POLITICAL AND SOCIAL HISTORY OF THE KACHARIS OF NAGALAND

THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

By

SEBASTIAN ROY

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POLITICAL AND SOCIAL HISTORY OF THE KACHARIS OF NAGALAND

By

Sebastian Roy

Supervisor

Prof Y. Ben Lotha

Submitted

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

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

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(Prof. Y. Ben Lotha)

Supervisor

Department of History & Archaeology

Nagaland University

Kohima Campus, Meriema

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Head

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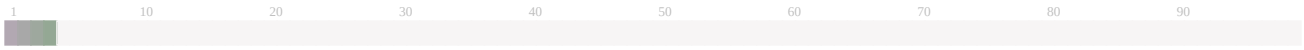

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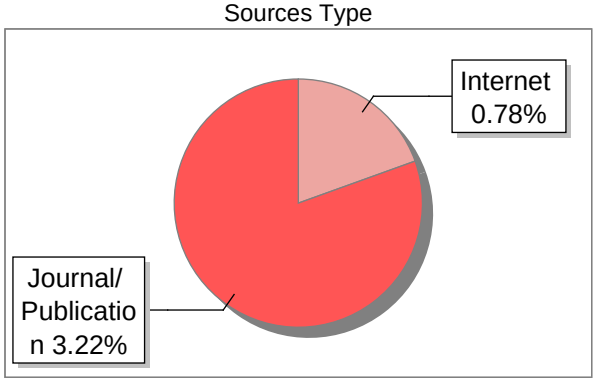

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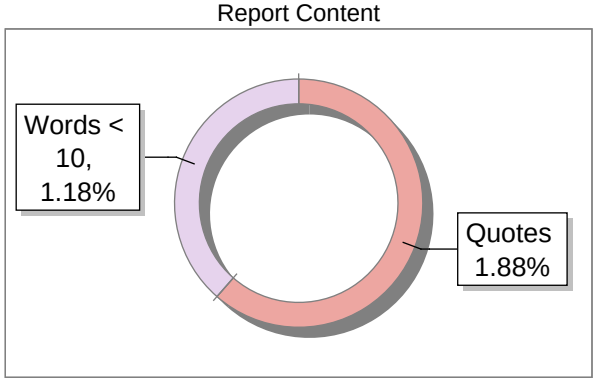

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Name &Institutional Address of the Supervisor/Co-Supervisor	Prof. Y. Ben Lotha Department of History and Archaeology Nagaland University Kohima Campus, Meriema	
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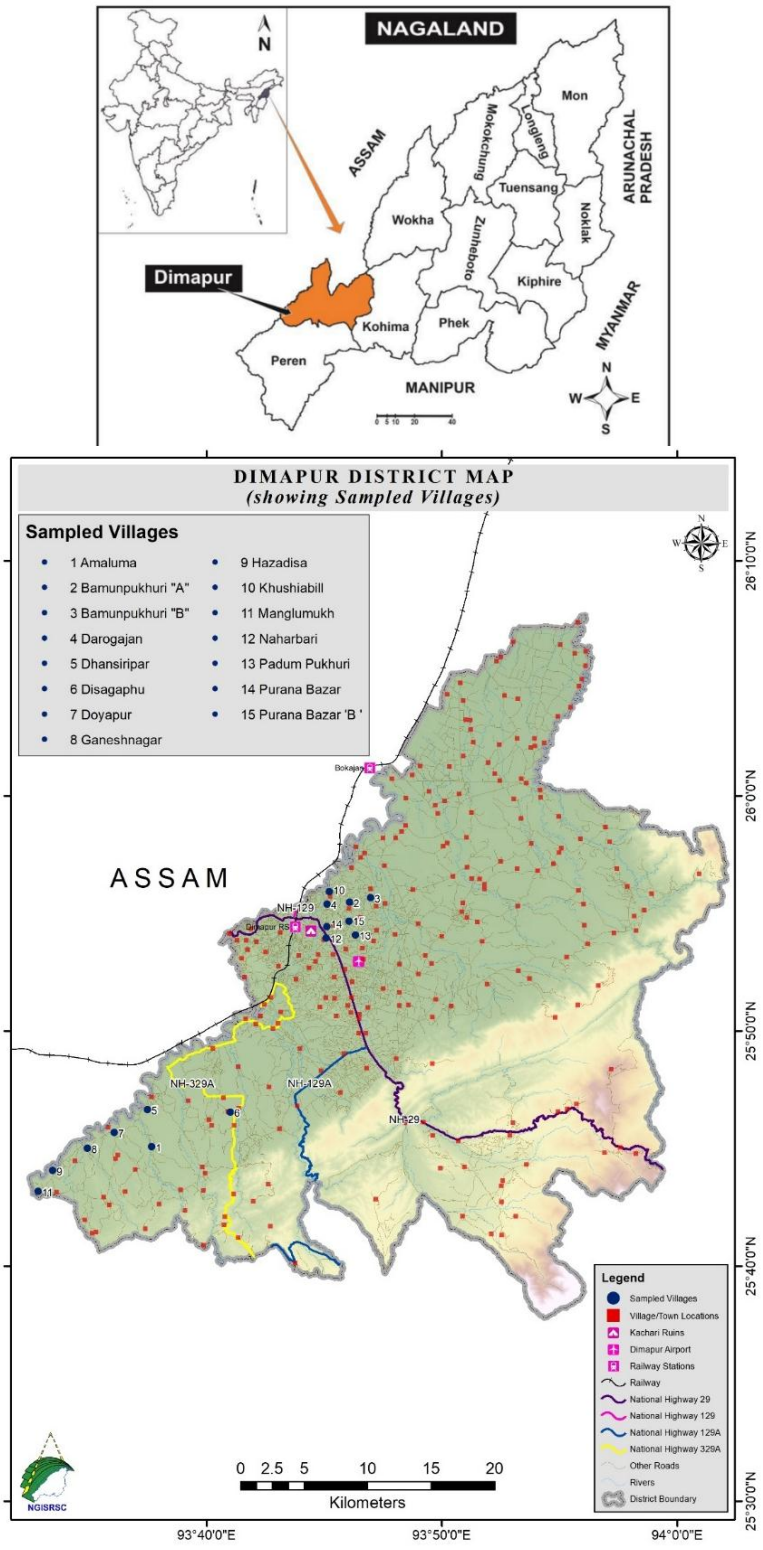
List of Figures

List of Maps

List of Appendix

Area Of Study



Map1: A map of the erstwhile Dimapur region prior to bifurcation with the sampled villages.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Kacharis are known as the earliest inhabitants of the Brahmaputra valley. G.P. Singh in his book, *The Kiratas in Ancient India* (1990), has likened the Kacharis and other tribal groups of North-east India to the ancient group known as Kiratas, who figure in the ancient Indian and classical Greek and Roman literature. According to Sidney Endle (1911) the Kacharis 'generally differ in some material ways from their Hindu and Musulman neighbours alike in things material and moral.' He has described them as, 'not a tall or handsome race, and in general bear some resemblance to the Nepali, being as a rule shorter and stouter than the people of North-West India though well fitted to bear up against physical fatigue and hardship. In face and figure they show a distinct approximation to what is known as the Mongolian type, i.e., they have square set faces, projecting cheek-bones, with almond-shaped eyes, and scanty beard and moustache.'

Rev. S. Endle says that the Kachari race was the original autochthones of Assam, and form a large, perhaps the main constituent element in the permanent population of the province. He believes that there were two great migrations from the North and North-east into the rich valley of the Brahmaputra – one entering North-East Bengal and Western Assam through the valley of Tista, Dharla, Sankosh and founding there what was formerly the powerful kingdom of Kamarupa; and the other making its way through the Subansiri, Dibong and Dihong valleys into eastern Assam, where a branch of the widespread Kachari race, known as Chutiyas (pronounced as Sutiyas), undoubtedly held sway for a long period. According to B. C. Allen, the Kacharis are a section of the Indo-Chinese race, whose original habitat was somewhere between the upper waters of the Yangtse-Kiang and the Hoang-Ho, and who gradually spread in successive waves of immigration over the greater part of what is now the province of Assam, entering by way of Burma. This theory is to be recommended because apart from the southward movement of the Miris and Chutiyas most of the tribal migration has been from the south towards the north. This was the direction of

the Ahom invasion in the thirteenth century, the tradition of the Nagas, all represent them as coming from the south, and the northward movement of the Kuki tribe was only stopped by the intervention of the British Government. On the other hand, Mr. Dundas, a former officer of North Cachar, reports that an old prayer was, fifty years ago, still in use amongst the Dimasa which refers to a huge pepul tree growing near the confluence of Dilao (Brahmaputra) and the Sangi. There the Kacharis were born and increased greatly in numbers, and thence they travelled till they reached Nilachal, the hill near Gauhati on which the temple of Kamakhya stands. From Nilachal they migrated to Halali and finally settled in Dimapur. (Acharya, 1984:213- 214)

The Kacharis are one of the recognised indigenous groups of Nagaland along with the Nagas and other non-Naga tribes like the Kukis, Garos and the Mikirs who are listed as scheduled tribes of Nagaland vide Notification (Nagaland) Scheduled Tribe Order 1970 (Luhadia, 2016) (see Appendix 1). There are two sub tribes of the Kacharis in Nagaland – the Dimasa Kacaharis and the Mech Kacharis. Both the sub-tribes are unique in their own way with different traditional practices but also has some similar traits. According to the 2011 Census Reports, the population of the Kacharis in Nagaland was 13,034 with 6562 males and 6472 females.

The society and the social structure of the Kacharis were very much similar to the other tribal societies of Northeast India with some unique characteristics of their own. The Dimasa Kachari is one of the few indigenous tribal communities in the world having the peculiarity of simultaneous presence of both patri and matri clan organizations. An important institution of the village is *Hangsao* – the bachelor's dormitory. Unlike the Nagas the Dimasas did not have separate dormitories for the females. Dormitory youths organized into labour force to carry out several public works in the village (Arunkumar, et. al, 2014). The Dimasa is unique in having a double descent system where the son belongs to the father's clan known as *senphong* while the daughters belong to the mother's clan called *jaddi.* (Singh, 1992)

Etymology of the term Kachari, Mech and Dimasa

The term 'Kachari' denotes many tribal communities originally belonging to the same stock of people, such as the Bodo Kachari, Dimasa Kachari, Mech Kachari,

and other Kachari sub-groups. Unfortunately, people have yet to ascertain the etymological meaning of the term 'Kachari' scientifically. The term's origin is complicated to trace, and the people themselves do not clearly understand why they are so-called. It can be mentioned here that the people belonging to the aforementioned tribal communities do not generally call themselves ‘Kachari’. They introduce themselves as Bodo, Dimasa, Sonowal, etc. In their traditional folktales, the term Kachari does not appear either. (Bordoloi, n.a)

The people between the river Koshi and Dilao (Brahmaputra) rivers were called as Kachari by the Nepalese. It is also believed that the term is derived from the Koch kingdom or tribe. It is also believed that when the Britishers arrived with the Assamese dobashis who termed the indigenous inhabitants as *kacha khaori* which means ‘raw eaters’ (Khemprai, personal comm,30/3/2022). Rampant orthographic inconsistencies in older writings, partly due to the investigator’s/informant’s lack of local culture or geography, often carry pejorative connotations and appellations that are further magnified. (Nienu, 2024)

It is very difficult to ascertain the origin of the term ‘Mech’. Many scholars hold differing opinions on its origin. A section of scholars suggests that the word is derived from the Sanskrit word ‘Mlechha’, which means ‘barbarian’ or ‘unclean’. On the other hand, another group of researchers argues that the community was named after the river ‘Mechi’, which flows along the Nepal-India border. Rev. S. Endle explained that the term ‘Mech’ originates from a corruption of the Sanskrit word ‘Mleccha’, meaning outcaste. Likewise, he noted, “the name (Mech) is almost a corruption of the Sanskrit word ‘Mleccha’, i.e., an outcaste from the Brahmin point of view...” (Endle, 1997: xvi). G.A. Grierson also stated that the term ‘Mech’ is a corruption of the Sanskrit word ‘Mlechha’. According to him, “the Bara folk who live to the west of the Kamrup district are called Mech by their Hindu neighbours. This word is probably a corruption of the Sanskrit ‘Mlechha’, which corresponds to the original meaning of our word ‘Welsh,’ i.e., foreigner or stranger.” (Grierson, 1903:1)

The term ‘Mech’ originated from the name of Mechi River because the settlements of the Meches have been found around the river valley since ancient times.

Thus, Sanyal states, “Meches are popularly called Mechia, that is, the inhabitants of the banks of the river Mechi, as the inhabitants of Bhot are called Bhotia.” (Sanyal, 1973: 22). In this regard, Dr. Kameswar Brahma also believed that the term ‘Mech’ or ‘Meche’ originated from the river Mechi. He remarks, “It is believed that the Bodo-Kacharis living by the bank of the river ‘Michi’, flowing through Nepal, call themselves ‘Mech’ or ‘Meche’. So, it may be possible that the word ‘Mech’ or ‘Meche’ originated from the river ‘Michi’.” (Brahma, 2008: iii) Observing the opinions of scholars and interviewing native speakers of Mech, it is clear that the term ‘Mech’ is not derived from the Sanskrit word ‘Mlechha’, which means ‘barbarian or unclean’. In this aspect, only British missionaries attempted to comment. It originated from the name of Mechi River, where they settled around the valley in both India and Nepal from the remote past.

He also describes the old folklore of ancient tribes in Nepal, Sikkim, and its adjacent areas. Folklore tells that “A prominent Bodo chief had five sons named Rai, Limbu, Meche (Mech), Koche (Koch), and Lepche (Lapcha). The region where Meche and his descendants lived naturally came to be named after him, and the river flowing through these parts was similarly named the Mechi River.” (Mondal, 2011:168)

The point of discussion is initiated from the etymology of the term Dimasa from which can also be gleaned the origin and migration of the Dimasa. One interpretation given by Monali Longmailai (2017) is that Dimasa is a generic term derived from ‘di’ meaning ‘water’ and and the suffixes ‘ma’ meaning ‘big’ and ‘sa’ is a masculine suffix for the people who derived the term at the time of rule in Dimapur kingdom. She also points out how a female in Dimasa is referred to with suffix ‘jik’. Further the terminologies used for regional sub- groups of Dimasa scattered in different regions are ha-sao (land-high), ha-war (land-plain),, dem-bra(water- rough), and ‘di- juwa’(water-high/tall) are derived from geographical descriptive terms of the region inhabited by the people and highlights how the dialects or variety Dimasa that is spoken has diachronically become distinct dialects (Thaosen, 2021: 53).

Origin and Migration

The earliest myth surrounding the origin of the Kacharis can be found in the epic of the Mahabharata. There it is mentioned that during the wandering days of the Pandava brothers, the second Pandava prince, Bhima, married a girl, Hidimba, after killing her brother Hidimbaka. It is believed that Hidimba belonged to the Dimasa Kachari tribe and that their son, Ghatotkach found a new dynastic rule with his capital in Hidimbapur, named after his mother. His domain covered a large area consisting of the modern districts of Karbi Anglong, North Cachar Hills, and the Cachar District of Assam. Hidimbapur subsequently became Dimbapur and later changed to Dimapur, now considered a part of the state of Nagaland. The Kacharis believe in this legend and consider themselves the sons of the great Bhima. They also believe Lord Bhima is still sleeping in a cave in Japfü peak, located in the Kohima district of Nagaland (Ghosh, 1992).

An oral tradition among the Dimasas regarding their origin is the legend of Bangla raja and Arikdima. According to the legend, in the beginning, the world was completely uninhabited, and the shape of the rivers, mountains, trees, plants, etc., was not the same that we find today. An unearthly silence enveloped the whole atmosphere. Over time, two divine beings, one male and one female, appeared. Their appearance had broken the unearthly and all-pervading silence of the earth. The male was called Bangla Raja, who was also the god or deity of the earthquake. The female was called Arikdima, who was a giant bird. The two fell in love, and as a result, Arikdima conceived. However, finding a suitable place to lay eggs was difficult, so Arikdima flew out searching for such a place. (Ghosh, 1992)

At last, she got a beautiful place known as Dilaobra Sangibra, the confluence of rivers Dilao and Sangi. The landscape was beautiful, with shining golden sand and blooming flowers, having a huge banyan tree at the centre, which was strong enough not to be affected by any high-velocity storm. It was here that Arikdima laid seven divine eggs. From the first egg, Sibrai was born, followed by Duraja, Naikhu Raja, Wa Raja, Ganyung Braiyung, and Hamaidao. They were Gods in the form of human beings and started playing gleefully on the golden sand. The seventh egg, which did not break on its own after hatching, was broken by applying force from which an evil

spirit came out, which causes miseries even today. The six gods are believed to be the ancestors of the Dimasas, whom they worship even today. (Ghosh, 1992)

There is also a folklore among the Dimasa Kacharis which gives the account of the migration of the Dimasas from their ancestral land sixty thousand years ago when their land was visited by drought and their settlement at the confluence of the Dilao and Tsangi rivers identified as Brahmaputra and Padma respectively by a local Dimasa historian Nalindra Bathari. In this salubrious tract, they settled and multiplied in numbers. They held assemblies, both large and small. However, after years of settlement in this tract, the Dimasas again commenced their march up the course of Brahmaputra. (Jahari, 2010)

It is believed that the Kacharis might have migrated in two or more waves, and there are various speculations about their migration. However, it is known that the Kacharis have migrated from Sadiya to Kasomari and from Kasomari to Dimapur, with similar structures around these areas. It is generally divided into two periods and is usually identified by its political establishments. The first period is known as the Sadiyal period – Sadiya to Dimapur, where the Kachari political system was more or less based on kinship. The second period is known as the Hidimbiyal period – Dimapur to Khaspur, and by this period, the Kacharis had already established a form of kingship. Similar structures like the ones in Rajbari ruins in Dimapur are also found in Kasomari, which suggests the earlier settlement of the Kacharis before settling in Dimapur and establishing a kingdom. (S.K.Khemprai, personal comm., March 30, 2022)

Allen (1905) has given the following account for the separation of the Bodo and Dimasa, but according to him, no trace of the story has been found among the Kacharis of Darrang. "Long ago, the Dimasa fought against a powerful tribe and were beaten in a pitched battle. They were compelled to give ground, but a broad and deep river debarred further retreat after a time. In despair, the king resolved to fight the following day again. Out in the night, a god appeared to him and told him that the next day the army could cross the river if they entered it at a spot where they saw a heron standing on the bank. No one, however, was to look back while the movement was in

progress. The dream proved true – a heron was seen standing on the bank, and the king had a significant portion of the people crossed in safety. A man then turned to see whether his son was following when the water suddenly rose, swept away those in the river bed, and prevented the others from crossing. The Dimasa were those who succeeded in reaching the other bank of safety. (Burman, 2016)

B.K. Roy Burman in *Census of India 1961 Vol 1 Monograph Series Part V-B Dimasa Kachari of Assam* have noted:

> "Allen (1903) stated that this legend accounting for the separation of the Bodo and the 'Dimasa finds no place among the Kacharis of Goalpara (Kacharis of Goalpara are known as Mech). Thus, one section style themselves as Bara and the other as Dimasa, though both use languages of Bodo origin. According to Allen (1903, p. 45) the Mech tribe is believed to be absolutely identical with the Kacharis. But the Dimasa Kacharis of the N.C. Hills do not support the views expressed by Allen (1903) in toto, though they do not deny thot the Mechs are also a branch of Kachari which got separated in the distant past, but how and when is not known; probably it is lost in the mist of the history."

Linguistic Background

Paul K. Benedict in his article *'Sino Tibetan: Another Look'* (1976) has classified the Kachari language under the Bodo-Konyak-Jinghpaw sub-group which comes under the Tibeto-Burman group under the Sino-Tibetan linguistic family. The Bodo branch includes several languages (or dialects) spoken both in the valley and in the hilly areas to the south. These have been known by such names as Boro (or Bodo), Mech, Dimasa, Kachari, and Hill Kachari. At least some of these are probably different enough to count as separate languages, although some of their speakers now prefer to identify themselves as 'Bodo' rather than 'Mech', 'Dimasa', or 'Kachari'. Tiwa [Lalung], also in Assam and Kokborok [Tripuri] in Tripura state to the south appear to be only marginally more distant from Boro, Dimasa, and Kachari than the latter are from each other. Ajoy Roy (1995) has mentioned how the term 'Bodo' or 'Boro' was first applied in the linguistic context which later became an ethnic connotation.

Kazuyuki Kiryu, in his project report '*An Outline of the Mech Language Grammar, text and Glossary'* (2005-2007) has classified the Bodo dialect as follows:

Bodo Dialect

1. Western dialects (Meche) - (i) Jalpaiguri Dialect (ii) Jhapa Dialect
2. Eastern dialects (Bodo) - (i) Western Assam dialect (Kokrajhar) (ii) Central Assam Dialect (iii) Eastern Assam Dialect

Dimasa is sub-classed under the Bodo-Garo group of the Tibeto-Burman language family (following Burling 1983) though the earlier classifications of the language had related sub-branching. Grierson (1903) is the earliest classification of Dimasa (people) as Dimasa (Hills Kachari), while Bodo as Kachari (Plains Kachari) and Mech in the Bodo-Naga sub-group of the Tibeto Burman language family. Dimasa has mainly four dialects, Hasao, Hawar, Dembra and Dijuwa, based on the geographical distribution of the speakers and the variations in speech and use. (Longmailai, 2017: 67-69)

Religion

The Kachari society, although with a more centralized form of government with a king, was of tribal origin and worked in similar ways like any other tribal society. In the tribal worldview, space is central. Everything has to be understood from the perspective of creation. Harmony with space or creation is the starting point of their spirituality and their search for liberation. An awareness of being one with the whole of creation is the spiritual foundation of the tribal people. In this unity of creation and spirituality, there is no clear-cut distinction between the sacred and secular, religion, and non-religion. One sees the Supreme Being in space/creation and not outside it. The animistic religion of the Kacharis known as Bathousim also revolves around this concept. *Bathoubwarai* is considered their supreme god who is unseen and is omnipresent, omniscient, and omnipotent. The Sijou plant, a woody species of Euphorbia Milli var. Splendens is considered as the living embodiment of *Bathoubwarai*. Sidney Endle (1911) has mentioned about the Sijou plant which was planted at a community land or the north-east corner of the courtyard, in an altar called *Sijousali*. *Bathoubwarai* was later related to Lord Shiva of the Hindu religion after

Sanskritization took place among the Kacharis (Boro, 2014). The beliefs of Bathouism are similar to the concept of the Tibetan prayer flag, in which the five elements fire, water, earth, air and sky are considered to be an integral part of their prayer. This also hints to the southward migration of the Kacharis from south-eastern Tibet as mentioned in *The Boro Imbroglio* (1995).

G.K. Ghosh in his book *Tribals and Their Culture in Assam Meghalaya and Mizoram* (1992) mentions about the Mech Kacharis who, according to him, were subjugated under the Kachari kingdom ruled by the Dimasas. He also mentions about the cultural and linguistic similarity between the Dimasas and Meches and the influence of Hinduism from their neighbours. They were formally converted as Hindus when the Dimasa Kachari king Krishna Chandra and his brother Govinda Chandra converted to Hinduism in the year 1790 in a function at the capital town Khaspur and declared all his subjects as Hindus.

Ahom Invasion

It is not known when exactly this Dimapur Kachari dynasty came to power. But there is no doubt that by the thirteenth century when the Tai-Ahom kings were carving out an Ahom kingdom in upper Assam, the Kachari kingdom in the Dhansiri valley was quite powerful, and for about two hundred years the Ahom kings refrained from launching any major attacks against them. Around the end of 1490 A.D. Ahom king, Suhenpha(1488-1493) launched an attack on the Kachari kingdom but had to return defeated. In 1526 A.D. Ahom King Suhungmung (1497-1539), one of the most powerful Ahom kings, invaded the Kachari kingdom of Dhansiri valley but the Kacharis again defeated the Ahoms. After renewed preparation, Suhungmung again attacked the Kachari kingdom in 1531A.D. and defeated the Kachari army. Suhungmung marched on to Dimapur when the Kachari king Khungkhara fled away and his brother Detsung was installed as a puppet king at Dimapur. In 1536 Detsung rebelled when Suhungmung again attacked Dimapur, killed Detsung, and ransacked the capital town. That was the end of the Dimapur kingdom (Roy, 1995). A folk tale among the Kacharis says that the Ahom army rode on cows during their last battle which completely shocked the Kachari army for it may result in the killing of cows

which they thought would cause defilement of their fight. It may be noted here that the Kacharis particularly the Dimasas at that period considered cows as 'Gushu' or impure (Arunkumar, et. al, 2014: 380).

Although previous to the establishment of the Kachari raj at Dimapur on the river Subansiri, a portion of their history is, to a certain extent, wrapped in oblivion, the race was certainly ruling for many years throughout Assam. This fact is established not only by the large number of the people now found, but by the traces of their domination having been left in the nomenclature of some of the physical features of the country, especially in the names of all, or nearly all, the principal rivers; thus, Dibru signifies in Kachari, the river of rapids (di- water bru- bubbling, broken); Disai means the small river, and the word *di*, a Kachari synonym for water, is traceable in the names of numberless other rivers and streams throughout the Assam valley, such as Dihing, Dijoi, Disang, Diputa, Dikrang, Diju, Dihong, Dibong, Dimu, Diku, Diphu, and Digaru, etc. Dimapur signifies "the town on the big or headwater", i.e. river town and was doubtless so named by the Kacharis on the Raj being established. (Acharya, 1984: 216)

Kacharis in Nagaland

There are very few records of the interaction between the Nagas tribes and the Kacharis but, amicable and at times strained relations were cultivated among the Angamis and Kacharis. Although the Nagas and the Kacharis were two neighbouring tribal societies the history of their interactions seems to be very few and between. A fortress whose remains are still lying scattered about in Dimapur is said to have been constructed by a Kachari king to protect the city from the raids of Angami warriors. Dimapur was a flourishing city. Several industries such as textile, cotton ginning, and pottery sprang, the manufactures of which were sent to Golaghat and Rangpur. There were Rengma colonies in Dimapur’s suburbs. The Rengmas were then brilliant sculptors and made stone inscription of arrows. They supplied steel made implements to the Kachari and obtained salt in return. It is said that Kacharis handled intermediary trade in iron implements and weapons with the Zeliangrong. Cultural assimilations occurred and can be seen in the oblong V-shaped stone pillars of the Kacharis at

Dimapur which closely correspond to the similar V-shaped posts protruding from the roof of the house of a wealthy Angami person. The posts stand as a female symbol, but sometimes are an attribute of cows' sacrifice among the Nagas whereas a bulbous topped post (commonly standing erect at the Ao and the northern Naga festivals), an attribute of Naga mithun sacrifice, represents a male symbol. (Bareh, 1970: 22-23).

In 1866 the Naga Hills district was formed with Samaguting (Chumukedima) as the headquarters. In 1876 the headquarter of the Naga Hills district were shifted to Wokha and in 1878, the headquarter was further shifted to Kohima to effectively control and influence the Naga Hills. The tribes violently and bitterly resisted the British authority until the fall of Khonoma village in 1880 (Bareh, 1970:34). Major H.H. Godwin-Austen (1874) gave an account of the city of Dimapur and mentions that it was 'uninhabited' with the nearest villages, Mohundijua and Borpathar in the low country and the nearest Naga village of Samaguting. He states that he was unable to obtain any information, and no native was able to tell anything reliable about the history of the city. We can assume that the Kacharis returned and settled in Dimapur after the Ahom invasion but the history of that period is unavailable.

After the statehood was, a new interim body was set up whereby the Kacharis were given representation in the form of membership in the government body. The Kacharis were asked to nominate their member and hence they brought in Late Deblal Mech to represent the people. The Kacharis are mostly in the Dimapur III constituency of the state and at present, the different sub-tribes of the Kachari community live alongside other Naga communities in Dimapur, and the Kachari community as a whole is considered as one of the indigenous communities of Nagaland.

This research is an attempt to study the history of the Kacharis in Nagaland and will involve the Pre-colonial, the Colonial, and Post-Colonial period of history. As such the area of study will encompass the state of Nagaland. The research will focus on the Kachari villages in Nagaland which are largely located in the district of Dimapur. Additional areas will be augmented into the area of research during the course of the study if necessary.

Review of Literature

Edward Albert Gait, *A History of Assam*, 1906: In this book, E.A.Gait has given a comprehensive history of the Assam province of British India which covered the whole of present-day North Eastern region of India. E.A. Gait mentioned that there are no written records of the Kachari rule. He further states about the Ahom invasion and the destruction of the Kachari capital in Dimapur and how they fled to Maibong, which seems to be the common pattern for most of the historical works available on the Kacharis.

Sidney Endle, *The Kacharis*, 1911: *The Kacharis* by Sidney Endle is one of the earliest anthropological works, based entirely on the Kachari tribe, by the British administrators in India. His work is an account of the physical and moral characteristics of the Kacharis, their origin, distribution, and historic summary. Sidney Endle in his book has mentioned the myth of the origin of the Kacharis relating to Bhima and Hidimba, the social and domestic lives, the laws and customs, religion, folklore, traditions, and superstitions. Apart from these, he has also made a linguistic study and he came up with an outline of grammar in his book. He also mentioned the religion of the Kacharis and the ceremonies related to the marriage and funeral. However, he termed the Mech as a tribe closely related to the Kacharis rather than being one of the sub-tribes and we come across many works that reflect the same.

The *Ahom Buranji* (1930) by Rai Sahib Golap Chandra Barua is a translated version of the Buranji in English. The *Ahom Buranji* is considered as a primary source for studying the history of Ahom dynasty and its relation to several Northeastern tribes. It is a chronicle from the earliest period of Ahom rule discussing the administration, religious and cultural practices, external relations and the legacy of the Ahom Kingdom. The *Kachari Buranji* (1936) by S.K. Bhuyan is a chronicle of the Kachari kings from the earliest times to the 18th Century CE and mainly focusses on the Ahom-Kachari relations and is mainly a derivative of the *Assam Buranji*.

J.H. Hutton's, 'On the Ruins at Dimapur on the Dunsiri River, Asam' *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* (pp:1-6), 'Carved Monoliths at Dimapur and an Angami Naga Ceremony.' *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great*

Britain and Ireland. Vol 52. pp. 55-70 (1922) & 'Carved monoliths at Jamguri in Assam' *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*. Vol 53. pp. 150-159 (1923) gives an account of the monolithic structures in Dimapur and its resemblance to the Naga megalithic or wooden structures. This paper draws the similarities between these structures which also hints at the cultural assimilation of two or more neighbouring tribes. He also points out the inability of the natives to provide him anything reliable about the history of the place.

Linguistic Survey of India Vol 3 Tibeto Burman Family Part 2 Specimens of The Bodo, Naga, And Kachin Groups (1927) by George A. Grierson gives a detailed classification of the Bodo-Naga group of languages. It explains the similarities between the different tribes under a similar linguistic family through a comparative study.

Travels and Adventure in the Province of Assam by John Butler (1855) and *History of Upper Assam, Burmah, and Northeast Frontier* (1914) & *History of Assam Rifles* (1929) by L.W Shakespear are ethnographic works by the British administrators. They cover a number of topics regarding the different tribes of north-east India and have mentioned about the Kacharis though their works usually revolves around the archaeological remains and their relation with the Ahoms without a proper structure.

Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal (1872) by Edward Tuite Dalton gives a brief description of the tribes in the north eastern frontiers of Bengal. In his work he has mentioned about the customs and habits of the Kachari groups and mentions Captain Fisher's comparison of the Mech to the 'Kasias' who are 'greatly addicted to drinking spirits, smoking, and pan chewing' in his work *Memoir of Sylhet, Kachar and The Adjacent Districts* (1840)

B.C. Allen in his work *Assam District Gazetteer Vol1: Cachar* (1905) discusses the traditional origin of the Kacharis and the political relations with the Ahoms and Tularam's territory but his work mostly comprises of the History of the Kacharis in Cachar and we find very few mentions of their capital in Dimapur.

A Historical and Descriptive Account of the Kachari Tribes in the North Cachar Hills (1885) by C.A.Soppitt (1885) gives a more detailed narrative of the

Kachari society in Cachar. He has also observed the distinction among the Kacharis living in the hills and plains.

Art and Archaeology of The Doiyang-Dhansiri Valley of Assam (PhD Thesis) (1997) and "V-Shaped Columns at Kachari Monolithic Rajbari Site in Dimapur, Nagaland: Their Architectural and Social Reflections." *Journal of Neolithic Archaeology*, December, 145 – 150, by Hemandra Nath Dutta, (2019) gives a proper in-depth study of the archaeological remains of the ancient Kachari Kingdoms in the north eastern region of India which are an important tangible source for the study of Kachari history.

History Of Upper Assam, Burmah, and Northeast Frontier by L.W Shakespear (1914) has mentioned the archaeological prospects of Assam. He has also mentioned about the Kachari race and its relation with the Koch and the Ahoms. He has documented the Kachari ruins of Dimapur and have related it to the other Kachari ruins in Maibong, Khaspur and also Kasomari Pathar in Assam.

The Sema Nagas & *The Angami Nagas* (Hutton, 1921) and *The Lotha Nagas* (1922), *The Ao Nagas* (1926) & *The Rengma Nagas* (1937) by J.P. Mills mentions about the similarities and relation among the Naga tribes and the Kacharis. Through this works we can see that the relation between the Kacharis and the Nagas surpassed the political and economic aspects, and somehow, their socio-cultural traditions got intertwined. Mills and Hutton have mentioned about the similar oral traditions and linguistic traits along with the assimilation of their material culture as well. Hutton in his work *'Leopard -Men in the Naga Hills'* (1920), have discussed about the similar belief in lycanthropy among the Nagas and Kacharis. *The Garos* by Major A. Playfair (1975) is a similar work on the Garo tribe and it highlights the affinities of the Garos and Kacharis.

Resumption of Tularam's Territory: A reappraisal (1975) by S.K. Barpujari gives us a glimpse of the late Kachari kingdom under Tularam Senapati. This paper explains the political relation of the Kacharis with the Britishers and the Nagas and how the territory finally came under the British government.

Nagendra Nath Acharya, *The History of Medieval Assam*, 1984: N. N. Acharya in his book has given an insight into the development of the Ahom kingdom during the medieval period and their relation to the other tribes of the North-Eastern region. He has written a chapter on the Kacharis which mainly focuses on their origin and migration, their struggle with the Ahoms, and the genealogy of the rulers. This book like many others is also Ahom-centric and focuses on the other tribes from the Ahom perspective.

G.P.Singh, *The Kiratas in Ancient India*, 1990: In this book, the author has likened the Kiratas of Ancient India to certain tribes of the Northeast like the Kacharis, Garos, Chutiyas, Mishmis, etc. In his book, he has mentioned the works of Sylvain Levi who has associated the Kiratas with the Sakas, the Yavanas, the Pahlavas, and the Cinas or the Chinese. He has also mentioned the work of Suniti Kumar Chatterji who associated the Kiratas with the Tibeto-Burman family and Sino-Tibetan speaking tribes. His work reflects the idea of 'Sanskritization' where the ancient tribes are usually likened to a group that is mentioned in the historical texts of Ancient India.

Ajay Roy, *The Boro Imbroglio*, 1995: *The Boro Imbroglio* has given some insight into the arrival of the Kacharis from the Tibetan plateau and their settlement in the different regions of India. The author also mentions the arrival of the Kacharis in Dimapur but has not given any specific period or year of their arrival and have only mentioned about their conflict with the Ahoms. He pointed out the term 'Bodo or 'Boro' was originally applied only in the linguistic context and later acquired ethnic connotation.

Manorama Sharma, *History and History Writing in North East India*, 2006: Manorama Sharma in her book has explained about the different theories of history and the historiographical trend in North East India, which was more empirical and descriptive in nature and lacked critical interpretation. She has also pointed out the bias in the official records and the religious texts and how an uncritical analysis of these historical materials could lead to 'mere documentation of the available records' which does not reflect 'historical evolution'. She has also mentioned the feminist approach to the study of history and how it is often neglected by the authors coming

from a patriarchal society and the need for the acceptance of methodology to study the subordinated groups which are very essential for the various matrilineal societies that are still prevalent. She has also mentioned about the shortcomings of the colonial historiography and stressed on 'applying oneself to the exercise of identifying, assessing, and overcoming the strains of colonial bias in the writing of history'.

Sanghamitra Jahari, *'A Study of the Dimasa State Formation and Its Changing Character (13th – 19th Century CE)'* (Ph.D. thesis), 2010: Jahari's Ph.D. thesis comprises of the political history of the Dimasas in general and follows the political and social structures of the Dimasa subgroup only, with few references to the other subgroups. She mentions about the Kachari kingdom of Dimapur but has only mentioned till the Ahom invasion. The thesis like many other works focuses on the Dimasas and the Ahom invasion and the subsequent exodus of the Dimasa to Maibang and later Khaspur. But her research has also taken into consideration the oral traditions and narratives, which is lacking in the works of many others and is an important aspect for the study of the tribal culture and their society.

Melville J. Herskovits, *The Science of Cultural Anthropology (Man and His Works)*, 2012: Fundamentally history and anthropology work in similar ways, where the subject of anthropology is chiefly the human as a dynamic creature and history with the events related to humans. In this book, Herskovits has mentioned about the nature of culture and its relation to the society and the individual, its materials and structure, and the dynamics and variations. He has emphasized on the origins and evolution of culture and the mechanism of cultural change, diffusion, and acculturation. The Kacharis being termed as one of the earliest inhabiting tribes of North East India it is imperative to understand their cultural origin, the changes over the course of history, and the also the factors that influence the social and cultural change.

Conceptual Framework

Oral Traditions

Oral traditions presuppose time-tested and culturally recognized folklores and traditions that are socially sanctioned and accepted by a group. It is further noted that

the concepts of folklore and oral traditions have always implied an idea of change and continuity. This lends credence to the assumptions that the elemental essence of folklore and oral traditions are its acquiescent qualities to the changing social and cultural landscape. Oral traditions about origin, migrations and such events that comprise of ethnohistory of the people are sometimes very brief, a matter-of-fact kind of statement, and at other times it runs into lengthy narratives of the ancestral genealogy, their historical experiences of failures and successes with place names and encounters of significance. Such traditions are preserved sometimes in the form of a story and sometimes in the form of a song or both. (Aier, 2018)

The expression 'oral tradition' applies to a process and its products. The products are oral messages based on previous oral statements, at least a generation old—the method of transmitting such messages by word of mouth over time until the disappearance of the message. Hence any given oral tradition is but a rendering at one moment, an element in the process of oral development that began with the original communication. The characteristics of each rendering will differ according to its position in the process (Vansina, 1985).

Dr Uttam Bathari (2014) states, "Like many others in the world, the oral communities in the North East region are termed as 'people without history', mainly because there are not enough written records. Today, attempts are being made by historians to find ways of recovering the pasts of such communities through the idea of memory, legends, fables, and other linguistic practices reflecting their *mentalité*." Sidney Endle has termed the Kacharis as the autochthones of the Brahmaputra valley, but the history of the Kacharis is often shrouded in various myths and legends. Oral traditions and history, which are passed down from one generation to another, are some of the most efficient ways to learn the history of such tribal communities, and as such, it is also essential to understand the role of cultural memory in the formation of oral traditions.

Even though there has been considerable opposition to the use of oral tradition in historical writing, it is clear that such resistance is unjustified because there is no historical source, either oral or written, that is perfect. There is no record of fulfilling

all required conditions. Nevertheless, oral traditions and other non-written sources like oral history-oral evidence, archaeological remains, and a host of others have become reliable sources for writing history or recovering history. Many eminent historians used oral or non-written sources to reconstruct history, proving that oral traditions are suitable materials for historical writing. However, it is a good practice to cross-check oral sources and derive conclusions from sources like written sources and an interdisciplinary approach such as anthropology, ethnography, linguistics, geography, sciences, and archaeology. Historians must be careful while using the facts and be patient in going to the roots of the oral tradition to ensure that the facts collected and gathered are authentic and genuine. Through the multidisciplinary method, historians can apply the insights of history, historical linguistics, archaeology, and the resources of other disciplines to enrich the evidence of oral traditions, oral history, and folklore. The reliability of oral tradition can be better guaranteed through critical data analysis and by following internal and external criticism of sources. Finally, a careful effort should be made in preserving and enriching the tradition to preserve the authenticity and diversity of traditional cultures (Vijayakumari, 2018)

The reliance on the written sources combined with the state-centric approach in writing of 'disciplinary' history has had serious consequences for oral societies and ethnic communities. It has thus portrayed the oral communities and ethnicities as something to be reclaimed to the nationalist/ civilised space from the margins. Such attempts have been viewed by these communities as a threat to their identities and cultures. In such a situation, the creation of their 'own history' is part of the political exigency for creating alternative space for themselves. This resistance to nation as the sole legitimate site for the production of history shows that the movements of these ethnic minorities are not against the state alone, but also against the constructs of 'disciplinary' history. (Bathari, 2014:2-3)

Cultural memory/ Collective memory

Cultural memory is a term often used ambiguously and vaguely. Media, practices, and structures as diverse as myth, monuments, historiography, ritual, conversational remembering, configurations of cultural knowledge, and neuronal

networks are nowadays subsumed under this wide umbrella term. The umbrella quality of cultural memory helps us see the relationships between such phenomena as ancient myths and the personal recollection of the recent experience, which enables disciplines as varied as psychology, history, sociology, and literary studies to engage in stimulating dialogue. According to anthropological and semiotic theories, culture can be seen as a three-dimensional framework, comprising social (people, social relations, institutions), material (artefacts and media), and mental aspects (culturally defined ways of thinking, mentalities). Understood in this way, "*cultural* memory" can serve as an umbrella term that comprises "*social* memory" (the starting point for memory research in the social sciences), "*material* or *medial* memory" (the focus of interest in literary and media studies), and "*mental* or *cognitive* memory" (the field of expertise in psychology and the neurosciences). This neat distinction is, of course, merely a heuristic tool; in reality, all three dimensions are involved in making cultural memories. Cultural memory studies are therefore characterized by the transcending of boundaries. (Erll, 2008)

Memory is the core of oral history, from which meaning can be extracted and preserved. Simply put, oral history collects memories and personal commentaries of historical significance through recorded interviews. Oral history is too dynamic and creative a field to be entirely captured by any single definition. For every rule, an exception has worked. Imaginative interviewers are constantly developing and sharing new methods and uses of oral history. Any definition of the oral history process, or any form of interviewing, must reflect the goals of the specific project, the resources available, and other practical considerations. As distinct from oral traditions—stories that societies have passed along in spoken form from generation to generation—oral history *interviewing* has been occurring since history was first recorded. Years after the event, when memories have grown imprecise, they have the advantage of being conducted by a trained interviewer who can raise questions and challenge dubious answers.

The concept of cultural memory originates from the notion of collective memory, as introduced by Maurice Halbwachs; however, Emile Durkheim's contributions to this discourse merit attention (Misztal, 2003). Durkheim stated that

'religious representations are collective representations that express collective realities' (Fields (Ed.), 1995). He explored how religion offers a comprehensive framework for conducting rites, serving as a source of stability for the community. He contended that collective memory encompasses the manner in which a group recalls its past and transmits its traditions, values, and customs. Halbwachs expands on these ideas by elucidating how our memories are shaped by the surrounding social context, aligning with the norms, values, and beliefs of the group to which we belong. In Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory* (Edited and translated by Lewis A Coser) 1992, we find the works of Halbwachs where he discusses on 'the social frameworks of memory' and the various elements that influences the memory. In his *Les Cadres sociaux de la mémoire* (1925), Halbwachs showed how memory functions within social, collective circumstances – that it is socially constructed. (Yelvington, 2002: 237)

Peter Burke discusses the transmission and uses of the social memory and also 'social amnesia', where he investigates the 'social organisation of forgetting' in his work *History as Social Memory* (1990:97-113). Kwa Chong Guan in his paper *Oral Histories in The Making of Our Memories and Heritage* (2008) argues that the human memory is not static and filters from our past to our present and that human memory is not perfect and the method of interviewing and cross checking with other historical evidence can also be biased at times.

Pierre Nora's *Les lieux de mémoire* is a collection of essays that explore various 'sites of memory' in French history and culture, examining how certain places, objects or events become central to collective memory. His concept of sites of memory refers to places, objects or events that help people remember and preserve important parts of society's history or culture. Nora's *lieux de mémoire* are the most prominent examples of a mnem ohistorical (historical study of the workings of cultural memory) approach, in which a theoretical conception of cultural memory is borne out by a rich variety of case studies illuminating the dynamics of cultural remembrance (Erll, 2011).

'Memory' is everywhere and is often used quite loosely and, if it is intended to be used metaphorically, this is not at all clear. The result is often a false concreteness.

As with ‘history’, questions of evidence should come to the fore. Memory researchers going back to Bartlett suggest that cross-cultural differences in memory are not only due to differences in interests but also differences in the way things are recalled (Yelvington, 2002: 236, 239).

Silence in communal memory denotes the exclusion, repression, or sidelining of specific events, narratives, or viewpoints in the formation of a shared historical awareness. This phenomenon is not simply a passive absence but is frequently influenced by social, political, and ideological influences. This paper examines the complex characteristics of silence in collective memory, utilizing theoretical frameworks from memory studies, trauma theory, and critical historiography. It examines the processes of active and passive silencing, the influence of trauma and generational transmission, and the role of counter-memory in contesting prevailing narratives.

Silence in communal memory includes both the deliberate concealment and the inadvertent marginalization of certain experiences. Academics like Michel-Rolph Trouillot (1995) contend that silences manifest at every phase of historical production: source creation, archival processes, narrative building, and historical interpretation. Consequently, silence is not only a void but a manifestation of power dynamics and societal frameworks.

Silencing can transpire via active or passive methods. Active silencing encompasses intentional tactics, including state censorship, historical revisionism, and the denial of crimes. Instances encompass the repression of colonial brutality in imperial narratives or the omission of indigenous viewpoints from national educational programs. Passive silencing may arise from neglect, trauma, or the absence of accessible avenues for memory transfer. In both instances, specific voices and experiences are obscured inside the prevailing mnemonic framework (Assmann, 2011).

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In situations of communal trauma—such as genocide, warfare, or institutional oppression—silence can function as a coping strategy. Psychological trauma frequently obstructs the expression of experiences, resulting in enduring silences that span generations (Caruth, 1996). Silence may serve as a means of protection or resistance, although it can also impede acknowledgment, healing, and historical comprehension. The ethical implications of these silences present considerable issues for scholars, educators, and legislators.

The transmission of memory across generations can either sustain or undermine silences. Marianne Hirsch's (2008) notion of ‘post memory’ emphasizes how the progeny of trauma survivors interacts with inherited memories that are mediated rather than directly encountered. In numerous instances, younger generations serve as proactive agents in revealing suppressed histories, shown by the offspring of victims of state terror in Latin America or the descendants of Holocaust survivors. Utilizing Foucault’s (1977) concept of counter-memory, the omissions in communal memory can be contested by recovering and expressing underrepresented narratives. Counter-memories challenge dominant narratives of the past by elevating

marginalized voices and recontextualizing historical comprehension. Social movements, truth commissions, and creative interventions serve as venues for counter-memory, aiming to confront historical injustices and expand the parameters of collective recall.

The act of memorialization—via monuments, museums, and commemorative rituals—frequently mirrors wider societal silences. The choices about what to celebrate, the methods of commemoration, and the individuals whose memories are prioritized reflect the values and exclusions of a society. James E. Young (1993) shown that even altruistic monuments can perpetuate silences if they do not critically address the intricacies of historical pain and accountability.

Silence in collective memory is a multifaceted phenomenon influenced by social, political, and psychological factors. Silence, rather than being a passive absence, actively contributes to the formation of historical consciousness and the development of communal identities. Comprehending and examining these silences is crucial for cultivating more inclusive, equitable, and critically engaged memory cultures. Subsequent study should persist in investigating the mechanics of silence, with the potential for ethical recall and counter-memory.

State Formation

According to the Evolutionary Theory of State Formation kinship, religion, authority, political consciousness, economic need and social consciousness are the essential elements for the evolution of a state.

The academic discourses on the process of state formation have been vitiated by the dominance of the Eurocentric notion of the state. The Eurocentric notion of state has ruled out kinship, caste or ethnicity as an important adjunct of certain forms of the state; it has generated unproductive arguments about whether states which do not conform to the European pattern were truly feudal or merely tribal (Fox, 1997).

A study of state formation in the context of the tribals needs to consider the milieu in which they developed their society and culture. The different areas inhabited by the tribals underwent set patterns of polity formations. It is necessary to mark out

distinct stages of evolution in the tribal society not as an isolated entity but in a constant state of interaction, both at local and supra-local levels. This can come to the fore only when we consider not only the dynastic or elitist history but also the socio-cultural dynamics behind the changes or continuity of the tribal ethos as well as their ethno-cultural implications involving issues of identity, ethnicity and mobilization (Jahari, 2010).

The evolutionary model offers a framework for comprehending overarching trends in human political evolution; however, it has faced significant criticism for its reductionist and ethnocentric tendencies. Initially, it tends to generalise a Western trajectory of statehood, presupposing a singular progression from 'primitive' to 'civilised' societies. This disregards the diversity of political structures in non-Western environments, particularly in tribal communities, which can exhibit intricate governance systems, customary law, and conflict resolution methods that diverge from state-centric models.

The application of evolutionary theory is particularly troublesome in the context of tribal societies in Northeast India, such as the Kacharis, Nagas, and Mizos. These communities traditionally upheld clan-based, segmentary, or chiefdom frameworks that governed land, labour, and familial relations in the absence of centralised governmental power. Their political flexibility, tolerance to ecological limitations, and reliance on oral traditions contest the notion that the lack of written law or centralised bureaucracy signifies political underdevelopment.

Furthermore, colonial and postcolonial administrations frequently misapplied the evolutionary paradigm to rationalise interventionist measures. Colonial ethnographers and administrators legitimised indirect control, land confiscation, and the reorganisation of indigenous administration under state frameworks by classifying tribal cultures as “pre-political” or “primitive.” This not only upset established socio-political structures but also resulted in the obliteration of indigenous political agency in historical accounts.

Contemporary scholarship, informed by subaltern studies, postcolonial theory, and anthropological critiques such as James C. Scott’s The Art of Not Being Governed

(2009), posits that numerous tribal cultures deliberately avoided state development, opting for decentralised or acephalous structures to preserve their autonomy. These civilisations ought not to be regarded as failed states, but rather as alternative political systems adapted to their historical and ecological circumstances.

In conclusion, whereas evolutionary theory provides a fundamental framework for analysing state development, its application to tribal societies requires careful scrutiny. The theory's linear, hierarchical assumptions neglect the varied, adaptive, and frequently stateless political structures that exist beyond the Western paradigm. Understanding these complexities is crucial for cultivating a more sophisticated and inclusive perspective on political growth.

Subaltern theory

Examining the experiences, voices, and histories of underprivileged groups especially those suppressed or silenced by dominant cultural, political, or economic forces, subaltern theory is a concept within postcolonial studies. Antonio Gramsci, an Italian Marxist theorist, first used the term "subaltern" to describe groups in society including peasants, workers, and other lower socio-economic strata that are barred from the political sphere and the dominant class order.

Homi K. Bhabha's *The Commitment to Theory* (1994) is a seminal article in postcolonial theory that examines the relationship between theory, politics, and culture, arguing that the act of theorizing might serve as a kind of resistance and transformation. In this essay, Bhabha questions the traditional separation of theory and politics and proposes for an approach that acknowledges the complex nature of colonial and postcolonial identities. Bhabha's principal notion in *The Commitment to Theory* is ‘hybridity’, which asserts that postcolonial identities are neither static or monolithic but are ever transforming in reaction to complicated cultural and historical interactions.

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak in her work *Can the Subaltern Speak?* (1994) draws on Antonio Gramsci's concept of the ‘subaltern’ to refer to those at the bottom of the social hierarchy—those who lack power and whose voices are often excluded

from mainstream discourse. The subaltern includes women, peasants, workers, and colonized people who are denied access to education, politics, and representation.

Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978) is a groundbreaking work in postcolonial theory that critiques the way the West (particularly Europe) has historically constructed the "Orient" (the East, encompassing regions like the Middle East, Asia, and North Africa) as an exotic, backward, and mysterious "Other" in contrast to the rational, civilized, and superior West.

Studying the history of the Kacharis from a subaltern point of view is crucial for recovering the voices, experiences, and agency of a community that has long been marginalized in dominant historical narratives. Mainstream accounts—shaped by colonial ethnography and state-centric historiography—have often overlooked the complex political systems, cultural traditions, and historical contributions of the Kacharis. A subaltern approach centres oral histories, local memory, and indigenous knowledge systems, offering a more nuanced and inclusive understanding of their past. It challenges the narrative of decline and instead highlights resilience, adaptation, and resistance in the face of external domination. This perspective also helps deconstruct imposed identities and foregrounds the Kacharis' role in shaping regional histories on their own terms.

Zomia Theory

Zomia is a new name for virtually all the lands at altitudes above roughly three hundred meters all the way from the Central Highlands of Vietnam to northeastern India and traversing five Southeast Asian nations (Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, and Burma) and four provinces of China (Yunnan, Guizhou, Guangxi, and parts of Sichuan). It is an expanse of 2.5 million square kilometres containing about one hundred million minority peoples of truly bewildering ethnic and linguistic variety. Geographically, it is also known as the Southeast Asian mainland massif. Since this huge area is at the periphery of nine states and at the centre of none, since it also bestrides the usual regional designations (Southeast Asia, East Asia, South Asia), and since what makes it interesting is its ecological variety as well as its relation to states,

it represents a novel object of study, a kind of transnational Appala chia, and a new way to think of area studies(Scott, 2009:ix).

Gu Jiarong posits that Scott's thesis on the escapist nature of Southeast Asian Mountain societies, resulting from the role of the state and political choices made by the mountain inhabitants, challenges researchers who have solely focused on the state's sphere of influence and catered to the rulers' preferences. Furthermore, Jiarong maintains that Scott's work has fostered a renewed attention to the perspective of the cultural subject as a crucial means of acknowledging the Other. Wang Xiaoyi asserts that Scott's analysis of the art of escapism provides insights into contemporary society. Individuals facing pressure from mainstream modern society may resort to escapism as a means of survival. They construct subcultural identities and engage in self-mainstreaming to create a free space for themselves outside of mainstream society. (Huang & Wang, 2003:92-93)

According to the physical-space criterion used to support and legitimate area studies, Zomia certainly qualifies. Its ‘shared ideas, related lifeways, and long-standing cultural ties’ are manifold. They include language affinities (for example, Tibeto-Burman languages), religious commonalities (for example, community religions and, among the universalistic religions, Buddhism and Christianity), cultural traits (for example, kinship systems, ethnic scatter zones), ancient trade networks, and ecological conditions (for example, mountain agriculture). In the past, Zomia was a centre of state formation (for example, the Nanzhao kingdom in Yunnan, Tibetan states, the Ahom kingdom in Assam), but today its prime political characteristic is that it is relegated to the margins of ten valley-dominated states with which it has antagonistic relationships. Even though it does not have a pleasing (sub)continental shape, Zomia could have been defined as a distinct geographical region, an object of study, a world area (Schendel, 2005: 653-654).

The Zomia theory, in the context of the Kacharis, helps explain the socio-political autonomy, cultural resilience, and adaptation strategies in response to external pressures from Ahom invasions to colonial rule. Zomia provides a useful lens to understand how the Kacharis maintained decentralized forms of governance and

preserved their identity despite being marginalized in dominant state-centric historical narratives. In essence, applying Zomia theory to the Kacharis allows us to reinterpret their history not as one of mere decline, but as a form of political choice, resistance, and resilience, reframing their marginality as strategic autonomy.

Statement of Problem

Historical records of the Kacharis in Dimapur exhibit significant gaps, predominantly emphasizing the Dimasa Kacharis while redirecting attention to the Ahom invasion and the subsequent migration of the Dimasas to Maibang. Scarce materials pertaining to the history of the Kacharis remain in their old city of Dimapur. The adage “History is written by the victors” excellently applies to the Kacharis, as much of the historical documentation concerning them, particularly the Buranjis, predominantly emphasizes the political dynamics between the Ahoms and the Kacharis. The writings of European anthropologists and administrators serve as an additional source of information regarding Kachari history; yet, these works appear to reflect their subjective interpretations influenced by linguistic barriers and colonial perspectives. The Kacharis, despite their limited population, are an acknowledged indigenous group in the state of Nagaland. However, their historical presence in Nagaland is sparse, resulting in a rather vague identity for the general populace due to the absence of comprehensive historical accounts. The absence of a critical and analytical examination of the Kacharis in Nagaland has resulted in a predominantly descriptive historical narrative that inadequately addresses the 'how', 'when', and 'why' of numerous historical events concerning the Kacharis of Nagaland.

Significance of the Study

The history of the Kacharis in Nagaland seems to be very vague with the absence of proper historical documentation and this study aims to provide that. This study will focus on the many unanswered questions related to the Kacharis of Nagaland and provide a critical and analytical study of their history. This research will also dwell on the political and social scenario of the Kacharis during the Pre-Colonial, the Colonial, and the Post-Colonial period.

Objectives

The objectives of the study have been formulated based on the statement of problems and focus on the aspects of the history of the Kacharis that had been neglected in the earlier works. The research aims at providing an analytical and critical study of the political, social, and cultural lives of the Kachari tribe in Nagaland. The main objectives of the study are:

1. To examine the nature of the Kachari society in Nagaland before coming in contact with the Ahoms.
2. To study the various subgroups of the Kachari tribe in Nagaland through a Subaltern approach.
3. To study the changes in the social and cultural lives of the Kacharis in Nagaland over the course of history.
4. To study the internal and external polity and economy of the Kacharis in Nagaland.

Hypothesis

1. The lack of critical and analytical history of Kacharis in Nagaland, even with a proper language, may be attributed to their defeat against the Ahoms.
2. The historical study of the Kacharis has always focussed on the Dimasas, who formed the ruling class, and as such other aspects of the Kachari society may have been overlooked.

Methodology

The methods used for this research will consider several approaches to come up with an analytical study of the history of the Kacharis in Nagaland. The primary sources include the interviews with the village elders and people who are knowledgeable about the history of the Kacharis in Nagaland and the archival sources. This will also reflect the oral traditions that are still prevalent. Secondary sources will consist of relevant literary sources such as books, journals, and research papers, survey reports of various organizations, published and unpublished articles and government

records, and through the internet. Apart from the primary and secondary sources, field observation methods have been incorporated to gather data for the study which involves understanding people's experience in their everyday context.

Chapterization

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Chapter 2 - Social And Cultural Life of The Kacharis

Chapter 3 - Formation and Decline of Kachari Kingdom

Chapter 4 - British Occupation of the Naga Hills and its Impact on the Kacharis

Chapter 5 - Political and Social Life after the Formation of Nagaland State

Chapter 6 - Discussion and Conclusion

CHAPTER 2

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL LIFE OF THE KACHARIS

Tribal life is a subject of a wide range of studies in India. Large ethnographic literature now exists mainly on the socio-cultural aspects of traditional societies of different tribes. However, the findings of social anthropology presented in this literature are mostly based on in-depth microstudies of a few purposely selected villagers, and India is not amenable to wider generalisation. The Scheduled Tribe population is distributed unevenly across the country's geographical area. As much as 80 per cent of the tribal population is concentrated in the central belt extending from Gujarat and Rajasthan in the west, to West Bengal and Tripura in the east, through the states of Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, and Bihar. Most of the remaining 20% of the tribal population is accounted for by the northeastern states of Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, and Sikkim, and by the Union Territories of Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Lakshadweep. Except in the northeastern region, the tribal population is generally concentrated in some districts within the states, and even in these districts, they are found to be unevenly distributed geographically. (NSS Report, 1990: 1-3)

The Kachari tribe, one of the earliest indigenous communities of Assam in Northeast India, possesses a rich cultural heritage rooted in animistic beliefs, agrarian lifestyles, and community-based traditions. As part of the greater Bodo-Kachari group, their traditional practices reflect deep connections to nature, spiritual reverence, and social harmony. Agriculture is central to the Kachari way of life. Jhum cultivation (shifting agriculture) remains a primary subsistence method, supplemented by hunting, fishing, and forest gathering. Their agricultural rituals often include offerings to local deities and nature spirits, believed to influence fertility and harvest outcomes. These rituals are typically performed by village priests or elders during key agricultural seasons. The Kachari people follow animism, though many have integrated Hindu and Christian elements into their belief systems over time. Traditionally, they worship Bathou, a supreme deity symbolized by the Siju

(Euphorbia) plant, and venerate other spirits and ancestors through festivals and domestic rituals.

Festivals are significant in Kachari culture, with Bwisagu being the most prominent. Celebrated during the spring, it marks the New Year and includes folk songs, dances, and the ceremonial bathing of cattle. Music and dance play a vital role in community bonding, often performed during social and religious occasions. Social organization within the Kachari tribe is clan-based, with strong adherence to customary laws and oral traditions. Marriage practices, inheritance, and conflict resolution are often governed by traditional councils, maintaining cultural continuity and cohesion. In essence, the traditional practices of the Kachari tribe are characterized by their close relationship with nature, spiritual observances, and community-centric values, all of which continue to influence their identity despite modernization pressures.

The Early Tribal Village System

The Kachari people, an indigenous ethnic group primarily concentrated in the northeastern regions of India, particularly Assam and parts of Nagaland and Manipur, present a fascinating case of tribal organisation and socio-political structure in pre-colonial South Asia. The early tribal village system of the Kacharis, like that of many indigenous communities in the region, was deeply embedded in kinship networks, communal labour, and a spiritual connection to the natural world. Though subject to modification under external influences, this system retained its distinctive character for centuries, reflecting indigenous traditions and the adaptability of tribal governance. This paper seeks to analyse the components of the early Kachari tribal village system, focusing on its socio-economic organisation, governance structures, and religious-cultural practices, while also examining the historical factors that led to its transformation.

Geographical and Settlement Patterns

The Kachari tribes traditionally settled in the riverine plains, foothills, and forested regions of Assam, an area endowed with rich agricultural resources and

natural diversity. Early settlements were organised in small, self-sufficient villages often located near water sources, essential for farming practices such as rice cultivation and fishing. The Kacharis, like many other indigenous tribes of Northeast India, practised subsistence agriculture, relying on traditional methods such as jhum (slash-and-burn) cultivation, especially in hilly regions, while in the plains they engaged in more settled forms of rice paddy farming.

The Kachari village was a compact, cohesive unit where interdependence and collective effort were critical for survival. Village life was structured around a complex web of kinship and clan affiliations, with the family unit at its core. These kin-based structures were crucial for organising labour and social life, and these relationships often defined the territorial boundaries of each village. The Kachari villages were also marked by a high degree of social stratification based on kinship ties, with clan leaders or elders playing a dominant role in local governance.

Social and Political Organization

The governance system of early Kachari villages was a synthesis of tribal democracy and patriarchal leadership, with the headman, typically a male elder, acting as both the political leader and the custodian of the village's customs. The chief, or Raja, was not only responsible for administering the village but also for maintaining social order, resolving conflicts, and representing the village in interactions with other tribes or external authorities. This chief was often supported by a council of elders, drawn from the various clans within the village, which served as a forum for decision-making on matters of justice, marriage, and property disputes.

The role of the village headman was closely tied to religious authority, as the Kachari people adhered to an animistic belief system that required constant ritualistic engagement with nature and the spirit world. The headman often assumed the role of a mediator between the living and the spiritual realms, performing religious rites that ensured the community's prosperity. Such religious rituals were central to the village's agricultural calendar, marking important events such as sowing and harvesting, and were often accompanied by community feasts, dances, and sacrifices.

Economic Activities and Labor Division

The Kachari economy in the early period was primarily agrarian, with rice as the staple crop. Wet rice cultivation in the fertile plains and dry rice cultivation in the hilly regions formed the backbone of the rural economy. The agricultural cycle dictated much of the social and ritual life of the Kachari, with community labour playing a significant role in planting and harvesting crops. Collective labour was essential, as the community would come together to perform the tasks of ploughing, planting, and harvesting, reinforcing social bonds and solidarity.

The Kacharis mountain community, along with other mountainous populations, engaged in 'slash-and-burn' agriculture. This technique, known as jhum in Assam, involved alternating a brief tilling period with an extended fallow period. This form of agriculture did not facilitate the establishment of distinct land tenure patterns, especially given the abundance of forest areas during that period. The village community maintained collective oversight and administration of agricultural activities. Each family cultivated its own plot to produce sufficient quantities of rice, cotton, and other crops for subsistence, along with surplus for exchange at the local market for salt and other essential goods. This exchange primarily occurred through bartering. Evidence exists demonstrating the existence of private jhum fields associated with the court of the raja. (Maretina, 2010: 348-49)

In addition to agriculture, the Kacharis were skilled in craftsmanship, particularly in weaving textiles, basketry, and creating tools and utensils. These crafts were not only necessary for daily life but also formed a basis for trade with neighbouring communities. The Kacharis had well-established trade networks, exchanging agricultural products, crafted goods, and even labour with surrounding tribes, such as the Bodos and other indigenous groups.

The economic activities of the Kacharis were interlinked with their subsistence needs and religious beliefs. Ceremonial and sacrificial feasts often involved the consumption of animals, especially buffalo and pigs, which were both a source of food and a means of appeasing ancestral spirits. The rituals associated with these sacrifices reinforced the Kacharis' interdependence on their environment and natural resources.

Slavery

The Kachari state had an established system of slavery. Slave trading was extensively practiced. The Kacharis acquired slaves from hill tribes, which captured many individuals during their ongoing inter-tribal conflicts, compensating them with cowries, salt, and dogs. Slaves received adequate care, with their essential needs being sufficiently addressed. A slave required the owner's consent to marry, which effectively functioned as a release from servitude. This allowed the couple to obtain a separate residence and attain a status akin to freedom. Domestic slaves were nominally considered the property of their owners; however, their dependence was subsequently limited to minor services for the owner's family. Children born to slaves were regarded as free, although they faced challenges in marrying Kacharis. The majority of the enslaved individuals were ethnically connected to different Kukis tribes and the Manipuris. In most instances, the latter were ransomed by their relatives and subsequently returned home. The primary responsibilities of slaves included clearing hillsides for agricultural purposes, gathering firewood, and preparing meals for their owners. The Kacharis were permitted to consume food prepared by slaves; however, the slaves typically dined separately. Slaves donned clothing identical to that of the Kacharis, as they were prohibited from maintaining their own tribal attire. According to legal stipulations, deceased slaves were required to be buried; however, a favoured slave could be cremated in accordance with Kachari customs (Soppitt, 1885: 48).

Judicial and Conflict Resolution Systems

The Kachari villages operated on a system of customary law, which was informed by both social norms and religious beliefs. Disputes within the village were typically resolved through a consensus-based approach, with elders mediating conflicts and making decisions based on established traditions. The village council (often composed of the headman and respected elders) was the primary forum for resolving disputes, whether related to land, marriage, or theft.

The Kacharis did not have a formal codified legal system; instead, justice was seen as a social obligation enforced by the collective responsibility of the village. In serious matters, particularly those involving inter-village conflicts, the intervention of

higher authorities, such as regional rulers or neighbouring tribes, might be sought. However, the emphasis remained on local, customary practices, which allowed for flexibility and adaptation to the specific needs of the community.

External Influences and Transformation

The Kachari tribal village system was not static, and over time, it underwent significant changes due to external forces. The spread of Hinduism from neighbouring regions, particularly through the influence of the Ahom Kingdom in Assam, introduced new religious and social practices that gradually altered the traditional animistic beliefs. Colonial rule further impacted the Kacharis, as the British administration introduced new forms of land tenure, governance, and legal systems that replaced the indigenous systems of self-regulation.

Despite these external pressures, elements of the traditional Kachari village system, particularly kinship-based governance and communal agricultural practices, persisted well into the 20th century. The integration of Kachari villages into larger political entities, such as the Ahom kingdom and later the Indian state, led to the erosion of some aspects of their autonomy, but the tribal ethos of the Kacharis remains an important part of their cultural identity.

Social Structure

The unique feature of the Dimasa society was the existence of clans which regulated not only socio-cultural but also the political life of the people. Dimasa kings were selected from different clans. The clan to which he belonged was designated as *riphasphrain*.

The term *semfong* refers to the 'male', i.e., patrilineal clan, the only type known in the period of the rule of the Dimapur. However, from as early as the end of this period there are references to *jaddi*, or female clans, then thirteen in number. Later, their number equalled that of the 'male' clans, at present also coming to forty-two (Ghosh 1965: 190). According to the Kachari legend, the origin of the 'female' clans is to be explained as follows. After the Kacharis lived close to a number of alien tribes (Nagas, Kukis, etc.,), they could marry the latter's women and admit these to their

communities. Striving to confine marriage within the tribe in order to subject it to some sort of control, the Kachari raja brought together all his female subjects and formed the *jaddi*, or 'female' clans, linked by a complex system of marriage relations to the *semfongs* (Soppitt 1885: 36). Unfortunately, aside from the legend mentioned above, there are no other data available as regards the appearance of the *jaddi*, so that we are unable to ascertain how exactly this original clan system emerged. Moreover, the historical material fails to explain the background of the rise of 'male' and 'female' clans, so that one has to resort to contemporary data in order to grasp the difference between them. (Maretina:344)

The Bodo-Kacharis follow the patriarchal family system. The property belonging to father after his death is inherited by his sons. The Bodo-Kacharis have 23 *aris* (clans) These clans are totemic having their origin from plants and animals. These clans are exogamous. Moreover, as the Bodo-Kacharis of this region have been living along with the non-tribals generation after generation, they have been influenced by the non-tribals and vice-versa. The non-tribals have accepted many ingredients of the Bodo culture.

Religious and Cultural Practices

The religious life of the Kacharis was inseparable from their daily existence, rooted in animism and a deep reverence for nature. Spirits, ancestral deities, and natural forces were believed to exert an influence over the lives of the villagers, and rituals were performed to ensure harmony between the human and spiritual worlds. The Kacharis practised various forms of ancestor worship, with the veneration of deceased ancestors being integral to community well-being. Rituals were often held at sacred groves, rivers, or other natural sites deemed spiritually significant.

The Kachari society, although with a more centralized form of government with a king, was of tribal origin and worked in similar ways like any other tribal society. In the tribal worldview, space is central. Everything has to be understood from the perspective of creation. Harmony with space or creation is the starting point of their spirituality and their search for liberation. An awareness of being one with the whole of creation is the spiritual foundation of the tribal people. In this unity of

creation and spirituality, there is no clear-cut distinction between the sacred and secular, religion, and non-religion. One sees the Supreme Being in space/creation and not outside it. The animistic religion of the Kacharis known as Bathousim also revolves around this concept. *Bathou bwarai* is considered their supreme god who is unseen and is omnipresent, omniscient, and omnipotent. The *Sijou* plant, a woody species of Euphorbia Milli var. Splendens is considered as the living embodiment of *Bathoubwarai*. Sidney Endle (1911) has mentioned about the *Sijou* plant which was planted at a community land or the north-east corner of the courtyard, in an altar called *Sijousali*. Bathoubwarai was later related to Lord Shiva of the Hindu religion after Sanskritization took place among the Kacharis (Boro, 2014). The beliefs of Bathouism are similar to the concept of the Tibetan prayer flag, in which the five elements fire, water, earth, air and sky are considered to be an integral part of their prayer. This also hints to the southward migration of the Kacharis from south-eastern Tibet as mentioned in The Boro Imbroglio (1995).

Fig 1: Sijou/Siju plant.

Fig 2: Tibetan Prayer Flag which is based on the five elements fire, water, earth, air, and sky.

Within the community, tree worship is an important popular custom. The Meches believe that trees have souls and they are emblems of life, so the great God of Meches the Bathou (Euphorbia plant) is worshipped in every Mech house. (Dutta, 2022:28)

G.K. Ghosh in his book *Tribals and Their Culture in Assam Meghalaya and Mizoram* (1992) mentions about the Mech Kacharis who, according to him, were subjugated under the Kachari kingdom ruled by the Dimasas. He also mentions about the cultural and linguistic similarity between the Dimasas and Meches and the influence of Hinduism from their neighbours. They were formally converted as Hindus when the Dimasa Kachari king Krishna Chandra and his brother Govinda Chandra converted to Hinduism in the year 1790 in a function at the capital town Khaspur and declared all his subjects as Hindus.

Endle (1911) has mentioned that the Kachari pantheon is a very extensive one but it is probable that only a comparatively small number are strictly of tribal or national origin, many having been borrowed from the Hindu neighbours. He has also mentioned about ancestral worship among the Kacharis of the Darrang District of Assam. The worship of natural forces also would seem to be not at all common, though some traces of it may perhaps be noted here and there. For instance, in connection with the popular festival known as Bihu, there is what is called the *parwa* show or *bhotheli*, a festival common to the Hindu and Kachari alike.

The Dimasas assert that they are descendants of Bangla Raja and the esteemed celestial bird Arikhidima. The six sons—Shibrai (Shivrai), Doo Raja, Naikhu Raja, Waa Raja, Ganyung-Braiyung, and Hamiyadao—born to Bangla Raja and Arikhidima, are regarded as ancestors by the Dimasa, who venerate them as ancestral deities. In Dimasa, they are referred to as 'MADAI'. The malevolent spirits originating from the seventh egg of Arikhidima are accountable for all sicknesses and natural disasters; these spirits must be venerated and placated to mitigate their malevolent effects on the afflicted individuals and their families. Prior to the inauguration of a new Jhum site, malevolent spirits must be adequately appeased to avert their fury, which may manifest as insufficient rainfall or pestilence.

The most significant aspect of Dimasa religion is the dwelling of deities. A specific Dimasa location is regarded as the dwelling place of certain deities. The entire Dimasa Kingdom in ancient times was partitioned into twelve religious regions known as Daikho. The deities inhabiting a certain Daikho are said to safeguard the local populace and govern their fate. The Dimapur region is governed by the Daikho of Longmailum, where the Dimasa Kacharis conduct the Longmailum puja annually (personal comm, Rupkumar Langthasa).

Traditional Practices of the Mech Kacharis

1. **Khomlainai**

Khomlainai, an indigenous game integral to the cultural heritage of the Bodo tribes and also practiced by the Mech Kachari in Nagaland, exemplifies their physical prowess and traditional values. This unarmed combat sport, akin to wrestling, is conducted in a circular arena called the *Dokhor*, which features three concentric circles and a central point known as the *Nokhor*. Participants, attired in traditional garments and using a jute rope belt, engage in ten distinct sub-bouts, each emphasizing various techniques such as pulling, pushing, lifting, and strategic positioning within the arena. For identification purposes, one competitor is referred to as *Agor* and the other as *Matha*, hence the designation *Agor vs. Matha*. The game is officiated by referees and judges, who oversee the adherence to rules and scoring. Points are awarded based on the extent of control exerted over the opponent and the ability to manoeuvre them within the defined circles. The competitor with the highest cumulative score across all sub-bouts is declared the *Derhasat* (winner). Khomlainai not only showcases physical agility and strength but also embodies the cultural richness and communal spirit of the Bodo tribes, reinforcing their enduring legacy and traditional practices. In each bout of Khomlainai, two wrestlers compete through a series of sub-bouts.

2. **Bima Thanai**

Players are categorized into two groups in this game. One group consists of a mother and her offspring, while the other group comprises opponents or guards. The game is conducted on two basic courts delineated by circles drawn on the ground. One

court is inhabited by the mother, while the other is occupied by her children. The opposing faction protects the mother's court to ensure her safe passage to her children's court without interference. Initially, the children alternately attempting to touch or deter the opposing players to provide a secure route for the mother. If the mother successfully reaches her children's court, her group is deemed the victor. If she is contacted by the guards along the journey, the other faction prevails. Per the game's regulations, either the mother or her children forfeit their "lives" if contacted by opponents while outside the designated courts. If the youngsters succeed in touching the opponents, the opponents perish. To enhance the game's difficulty and engagement, the children must generate a continuous sound without pausing for breath while pursuing their opponents.

3. Baguroumba

The *Baguroumba* dance is the most beautiful dance of the Bodo-Kacharis, associated with merry-making and gossip (Roy, 2014: 43-44). It is performed only by women, who wear the regorging spread around their necks and hold the ends with both hands. The Baguroumba dance is performed on every occasion and festival. This word is also written and pronounced as Bagurungba and Bagurumba. The word Baguroumba consists of four sub-words: Ba+Ega+Rou+mba, which means to carry, to come out, heaven, and five, respectively. Hence, Baguroumba means to carry out the Bathou puja of the supreme God, who is the ruler of the five spiritual elements of heaven. The women dance by taking alternating steps with their feet, folding the lower back, and pushing the knees backward, all while keeping the song's rhythm. The dance begins with horizontal lines, then the dancers move into a circular pattern with a rising tempo, and ends in a beautiful, wave-like sea pattern. The Mech Kacharis draws inspiration from the Bodos and also practices it in Nagaland in a similar fashion.

4. Mwsaglangnai

Mwsaglangnai is an important traditional dance of the Mech Kacharis of Nagaland, performed during the Bathou Puja or Kherai Puja, celebrated in the last part of May. This dance is performed by young girls and boys. According to their beliefs,

the Kachari youth, dressed in their finest traditional attire, perform this dance to pray to Bwrai Bathou, the Almighty. They seek purification of their souls and steadiness of mind, enabling them to engage in suitable activities for the welfare of society as a whole. (R. Saija & M. Mech, personal communication, Feb 3, 2024)

5. Chotrolee

Chotrolee is a dance performed by the women of the Mech Kacharis of Nagaland during the Kherai Puja, which takes place in the latter part of May. A distinctive feature of this dance is that the dancers wave a pair of swords in their hands, suggesting fervour and intensity. This symbolic act represents the courage and valour of the Kachari women, demonstrating that they stand firmly alongside their male counterparts in defending their homeland from enemies. This dance celebrates the strength and fighting spirit of the women within the Kachari community.

6. Daosri Delai

Daosri Delai is a dance performed by the women of the Mech Kacharis of Nagaland, inspired by the movements of the Moina bird. The dancers wear vibrant and colourful traditional costumes, gracefully emulating the bird's movements. The melodious sounds of traditional Kachari musical instruments, such as the Kham, Sifung, and Jotha Jabkhring, accompany this performance. Daosri Delai is showcased at all significant occasions within the Kachari community, celebrating their cultural heritage and the beauty of nature as represented by the Moina bird.

7. Bar-Dwi-Sikhla

Bar-Dwi-Sikhla is a dance from the Mech Kachari dialect, which translates to "wind-water girl," symbolizing Mother Nature. This title reflects the agrarian Mech Kachari community's deep connection with the environment, as the different seasons play a crucial role in their agricultural practices. This particular dance is performed to depict the windy season preceding spring's arrival. It celebrates the vibrant spring season, when plants sprout new leaves and flowers, signalling the start of agricultural activities. During the dance, performers mimic natural phenomena associated with the

windy season, such as the blowing wind, swaying trees, and rustling leaves, bringing the spirit of nature to life through their movements.

8. Na Gwrnai Mwsanai

Na Gwrnai Mwsanai is a dance that reflects the significance of fishing in the rural life of the Mech Kachari community, where it is an everyday activity enjoyed by men, women, the young, and the old alike. The fishing equipment is mainly made from indigenous materials such as bamboo or cane. This dance explicitly portrays the women of the community fishing together in groups. They use a "*jekhai*," a triangular-shaped bamboo crate open at the front, and a "*khobai*," a small bamboo container to store the fish they catch. The dance captures the joy and camaraderie among the women as they engage in fishing, temporarily setting aside their daily struggles. It highlights the spirit of togetherness and the brief escape from everyday life that fishing provides. Ultimately, the dance celebrates the satisfaction and happiness the women feel at the end of the day, pleased with their catch that promises a nourishing meal for their families. This dance is a vibrant expression of community life and the simple joys of shared tasks.

9. Khopri Sibnai Mwsanai

Khopri Sibnai Mwsanai is a dance integral to the agrarian lifestyle of the Mech Kachari tribe, closely connected to their agricultural activities. The title of the dance, "*khopri*," translates to a bamboo hat, and "*sibnai*" means to put on or use. This dance highlights the importance of wearing a bamboo hat to shield oneself from the harsh sunlight during the labour-intensive tasks of sowing and planting paddy.

The lyrics of the accompanying song narrate the strenuous efforts involved in ploughing and preparing the fields day and night. They emphasize how the community members work together in groups, a practice that eases their workload and helps them alleviate their fatigue through mutual support. The song vividly brings to life the elements of nature that mark the sowing season, such as the onset of the monsoon, seasonal floods, and the croaking of frogs, painting a vivid picture of the rural landscape during this critical time of year.

The performance concludes with a collective prayer to *Mainao Buri*, a revered figure seeking blessings for a fruitful and bountiful harvest. Therefore, this dance serves as a cultural expression of the Mech Kachari's agricultural practices and a communal invocation for prosperity and success in their farming endeavours.

10. Nagaland Raijw Ni Sikhla Jwng

Nagaland Raijw Ni Sikhla Jwng is a beautiful song and dance that celebrates the cultural identity of the Mech Kachari damsels of Nagaland. The title and theme of the performance express a heartfelt message of unity and respect. Through this dance, the performers express their greetings and respect to all the different communities within Nagaland and worldwide. It serves as a bridge, connecting the Mech Kachari community with others through the universal language of music and dance, and underscores their openness and welcoming spirit. This performance showcases their cultural heritage and promotes a message of peace and harmony among diverse groups.

11. Dhansiri Dimapuri

Dhansiri Dimapuri is a poignant song that reflects on the historical splendour of the Kachari kingdom, with its capital once established in Dimapur. The song is an homage to the past Kachari kings and serves as a testament to the lasting legacy of their rule, evidence of which can still be seen in the ruins at Rajbari Dimapur. The lyrics emphasize the integral role of the Dhansiri River in fostering the growth and prosperity of the Kachari community and the kingdom at large. The river, often a lifeline for ancient civilizations, is celebrated for its contribution to the thriving culture and economy of the Kachari during their reign. Through its verses, the song encourages everyone to awaken from passivity and actively celebrate the rich heritage of the Kachari kings and their kingdom. It is a call to honour and remember the great deeds of the past, urging the community to take pride in their history and keep their ancestors' memory alive through song and celebration. This song is a reminder of past glories and a rallying cry for cultural pride and communal spirit.

Traditional Practices of the Dimasa Kacharis

1. **Majangdi Ni**

This Dimasa Kachari folk ballad is a romantic composition in which the lovers articulate their emotions via melody and rhythm. This genre of music is performed at any event or social gathering in the countryside. In this song, the female vocalist conveys her regret and grief at her male companion's choice to pursue further education in other cities. She fears that he may find a new romantic partner there and marry her, so losing his former love in the hamlet. The male partner reassures his beloved in his response, stating that he is pursuing studies rather than seeking to marry another woman. Although he is departing to another location, it is solely his physical body that is leaving, while he asserts that his soul will perpetually remain with her.

2. **Habling Dangbani**

This song is typically performed by young women and men while collaborating in the Jhum fields, serving as a reminder that time and tide wait for no one. The maidens respond, expressing a desire to have lunch and drink water from bamboo mugs to rejuvenate their weary spirits; “yet, alas! We have not yet completed our portion of sowing seeds”. The young men are promising that the comprehensive task would be completed collectively, alleviating any concerns. At day's end, we are reminded that the sun sets beyond the hills, signalling it is time to return to our homes, leaving the work in the jhum fields behind to arrive before darkness falls. This folk song signifies the necessity and worth of time while emphasizing the spirit of collective effort in accomplishing our life’s goals, regardless of their distance.

3. **Bagaoba**

This song is typically performed by individuals of all ages and genders during the seven-day post-harvest festival known as Hangsao Bishu. This song, consisting of four stanzas, is performed while walking in rows arranged in various patterns. The initial stanza greets the residents and guests attending the festival. The second stanza conveys that the host villages, regardless of age, diligently toiled throughout the year

to accumulate resources and rice to ensure the success of Bishu. In the third stanza, the performers announce the name of the chosen Gajaibao, the principal host family. The venue will be located in this man's compound. In the fourth stanza, they extol the praise and glory of Lord Sibrai for the forthcoming seven days of rejoicing.

4. Reemin Nehlaiba

This is a traditional game of the Dimasa people. The phrase "Reemin" refers to a wooden bar employed in the process of pounding rice, while "Nehlaiba" denotes the act of pushing and banging against one another. The game is conducted during the harvesting festival of the Dimasa, known as Bushu Dima, and on wedding days involving the young and older males from the families of the bride and groom, providing entertainment for the audience while showcasing their strength and skills. The game is played just by one male or between two individuals only. In this game, the victor is the individual who successfully forces their opponent either off of the designated court or to the ground.

Fig 3: Participants of Remin Nehlaiba in action during the Bushu festival.

5. Bai Dima

This variant of Dimasa traditional dance is typically executed to greet and honour esteemed guests of high social standing. Currently, it is also conducted on auspicious events like as festivals, births, and marriages. The dance consists of three phases. The initial step is termed Lama Hemba, or 'to stroll'; the subsequent phase is Khelimba, denoting 'Bow down' with hands folded in respect; and the last phase is referred to as Jawba, meaning 'to sail'. Consequently, this dance symbolizes that individuals traverse great distances on foot to greet friends and return with cherished memories.

6. Bai Bin or Bai Suphen

This folk dance is executed to the melodious strains of the single-string bin, the fiddle, or the flute, accompanied by the rhythmic beat of the Kharam, a traditional drum. The role of the *muree*, a wind instrument known for its loud and resonant deep tone, is not utilized here. It is conducted at all festivals and ceremonial festivities in which both males and females may participate. This dance is affectionately done during the post-harvest festival known as Bishu, celebrated in the month of Magh, approximately corresponding to January and February in the Gregorian calendar.

7. Barising Ha Khim Gaiba

This dance signifies the planting of flowering plant saplings in the garden and is typically done during post-harvest festivals such as Hangsao Bishu, Surem Bishu, and Jitap Bishu, as well as during cultural events and in honour of esteemed guests. The initial line describes the planting of flowering saplings in the garden, and upon blooming, one flower is taken for the hair while another is collected in a basket. In the second stanza, they summon the local elders and officials to address a conflict occurring among the goats in the lawn of Gajaibaw, the host of the Bishu. The final line instructs the troop to navigate downstream by constructing a vessel from Gamari wood and a row from Sisu wood. In other words, following the conclusion of the celebration, everyone must return to their individual homes.

8. Jalang Daindoha

The traditional dance of the Dimasa Kachari is referred to as *Bai Grah*. This dance is typically executed at the post-harvest festivals known as Hansioh Bishu and Surem Bishu, lasting seven days and three days, respectively. Currently, in addition to Bishu, it is also executed on significant events in the presence of guests.

9. Sugathai Solo Bani

This folk dance is executed to the melodic strains of the single-string bin, the fiddle, or the flute, backed by the rhythmic beats of the Kharam, a traditional drum. The lyrics of this dance describe groups of snails in the Lankhailu stream, a minor tributary of the Dhansiri, and the Dijen river, today referred to as the Jamuna River in Manja, traveling downstream en-masse. Young individuals may pick snails if they choose; in other words, numerous young women have attended the Bishu celebration. Consequently, young single guys seize the opportunity to select one for themselves.

10. Bai Khao Ba

This dance is typically performed by individuals of all ages and genders on the final day of the Dimasa Kachari post-harvest festival known as Hangsao Bishu. This dance is performed on the final day, hence its name. During the dance, some individuals create pliable mud. The dancers thereafter applied the mud to one another in a display of delight. While dancing, they bend first to the right and then to the left, akin to the *Homzing*, the large boar, as it bathes in the soft mud, occasionally wetting its left side followed by its right. This dance symbolizes that via this playful performance, all rumours, negative sentiments, and heated exchanges that may have arisen during the festival's preparation or celebration would be forgiven and forgotten.

Festivals

Festivals and cultural rituals were often communal affairs, with dances, music, and feasts reinforcing social cohesion. These events also served to mark the passage of the seasons, such as the harvest festival, which played a significant role in the

agricultural life of the tribe. The role of the village headman in conducting these ceremonies also reinforced his authority as both a secular and spiritual leader.

Every community has a social life lived within in and beyond their society. They have to follow some rules and regulation to survive their life in a society. They have tie with some social setting including their marriage, family pattern, household etc. In marriage system they have to marry within their tribe but within any of their septs. There is restriction in such marriages. The married women do not use vermilion on their forehead nor any iron ring bangles, but the modern educated section have started using them and following the custom of Hindu womenfolk. The Mech people have mostly joint family, and the boy does not usually take a separate house after marriage. And according to necessity separation is done by the head of the family. Father and mother have absolute authority over their children. They guidance them on various activities for growing up. After receiving modern education some numbers of families are breaking down. In a Mech family only, the son has right to inherit father's property, daughters married or unmarried have no right to the property (Dutta, 2022: 36).

1. Bushu Festival

The Bushu festival is a post-harvest festival that is celebrated in January every year. It is a communal Thanksgiving festival of the Kachari culture after the Jhum (harvest and cultivation) is completed in the later weeks of January. The Kachari people pay their sincere thanks in the form of worship and offering part of the year's cultivation to the harvest deity Sibrai. Sibrai blesses the people and their land with a thriving harvest. It is also a time when people take a break from their heavy work on the farms and rejoice over the success of their harvest. They relax and allow themselves a merry time.

Bushu is a post-harvest festival. It is celebrated by, the Kachari tribes of Nagaland in January. This grand festival is distinctly categorized into three different parts, namely, Hangsao, Surem, and Jidep Jiba. A feast of rice and meat is cooked in this festival as *prasad*. The feast is followed by diverse social activities that form an

integral part of the celebration. Competitions, traditional sports, and other cultural activities are also held during the grand festival.

The feast and tribal dance are the principal attractions of this festival. The Bishu or Bushu festival of the Dimasas was recognized as one of the festivals in Nagaland by the government in 2007. Till recently Bishu or Bushu did not have any date fixed, but due to compelling circumstances, people resolved to have a date fixed for the festival.

Weaving, cuisine, and agriculture are intricately integrated into their way of life. The festival embodies this sentiment. Individuals partake in religious ceremonies, arrange traditional music and dance exhibitions, and prepare a banquet. Culinary offerings are a significant aspect of this winter harvest ceremony. They don traditional handwoven attire and present handwoven fabric to relatives and acquaintances. The vocal and dance performances are accompanied by traditional folk instruments such as the *khram* (drum) and the *moori* (trumpet).

Fig 4: Musicians playing tunes with the traditional musical instruments.

The holiday is celebrated in diverse manners, contingent upon the extent of preparation and the duration allocated for the celebrations. The duration of the celebrations varies by community, with some lasting three days and others extending up to seven days. Three methods exist to commemorate the occasion. Three days of festivities are referred to as Busu Jidap, five days as Surem, and seven days as Hangsao Bushu.

2. Aai-Sagi

The Aai Sagi is celebrated by the Mech Kacharis in Nagaland. Aai Sagi signifies an offering of thanks to deities for a plentiful harvest and to mark an occasion of merry-making. This festival is also celebrated during the month of January and like the bushu festival, it does not have a specific date. But in recent years, the 13th of January was fixed for the celebration of the festival.

The Aai-Sagi festival begins with the preparation of *kher-miji, khuri-miji,* and the *bhela ghar.* The customary rituals are conducted early in the morning on the first day of Aai-Sagi, which is called Bathou puja. Before the ritual, the priests will cleanse themselves by taking a bath. The place of worship is also cleansed where they offer a sacrifice of a red rooster. The sacrifice is made to the Bathou deity, who is Lord Shiva of the Hindu religion. The rituals are conducted between the *kher miji* and the *khuri miji*. Apart from the red rooster an offering of rice beer and beetle leaves are also made during this ceremony.

Fig 5: Kher-miji, Khuri-miji, and the *Bhela ghar* being set-up before the celebration of Aai-Sagi festival.

After the Bathou puja, the Aai Sagi festival commences. The festival usually signifies the social bond of the community. The festival is marked by merrymaking, dancing and singing, food and drinks, and a display of the traditional attires.

The youth members stay overnight at the *bhela ghar* on the first night of the festival and continue the merry-making and on the second day, they burn all three structures early in the morning. Thereafter the festival is all about social and family bonding. The families would visit each other and prepare meals together during these two days. They pay respect to their elders and their forefathers. Family get-togethers are common during this time

3. Kechakhaiti/ Kesaikhati puja

Keshakati Puja is centrally agricultural and invokes blessings for fertile lands, a good harvest, and communal prosperity. It reflects the Kachari people's deep reverence for nature and ancestral spirits, which are believed to be integral to the well-being of both crops and community. The goddess Mahamaya or Kesaikhati Goxani is believed to be a raw flesh-eater, and hence on the fifteenth day, devotees sacrifice animals before the deity for blessings. People sacrifice animals like goats, ducks, hens, etc to fulfill their wishes. They also offer their prayers to seven sisters of the goddess Mahāmāyā, along with prayers women sing different devotional songs.

Fig 6: Devotees offering prayer to the Sijou plant during the *Keshakati puja*

Fig 7: A woman in trance believed to be possessed by a goddess during the Keshakati puja.

Marriage

The Kachari marriage system is deeply rooted in community values, ancestral respect, and clan relationships. While evolving with time, its traditional principles such as clan exogamy, arranged unions, and ritual significance remain vital markers of Kachari identity. In the Kachari society, marriage is sacred, and the process/ritual associated with marriage is strictly followed. There is no compulsion or rule that marriage must take place in a particular month or season, but the preferred season is Phalgun and Baisakh, which are March and April.

The marriage proposal usually comes from the boy's family. Although there are no professional matchmakers, distant relatives or family friends assist in finding a suitable match for the boy who wishes to marry. After finding a suitable girl, the boy's family sends a message regarding their intention to the girl's family. The boy's paternal or maternal uncle and aunt visit the girl's family on a pre-appointed date and time to present the proposal. If the response is positive, they arrange a date to initiate the first step towards the marriage ceremony.

In a Kachari marriage, there are two types of formal marriages. One is the *disengba* and the other is the *habriba*. In the first case, all the formalities of the marriage are followed; hence, it takes longer. In the second type of marriage, some of

the formalities are skipped, and the marriage is completed in a day. This kind of marriage is permitted for the economically weaker section of Kachari society.

The first step in the marriage ritual is called *semjulangba*, which involves wrapping a small quantity of salt (*sem*) in a banana leaf that is tied with seven strings and handed over to the girl's family, signifying that the girl is betrothed. The next step is *laothailangba*. Here, the boy's family comes to the girl's house and hands over a *laothai* (dried shell of wild bottle gourd) filled with rice beer as a gesture of honour to the girl's family. The girl's family accepts this honour with humility, and the date for the marriage is fixed on this day. The Khalti, a token bride price, is also agreed upon. The next step is the *gilimgsanaiba* ceremony, which involves the boy's relatives arriving at the girl's house a day before the marriage to enquire about the well-being of the girl and her family and to confirm whether they are ready for the marriage.

On the day of marriage, after the boy's family arrives at the girl's house, the first ritual is the acceptance of the Khalti. The Khalti is not the value of the girl but rather just a token monetary demand, as it is a customary tradition. During the ceremony, apart from both sets of parents, one best man, one bridesmaid, and close relatives of the couple are present. In the case of Mech Kacharis, the *Hadingra* (religious leader) carries out all the formalities of the marriage. The solemnisation is led by the village priest. After the marriage, the couple seek blessings from the parents, relatives, *Khunang* (GB), and elders of both families by bowing and touching their feet.

The early tribal village system of the Kacharis provides a compelling example of indigenous socio-political organisation in pre-colonial South Asia. Rooted in kinship, collective labour, and a deep connection to nature, the Kachari system exemplified a harmonious integration of economic, social, and spiritual life. While external forces—ranging from religious expansion to colonialism—have altered the fabric of Kachari society, the resilience of their traditional village system underscores the adaptability and continuity of tribal cultures in the face of socio-political change. Further research into the intricacies of the Kachari village system can offer valuable

insights into the broader dynamics of indigenous governance and cultural survival in the context of South Asia's historical trajectory.

Textile

The textile tradition of the Dimasa Kachari community represents a deeply embedded cultural heritage that has been meticulously preserved and transmitted across generations, predominantly through the hands of women weavers. Handloom weaving in this community transcends mere utility, functioning simultaneously as an artistic expression and a cultural practice rooted in mythology, natural symbolism, and ritual customs. Among the various traditional garments worn by Dimasa women, the *Rihjamphaing* stands out as a vibrant chest wrapper, originally woven in three primary colors and inspired by the hues of the rainbow. It holds significant ceremonial value, being used in life events ranging from birth and marriage to festivals and funerals. Its motifs—such as *Gisiplaih* (traditional hand fan) and *Khuronglaih* (Jatropha leaf)—symbolize practical tools and elements of nature. Complementing this is the *Rihgu*, a waist wrap characterized by floral and faunal motifs like *Thaidibar* (Elephant Apple flower) and *Daodai Muthai* (Peacock's eye), while the *Rikhaosa*, a multipurpose stole dyed traditionally with turmeric, carries vertical and horizontal motifs such as *Hamin*

Fig 8: A Dimasa Kachari couple in traditional attire.

(layers of soil) and *Rihmai* (sunlight rays), marking its importance in various rites of passage. The *Rihgu-Rihha*, a two-piece garment resembling a saree, is worn during marriages and social gatherings, blending the motifs from other attire to elevate its aesthetic and symbolic value.

In terms of male attire, the *Rihsa* serves as a versatile garment worn from the waist to the knee or as a muffler, with variations like the more ornate *Rihsa Rihmai* used during ceremonial events. The *Sgaopha* or *Phakri*, a turban-style headgear, is used during weddings and festivals, distinguished by its length and intricate weave. Certain garments, such as *Rih Khatho*, *Remsao*, and *Rihendi Rithap*, are worn by both men and women. *Rih Khatho*, a ritual sash adorned with motifs of elephants and banyan trees, is traditionally worn during rain-invoking rituals or to honor victorious warriors. *Remsao*, a large rectangular cloth, is used in both wedding and funeral contexts but is never reused between the two due to cultural taboos. *Rihendi Rithap*, a minimally designed shawl made from Eri or Endi silk, is a marker of dignity and is typically worn during the colder seasons.

The production of Dimasa textiles relies heavily on traditional knowledge systems and tools. Natural dyes are sourced from indigenous plants such as *Morinda angustifolia* for red, *Indigofera* for black, and turmeric for yellow. Thread processing follows intricate steps including spinning (*Khun Phaiba*), warping (*Daophang*), and weaving using handlooms. The textile tradition is further enriched by the community's use of symbolic ornaments, which include items like *Phowal* (a coral bead necklace), *Samtho Khamaothai* (earrings shaped like a paddy pounder), and *Yaosher* (armlets), crafted from materials such as silver, coral, ivory, and plant-based beads. These ornaments, like the textiles themselves, often bear motifs that represent flora, fauna, celestial bodies, and traditional tools, symbolizing the Dimasa community’s animistic worldview and close relationship with their agrarian environment.

In recent times, while the essence of these traditional garments and their symbolic motifs remains intact, contemporary influences have brought about variations in color palettes, materials, and applications. Yet, efforts are actively underway to document, preserve, and revitalize the traditional knowledge associated

with Dimasa textile arts, ensuring that this rich cultural practice continues to thrive among future generations.

The Mech Kacharis are an indigenous ethnic group primarily inhabiting the northeastern states of India—namely Nagaland, Assam, and West Bengal—as well as regions of Nepal. Their identity is regionally differentiated: they are referred to as "Mech" in Nagaland, "Bodo" in Assam, and "Meche" in Nepal. Historically, the Mech Kacharis were engaged in subsistence activities such as fishing and agriculture; however, with the onset of modernization and urbanization, many have transitioned into diverse occupational sectors while maintaining strong ties to their cultural roots.

Culturally, the Mech Kacharis embody a worldview deeply connected to nature, a perspective that is intricately woven into their customs, rituals, and particularly their textile traditions. Their artistic expressions—seen in weaving, dance, and ornamentation—are often inspired by natural elements such as mountains, birds, leaves, and flowers, reflecting their predominantly animistic beliefs. This reverence for nature is especially evident in their traditional attire, which functions not only as clothing but as a cultural narrative.

Fig 9: A Mech Kachari couple in their traditional attire.

The central component of Mech women's traditional dress is the *Dokhona*, a handwoven garment that wraps around the body from chest to ankle. It is often paired

with the *Jwmgra*, a long scarf that historically served to cover the upper body. The *Dokhona* appears in various forms and designs, each serving a specific purpose or ceremonial role. For instance, the *Bidon* is a plain version worn during worship and daily activities, typically in yellow or green. The *Agor Gubwi*, rich in design, is gifted to brides during marriage as a symbol of purity. Other variants include *Dokhona Thaosi*, featuring pigeon-eye motifs; *Daorai Mwkhreb*, which resembles peacock feathers and is worn during festivals; *Paro Megon*, also marked by pigeon-eye patterns; *Agor Gidir*, noted for its diamond-shaped interlocked patterns; and *Gorkha Gongbrwi Agor*, distinguished by its twill weave and thicker texture.

Complementing the *Dokhona*, the *Jwmgra* is often woven with motifs such as the *Hajw Agor* (hill design), and when made from *Endi* silk, it serves as a warm shawl used by both genders. The process of textile production is supported by a variety of traditional tools, including the *Jenther* (spinning wheel), *Swrkhi* (thread holder), *Rakhu* (weaving comb), and the *Hisanshali* (loom), which are essential to the community's handloom practices.

Ornamentation is another important aspect of Mech Kachari identity. Jewellery is worn by both men and women and is crafted from materials such as silver, coral, and beads. Common ornaments include *Phopalaasan* (traditional earrings), *Baju* (bracelets), and *Chandrahar* (moon-shaped necklaces). These are typically donned during rituals, celebrations, and festivals, reinforcing their symbolic and aesthetic significance.

While the art of weaving has traditionally been the domain of Mech women, contemporary trends show increasing participation from men, contributing to a broader cultural revitalization. Moreover, traditional motifs and weaving techniques are now being adapted into modern fashion, allowing the community to preserve its heritage while engaging with current aesthetic trends. This dynamic blend of tradition and innovation reflects the Mech Kacharis' commitment to sustaining their cultural identity in a rapidly changing world.

Archaeological Sources

The Dimapur Monolithic Site, also known as Rajbari, is located on the banks of the Dima River—now called the Dhansiri. This site once served as a royal stronghold of the Kachari kings and was fortified with brick ramparts and gateways.

Fig 10: The Gateway of the Kachari Rajbari ruins.

The name Dimapur originates from *di-ma-pur*, meaning "city by the Dima," highlighting the significance of the river in shaping the region's early agricultural settlements. In the medieval period, Dimapur served as the capital of the Kachari kingdom, flourishing along the Dhansiri's fertile banks.

Within the present-day township of Dimapur lies the monolithic complex, historically known as Rajbari. Enclosed by an earthen rampart reinforced with bricks and featuring a solid eastern gateway, the complex stands near the Dimapur-Imphal Highway. According to the Annual Report of 1906-07, the entire enclosure measured approximately 369 metres in length. The site comprises three distinct groups of megaliths. The main group, covering 78 by 18 metres, is flanked by two smaller ones measuring 40 by 23 metres and 55 by 6 metres positioned to the southwest and northwest. Two water tanks situated between these subsidiary groups further reflect the scale and planning of the complex. The principal group includes 18 upright monolithic columns arranged in four north-south aligned rows. The southwest group contains five rows, while the northwest group features two, with the latter containing seven standing stones. The largest column here measures 3.4 metres in height and 2

metres in diameter. These satellite groups are generally smaller and display less refined workmanship than those in the central area. Each group also includes a large, isolated column, possibly of ritual or commemorative significance(Dutta,1997:83-84).

Fig 11: Chessman or mushroom-domed pillars of the Kachari Rajbari ruins, Dimapur

A prominent feature of the site is the category of V-shaped or Y-shaped monolithic columns. These stones, often placed at the forefront of the main alignment facing a large isolated "chessman" column, derive their name from their shape, resembling the English letters V or Y. Although their precise origin remains unclear due to a lack of historical documentation, scholars suggest that these columns may reflect ritual practices involving feasts and animal sacrifices that elevated the social status of chieftains and elites (Dutta, 2019). These stones are thought to have developed from earlier wooden effigies used in ceremonies to guide the souls of the deceased. Ornamentation on the stones often reflects the attire or weapons of the individuals they commemorate, further linking them to notions of prestige and remembrance.

Structurally, the V-shaped columns are considered prototypes of the Y-shaped ceremonial posts used by tribes such as the Angami and Sema Nagas. These wooden posts often featured carved Mithun (Bos frontalis) heads and were used during festivals, particularly to tether animals for sacrifice. Among the Sema Nagas, such posts were erected outside the homes of tribal chiefs and the wealthy as symbols of prosperity and status (Hutton, 1921: 36, 48). Similarly, the Mizos and other Naga

groups viewed Y-shaped posts as emblems of fertility, tied to agricultural success and well-being. These practices suggest that the carved stone columns of Dimapur embody a transition from wooden ritual forms to more permanent stone memorials grounded in phallic symbolism and prosperity cults. P.R. Gordon even notes the resemblance between Dimapur's stone columns and the carved Kima posts of the Garos, which commemorate ancestors (Dutta, 1997: 87).

Fig 12: V-Shaped structure at Kachari Rajbari ruin, Dimapur

In traditional Naga society, social hierarchy was not determined by material wealth or landholdings, but by an individual's ability to host communal feasts, known as "Feasts of Merit." Such acts earned lasting social prestige, reflected in distinctive architectural features like horn-like projections on house facades—referred to as *ceka*, symbolic of virility and social power (Dutta & Ao, 2018: 24). These V- or Y-shaped motifs, also echoed in tattoo patterns, are seen as representations of the "female principle" and indicators of fertility and economic prosperity. Hutton (1929: 48–51) correlates these forms with sociocultural values embedded in production, regeneration, and prestige.

The broader significance of Dimapur emerged further during railway construction in 1896–97, when remnants of ancient structures temples, canals, tanks, and causeways were uncovered in Greater Dimapur and Rangapar. These findings

reveal that Dimapur was once a vast metropolis, with its initial occupation dating back to the 3rd century CE, as confirmed by radiocarbon evidence (Nienu, 2024). The city, once believed to be the Kachari capital before it was sacked in 1536 and relocated to Maibong, is now understood to have been far larger than previously assumed comparable in size to Washington, D.C., at 177 square kilometres. Interestingly, the river's name, Dhansiri, was a later attribution by outsiders. Native Kacharis referred to it as *Di-ma* 'di' meaning water and 'ma' meaning mother—translating to "mother river." The Dimasa Kacharis, a subgroup, claim descent from this river, as reflected in their name: Dimasa, or "sons of Dima." The use of "Di" or "Doi" as a prefix for river names is common among the Bodo-Kachari linguistic family (Dutta, 1997).

Nienu (2024) in his paper, *Excavations at Rajbari, Dimapur, Nagaland, Reveal the Kachari Civilization to the 3rd century AD*, has given a very detailed description of Dimapur and the Kachari Rajbari Ruins. According to Nienu, the 'excavation was a salvage operation because of the massive destruction throughout the site from construction projects.' He has shared his own experience of meeting the Additional Deputy Commission in 1980 to discuss the suspension of construction projects which was declined citing lack of regulatory measures and authority for enforcement and laments the loss of archaeological treasures in Dimapur which he said 'cannot be measured purely by their monetary value'.

In his paper Nienu (2024) has described about his findings in detail which provides a new perspective to the 'established knowledge' that are known to the general citizens. He states that the excavation was carried out as a salvage operation due to the extensive destruction observed across the site and to effectively manage the site's complex nature and meet specific research goals, a novel excavation strategy was implemented. The primary objectives included recovering the longest possible cultural sequence, identifying any cultural deposits within the Rajbari complex, and collecting information on structural remains and associated activity patterns linked to the ruins. Additionally, the excavation aimed to understand the cultural and natural processes that contributed to the various formative phases of the Kachari culture. The area closest to the standing monuments was selected as the focal point, as it was expected to provide further valuable insights. Trenches were also placed at a distance

from the Gateway, under the assumption that these zones might have been used for habitation or other purposes.

Vikousa Neinu has given the following report on the ceramics and other miscellaneous findings at the Rajbari ruins:

> "Approximately 200 sherds were collected down to layer 5. Ceramics from the Dimapur excavations are labeled Dimapur Rajbari Ware (DR Ceramic/Ware) to avoid confusion when conducting future research in the region. The DR Wares are highly kaolinitic, an excellent raw material for quality ceramic production found in abundance locally; a tradition continues among the Kacharis living in Dimapur and adjacent areas. Similar traditions reportedly exist among the Hira and Kumar potters in several districts of Assam (Duary 2007, 98; Thakuria 2017, 701; Sarmah and Hazarika 2018, 967). No complete vessels were recovered; however, a few rims and body sherds were sufficient to reconstruct their shapes, sizes, and other attributes (Figure 9, a-c). The sherds range from black and dull red to dark brown. A few fine sherds, without extraneous elements in the collection, were ostensibly used for ritualistic/ceremonial purposes, revealing superior texture and craftsmanship. Fine sherds range between 3 and 8 mm, while coarser varieties are 8 and 20 mm thick. Some sherds indicate the presence of slip and burnishing. A small percentage of sherds had high contents of mica that frequently glitter. With a few exceptions, coarse sherds are invariably tempered with quartz sands and gritty, while most sherds maintain a smooth surface finish. Larger vessels, primarily utilitarian, contain greater quantities and larger temper particles. This observation is absolute only in some cases since a small number of smaller vessels also contain coarse ingredients, but it seems to hold. This ceramic technology dates to the Indus/Harappan civilization (personal communication, G. Dales 1982, now deceased). Rajbari Wares are wheel-turned, except for a few handmade dark brown wares and spouts, lids, and handles, signifying an advancement in ceramic production technology. Wheel striation marks are visible on the vessels' bases. This suggests that at this site, ceramic technology was brought to, rather than developed at, the site."

Nienu stated that an archaeological salvage operation was necessitated by deliberate obliteration of cultural remains, leaving only a few standing monuments behind. Employing a well-conceived strategy, clear planning, and precise foresight, the excavation team retrieved stratified cultural materials—such as ceramics and charcoal—within a limited timeframe. These findings confirm that the Kacharis were the original settlers of the site. Characteristic ceramics found at all stratigraphic levels indicate a longstanding knowledge of pottery production, with little technological change over time. Radiocarbon dates suggest their occupation of Dimapur may date to before the First Century CE. A sterile ash lens overlaying level three throughout the excavated area points to a major conflagration between 600 and 800 CE. However, further excavations—particularly in the citadel's core—are essential to understand the nature, timing, and cultural context of this destruction.

The broader northeastern region, especially Kachari-related sites, remains largely unexplored and demands systematic archaeological investigation. Future projects will require interdisciplinary teams, innovative methodologies, and sufficient funding—elements that were scarce in the 1970s and 1980s. Urgent focus is needed on the material culture of the Kachari Civilization to establish spatial and temporal frameworks and to understand intra- and inter-group dynamics across centuries of their rule. Dimapur's limited radiocarbon chronology positions the Kachari presence back to at least the Third Century CE, but more chronometric anchors are required. The ongoing threat of infrastructure development and inadequate preservation underscores the necessity for governmental protection and sustained excavation efforts. This research serves as a vital springboard for future programs aimed at tracing the rise, influence, and legacy of the Kachari Kingdom in the Dhunsiri–Diyung Valley and beyond. (Neinu, 2024)

The Rajbari ruins of Dimapur represent one of the most intriguing archaeological sites in Northeast India, reflecting the cultural and spiritual complexities of the early Kachari civilization. Dominated by monolithic structures—including stone pillars, V-shaped monoliths, and intricately carved motifs of flora, fauna, and weaponry—the site remains largely undeciphered due to the absence of

written records. The reliance on oral narratives has led to a multiplicity of interpretations about their origin and function.

Some scholars view the stone pillars as phallic symbols, indicative of fertility cults and possibly connected to Shaivism, given their resemblance to Shiva lingas and their devotional associations. This suggests that Shaiva worship was once prevalent among the Kacharis, with kings installing such monuments as acts of bhakti towards Lord Shiva. Another hypothesis, proposed by archaeologist Rajmohan Nath, interprets the monoliths as triumphal monuments, with the largest pillar symbolizing the ruling Kachari king and the smaller ones representing conquered chiefs. An alternate theory links the pillars to Buddhist votive stupas, proposing that Dimapur may have served as a transit point for monks traveling between Bengal, Bihar, and Southeast Asia—hints of broader transregional religious interactions. In comparative terms, these structures have been likened to Stonehenge and megalithic menhirs, possibly serving as memorial stones or burial markers for elite members of society. This opens the possibility of a funerary function associated with the Rajbari complex. (Das, 2021)

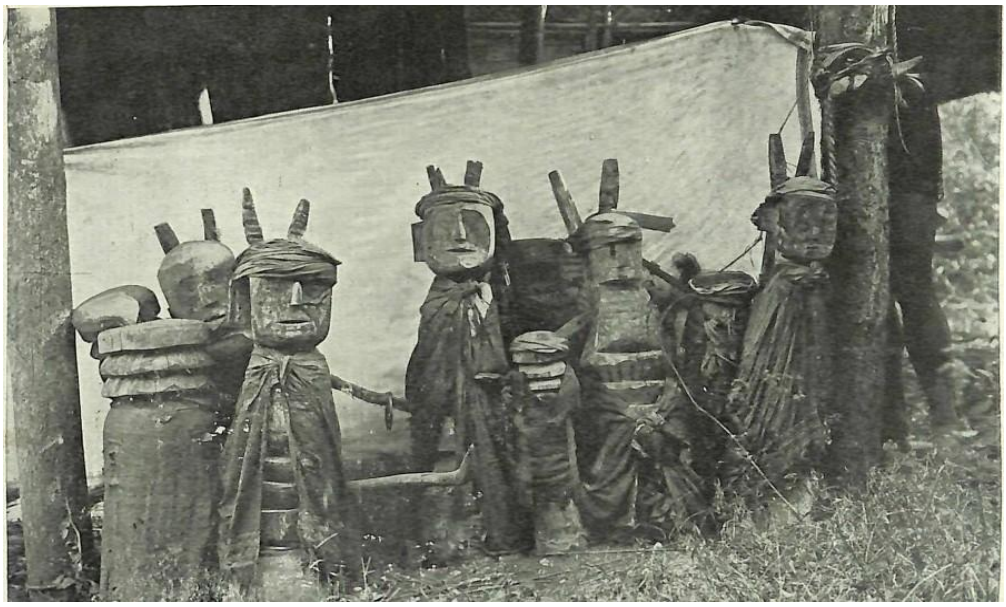


Fig 13: Kimas or memorial posts of the Garos (northeastindiawiki.wordpress.com)

Furthermore, the practice may have evolved from earlier traditions of wooden carvings, now lost, which were later immortalized in stone by artisans possibly brought from Orissa. The continued tradition of wood carving among Naga tribes and their animistic beliefs further enriches the interpretive landscape of the site. Until concrete archaeological evidence emerges, these varied theories—rooted in religious, political, and cultural frameworks—remain essential in shaping our understanding of the Kachari past and the symbolic weight of the Dimapur ruins. (Map 17)

The megalithic complex at Kasomaripathar, consisting of two rows, is located on an elevated region locally known as Rajabari, about 10 km to the east of Jamuguri in Golaghat District. The site, facing a dead course of the Doiyang, covers an area of 65 x15m. The remains of the total 51 megaliths are found at this site in east west alignment facing south. The eastern part of this complex is found with a number of menhirs. However, those in the west are carved megaliths facing south and these are taller than the menhirs in the eastern part. The tallest ones are in the centre. Not a single carved megalith is now in erect position. An isolated large cylindrical column, like the ones in Dimapur megalithic site, lies broken at this site, at a distance of 18m from the first row of megaliths (Dutta,1997:83-84).

Fig 14: Megalithic Monuments at Kasomaripathar, Assam

In his paper *"Assam Megaliths,"* (1929) J.H. Hutton offers a detailed account of the megalithic traditions in Assam, India, emphasizing their continuity, diversity, and cultural significance. He notes that Assam remains one of the few regions where

megalithic monuments—such as menhirs, dolmens, and carved stones—are still erected, particularly in the hill districts that have remained relatively untouched by Hindu and Muslim influences. These monuments are strongly associated with a cult of the dead and fertility rituals and share affinities with megalithic traditions in Southeast Asia, Madagascar, and even Europe. Among the notable sites discussed are the carved monoliths at Dimapur and Kasomari, which include "chessman" pillars and Y-shaped stones adorned with animal motifs, lotus designs, and symbolic carvings that often represent male and female sexual organs. Hutton interprets these as part of a fertility cult meant to harness the soul-force of the deceased to ensure agricultural prosperity. Similar symbolism appears in the recently discovered pear-shaped stones in the North Cachar Hills and the phallic skull cists of the Konyak Nagas, where the dead's skulls are ritually enshrined and associated with procreative power. He further describes various construction techniques used to quarry, transport, and erect these massive stones, all achieved through coordinated community effort with sledges, wooden frames, and rope. Hutton draws parallels between stone and wooden ritual objects, noting how wooden effigies and soul-figures serve temporary functions until replaced by more permanent stone monuments. He argues that the widespread alignment of these stones along paths and near water, along with practices such as headhunting for crop fertility, support a unifying theory: these monuments are not astronomical in purpose, as often assumed in European contexts, but are deeply rooted in beliefs about the cyclical nature of life, death, and regeneration. Overall, the paper positions Assam's living megalithic culture as a key to understanding ancient societies and their ritual relationships with the dead, nature, and fertility.

Fig 15: An alignment of two rows of monoliths in Lotha Village with a wooden Y-post infront.

(Hutton, 1923)

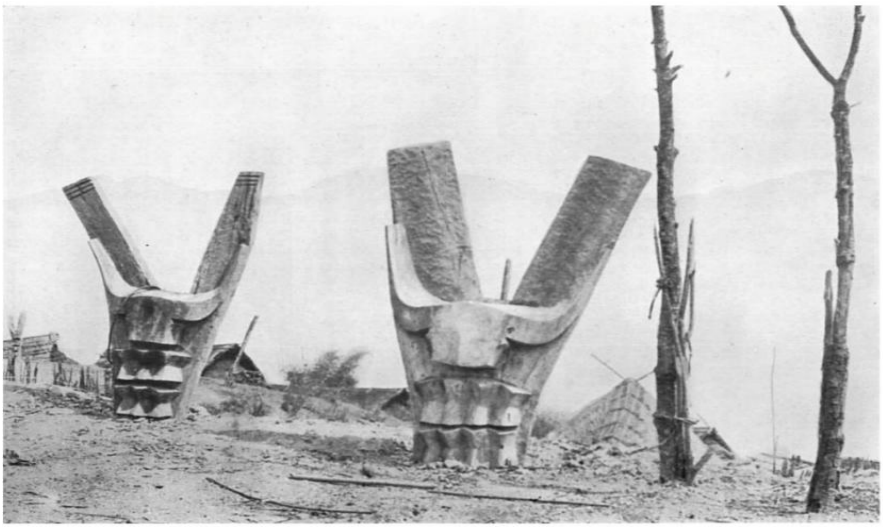


Fig 16: Forked wooden posts, Sema Nagas (Plate VIII; Hutton, 1929)

During research in Ganeshnagar Village, a report was documented regarding the discovery of an idol in the community. The statue was reported to resemble Lord Ganesha, a Hindu deity characterised by an elephantine head. The oral narrative and the foundation stone at the temple indicate that the idol manifested on 16th August 1927, discovered by Biri Singh Napensa. However, the idol remained immobile until Phoidar Hojaisa and Jaiham Singh Hasnusa relocated it from its original site to its current position at Dhansiri Anchalik Shri Shri Ganesh Mondir in Dawjingphang,

Fig 17: The idol of Lord Ganesh found at Ganeshnagar Village.

Dhansiri, Karbi Anglong. A temple was constructed, and the idol was installed therein; the village where the idol was found was then renamed Ganeshnagar, formerly known as Lombudar in the local dialect, to honour the discovery.

Over the years, the Kachari Rajbari ruins have been neglected by the authorities responsible for their upkeep and the citizens of Dimapur. The neglect and apathy were further highlighted after a Right to Information (RTI) application was filed by Dr. John Murry, CEO and Secretary of the Society for Education Empowerment and Development. The reply to the RTI revealed that the funds allotted for the park's upkeep in the last three years were Rs. one lakh in 2011-12, Rs. eight lakhs in 2012-13, and Rs. 7.7 lakhs for 2013-14.

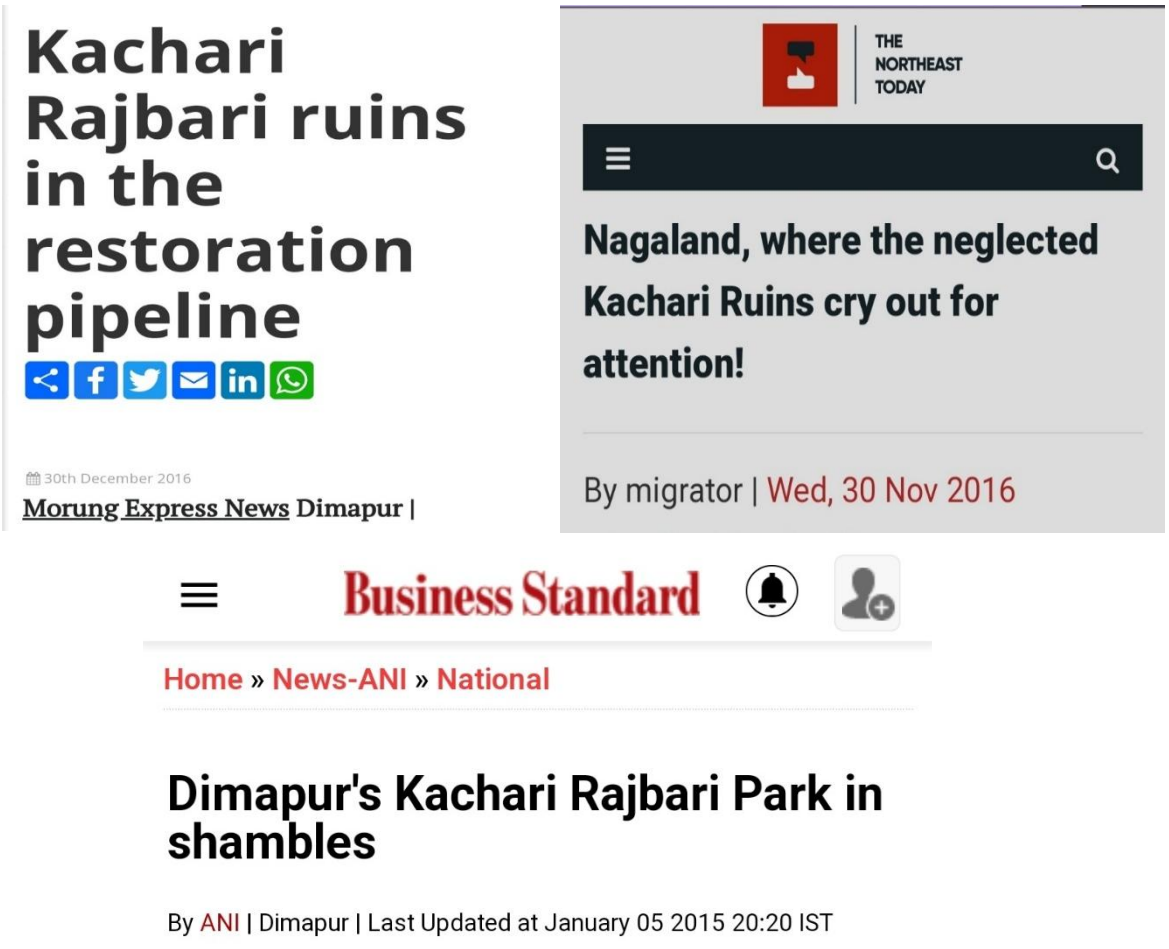


Fig 18: Various news articles on the neglect of the Kachari Rajbari ruins in Dimapur, Nagaland.

The social and cultural fabric of the Kachari community, particularly the Dimasa and Mech Kacharis in Nagaland, reveals a richly layered heritage shaped by deep-rooted traditions, close kinship structures, and an enduring connection to nature. Their society is marked by intricate clan systems, animistic religious beliefs like Bathouism, and vibrant expressions of art through textile weaving, music, dance, and ritual practices. From the agricultural rhythms of village life to ceremonial festivals such as Bushu and Aai-Sagi, every aspect of their culture reinforces community cohesion and spiritual balance. The Kachari textile traditions—especially the Dokhona and Rihjamphaing—stand as testaments to generational craftsmanship and cultural symbolism, while archaeological sites like Rajbari in Dimapur anchor their historical continuity to a much earlier era. Despite external influences from Hinduism, colonialism, and modernization, the Kacharis have shown remarkable resilience in preserving their identity. Today, through revitalization efforts, cultural documentation, and creative adaptation, the Kacharis continue to navigate the modern world while honouring the legacies of their ancestral past.

CHAPTER 3

FORMATION AND DECLINE OF KACHARI KINGDOM

The ethnic history of Assam can be characterized by successive waves of settlement by diverse ethnic groups. Evidence of the earliest waves, likely of Negroid origin, is evident through various anthropological variations observed in a limited number of populations. The subsequent group was represented by the Mon-Khmers, who were assimilated by later immigrants and partially displaced into the hills. This displacement occurred as new immigrants sought to inhabit the fertile valleys of the Brahmaputra and its tributaries, ultimately leading to the Mon-Khmers' retreat to the hills when confronted by a more dominant rival. The Tibeto-Burmese similarly followed the Mon-Khmers and initially dispersed across the plains. The Tibeto-Burmese migrated into Northeast India through multiple, chronologically distinct waves. The Bodo constituted the initial stream. In contrast to other Tibeto-Burmese tribes that promptly settled in the hill districts of Assam, the Bodo people initially inhabited extensive areas of the plains. A record indicates that 'two thousand years ago, if not earlier, the Bodo likely occupied the entirety of the Assam Valley, the majority of North Bengal, and the Surma Valley' (Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics 1909: 753). This assertion is supported by several historical evidences. The evidence from toponymy is particularly compelling, as it demonstrates the impact of Bodo languages on the place names in Assam. Many river names in Assam are prefixed with 'di' or 'ii', which translates to 'water' in Bodo. Examples include Dibang, Dihong, Dibru, Dikho, Tista, and Tilao, the latter being the local designation for the Brahmaputra (Gait 1926). The linguistic traces of the Bodo reflect their extended period of governance in Assam, especially within the valleys. Additional evidence is provided by linguistic data, including the existence of several verbal roots and words derived from Bodo in the Assamese language; for example, *agach* — 'to prevent', *chelak* — 'to lick', *Haphala* — 'embankment', *bonda* — 'caf', among others. (Gait,1926) (Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, 1909: 753). Finally, the renowned Chinese traveller Hsuang-ch'uang, who visited Assam in A.D. 640, explicitly noted that the Bodo comprised the primary population group of Kamarupa, or ancient Assam. The Ahoms, invading

Assam in the thirteenth century, encountered various tribes of the Bodo group, which then occupied the Brahmaputra Valley, including not only the Kacharis but all Bodo peoples. At the time of the Kachari state's emergence, the Bodo were established in the plains of Assam. This likely explains why they were able, in contrast to other tribes that had been restricted to hilly terrain, to progress to state formation. This concept is corroborated by Gait, a historian of Assam, who states: 'Life under conditions of the Valleys helps to consolidate power.' In the hills, these processes exhibit reduced intensity. Several tribes, now residing in the hills, previously occupied the plains. The Kacharis were displaced by the Ahoms into the North Kachar Hills (Gait, 1926).

The roots of the Kachari people, especially the Dimasa Kacharis, are elucidated through mythology and historical narratives. A myth links their lineage to the Mahabharata, wherein Bhima's union with Hidimba, purportedly a Dimasa Kachari, resulted in the birth of Ghatotkach, who established a dynasty in Hidimbapur (present-day Dimapur). This provides the Kacharis with a legendary ancestry linked to the Pandavas. The Dimasa origin myth encompasses the narrative of Bangla Raja (the earthquake deity) and Arikdima (a celestial avian), whose amalgamation resulted in the emergence of six divine progenitors of the Dimasas at Dilaobra Sangibra, a revered confluence of two rivers. A seventh egg unleashed a malevolent spirit, which is still thought to cause suffering. Historically, the Dimasas migrated in response to drought, initially settling at the confluence of the Brahmaputra and Padma rivers before moving upstream along the Brahmaputra. Their political history encompasses two primary phases - the Sadiyal period, spanning from Sadiya to Dimapur, is characterized by kinship and the Hidimbiyal period, spanning from Dimapur to Khaspur, was characterized by a monarchy. The archaeological parallels between Kasomari and Dimapur corroborate these movement patterns. A mythical sanctuary of the Dimasas situated across a river, directed by a divinity and a heron, constitutes an element of their folklore. Scholarly discourse exists over the interrelation of the Dimasa, Bodo, and Mech people, all regarded as components of the overarching Kachari ethnicity. Although several researchers, like as Allen, associate the Mech with the Kacharis, the Dimasas refute this claim. The historical distinction between these groups is unclear and conjectural due to the absence of definitive historical documents.

An Overview of the Political History of the Kacharis

The Kachari society, although with a more centralised form of government with a king, was of tribal origin and functioned similarly to any other tribal community. The basis of the Kachari race is still essentially a matter of conjecture and inference in the absence of anything entitled to be regarded as authentic history (Endle, 1911). Rev. S. Endle says that the Kachari race was the original autochthones of Assam and formed a large, perhaps the primary constituent element in the permanent population of the province. He believes that there were two great migrations from north and northeast into the rich valley of the Brahmaputra – one entering North-East Bengal and Western Assam through the valley of tista, Dharla, Sankosh and founding there what was formerly the mighty kingdom of Kamarupa; and the other making its way through the Subansari, Dibong, and Dihong valleys into eastern Assam, where a branch of the widespread Kachari race known as Chutiyas (pronounced as Sutiyas), undoubtedly held sway for an extended period. (Acharya, 1984).

The historical record indicates that the Kacharis were overwhelmed by the Ahoms, leading to the sacking of their capital in the mid-sixteenth century, after which the region was abandoned and never reoccupied by either group (Shakespear, 1914, pp. 3-4). Initially settling in what is now the Nowgong District, the Kacharis gradually extended their dominion up the Brahmaputra Valley to the region around present-day Sadiya, and southward through the Kopili Valley, eventually moving into the Dhansiri and Doyang valleys as they descended from the hills. Bryan Hodgson (1847) is among the authorities who assert this migration pattern, suggesting that the Kacharis and the Kocches were linguistically related. However, Endle, in his comprehensive work on the Kacharis, posits that their ancestral homeland lies in Tibet and China. He theorizes that the Kacharis migrated into the Brahmaputra Valley in two distinct streams: one entered western Assam through the valleys of the Tista, Dharla, and Sankosh rivers, leading to the establishment of the kingdom of Kamarupa, while the other stream descended into eastern Assam via the Subansiri, Dihong, and Dibang valleys. Endle also identifies the Chutiyas, who once dominated the Sadiya region, as a clan of the broader Kachari nation, left behind as the migration wave moved westward and southward.

Both Hodgson and Endle agree that the Kacharis and Kocches were once dominant groups in Assam, though Hodgson extends this argument by classifying them as the aboriginal inhabitants of Assam. He aligns them with other Tamulian aboriginal groups in India, such as the Gonds and Bhils, due to their remarkable ability to thrive in forested and swampy areas, environments in which few other populations could survive. Hodgson argues that this unique adaptation must have developed over an extended period, estimating their presence in the region to span approximately thirty centuries. Consequently, it is plausible to consider the Kacharis and Kocches as belonging to the indigenous populations of India. Historically, the Kacharis appear to have been a peaceful and prosperous people, primarily engaged in agriculture. They seem to have coexisted amicably with the rising Kocch nation across the Brahmaputra, with the notable exception of 1562, when they were defeated by Kocch king Nar Narain. Additionally, they maintained trade relations with Dacca and Bengal through the Goalpara route.

It appears evident that the Kacharis derived their knowledge of brick construction from Bengal, as neither the Kacharis nor other neighboring nations in earlier times built permanent towns or forts. Their defenses primarily consisted of earthworks, while their buildings were constructed using wood and bamboo. In upper Assam, only a few ancient temples were built of masonry during this period. However, the ruins at Dimapur, which date back to centuries before the arrival of the Ahoms, demonstrate that the Kacharis were well-versed in the art of brickmaking and permanent construction. The architectural style of these structures suggests significant influence from Bengal, the closest advanced civilization to the Kacharis.

Today, it is difficult for travelers, whether by rail from Haflong to near Golaghat or by road from Golaghat to Nichuguard at the base of the Naga Hills, to fathom that this now densely forested region once hosted thriving cities and vast tracts of cultivated land. Only names such as Maiham, Jamaguri, and Dijoa remain in old Ahom records, recalling these forgotten settlements. Of the three valleys previously mentioned—Kopili, Dhansiri, and Doyang—the Kopili Valley is the only one that did not fall into complete desolation, primarily because the Kacharis maintained control

of this region until nearly the start of the nineteenth century. In contrast, the Dhansiri and Doyang valleys slipped from their grasp approximately 300 years earlier.

By the time the Ahoms began consolidating their power in the regions around Sadiya and Namrup, the Kacharis controlled the territory up to the Dikkoo River, which flows past Sibsagor. It was here, in the early fourteenth century, that they first came into contact with the Ahoms. The relationship was marked by constant friction, and as the Ahoms gained strength through a fresh influx of migrants from the east, the Kacharis gradually withdrew. By the late fifteenth century, the Kacharis launched a successful military campaign to reclaim lost territory, culminating in their victory over the Ahoms in 1490 at Dampuk on the Dikkoo River, which they once again established as their boundary.

However, thirty years later, a prolonged series of conflicts ensued. By this time, the Ahoms had subdued their other adversaries, including the Chutiyas, Morans, and to a certain extent, the Kocches. This allowed them to turn their full attention to the Kacharis. In the early sixteenth century, the Kacharis were gradually pushed back, losing all territory east of Golaghat. The Ahoms consolidated their gains by constructing a formidable earthwork fort at Marangi, just south of Jorhat. Within a year, the Kacharis mounted an assault on Marangi, prompting the Ahoms to lead two strong military expeditions up the Dhansiri and Doyang valleys. Despite successful engagements at Bardua and Maiham, the Ahoms eventually withdrew. The exact locations of these battle sites are now lost to history.

Five years later, still aggrieved by these defeats, the Kacharis launched another attack on the Ahoms near Golaghat. This time, the Ahoms mounted a large-scale campaign up the Dhansiri, advancing as far as the Kachari capital of Dimapur. After a fierce battle, during which the Kachari king was killed and his head sent to Charaideo, the Ahoms imposed terms on the Kacharis, installing one Detsing as king before retreating from the territory. However, within five years, Detsing quarreled with the Ahom king Sukmungijng, prompting the Ahoms to mount another military expedition. A large Ahom force advanced along both sides of the Doyang River, where they

encountered minimal resistance, and then proceeded up the Dhansiri to the Kachari capital.

Following a desperate defense, the Kacharis were decisively defeated, and their city was sacked. Although the Ahoms claimed control over the entire tract of land, they never occupied it, and with the former Kachari inhabitants either killed or having retreated to establish a new capital at Maibong in the present-day North Cachar Hills, the Dhansiri and Doyang valleys soon reverted to jungle. This area later became known as the Nambhor Forest. According to Ahom "buranjis" (chronicles), by 1637, communication between the Ahoms and Kacharis was routed via Koliabar, Nowgong, and the Kopili Valley, as the Dhansiri Valley route had become impassable due to depopulation. Maibong, now a small station on the Assam-Bengal Railway a few miles north of the civil station at Haflong, had grown into a sizable and fortified town by the late sixteenth century, as evidenced by the remnants of strong walls, gateways, and temples. One notable rock-cut temple bears an inscription dating it to 1721 during the reign of Chandra Narain.

In the early seventeenth century, the Kacharis maintained control over the northern part of the Nowgong District, bordering the Brahmaputra Valley, and the southern regions along the Jamuna and Kopili valleys, where the once-thriving towns of Raha, Doboka, and Demera were located. By this time, they had also long since established dominance in the Cachar plains (Surma Valley), where they had displaced the original inhabitants, the Tippera people. The Kacharis then attempted to expand their power against the neighboring Jaintia tribe. They successfully defeated the Raja of the Jaintias and captured his capital, Khaspur. However, in 1606, tensions with the Ahoms resurfaced, leading to a confrontation at Dharmtika, where the Ahom king, Pratap Sing, emerged victorious. Despite this, he later suffered a significant defeat at Raha near Nowgong and withdrew his forces due to concerns about an impending Mughal invasion.

The Kacharis enjoyed a relatively peaceful period for approximately ninety years until, in 1696, the Ahom monarch Rudra Sing, one of the greatest of the Ahom rulers, waged war against the Kachari king Tamradhoj, who had declared his

independence. Rudra Singh dispatched two armies, one consisting of 37,000 troops to advance up the Dhansiri River toward Dijoa, and another with 34,000 troops via Raha and the Kopili Valley. Both armies aimed to capture Maibong, the Kachari capital, and were required to carve out roads through the dense forest as they advanced. The Dhansiri force successfully defeated the Kacharis at Dijoa (now known as Mohan Dijoa on the northeastern edge of the Mikir Hills) and reached Maibong, where they decisively crushed Tamradhoj's forces and captured the city, demolishing its fortifications. The Raha army, hindered by the difficult terrain, arrived late but was later tasked with continuing the campaign into Cachar, with Khaspur as the next target. However, Rudra Sing was ultimately forced to abandon the campaign due to sickness in his army and supply shortages.

In 1705, the Jaintias, still resentful of their earlier defeat by the Kacharis, renewed hostilities. After a series of skirmishes, the Jaintia Raja, through treachery, captured King Tamradhoj, who then appealed to his former enemy, Rudra Sing of the Ahoms, for assistance. In response, Rudra Sing dispatched two Ahom columns into Jaintia territory in 1707. One of these columns successfully traversed the hills, defeated the Jaintia forces, and occupied the city of Jaintiapur on the southern side of the hills. Both the Jaintia Raja and Tamradhoj were captured and sent to Bishnath, near Tezpur on the Brahmaputra. Following this, both the Kachari and Jaintia territories were brought under Ahom rule.

Two years later, in 1709, the Jaintias revolted against the Ahoms, initially achieving some success against the small Ahom forces stationed in the hills. However, the Ahom garrison at Demera in the upper Kopili Valley, in coordination with the troops holding Jaintiapur, managed to suppress the rebellion. The conflict concluded with a brutal massacre and the destruction of Jaintiapur. Later, Rudra Sing, in a grand durbar held at Salagarh, near Bishnath, released both royal captives, allowing them to return to their respective states, though these remained feudatories of the Ahoms.

Exhausted by this final conflict, the Kacharis experienced nearly a century of peace until 1803, when the great Moamoria Rebellion erupted in Upper Assam against Ahom rule. The Kacharis, hoping to reclaim their independence, aligned themselves

with the rebels. A desultory war ensued for two years, but the Kacharis were decisively defeated in a pitched battle at Doboka on the Jamuna River and retreated to Maibong and Cachar. In 1817, the Manipuris, under Raja Manjit, invaded, effectively placing all of Cachar and its hill district under Manipuri control. However, this was short-lived, as, in 1819-1820, the Burmese ousted the Manipuris and took control of Cachar. Their occupation lasted until the British declared war on Burma in response to its territorial aggressions, which led to the Burmese expulsion from Assam.

The first documented visit to Khaspur, in Cachar, by an Englishman of note was made by Mr. Verelst in 1763, who later became Governor-General of Bengal. The earliest recorded conflict between the British and local forces occurred when a detachment of the Honourable East India Company's troops from Dacca clashed with the Jaintia Raja's forces approximately twenty-one miles north-northeast of Sylhet. Today, the Kacharis have dwindled into agricultural communities scattered across Cachar and Upper Assam, while Maibong and the North Cachar Hills, once their capital and stronghold, have largely fallen into ruins and jungle. Only the lower reaches of the Jetinga Valley have seen rejuvenation, now flourishing with tea gardens (Shakespear, 1914: 12-19).

A year later the Ahoms are found defeating the Kacharis in the Doyang and Dhansiri valleys, and sacking their ancient capital of Dimapur. The destruction of this and their heavy losses took all heart out of the Kachari people, who, as we have seen before, evacuated the Dhansiri valley and formed a new capital at Maibong in what is now called the North Cachar hills. For what reason the Ahoms never occupied this part of Kachari territory is not known, but as it was quite depopulated by war it soon relapsed into a jungle too heavy perhaps for the conquerors to cope with; and so, it developed into the dense Nambhor forest, gradually covering and blotting out all evidences of Kachari towns, roads, etc., which had been their pride and home for hundreds of years. This reign, namely that of Siikmungnung lasting forty-two years, was long and eventful. (Shakespear, 1914: 33)

The Ahom Invasion

It is not known when exactly this Dimapur Kachari dynasty came to power. But there is no doubt that by the thirteenth century when the Tai-Ahom kings were carving out an Ahom kingdom in upper Assam, the Kachari kingdom in the Dhansiri valley was quite powerful, and for about two hundred years the Ahom kings refrained from launching any major attacks against them. Around the end of 1490 A.D. Ahom king, Suhenpha (1488-1493) launched an attack on the Kachari kingdom but had to return defeated. In 1526 A.D. Ahom King Suhungmung (1497-1539), one of the most powerful Ahom kings, invaded the Kachari kingdom of Dhansiri valley but the Kacharis again defeated the Ahoms. After renewed preparation, Suhungmung again attacked the Kachari kingdom in 1531A.D. and defeated the Kachari army. Suhungmung marched on to Dimapur when the Kachari king Khungkhara fled away and his brother Detsung was installed as a puppet king at Dimapur. In 1536 Detsung rebelled when Suhungmung again attacked Dimapur, killed Detsung, and ransacked the capital town. That was the end of the Dimapur kingdom (Roy, 1995). A folk tale among the Kacharis says that the Ahom army rode on cows during their last battle which completely shocked the Kachari army for it may result in the killing of cows which they thought would cause defilement of their fight. It may be noted here that the Kacharis particularly the Dimasas at that period considered cows as 'Gushu' or impure (Arunkumar, et. al, 2014: 380).

Impact of the Ahom invasion

The Ahom invasion profoundly influenced the Kachari kingdom, bringing about significant changes to its political, social, and cultural fabric. The Ahoms, who ruled Assam for nearly six centuries from 1228 to 1826, frequently came into conflict with the Kacharis—a powerful kingdom in northeastern India. These encounters left lasting impacts on the Kacharis, altering their trajectory in various ways.

Politically, the Kacharis experienced substantial setbacks due to the Ahom expansion. Once rulers over a vast region of present-day Assam, they gradually lost significant portions of their territory, particularly in Upper Assam. The repeated

military pressure weakened the Kachari kingdom's political power and influence, eventually confining their control to more remote areas such as Dimapur, and later Maibang in the North Cachar Hills. At several points in history, the Kacharis were forced into subjugation, becoming tributary states or signing treaties that curtailed their sovereignty. The military engagements between the Ahoms and Kacharis were numerous and intense, centered largely around territorial control. Although the famous Battle of Saraighat in 1671 was primarily between the Ahoms and the Mughals, it had broader consequences for regional power structures. The Ahom military success in such battles indirectly impacted neighboring kingdoms like the Kacharis by reaffirming the Ahoms' dominance in the region.

Despite the ongoing hostilities, the cultural exchange between the two communities was significant. Over time, many Kacharis adopted elements of Ahom culture, including language, administrative systems, and social customs. This led to a gradual assimilation in certain regions. The Ahoms' religious practices, which evolved from indigenous Tai faiths to include elements of Hinduism, also influenced the Kacharis. Traditionally animist, the Kachari society saw an increasing acceptance of Hindu rituals and beliefs. Economically and socially, the Kacharis suffered due to the continuous conflict. Repeated invasions disrupted agricultural activities, damaged fertile lands, and disturbed trade routes, leading to economic decline in several Kachari-held areas. The toll of warfare included loss of lives, displacement of communities, and widespread instability, all of which eroded the social fabric of the kingdom.

These military and political pressures eventually led to large-scale migration. The fall of Dimapur to the Ahoms compelled the Kacharis to relocate their capital to Maibang, seeking refuge in the more secure and remote North Cachar Hills. This movement not only altered the geographical extent of their kingdom but also influenced the demography and settlement patterns of the Kachari people. Diplomatically, the Kacharis attempted to resist the Ahoms by forging alliances with other regional powers such as the Tripuris and Chutias. However, the lack of strong

unity among these groups, coupled with the superior strategic capabilities of the Ahom military, rendered these alliances ineffective in halting Ahom expansion.

The Ahom invasions led to a considerable decline in Kachari power, territory, and influence. While the Kacharis retained their distinct identity over the centuries, the political domination and cultural influence of the Ahoms left a deep imprint on their society. Nonetheless, the resilience of the Kacharis allowed them to preserve many of their traditions, even as they adapted to the new realities imposed by Ahom rule.

Establishment of capitals at Maibang and Khaspur

1. **Maibong**

After their escape from Dimapur, the Dimasas under the leadership of Detsung fled southward to the Mahur valley where they chose Maibang on the banks of river Mahur/Mahour in North Cachar Hills (present Dima Hasao district) as their new capital. Suffice it to say that Detsung did not establish a new state in North Cachar as it was already under Dimasa control ever since they were ruling at Dimapur. The migration of the Dimasas was from one centre to another or in other words, from the core to the periphery. But once the Dimasas settled in Maibang it soon emerged as the capital and the administrative centre. Dimapur soon lost its former relevance. The strategic location of Maibang was, no doubt, a prime consideration behind its selection. The Dimasas found the salubrious tract of the Mahur Valley similar to that of the Dhansiri Valley. They found it alluring both for settlement and cultivation. Since they were practicing wet-rice cultivation and were acquainted with irrigation it was but natural that the Dimasas selected a place with similar topography. The Dimasas also chose Maibang as it was surrounded by hills and dense forest which removed the threat of any further Ahom inroads. The town of Maibang was constructed on a similar pattern like that of Dimapur and exhibited good example of town planning with the roads intersecting the city in the middle. It was surrounded by a perpendicular brick rampart; the side towards the river Mahur being left free. The river Mahur flowed in the north-south direction in the west (Jahari, 2010:86).

After the destruction of Dimapur by the Ahoms, the Kachari kings established themselves at Maibong (Gait,1906: 251). This place is on the bank of the Mahur River. It was surrounded by a wall, inside which several temples' remains are still visible. It is recorded in the Bansabali of the Darrang rajas that the Kachari king was defeated, about the middle of the sixteenth century by Chilarai, the brother and general of the great Koch king Nar Narayan.

A noteworthy feature of Dimasa society at Maibang was the beginning of the settlement of the Bengalis on the northern side of Barak bordering Sylhet. Bengalis were settled in certain pockets of the town. On the invitation of Suradarpa Narayana (1708-20), many Bengalis had immigrated into the country. They occupied the fallow lands and cultivated thereon. However, they were not numerically strong, as the majority section of the state came from the indigenous section (Jahari,2010: 111).

2. Khaspur

With each shifting of the Kachari capital from Dimapur to Khaspur the primitive beliefs and traditions in the Kachari society underwent remarkable changes. At each stage thrust was given by them to the gradual arynisation of their social outlook. While at Dimapur, the royal family claimed descent from the demoness Hidimba, and this was the reason why the other name of Dimapur became Hidimbapur. The name Dimapur must have also originated from the word Hidimbapur. The Kacharis of Dimapur were, therefore, known as Hidimbial Kacharis and subsequently they came to be known as Dimacha or Dimasa. The Dirnasa Kacharis of Dimapur were quite different from the Kacharis of Sadiya called Sadiyal Kacharis, and the difference has been compared by one author as the difference that exists between the "French and Spanish"(Sen 1994:88)

Khaspur was the last historical capital of the Dimasas. The period of Dimasa rule at Khaspur, which commenced in about 1755, came to an ignominious end in 1832. After its annexation to the British Empire, T Fischer was appointed as the first Superintendent of Cachar who implanted the British administrative system in Cachar, though in the early stages, some vestige of the former administrative system was

maintained. Khaspur lost its importance as the administrative centre, and its place was taken over by Silchar, which became the new headquarters of Cachar under the British.

The causes of the shift of the capital from Maibang to Khaspur was attributed by different scholars to the following: (i) aggressive designs of the Ahoms and Jaintias, (ii) raids of the Nagas, (iii) strategic location of Khaspur which was at a safe distance from both the Ahoms and Jaintias, (iv) the marriage between the Dimasa prince, Lakshmichandra and Kanchani, the Dehan princess of Khaspur and, (v) better economic prospects in the plains of Cachar. According to N. G. Rhodes, the capital was moved from Maibang to the plains of Cachar because Kirti Chandra's predecessor Raja Dharmadhvaj had married a daughter of the Raja of Tripura and received the Barak Valley as dowry. According to Gauri Sen, it was as a measure of good defense against enemy attacks and better prospects of revenue that necessitated the shift. The transfer of capital might have also been considered necessary on economic grounds. Taking all these into consideration it would surmise that both strategic and economic factors compelled the Dimasa kings to shift their base to Khaspur in Cachar plains (Jahari, 2010:142).

There is no consensus among scholars about the date of the shifting of the capital from Maibang to Khaspur. W. W. Hunter opined that the Dimasas reached Khaspur between 1700 and 1750. C. A. Soppitt puts the date at 1750. J. B. Bhattacharjee puts the date as 1745. Sofia A. Maretina has given the same date as Soppitt. Gauri Sen does not accept the date given by them on the ground that in 1750 Bhim Singha was alive and Lakshmichandra was the Dehan governor under him. The prince could do nothing to assist his father Kirtichandra in getting the Dimasa capital transferred to Khaspur. According to Gauri Sen, the shift to Khaspur took place during 1761-1771. The Dimasas allowed their prince Lakshmichandra to stay at Khaspur with the Dehan royal family for diplomatic reasons. They thought this would gradually establish Dimasa authority over Khaspur and might facilitate the transfer one day. Harishchandra has been considered as the first Dimasa king to reign from Khaspur. He reigned in two phases. The first phase was from 1755-60 during which his seat of power was at Maibang and the second was from 1761-71 during which he ruled at

Khaspur. When Harishchandra shifted to Khaspur with his royal entourage, the general Dimasa populace stayed back in North Cachar (Ibid:143).

The Kachari State after the Downfall

What persisted, then, following the collapse of the state? The destinies of the lowland and highland regions were markedly distinct. The former were inundated by incessantly shifting waves of conquerors, leading to the absorption of the residual population by the conquerors, thereby rendering them virtually extinct as a distinct ethnic group. The hill communities preserved their distinct ethnic characteristics and traditional institutions to a significant degree; they never developed into a class society, and their institutions have lost the remnants of social stratification that existed during the Kachari raj. The aforementioned situation requires further elaboration. Stratified social groups did not include the entirety of Kachari society. During the Kachari state, there existed two distinct types of clans with divergent functions: one served as categories of blood relations governing marriage, primarily exogamous in nature, while the other comprised social groups that had forfeited their original exogamous function, frequently becoming endogamous, and occupied varying positions within the social hierarchy. The metamorphosis of clans into social organizations predominantly occurred in the raja's local vicinity, particularly in regions with the most intimate ties to the court. The association of more advanced social strata with the highest echelons of noble clans, supported by subordinate professional groupings, is exemplified by the nomenclature of the various groups. The presence of the term 'king's' preceding the names of most professional clans such as the king's fishermen and the king's laundresses signifies that these designations do not pertain to conventional trade groups formed by the natural division of labour within a community, but rather to professional entities established primarily to fulfil the requirements of the court. It is entirely logical that the appellations for these specific groupings have been transmitted to us, as the historical evidence predominantly pertains to the raja's endeavours, the royal court, and the institutions most intimately associated with both. Subsequent to the decline of the Kachari kingdom, new conquerors integrated the most advanced and sophisticated elite groups, the politically

engaged strata of society together with their socially stratified clans. In the remote and especially the hilly regions, the clans are more inclined to have preserved their fundamental roles; the necessity for the stratification of labourers into specialized castes, or for the professional differentiation among the predominantly agrarian communities engaged in a subsistence economy throughout the hills, has not yet emerged. While the raja's immediate entourage consisted of individuals from noble clans, his closest associates and officials emerged from various communities, thereby attaining a superior status over them. In contrast, the hill communities maintained their social integrity, with the clans within them upholding their exogamous principles and social homogeneity. This is, based on the available evidence, an assessment of the social structure, or more precisely, the social foundation of the Kachari state. The little accessible material allows us to examine only a relatively late phase of the Kachari raj, specifically from the early sixteenth century, about its administrative and political institutions. This data mostly pertains to the administrative system and state organization in the North Cachar Hills, which were the nucleus of the Kachari raja's territory during that era.

The Kachari state encompassed both the lowland and mountainous regions. The latter, due to their ecological characteristics, consistently experienced higher autonomy. The hill regions, during the Maibong period and subsequently when the raja relocated to Khaspur in the plains, were administered by the Bara Bhandari, the head judge, supported by a comprehensive bureaucratic system. All grave offenses were adjudicated by the raja of Maibong. Minor disputes, such as those concerning inheritance, were resolved by the village delegates, known as *kunangs*. The raja conducted his judicial duties alongside the bara Bhandari. The *kunang* of a hamlet where an offense transpired appeared before the raja's court, accompanied by both parties involved in the dispute. The *kunang* was accountable for the protection of the accused throughout the court process. The accused represented himself without legal counsel. (Maretina, 2010:346-47)

Sanskritization

Sanskritization is a process by which a community or group adopts the cultural practices, social norms, or religious beliefs traditionally associated with higher-status groups, often aiming to improve their social status. This concept was extensively discussed by Indian sociologist M.N. Srinivas, who used the term to describe the process through which lower-caste groups adopt elements of the culture of the higher castes to gain social mobility and respect.

The Kachari tribe, which is a Tibeto-Burman-speaking community predominantly found in parts of Assam and neighboring regions in India, has experienced its version of Sanskritization. The process for the Kacharis, as with other tribal groups, involves several key aspects:

1. Adoption of Hindu Rituals and Beliefs: Some Kachari individuals or sub-groups may have adopted Hindu rituals, customs, and beliefs. This could include the incorporation of Hindu deities into their religious practices, the performance of Hindu rites, and participation in Hindu festivals.
2. Language and Education: Sanskritization can also involve a shift towards using languages associated with higher social status or broader communication. In the case of the Kacharis, this might involve increased use of Assamese or Bengali, languages with significant influence in their regions, and participation in formal education systems that emphasize these languages.
3. Cultural Practices: The adoption of cultural practices associated with higher castes, such as wearing certain types of clothing, adopting dietary practices, or modifying traditional customs to align more closely with those of higher-status groups.
4. Social Stratification: By adopting certain practices and norms, members of the Kachari tribe may aim to improve their social status within the broader societal structure, seeking recognition and respect similar to that enjoyed by higher castes or more mainstream communities.

5. Political and Economic Participation: Engaging more actively in political and economic activities, often aligning with dominant social structures, to gain influence and resources that can improve their socio-economic position.

The extent and nature of Sanskritization among the Kachari tribe can vary widely depending on regional contexts and the specific sub-group within the tribe. This process, while providing opportunities for upward mobility, also raises questions about the preservation of traditional tribal identities and the potential impacts of such changes on the tribe's cultural heritage.

The systematic and progressive Aryanisation of the Bodo people appear to have gained momentum in the seventh century A.D under the patronage of the Varman and the Salasthamba line of rulers who are believed to belong originally to Mech tribe who with the passage of time became thoroughly Hinduised. The kingdom of Kamarupa during their rule was bound by the Korotoya river in the west and hence, the western part of this kingdom was in close vicinity of the Aryan settlements in Magadha, Vaisali and Mithila etc. In this position, the kingdom of Kamarupa must have not only a close contact with the Aryans, but also have been continually receiving Hindu migrants. That was how the Varmans, the Salasthambas and other Bodo line of rulers were influenced by the Hindus and thereby became hinduised. So also, their subjects who simply followed their tracks of their royal masters and protectors (Mosahary, 1989: 166).

The process of Hinduisation, in its cross-cultural aspects, which commenced at Maibang seeped into the religious outlook of the Dimasa rulers which profoundly altered the ideals of legitimation of state power. New roles and tasks assumed by the Dimasa rulers were in consonance with the Hindu ideals of kingship and they were legitimized by the Brahmanas who acted as catalysts of change. While the royalty was under the influence of Hinduism the socio-cultural life of the indigenous elements still had the vestige of their inherited beliefs. This, to a great extent brought a cultural rift between the royal house that followed Hindu rituals and the indigenous elements who remained outside its fold. However, with the permeation of the Hindu ideals among

the Dimasa rulers at Maibang the Dimasa state which had emerged from a tribal base became attuned to that of an Indian state system (Jahari, 2010:136).

Ahomization

Ahomization denotes the historical and socio-cultural process by which the Ahoms, a Tai-speaking population that came to Assam in the 13th century, progressively assimilated with and impacted the indigenous communities of the area. This process resulted in the emergence of a distinctive Assamese identity through the amalgamation of Tai-Ahom components with indigenous rituals, dialects, religions, and governance structures. The absorption was not unilateral but a complex, dynamic interplay that profoundly influenced the cultural and political landscape of medieval Assam. The Ahoms, led by Sukaphaa, invaded the Brahmaputra Valley in 1228 AD from contemporary Myanmar via the Patkai highlands. The Ahoms, once a small clan, established themselves in Upper Assam and progressively extended their territory. The Ahoms adopted a strategy of accommodation and inclusiveness rather than enforcing their power through coercion. They employed a flexible strategy for the local populace, encompassing diverse ethnic groups such the Chutiyas, Morans, Borahis, Kacharis, and others. Over time, numerous groups were assimilated into the Ahom polity and assigned roles in administration and the military.

An essential element of Ahomization was the assimilation of indigenous practices and languages. The Ahoms initially communicated in their Tai language and adhered to their animistic beliefs, but they progressively embraced the Assamese language and Hindu customs. In the 16th century, Hinduism, especially in its Shakta and Vaishnavite manifestations, started to impact the Ahom court. This resulted in the Sanskritization of the Ahom aristocracy and the patronage of Brahmin intellectuals. The Ahoms commenced the observance of Hindu rituals, festivals, and customs, while simultaneously preserving many Tai-Ahom religious practices in an altered manner. The Ahoms established an effective administrative framework called the Paik system, which functioned as a method of labour and military conscription. The approach enabled the incorporation of diverse ethnic groupings into the governmental framework and enhanced political stability. The Ahom monarchs upheld a

decentralized yet unified government framework, facilitating the retention of local identities within the overarching Ahom kingdom. Ahomization involved not just cultural assimilation but also reciprocal enhancement. The indigenous populations assimilated certain Ahom customs and administrative methods, while the Ahoms underwent transformation in the process. This reciprocal absorption fostered a syncretic culture that established the groundwork for what would subsequently be identified as Assamese society.

Ahomization was a pivotal historical movement that significantly influenced the socio-political structure of Assam. This illustrates that cultural integration, when propelled by inclusive and respectful policies, can result in the formation of a unified and dynamic society. The legacy of Ahomization persists in contemporary Assam, embodying the region's intricate and diverse background. The impact of Ahomization can be seen in the Kachari tribe, who was culturally and linguistically influenced a lot by this phenomenon and its effects can be observed to this day.

Political Relations with Other North Eastern Tribes

Kachari relations with other northeastern tribes were dynamic, marked by periods of conflict, coexistence, and cultural fusion. Their interactions shaped the socio-political landscape of the region, contributing to the diverse and layered identity of Northeast India today. Understanding these relationships offers important insights into the region’s ethno-history and tribal politics. These relationships were shaped by geopolitical proximity, trade, resource control, and external pressures (especially from the Ahoms and later the British). The Kacharis were both aggressors and negotiators, adapting their diplomacy to survive in a politically fragmented but culturally vibrant region.

The Dimasa rulers at Maibang had subdued a large number of Mikir and Angami Naga villages and it is very likely that they must have paid taxes most probably in kind to the Dimasa king. Mayuradhvaj (1695-96) collected from his hill subjects a house tax amounting to four cowries per house. In the time of Kirtichandra (1735-45) it was raised to three rupees. Gopichandra conquered the land of the Kukis

and appointed Raja and Mantri from their tribe. They served as intermediaries between the Dimasa rulers and their tribesmen. The rulers did not interfere in the internal affairs of the tribe. On their part the Mikirs, Kookies and other tribes paid some goods and chattels as token of goodwill (Jahari,2010: 97).

The Jaintia Kingdom, located in present-day Meghalaya, shared a southern frontier with Kachari territory. Political relations between the two were defined by territorial disputes, especially over access to trade routes and fertile plains. While occasional military clashes occurred, diplomacy was also employed to negotiate boundaries. The Jaintia–Kachari frontier, often marked by fluctuating control, exemplified the contest for regional dominance in the hill-plain interface.

The Koch Kingdom, founded in the 16th century in western Assam and North Bengal, was a powerful regional force. The Kacharis and the Koch often found themselves in territorial competition, particularly in Lower Assam. Historical evidence suggests periods of military conflict as well as marriage alliances and tributary agreements. The Koch influence limited Kachari westward expansion but also opened possibilities for diplomatic arrangements, especially in the face of a mutual threat from the Ahoms.

The Mikirs (now Karbis), occupying the hill regions adjacent to Kachari territories, had more localized and informal political interactions with the Kacharis. These interactions involved shared land usage, intermarriage, and occasional conflict over territory. There is some evidence that Mikir chieftains acknowledged Kachari suzerainty at times, though formal political subordination was rare. Relations remained tribal in nature, marked by mutual coexistence and limited friction.

Situated in the western hill tracts, the Garos had indirect contact with the Kachari Kingdom, primarily through migration routes and trade exchanges. While no major political alliances or conflicts are recorded between the two groups, intermittent interactions likely occurred in border zones. The Garo–Kachari relationship can be characterized as mutually neutral, shaped more by geography and distance than by political necessity.

The Khasis, inhabiting the central hill regions of Meghalaya, maintained intermittent political and trade relations with the Kacharis. Disputes arose occasionally over borderlands and market control, but both groups also engaged in economic exchange through strategic trade routes linking the hills and valleys. Khasi chiefs (Siems) sometimes negotiated with Kachari rulers to settle land and taxation disputes, reflecting a dynamic political relationship governed by both rivalry and pragmatism.

The Kachari Kingdom's political relations with its neighbouring tribes were marked by strategic alliances, competition for resources, and territorial defence. The intensity of these interactions varied according to proximity, political strength, and cultural ties. While some relations, such as those with the Koch and Jaintia, were more formal and conflict-prone, others, like those with the Mikirs, Garos, and Khasis, were localized and flexible. These inter-tribal dynamics contributed significantly to the political landscape of pre-colonial Northeast India and reflect the region's diversity and complexity.

Relations with the Naga Tribes

The political relationship between the Kacharis and the Nagas in pre-colonial Northeast India was marked by a complex blend of conflict, cooperation, and cultural interdependence. The Kacharis, established their kingdom in the Dhansiri-Doyang Valley and surrounding foothill regions of present-day Assam and Nagaland. Their geographical proximity to various Naga tribes—such as the Angami, Lotha, Ao, and Zeme—brought the two communities into regular contact, often leading to overlapping territorial claims and interactions that shaped their political dynamics over centuries.

Historically, the relationship was characterized by periodic clashes and localized conflicts. As the Kacharis expanded their control over the plains and foothills, they encountered resistance from Naga groups who traditionally occupied the adjoining hills. Naga raids into Kachari settlements were not uncommon, driven by disputes over land, resources, or tribal rivalries. In response, the Kachari rulers often launched military expeditions into Naga-inhabited areas to reassert authority or

secure their frontiers. These cycles of retaliation and defence were part of the broader political landscape of Northeast India, where tribal boundaries were fluid, and authority was negotiated rather than rigidly imposed.

Despite these tensions, political pragmatism often guided the relationship between the Kacharis and the Nagas. In many cases, Kachari rulers established tributary relations with nearby Naga villages. Certain Naga groups paid tribute in the form of forest produce, livestock, or labour in exchange for protection or trade privileges. Some Kachari administrators even appointed local Naga chieftains or intermediaries to maintain peace and collect dues, suggesting a form of localized political accommodation. This type of indirect rule was especially effective in regions where direct military control was neither sustainable nor strategically necessary.

Economically, the two groups were closely linked through trade. The Kacharis, being settled agriculturalists, provided grains, textiles, and pottery, while the Nagas offered forest products such as honey, bamboo, medicinal herbs, and livestock. Hill-valley trade routes served not only as economic arteries but also as political meeting points where temporary truces were negotiated to allow for peaceful exchange. In some areas, these interactions led to cultural assimilation, visible in shared rituals, agricultural practices, and even linguistic borrowings. J.P. Mills in his work *The Ao Nagas* (1926) claims of the Ao tribe possessing ornaments that were of Kachari origin that came from Maibong.

Furthermore, the political ties between the Kacharis and the Nagas were also influenced by broader regional pressures. The rise of the Ahom Kingdom in Assam and its subsequent expansion pushed both the Kacharis and Nagas into defensive alliances or territorial adjustments. Later, the advent of British colonial administration further disrupted existing tribal dynamics. The colonial government's efforts to demarcate administrative boundaries and impose direct rule weakened the influence of indigenous polities like the Kacharis and disrupted traditional political relationships with groups like the Nagas.

There are very few records of the interaction between the Nagas tribes and the Kacharis, but amicable and, at times, strained relations were cultivated among the Angamis and Kacharis. Although the Nagas and the Kacharis were two neighbouring tribal societies the history of their interactions seems to be very few and between. A fortress whose remains are still scattered about in Dimapur is said to have been constructed by a Kachari king to protect the city from the raids of Angami warriors. Dimapur was a flourishing city. Several industries such as textile, cotton ginning, and pottery sprang up, the manufacturers of which were sent to Golaghat and Rangpur. There were Rengma colonies in Dimapur's suburbs. The Rengmas were then brilliant sculptors and made stone inscriptions of arrows. They supplied steel-made implements to the Kachari and obtained salt in return. It is said that Kacharis handled intermediary trade in iron implements and weapons with the Zeliangrong. Cultural assimilations occurred and can be seen in the oblong V-shaped stone pillars of the Kacharis at Dimapur which closely correspond to the similar V-shaped posts protruding from the roof of the house of a wealthy Angami person. The posts stand as a female symbol, but sometimes are an attribute of cows' sacrifice among the Nagas whereas a bulbous topped post (commonly standing erect at the Ao and the northern Naga festivals), an attribute of Naga mithun sacrifice, represents a male symbol. (Bareh, 1970: 22-23).

The political relations between the Kacharis and the Nagas were dynamic and multifaceted, shaped by a combination of geographical realities, economic interdependence, and shifting power structures. While conflict over territory and resources was a recurring theme, it was balanced by diplomatic exchanges, tributary arrangements, and mutual trade interests. This relationship exemplifies the adaptive and negotiated nature of tribal politics in pre-colonial Northeast India, offering valuable insights into the region's complex historical fabric.

There is narrative regarding oral tradition from Viswema village, belonging to the Southern Angami tribe of Nagaland. It recounts a historical conflict between the Viswema villagers and the Kachari tribe, led by a formidable leader named King Nathuram. Drawn by the large and prosperous settlement of Viswema, the Kacharis launched an expedition to subdue it. Viswema, with no prior history of conflict,

prepared its warriors and ambushed the invaders. The battle occurred near the present-day site of John High School, with the decisive moment being the death of King Nathuram—struck by a spear from a hidden Viswema warrior. Despite Kachari rituals involving the extraction and burning of the king's heart and the ceremonial display of his severed head, the belief in resurrection failed. The Kachari forces suffered heavy losses, with only two soldiers spared to deliver a warning not to return. A prophecy emerged that the Kacharis would one day rise again. Subsequently, the severed head of the king was recovered by two local men from Jakhama and Khonoma, who returned it to the Kacharis in exchange for wealth, using the money to buy land and improve their status. An anecdote is included about a Kachari man hiding in Jakhama, whose plea for water "*pani*" led to the local villagers' first exposure to Nagamese. This incident is said to predate British colonial presence in the region. The story, passed down orally through generations, serves as a significant folkloric account of inter-tribal conflict, resistance, and cultural memory in pre-colonial Nagaland (personal comm., Daniel Kikhi, 16/02/2024).

As with many oral traditions, lines between historical fact and legendary embellishment blur. The presence of supernatural motifs (rituals to resurrect the dead, prophecies) reflects both animist belief systems and efforts to sanctify significant historical turning points. The anecdote about the Kachari man's plea for 'pani' (water) leading to the local exposure to Nagamese marks an important point about linguistic and cultural exchange prior to the organizing presence of colonial rule. It reflects how moments of crisis acted as crucibles for lasting changes in daily life and communication. This detail, though minor in the narrative arc, is significant for understanding how languages and concepts migrated among communities, often through chance or necessity. The use of the term 'pani' in the Viswema oral narrative invites critical scrutiny, particularly regarding the identification of the opposing group as the Kacharis. Linguistic and historical sources consistently indicate that the Kachari language, along with other related Bodo-Garo languages, employs the term 'di' or 'doi' to denote water. This is evident not only in lexical records of the Kachari language but also in the recurrent 'di-' prefix in the names of numerous rivers across Assam, a region historically associated with Kachari presence such as Dibang, Dihing, Dikhou, and

others. The absence of the term ‘pani’ in authentic Kachari or cognate lexicons suggests an alternative possibility: that the usage of ‘pani’, likely derived from Indo-Aryan languages via Assamese, Bengali, or Nagamese, indicates cultural or linguistic contact with speakers of these languages rather than with genuine Kacharis. It is plausible that, through generational transmission or contact with intermediary groups, the original tribal identity may have become conflated or reinterpreted, particularly as Nagamese emerged as a lingua franca in the region and the term ‘pani’ became commonplace. Thus, while the oral tradition remains a valuable source of communal memory, the linguistic detail warrants caution and invites reconsideration of the historical actors involved in the narrated conflict. As acknowledged, this narrative is a product of oral memory, subject to adaptation over generations. While the central themes likely endure, peripheral details may shift, reflecting changing community values or responses to later historical events.

The historical trajectory of the Kachari Kingdom reveals a complex narrative of migration, cultural assimilation, state formation, and eventual decline shaped by both internal dynamics and external pressures. Originating from early Tibeto-Burman settlers, the Kacharis emerged as one of the most influential indigenous polities in Northeast India. Their strategic expansion into fertile valleys facilitated state consolidation, which was later challenged by powerful adversaries such as the Ahoms, Koch, and Jaintias. Despite sustaining prolonged resistance, repeated invasions led to their territorial contraction and eventual political downfall, marked by the sacking of Dimapur and the successive relocations of their capital to Maibang and Khaspur. Their migration from Dimapur to Maibang and later to Khaspur can be seen not just as displacement, but as a strategic retreat to preserve autonomy from the expanding Ahom and later British state structures. Yet, their legacy endures through archaeological remains, oral traditions, and the continued cultural practices of the Kacharis. The Kachari experience illustrates the fluidity of tribal-state interactions, the transformative impact of Sanskritization and Ahomization, and the adaptive resilience of indigenous communities in the face of shifting power structures across pre-colonial Assam.

CHAPTER 4

BRITISH OCCUPATION OF THE NAGA HILLS AND ITS IMPACT ON THE KACHARIS

The British arrival in Northeast India began in the early 19th century, primarily following the First Anglo-Burmese War (1824-1826), which led to the British cession of Assam, Manipur, and surrounding areas. The British expanded their control over the region through treaties, annexations, and military expeditions, establishing administration over Assam and the tribal hill regions like the Khasi, Garo, and Naga Hills. Throughout the British colonial period, the North East was treated separately and differently from the other areas of British India. In the early colonial period, the region formed part of Bengal Province and it was governed as though it were an adjacent subordinate area of Bengal Province even after it became the separate province of Assam in 1874. Moreover, with the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation of 1873, a Line System was introduced to protect the minority indigenous ethnic groups in the hill areas of Assam by restricting outsiders' entry, business activities, land transactions and settlement. For the same purpose, in 1935 the hill areas were demarcated and divided into "excluded areas" and "partially excluded Areas". The former fell under direct British jurisdiction and the latter were given a limited representative system under British administrative control. In short, separation and isolation formed the core of British policy towards the North East. (Inoue, n.a.:16)

Ever since the First Anglo-Burmese War (1824-26), the British authorities in Assam came into contact with the independent Nagas and other inhabitants of the area round about Manipur. Besides furnishing intelligence and conveying military stores, the Nagas helped the British troops by harassing the Burmese invaders at every step. But in 1832, their friendship was turned into one of hostility when several British Officers at the head of local levies marched through the Naga hills in their endeavour to establish a direct line of communication, between Manipur and Assam. Although the attempt to open up the Naga country was abandoned due to the united opposition of the tribes, those intrusions brought about retaliatory attacks on the villages under the jurisdiction of British and Manipur Governments. Such attacks became too

numerous and frequent during 1835-1838. All these aggressions were supposed to have come from the Angami Nagas inhabiting the southern part of Tularam Senapati's country. Till then the British Indian Government had no settled policy towards the Nagas of this frontier. Therefore, it placed the responsibility of checking the inroads of the Nagas on the Kachari chief Tularam and Gambhir Singh, the Raja of Manipur, who had been attempting to bring all the hill country between Manipur and Assam under his authority. The former was incapable of exercising any control over the Nagas and the latter's repressive measures provoked them to more acts of aggression. Consequently, the peace of the Naga frontier was greatly disturbed; and yet the British Government was reluctant to adopt any measure even for its own defence. (Barpujari,1969: 369)

The annexation of the Ahom kingdom by the East India Company in the early decades of the nineteenth century has loomed large as an important moment in the establishment of the British Raj in Assam. The Treaty of Yandaboo of 1826 (see Appendix 2) gave the British East India Company an opportunity to establish its commercial and political interests in the frontier region of India. Throughout British colonialism, the North East region of India was treated differently from other parts of British State of India. The ability of the colonial administration to maintain peace and order in the frontier areas was crucial to the colonial economy in Assam, which was the hub of tea, petroleum, coal and rubber production. To further strengthen their footing in Assam and other hilly areas in the North Eastern region of India, as well as to safeguard the company’s financial interests, the British administrators had to take a number of strategic changes towards the frontier areas of India, which is the primary purpose of this article. This study also looked at the process of colonial expansion in India’s North Eastern region and its formal integration into the dominions of the British East India Company. (Dutta, 2024:672-676)

Economic interests, particularly tea cultivation, drove further British involvement, leading to significant infrastructure development. Despite resistance from local tribes and periodic rebellions, the British consolidated their rule. The region's strategic importance grew during World War II, and following India's

independence in 1947, Northeast India became part of the Indian Union. However, it faced ongoing challenges related to ethnic conflicts and demands for autonomy.

British Policies in the North East

Before the British annexation of Assam, the Ahom rulers seem to have pursued a more or less definite policy in their relations with the tribes of the north-east frontier. This policy appears to have been one of conciliation backed by a display of force when conciliation failed. They tried to prevent the tribesmen from harassing the plains by granting them a subsidy, called *posa* in Assamese, which was expected to provide them with part of their subsistence. But it was no absolute guarantee against tribal raids. The hillmen might at any time descend on the villages in the plains, and carry off captives and property. Punitive expeditions to punish the guilty hillmen are known to have been sent by the Ahom government. (Choudhury, 1970: 56)

The British colonization of Northeast India was marked by strategic territorial expansion, economic exploitation, and intricate administrative policies. Initially, the region was a patchwork of independent kingdoms and tribal territories and gradually came under British control, leading to profound changes in its social, economic, and political fabric. The policies implemented by the British during their rule in Northeast India were driven by a combination of strategic interests, financial objectives, and the need to maintain order in a culturally diverse and geographically challenging area.

Territorial Expansion and Annexation

The British began formal involvement in Northeast India following the First Anglo-Burmese War (1824-1826). The Treaty of Yandabo, signed in 1826, which concluded the war, marked the cession of key territories, including Assam, Manipur, Cachar, and the Jaintia Hills, to the British. This initial annexation laid the foundation for further expansion into the region. The British systematically extended their control over the hill regions, including the Khasi, Garo, Naga, and Lushai (Mizo) Hills, through treaties, military expeditions, and diplomatic efforts. The annexation of these areas was driven by both strategic considerations—such as securing the borders of British India—and the desire to exploit the region's resources.

Administrative Policies

As the British solidified their control over Northeast India, they established administrative structures to govern the region. In 1874, Assam was separated from the Bengal Presidency and made a separate province, reflecting its growing importance to the British administration. The administrative focus in Assam and other areas was primarily on revenue generation, law and order, and resource exploitation. The British also employed a policy of indirect rule in regions like Manipur and the hill areas, allowing local rulers to maintain a degree of autonomy while the British controlled external affairs and significant internal matters. This system of indirect rule was a pragmatic approach designed to minimise resistance while maximising British influence.

Economic Exploitation

Economic interests were a major driving force behind British policies in Northeast India. The discovery of Assam's suitability for tea cultivation in the early 19th century led to the establishment of extensive tea plantations. The British developed a plantation economy in Assam, which required a significant influx of labour from other parts of India, as the local population was insufficient for labour-intensive work. Besides tea, the British exploited other natural resources such as timber, oil, and coal. Infrastructure development, including roads, railways, and telecommunication systems, was primarily geared towards facilitating the extraction and transportation of these resources, further integrating the region into the broader colonial economy.

Tribal Policies and Social Control

A combination of paternalism and pragmatism shaped the British approach to the tribal communities of Northeast India. One of the key policies was the implementation of the Inner Line Regulation in 1873 under the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation. This policy restricted the entry of outsiders into tribal areas, ostensibly to protect tribal lands from exploitation but also to maintain British control by limiting contact between the plains and the hill tribes. The British also employed a

“divide and rule” strategy, fostering divisions among different tribes to prevent unified resistance against colonial rule.

Christian missionaries played a significant role in the British social control policy, particularly in the hill areas. The missionaries were encouraged to work among the tribal communities, where they established schools and introduced Western education and healthcare. This not only facilitated the spread of Christianity among the tribes but also aligned these communities more closely with British interests, helping to consolidate colonial control.

Political and Military Control

To maintain their authority, the British frequently resorted to military force. Several military campaigns were conducted to suppress uprisings and pacify the region, including the Kuki Rebellion, the Lushai Expedition, and operations in the Naga Hills. The presence of British political agents in critical areas ensured that local rulers remained compliant with colonial directives. These agents were crucial in managing affairs and implementing British policies, often intervening in succession disputes and other internal matters to ensure stability and British dominance.

World War II and Its Impact

Northeast India gained significant strategic importance during World War II due to its proximity to Burma and China. The region became a critical theatre of conflict, with battles such as the Battle of Imphal and the Battle of Kohima playing essential roles in halting the Japanese advance into India. The war brought about significant disruption, including the displacement of local populations and the militarization of the region. The British fortified Northeast India and used it as a base for military operations, which had lasting effects on the local communities and the region's infrastructure.

The impact of the Second World War (WWII) on the Kacharis in Nagaland must be understood within the broader context of the war's effects on indigenous groups in the Naga Hills. While specific documentation on the Kacharis in Nagaland during WWII remains limited, the general effects on Naga communities—which

would include groups like the Kacharis—are well recorded. While evidence from scholarly and governmental sources directly mentioning the Kacharis of Nagaland in isolation is limited, it is clear they shared the fate of other Naga groups living at the crossroads of battle. The Second World War was a watershed event that radically altered patterns of life, settlement, economy, and political consciousness for all indigenous peoples of Nagaland, including the Kacharis.

Post-War Policies

As India moved towards independence, the British introduced limited political reforms in Northeast India, allowing for some self-governance. However, the region remained somewhat peripheral to the more significant Indian independence movement, with its unique challenges and aspirations. The legacy of British policies, including the administrative boundaries, economic structures, and social divisions, continued to influence the region even after independence. The integration of Northeast India into the newly independent Indian Union was fraught with challenges, including demands for autonomy, ethnic conflicts, and insurgencies, many of which have roots in the colonial period.

The British policies in Northeast India were primarily driven by strategic and economic interests, focusing on controlling the region and exploiting its resources. The colonial administration’s approach to governance, economic development, and social control profoundly impacted the area, shaping its modern political and economic landscape. These policies' legacy continues to influence Northeast India's dynamics today, contributing to the region's complex and often turbulent history.

British Annexation of the North Eastern States

The British annexation of the northeastern Indian states was a gradual process that unfolded over the 19th century, driven by strategic considerations, military conquests, and economic interests. The region, comprising Assam, Manipur, Tripura, and the tribal areas of the Khasi, Garo, Naga, and Mizo Hills, was characterized by a complex tapestry of independent kingdoms, tribal territories, and small princely states. The British East India Company, and later the British Crown, systematically brought

these diverse regions under their control through treaties, warfare, and diplomatic manoeuvres.

The British interest in Northeast India intensified in the early 19th century due to the region's strategic importance as a frontier against Burma (now Myanmar) and its potential for trade. The First Anglo-Burmese War (1824-1826) was a turning point in the British expansion into Northeast India. The war was partly triggered by Burmese incursions into Assam and Manipur, regions that were already under pressure from internal conflicts and external threats.

The war ended with the Treaty of Yandabo in 1826, which had significant implications for Northeast India. Under the treaty's terms, the Burmese ceded control of Assam, Manipur, Cachar, and the Jaintia Hills to the British. This marked the beginning of British territorial control in the region and laid the groundwork for further annexations.

Following the Treaty of Yandabo, Assam was one of the first areas in Northeast India to come under direct British control. The British dismantled the Ahom monarchy, which had ruled Assam for nearly six centuries, and established their administrative structures in the region. The annexation of Assam was motivated by both strategic and economic considerations. The British were keen to secure their northeastern frontier and recognized Assam's potential for tea cultivation, which would later become a cornerstone of the region's economy.

Expansion into the Hill Regions

The British gradually extended their control into Assam's hill regions, including the Khasi, Garo, and Jaintia Hills. These areas were inhabited by various tribal communities, each with its own distinct culture and political organization. The annexation of these regions was achieved through a combination of treaties, military expeditions, and the establishment of protectorates.

The Khasi Hills were brought under British control following the Anglo-Khasi War (1829-1833), which was triggered by Khasi resistance to British infrastructure projects, particularly the construction of a road connecting the Brahmaputra Valley

with Sylhet. The British eventually defeated the Khasi forces, and the region was annexed.

The Jaintia Kingdom, located south of the Khasi Hills, was annexed in 1835 following a series of conflicts between the British and the Jaintia rulers. The Garo Hills, west of the Khasi Hills, were gradually brought under British administration through military campaigns and treaties.

Manipur, a small kingdom east of Assam, had a complex relationship with the British. Following the Treaty of Yandabo, Manipur became a British protectorate, with the local king allowed to rule under British supervision. However, the kingdom's internal dynamics and strategic location meant that the British often intervened in its affairs. The Anglo-Manipur War of 1891 marked a significant turning point in Manipur's history. The conflict arose from a succession dispute, during which a faction in the Manipur court opposed British influence. The British responded with military force, leading to the capture of Imphal, the capital of Manipur, and the execution of several Manipuri leaders. Following the war, Manipur was brought under direct British control, though it continued to be ruled by a local monarch under British supervision.

The British also extended their influence over other hill regions in Northeast India, including the Naga Hills, Lushai Hills, and the areas inhabited by the Kuki and Mizo tribes. These areas were annexed through a series of military expeditions, treaties, and the establishment of administrative outposts. The Naga Hills, located east of Assam, were brought under British control in the mid-19th century. The British conducted several military expeditions to subdue the Naga tribes, who resisted external interference. By the late 19th century, the British had established a foothold in the region, though many areas remained beyond their effective control. The Lushai Hills, inhabited by the Mizo tribes, were annexed in the late 19th century following two major expeditions (1871-1872 and 1888-1889). The British established administrative control over the region, allowing the Mizo tribes autonomy in their internal affairs.

In 1761, the defiance of Kishen Manik, the succeeding Raja, marked the final phase in the history of the kingdom. On January 20th of the year, Governor Vansittart,

representing the Company embarking on its imperial endeavours, communicated from Calcutta to the president and council of the Factory at Islamabad as follows: “Concerning Tipperah Rajah, as the Nawab’s Foujdar has been compelled to take arms against him due to his misconduct, we request that you make efforts to restore him to proper obedience to the government of Islamabad. Please inform us of any advantages that may arise for the Company from the acquisition of that territory, and we will address any representations made by the Nawab on this matter.”

In compliance with this directive, Mr. Verelst, the chief in Islamabad (Chittagong), dispatched Lieutenant Mathews with 200 sepoys and two artillery pieces to Tipperah, where the Nawab’s Dewan was already engaged with Mahomedan forces. The Dewan reported that he compelled the Rajah to retreat to the mountains and secured control of all forts within his territory. Upon the arrival of our troops, the Rajah immediately surrendered to them. A revenue collector was sent from Chittagong with the mandate to assess the country's resources and request payment for the expedition expenses. The collectors discovered the province devastated by the Nawab’s forces and were obliged to accept payment in instalments due to the Rajah's severe cash shortage. The revenue for the initial year was established at one lakh and one sicca rupees. (Mackenzie, 1979: 271-72)

Kishen Manik, the final raja appointed by the Mughals, passed away in 1780. Rajender Manik, who succeeded him, was invested by the British Government, but not until 1785. Throughout much of his reign, he seems to have encountered significant difficulties. The zamindari was placed under Khas or direct management by the resident. In 1783, the raja was imprisoned in Chittagong on charges of harbouring dacoits, and it was not until 1792 that he was permitted to settle his estate on the plains. From the outset, he remained undisturbed in his control of the hills, where he married a daughter of the Manipur Raja and achieved victory over the outer Kookies who invaded his territory. In his later years, he became devout and created an image composed of eight metals for the shrine of Brindabun. He passed away in 1804, recognised as an ascetic of the highest order. Between 1804 and 1810, the matters concerning hill Tipperah were frequently discussed in both the governmental council chamber and the legal court. The succession was contested, and regarding the

zamindari, the parties involved were directed to the regular courts, while the most powerful seized the highlands, capitalising on the delays inherent in the legal process. (ibid: 273)

British Expansion and Control in the Naga Hills

Following the Treaty of Yandabo in 1826, Assam came under British control, but the treaty failed to clearly define territorial boundaries. The Naga Hills, situated between Assam and Manipur, became strategically significant. Although the British initially sought peaceful relations with the Nagas, resistance ensued. Early efforts to survey and build a route through Naga territory—particularly through Angami and Zeliang areas—were met with hostility, as exemplified by Captain Jenkins' 1832 expedition, which faced both logistical challenges and Naga opposition. Violent encounters, such as the killing of Nagas by modern weaponry, marked these early interactions. Subsequent expeditions, including those led by Lt. Gordon and Raja Gambhir Singh in 1833, encountered similar resistance. As a result, the British abandoned the plan to link Manipur and Assam via the Naga Hills, opting instead to defend the plains and suppress raids through indirect control. Authority to manage Naga incursions was delegated to local rulers like Raja Gambhir Singh, but these efforts proved ineffective. From 1833 to 1840, often referred to as the "period of control from outside," the British conducted punitive expeditions but failed to deter Naga raids. This approach shifted in the late 1840s to a policy of "control from within," involving the establishment of outposts in the hills. However, these also failed—evidenced by the assassination of Superintendent Bhogchand and persistent raids—which led to a period of non-interference beginning in the 1850s due to financial constraints and broader geopolitical tensions. Despite the policy of non-interference, raids escalated, and the Nagas perceived British inaction as weakness. In response, the British implemented limited containment strategies, such as frontier outposts, Kuki settlements, and recruiting Nagas into colonial forces, but these proved inadequate.

By 1866, the British adopted the 'Forward Policy,' formally annexing the Naga Hills and establishing Samaguting as the district headquarters with Lt. Gregory as the first Deputy Commissioner. The government introduced administrative structures,

promoted trade, and encouraged Naga leaders to accept British protection. The region was categorized into three zones: administrative, politically influenced, and unadministered areas, with varying degrees of British oversight. In 1878, the administrative centre moved to Kohima for strategic reasons. Although this transition reduced the frequency of raids, tensions persisted. The killing of three British officers—Captain Butler (1876), Captain Carnegy (Mezoma), and Mr. Damant (1879)—highlighted the volatility. Mr. Damant's death triggered a military campaign against Khonoma, leading to its defeat and the collapse of Angami resistance. This marked the beginning of broader annexation efforts. The Lotha area was annexed in 1885, with a British officer posted in Wokha. The Ao region followed in 1889, with Mokokchung as the administrative center. British influence gradually extended to regions like Zunheboto and Phek, though the Eastern Naga tribes, such as the Konyaks, remained largely outside colonial administration. (Zetsuvi, 2015:55-57)

The initial British expeditions into the Naga Hills during the 19th century were part of a broader strategy to secure the northeastern frontier of colonial India. These expeditions aimed to assert British authority, open trade routes, and contain the autonomous and often resistant Naga tribes. The region's challenging terrain and the Nagas' independent sociopolitical systems posed significant obstacles to colonial expansion. Following the First Anglo-Burmese War (1824–26), British authorities in Assam began engaging with the Nagas, who, during the conflict, provided assistance by disrupting Burmese movements. However, relations deteriorated in 1832 when British forces under Captain Francis Jenkins and Lieutenant Robert Pemberton attempted to establish a communication route between Manipur and Assam through Naga territory. The unified tribal resistance led to the abandonment of this initiative, and subsequent retaliatory attacks by the Nagas escalated, particularly between 1835 and 1838. The British lacked a coherent frontier policy at the time, delegating the responsibility for controlling Naga incursions to local leaders—Tularam Senapati of the Kachari and Gambhir Singh, Raja of Manipur. However, both failed to manage the situation effectively; the former lacked authority, while the latter's harsh measures provoked further hostilities. As a result, the Naga frontier remained volatile, yet the British hesitated to intervene directly. (Barpujari, 1969:369)

As British influence in Assam grew, securing peripheral regions like the Naga Hills became more pressing. The area, bordering Burma, held strategic importance for defence and trade. Early British expeditions aimed to understand the region's geography and tribal dynamics, but progress was hampered by difficult terrain and Naga resistance. The punitive expedition of 1835, launched in response to Angami Naga raids, met with fierce guerrilla tactics and local knowledge that frustrated British efforts. Despite early setbacks, British policy evolved into a strategy combining military action, infrastructure development, and diplomatic engagement. Road construction and improved communication networks facilitated troop movement and trade, integrating the region into the colonial economy. The British adopted a "divide and rule" policy, forging alliances with certain tribes to weaken unified resistance and gradually expand their influence.

By the 1850s, the British had established a more permanent presence in the Naga Hills, incorporating the area into the Assam Province. However, their control remained limited, mostly confined to military outposts. Acknowledging the difficulty of direct rule, the British pursued a system of indirect governance, allowing Nagas to retain traditional systems as long as peace was maintained. Resistance continued throughout the late 19th century. Naga attacks on British outposts underscored the enduring opposition to colonial rule. The fragmented and decentralized nature of Naga society composed of distinct, often competing tribes further complicated British efforts to impose a uniform administrative structure. The need for separate agreements with each tribe undermined any effort to centralize control, leading to a tenuous and uneven colonial presence in the region

Economic Motives and Infrastructure Development

Strategic concerns did not solely drive the British annexation of Northeast India; economic motives also played a significant role. The discovery of Assam's potential for tea cultivation led to the establishment of extensive tea plantations, which became an essential economic enterprise in the region. The British invested in infrastructure development to support the tea industry and other financial activities, including roads, railways, and telecommunication networks. Infrastructure

construction also had strategic implications, as it facilitated the movement of British troops and the maintenance of control over the region. However, these projects often met resistance from local communities, who saw them as encroachments on their land and way of life.

The British annexation of the northeastern Indian states was a complex process that unfolded over several decades, driven by strategic, economic, and administrative objectives. Through treaties, military expeditions, and diplomatic manoeuvres, the British gradually brought the diverse and independent kingdoms and tribal territories of Northeast India under their control. This process of annexation laid the groundwork for the region's integration into British India and profoundly impacted its political, social, and economic landscape. The legacy of British rule continues to influence the region's dynamics and relationships with the rest of India today.

Subsequent to the annexation of Assam in 1826, the British implemented a nearly same approach towards the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh. The Ahoms adopted a policy of reconciliation with the tribes and never contemplated extending their dominion into the hills. David Scott, regarded as the architect of British administration in the North East, advocated for the status quo in interactions with the tribes of Arunachal and others. Over time, for administrative efficiency and the requirements of the burgeoning colonial economy, the necessity for boundary demarcation between Assam and Arunachal Pradesh was acknowledged. Consequently, the entire process of demarcation commenced.

Inner Line Regulation

In 1872-73 the statute 32 and 33 Vic, Cap. 3, which gives a power of summary legislation for backward tracts to the Executive Government was extended to Assam. The first use of the power of summary legislation given by that Act was to pass a regulation for the frontier districts (Mackenzie,1979:55). Regulation I of 1873 (see Appendix 3), called ‘Regulation for the Peace and Good Government of Certain Districts on the Eastern Frontier’ came into operation on 1 November 1873. This became popular as the Inner Line Regulations because of the name given to the line of control by the author of the Act, Sir Arthur Hobhouse, a member of the Viceroy’s

Council. This regulation is also called 'The Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation I of 1873.' According to this Act, which was to be applicable to the districts of Kamrup, Darrang, Nowgong, Sibsagar, Lakhimpur, Garo Hills, Khasi and Jayantiya Hills, Naga Hills, Cachar and Chittagong Hills, a restriction line was laid down to regulate intercourse between the tribesmen and the British subjects in the plains; bordering the hills. This line was called the Inner Line and beyond this no British subject was allowed to enter without a formal pass from the concerned authority. The Regulation laid down that 'any British subject or other person ... who goes beyond the Inner Line ....without a pass, shall be liable on conviction before a magistrate to a fine not exceeding Rs 100 for the first offence and to a fine of not exceeding Rs 500 or to simple or rigorous imprisonment for a term not exceeding three months, or to both for each subsequent offence. 'The Regulation further laid down that, 'any wood, wax, ivory, rubber or any other jungle products found in the possession of any person without permit, may be confiscated to the government.' The Act also prohibited the killing or catching of the wild elephants without a license, and laid restrictions on the possession of land beyond this line, by saying that, 'it shall not be lawful for any British subject, not being native of the district, to acquire any interest in the land or the product of land beyond the Inner Line without sanction of the local government.' The local government, however, was empowered to suspend or alter these restrictions from time to time. It was also made clear that the Government of India was not to be held responsible for the loss of life or property beyond the Inner Line, of those persons who went there without a permit. The Inner Line was notified for Lakhimpur district on 3 September 1875, in accordance with the Regulation of 1873. This Line was initially proposed by Major W. S. Clarke, Commissioner of Lakhimpur district, on 22 May 1875. Later some changes were made on the suggestions of the chief commissioner of Assam. The Government of India, while passing the Regulation of 1873, had suggested to the Government of Bengal that while prescribing the Inner Line, they should see that the line corresponded to the natural features of the country and if there were no such features, it was to coincide with the obligatory points like crossing of a road. The place where a road crossed the line was to be clearly shown on the map and if the area through which it ran had not been mapped, arrangements were to be made for topographical survey as well. If any tea garden was there in the frontier,

it was to be brought within the Inner Line if it was possible to avoid any complications (History of North East India: 104).

Following these suggestions, the Inner Line which was finally drawn up in Lakhimpur was to take the course of the Buri Dihing in the south-eastern sector, as it was a good natural boundary though it kept outside the Inner Line, the coal fields of Tirap and Nandang. The tea gardens of Namsang, Hukanjuri and Taurack, however, were brought within the Inner Line after an agreement with the Namsangia chief. The tea gardens of Joyhing and Harmoti were also brought within the Inner Line. This Inner Line starting from Desang was to go along the Desang River, Namsang River, Boori Dihing, Kherampani, Noa Dihing and up to river Brahmaputra. From the north of Brahmaputra, starting from the boundary of Darrang, it was to go along the Rajgarh Ali, Dihing, Rangnadi, Joyhing tea garden, the Sisi river up to the Dimu guard. From there it was to go to the Puba guard, Lalimukh, Debongmukh up to Debong and Dikrang guard. It terminated on Noa Dihing Mukh in the east (Ibid:105).

Economic aspect aside, the Inner Line saw to it that the tribal remained in primitive conditions and did not allow any social, economic or administrative developments in the region. It served as the hinterland to the colonial economy. The process of modernization was postponed, with the result that till very recently, except for the district headquarters, the people of the state lived as they had been doing for centuries. The process of bringing modern institutions and elements of civilization was thus deliberately delayed by the imposition of this Inner Line. Since no outsider was allowed to cross the Inner Line and settle in the hills and as no effort was undertaken by the government, education could not be spread to the hills which proved to be a great obstacle in the path of progress. As early as 1886, Colonel Hopkinson had clearly stated to the government that the British government had undertaken an obligation to administer and civilize the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh after the annexation of Assam, but the issue was scrupulously avoided as it was to prove very expensive without any economic profit (Ibid:106).

While the stated aim was *"peace and good government,"* the regulation at its core served the colonial interest by ensuring that the resource-rich but difficult-to-

administer tribal areas would remain depopulated and underdeveloped, acting as a buffer for the more economically valuable plains. The flexibility for the government to alter or suspend regulations at will underlines its authoritarian, rather than democratic, intent. Upon critical scrutiny, the Inner Line Regulation, framed as a mechanism for peace and tribal protection, was a tool for colonial control, resource management, and administrative convenience. Its implementation responded more to the needs of the colonial economy and bureaucracy than to any genuine concern for tribal welfare or future development. The deliberate isolation of these areas postponed their socio-economic progress, and this legacy remains evident in present-day disparities and legal exceptionalism in Northeast India.

The British Relationship with the Kachari Tribe

The British relationship with the Kachari tribe evolved from diplomatic engagement to full annexation and integration into the colonial administrative framework. One of the oldest ethnic groups in Northeast India, the Kacharis had established powerful kingdoms in parts of present-day Assam and Nagaland. Their political significance initially prompted the British to engage with them through diplomacy, recognising their influence in the region. However, with the steady consolidation of British power in Assam after the First Anglo-Burmese War (1824–26), this relationship shifted toward colonial control.

British contact with the Kacharis began in the early 19th century, particularly after the Treaty of Yandabo in 1826, which marked the start of British administration in Assam. The Kachari Kingdom, already weakened by internal divisions and external threats—especially from the Ahoms—was in decline. Rather than resorting to immediate conquest, the British initially preferred diplomacy and trade relations.

This changed in 1832, following the assassination of King Gobinda Chandra. The power vacuum allowed the British to annex the remaining Kachari territories, effectively dissolving the kingdom. The capital, Khaspur (now in Cachar district), was incorporated into British India, and the region was reorganised as part of the Assam Province.

Under British rule, the former Kachari territories were absorbed into the Cachar district. New administrative systems were implemented, particularly in land revenue and law enforcement, replacing traditional governance structures. One of the most transformative British policies was the promotion of tea cultivation. Cachar's fertile soil proved ideal for plantations, leading to the establishment of numerous estates. This introduced a large migrant labour force and altered the demographic and economic landscape of the region. Additionally, British policies introduced Western education, Christian missionary activity, and new legal systems. These developments gradually influenced and altered the traditional social and religious practices of the Kachari people.

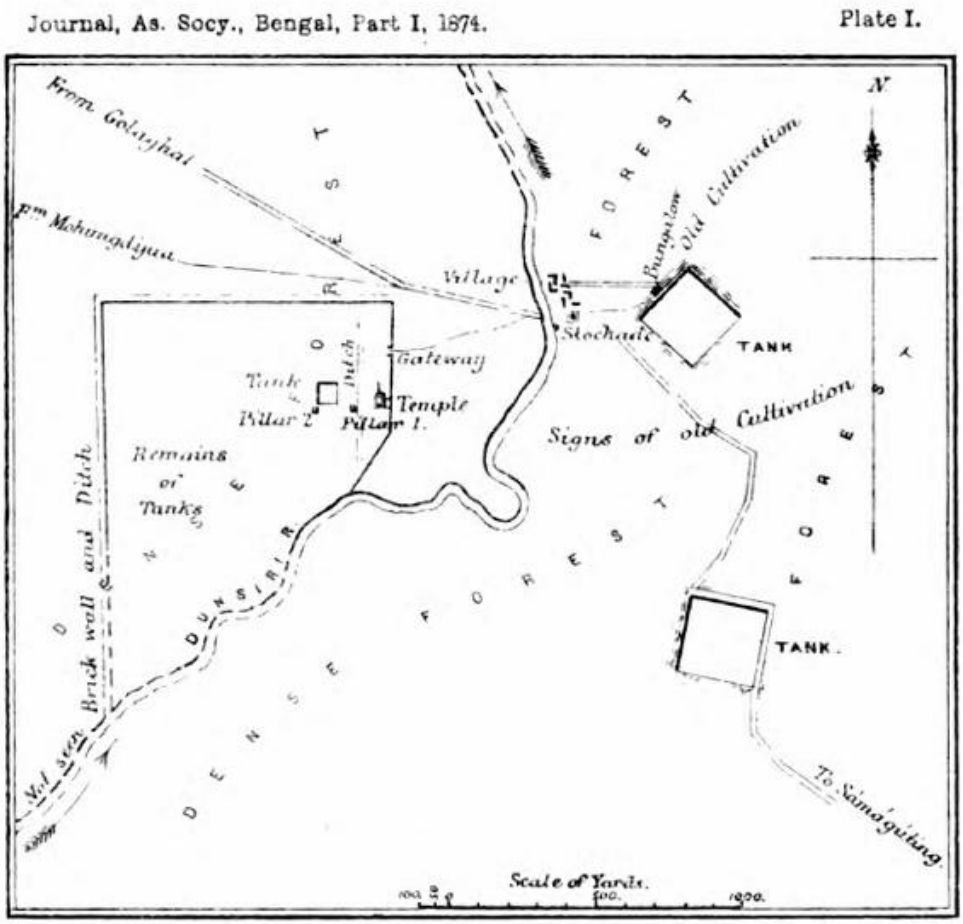
While the Kachari political structure was dismantled, the British allowed a degree of local autonomy, especially in difficult-to-administer hill regions. Some resistance emerged in response to land alienation and new taxation systems, particularly as Kachari land was converted for plantation use. However, these uprisings were mostly localised and did not develop into a large-scale rebellion. Over time, certain Kachari elites adapted to the new colonial order, participating in administration and education. The British strategically co-opted local leaders, using them as intermediaries a common tactic to maintain stability and extend influence.

Dimapur During British Rule

Dimapur, once the capital of the Kachari Kingdom, retained its cultural and historical importance even after the capital was moved to Maibang. Though politically diminished, its strategic location along the Dhansiri River made it valuable to British interests. During the British period, Dimapur emerged as a key logistical hub, linking Assam, Manipur, and the Naga Hills.

The British expanded road and communication infrastructure in the city, facilitating trade, military operations, and resource extraction—especially timber. The Dhansiri River enabled the transport of goods, positioning Dimapur as an important center in the colonial economy. While British rule largely followed a policy of indirect administration in Dimapur and the surrounding Naga areas, the influx of migrants and economic changes led to shifts in traditional ways of life.

While many in India seem to think of Dimapur as a remote place, historians of World War II know it as an important strategic location. It was the main supply depot for the British 14th Army in its war with the Japanese. That is why capturing Dimapur was an important strategic goal for the Japanese. What made Dimapur so strategic was its railhead. The same railhead made Dimapur strategically important in the last World War. Even today, the railhead gives Dimapur its special economic niche. (http://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/reimagining-dimapur/)



PLAN OF DIMAPUR

on the Dunsiri River, ASSAM.

Fig 19: A 'Plan of Dimapur' drawn by Major Godwin Austen.

World War II and the Kachari Tribe

World War II had a profound impact on the Kachari people and the broader Northeast region. With the Japanese invasion of Burma in 1942, Northeast India became a frontline of the Allied campaign. The construction of the Stilwell (Ledo) Road and other infrastructure projects brought large-scale militarisation and demanded substantial local labour, disrupting traditional economic practices and community life.

The war caused widespread displacement as villages faced threats from both Japanese incursions and Allied military requisitions. Agricultural routines were disrupted, land was commandeered for military purposes, and inflation and food shortages intensified economic hardship.

At the time when the Second World War broke out, Assam province did not have any regular infantry regiment of her own. The tribal people from Assam like the Kacharis, Kukis, Lushais, Nagas and other tribes from Assam and the Gurkhas had rendered many years of services in the Assam Frontier Corps police- Assam Rifles (Metha, 2018: 134)

The social impact was equally significant. The influx of Allied personnel, labourers, and new ideas introduced changes to Kachari society. While some aspects such as exposure to new technologies and markets presented opportunities, they also challenged traditional customs and disrupted social cohesion. Communities that were relocated or devastated by the conflict experienced long-term psychological and structural disruption.

The war accelerated the integration of the Kachari people into modern administrative and economic systems but also deepened their marginalisation. Traditional governance eroded further, and the post-war period saw increased incorporation of indigenous communities into broader Indian state structures. British and wartime legacies including infrastructure, administrative norms, and economic dependencies continue to shape the region today.

The experience of World War II also laid the groundwork for post-independence tensions, including ethnic and insurgent movements. The challenges

faced by the Kachari people during this period influenced their later interactions with the Indian state and shaped their socio-political aspirations. The British relationship with the Kachari tribe evolved from cautious diplomacy to outright annexation and colonial integration. While British rule brought about economic changes, infrastructure development, and new institutions, it also disrupted traditional life and diminished indigenous autonomy. Dimapur, as a symbolic and strategic location, mirrored these broader transformations. The added impact of World War II further accelerated change, leaving a lasting legacy on the Kachari people and their role within Northeast India's evolving political and cultural landscape

Tularam Senapati and His Territory: A Historical Overview

Tularam Senapati is a figure who stands out in the annals of Indian history, particularly in the context of the 19th-century resistance against British colonial rule. His life and actions are emblematic of the larger struggle against colonial domination, and his territory, situated in the region now known as Assam in northeastern India, plays a critical role in understanding his historical significance. Tularam Senapati was born in the early 19th century in a region that was then part of the princely state of Assam in northeastern India. Little is known about his early life, but his later actions suggest a background steeped in local governance and military strategy.

Tularam's father was a 'Khidmuitgat' in the service of Raja Krishnachandra. Kohidan, married Ratnamala, a Manipuri 'slave girl' and through her Tularam was born. Whatever the parentage, Tularam and his kinsmen claim that they were descended from Tamradhwaj. That Tularam had some relationship with the ruling family of Cachar even the official sources who were hostile to Tularam could not deny. Worthy son of worthy father, Tularam by his martial qualities drew to the early notices of Krishna- Chandra who appointed him martial qualities drew the early notice of Krishnachandra who appointed him 'Ummuldar' in a crop's artillery. During the time of his successor Gobindchandra Tularam was given the command of a crop of foot-soldiers known as 'Chandy Palton'. Here, however, he was not destined to remain for long. He joined his father who endeavoured to form an independent principality of his own in the hilly areas of the northern part of Cachar. But the Raja succeeded in putting

Kohi Don to death, whereupon Tularam continued the rebellion; he joined the Burmese in their invasion of Cachar. His success against the Raja deprived the latter of his northern hills where the former was able to maintain himself independently against every attempt of Gobind Chandra to reconquer it. (Barujari, 1975: 431-432)

Assam in the 19th century was a nexus of various socio-political and cultural forces, influenced by both internal conflicts and external pressures. During this period, Assam was under the rule of the Ahom dynasty, which had been established in the 13th century but gradually weakened due to internal strife and external invasions. By the early 19th century, the British East India Company expanded its influence across India, including the northeastern regions. The British colonial strategy in Assam involved a combination of diplomacy and military might, seeking to integrate the region into its broader administrative framework. This often led to conflicts with local rulers and resistance movements.

Tularam Senapati emerged as a prominent leader in the resistance against British colonial rule. His leadership was crucial in mobilizing local forces and organizing resistance efforts. His military acumen and strategic insights were instrumental in challenging the British advance and defending his territory against colonial incursions. Senapati's resistance was not just a military campaign but also a reflection of the broader struggle for autonomy and self-determination by the people of Assam. He was known for his ability to unite various factions within the region, including local rulers, tribal groups, and common people, to present a cohesive front against the British.

Senapati's geographical and cultural diversity characterized the territory under its influence. Assam's landscape, marked by lush forests, river valleys, and hilly terrain, presented opportunities and challenges for military engagements. The region's socio-political structure was also complex, with various ethnic groups, each with its traditions and governance systems. Senapati's control over this territory was defined by his ability to navigate these complexities. He utilized the natural landscape to his advantage, employing guerrilla tactics and leveraging local knowledge to resist the

better-equipped British forces. His leadership was marked by a deep understanding of the terrain and the people, crucial in mounting an effective resistance.

Tularam Senapati's legacy is multifaceted. He is remembered as a symbol of resistance and resilience in the face of colonial oppression. His efforts contributed to the larger narrative of Indian resistance against British rule, highlighting the regional dimensions of the struggle for independence. In addition to his role as a military leader, Senapati's resistance underscored the importance of local leadership and regional autonomy in the broader context of national liberation. His ability to galvanize support and lead a diverse coalition of forces demonstrates the complexities and nuances of anti-colonial movements in different parts of India. Tularam Senapati's life and actions offer valuable insights into the resistance movements that shaped India's struggle for independence. His leadership in Assam, a region with unique geographical and cultural characteristics, reflects the broader dynamics of colonial resistance. As history continues to be re-evaluated and reinterpreted, figures like Tularam Senapati remind us of the diverse and localized efforts that collectively contributed to the larger narrative of freedom and self-determination. His legacy is a testament to the resilience and courage of those who stood against colonial domination and fought for their land and people.

By a treaty executed with Tularam in November 1834, he was allowed to retain the tract on the east, bounded on the south by the Mahur river and the Naga Hills, on the west by the Dóyang, on the east by the Dhansiri and on the north by the Jamuna and Dayang. For this Tularam agreed to pay a tribute of four pairs elephant's tusks annually, which was later commuted to a money payment of Rs. 490 a year.

The vacillation on the part of the British authority encouraged the Angami Nagas to wanton acts of aggression on the peaceful population of North Cachar. In fact, the situation deteriorated to such an extent that in 1839, in spite of the continued Burmese threat, the expedition against the Angamis formerly approved of by the Government of India was now authorised to be undertaken. Accordingly, Mr. Grange, Sub Assistant Commissioner of Nowgong, led an expedition into the Angami hills in January, 1839. 12 After a second expedition under the same officer next year, the Naga

Hills were visited respectively by Captains Bigge, Eld and Butler. In fact, since 1839 annual expeditions under a European officer became a permanent feature till 1846 when the last-named officer established a post at Samaguting (Chumukedima) under a native Daroga Bhogchand by name. (Barpujari, 1975: 434)

Agreeing with the views of the local authorities that "the country under its present administration is a serious obstacle to the settlement of the Naga territory, Hills recommended to the Government that" there is nothing left for it but to interfere and resume the country. Lord Dalhousie, in his minutes dated 27 August 1853 desired the Government of India to resume Tularam's territory as its occupation seemed to him a less objectionable alternative than letting it alone". Accordingly, the territory of Tularam was annexed to North Cachar by a proclamation issued by Bivar on 3 December, 1853, after intelligence was conveyed to the Nagas through the Subedar Commanding the Post of Dimapur. In accordance with the instructions of the Government, the remaining heirs of Tularam were granted annual pensions in cash, besides rent-free lands at Mohong Dijua during their lives.

The resumption of Tularam's territory not only marked the end of the rule of an independent hill chief but the culmination of an imperialistic game pursued for years. In 1829, when the British found that Tularam had already established his mastery as an independent chief over the warlike tribes in the impenetrable hills, the geography and resources of which were unknown, they considered it expedient to accept it as an accomplished fact. Since however, conditions have changed and instead of being a potential strength and a bulwark against the Nagas, "Tularam's territory" had become a source of danger and constant embarrassment to the British authorities". Under such circumstances the existence of an independent principality with doubtful loyalty to the paramount power became an anathema. Besides Tularam's successors could neither extricate themselves from their powerful ally the British Government with their own might nor reassert their position with the aid of any other power. All these rendered inevitable the take-over of Tularam's territory. (Barujari, 1975: 442)

The British colonization of the Naga Hills and adjoining regions profoundly transformed the socio-political and economic fabric of Northeast India. Initially

guided by strategic and economic interests, British policies gradually transitioned from indirect engagement to direct control, often enforced through military expeditions and administrative reorganization. Through instruments such as the Inner Line Regulation and the divide-and-rule strategy, colonial authorities reshaped indigenous governance systems and restricted regional integration. The annexation of Kachari territories and the decline of figures like Tularam Senapati signalled the end of local autonomy and the absorption of traditional polities into the colonial framework. While infrastructure development and resource exploitation advanced under British rule, they simultaneously disrupted traditional livelihoods and introduced long-term structural imbalances. The legacy of these colonial interventions continues to influence the region's political dynamics, identity assertions, and developmental challenges in post-independence India.

CHAPTER 5

POLITICAL AND SOCIAL LIFE AFTER THE FORMATION OF NAGALAND STATE

The formation of Nagaland as a state in India on December 1, 1963, was a significant milestone in the political and social history of the region. Emerging from decades of ethnic strife, insurgency, and political agitation, the creation of Nagaland marked a new chapter in the lives of the Naga people, promising both opportunities and challenges. This essay explores the evolution of political and social life in Nagaland post-statehood, examining the developments, achievements, and ongoing issues that have shaped the state's trajectory.

Since gaining statehood, Nagaland's political landscape has been shaped by intricate local, regional, and national interactions. The creation of the state aimed to address the Naga people's aspirations for self-determination and autonomy. At the outset, the political scene was focused on establishing governance structures and uniting the various Naga tribes within a single administrative framework. One of Nagaland's primary challenges since 1963 has been attaining political stability. The initial years of statehood experienced considerable political turmoil and insurgencies, primarily fueled by factions unhappy with the political system and those still advocating for an independent Naga state. The intervention of the central government and efforts at peace negotiations were essential in tackling these challenges. Gradually, the state began to stabilize, focusing on governance reforms, infrastructure advancements, and economic development. Even after the state's official establishment, calls for enhanced autonomy and secession continued to shape Nagaland’s political environment. Various insurgent factions, like the Nationalist Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN), have been pivotal in seeking a more autonomous setup. Discussions between these groups and the Indian government have resulted in several agreements, including the Framework Agreement of 2015, which aims to resolve longstanding grievances and aspirations. Regional parties, particularly the Naga People’s Front (NPF) and the Indian National Congress (INC), have

predominantly shaped Nagaland's political landscape. Coalition politics plays a crucial role in influencing the state's governance. Elections have consistently showcased high political engagement and competition, underscoring the region's robust democratic spirit.

The social life in Nagaland has experienced notable transformations since the formation of the state. These changes not only reflect the progress achieved in various sectors but also highlight the persistent challenges affecting the lives of its residents. The establishment of Nagaland represented a significant milestone in the preservation and promotion of Naga cultural identity. The state has proactively endeavored to celebrate its rich cultural heritage through festivals, traditional practices, and the promotion of indigenous arts and crafts. Institutions such as the Nagaland State Museum have played pivotal roles in this endeavor. Nevertheless, the challenge of balancing modernity with traditional values remains an ongoing concern. Since attaining statehood, Nagaland has made commendable advances in enhancing its educational and healthcare infrastructure. The creation of new educational establishments and healthcare facilities has contributed to improved literacy rates and health outcomes. However, issues such as insufficient infrastructure, particularly in rural regions, and a shortage of qualified personnel persist. Economic development has been a primary focus for Nagaland, with efforts directed towards strengthening agriculture, tourism, and small-scale industries. The unique geographical location and abundant natural resources of the state offer substantial opportunities for growth. Nonetheless, Nagaland continues to confront economic challenges, including limited industrialization and dependence on central government subsidies. Despite the advancements made, Nagaland faces several social issues, including inter-tribal tensions, gender inequality, and socio-economic disparities. Efforts to address these challenges involve community initiatives, government programs, and the engagement of non-governmental organizations. The promotion of social cohesion remains a critical area of focus as the state aims to foster unity among its diverse ethnic groups.

The establishment of Nagaland as a state constituted a transformative event in the political and social landscape of the region. Over the decades, Nagaland has

navigated a complex trajectory characterized by both achievements and challenges. Politically, the state has sought stability and effective governance amidst ongoing demands for autonomy and peace negotiations. Socially, while there have been significant advancements in cultural preservation, education, and healthcare, challenges such as economic development and social issues continue to influence the state's progress.

As Nagaland progresses, its future will likely be determined by how effectively it confronts these challenges while capitalizing on its unique strengths. The post-statehood journey of Nagaland reflects broader themes of identity, governance, and development that resonate across numerous regions with similar histories and aspirations.

Indian Independence

India’s struggle for independence from British colonial rule culminated in 1947 with the partition of the subcontinent into India and Pakistan. The independence movement, spearheaded by prominent figures such as Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, and Sardar Patel, was characterized by a pursuit of self-determination, sovereignty, and the establishment of a unified nation-state. Nonetheless, the partition bequeathed a legacy of regional and ethnic tensions, further aggravated by the integration of princely states and the delineation of new administrative boundaries.

In regions such as Nagaland, which possess distinct ethnic identities and historical grievances, the transition from colonial rule to inclusion within a newly independent India was replete with challenges. The Naga people, endowed with unique cultural and political aspirations, were particularly impacted by the overarching context of Indian independence and the ensuing integration process.

During the Indian independence in 1947, Nagaland, previously referred to as the Naga Hills district, was incorporated inside the province of Assam. The political situation in Nagaland was markedly different from that of the rest of the country. The Naga National Council (NNC), founded in 1946, proclaimed a distinct identity and articulated a yearning for self-determination. On 14 August 1947, one day prior to

India's independence, the Naga National Council, led by Angami Zapu Phizo, symbolically proclaimed Naga independence and communicated this to the British, Indian authorities, and the United Nations.

Political Situation of the Naga Hills After Indian Independence

The political landscape in the Naga Hills post-Indian independence has been characterized by considerable challenges and complexities. The transition from British colonial governance to Indian sovereignty resulted in profound changes for the Naga populace, which confronted a unique array of issues rooted in their distinct ethnic identity and aspirations for self-determination. A comprehensive understanding of the political developments in the Naga Hills during this period necessitates an examination of the historical context, the emergence of insurgent movements, and the subsequent initiatives by the Indian government to address these matters.

Prior to Indian independence, the Naga Hills formed part of British India's administrative framework but retained significant autonomy under British governance. The Naga community experienced limited interactions with the colonial administration and enjoyed a certain degree of self-governance through traditional village councils. The cessation of British rule in 1947 marked a pivotal shift, as the Naga Hills, akin to other regions, were incorporated into the newly independent Indian Union.

The integration of the Naga Hills into the Indian territory was imbued with tension. The Naga National Council (NNC), spearheaded by A.Z. Phizo, emerged as a notable political organization during this era, advocating for greater autonomy or outright independence from India. The demands put forth by the NNC were propelled by a myriad of factors, including the desire to safeguard Naga cultural identity and discontent with the integration process. Negotiations for accommodation culminated in a nine-point accord with Akbar Hydari, the Governor of Assam, which conferred to the Nagas judicial, legislative, and executive autonomy for a decade, after which their constitutional status would be reassessed. Nonetheless, divergent interpretations and increasing distrust resulted in the dissolution of this agreement. The NNC declined to

join the Indian Union outright and abstained from following political activities, including the inaugural Indian general elections.

The Path to Statehood

The Naga populace, represented by organizations such as the Naga National Council (NNC), articulated their dissatisfaction with their incorporation into Assam and commenced advocacy for enhanced autonomy or outright independence. The NNC's concerted efforts for self-determination and the ensuing insurgency underscored the necessity for a political resolution that appropriately addressed the unique identity and aspirations of the Naga community. By the late 1940s and early 1950s, the demand for sovereignty intensified. In 1951, the NNC asserted that a plebiscite indicated substantial backing for independence, a conclusion not acknowledged by the Indian government. This established the foundation for ensuing rebellion, civil disobedience, and ultimately armed confrontation beginning in the 1950s. The time surrounding independence initiated prolonged political turmoil in Nagaland, stemming from a distinct ethnic identity, profound distrust of external governance, and an early pursuit of sovereignty, which would influence the region's development for decades.

In light of these demands and the persistent insurgency, the Government of India undertook negotiations with Naga leaders. This deliberative process culminated in the establishment of Nagaland as an autonomous state on 1 December 1963. The newly formed state was delineated from the Naga Hills and neighboring regions of Assam and is intended to afford a specific level of self-governance within the framework of the Indian Union. The incorporation of Dimapur—previously part of the Naga Hills district—into this new state represented a significant element of the political reorganization.

The Naga insurgency gained momentum in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Initially, the NNC sought a peaceful resolution; however, as negotiations with the Indian government failed to satisfy their demands, they resorted to armed struggle. The insurgency was marked by numerous violent confrontations between insurgent

factions and Indian security forces. The declaration of independence by the NNC in 1950 was not recognized by the Indian government, leading to an increased military presence and counter-insurgency operations in the region. In a bid to address the ongoing conflict, the Indian government engaged in negotiations to tackle Naga grievances. The Shillong Accord of 1975 (see Appendix 4) represented a significant attempt to reach a compromise. While the Accord acknowledged some of the Naga demands for enhanced autonomy, it did not entirely satisfy the insurgent factions, resulting in continued unrest and the formation of new groups. The Naga insurgency was not a unified movement; it exhibited significant fragmentation and the emergence of various factions, including the Nationalist Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN), which progressively divided into different groups. These factions harbored divergent perspectives on the extent of autonomy and the approach to attaining their objectives, thereby complicating conflict resolution efforts.

Efforts Towards Political Resolution

The establishment of Nagaland as a state in 1963 constituted a significant political advancement aimed at addressing some of the Naga people's demands. The newly formed state was intended to provide a degree of self-governance within the Indian Union. This attainment of statehood was perceived as a compromise to incorporate the Naga Hills into India while acknowledging their distinctive identity. However, this transition did not fully quell insurgency nor address all grievances. Over the ensuing decades, various agreements and negotiations have been initiated to address the Naga issue. The Indian government and Naga leaders have participated in multiple rounds of discussions, culminating in numerous accords designed to address issues of autonomy and political representation. The Framework Agreement of 2015 between the Indian government and the NSCN (IM) stands out as a notable development, signifying a potential pathway towards a more comprehensive resolution. In recent years, there has been an increased emphasis on peacebuilding and reconciliation initiatives. Efforts aimed at fostering dialogue among diverse Naga factions, as well as between the government and insurgent groups, have been instrumental in advancing towards a peaceful resolution. Additionally, the Indian

government has made investments in infrastructure and development projects in Nagaland to bolster socio-economic progress and stability.

The political environment in the Naga Hills following Indian independence has been shaped by a complex interplay of historical grievances, insurgency, and attempts at resolution. The transition from colonial rule to inclusion in the Indian Union presented substantial challenges, particularly for the Naga population, who endeavored to preserve their unique identity while navigating the new political terrain. The rise of insurgency and subsequent efforts towards political resolution underscore the difficulties associated with balancing regional aspirations alongside national integration. The creation of Nagaland as a state in 1963 was a pivotal step in addressing some of these challenges; however, it merely represents a segment of a broader, ongoing process of negotiation and reconciliation.

As Nagaland strives towards enduring peace and stability, grasping the historical context and the evolution of its political climate remains imperative. The region's progression exemplifies overarching themes of identity, autonomy, and governance that resonate throughout various regions sharing analogous historical contexts and aspirations.

A Sketch of Dimapur and its Surroundings by Johnstone

Major-General Sir James Johnstone gave a detailed description of Dimapur and its surroundings in his book titled *Manipur and the Naga Hills* (2002, Indian edition) which, which gives us a glimpse of the region during that period. Below is a n excerpt from his work:

> "The region surrounding Dimapur is exceptionally affluent and exhibits signs of dense habitation throughout. It is well equipped with artificially constructed square tanks, some significantly larger than the previously mentioned one. We crossed to the opposite bank of the river to reach our designated stopping point, where the remnants of an ancient fortified city can be observed. Mounds filled with wheel-made broken pottery are prevalent, although the neighbouring tribes have long since forgotten its usage. During that period, Dimapur was

home to three or four government elephants and a few shops operated by "Khyahs," an enterprising community of merchants from Western India. The dilapidated city warrants detailed description. Originally, it was encircled by robust brick walls, measuring twelve feet in height and six feet in thickness, composed of bricks that were exceptionally well-crafted and fired. The walls enclosed an area of seven hundred square yards; entry was gained through a Gothic archway, with a gap in the wall nearby purportedly created for cattle access. Inside, there were tanks, some lined with brick walls, complete with brick steps descending to the water. Despite a thorough exploration of the interior, I found no additional traces of brickwork aside from a possible platform; however, I did discover one or two sacrificial stones intended for offerings of flowers, water, and oil. One segment of the outer wall had been eroded by the river. The enclosed area is now overgrown with forest. Adjacent to the gateway stand several massive monoliths, one reaching an impressive height of eighteen feet. All are adorned with intricate carvings, and some feature deep grooves at the top, seemingly designed to accommodate beams. It is challenging to speculate on their original purpose and transportation, given that the nearest rocks from which they could have been hewn are located at least ten miles away. If the Assam-Bengal Railway proceeds as planned near Dimapur, it is highly likely that this intriguing ancient city wall will soon be quarried for railway construction, leaving no trace of its existence. Such is the lament of vandalism! Historical records provide limited information on the origins of Dimapur, yet it was likely once a hub of Cacharee civilization. As the Angami Nagas advanced, the city wall was erected to provide refuge against unexpected incursions. It offers a peculiar sight to witness the remnants of a forgotten civilization nestled within a pathless forest." (Johnstone, 2002: 29-30)

"My initial assessments of Samagudting were far from favourable. It was decidedly a temporary settlement. The location had intermittently served as a small outpost from 1846 to 1851, yet it was never suitable for a permanent detachment exceeding twenty-five personnel due to inadequate water supply.

There were no springs, and only a handful of water holes, reliant entirely on inconsistent rainfall. A small tank was constructed, though it was situated 500 feet below the summit, resulting in exorbitant water prices. Food items were scarce, expensive, and of inferior quality; firewood was prohibitively costly, and to compound matters, the locality posed health risks and was perpetually shrouded in fog." (Ibid: 33)

"We arrived at Samagudting on January 23, 1874, and by early February, we felt like seasoned residents; hill walking no longer exhausted me, and we had established acquaintances with all the Nagas in the village as well as others. We enjoyed amicable relations with "Jatsole," the chief of Samagudting, a sagacious and far-sighted individual with considerable strength of character. I have previously referenced the Burrail range and the valley that divides us. In addition to Samagudting, there were two other villages on our side: Sitekima, situated on the opposite bank of the Diphoo Panee Gorge, and Tesephima, located on the outer spurs of Samagudting. While I refer to it as Samagudting, it has become the prevalent designation; however, to be precise, it should be known as Chumookodima." (Ibid: 37)

The juxtaposition of Dimapur and Samagudting in Johnstone's account offers a nuanced lens through which to interrogate the layered histories and socio-cultural dynamics of Northeast India during the colonial period. This critical overview underscores the complexity of interpreting archaeological vestiges and colonial encounters, drawing on the detailed observations rendered in the primary source.

Dimapur is rendered as the locus of a sophisticated, urbanized civilization evidenced by monumental brick fortifications, engineered tanks, and monolithic structures yet one whose origins and cultural memory have faded from local consciousness. The text highlights not only the city's architectural grandeur but also its function as a commercial hub, frequented by itinerant merchants ("Khyahs") and serving the colonial regime's logistical needs (e.g., government elephants). The lost knowledge of wheel-made pottery and the mysterious function of the monoliths evoke deep historical discontinuities: the present is materially haunted by the achievements

of the past, but remains uncoupled from its legacies, signalling both a rupture in oral tradition and the limitations of historical record-keeping.

Taking a critical stance, one must recognize how natural forces (river erosion) and colonial "progress" (railway construction) are implicated in tangible heritage loss. Johnstone's lament over the potential destruction of the city's remnants is emblematic of a broader pattern wherein economic modernization, under the aegis of empire, superseded archaeological preservation. The "vandalism" he decries is not merely physical but epistemic: obliterating opportunities for future historical or anthropological inquiry into the region's enigmatic past.

Dimapur: How it Became Part of Nagaland

Dimapur, a city of strategic significance located in Nagaland, India, occupies a complex and pivotal role within the historical and political context of the region. Its incorporation into Nagaland was shaped by an array of historical, geographical, and political factors, which exemplify the broader challenges associated with the integration of diverse and historically distinct regions into the Indian Union. This essay aims to examine the processes and significance surrounding Dimapur's inclusion in Nagaland, tracing the historical context, the influences of colonial and post-colonial policies, and the consequent implications for the region's political and social development.

During the British colonial period, Dimapur was situated within the broader Naga Hills district. It functioned as a pivotal administrative and commercial center due to its strategic location along key trade routes and its accessibility from the plains of Assam. The city acted as a crucial gateway to the Naga Hills and played an essential role in facilitating trade and communication between the Naga tribes and the remainder of British India. In the aftermath of Indian independence in 1947, the newly constituted Indian Union encountered the challenge of integrating various regions characterized by diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds. The Naga Hills, encompassing Dimapur, were assimilated into the Indian state of Assam. This arrangement was a component of the wider endeavor to incorporate princely states and

tribal regions into the Indian Union, yet it failed to fully accommodate the aspirations of the Naga people for enhanced autonomy or self-determination.

The inclusion of Dimapur in the state of Nagaland represents not merely a political decision but also an acknowledgment of its strategic significance. As the largest city in Nagaland, Dimapur serves as a pivotal economic and transportation nexus, playing an indispensable role in the development of the state. Its geographical positioning facilitates essential connectivity between Nagaland and the broader Indian subcontinent, thereby establishing it as a crucial center for trade, commerce, and administrative affairs. Following the establishment of Nagaland, Dimapur was assimilated into the administrative framework of the newly formed state. This initiative sought to consolidate the Naga Hills region while addressing exigent demands for enhanced local governance. The status of Dimapur as a commercial hub was regarded as a valuable asset for the nascent state, significantly contributing to its economic growth and overall development.

The incorporation of Dimapur into the state of Nagaland represented a significant milestone in the political and historical development of the region. The city's strategic importance, coupled with the aspirations of the Naga people for autonomy and self-determination, played a critical role in its assimilation into the newly established state of Nagaland. As the largest city within Nagaland and an essential economic hub, Dimapur has significantly contributed to the state's progress, while simultaneously navigating the complexities associated with regional integration and social cohesion. The integration of Dimapur into Nagaland exemplifies the broader challenges inherent in reconciling regional aspirations with national integration, and its historical narrative underscores the interaction between political decisions and socio-economic development within the framework of post-colonial India.

Brief History of Kachari Villages in Nagaland

Dimapur represents a relic of an advanced, yet vanished civilization, marked by enduring ruins and mysteries. Historical evidences testify that during the 13th Century AD the Kachari kingdom with its capital at Hidimbapur (Dimapur) under the kingship of Dimasa royal clans which Dr. Hamilton termed as the Kachari aristocracy

extended to the southern bank of the Brahmaputra, to the west Kallang River and to the east Dikhow river including the whole of Dhansiri Valley. The Kachari villages are presently in the two districts of Nagaland – Dimapur and the newly created Chumoukedima.

Amaluma

Amaluma village with the rest of the Dimasa villages formed an integral part of the great Kachari kingdom during the medieval period of history. However, during an unprecedented transitional period dation back to the 16th century AD, when the Dimasa king deserted Dimapur and shifted to Maibang to the present Dima Hasao District of Assam, a bulk of Agrarian population could not follow the king and shifted their dwellings in different directions. During the later part of the 19th century and the early part of the 20th century, the decendants of this section of the people re-established their villages in various parts of Dhansiri valley, including Dimapur, presently a district of Nagaland state.

Amaluma village was established in 1917 and is an offshoot village of Dhansiripar (Maibiram). The origin of the word Amaluma is ambiguous but the meaning of the word Amaluma in Dimasa dialect means ‘my mother will spin’. Perhaps it may so happen death early dimasa who settled by the riverbank of this Amaluma might have planted cotton plants and spun the threads to weave the clothes and thereby assumed significant tradition of naming Amaluma for both the village and the river flowing through it.

In early 1917, a contingent commanded by Aporsing Nunisa departed from Dhansiripar village and founded a distinct settlement named Amaluma at the junction of the Amaluma and Dhansiri rivers. Upon reaching old age, Late Aporsing Nunisa's son-in-law, the late Dikawram Jidung, was appointed the Gaon Bura of Amaluma village in 1918 by the customary assembly representing the male and female clans of Dimasa. At that time, the Deputy Commissioner of the Naga Hills, J.H. Hutton, acknowledged the Amaluma settlement. In the late 1930s, Late Kamuni Haflongbar, the ten GB of Amaluma village, guided the residents to the upper reaches of the Amaluma River, where they established their settlement on the western bank. Under

the leadership of the late Dibison Thaosen, the villagers dispersed because of the ongoing Naga political movements. In 1955, the late Jonomoni Jidung reassembled these villagers on the eastern bank of the Amaluma River. (Map 4)

Bamunpukhuri A

Bamunpukhuri A village was established in the year 1965. It is an offshoot of the Darogajan village. The early settlers of the village belong to the Daroga Jan Village who decided to establish a separate village in the room and fallow lands of their own. In later years more people joined the village the neighbouring villages including the Kacharis of Kushiabill village. It may be mentioned that since the village was carved out of Darogajan village 3 years after 1963, the year of declaration of Nagaland state, all the eligible voters of that period were listed under Darogajan village. One of the first settlers of the village Lt. Gurkhasing Difoe was appointed as the first GB of the village in the year 1980. During the re settlement exercise of Dimapur Mauza No.3 in 1971-72, because of its largeness, the area was divided into two separate blocks Bamunpukhuri A and B for survey convenience which later on separated into two sperate villages i.e. Bamunpukhuri-A and Bamunpukhuri-B. (Map 5)

Bamunpukhuri B

Bamanpukhuri Dimasa Kachari traditional village was established in 1943. The village was established following the Dimasa Kachari customary practises and usages. In 1939 a group of like-minded members led by Ringjan Borman and three others moved out of the parent village Darogajan toward the East for Jhoom cultivation by clearing the jungle and when they found the land suitable for Jhum as well as wet cultivation they preferred to settle down their permanently. The name derives from the word 'Bawanpukhuri' which is 52 Ponds Dug by the Kachari king as one of the ponds was dug in the Bamanpukhuri area the settlers of Bawan Pukhuri referred to the name of the village as Bamunpukhuri village.

The government notification dated 17th September 1960 issued by His Excellency the Governor of Assam with regard to the deforestation of Dimapur Mouza No.3 was served by the then Assistant Commissioner to Ringjan Bormon (Daulaguphu) the then GB of Bamunpukhuri. On 29th November, 1960 the village

authority of Bamanpukhuri Village submitted an application to the Assistant Commissioner Dimapur with a request to issue a formal appointment, Late Ringjan Bormon as the GB of the village. In pursuance of government order No. 11/ LR/ 4/ REV / 62. DC dated Dimapur the 24th May / 1960 the Assistant Commissioner, Dimapur, Director to Old GBS to collect house taxes from their respective villages. The GB of Bamanpukri Village was also permitted to implement the aforesaid government order. (Map 6)

Darogajan

Darogajan village, originally known as Darogadisa, is located on the east bank of the Dhansiri River. It was founded in 1890 by a group of Dimasa people led by Doyaram Khemprai. The village's name derives from a small stream called Daroga Disa (currently referred to as Darogajan), which flows into the Dhansiri River. This stream is said to have been named after an extraordinary strongman named Darogaram, who lived in the vicinity of Samaguting (present-day Chümoukedima) and tended to paddy fields on both sides of the stream originating from the area near the present Nagaland Bamboo Research Centre, previously known as the sugar mill area.

In later years, segments of Garo and Kachari people established a village near Darogaram's paddy field, and it became known as Darogapathar, meaning "the field of Darogaram." This stream passes through several villages before joining the Dhansiri River at the southern edge of Darogajan village. Initially, the founders of the village settled in the middle ridge of the Daroga Disa Stream. However, due to persistent waterlogging during the rainy season, they later relocated to the lower reaches of the stream where it merges with the Dhansiri River. As previously noted, Darogajan was originally called Daroga Disa, derived from the combination of two words: Darogaram and Disa, which means "stream."

It is worth mentioning that during the first survey of the area in 1936, the British government employed Assamese surveyors who often modified or changed the names of villages and areas to better align with the Assamese language. In Assamese, "*disa*" (stream) translates to "*jan*," resulting in the transformation of Disa to Jan, and

thus the name evolved into Darogajan. Such instances of name changes are prevalent in Dimapur, particularly in villages inhabited by the Kachari people. Daroganjan village is a revenue village under Dimapur mauza no. 3 And was surveyed for the first time in 1936 and notified as revenue village in 1939 by the then British government. (Map 7)

Dhansiripar

Dhansiripar was founded by Maibiram Jigdung, a Mauzari, in 1906 and later recognized in the year 1913. As any Dimasa village, Dhansiripar Village was established in the bank of the Dhansiri river with Karbi Anglong in the west, Langlung rivulet in the east and North and Amaluma and Doyapur village in the south. Dhansiripar is one of the oldest Sub-Divisional headquarters in the state. (Map 8)

Disaguphu

Disaguphu was established in the year 1932 in accordance with the Dimasa Kachari customary practices and usages. In 1926, two brothers, Risang Khersa and Baniram Khersa along with some others moved towards the land between the rivulet Disaguphu on the east and another rivulet Langlung on the west and settled down permanently when they found a land suitable for both Jhum and wet cultivation. The performed symbolic Dimasa traditional rituals like *Maiyaopha garba, nohyam suba* etc to mark the occupation and to establish a new village. They named this village Disaguphu after the name of the rivulet. The name is derived from two words *'Disa'* meaning stream and *'Guphu'* meaning white/clean. It is also said that during the rule of Dimaraja at Dimapur a missing white elephant was finally found in this area and therefore the village founders preferred to call the village as Disaguphu tagging the word Guphu meaning white. (Map 9)

Doyapur

Doyapur is a village in Dhansiripar sub-division under Chumoukedima district. It was established in 1910 and was duly recognized in 1926 by the government during the tenure of the then DC of Naga Hills Mr J.H Hutton. During his visit to the area in

1921 Mr. Hutton recommended Lt. Donring Phonglosa to be appointed as the gaonbura of the village

The original name of the village was Khujadisa, which is derived from the Khujadisa stream (with "Khuja" meaning old man and "disa" meaning stream) that flows through the village and joins the Dhansiri River. The name was changed to Doyapur when the village was officially recognized in 1926. The current name, Doyapur, is formed from the names of two prominent individuals from that time: "do" is taken from the first two letters of "Doring," "ya" comes from the middle letters of "Doyal," and "pur" is a Sanskrit word meaning town or area. (Map 10)

Ganeshnagar

Ganeshnagar village was established in 1914 by a group of Dimasas led by Lombudhar Jarambusa. The village was later renamed as Ganeshnagar in1927 when a stone idol of Lord Ganesha was found by Phantising Nabensa. The idol is currently in a temple in Karbi Anglong, Assam.

A government-initiated Industrial Growth Centre was also established within Ganeshnagar. It was reported in *The Morung Express* on 30th May, 2020, that this Industrial Growth Centre was being turned into a quarantine centre during the lockdown due to COVID-19 pandemic due to the centre being abandoned for several years as 'no potential Naga entrepreneurs came forward to stay and work there'. But it was also reported that there was two Naga entrepreneurs were still running their units at the centre. (Map 11)

Ganeshnagar not entirely 'abandoned'

A worker operates a machine at Fine Windows Company, Ganeshnagar Industrial Centre. (Morung Photo)

MORUNG EXCLUSIVE 30th May 2020

Entrepreneurs in dilemma as Industrial Centre turn into Quarantine Centre

Fig 20: News article on the industrial centre at Ganeshnagar village

Hazadisa

In 1915, Ruhidao Daolaguphu from the Dimapur region founded the village of Hazadisa along the upper reaches of the Dhansiri River, approximately 4 kilometres west of Ganeshnagar Village. Mr. C.H. Burnes served as the Deputy Commissioner of the Naga Hills at that time. The village is called after the Hazadisa stream, as it is located on its bank. In the Dimasa dialect, "Haza" denotes a salt lick (natural salt deposit), while "Disa" signifies stream. It is posited that plentiful salt licks existed along the stream's banks, leading to the stream being named Hazadisa, which then inspired the village's name. (Map 12)

Kushiabill

Kushiabill village was established in 1942. It is derived from two words ‘Kushia’- eel fish and ‘bill’- pond. The village was founded when the Kacharis were shifted from their original villages in Naharbari, Darogapathar, Padampukhuri during the Kohima War in 1939. At the end of the war some of them returned back to their native village while some settled and established the village slashing the jungle. The first gaon bura was Shri Ratanlal who was also the gaon bura of Naharbari village. The Kushiabill Village Council was established in 1980 and later in 1998 it became a joint council. The first council chairman was Shri. Ananda Chandra Mech and first VDB secretary was Shri. Radheswar Mech. (Map 13)

Manglumukh

Manglumukh was established in the year 1907 by Anjiram Daolagajao on the bank of Manglu River and Dhansiri. The name is derived from Manglubra which means bank of river Manglu ((Mang- dead body and lu-to immerese).

The land was fertile and the life in the village was going on smoothly, however, about 15 years after its establishment, the village was struck upon by natural calamities claiming many souls. Life became difficult to live at the present site. Therefore, they shifted the village to manglubra ‘bra’ means confluence i.e. confluence of the rivulet Manglu with Dhansiri River and the village came to be known as Manglumukh. (Map 14)

Naharbari

Naharbari village is situated near the bank of river Dhansiri, is a traditional Mech Kachari village. It was formerly known as Nahorani and was established in the year 1818. It is derived from the Nahar tree (Ceylon iron wood). It is common practice or tradition of the Kacharis to derive specific names of the villages/areas borrowed from or inspired by creations of mother nature such as trees, flowers, rivers, streams, ponds, hills etc.

Naharbari village has some important historical facts that are not known by many people, that there are total of five ponds out of the fifty-two ponds that were dug by the Kachari Kings which are still in existence in the village but on the verge of extinction. Among them the largest pond is the 'Padumpukhuri' which was under the Padumpukhuri village but during 1873 with the construction of the Dimapur-Kohima Road by the Britishers, it came under the jurisdiction of Naharbari village. (Map 15)

Padumpukhuri

Padumpukuri Village was established in 1850 under the leadership of two great Kachari pioneers of that time Fairengdao and Narayan Basumatary along with a few other people. The descendants of these people are still living in the village to the present day. As a customary practice, the Kachari people usually dwell near a water source like a river or a pond. During the medieval period, this group met their dwelling near a big pond dug by the Kachari King in Dimapur. Stop this phone which still exists in the present day to the southwest of the village adjacent to the present National Highway 29 was full of Lotus Flowers in ancient times. This phone was the main water source for all the village residents then. Thus, the dwelling placed by the sight of this pawn came to be known and named Padampukhuri Village combining two words *padum* which means lotus flower and *pukhri* which means pond.

Unfortunately, the pond after which the village was named was separated from the village when the British met the highway to Manipur. Then again during this land survey in 1971-72 this pond came to be under the jurisdiction of the present Naharbari village since it was on the other side of the highway.

Since the establishment of Nagaland, Dimapur has undergone considerable urbanization and development. The city has emerged as a pivotal center for trade, education, and infrastructure within the state. Its growth has been bolstered by its strategic location and its prominence as a key economic hub. Notwithstanding its significance, Dimapur has encountered challenges pertaining to political and social issues. The city has functioned as a nucleus for various regional and ethnic tensions, mirroring the broader complexities associated with the integration of diverse communities within Nagaland. Initiatives aimed at addressing these challenges have encompassed development projects, peacebuilding endeavors, and administrative reforms. (Map 16)

Purana Bazar-A

Various narratives and interpretations exist regarding the origins of the term "Purana Bazar" for a village located in Dimapur. Nevertheless, according to a rendition of their traditional oral narratives, the local Kacharis of Dimapur hold the belief that their predecessors were the initial founders of a village named Panbari, situated near Nichuguard, which was formerly referred to as Samaguting. In 1811, the endeavour was subsequently abandoned due to insurmountable circumstances, after which it is reported that the group relocated to Dimapur and established several villages along the eastern bank of the Dhansiri River. Among the villages, one was situated closest to the archaeological site located across the Western Bank River. The construction of the rudimentary carriage road to Samaguting, Kohima, and Imphal by the British government traversed the centre of the village, thereby dividing the section of the village that housed the market from the remainder of the community. After several years, the viability of the said market began to decline as traders and entrepreneurs progressively transitioned their operations to a burgeoning market located near the railway station, following Dimapur's integration into the Assam Bengal Railway Network in 1903. Throughout the years, as the state market or bazaar experienced a period of considerable abundance, the residents of Dimapur began to designate it as the "old market" or "Purana bazaar." The area experienced a regression into a tranquil village, a state that persisted for several decades, until it was progressively revitalized into a thriving centre of trade and commerce by the residents of Nagaland, particularly

by entrepreneurs, with the assistance of the Nagaland government. The other section of the aforementioned village was historically referred to as Nahoroni Village; it is now known as Naharbari Village. (Map 17)

Purana Bazar-B

Originally the village was referred as Bokajan which comprises of two words – *Boka* meaning mud and *Jan* meaning stream. Thus, the village acquired its name from a muddy stream that existed in the village, which is generally a Kachari tradition of naming a village after distinct physical feature of the area such as rivers mountains, ponds, streams, or big trees. In 1963 when Nagaland attained statehood Bokajan village was declared as an ancestral traditional village of the state. Later, for administration convenience and to avail R.D Grant in aid, Bokajan village was renamed as Purana Bazar-B Village. (Map 18)

Kacharis in the Interim Government and the First General Election

The Kacharis, an indigenous ethnic group in Northeastern India, have played an important role in the history and development of the Naga Hills, now part of Nagaland. Their inclusion in Nagaland's interim government before its statehood in 1963 reflected the region's ethnic diversity and the effort to build an inclusive political framework. As Nagaland transitioned from colonial rule to Indian statehood, integrating various ethnic groups—including the Kacharis—was essential for stable governance. Their participation in the interim government ensured that the concerns of minority communities were considered in the state's early policymaking. This helped promote cooperation among ethnic groups and laid the foundation for a representative political system. Despite challenges such as ethnic tensions and competition for resources, the Kacharis' involvement had a lasting socio-political impact. It supported social cohesion, equitable development, and a more inclusive approach to governance. Their continued engagement highlights the complexities of managing diversity and the importance of inclusive politics in shaping Nagaland's evolving identity.

The inaugural general election in Nagaland, conducted in 1964, represented a significant milestone in the state's political history. This election signified the transition from a provisional governance structure to an established democratic state government, subsequent to the designation of Nagaland as a state in December 1963. The election was notable not only for its immediate political ramifications but also for its influence on the development of democratic processes and the political landscape of the nascent state.

On December 1, 1963, Nagaland was officially constituted as the 16th state of India. This establishment was a response to the enduring demands of the Naga populace for increased autonomy and self-governance. The formation of Nagaland followed years of insurgency and political dialogues between Naga leaders and the Indian government. The state was delineated from the Naga Hills district of Assam, and an interim government was established to facilitate the transition. The establishment of the state was a response to the Naga populace's demands for greater autonomy and self-governance.

Prior to the general election, an interim government was instituted to supervise the initial administrative setup of the new state. This transitional administration was tasked with laying the foundation for democratic institutions and preparing for the inaugural general elections. The interim phase was pivotal in establishing the framework by which the state’s political system would function. Late Deblal Mech was approached by the Kachari elders of Dimapur to represent the indigenous minority tribes of Nagaland in 1961 in the Interim Government. In 1964 when the first general elections were held, he contested from the then Dimapur II Constituency and won the election on Nagaland Nationalist Organization (NNO) ticket. He went on to win the next election in 1969 followed by yet two consecutive elections in 1974 and 1977.

Another political figure from the Kachari community in Nagaland was Late Gobinda Chandra Paira who as elected for two consecutive terms as MLA on NNO ticket as well. He was elected from Dimapur I AC in 1964 and 1969. He served as the chairman of the Estimate and public Accounts Committee and as the chairman of NNO, Dimapur Division (1964-68). He was also a founder member of the UDF party

and served as the chairman of Dimapur division (1973-74) and was elected as the Chief Whip of the UDF in 1974. He was also a very active social worker and has served in various government, semi-government and public organizations in different capacities.

Late Lalit Mech was the MLA representing Dimapur III Assembly Constituency. He was elected in the year 1982 and served as the NIDC Chairman for two years. He also served as the Secretary of the Dimapur Sugarcane Farming Cooperative Society in 1956-57 and again in 1980-81. He was an undisputed leader of the villages around Padum Pukhuri and Dimapur town.

The first general election in Nagaland, conducted in 1964, signified a landmark moment in the state's political history. As a newly constituted state, Nagaland's political landscape was characterized by the involvement of various ethnic and regional groups, including the Kacharis. The Kacharis, an indigenous ethnic group possessing a significant presence in the region, engaged in this electoral process, reflecting their role in the state's early political dynamics. The political environment in Nagaland during this era was significantly influenced by the transition from an interim administration to a fully democratic government. The election was marked by the participation of various political parties and candidates, reflecting the ethnic diversity inherent within the state.

The Kacharis, as a significant ethnic group in the region, were duly represented in the electoral process. Their involvement in the election was crucial for ensuring that the varied interests of the state's populace were taken into account within the new governance framework. In the 1964 election, Kachari candidates participated as representatives of their communities. They sought election to seats in the Nagaland Legislative Assembly, with the objective of ensuring that the concerns and aspirations of the Kachari people were duly considered within the state's political framework. The participation of Kachari candidates in the inaugural general election facilitated the integration of their community into the political process of the newly established state. It provided a platform for the Kacharis to articulate their concerns and contribute to policy development that addressed their needs. The engagement of Kachari candidates

and their electoral success enriched the representation of ethnic and regional interests within the state's governance structure. The involvement of Kachari candidates in the first general election established a precedent for subsequent elections and political participation in Nagaland.

Mauzadari System in Dimapur

The Mauza/Mouza system, also referred to as the Mauzadari system, was instituted by the British Government in 1870. The Mauzadari system denotes a conventional, decentralized method for the collection of land tax, formerly overseen by local "Mauzadars," who acted as intermediaries between farmers and governmental entities. The term Mauza denotes a delineated, surveyed, and documented region within a district's revenue records, as referenced in clause (g) of article 243 of the Indian Constitution, serving as the smallest administrative unit for public notification of the designation of a village. Although it was introduced in Assam in 1870, it was not established in Dimapur until 1916, which was part of the Golaghat Sub-Division of Sibsagar District.

The inaugural Mauzadar at Dimapur was the late Rai Sahib Subedar Lokhra Ram Mech (Khaklary), a British Army officer and an inhabitant of Naharbari village. He was also a recipient of the Rai Sahib Medal, an honor conferred during the British colonial period to persons who rendered dedicated service or contributed to public welfare for the nation. He governed Dimapur Mauza from 1916 till 1935. The second mauzadar was the late Subedar Mahindra Mech, a resident of Naharbari village. He governed Dimapur mauza from 1935 to 1972. During his tenure, the Dimapur Mauza was partitioned into three Mauzas. The third Mauzadar was the late Purno Ram Mech, who was the grandson of the late Rai Sahib Subedar Lokhra Ram Mech. He is the inaugural Mauzadar of Dimapur III. He governed Mauza III from 1972 to 2001. The fourth and current Mauzadar of Dimapur III Mauza is Sonjay Kumar Mech.

Recent Socio-Political Events

The treatment of the Kachari tribe in Nagaland—a historically indigenous but numerically smaller community—raises important questions about fairness,

recognition, and representation in the state's socio-political landscape, especially in the context of RIIN and the Indigenous Inhabitant Certificate (IIC).

In practical terms, yes—if not implemented fairly, RIIN could:

- Segregate or exclude smaller tribes, undocumented groups, or displaced families
- Lead to loss of state benefits (employment, land rights, scholarships)
- Create a two-tier citizenship within Nagaland—between certified and uncertified residents

This could deepen tribal divisions and erode inter-tribal harmony if communities feel politically or culturally sidelined.

To avoid the marginalization of minor tribes, the government and tribal bodies must:

- Use flexible proof standards (not only official documents)
- Ensure fair representation in verification committees
- Create a strong appeals process for rejected applicants
- Recognize oral history and community testimony as valid
- Respect self-identification and lived heritage

While the Kachari tribe has formal recognition**,** fair treatment depends on implementation of policies**,** representation in governance, and community-sensitive administration. Without active effort from the state and tribal bodies, numerically smaller and historically rooted tribes like the Kacharis risk being quietly marginalized, despite being among the oldest inhabitants of the region.

Concerns and Challenges

Despite their historical presence, Kacharis are often left out of dominant tribal narratives in Nagaland. They face underrepresentation in legislative, bureaucratic, and cultural decision-making spaces. Dimapur, historically Kachari land, has seen a shift in demography and land ownership, raising fears among Kacharis of being "guests in their own land." The extension of Inner Line Permit (ILP) to Dimapur in 2019 raised anxieties about land ownership, mobility, and certification, as many Kacharis had long inter-state links (Nagaland-Assam). Because Kacharis do not belong to the dominant Naga tribal fold, there's a risk of procedural bias or exclusion, especially if village-based verification systems are not inclusive. Some reports and community statements express concern that their oral histories and customary links are not being respected or documented fully. Many Kachari students and youth in Nagaland report difficulty accessing scholarships and state schemes, partly due to bureaucratic confusion or lack of tribal assertion.

The role of the Nagaland state government in the marginalization of the Kachari tribe is complex. While the state has formally recognized the Kacharis as an indigenous tribe, it has also contributed directly and indirectly to their socio-political marginalization through systemic neglect, weak representation, and uneven implementation of policies.

The Kachari tribe has long maintained a distinct cultural identity and historical presence—particularly in and around Dimapur. Despite formal recognition as an indigenous Scheduled Tribe, the community continues to face systemic marginalization rooted in weak political representation, lack of institutional support, and exclusion from decision-making processes. The state government's policies, while inclusive on paper, often fall short in practice, especially in implementing frameworks like the Register of Indigenous Inhabitants of Nagaland (RIIN). The RIIN verification process, for instance, relies heavily on documentation and village-level committees that are often dominated by major tribes, leaving Kachari applicants at risk of procedural exclusion. There is no requirement for minority tribal representatives on

verification panels, nor adequate consideration for oral histories or mixed-ancestry households common among smaller tribes.

Culturally, the state has also neglected to preserve Kachari language, traditions, and historical landmarks. The ancient Kachari ruins in Dimapur, symbols of a once-thriving kingdom, remain under-recognized and poorly maintained. The absence of a state-funded language preservation effort further accelerates the erosion of Kachari identity, particularly among youth. Economically and educationally, the community lacks targeted support no tribal welfare board exists for the Kacharis, and they are underrepresented in scholarship distribution and government job access. Vikousa Neinu in his paper *Excavations at Rajbari, Dimapur, Nagaland, Reveal the Kachari Civilization to the 3rd century AD* (2024) lamented about the loss of archaeological treasures in Dimapur which cannot be measured by their monetary value. He has mentioned about how in 1980, he discussed the matter with Additional Deputy Commissioner and requested that the construction projects in Dimapur area be suspended until the issues related with the preservation of the archaeological sites were resolved; but was declined, stating that the ADC was not in the position of authority, besides lacking any regulatory measures for enforcement.

The role of the Nagaland state government in the marginalization of the Kachari tribe is one shaped more by systemic neglect than explicit discrimination. While the Kacharis are officially recognized as an Indigenous Scheduled Tribe in the state, their inclusion has largely remained symbolic. The community lacks political representation, has minimal presence in state planning bodies, and is almost entirely absent from key decision-making platforms such as the Nagaland Legislative Assembly, district planning boards, and major tribal councils. In Dimapur—an area with deep historical and cultural ties to the Kacharis—the state government has failed to safeguard their heritage, allowing encroachments and demographic shifts to go unaddressed for decades. Despite Dimapur being the heartland of the ancient Kachari kingdom, there has been no serious initiative to protect or promote Kachari heritage sites, language, or culture.

This marginalization is further evident in the implementation of the Register of Indigenous Inhabitants of Nagaland (RIIN). The RIIN verification mechanism is driven by village-level committees, often dominated by numerically and politically stronger tribes. These panels lack adequate representation of minority communities such as the Kacharis, increasing the risk of biased assessments or exclusion due to insufficient documentation. The state has not put in place safeguards to accommodate oral histories, inter-tribal families, or urban Kacharis who may not conform to the rigid definitions of indigeneity based on village records. By failing to tailor the RIIN process to reflect Nagaland's full ethnic diversity, the state has created a system that inadvertently disadvantages its smaller tribes.

Moreover, the state has made little effort to promote the educational and economic advancement of the Kacharis. Unlike other tribes who benefit from development boards and dedicated welfare programs, the Kacharis have no state-sponsored schemes aimed at community upliftment. Their language is not taught in public schools, and there are no institutional platforms to preserve or promote their traditional knowledge. This lack of cultural investment has weakened intergenerational transmission of identity, particularly among Kachari youth living in urban or mixed-ethnic areas.

In summary, while the state government may not be deliberately marginalizing the Kacharis, its inaction and non-inclusive policy frameworks have created an environment where the community's cultural, political, and social visibility continues to decline. Without immediate corrective measures such as stronger representation, cultural preservation policies, and fair administrative procedures this marginalization may deepen into erasure. The Kacharis, with their centuries-old roots in Nagaland, deserve not only recognition but respect, protection, and a fair share in the state's future.

The Kachari Tribal Council Nagaland has submitted multiple representations with regards to the protection and preservation of their history, tradition, culture and political right over the course of years. But these representations seem to be ineffective as the government never seem to take any step with regards to these crucial subjects

rather, they continue to sideline the Kacharis along with the other minor tribes of the state.

Contentions over Dimapur Area

Dimapur is the most populous district of Nagaland. A large area of the district is in the plains with an average elevation of 260m above sea level except Medziphema sub-division and a few villages of Niuland sub-division, which are located in the foothills. The climate in Dimapur district is hot and humid in the plains during summer reaching a maximum of 36 °C, with humidity up to 93%. While winter are cool and pleasant. The average annual rainfall is 1504.7mm. (District Census Handbook, 2011: 9)

The region of Dimapur unlike the other regions of Nagaland was very thinly populated and as such the government took certain steps for administrative control of the area. On 4th December 1913, a record of the proposed Rangapahar Reserve was sent by the Deputy Commissioner of Sibsagar to the Deputy Commissioner of the Naga Hills District and on 29th December 1913 the Chief Commissioner appointed the DC of the Naga Hills to be the Forest Settlement Officer for the Rangapahar forest in place of the DC of Sibsagar. (PR-737: Reserve Near Dimapur)

Dimapur has remained an area of contention for a very long period and there were many arguments made for the region to be transferred to assam by various individuals and groups. In 1953, we find that the secretary of Golaghat Bar Association has submitted a resolution regarding the inclusion of the plains portion Bokajan area of Sarupathar Mauza and the Dimapur Mauza of Naga Hills in the District of Sibsagar which was declined citing ‘adverse political repercussions in the area’. (PR-1099).

During the framing of the 6th Schedule (see Appendix 5) as well the transfer of Dimapur to Assam was brought to the attention of the Drafting Committee. The Assam Members had also pleaded to exclude Dimapur Mauza from the territorial limits of the Naga Hills District, but on Shri Bordoloi not supporting the plea because that would give rise to boundary dispute as the Nagas may say that their district would go to a

certain point and the Dimapur people may say differently, the amendment was negatived by the Assembly. The individuals and groups demanding for Dimapur to be transferred to Assam stems from the idea that Dimapur was given to the newly formed Nagaland State on a lease by the Assam Government but there are no such records.

Fig 21: News article on the plans for change of name for Dimapur district in 2010

In 2010, a news article published in The Telegraph titled "Row brews over Dimapur-Kachari council to oppose Naga name for trade hub". The tribal council stated that the renaming of Dimapur would be tantamount to erasing the history of the Kacharis. The council expressed that they would resort to democratic methods of protest to safeguard their history. Here we can observe the people's ignorance of the history of the Kacharis.

Recently, when the state government decided to create three new districts, the district of Dimapur was divided into three areas – Dimapur, Chumukedima, and Niuland. In doing so, the Kachari villages, which were earlier under the Dhansiripar sub-division, came under the new district of Chumukedima. These Kachari villages are historically and culturally part of Dimapur. The Dimasa Students' Union Nagaland protested against this bifurcation of the Kachari villages, but it fell on deaf ears. The Kacharis were further relegated to the status micro-minority groups in Nagaland

through this process and any chances of raising concerns as a tribe was highly diminished.

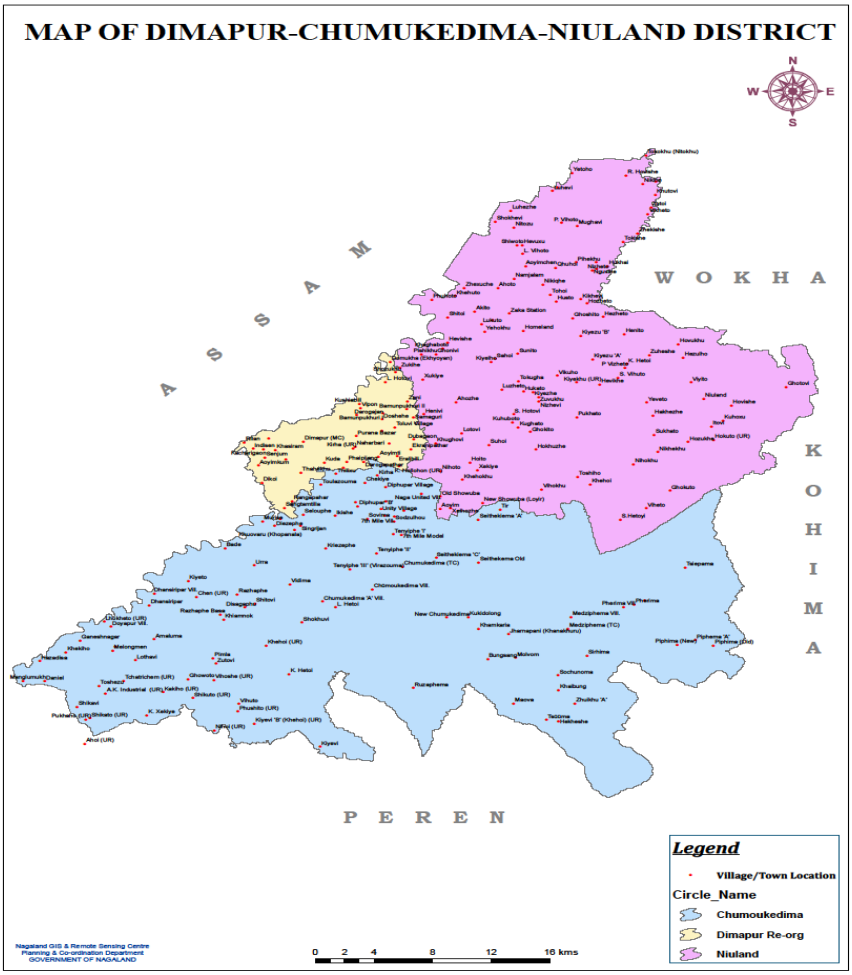


Fig 22: A map showing the three new districts that were created after the bifurcation of the erstwhile Dimapur District. (Source: Nagaland GIS and Remote Sensing Centre)

Fig 23: News article after the government's decision to bifurcate the erstwhile Dimapur District

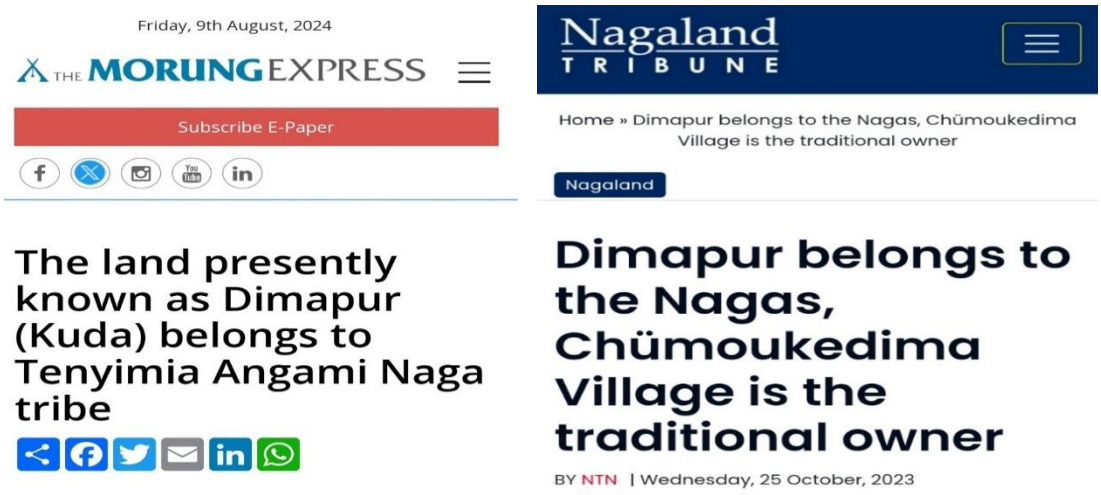


Fig 24: Newspaper articles claiming ownership over Dimapur

Occasionally, one encounters a newspaper article, a report or social media posts and comments asserting possession of the ancestral lands of the Kacharis, entirely overlooking their cultural and historical heritage. A prevalent theme in these accounts is that the Kacharis suffered a defeat by the Ahoms, leading to the abandonment of Dimapur by the Kacharis. Currently, given Dimapur is situated inside the State of Nagaland, it is considered the heritage of all Nagas. The majority of Kachari villages were founded in Dimapur prior to Indian independence, with some predating the colonial era. Therefore, it is highly insensitive to dismiss their historical significance and impose a majoritarian perspective on the Kacharis and other indigenous minority groups in Nagaland.

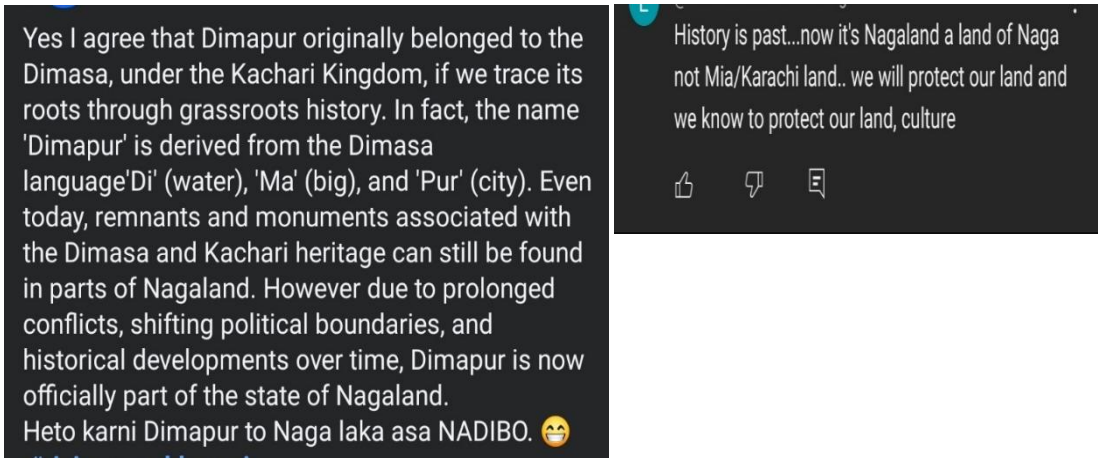


Fig 25: Some examples of views shared online related to Dimapur and Kacharis.
Source: facebook.com (left) and youtube.com (right)

Table 1: Name of Kachari villages and the year of establishment

Village	Year	Village	Year
Amaluma	1917	Hazadisa	1915
Bamunpukhuri A	1965	Kushiabill	1942
Bamunpukhuri B	1943	Manglumukh	1907
Darogajan	1890	Naharbari	1818
Doyapur	1926	Purana Bazar A	1818
Disaguphu	1932	Purana Bazar B	1942
Dhansiripar	1913	Padumpukhuri	1850
Ganeshnagar (Lombudhar)	1914		

The data enumerates the names and establishment years of the Kachari villages in Nagaland, underscoring the dissemination and historical existence of the Kachari community in the area. The settlements exhibit a diverse array of founding dates, with the earliest, Naharbari and Purana Bazar A, originating in 1818. Notable early settlements comprise Padumpukhuri (1850), Darogajan (1890), and Ganeshnagar (1914).

As the decades advanced, additional settlements were founded, indicating demographic shifts and growth. Prominent mid-20th-century establishments comprise Kushiabill (1942), Purana Bazar B (1942), and Bamunpukhuri B (1943). The last village recorded is Bamunpukhuri A, founded in 1965, demonstrating that the establishment of new communities persisted into the post-independence era. The villages established subsequently were those displaced during the Second World War, such as Kushiabill Village, which was formerly located where Dimapur Airport is now

situated. Bamunpukhuri A was established following the formation of the state of Nagaland, when it was divided into two villages for administrative purposes.

The oral tradition among the Kacharis and Garos asserts that they have coexisted in close proximity from ancient times. They refer to a location named Panbari, which they believe was situated in the region formerly known as Samguting. It depicts almost a century of settlement history, showcasing both the established and developing traits of the Kachari village network in the area. These eras are essential for understanding migration patterns, the distribution of the Kachari group, and the historical development of rural culture in this region.

Power and Functions of the Village Council and Gaon Buras

The annexation of Naga Hills by the British during mid nineteenth century gave rise to the emergence of two institutions – Gaon Burah (GB) and Do-bhasi (DB). The British recognized the existence of the traditional village authority and also identified the importance of clan or khel institution within the village. The traditional khel heads, representing khels were appointed as khel GB and the eldest among all the GBs was selected as Head GB. Besides, collecting taxes from each household GBs were made responsible for settlement of all the disputes in the village, according to Naga customary laws. The forum for the purpose was called the village court. But during those days the powers of chief gradually began to disappear.

After fourteen years of India's independence, the Government of India passed an Act called "Nagaland (Traditional Provisions) Regulation Act, 1961" according to which there shall be one village council for each village, range council for each range and a tribal council for each tribe. The validity of this Act was however discontinued from 1st Dec. 1963 when Nagaland attained statehood.

The birth of present form of the Village Council in Nagaland is the result of several years of experience on the part of the Nagaland Government Since 1963, which recognized the traditional village government as an important institution for the benefit of each village. The outcome of this recognition was reflected in the Act of "Nagaland Village and Area Council Act, 1973" which was further amended in 1978.

Under the Act of 1978, the traditional village authority was given statutory recognition under the name of Village Council. The Village Council is provided with uniform powers and duties to all recognized villages of Nagaland. At present, being a statutory body empowered with a common set of powers and functions, in the area of judicial, administration and development, the Village Council is organically linked with the entire rural system and also with the management of shifting cultivation – the basic livelihood security of any village in Nagaland (Devi, 2015: 265).

The Naga Hills was under a regional council before the Village Council Act was imposed in 1978. The Kachari villages like the Naga villages in Nagaland has similar composition in its functionary and functions in a similar fashion. The powers and functions of the Village Council and the Gaon Buras are as follows (as mentioned in the *Souvenir Celebrating 25 Years of Kachari Tribal Council, Nagaland 1998-2024*):

A. The Village Council

The village council means a local authority responsible for the administration of a village. The village council shall have the following power and duties:

1. The village council shall formulate village development schemes, supervise proper maintenance of water supply, roads, forest, sanitations, education and other welfare activities.
2. The village council also helps various government agencies in carrying out development works in the village.
3. The village councils are charged with good governance and improvement of the village.
4. The village council should ensure that births and deaths are duly registered in their village.
5. Village council shall be a body corporate having perpetual succession and a common seal with power to acquire, hold and dispose off property and shall sue or be sued by its corporate name, constitution of the village council.

6. Moreover, the village council is responsible for addressing the specific needs and concern of the local community. the village council also play vital role in managing local resources, infrastructure development and service delivery at the village level.
7. The three different types of village council are Gram panchayats at village level, Panchayat Samiti at Block level and Zila Panchayats at District level.
8. In Non-Cadastral Villages like Dhansiripar, Doyapur, Amaluma, Ganeshnagar, Hazadisa, Disaguphu and Manglumukh, the village council has full authority to protect their land, without whose consent/knowledge no one can dispose or sell their land.
9. In Cadastral villages like Naharbari, Darogajan, Bamunpukhuri I, Bamunpukhuri II, Khushiabill, Puranabazar B, Padumpukhuri, the Gaon Buras have full power to control the village administration as well as the Customary Law of the founder tribe example, Kachari Tribe.

B. The Gaon Buras

The Gaon Buras are the ex-officio member in the village council. GBs are empowered to try cases and dispense justice according to the prevailing customary law. The Gaon Buras shall have the following power and duties:

1. GBs are appointed in the villages to act as Government agents to collect yearly house tax from the villagers on behalf of the Government.
2. GBs are the guardians and custodians of the customary laws.
3. The GBs are the protectors, interpreters and custodians of the customary laws and practice and also traditional value.
4. The GBs shall help the village administration in trial of both civil and criminal cases except the cases of murder.
5. The GBs empowered to act as the rural police and authorized to arrest culprits in their respective village area.
6. GBs should be free from political biasness while playing their role because they arbitrate cases and are expected to display exemplary fairness when dispensing justice at the grassroots.

7. Gaon Buras in Nagaland context is a legal and constitutional entity that functions as per customary laws and practices envisaged in the Article 371(A) of the Constitution of India.
8. The Gaon Buras have power to deliver justice in their villages if any problems occur as per the customary law of the founder tribe of the village.

It may be noted that at present the village councils in the Kachari villages are not exclusive to the Kachari tribe and individual from the Naga communities have been known to participate in elections and being elected in various positions in the Village Council, unlike the Naga villages where we can find that only an individual from a particular tribe belonging to that particular village are known to participate in the Village Council. Recently certain individuals from the Naga community also raised a demand for the position of Gaonbura in a traditional Kachari village citing that there is a good number of Nagas in that village. It raises the question on the value of tradition and oral history of the minor tribes in Nagaland which are being blatantly violated by certain groups and individuals for their own personal gain.

Social and Cultural Developments in Recent Times

The political and social life of the Kacharis in Dimapur after the formation of Nagaland has been shaped by a complex interplay of marginalization, adaptation, and cultural resilience. Politically, the community remains underrepresented and excluded from constitutional protections afforded to other tribal groups in the state. Socially, however, the Kacharis have demonstrated a capacity to preserve their traditions, adapt to urban life, and assert their identity through festivals, education, and grassroots activism. As the state of Nagaland continues to evolve, greater inclusivity and recognition of non-Naga indigenous groups like the Kacharis will be essential to building a more equitable and representative society.

Despite their political marginalization, the Kacharis in Dimapur have shown significant social resilience and adaptability. One notable area of transformation is in religious practices. Traditionally animist, the Kacharis worshipped ancestors and natural deities through clan-based rituals. In the post-statehood period, however, many

have embraced Christianity, particularly among the urban middle classes. Churches now function not only as spiritual centres but also as spaces for community organization and education.

This religious shift has not entirely displaced traditional customs. Festivals such as Bushu Dima and Aai Sagi, the community's main post-harvest celebrations, continue to be observed with great enthusiasm in Dimapur. These events have transformed into cultural showcases featuring traditional dance, music, and ethnic cuisine, often supported by local community groups. They serve as platforms for reinforcing ethnic identity, especially among younger generations facing increasing cultural assimilation in the urban context.

Social structures within the Kachari community have also undergone change. Traditionally organized around patrilineal clans and village elders, contemporary Kachari families in Dimapur are increasingly nuclear and urbanized. The role of women has notably expanded; many are active in self-help groups (SHGs), weaving cooperatives, and educational outreach programs, contributing to a subtle but meaningful shift in gender dynamics. Dimasa women In the Dhansiripar region of Dimapur (now Chumukedima) continue weaving *eri* silk and traditionally cultivate castor plants to rear *eri* larvae, weaving cloth with floral and animal motifs. While synthetic yarns have displaced some hand spun regimes, traditional weaving still remains an identity marker and small-scale income source.

In an effort to revive traditional practices, the Burkhang Cultural Society was established in 2016. The term "*Burkhang*," meaning "to dig up" in the Bodo dialect, reflects the society's mission to rediscover and rejuvenate cultural practices that were in danger of being forgotten. Furthermore, *Gyanswarang Forai*s*ali*, a school dedicated to preserving and teaching traditional dances, songs, and language, was established in Kushiabill village, Dimapur, in 2022. This institution aims to impart cultural knowledge to younger generations, ensuring the transmission of heritage. In addition to these educational endeavours, various self-help groups have been formed to engage in traditional crafts, such as weaving traditional dresses and creating ornaments. These

groups play a crucial role in maintaining and passing on traditional knowledge across generations.

Fig 26: Students of Gyanswarang Foraisali

Fig 27: Dimasa women showcasing the traditional method of weaving at the Hornbill Festival, 2024

Fig 28: Training on Handloom Weaving held at Dhansiripar Village, Chumoukedima.

The art of dance and music has been an integral component of the socio-cultural life of the people of Nagaland. The Hornbill Festival has acted as an impetus for the growth of music in Nagaland (Roy, 2020: 213). In addition to music, the Hornbill Festival offers a comprehensive platform for the exhibition of traditional practices from all tribes in Nagaland. The performances highlighted their rich cultural legacy and demonstrated their commitment to cultural preservation amidst modern influences.

Fig 29: Mech Kachari Cultural Troupe, in front of the Kachari Nohdrang during the Hornbill Festival, 2023.

Fig 30: Dimasa Kachari Cultural troupe performing the *Bai Dima* during the Hornbill Festival, 2024.

Access to education has improved significantly for the Kacharis in Dimapur since statehood, largely due to the establishment of mission-run and government schools in the district. Institutions like Dimapur Government College have enabled Kachari youth to pursue higher education, though their progress is often hindered by the lack of tribal reservation benefits in Nagaland. Nevertheless, a growing number of educated Kachari youth are emerging as leaders and cultural custodians. They engage actively in tribal associations, organize language preservation efforts, and leverage social media platforms to raise awareness about Kachari history, identity, and rights. This youth mobilization reflects a broader trend of ethnic revivalism seen across many tribal communities in Northeast India. The Kacharis of Dimapur stand at a crossroads of cultural resilience and adaptation. While modern education, urban living, and religion have transformed many aspects of their traditional life, cultural festivals, language revival, and community organization remain key pillars of ethnic identity. Dimapur continues to function as both a cultural heartland and a laboratory of socio-cultural change for the Kacharis in Nagaland.

The formation of the state of Nagaland in 1963 marked a significant turning point in the political geography of Northeast India. While the state was created to address the aspirations of the Naga people, it also reshaped the political and social landscape for non-Naga indigenous communities residing within its territory. Among these are the Kacharis, who historically inhabited the Dimapur region and trace their ancestry to the ancient Dimasa kingdom, which once ruled large parts of present-day Assam and Nagaland. The Kacharis, hold a unique historical position in Dimapur. The city, now a commercial hub of Nagaland, was once the capital of the Dimasa kingdom during the 13th to 16th centuries. However, following the integration of Dimapur into Nagaland, the Kacharis found themselves politically marginalized within a state constructed primarily for the Naga ethnic groups. As a result, the Kacharis have had limited participation in state politics and are rarely represented in the Nagaland Legislative Assembly or local governance institutions such as the Dimapur Municipal Council.

These groups also campaign for the protection of customary land rights and greater inclusion in administrative frameworks. However, their efforts have so far met with limited success, reflecting the structural dominance of Naga-majority institutions in the state. Land ownership remains a core issue in the political identity of the Kacharis in Dimapur. Despite their deep-rooted presence in the region, Kachari land rights are often unrecognized under Nagaland's customary land laws, which are primarily tailored to Naga tribal systems under Article 371(A) of the Indian Constitution. As urbanization has rapidly expanded in Dimapur, Kachari villages have experienced encroachment, unregulated land sales, and growing pressure on communal lands, often without adequate legal protection or compensation.

The post-Independence period ushered in significant political and administrative transformations for the Kachari communities, particularly the Dimasas and Mech Kacharis. The reorganization of states, especially the separation of Nagaland from Assam and the creation of autonomous councils like the NC Hills Autonomous Council (now Dima Hasao), reshaped the spatial and political identity of these groups. While autonomy brought recognition and a degree of self-governance, it also exposed internal divisions and triggered new challenges related to ethnic identity, migration, land rights, and political representation. The gradual loss of traditional territories such as the historic capital Dimapur now located in Nagaland has become symbolic of broader cultural and political marginalization. The legacy of colonial policies, coupled with post-colonial administrative restructuring, continues to shape the contemporary realities and future trajectories of the Kachari communities in Northeast India.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The research aims to transcend prevailing historical paradigms and reclaim the voices, traditions, and historical agency of the Kacharis in Nagaland, specifically by incorporating oral traditions and interdisciplinary approaches. The historical account of the Kacharis in Nagaland has been predominantly eclipsed by narratives focused on the Ahom-Kachari war and the Dimasa ruling elite, hence marginalising alternative perspectives on Kachari history. This has resulted in the marginalisation of the Kachari tribe within the prevailing historical and cultural narratives of Nagaland. The history of the Kacharis relies on colonial, biassed, or secondary sources due to the lack of original evidence. This has resulted in stereotyping, cultural misinterpretation, and misrepresentation of their beliefs, practices, and social systems. The lack of previous studies has deterred researchers from investigating the tribe, resulting in a cycle of scholarly neglect. The absence of literary research on the Kacharis of Nagaland has resulted in the erosion or misinterpretation of traditional practices, oral histories, and indigenous knowledge systems across centuries. In the absence of adequate documentation or academic focus, languages, rituals, folklore, and other forms of intangible heritage face the peril of extinction in the future.

This study aimed to investigate the characteristics of Kachari society in Nagaland before their interaction with the Ahoms, revealing that Kachari society closely resembled other tribal societies in Northeast India. It was an agricultural society with the family as the nucleus of the social structure. The governance transitioned from kinship to kingship during the establishment of the Kachari kingdom in Dimapur. While previous research has predominantly concentrated on the Dimasas, it is essential to consider the Mech community, which is also a constituent of the Kachari tribe, within the context of Nagaland. Analysing the history of both subgroups is crucial for conducting a comprehensive analytical study of the Kachari tribe in Nagaland. Analysing the history of the general populace is crucial, rather than focussing just on the rulers, which has contributed to the under-representation of the Kachari tribe in the historical and political discourse of the state of Nagaland.

The research has sought to elucidate the influence of the Kachari tribe's interactions with the Ahoms and surrounding cultures such as the Nagas, which have significantly affected their socio-cultural existence. A notable consequence of the Kacharis' interaction with the Ahoms has been the erosion of their linguistic distinctiveness. In Nagaland, the Dimasas have successfully maintained their linguistic identity to a greater extent than the Mech, who have yielded to Assamese influence. The erosion of linguistic identity can be attributed to the education system in the region post-independence, where the majority of schools operated in the Assamese medium. Initiatives are underway to rejuvenate and transmit traditional knowledge to the younger generation.

The Kacharis and the Nagas share a longstanding relationship in politics, culture, and economy. Oral histories and written records of the Kachari-Naga relationship indicate that these two tribes had been acquainted for an extended period. Oral traditions recount the marriages of Kachari kings to Naga princesses, and references to a trading economy between the two tribes are also present. Archaeological evidence indicates cultural integration between the Kacharis and the Nagas, with scholars noting the parallels in the megalithic constructions of these two groups. The recent interactions between the Kacharis and Nagas have been decidedly negative. The Kacharis currently constitute a minority in their original territory, and following the recent division of the former Dimapur region, they can be classified as micro-minorities dispersed among the districts of Dimapur and Chumoukedima. This division faced significant criticism from both the Kachari and Naga communities in Dimapur; however, the administration turned a deaf ear to all the appeals and objections.

The research provides historical grounding for the Kachari community’s quest for recognition, preservation of identity, and protection of heritage, while also framing current socio-economic and political challenges as products of a complex historical trajectory. This influences perceptions by fostering respect for their resilience, admiration for their cultural distinctiveness, and empathy for the challenges rooted in historical marginalization

Key Findings and Observation

This research set out to explore and critically analyse the history of the Kacharis in Nagaland, particularly through the lens of their social, political, and cultural evolution across pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial periods. The study, grounded in oral traditions and interdisciplinary methodologies, has revealed significant insights into the identity, historical agency, and marginalization of the Kachari community.

One of the central findings of this study is the evident historical marginalization of the Kacharis within dominant historiography. Much of the existing literature is centred around the Dimasa subgroup and their interactions with the Ahoms, while the broader narrative of the Kacharis in Dimapur and Nagaland has remained obscured. This omission aligns with the notion that "history is written by the victors," where colonial records and Ahom-centric Buranjis shaped the historical discourse, leaving out the nuanced experiences of the Kacharis as a community.

The Dimasa Kacharis exhibit a unique social structure, particularly notable for their dual clan system that incorporates both patrilineal (senphong) and matrilineal (jaddi) descent. This rare duality plays a pivotal role in governing marriage rules, kinship networks, and political succession, setting the Kacharis apart from neighbouring tribes. Additionally, institutions such as the Hangsao (bachelor's dormitory) and customary councils reflect a community-oriented and structurally sophisticated society. These distinctive features have often been overlooked in external academic interpretations that focused mainly on political elites or written texts.

In the absence of extensive written records, oral traditions among the Kacharis have served as vital sources of historical memory. Folklore such as the Bhima-Hidimba lineage, the myth of Bangla Raja and Arikdima, and other place-based narratives illustrate how the Kacharis have preserved their identity and collective memory through storytelling. These traditions not only function as historical testimony but also challenge the dominance of written sources in the construction of tribal histories.

Historically, the Mech Kacharis, who consider themselves to be an off-shoot of the Bodo group, have often been overshadowed by the politically dominant Dimasa subgroup. Unlike the Dimasas, who established centralized kingdoms like Dimapur and later Maibong and Khaspur, the Mech Kacharis did not form a kingdom of their own but were incorporated into larger political entities. During the Kachari kingdom's rule from Dimapur, the Meches were likely subjects or tributaries, and G.K. Ghosh notes that they were formally subjugated during the period of Dimasa expansion. The Mech Kacharis of Nagaland incorporate the traditional practices of the larger Bodo group.

Today, the Mech Kacharis continue to live in and around Dimapur, coexisting with other tribal communities. Despite being numerically smaller and politically less influential, they retain a strong sense of cultural identity through clan affiliations, oral histories, and linguistic preservation. The continuation of traditional rituals and community festivals signifies their resilience and cultural vitality within the broader Kachari framework.

The study also highlights how external influences, particularly the Ahom invasion and later British colonial interventions, reshaped the Kachari social and political fabric. These encounters disrupted indigenous governance and landholding patterns, leading to the gradual erosion of traditional autonomy. However, despite these disruptions, many aspects of Kachari cultural life such as their ritual practices, belief systems, and communal traditions have endured, demonstrating resilience and adaptive capacity. The colonial prioritization of infrastructure over heritage illustrates the fraught valuation of the past, a tension still palpable in many postcolonial contexts.

The evolution of the Kachari polity itself offers significant insight into indigenous state formation. From kin-based tribal leadership in the Sadiyal phase to monarchic rule in the Hidimbiyal period, the Kacharis developed complex political systems that governed large territories. Evidence from archaeological remains at Dimapur, including the Rajbari ruins and stone monoliths, points to a centralized administration and cultural advancement that counter the stereotype of tribal societies as politically unorganized.

Another important finding is the extensive cultural exchange between the Kacharis and neighbouring tribal groups such as the Nagas, Karbis (Mikirs), Garos, etc. These interactions led to significant assimilation in terms of material culture, ritual symbolism, and linguistic overlap. Architectural elements like the V-shaped monoliths and communal rituals show a hybridized cultural identity shaped by both mutual influence and distinct heritage. The forgotten functions of material culture illustrate how colonial and local archival silences may conspire to obscure past societies, necessitating interdisciplinary efforts in archaeology and oral history.

Ethno-linguistically, the Kacharis form part of the Bodo-Kachari branch of the Tibeto-Burman language family, sharing close affinities with groups such as the Mech, Bodo, and Dimasa. However, varying historical trajectories, political developments, and administrative classifications have contributed to internal differentiation and fragmentation of a once-unified identity. The interplay between linguistic commonality and political separation reflects the complexities of tribal identity in the modern context.

Lastly, while the Kacharis have been officially recognized as an indigenous group in Nagaland since statehood, their political representation and visibility remain limited. Despite their historical presence and contributions, the Kacharis are often overlooked in state narratives, cultural policy, and public consciousness. This underlines the need for inclusive historiography that accounts for marginalized voices and reclaims suppressed narratives.

Discussion

The current study was conducted by the researcher with the intention of highlighting the under-representation of the indigenous Kacharis within the socio-political discourse of Nagaland. Throughout the research endeavour, numerous pieces of evidence emerged that substantiated the assumption as valid. However, the challenges faced by the Kachari tribe in Nagaland extended beyond mere under-representation. The circumstances have progressed to a stage where individuals lack awareness of the historical context of the Kacharis, resulting in their relegation to the position of outsiders within their own ancestral territories.

In Nagaland, where each tribe possesses a degree of autonomy determined by their traditional laws and ancestral territories, history is predominantly shaped by oral narratives transmitted across generations, a practice common to all tribal communities lacking a written historical record. The Kachari tribe in Nagaland have a distinct oral history; yet, unlike other Naga tribes, their historical narrative is subject to ongoing investigation and scepticism. Their sovereignty over their ancestral locations is frequently challenged, unlike that of other tribes. In discussions regarding the legitimacy of the Kacharis in Dimapur, perspectives often shift, with individuals asserting that all territory currently designated as Nagaland rightfully belongs to the Nagas. Simultaneously, these individuals tend to gatekeep the historical narratives of the Naga tribes, asserting their legitimacy based on the analogous oral traditions upheld by each tribe in Nagaland.

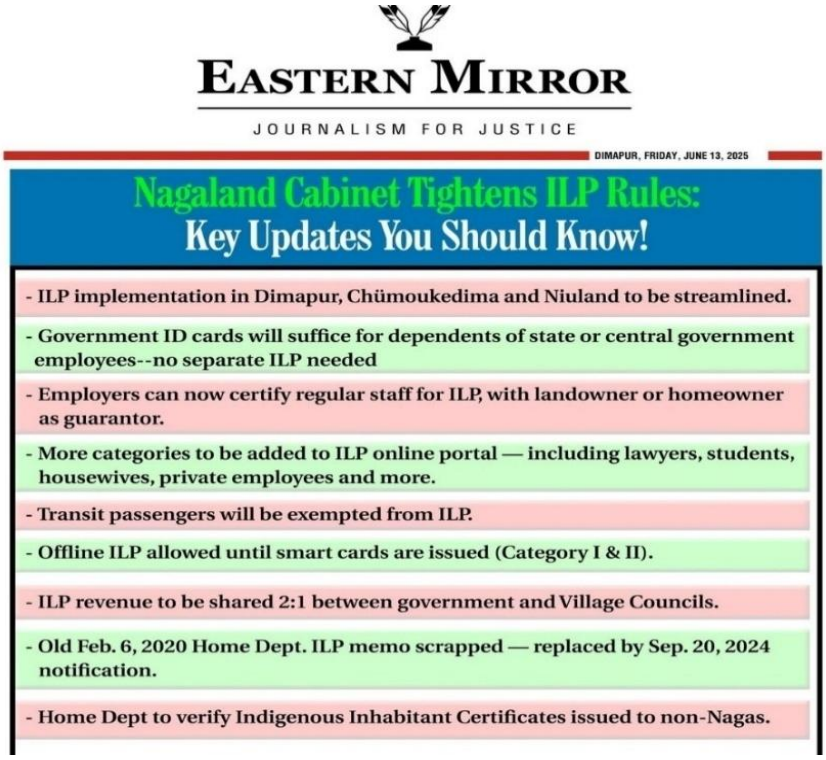
Currently, as Naga Nationalism reaches its zenith and social media enables widespread expression of opinions, many of these perspectives exhibit insensitivity towards the enduring history, culture, and traditions of the Kacharis, who are perceived as outsiders when they present their concerns. This bias appears to be systematic, originating at the political level and permeating social and cultural spheres. The government's lackadaisical attitude towards the Kacharis' plight can also be ascribed to the general Naga population's disposition in contemporary society, where individuals increasingly distance themselves from the truth and form opinions based on reports and news disseminated through social media.

The recent governmental initiative, Register for Indigenous Inhabitants of Nagaland (RIIN), initially perceived as a comprehensive assessment of all indigenous populations in Nagaland, was ultimately confined to the former Dimapur region, focussing exclusively on non-Naga indigenous individuals required to substantiate their ancestry through the electoral rolls of 1963. The reliance on the 1963 electoral roll to substantiate the authenticity of one's identification appears to be flawed on several grounds. Firstly, it is implausible that every citizen would be included in that specific list; if this is the case, then every tribe in Nagaland must be evaluated by the same criteria. Secondly, the RIIN, intended as a statewide initiative, has been diminished to a mechanism for executing the ILP, which possesses its own constraints

due to the government's lack of definitive strategies for its implementation. Simultaneously, the minor tribes are consistently pressured to furnish documentation, with their indigenous certificates perpetually subjected to examination. Thirdly, it prompts various question:

1. Is the government genuinely committed to the implementation of such programs?
2. Are they treating all Indigenous inhabitants equitably?
3. What methods are they employing to ascertain the authenticity of the certificates issued to other Naga groups?
4. Is the government certain that only non-Nagas are issuing indigenous certificates to non-indigenous individuals, and that no Naga group or individual is implicated in these practices?

At a time when a segment of the Nagas adheres to the notion that 'Nagaland belongs to the Nagas,' the state government's efforts that specifically target the indigenous non-Naga people in these initiatives are detrimental to these tribes. It generates greater confusion among the general populace and exposes these minor tribes to scrutiny from individuals lacking historical awareness or socio-political understanding. Recently, the government resolved to cease the issuance of indigenous inhabitant certificates to the indigenous non-Naga populations of Nagaland. This decision was contested by the tribes in court, leading to a judicial stay of the order. However, the government contravened the court's standing order and issued a subsequent directive. When this was brought to the court's attention, the government, in order no. CAB-1/14/2023, asserted that 'the present court stay should be strongly contested' and maintained that no new indigenous inhabitant certificates should be granted to these tribes (see Appendix 6). Simultaneously, hundreds, if not thousands, particularly from the student demographic of these tribes, endured hardships due to this unreasonable directive issued by the state administration. Students typically necessitate these documents when seeking admissions to a new institution or employment; nevertheless, the current government appears oblivious to the challenges faced by minorities in the state, instead perpetuating a narrative aligned with the majoritarian perspective.



EASTERN MIRROR

JOURNALISM FOR JUSTICE

DIMAPUR, FRIDAY, JUNE 13, 2025

Nagaland Cabinet Tightens ILP Rules: Key Updates You Should Know!

- ILP implementation in Dimapur, Chümoukedima and Niuland to be streamlined.
- Government ID cards will suffice for dependents of state or central government employees--no separate ILP needed
- Employers can now certify regular staff for ILP, with landowner or homeowner as guarantor.
- More categories to be added to ILP online portal — including lawyers, students, housewives, private employees and more.
- Transit passengers will be exempted from ILP.
- Offline ILP allowed until smart cards are issued (Category I & II).
- ILP revenue to be shared 2:1 between government and Village Councils.
- Old Feb. 6, 2020 Home Dept. ILP memo scrapped — replaced by Sep. 20, 2024 notification.
- Home Dept to verify Indigenous Inhabitant Certificates issued to non-Nagas.

Fig 31: A news article about an update on the ILP rules.

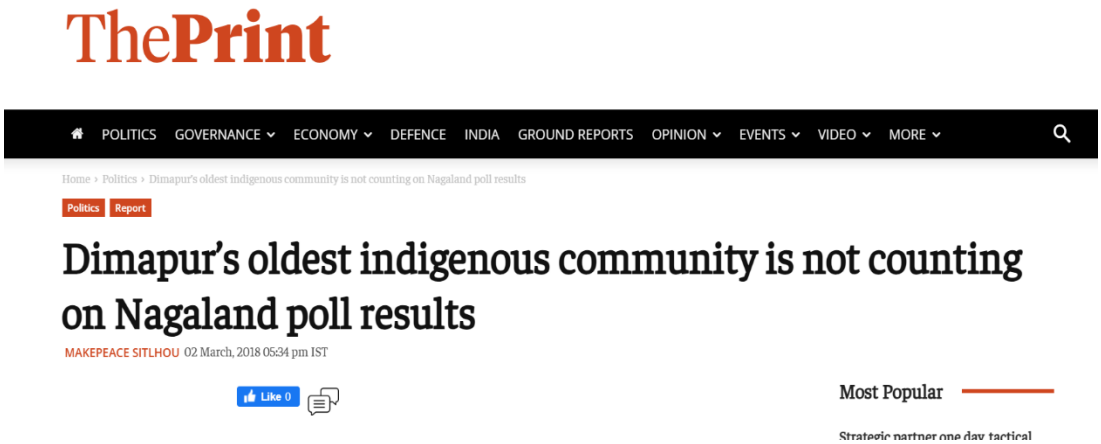
Recently, published in *Morung Express*, Deputy Chief Minister and Home Department Minister Y. Patton provided data in response to a starred query on the opening day of the fifth session of the Nagaland Legislative Assembly on August 27, 2024. The data indicates that there were no gazetted officers from the Kachari tribe and only 155 non-gazetted officers inside the state apparatus. Numerous openings are allocated based on the backward tribe quota, or in certain instances, preference is afforded to a local indigenous individual of a specific tribe contingent upon the location of the posting. However, the Dimapur district is frequently classified as a metropolitan area, and the openings are accessible to persons from all recognised tribes. According to the 2011 census, the Kachari population was 13,034, which may have significantly expanded by 2024; yet, when comparing the number of non-gazetted officers in 2024 to the 2011 population, it constitutes only 1.19% of the overall population.

Fig 32: Newspaper article on the representation of tribes in the government sector.

All tribes in Nagaland receive certain preferences based on their tribal affiliation or the dialect they speak regarding postings in specific tribal areas. However, the Kacharis and other minor groups, who regard Dimapur as their traditional homeland, do not benefit from this same provision. The prevailing discourse surrounding the denial of special provisions to the Kacharis posits that their defeat by the Ahoms led to their exodus from Dimapur, resulting in a deserted locale that subsequently became integrated into Nagaland. Although the defeat against the Ahoms is indeed a fact, the notion that the entirety of Dimapur was abandoned appears to be rather implausible. It is indeed the case that a significant portion of the Nagas currently possess land in Dimapur through various avenues; however, a review of the electoral rolls from 1963 and the census data preceding that period reveals a markedly small presence of Nagas in that area.

The presence of the Kacharis in the interim government of 1961 and their elected representation in the Nagaland Legislative Assembly until 1987 clearly indicates their significant involvement and substantial population in that region. The notion that Dimapur was deserted could stem from the observation that, during the British arrival and the subsequent formation of the state, Dimapur was sparsely populated, a reality still evident in the villages located on the periphery of the more densely inhabited regions. To assert that there were no settlements is quite

unreasonable, as evidence indicates that certain Kachari Villages were indeed relocated during the period of the Second World War.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Politics Report

Dimapur's oldest indigenous community is not counting on Nagaland poll results

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Fig 33: Newspaper article during the 2018 elections in Nagaland.

The Kacharis in Nagaland have experienced a significant erosion of political status and representation, despite being among the region's oldest indigenous communities and constitutionally recognised as Scheduled Tribes. Once politically active during the early years of Nagaland's formation, they have since been largely marginalized.

To address this growing inequality, the Nagaland government must adopt inclusive reforms. These should include establishing a dedicated Kachari Tribal Welfare Board, ensuring minority representation in RIIN and IIC verification committees, and preserving Kachari heritage sites under state protection. Additionally, reserved representation in urban local bodies or consultative tribal councils would give the community a much-needed voice in governance. The government should also introduce a cultural preservation fund to support Kachari language education, festivals, and traditional knowledge systems.

Ultimately, the Kacharis are not asking for privilege—they are demanding protection of their rightful place in Nagaland's multicultural landscape. Inclusion, representation, and respect are essential not only for justice but for the broader harmony of the state's indigenous fabric. Unless urgent corrective measures are taken,

the silent marginalization of the Kacharis will continue, eroding a legacy far older than the modern political boundaries that now threaten to define them.

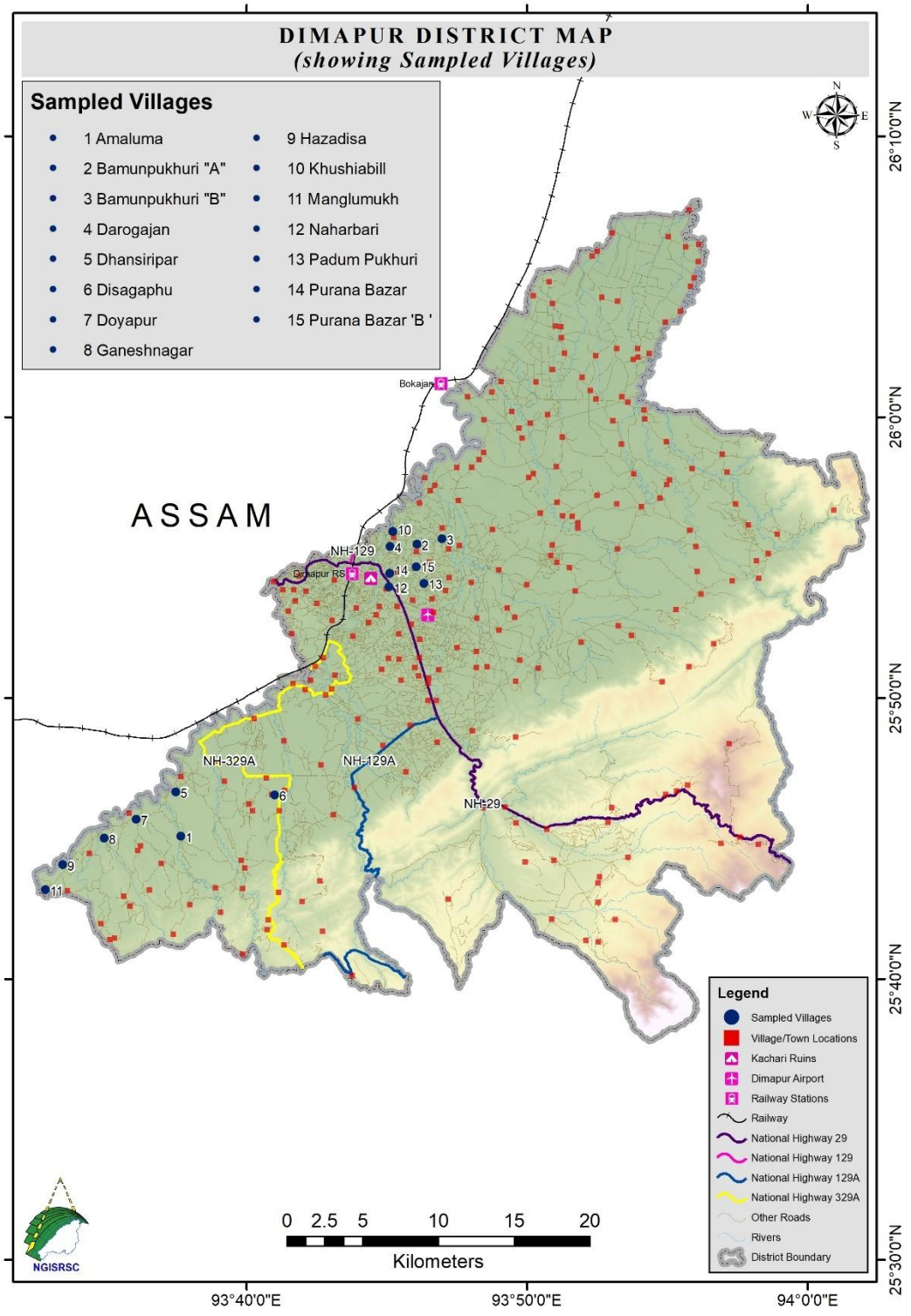
Scope for Further Research

While the scholar has made all possible effort to document the political and social history of the Kacharis of Nagaland, it is not without its limitations. For this research the scholar has focussed mostly on the Kacharis that are residing in Nagaland, Dimapur in particular, and have come up with a descriptive history of the Kacharis in Nagaland and may not be as in-depth as intended. Nevertheless, these limitations also open up avenues for further research. Future studies could expand the scope by incorporating broader datasets, engaging with more diverse populations, or applying comparative frameworks to deepen the understanding of the topic. Such continued investigation would not only strengthen existing knowledge but also contribute to a more comprehensive academic discourse. Some of the avenues for further research includes and not limited to:

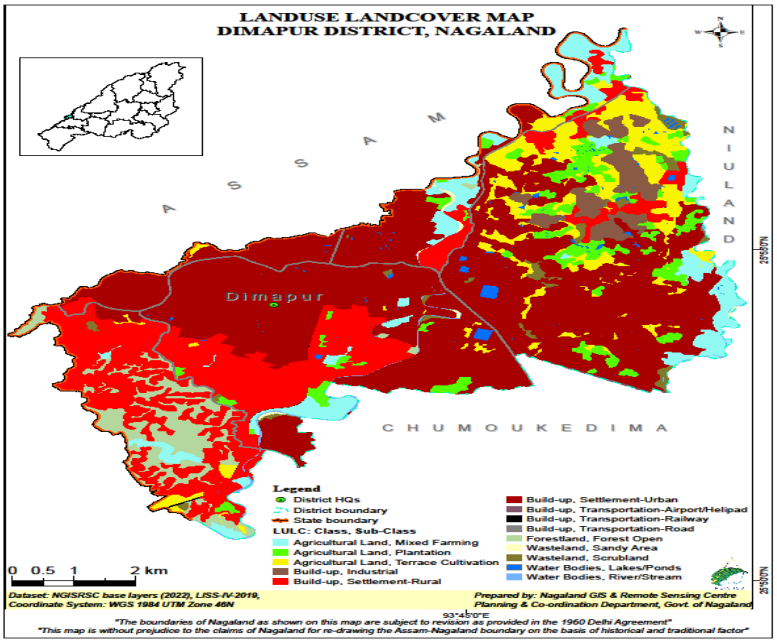
1. A comprehensive examination of the migration of the Kacharis can be conducted, focussing on the settlement patterns of the Kacharis across various regions of Northeast.
2. Detailed studies can be done on the two indigenous sub-tribes of Kacharis in Nagaland, looking at what they have in common and what makes them different.
3. There is potential for research into the significance of the archaeological and material culture of the Kacharis in Nagaland.
4. A comprehensive study of the Kachari-Naga relationship can be taken to analyse the dynamics within the current socio-political context.
5. A study may be conducted to analyse the absence of historical documentation regarding the Kacharis and their under-representation in social and political discussions.
6. A detailed examination of the effects stemming from the recent bifurcation of the former Dimapur district, resulting in the establishment of the two new districts of Chumoukedima and Niuland, on the Kacharis is warranted.

7. It is essential to conduct research on the various political, social, cultural, and traditional dimensions of the Kacharis in Nagaland to enhance awareness among the general population regarding the challenges faced by the Kacharis.
8. The effects of modernisation, urbanisation, and development activities can be studied in Dimapur and the newly established district of Chumoukedima, which are evolving into significant commercial centres, where the Kachari villages are located at present.
9. Research can be done on issues of autonomy, land rights, and minority policies.
10. Language shift, endangerment, and revitalization efforts in multilingual settings can be studied in greater detail.

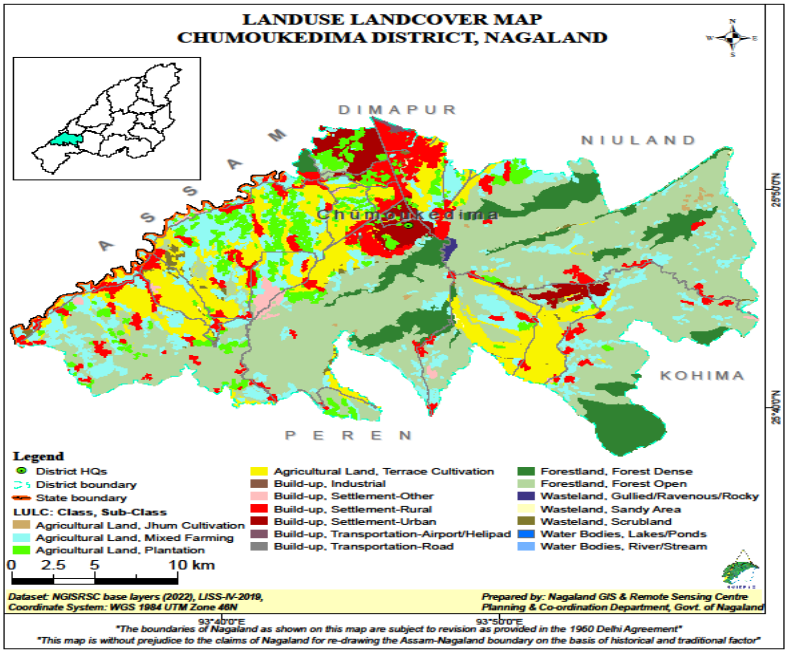
Map1: A map of the erstwhile Dimapur region prior to bifurcation with the sampled villages. (Area Of Study)



Maps showing the land use/ land cover of the Districts of Dimapur and Chumoukedima indicating a more densely populated region in Dimapur with mostly urban settlement area, whereas, a more rural setting for Chumoukedima with more forest cover.



Map 2: Land use/cover Dimapur



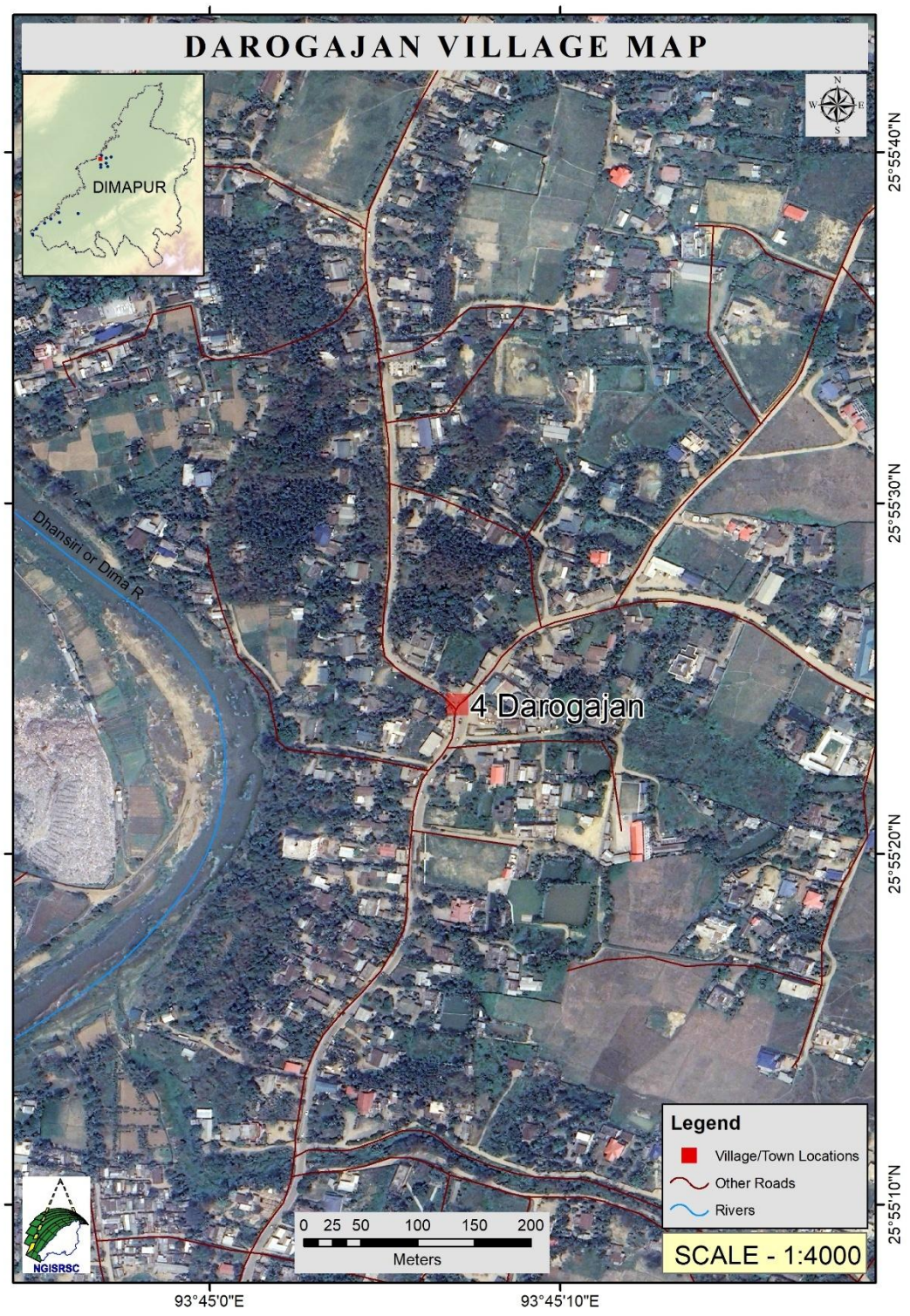
Map 3: Land use/cover Chumoukedima

Google Earth maps of the Kachari villages in Nagaland.

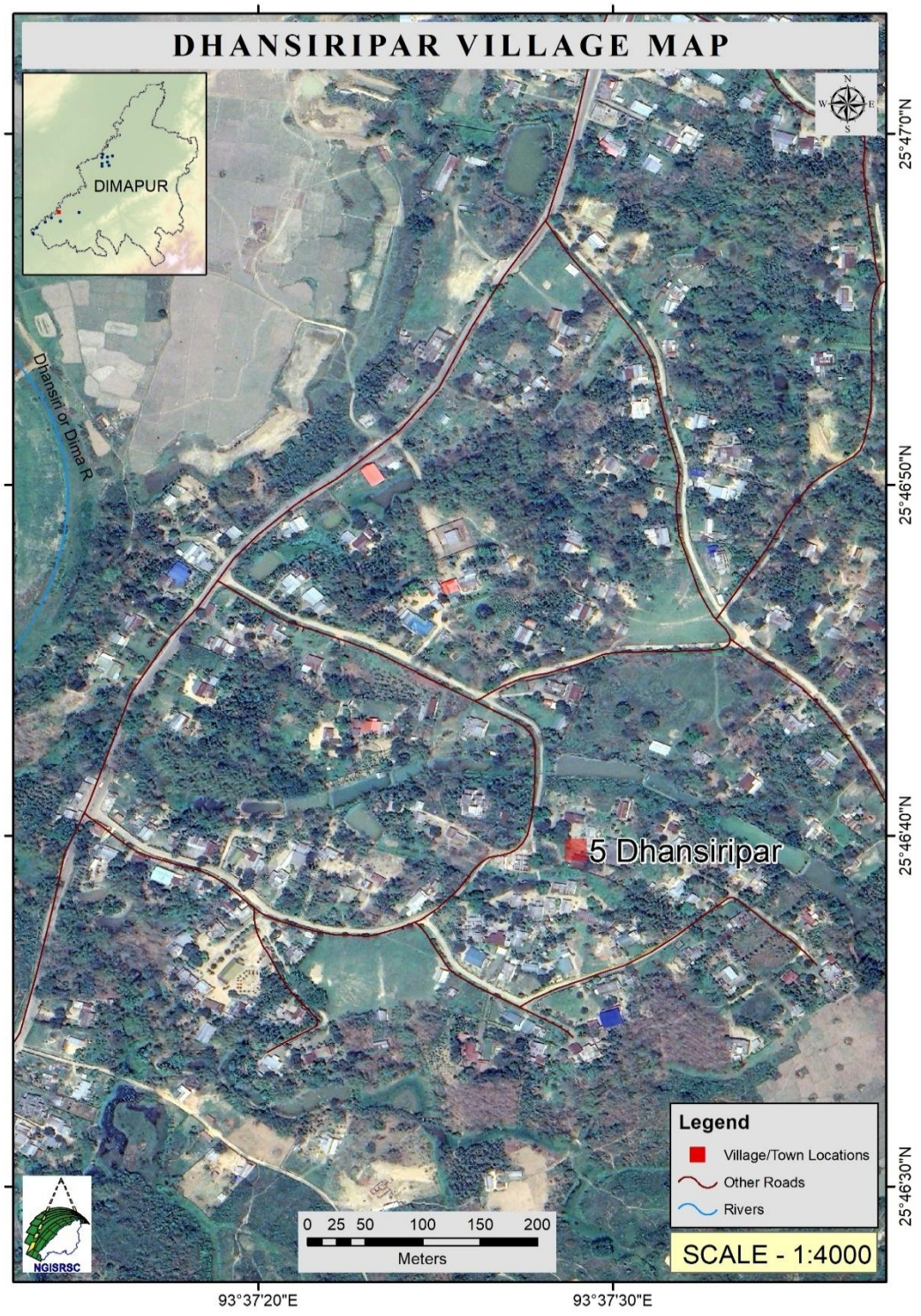
Map 4: Amaluma Village

Map 5: Bamunpukhuri A Village

Map 6: Bamunpukhuri B Village



Map 7: Darogajan Village



Map 8: Dhansiripar Village

Map 9: Disaguphu Village

Map 10: Doyapur Village

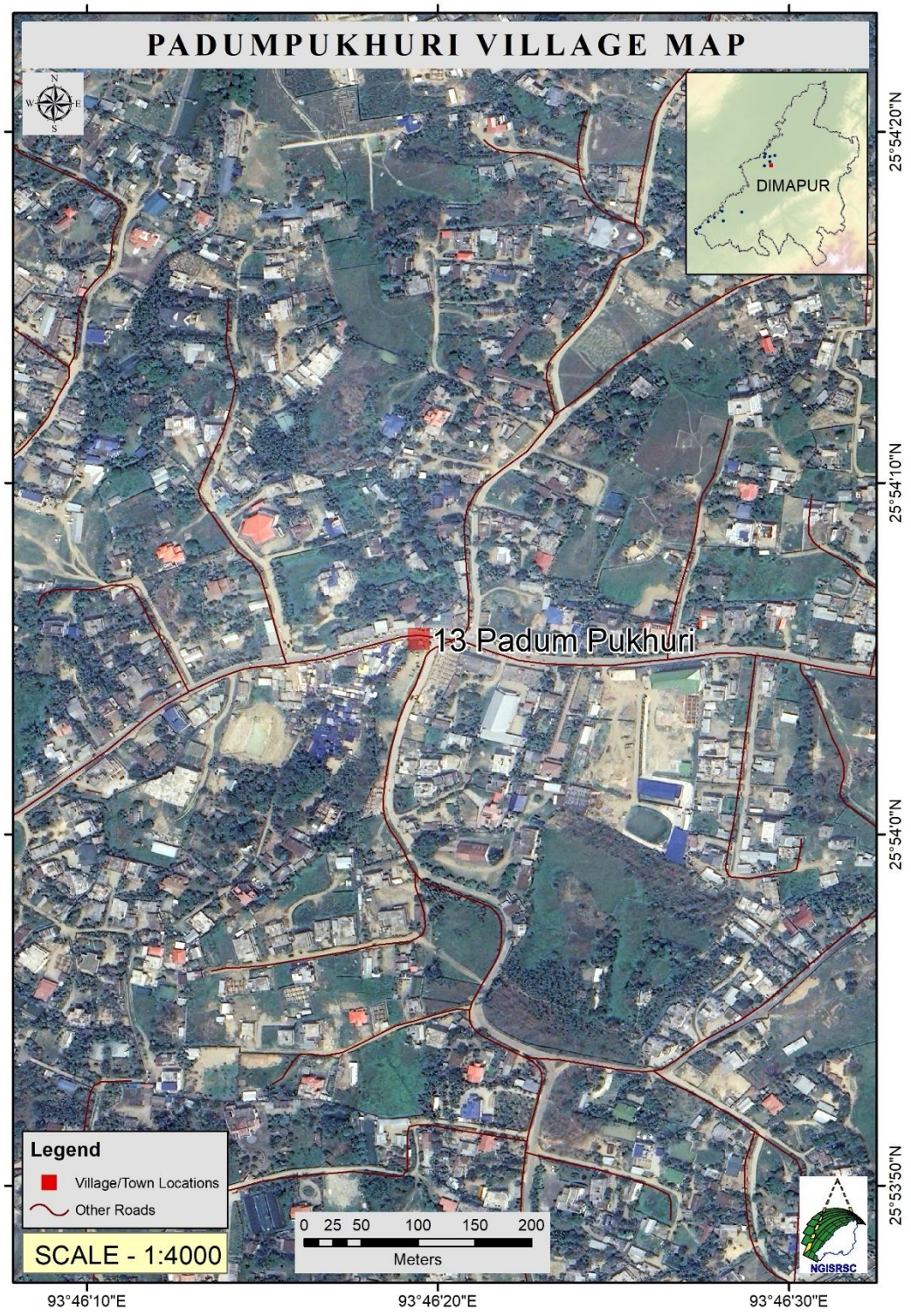
Map 11: Ganeshnagar Village

Map 12: Hazadisa Village

Map 13: Kushiabill Village

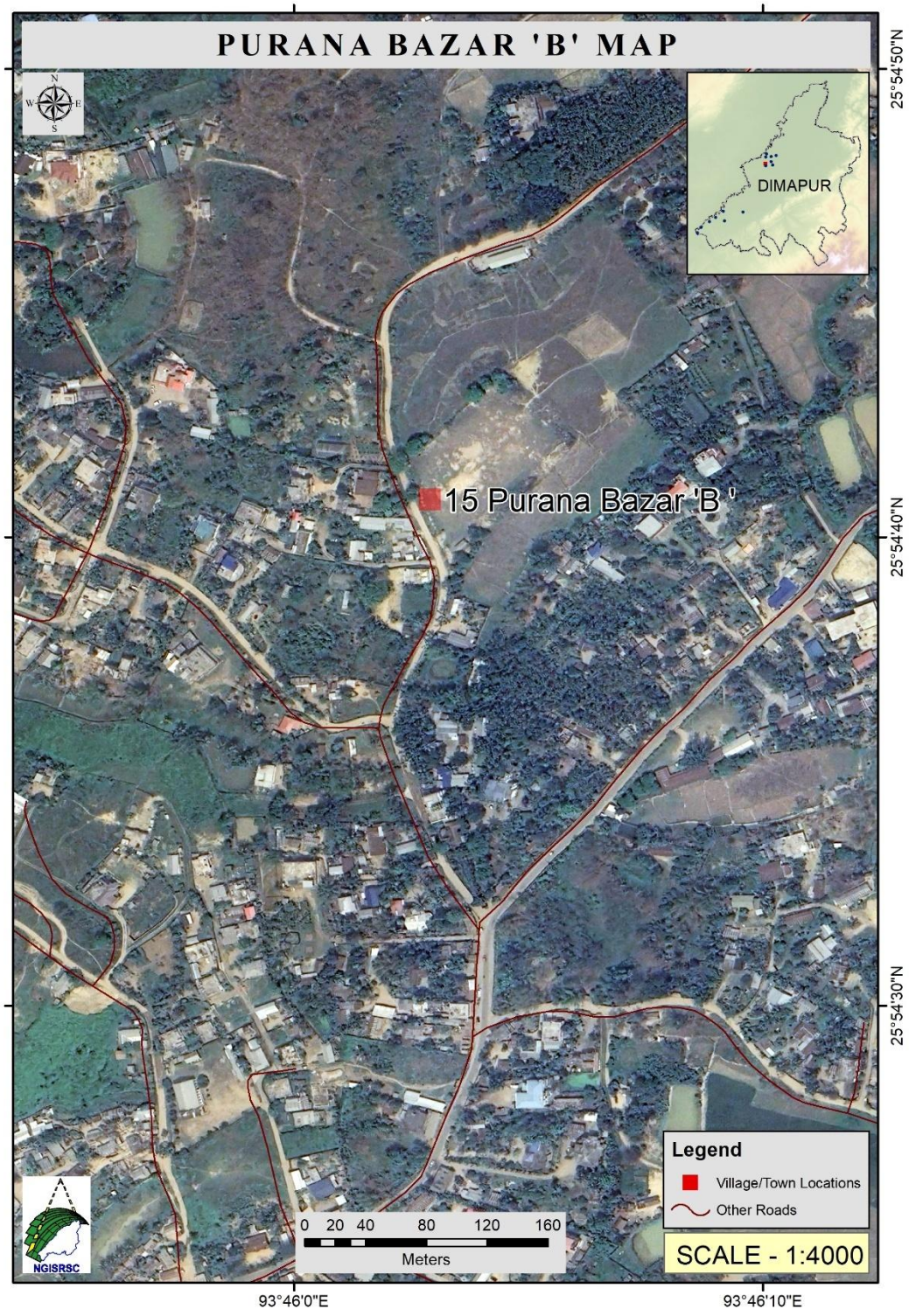
Map 14: Manglamukh Village

Map 15: Naharbari Village

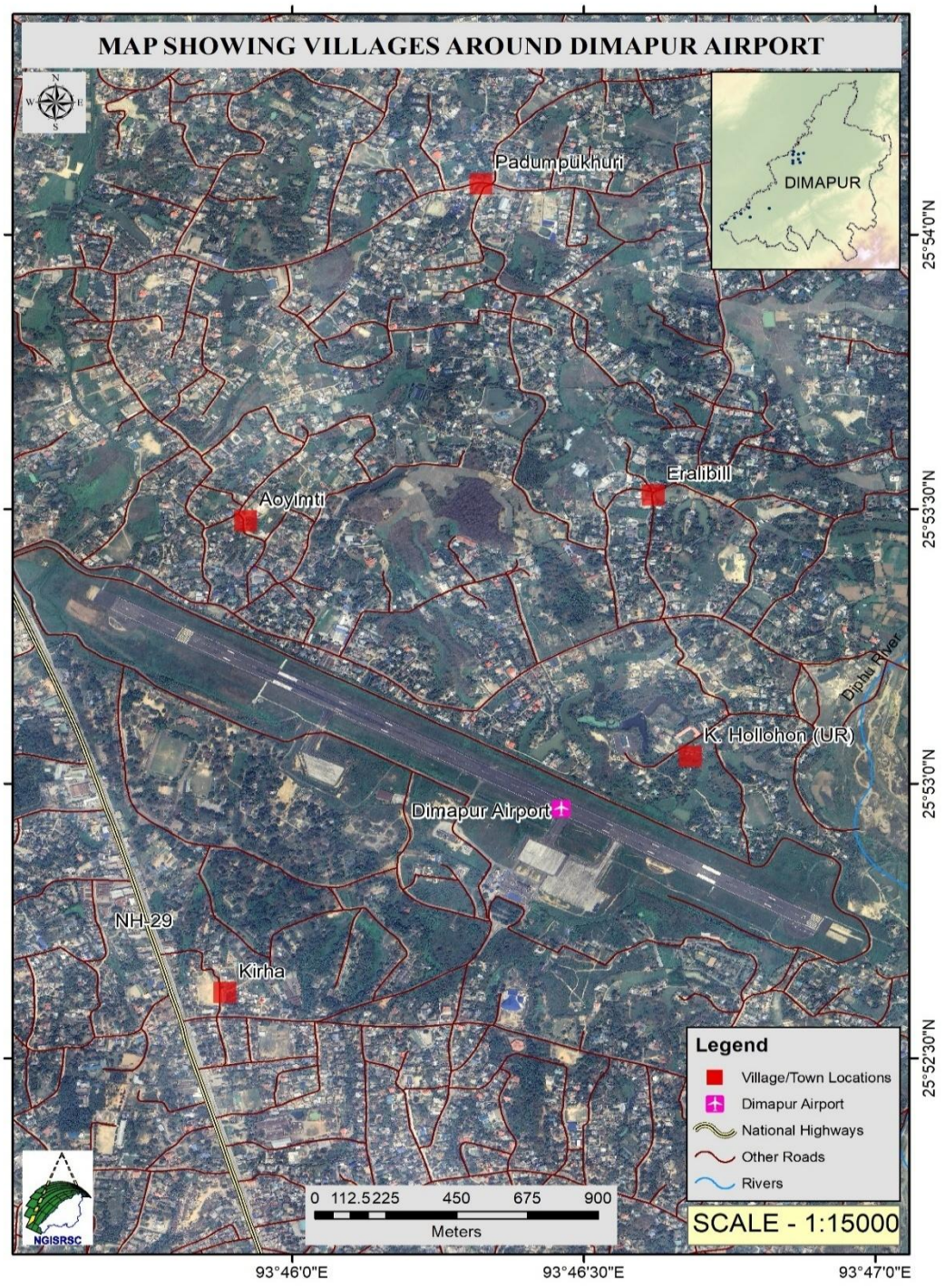


Map 16: Padumpukhuri Village

Map 17: Purana Bazar A Village



Map 18: Purana Bazar B Village



Map 19: A map delineating the regions and settlements surrounding Dimapur Airport.

Oral history indicates some Kachari villages were located in this area prior to their displacement during the Second World War.

Map 20: Kachari Rajbari Ruins

Appendix 1

Scheduled Tribes of Nagaland, 1970

[1]THE CONSTITUTION (NAGALAND) SCHEDULED TRIBES ORDER, 1970

(C.O. 88)

In exercise of the powers conferred by clause (1) of article 342 of the Constitution of India, the President, after consultation with the Governor of the State of Nagaland, is pleased to make the following Order, namely:--

1. This Order may be called the Constitution (Nagaland) Scheduled Tribes Order, 1970.

2. The tribes or tribal communities, or parts of, or groups within, tribes or tribal communities, specified in the Schedule to this Order, shall, for the purposes of the Constitution, be deemed to be Scheduled Tribes in relation to the State of Nagaland so far as regards members thereof resident in that State.

THE SCHEDULE

1. Naga
2. Kuki
3. Kachari
4. Mikir
5. Garo.

1. Published with the Ministry of Law, Notifn. No. G.S.R. 1099, dated the 23rd July, 1970, Gazette of India, Extraordinary, 1970, Part II, Section 3(i), page 641.

Appendix 2

Treaty of Yandabo

Treaty of Yandaboo, 24 February 1826

TREATY of PEACE between the HONORABLE EAST INDIA COMPANY on the one part, and HIS MAJESTY the KING of AVA on the other, settled MAJOR-GENERAL SIR ARCHIBALD CAMPBELL, K.C.B., and K.C.T.S., COMMANDING the EXPEDITION, and SENIOR COMMISSIONER in PEGU and AVA; THOMAS CAMPBELL ROBERTSON, ESQ., CIVIL COMMISSIONER in PEGU and AVA; and HENRY DUCIE CHAD, ESQ., CAPTAIN, COMMANDING BRITANNIC MAJESTY'S and the HONORABLE COMPANY'S NAVAL FORCE the IRRAWADDY RIVER, on the part of the Honorable Company; and by MENGYEE-MAHA-MEN-KYAN-TEN WOONGYEE, LORD of LAYKAING, and MENGYEE-MARA-HLAH-THUO-HAH-THOO-ATWEN-WOON, LORD of the REVENUE, on the part of the King of Ava; who have each communicated to the other their full powers, agreed to and executed at Yandaboo in the Kingdom of Ava, on this Twenty-fourth day of February, in the year of Our Lord One Thousand Eight Hundred and Twenty-six, corresponding with the Fourth day of the decrease of the Moon Taboung, in the year One Thousand One Hundred and Eighty-seven Gaudma Era, 1826.

ARTICLE 1.

There shall be perpetual peace and friendship between the Honorable Company on the one part, and His Majesty the King of Ava on the other.

ARTICLE 2.

His Majesty the King of Ava renounces all claims upon, and will abstain from all future interference with, the principality of Assam and its dependencies, and also with the contiguous petty States of Cachar and Jyntia. With regard to Munnipoor it is stipulated, that should Ghumbheer Sing desire to return to that country, he shall be recognized by the King of Ava as Rajah thereof.

ARTICLE 3.

To prevent all future disputes respecting the boundary line between the two great Nations, the British Government will retain the conquered Provinces of Arracan, including the four divisions of Arracan, Ramree, Cheduba, and Sandoway, and His Majesty the King of Ava cedes all right thereto. The Unnoupectoumien or Arakan Mountains (known in Arakan by the name of the Yeomatoung or Pokhingloung Range) will henceforth form the boundary between the two great Nations on that side. Any doubts regarding the said line of demarcation will be settled by Commissioners appointed by the respective governments fur that purpose, such Commissioners from both powers to be of suitable and corresponding rank.

ARTICLE 4.

His Majesty the King of Ava cedes to the British Government the conquered Provinces of Yeh, Tavoy, and Mergui and Tenasserim, with the islands and dependencies thereunto appertaining, taking the Salween River as the line of demarcation on that frontier ; any doubts regarding their boundaries will be settled as specified in the concluding part of Article third.

ARTICLE 5.

In proof of the sincere disposition of the Burmese Government to maintain the relations of peace and amity between the

Nations, and as part indemnification to the British Government for the expenses of the War, His Majesty the King of Ava agrees to pay the sum of one crore of Rupees.

ARTICLE 6.

No person whatever, whether native or foreign, is hereafter to be molested by either party, on account of the part which he map have taken or have been compelled to take in the present war.

ARTICLE 7.

In order to cultivate and improve the relations of amity and peace hereby established between the two governments, it is agreed that accredited ministers, retaining an escort or safeguard of fifty men, from each shall reside at the Durbar of the other, who shall be permitted to purchase, or to build a suitable place of residence, of permanent materials ; and a Commercial Treaty, upon principles of reciprocal advantage, will be entered into by the two high contracting powers.

ARTICLE 8.

All public and private debts contracted by either government, or by the subjects of either government, with the others previous to the war, to be recognized and liquidated upon the same principles of honor and good faith as if hostilities had not taken place between the two Nations, and no advantage shall be taken by either party of the period that may have elapsed since the debts were incurred, or in consequence of the war ; and according to the universal law of Nations, it is further stipulated, that the property of all British subjects who may die in the dominions of His Majesty the King of Ava., shall, in the absence of legal heirs, be placed in the hands of the British Resident or Consul in the said dominions, who will dispose of the same according to the tenor of the British law. In like manner the property of Burmese subjects dying under the same circumstances, in and part of the British dominions, shall be made over to the minister or other authority delegated by His Burmese Majesty to the Supreme Government of India.

ARTICLE 9.

The Kink of Ava will abolish all exactions upon British ships or vessels in Burman ports, that are not required from Burmah ships or vessels in British port nor shall ships or vessels, the property of British subjects, whether European or Indian, entering the Rangoon River or other Burman ports, be required to land their guns, or unship their rudders, or to do any other act not required of Burmese ships or vessels in British ports.

ARTICLE 10.

The good and faithful Ally of the British Government, His Majesty the King of Siam, having taken a part in the present War, will, to the fullest extent, as far as regards His Majesty and his subjects, be included in the above Treaty.

ARTICLE 11.

This Treaty to be ratified by the Burmese authorities competent in the like cases, and the Ratification to be accompanied by all British, whether Europe or Native, American, and other prisoners, who will be delivered over to the British Commissioners ; the British Commissioners on their part engaging that the said Treaty shall be ratified by the Right Honorable the Governor-General in Council ,and the Ratification shall be delivered to His Majesty the King of Ava in four months, or sooner if possible, and all the Burmese prisoners shall, in like manner be delivered over to their own Government as soon as they arrive from Bengal.

ARCHIBALD CAMPBELL.

LARGEEN MEONJA,

Woonghee.

T. C. ROBERTSON,
Civil Commissioner.

SEAL OF THE LOTOO.

HY. D. CHADS,

Captain, Royal Navy.

SHWAGUM WOON,

Atawoon.

ADDITIONAL ARTICLE.

The British Commissioners being most anxiously desirous to manifest the sincerity of their wish for peace, and to make the immediate execution of the fifth Article of this Treaty as little irksome or inconvenient as possible to His Majesty the King of Ava, consent to the following arrangements, with respect to the division of the sum total, as specified in the Article before referred to, into instalments, *viz.*, upon the payment of twenty-five lacks of Rupees, or one-fourth of the sum total (the other Articles of the Treaty being executed), the Army will retire to Rangoon. Upon the further payment of a similar sum at that place within one hundred days from this date, with the proviso as above, the Army will evacuate the dominions of His Majesty the King of Ava with the least possible delay, leaving the remaining moiety of the sum total to be paid by equal annual instalments in two years, from this Twenty-fourth day of February 1826 A.D., through the Consul or Resident in Ava or Pegu, on the part of the Honorable the East India Company.

ARCHIBALD CAMPBELL.

LARGEEN MEONJA,

Woongee.

T. C. ROBERTSON,
Civil Commissioner.

SEAL OF THE LOTOO

HY. D. CHADS,

Captain, Royal Navy.

SHWWAGUM WOON,

Atawoon

Ratified by the Governor-General in Council, at Fort William in Bengal, this Eleventh day of April, in the Year of our Lord One Thousand Eight Hundred and Twenty-six.

AMHERST.

COMBERMERE.

J. H. HARINGTON.

W. B. BAYLEY.

From: C. U. Aitchison, ed. *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sanads: Relating to India and Neighbouring Countries*. Vol. XII. Calcutta: Government of India Central Publication Branch, 1931, 230-233.

Appendix 3

Inner Line Regulation

Annexure-III

[PART III]

[REGULATIONS MADE UNDER THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA ACT, 1870 (32 & 34 VICT.., C.3), AND GOVERNMENT OF INDIA ACT, 1915, IN FORCE IN THE PROVINCE OF ASSAM.]

REGULATION 5 OF 1873

(BENGAL EASTERN FRONTIER REGULATION, 1873)[1]

(27th August 1873)

A Regulation for the peace and Government of certain districts on the Eastern Frontier of Bengal.

Preamble.

WHEREAS the Secretary of State for India in Council has by Resolution in Council, declared the provisions of Act 33 Vict. Chap. 3, Section 1, to be applicable to the districts of Kamrup, Darrang, Nowgong, Sibsagar, Lakhimpur (Garo Hills)[3], Khasi and Jainta Hills, Naga Hills, Cachar. * [4]

And whereas the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal has proposed to the Governor General in Council a draft of the following Regulation, together with the reasons for proposing the same, for the peace and government of the said districts;

And whereas the Governor General in Council has taken such draft and reasons into consideration, and has approved of such draft, and the same has received the Governor General's assent;

The following Regulations is now published in the Gazette of India, and

will be published in the Calcutta Gazette, and will thereupon have the force of law, under the 33rd of Victoria, Chapter 3 :-

1. This Regulation shall extend to the districts named in the preamble, and shall come into force on the 1st of November, 1873.

---

1 SHORT TITLE – This short title was given by Notification No. 13; dated 11th October, 1875, published in Gazette of India, 1875, Part I, page 529.

LOCAL EXTENT – This Regulation extends pro prio vigore to the districts of Cachar, Darrang, Kamrup, Khasi and Jainta Hills, Lakhimpur, Naga Hills, Nowgong and Sibsagar – see the preamble and section1.

It has been extended, by notification under the Scheduled Districts Act, 1874 (XIV of 1874), section 5, to the following Scheduled Districts, namely:-

THE Eastern Duars in the Goalpara District – see Vol.I of Manual of Local Rules and Orders, Local extent

the Mokokchang subdivision of the Naga Hills District – see ibid.

the Sadiya Frontier Tract,

the Balipara Frontier Tract,

the Lakhimpur Frontier Tract and the Lushai Hills district.

(see the Manual of Assam Local Rules and Orders, Volume I and Notification No713-L., dated the 27th September, 1937.)

The Government of India Act, 1870. It is printed in the Collection of statutes relating to Inida, Vol.I

Reg. V of 1873, so far as it applied to the Garo Hills Districts, was repealed by the Repealing Act, 1897 (V of 1897).

The words "and Chittagong Hills," which were repealed by the Amending Act, 1903 (I of 1903), are omitted.

---

2. It shall be lawful for the [State Government] * * * * to prescribe, and from time to time to alter by notification in the [official Gazette][3], a line to be called "The Inner Line" in each or any of the above named districts.

The [State Government][1] may, by notification in the [official Gazette], prohibit all [citizens of India or any class of such citizens][5] or any persons residing in or passing through such districts from going from beyond such line without a pass under the hand and seal of the chief executive officer of such district or of such other officer as he may authorize to grant such pass; and the [State Government][1] may, from time to time, cancel or vary such prohibition[4].

3. Any * * * * [6] person so prohibited, who after "the Inner Line" has been prescribed and notified in accordance with section 2 of this Regulation, goes beyond such line without a pass, shall be liable, on conviction before a Magistrate (to imprisonment of either description which may extend to one year, to a fine not exceeding one thousand rupees, or to both).

Power prescribe and alter inner line.

4. The [State Government][8] may from time to time prescribe by notification in the Official Gazette[3] a form of pass[9] for each district, and may in such form fix such restrictions or conditions as the [State Government] [8] may deem fit and may require the payment of such dues and fees for such passes as the [State Government] [8] may seem proper.

Any holder of such a pass shall, on breach of any restriction or condition be liable, on conviction (to imprisonment of either description which may extend to one year, or to a fine not exceeding one thousand rupees, or to both.) [10]

---

1 The Chief Commissioner of Assam (Now, the State Government) see the Bengal, Bihar and Orissa and Assam Laws Act, 1912 (VII of 1912)s.3, and Sch.D, Pt.III, ante (as adopted by the A.O. 1937 and 1950).

Penalty for crossing line without pass.

2 The words "with the previous sanction of Governor General in Council", omitted by the A.O. 1937.

3 Now the official Gazette – see the Bengal Bihar and Orissa and Assam Laws Act, 1912 (VII of 1912) s.3, and Sch.D, Pt.III, ante (as adopted by the A.O.) 1937.

4. For notifications prescribing and altering Inner Lines, and prohibiting persons from going beyond such lines without a pass, see the Manual of Assam Local Rules and Orders.

5. Substituted for "British subjects or any class of British subjects" by A.O. 1950.

6. The words, "British subject or other" omitted by A.O. 1950.

Power to prescribe form of pass.

7. The words under brackets were substituted for the words "to a fine not exceeding Rupees 100 for a first offence and to a fine not exceeding Rupees 500 or to simple or rigorous imprisonment, which may extend to three months or to both, for each subsequent offence" by s.2 of Regulation V of 1925.

8. Substituted by the A.O. 1937 for "L.G." which was again substituted by A.O. 1950 to read as above.

9. For notifications prescribing forms of pass, the Manual of Assam Local Rules and Orders, Vol.III.

10. The words under brackets were substituted for the words "to a fine not exceeding Rupees 100 for a first offence and to a fine not exceeding Rupees 500 or to simple or rigorous imprisonment, which may extend to three months or to both, for each subsequent offence."

---

5. (1) Any rubber, wax, ivory or other jungle-product,1 (or any book, diary, manuscript, map, picture, photograph, film, curio or article of religious or scientific interest) found in the possession of any person convicted of any offence under this Regulation may be confiscated to Government by an order to be passed at the time of conviction by the Magistrate.

[2] (2) If the Magistrate has reason to believe that any article which if found in the possession of a person convicted under this Regulation would have been liable to confiscation under sub-section (1) has been acquired or wholly or partly written, made or taken by such person beyond "the Inner Line", the Magistrate after giving the person in whose possession the article is found an opportunity to show cause why an order under the sub-section should not be passed in respect of the article any, unless it is proved that the article was not acquired, written, made or taken as aforesaid, order that such article be confiscated to Government.

6. The Chief Executive Officer of any district comprised in any notification as aforesaid may, subject to the approval of the [State Government] [3] authorize,

by a written instrument under his hand any public servant to arrest and bring before him with the least practicable delay -

firstly, any person prohibited from crossing "the Inner Line" prescribed for such district, if such person shall be found beyond the line and when asked to produce his pass shall refuse or be unable so to do.

secondly, any person to whom a pass may have been granted and who has committed any infraction of its conditions.

7. It shall not be lawful for any * * * person, not being a Native of the districts comprised in the preamble of this Regulation, to acquire any interest in land or the product of land beyond the said "Inner Line" without the sanction of the [State Government][3] or such officer as the [State Government][3] shall appoint in this behalf.

Confiscation of jungle products found with offender.

Any interest so acquired may be dealt with as the [State Government] or its said officer shall direct.

The [State Government][3] may also, by notification in the [Office Gazette][5] extend the prohibition contained in this section to any class of persons, Natives of the said districts, and may from time to time in like manner cancel or vary such extension.

8 to 10. [Killing or capturing elephant]. Rep by Reg. 1 of 1880.

11. Offences against this Regulation may be tried by Magistrates of the first or second class, and shall be bailable.

---

1. The words under brackets were inscribed by s.3 of Regulation V of 1925.
2. Section 5(2) was inserted by s.4 of Regulation V of 1925.
3. Substituted by the A.O. 1937 of "L.O." which was again substituted by A.O. 1950 to read as above.
4. The word "British subject or other" omitted by A.O. 1950.

Now the Official Gazette – see the Bengal, Bihar and Orissa and Assam Laws Act, 1912 (VII of 1912), s.3 and Sch.D., Pt. III, ante (as adopted by the A.O.) 1937.

Power to authorize arrest.

Appendix 4

The Shillong Accord, 1975

Shillong Agreement between the Government of India and the Underground Nagas

Shillong, 11 November 1975

The following representatives of the underground organisations met the Governor of Nagaland, Shri L.P. Singh representing the Government of India, at Shillong on 10th and 11th November, 1975.

1. Shri. I. Temjenba
2. Shri. S. Dahru
3. Shri Veenyiyl Rhakhu
4. Shri. Z. Ramyo
5. Shri M. Assa
6. Shri Kevi Yallay

2. There was a series of four discussions. Some of the discussions were held with the Governor alone; at other, the Governor was assisted by the two Advisors for Nagaland, Shri M. Ramunny, and Shri. H. Zopianga, and Shri M.L. Kampani, Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Home Affairs. All the five members of the Liaison Committee, namely Rev. Longri Ao, Dr. M. Aram, Shri. L. Lungalang, Shri Kenneth Kerhuo, and Shri Lungshim Shaiza, participated in the discussions.
3. The following were the outcome of the discussions:

   i. The representatives of the underground organisations conveyed their decision, of their own volition, to accept, without condition, the Constitution of India.
   ii. It was agreed that the arms, now underground, would be brought out and deposited at appointed places. Details for giving effect of this agreement will be worked out between them and representatives of the Government, the security forces, and members of the Liaison Committee.
   iii. It was agreed that the representatives of the underground organisations should have reasonable time to formulate other issues for discussion for final settlement.

Sd/- (I. Temjenba)
Sd/- (S. Dahru)
Sd/- (Z. Ramyo)
Sd/- (M. Assa)
Sd/- (Kevi Yalley)
On behalf of the Representative of the Underground organisations

Representative of Government of India Sd/-(L.P. Singh)
On behalf of the Government of India

Source: The South Asia Terrorism Portal

Retrieved from
https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/default/files/document/files/2024/05/in751111shillong20agreement0.pdf

Appendix 5

Framing of the 6th Schedule

FRAMING OF THE SIXTH SCHEDULE

Great care had been bestowed when the question of providing a proper — constitutional set up for the tribal areas of North East was debated in the Constituent Assembly'. The desire was to see that the aspirations of the people of the area are met on the one hand, and on the other, these areas are assimilated with the main stream of the country. To assist the Assembly in this purpose, a Sub-Committee was formed to report on the North East Frontier (Assam) Tribal and Excluded Areas. This Sub-Committee was to work under the Advisory Committee on Fundamental Rights, Minorities and Tribal and Excluded, Areas. The Sub-Committee was to have the then Premier of Assam, Shri Gopinath Bordoloi, as its Chairman. Other persons who acted as full members of the Committee to start with were:

(1) Shri J.J.M. Nichols Roy,
(2) Shri Rup Nath Brahma,
(3) Shri A.V. Thakkar and
(4) Shri Mayang Nokcha, who was later on replaced by Shri Aliba Imti.

The Committee which was formed on 27th February, 1947, extensively toured the Province of Assam, as it then was, which included visits to Lushai Hills District, North Cachar Sub-Division, Mikir Hills and the Naga Hills District. The Committee could not visit the Garo Hills District on account of bad weather and difficult communications. Jowai Sub-Division of Khasi Hills District could not also be visited for the same reason. The Committee noted the anxiety of the hill people about their land and fear of exploitation by more advanced persons, especially the money lenders because of which control of immigration was desired. The unsuitability of normal laws for the simple folk was also felt. The Sub Committee after great deliberations submitted its Report2 on 28th July, 1947 to the Chairman, Advisory Committee on Fundamental Rights, Shri Ballabhbhai Patel. The report has dealt in detail with various aspects relating to administration of the tribal areas. These aspects include thoughts on development, special features of these areas, land, forest, jhumming, courts, finance, control of immigration, mines, legislation, representation, services etc. The Advisory Committee discussed the matter on 7th December, 1947 and 24th February, 1948; and while forwarding the same to the President of the Constituent Assembly on 4th March, 1948, suggested only two amendments. These were:

1. The Assam High Court shall have power of revision in cases where there is failure of justice or where the authority exercised by the District Court is without jurisdiction; and
2. The plains portions were to be excluded from Schedule 'B' of the areas which were recommended for inclusion in the Schedule by the Sub-Committee.

Before the Advisory Committee had discussed the report of the Sub Committee, the Constitutional Adviser, *Shri B.N. Rau,* who had prepared the first draft of the Constitution in October, 1947, incorporated the recommendations in the Eighth Schedule of his draft.

The Drafting Committee (whose President was Dr. B.R.Ambedkar) considered this matter on 13th February, 1948 and made minor amendments in the draft. The number of the Schedule became Six from Eight because of general revision of numbers etc. of the Schedules. This apart, the three amendments which were made are-

1. In paragraph 1 (2), the words "on representation made in that behalf by such tribes" were omitted;
2. In paragraph 2(7) (c), for the words "entitling persons who vote" the words "for voting" were submitted; and
3. Paragraphs 4(2), and 4(1) were numbered as paragraphs 4(l) and 4(2), respectively.

The Draft of the Schedule with the aforesaid minor amendments was submitted to the President of the Constituent Assembly on 21st February, 1948. The Drafting Committee further examined the matter in the light of comments and criticisms of the draft which was circulated to all concerned and decided to sponsor some of the amendments suggested and to recast the language of some paragraphs as appeared in the reprint of the draft which was forwarded on 26th October, 1948.

The Constituent Assembly considered the matter on 5th, 6th and 7th September, 1949 and after extensive debate the draft Constitution was adopted with various amendments.

When the matter was debated in the Constituent Assembly, three distinct shades of opinion came to be expressed. One point of view, which was put forward mainly by *Shri Brajeswar Prasad* of Bihar was that the provincial Government or the Governor should have nothing to do with the administration of these areas; and it is the President who should look after them. In other words, these areas should be brought under Central jurisdiction. This view was taken by Shri Prasad because Assam being in the border of five or six foreign countries, he was opposed to handing over of the administration into the hands of provincial Government, specially because, according to him, there was in Assam at the relevant time conflicts between the Ahoms, and the Assamese, the Bengalees and the Muslims and the Mongoloid races. Infiltration on mass scale was going on. He, therefore, asked:

> "Is it right, is it safe, is it desirable, is it militarily in the interest of the Government of India, is it politically advisable that the administration of such a vast tract of land should be left in the hands of provincial Government, especially in a province where there is no element of political stability?"

He continued

> "Sir, I love this country more than provincial autonomy. I know the problems of Assam are too complicated and are beyond the economic resources of the province to tackled by the Provincial Government of Assam. Therefore, this problem should be left in the hands of the experts, social workers, doctors, engineers, psychologist, professors, philosophers and sociologists and no politicians should be allowed to meddle in this affair.

A little later he said

> "I will not jeopardize the interest of India at the altar of the tribals. The principle of self-determination has worked havoc in Europe……. It led to……..the vivisection of India…"

Shri Prasad had tabled amendments of different paragraphs in the light of his above thinking desiring placing of the entire matter in the hands of the Centre and the President, but the Constituent Assembly was not inclined to accept this view of Shri Prasad.

As against this, two Hon'ble Members from Assam, *Shri Kuladhar Chaliha* and *Shri Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri,* made efforts on a large number of occasions to give greater voice than what was proposed to the State Legislature and the Provincial Government. Shri Chaliha said that giving of too much autonomy to the tribals, would result in creation of "tribalstan" just as Pakistan had been created. Shri Chaudhuri asked:

> "Do you want an assimilation of the tribal and non-tribal people or do you want to keep them separate? If you want to keep them separate, they will never join with Tibet, they will join with Burma. They will never join with rest of India. You may take it from me."

Shri Chaliha was very sore about the provision that even an Act of Parliament could not be made applicable unless the tribals consented to it. He stated:

"Have you ever heard that an Act of Parliament cannot be applicable to any people unless they agree to it? Such a thing is impossible and therefore I say that this Schedule has been conceived in a way the background of which is to keep them away from us and to create a Tribalstan. And the result will be that there will be communistan there. The Communists will come and they will have a free hand, as in Manipur one of the Ministers was already a Communist."

Views of the then premier of Assam, *Shri Gopinath Bordoloi,* were given great weight not only because he was the Chairman of the Sub-Committee but because as stated by *Shri Nichols Roy,* Shri Bordoloi was known to be very kind and sympathetic to the hill people, had been respected by the hill tribes and had studied very closely the position of these tribal people. Shri Bordoloi explained to the Constituent Assembly the background in which the draft had been prepared. He referred to the problems of these areas .which were entirely excluded areas in the sense that none from the plains could go there and contact the tribal people. Some of the areas were described as war zones and it was stated that during the war the then Rulers and officers developed in the minds of these people a sense of separation and isolation and gave them assurance that at the end of the war they will be independent States managing their affairs in their own way. So, when the investigation began it was found that the people of the area were already immersed with ideas of isolation and separation. The Committee was therefore confronted with the question whether for the purpose of integration "methods of force, the methods of use of Assam Rifles and the military forces, should be used, or a method should be used in which the willing cooperation of these people can be obtained for the purpose of governing these areas."

Then it was found that there were certain institutions, among the hill tribals, which were so good that it would have been wrong to destroy them. Mention was made of village administration and of the manner in which disputes were settled. A point which had presented itself to the Committee was whether they would raise in the tribals a spirit of enmity and hatred by application of force or whether they should bring them up under the broad principles of government by good-will and love and the Sub-Committee felt that the latter course was the one which should be adopted.

Shri A.V.Thakkar, who was also a Member of the Sub-Committee, stated that the idea of autonomous district was the only proposal which was found acceptable not only to the Committee but also to the various tribes, though when he had first heard about this proposal he was himself surprised because this had never existed anywhere in any part of India.

According to *Shri Nochols Roy,* the measure of self-Government will make the tribals feel that the whole of India is sympathetic with them and nothing is going to be forced on them to destroy their feeling and culture. He asked why should the tribals not be allowed to develop themselves in their own way. He reminded that to keep the frontier area safe, these people must be kept in a satisfied condition. If force were to be used on them, more harm would be done as no advancement can come through force.

Shri Jaipal Singh, himself a tribal leader of repute, stated that of the two solutions, which he described as 'power solution' and 'knowledge solution', the former was no solution at all, as that would bring about a further disintegration of India. He asked not to suspect the intention of the tribals and desired restoration of their confidence and to respect the understanding reached by the Sub-Committee with the tribals.

According to *Dr. Ambedkar* the tribal people of Assam differed from the tribals of other areas. As for the latter, they were more or less Hinduised, more or less assimilated with the civilization and culture of the majority of the people in whose midst they lived. As for the former, their roots were still in their own civilization and their own culture. They had not adopted either the modes or the manners of the Hindus who surrounded them. Their laws of inheritance, their laws of marriage, custom, etc. were quite different from that of Hindus. He felt that the position of the tribals of Assam was somewhat analogous to that of the Red Indians in the United States who are a Republic by themselves in that country, and were regarded as a separate and independent people. He agreed that Regional and District Councils have been created to some extent on the lines which was adopted by the United States for the purpose of the Red Indians.

As the Constituent Assembly debated the draft by taking up each paragraph, it became apparent that the proposals of the Sub-Committee which had been accepted by the drafting Committee were going to be approved. Above all, it was the views of Dr. Ambedkar which carried the greatest weight.

As one amendment after another of Shri Chaliha and Shri Chaudhuri were being negatived, they felt disappointed and dejected. Shri Chaliha asked for kindness to be shown to him in accepting his amendment to paragraph 14, after all the unkindness that had been shown. Earlier to that Shri Chaliha had stated that the British had induced belief that the Hindus and men of plains were their greatest enemies and this feeling was being endorsed. Shri Chaudhari had desired acceptance of his views by saying that if the opinion of the members from Assam courts for anything in regard to the Sixth Schedule which relates primarily to Assam, it must be so done. But these appeals also were not to mellow down the heart of Dr. Ambedkar. This led Shri Chaudhuri to state about the stalwart at one stage:

"What mesmerism had been practiced over him is more than what I can see. I cannot understand a man like him trying to circumscribe the rights of ordinary people like this. I am feeling very much disappointed in him. He has come to a position where he can ridicule an orphan, Oliver Twist or David Copperfield, whatsoever he calls him."

Reference was made about David Copperfield because Dr. Ambedkar had earlier said that he was like hungry David Copperfield asking for more gruel.

This general discussion may be ended by quoting the statement of *Shri B.Das,* which he made towards the concluding stage to show the strong feelings of the members about the provisions of this Schedule. He said:

"Sir, I may be a fool in this house but I just want the house to know that what Rev. Nichols Roy said is only in continuation of the "two nation theory"...I hate the provisions of the Sixth Schedule whereby you are perpetuating primitive conditions of life. I have warned you yesterday and I warn you again. The British spies through help of British and American missions and communists are coming to these tribal areas and for that Reverend Nichols Roy will be held responsible."

During the debate, the draft provisions underwent many amendments, the important among which are the following:

1. A complete departure was made so far as the role of the Governor in the administration of these areas is concerned. Under the scheme of the Government of India Act, 1935, so far as the excluded areas are concerned, the Governor was to act in his discretion *[vide section 93(3)]* and as regards the partially excluded areas, he had a special responsibility to make regulation for peace and good government *[vide section 92(2)]*. When the Constitution was drafted, discretionary power of the Governor was kept intact with respect to certain matters and it is because of this that in paragraphs 15 and 18 (as drafted) had been specifically mentioned that the Governor shall exercise his functions under- these paragraphs in his discretion. But during the course of the debate in the Assembly, *Dr. Ambedkar* himself moved for deletion of these provisions from the two paragraphs. The discretion was rather sought to be confined while administering the areas specified in Part B of the Table appended to paragraph 17 (as it was numbered in the draft Constitution, which ultimately becamel.8). To make this clear, *Dr. Ambedkar* himself moved on amendment as it finds place in sub-paragraph 18(3) now.

This point came up for the first time when the Assembly was dealing with paragraph 1(3), and specially regarding the composition of the Commission on whose report only certain actions were permitted to be taken by the Governor. *Shri Kuladhar Chaliha* had desired that the Commission must have some members of the State legislature in it. *Dr. Ambedkar* in reply stated:

"I think if Mr. Chaliha had only read carefully the wording of the Sixth Schedule he would have seen that in appointing the Commission, the Governor is not going to act in his discretion. There is no discretion left in the Governor. That being so , it is quite obvious that in constituting the Commission and defining its terms of reference, the Governor would be guided by the advice of the local Ministers and, I do not think, therefore, there need be any fears such as the one that he has expressed."

This point came up again when paragraph 2 was being debated. To dispel any doubt on this point, Dr. Ambedkar stated as below:

> "The first thing that we have done is this: That we have provided that the executive authority of the Government of Assam shall extend not merely to non-tribal areas in Assam, but also to tribal areas, that is to say, the executive authority of the Assam Government will be exercised even in those areas which are covered by the autonomous districts. This, as will be seen, is a great improvement over the provisions contained in the Government of India Act, 1935. In the provisions contained in that Act, the executive was divided into two categories, one was called the Government of the province and the other executive was called the Governor in his discretion, so far as the tribal areas were concerned. This applied not only to the tribal areas in Assam but also to completely excluded areas in other areas. The executive authority which operated upon those areas was not the executive of province but the Governor in his discretion. We have abolished that distinction so that the whole of the tribal area including those in the autonomous district is now under the authority of the Provincial Government."

While dealing with paragraph 3 also, it was stated by Dr. Ambedkar as below:

> "According to my amendment the laws will be approved by the Governor as advised by Ministry of Assam, because in all this scheme we are dropping the words 'in his discretion'. Where ever the word Governor occurs, it means Governor acting on the advice of the Ministry."

When the Assembly was going through draft paragraph 10 which gave power to the District Council to make regulation even to control the trading by non-tribals, to which strong objection was taken by Shri Chaliha and Shri Chaudhury, Dr. Ambedkar stated in reply that the amendment which he had proposed stating that all regulations made under this paragraph shall be submitted to the Governor and until assented to by him shall have no effect, takes care among other safeguards of this apprehension. He clarified that the discretion which was vested in the Governor under the earlier provisions has altogether been taken away and the Governor can now act only subject to the advice of the Ministry.

This point was again made clear when paragraph 12 was being debated. The objection of Shri Chaliha was to the provision in clause (b) that for application of any law approval of the District Council would be necessary. Dr. Ambedkar while conceding to the amendment, stated:

> "The Governor by this amendment, is freed from trammels of any resolution that may be passed by the District Council or the Regional Council. He can now act on the advice of the Ministry whether a particular law passed by the Parliament or by the legislature of Assam is to apply to that area or not."

Reference may finally be made in this regard to what was stated by Pt. Hriday Nath Kunjru when paragraph 19 of the draft (which is paragraph 20 now) was being debated. He brought to the attention of the Assembly the distinction in the role of the Governor with reference to excluded and partially excluded area (under the scheme of Government of India Act, 1935) and then stated:

> "In other words, while in connection with excluded areas he (i.e., the Governor) was not bound to consult his Ministers at all, in respect of partially excluded areas he was bound to act according to their advice, unless he felt that he must dissent from it. Now this distinction no longer exists because the Governor, practically speaking, is required in all cases to act on the advice of his Ministers……I have said 'practically speaking'. The only exception is with regard to areas specified in Part II of the table appended to paragraph 19. There he is to act in his discretion because he will act as an agent of the President and obviously the directions given by the President cannot be allowed to be modified by the Provincial Ministers."

2. Sub-paragraph (3) of draft paragraph 15 and clause (c) of draft paragraph 18, both stating that Governor shall exercise his powers under these paragraphs in his discretion, were deleted, to bring the provisions of the Schedule in line with the thinking of the founding fathers about the role, a Governor should play in a free India.

3. Another point on which there was long and heated debates in the Assembly related to the position which Shillong town should occupy. In the draft, which was prepared on the basis of the report of the Sub-Committee, the entire town of Shillong was recommended for exclusion from item 1 of Part A of the Table, that is, from the tribal area falling within Khasi and Jaintia Hills District. But when the matter came before the Assembly, Dr. Ambedkar himself moved an amendment to the effect that part of Municipal area of Shillong which belonged to the State of Mylliem would be included in item 1, though for certain purposes this area also would be excluded, vide proviso to paragraph 19(2) of the draft. In the proviso, as proposed by Dr. Ambedkar, there was no mention of clause (d) of sub-paragraph (2) of the paragraph 10, which relates to the taking of licence form the District Council by any non-tribal to carry on wholesale or retail business in any commodity. Shri Chaliha and Shri Chaudhury strongly pleaded not to include any part of Shillong Municipality in the tribal area as that would vitally affect the non-tribals who were in great number. Shri Chaliha stated that it is an injustice to call Khasis as "tribals" as they are so much advanced that there are scholars, principals of Colleges and Ministers amongst them and they have the highest literacy in Assam. Shri Gopinath Bordaloi, however, stated that the basic question was how to maintain the District Council with its powers and at the same time integrate it with the municipal administration of the town of Shillong. It was to reconcile these two views that *so far* as municipal administration was concerned ri#hts was given to the Provincial Government; but as regards the tribal right relating to representation m District Council, that was, however, not taken away. According to Dr-Ambedkar, it was avoid double jurisdiction over the municipality that the proviso had been inserted in sub-paragraph (2). He asked as to how tribals living in Shillong could be subjected to different laws than their brothers so far as the marriage, inheritance, etc. are concerned. It was because of these considerations that for the purpose of municipality the part which was in the Mylliem State should be subject to municipality, while for the purpose for which the District Council is constituted it should remain subject to the District Council.

But keeping in view the strong pleas of the Assam Members, clause (d) to sub-paragraph (2) of paragraph 10 was also inserted in the proviso to subparagraph 19(2) which ultimately became paragraph 20(2).

4. The Assam Members had also pleaded to exclude Dimapur Mauza from the territorial limits of the Naga Hills District, but on Shri Bordoloi not supporting the plea because that would give rise to boundary dispute as the Nagas may say that their district would go to a certain point and the Dimapur people may say differently, the amendment was negatived by the Assembly.

5. As per the draft proposed, the decisions of the District Council Courts were to be final under paragraph 4. But this was amended at the behest of Dr. Ambedkar himself who proposed for the insertion of sub-paragraph (3) as it finds place now and for substitution of the words "except the High Court and the Supreme Court shall have jurisdiction over such suits or cases" for the words "shall have appellate jurisdiction over such suits or cases and the decision of such Regional or District Council or Court shall be final" in sub-paragraph (2).

6. In the draft finalised by the Drafting Committee, the laws and regulations made by the District Council were not required to be assented to by the Governor before becoming effective. But at the final stage Dr. Ambedkar himself moved amendments to paragraphs 3 and 10 by way of inserting subparagraphs (3) in both the paragraphs, as they find place now. This had been done with a view to see that the District Council and Regional Councils do not make such laws or regulations which may go against the interest of the State or non-tribals.

7. The requirement of approval of the District Council regarding applicability of Central and State laws was deleted from the provisions of paragraph 12 as drafted. This was one of the amendments of Shri Chaliha which had found favour with the Drafting Committee, which had led Shri Chaliha to say:

"Shri Kuladhar Chaliha: I am glad that for once some kind of sense has dawned upon the Drafting Committee. It is fortunate that for the first time sense has dawned on the drafting Committee.

The Hon'ble B.R.Ambedkar: That is because for the first time you have convinced me by your arguments."

8. Paragraph 17 as it finds place now was added in the Schedule. This was proposed by the Drafting Committee itself and the object of the same may be put in the words of the mover, who was none else than Dr. Ambedkar. He stated:

"The object of this is to give the people who are included in the autonomous districts but really who are not part and parcel of the people inhabiting the autonomous districts an opportunity to have a place in the Legislative Assembly by having their own constituencies marked out for them."

As would appear from his speech, this had been done at the instance of the representatives of Assam; and this, according to him, should take care of the difficulties which the non-tribals in some mauzas of Garo Hills and of Dimapur area may face on account of the inclusion of these areas in the Schedule.

9. Paragraph 1 had undergone many amendments. At first Dr. Ambedkar moved an amendment of sub-paragraph (3). The purport of the same was to delete Clause (d) of the draft and to add clauses (f) and (g) as they find place now. The two provisos as in the draft were also recast. Shri Chaliha had felt that there was no necessity of having a Commission. According to him, the power could be given to the Governor which means, of course, the Cabinet. Shri Brajeswar Prasad wanted the following amendment:

"That the following be added at the end of paragraph 1: " functions of the Governor under this paragraph shall be exercised by him as the agent of the President." Or, alternative, "The functions of the Governor under this paragraph shall be exercised by him in his discretion,"

Dr. Ambedkar did not favour any of these amendments and as to Shri Chaliha's plea that even if there be a Commission, the composition of the same should be declared and which according to him must have some members of the Legislative Assembly, the reply of Dr. Ambedkar, as already noted, was that the Governor would be guide in this matter by the advice of the local Ministers.

On the amendment moved by Shri Prasad, the Chairman of the Drafting Committee stated that as the autonomous districts shall form part of the Province of Assam, a part of the Province cannot be allowed to be governed by the Governor and a part to be administered by the Centre, which was the effect of the amendment suggested by Shri Prasad. Dr. Ambedkar also stated that the mover of the amendment had forgotten to take note that while constituting the autonomous areas, for the part which can be called "Frontier Areas", the Governor would be acting under the President. Consequently whatever strategic importance the frontier area may have, the Centre would certainly have ample jurisdiction to see that none of the disturbing factors to which reference was made by Shri Prasad, would find place there.

In view of this stand taken by Dr. Ambedkar, his amendment alone was adopted while those of Shri Prasad were negatived. It is, however, interesting to note that towards the close of the proceedings relating to this Schedule, the President of the Constituent Assembly himself suggested to re-open the amendments relating to paragraph 1 and stated that in paragraph 1(3) the following Clause should be inserted:

"(aa) excluding any area from part I of the said Table."

This suggestion was made because many speakers had expressed the reeling during the course of the debate that a need may arise to take out some areas from the Sixth Schedule, say because of its, development or desire of its inhabitants, and as such, there should be a specific power to do so, though the power to 'diminish the area of any autonomous district' may also cover the power to exclude. This amendment was adopted, which shows that areas included in Sixth Schedule were not meant to be permanently kept out from the other parts of the Province, or to be governed by special provisions as they find place in Sixth Schedule.

10. The last amendment of which mention may be made is the one which finds place in paragraph 21 of the Schedule. This amendment was also moved by Dr. Ambedkar. Professor Shibban Lal Saksena objected to the amendment and desired amendment of the Schedule after the whole matter of the tribal areas had been gone into by a Parliamentary Commission. According to him, the entire Schedule could be changed as per the report of the Commission. This was not accepted by the Assembly and the amendment moved by Dr. Ambedkar was adopted.

The Sixth Schedule as it finally emerged and found place in Constitution, as originally adopted, has been included in the Appendix

Appendix 6

Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting held on 14th May, 2025

GOVERNMENT OF NAGALAND
CABINET SECRETARIAT (CABINET CELL)
******

No. CAB-1/14/2023 Dated, Kohima the 15th May, 2025

Sub: Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 14th May, 2025.

The undersigned is directed to forward herewith an extract of the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 14th May, 2025 for your kind information and necessary action.

Agenda No. 2: Inner Line Permit.

The Home Commissioner briefed the Cabinet on the present status of enforcing the Inner Line Permit (ILP) in the State. He informed the Cabinet that a Committee has been approved to look into the grievances and suggestions to improve implementation of the ILP regime in the State. After thorough discussion, the Cabinet directed that a separate register of ILP holders residing in the village should also be maintained by the Village Council. Home department may prescribe a reasonable fee to be charged from ILP holders for maintaining such record. The Cabinet also directed that strict checks should be conducted immediately by the Police & District Administration for the ILPs in all the designated places and check gates of the State. The Cabinet also directed that ILP checking should also be done at Airport and Railway station and proper co-ordination must be ensured between District Administration and Police. The new features must be incorporated to make the ILP system more robust and effective.

The Cabinet was also apprised of the developments in the enumeration of 4 non-Naga tribes, under RIIN, and the stay granted by the High Court. The Cabinet directed that the present Court stay should be strongly contested and in the meanwhile no new IIC (Indigenous Inhabitants Certificate) should be issued to these tribes.

Action taken on the matter may be intimated to the Cabinet Cell.

15/5/25

(I. TONGPANGLONG)
Deputy Secretary to the Govt. of Nagaland

To

Glossary

Aai Sagi	Harvest festival of the Mech Kacharis
Burkhang	means ‘to dig up’ in Bodo dialect, name of a cultural society dedicated to teach and preserve the cultural identity of the Mech Kachari
Bushu	Harvest festival of the Dimasa Kacharis
Daikho	Area cordoned as the shrine of the area god
Forty Semphongs	Council of forty clan representatives
Gyanswarang Forai Sali	a school dedicated to preserving and teaching traditional dances, songs, and language
Hidimbiyal	Refers to the period of the Kachari history when they started claiming descent from Hidimba of the Mahabharata.
Jaddi	Matrilineal Clan (Dimasa)
Kechai Khati	'Eater of raw flesh', Kachari pantheon
Khram	A traditional Dimasa drum
Khidmudgar	Servant (revenue officer)

Mauza	A revenue village
Mauzadar	A revenue officer in-charge of a mauza
Nohdrang	Bachelor's dormitory
Posa	A term referred specifically to the obligatory tribute or provision of goods collected from plains villages and given to certain hill tribes as an appeasement or as part of a diplomatic agreement during the reign of Ahom King Pratap Singha (also known as Susenghpha, 1603–1641)
Sadiyal	Refers to the period when the Kacharis were settled in the region of Sadiya.
Semphong	Dimasa Kachari patrilineal clan

List of Interviews

1. Razouvotuo Chatsu – Male, 65. Interview conducted in Chumoukedima on January 14, 2022.
2. Kumar Naben – Male, 58. Interview conducted in Dhansiripar on January 23, 2022.
3. Rupkumar Langthasa – Male, 57. Interview conducted in Dhansiripar on January 29, 2022.
4. Reena Rajiyung – Female, age not stated. Interview conducted in Dhansiripar on January 30, 2022.
5. Riteki Kirisa – Female, age not stated. Interview conducted in Dhansiripar on January 30, 2022.
6. Dr. Uttam Bathari – Male, age not stated. Interview conducted at Gauhati University on February 24, 2022.
7. Phillip Thousen – Male, 32. Interview conducted in Doyapur on March 21, 2022.
8. Jeeten Nunisa – Male, 64. Interview conducted in Manglamukh on March 25, 2022.
9. Udil Haflongbar – Male, 50. Interview conducted in Manglamukh on March 25, 2022.
10. Soren Khemprai – Male, 52. Interview conducted in Ganehnagar on March 25, 2022.
11. Gobindra Doulagoupu – Male, 78. Interview conducted in Hazadisa on March 28, 2022.
12. Thangmi Langthasa – Female, 39. Interview conducted in Hazadisa on March 28, 2022.
13. Ranjit Langthasa – Male, approx. 92. Interview conducted in Hazadisa on March 28, 2022.
14. Gorondao Khersa – Male, 48. Interview conducted in Disaguphu on March 29, 2022.
15. Swapna Kumar Khemprai – Male, 60. Interview conducted in Darogajan. on March 30, 2022.

16. Joychandra Khakhlary – Male, 73. Interview conducted in Naharbari on April 2, 2022.
17. Gonjolal Mech – Male, 59. Interview conducted in Naharbari on April 2, 2022.
18. Rameshwar Basumatary – Male, 88. Interview conducted in Purana Bazar-A on September 10, 2022 and January 31, 2024.
19. Manoraj Basumatary – Male, 49. Interview conducted in Purana Bazaar A on September 10, 2022.
20. Suman Mech – Male, age not stated. Interview conducted in Marwari Patti Colony on September 11, 2022.
21. Dhonuram Mech – Male, age not stated. Interview conducted in Purana Bazar on April 18, 2023.
22. Amulya Mech – Male, 67. Interview conducted in Darogajan Village on November 7, 2023.
23. Hiren Mech – Male, 65. Interview conducted in Kushiabill Village on November 7, 2023.
24. Gopen Mech – Male, 48. Interview conducted in Kushiabill Village on February 3, 2024.
25. Ranu Saija – Female, 46. Interview conducted in Kushiabill Village on February 3, 2024.
26. Manjula Mech – Female, 46. Interview conducted in Kushiabill Village on February 3, 2024.
27. Harisingh Hakthong – Male, 65. Interview conducted in Bamunpukhuri Village A on February 1, 2024.
28. Bimol Jigdung – Male, 80. Interview conducted in Bamunpukhuri Village A on February 1, 2024.
29. Daniel Kikihi – Male, approx. 80. Interview conducted in Viswema Village on February 16, 2024.
30. Dr. H. N. Dutta – Male, age not stated. Interview conducted at Global Open University on July 23, 2024.
31. Maisanon, – Male, age not stated. Interview conducted in Disaguphu village on January 25, 2025.

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NU/AC/Ph.D-265/2020– 2981 Dated, Lumami, the January 2021

To,

The Dean,
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NU, Lumami.

Sub:- Ph.D. Registration-reg.

Madam/Sir,

With reference to the subject cited above, the undersigned is directed to convey that **Mr. Sebastian Roy** has been registered for research work leading to Ph.D. degree under Nagaland University as detailed below:

1. Name of the supervisor	: Prof. Y. Ben Lotha
2. Department	: History & Archaeology
3. Registration No.	: Ph.D./HAR/00265
4. Date of registration	: 15/8/2019
5. Topic of research	: 'Political and social history of the Kacharis of Nagaland'

The scholar has to deposit the fees regularly in time and produce clearance certificates of Library/Laboratory/ Finance Section at the time for submission of thesis.

Yours faithfully,

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The following is the record of the assessment of SEBASTIAN ROY bearing Roll No. H&A-06/2019(PhD) in the PhD Course Work Examination for the year 2019-2020.

Paper 501: Research Methodology			Paper 502: Oral Sources in Historical Research			Paper 503: Historiography			Paper 504: Term Paper	Total Sessional Work	Total Semester Examination	Grand Total	Result	Percentage
Max Marks:100 Pass Marks: 50%			Max Marks:100 Pass Marks: 50%			Max Marks:100 Pass Marks: 50%			Max Marks:100 Pass Marks: 50%					
Sessional Works 30	Semester Exams 70	Total 100	Sessional Works 30	Semester Exams 70	Total 100	Sessional Works 30	Semester Exams 70	Total 100		90	310	400		
22	42	64	21	52	73	22	39	61	78	65	211	276	Cleared	69

Note: 1. A student is required to secure a minimum of 50% of marks (Sessional+Semester) in each Paper to clear the same.

Marks entered by:
Date. 4.12.2020

Head
Department of History & Archeology

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