
<i>Puti Ungr</i>	Chief Priest in Ao
<i>Putir</i>	The term for 'Priest' in Ao.

**S**

<i>Samaguting</i>	The colonial name given to the present day Chumukedima. Samaguting was the first British Headquarter of the Naga Hills
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**T**

<i>Tephriema</i>	The Angami word for plains people and Assamese people
<i>Tsiüngrem</i>	God in Ao language
<i>Ukepenopfü</i>	Angami word for Supreme God

**Z**

<i>Zü</i>	Rice beer in Angami dialect.
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**PLATES**



**Plate 1. Ao Naga Village - 1876**



**Plate 2. Ao Naga Men and Women around 1880**



**Plate 3. Nagas in Assam – 1880**



**Plate 4. Konyak Nagas - 1880**



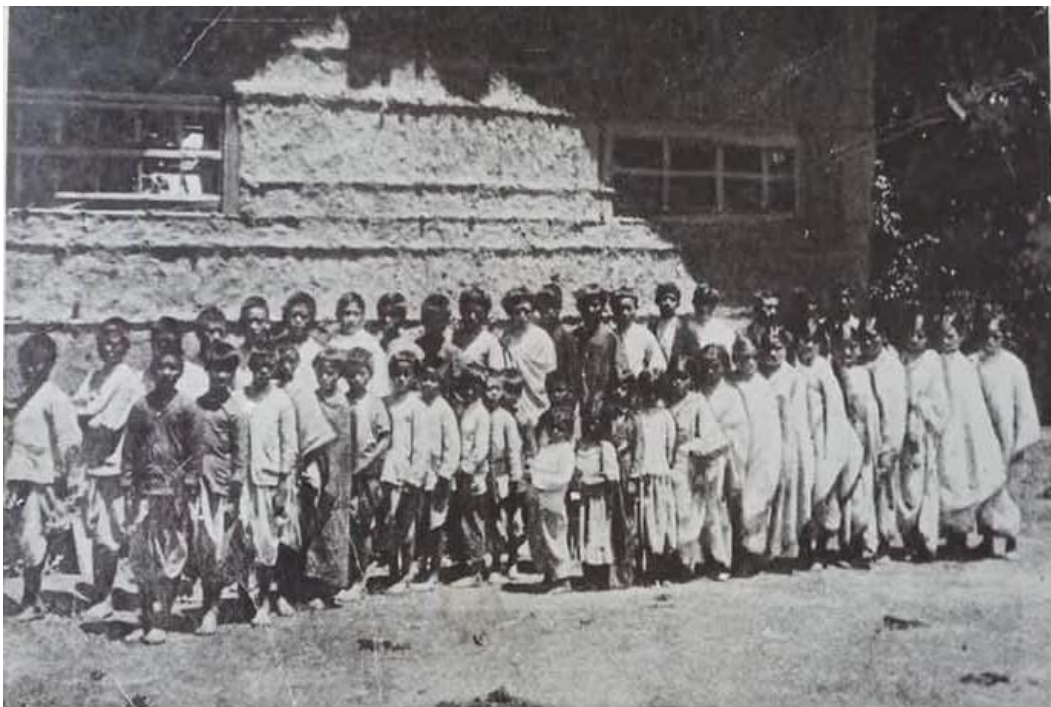
**Plate 5. Dr. E W Clark & Mary Mead Clark – 1871 Assam Sibsagar**



**Plate 6. Dr. & Mrs. Clark with Naga people – 1880**



**Plate 7. Dekahaimung (Molungkimong) – 1880**



**Plate No 8. Naga students of Impur Mission School - 1898**



**Plate 9. Naga Labour Corps (Sumi Nagas) - 1917**



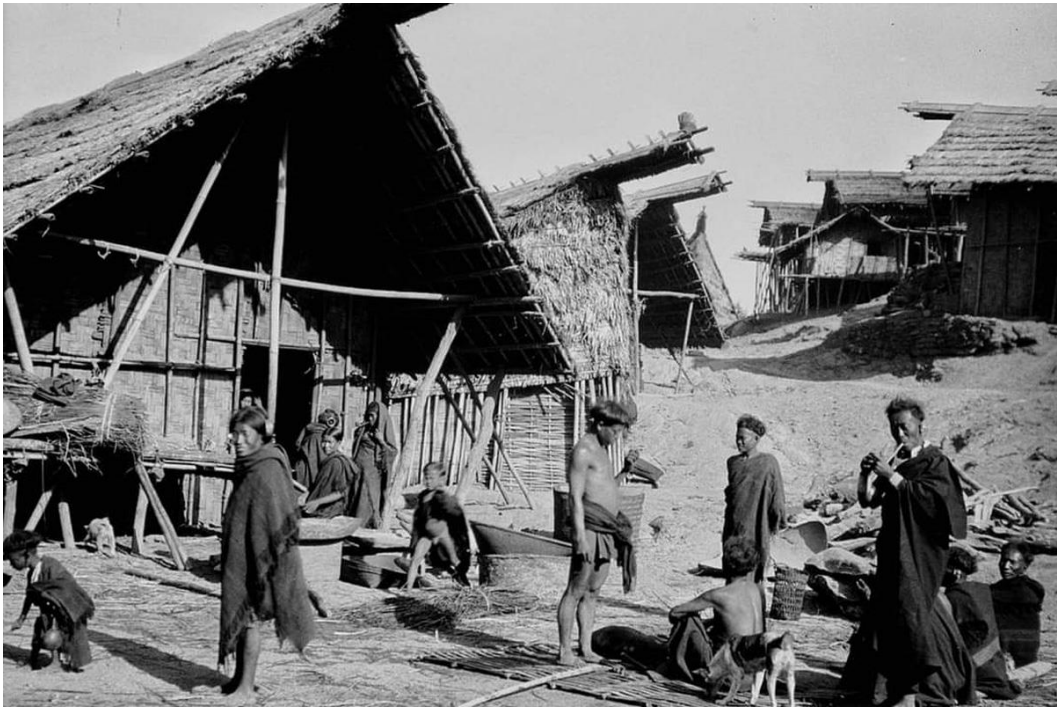
**Plate 10. Naga Labour Corps (Ao Nagas) – 1917**



**Plate 11. Naga Labour Corps ( Lotha Naga) – 1917**



**Plate 12. View of Lotha Naga Village, Longsa - 1948**



**Plate 13. View of Longkhum Ao Naga Village - 1922**



**Plate 14. Kohima TCP Gate Colonial Era**



**Plate 15. Khonoma Fort**



**Plate16. School Children Yimbang Village - 1947**



**Plate 17. Group of Dobashis & Scouts – 1918**



**Plate 18. Battle of Kohima – 1945**



**Plate 19. Battle of Kohima - 1944**



**Plate 20. Battle of Kohima, Japanese Soldiers – 1944**



**Plate 21. Dimapur Railway Station- 1944**



**Plate 22. Dimapur - 1944**



**Plate 23. Naga Plebiscite - May 1951**



**Plate 24. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, President of India  
Nagaland State Inauguration - 1963**



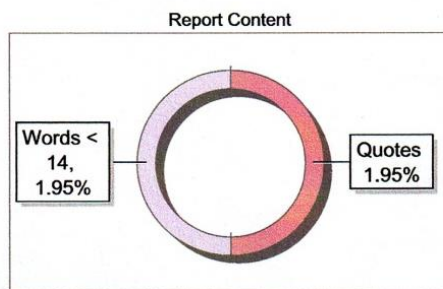
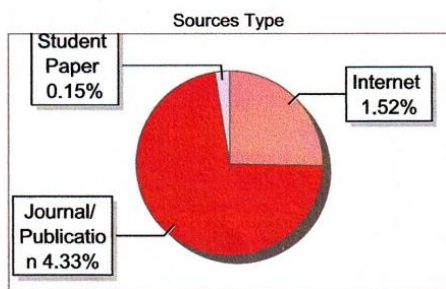
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