

ETHNIC IDENTITY AND POLITICAL UNREST IN NAGALAND

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MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that this dissertation entitled "**Ethnic Identity and Political Unrest in Nagaland**", submitted by **I. Kitto Zhimomi** in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **Master of Philosophy**, has not been previously submitted for any degree of this or any other University. This is his original work.

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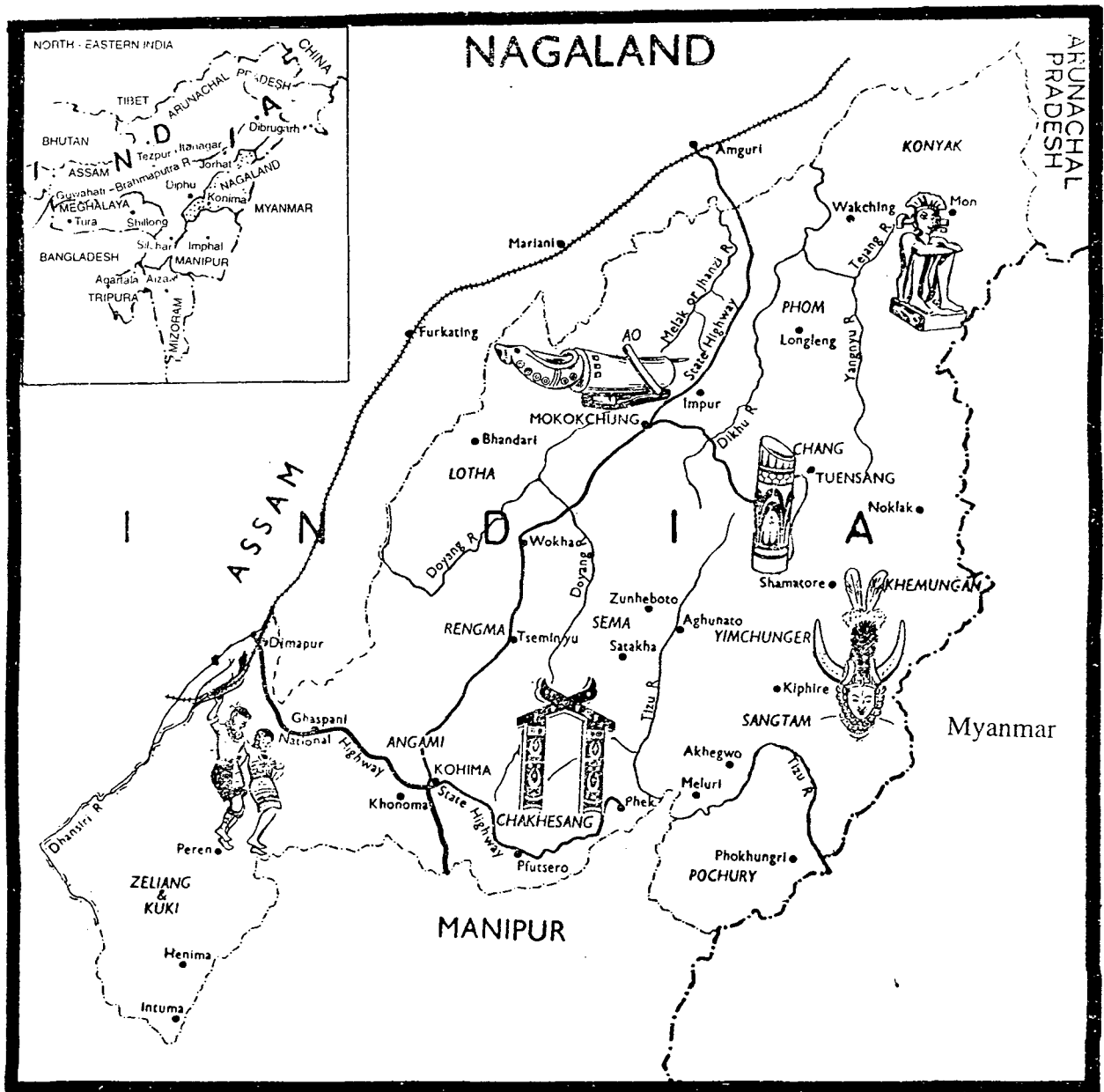
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I. KITTO ZHIMOMI



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CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE NAGA ISSUE

The word Naga is a generic term for a cluster of thirty two tribes, five in Burma, sixteen in Nagaland, seven in Manipur, three in Arunachal Pradesh and one in Assam.¹ For the past five decades, a section of the Nagas have been demanding complete independence.

The talk of complete separation from India was at first a mild cry, but when it came to be known that the British had a scheme to carve out a 'trust territory' comprising the Naga hills, the area now forming North Eastern Frontier Agency (NEFA) and the upper part of Burma inhabited by tribal people, the Nagas opposed the idea, and later the Naga National Council (NNC) openly declared that the moment the British quit India, they would have to quit the Naga hills as well.²

In June 1947, the Naga National Council issued an ultimatum that the Naga hills should cease to be part of India when Independence was attained. There was a good deal of controversy on the point. While one group of

-
1. B.G.Verghese, India's North-East Resurgent (p.83.).
 2. Alemchiba Ao. A Brief Historical account of Nagaland (p.166).

Nagas favoured immediate independence, some moderates favoured the continuance of governmental relations with India in some modified form until such time the Nagas were sufficiently schooled in the art of running a modern state. There was yet another group, a minority which wanted to bring Nagaland into the position of a mandatory state under the British government for a specified period of time.³

On February 20, 1947, the Naga National Council requested His Majesty's government to appoint India to act as the guardian power over Nagaland for a period of ten years, at the end of which it was proposed that the question of their political future would be left to the Naga people themselves to decide.⁴

This demand materialized into the first political settlement between the Nagas and the interim government in June 1947, called the 'Nine Point Agreement'. It was the ninth point of the agreement which laid down the terms for the period of Agreement, that was later to become highly controversial. Under this provision, the governor of Assam as the agent of the government of the Indian union was to have a special responsibility for a period of ten years to ensure the due observance of this agreement; at the end of this period, the Naga National Council was to be asked whether they

3. Alemchiba Ao op.cit., p.169.

4. Bendangangshi, Glimpses of Naga History, p.50.

required the above agreement to be extended for a further period, or a new agreement regarding the future of the Naga people was to be arrived at.⁵

In order to extract a clear statement about the actual fate of the nine point agreement, a three man delegation of the NNC met the representatives of the government of India in Shillong on November 3, 1949. The Naga delegation was bluntly told that there was no such agreement made with the Nagas. Shri Gopinath Bordoloi himself sorrowfully admitted to the Nagas in the government house in Shillong on November 9, 1949 that the Agreement was no longer considered to exist by the Indian Government.⁶ Hence in its session at Kohima on Dec. 30, 1949, the NNC passed a resolution: this house of the Naga National Council meeting at Kohima on 30th December, 1949 resolves to establish at the earliest possible time a "separate sovereign state of Nagaland" in fulfillment of the aspiration of the Naga tribes represented in the NNC.⁷

On January 24, 1950 the NNC informed the government of India, the U.N.O. and all the foreign Ambassadors in New Delhi that the Nagas had taken a decision not to accept the Indian constitution.⁸

5. Bendangangshi: op.cit.,p.61-62.

6. Ibid., pp.66-67.

7. Ibid.,p.68.

8. Bendangangshi; op.cit.,p.69.

Early in 1951, the NNC launched a voluntary Plebiscite which was inaugurated by A.Z.Phizo the president of NNC on May 16, 1951 at Kohima. It was seen that ninety nine percent of the Nagas were in favour of the sovereign stage of Nagaland.⁹

In March 1956 the insurgents founded what they ambitiously called a Naga federal government and its flag was hoisted on the 22nd of that month at phensinyu, a Rengma village.¹⁰ Thereafter the rebels made an all-out effort to achieve Naga independence by an organised campaign of violence throughout the Naga hills and Tuensang.¹¹

Writing on the government reaction to the problem in Nagaland, Elwin posits that, the government supported unanimously by public opinion through out the country, regarded the creation of a sovereign Naga state outside India as unrealistic, and unsupported by law, history or commonsense; it felt that even a separate Nagaland within India might not be in the best interest of the Nagas and that certainly so long as a violent revolution was in progress there was no point in attempting a political settlement. But by the middle of 1960, although a hard core of rebel

9. Ibid.,p.71.

10. V.Elwin, Nagaland, p.56.

11. Ibid.,p.58.

resistance still continued , the situation had greatly improved and at last there was a representative body of Nagas, the Naga peoples council (NPC), with whom it was possible to deal. It was now clear that nothing less than Nagaland-within India but with a large measure of autonomy-would satisfy the Nagas, and India's strongly democratic spirit prompted her to agree to its creation.¹²

But we see that even thirty five years after the attainment of statehood, Nagaland is still a disturbed state. The precise proof of this being the imposition and continuance of the Disturbed Areas Act of 1958. Alemchiba, writing on the reasons for the success of British administration in Naga areas says, "one of the main reasons why the British could establish a stable administration in an area of hilly jungles populated by head hunters and why the new administration became popular day by day was their intimate knowledge and interest of the native people".¹³ He says that even today, the elder Nagas, who have experienced both the British Administration and the Indian Administration, are always in favour of the former.¹⁴ This he says is due to the fact that every officer posted in the Naga hills, in the era of British administration, tried to understand the people

12. Elwin, *Ibid.*, p.82.

13. Alemchiba, *op.cit.*, p.132.

14. *Ibid.*, p.133.

by minute study of their way of life, their culture, customs and manners. It was a normal duty of each officer to submit a comprehensive report based on his own field study and observation. Since the British administration made its policy based on these reports, the question of implementation of policy was not at all difficult. It was rather welcomed.¹⁵ There are several question that need to be taken into account in order to enable a better understanding of the Naga question. Does the government of India have adequate intimate knowledge of the interest of the native people? Has the government made any effort to understand the people by minute study of their way of life, their culture, customs and manners? How well has the government of India understood the Naga question from the ethnic perspective? Given the inadequacy of such understanding, there is an urgent need to understand the Naga issue from the ethnic perspective. But before the various theoretical aspects of ethnicity in general and Naga ethnicity in particular are taken into consideration, the various perspectives from which the Naga issue is looked at will be discussed. Especially the British administrators perspective, the Christian missionaries perspective, the governments perspective and the perspective of the so called insurgents.

15. Alemchiba, op.cit., p.132.

Perhaps, till date, the most extensive and comprehensive study of the Nagas can be traced to the works of the British administrators. Although most of these works are monographs, they give a fairly accurate account of the various Naga tribes as they existed then. Most of the recent works on the Nagas have largely been based on these monographs. It is therefore, not surprising that many a time, the Nagas learn and discover new things about themselves from these colonial accounts. The works of Alexander Mackenzie, Robert Reid, Von Furer Haimendorf, J.H.Hutton and J.P.Mills are priceless for any researcher working on the Nagas.

Christian Missionaries have played an immense role in the life of the Nagas. They were the main vehicles of social change among the Naga tribes. S.Chaube has summarized the relative roles of the British government and the missionaries thus:-The contribution of Administration may be summed up under the following categories: establishment of law and order, improvement in communication, introduction of money-economy in remote areas and as will be seen, the creation of vested interests. The task of acculturation on the subjective level, was almost entirely left to the church of various denominations.¹⁶ There are then two ways in which the Christian missionaries perspective may be looked at: One is the ideas, views

16. Chaube. Hill Politics, p.42.

and opinions of the Christian missionaries about the Nagas, and the other is the perception of the role of Christian missionaries in the life of the Nagas from diverse standpoints.

The Army has had a strong presence in Nagaland, since the 1950s. It is not surprising then, that more than any politician, journalist or academic from mainland India, the army might have understood the Naga question more comprehensively. Therefore, when for instance Lt. General (retired) V.K.Nayar, who had served in Nagaland for a number of years as an army officer and later as a governor, says that the Naga problem is a political problem and not a military problem, it definitely has an element of truth. Hence there is a need to study the impact of presenting a military solution to a political problem. Ved Marwah an eminent civil servant clubs all so called insurgent movements under the banner 'terrorism'.¹⁷ He believes that at present the situation in Nagaland is a matter of great concern for India's national security.¹⁸ He adds that the Naga rebels, though have built bases and are operating from outside the state, still get their main support from the people in Nagaland. This support base has to be neutralized and that cannot be done till a coordinated multi-pronged approach is adopted to defeat the

17. Ved Marwah: Uncivil Wars pathology of terrorism in India.

18. *Ibid.*, p.281.

separatist forces. He proceeds to suggest a strategy which can hardly be called multi-pronged as its main emphasis is on the more effective use of the armed forces.¹⁹ Speaking on the governments approach to the Naga issue, Sanjoy Hazarika an eminent journalist says, "by the 1970s India had fully developed its strategy against the Nagas and the other recalcitrant hill groups: one prong of the strategy was to pour in huge amounts of money to 'soften up' the Nagas so that as one home Ministry official at Delhi said, 'they will become too comfortable to fight in the jungle again'. The other was to keep the pressure on, so that the options of continuing the fight or joining the political process became starker".²⁰

The Naga National Council was the only authentic political organization of the people of Nagaland in the initial years of the Naga movement.²¹ It was this council that boldly took up the historic national trust, that is, the safe guarding of the right of the sovereign existence of Nagaland.²² The Shillong Accord of November 1975 signed between the government of India and a section of the NNC was denounced by Phizo and

19. Ved Marwah: *Ibid.*, ch.7.

20. Sanjoy Hazarika. Strangers Of The Mist, p.241.

21. Appendix J. 'Manifesto of the NSCN' in Sanjoy Hazarika, strangers of the mist, pp.367.

22. *Ibid.*, p.368.

T.Muivah. This accord sharpened simmering differences between the different groups in the underground. As a result, Muivah and Isak Swu, a close compatriot, eventually broke away from Phizo in 1980 and formed the NSCN.²³ It swiftly ousted Phizo's group from position and areas held for many years. With a harsh campaign of armed force and intimidation, it gained control over many Naga -speaking areas of western Myanmar. Differences among the NSCN groups led to another faction led by S.S.Khaplang called the NSCN (K).²⁴ The NNC on the other hand was taken over by Phizo's daughter on his death in 1990. Differences among the NNC leaders further led to the formation of the NNC(K). After the split the NNC led by Phizo's daughter came to be known as NNC(A), A standing for Adino. The Naga movement simmered over four to five decades and at different stages it has been oriented by different stages, acquired a new dimension both in form and content. However, the basic character of the movement never changed.²⁵ At present in Nagaland, there are four so called insurgent groups: The Nationalist Socialist Council of Nagaland, Isak and Muivah (NSCN,I-M), the Nationalist Socialist Council of Nagaland,

23. Sanjoy Hazarika, Strangers of the mist, p.109.

24. Sanjoy Hazarika. op.cit., p.110.

25. N.K. Das, "The Naga Movement" in K.S. Singh (ed.), Nagaland Vol.XXXIV, Anthropological Survey of India, Seagull Books, Calcutta, 1994, p.48.

Khaplang (NSCN-K), the Naga National Council, Adino (NNC-A), and the Naga National Council, Khodao (NNC-K). Hence irrespective of their differences, all the faction have an unequivocal standpoint. That is the complete independence of Nagaland. This point can be further substantiated by taking into account what T.Muivah had to say through a recent NSCN(M) press release, "the Nagas do not demand anything form India, nor do they place their fate at her mercy and whims. The Naga people are simply defending their rights against the forcible occupation of their land. Past experience points to the fact that a military solution is not possible. The admission of this fact is the real beginning towards a solution. Seeking political means is the only way available. It is therefore, worth the effort to explore what is possible".²⁶

But, given the nature of the political demands of the Naga groups on one hand and the absolute inviolability of the territorial integrity of India on the other hand, the call for a political solution appears to be a distant possibility. Various political solutions have been arrived at before: the nine point agreement; the sixteen point agreement and the Shillong accord of 1975. These accords and agreements have to a great extent failed to bring a solution to the Naga question.

26. T.H.Muivah in 'Signs of Peace' by Kalyan Choudhri. Frontline, June 18,1999,p.45.

Keeping in mind these complexities involved in the Naga question, i.e, the failure of the various policies of the government, the ineffective accords and agreements, the irreconcilable interests of the Naga groups and the government, it would be of great help to both the Naga groups as well as the government of India if we made an effort to understand the constants and the variables that have shaped, and sustained Naga Ethnicity.

Therefore in order to understand Naga ethnicity it is necessary to take into discussion the diverse approaches and theories of ethnicity. There are two main approaches to the study of ethnicity. The first is the primordialist approach to the study of ethnic identities and ethnicity which considers common descent as the most important factor in determining group membership. The other approach is variously known as situational, subjectivist or instrumental. Its main emphasis is on a group's member's perception of being different from others and on the implications of this for that group's present status or predicament and for its future prospects. It is within these two approaches that this study will discuss the works of some writers on the issue of ethnic groups and ethnicity.

For Max weber ethnic groups are those human groups that entertain a subjective belief in their common descent because of similarities of physical type or of customs or both, or because of memories of colonization and migration; this belief must be important for the propogation of, group

formation, conversely it does not matter whether or not an objective blood relationship exists. He further adds that it is the political community, no matter how artificially organized, that inspires the belief in common ethnicity.²⁷

For Weber the palable differences in dialect and differences of religions in themselves do not exclude sentiments of common ethnicity. Next to pronounced differences in the economic way of life, the belief in ethnic affinity has at all times been affected by outward differences in clothes, in the style of housing, food and eating habits, the division of labour between the sexes and between the free and unfree.²⁸

Anthony Smith writes that ethnies may be defined as named human populations with shared ancestry, myths, histories and culture, having an association with a specific territory and a sense of solidarity.²⁹ He argues for the wide spread and chronic, if intermittent, appearance and persistence of ethnicity. The paradox of ethnicity is its mutability in persistence and its persistence through change.³⁰

27. Max Weber 'Ethnic groups' in M. Guberman and J. Rex (ed.), The ethnicity reader, pp.8-9.

28. Max Weber, op.cit., p.20.

29. A.D. Smith 'Structure and Persistence of Ethnie' in M. Guberman and J. Rex (ed.), op.cit., p.27.

30. Ibid., p.27.

Barth gives primacy to boundaries to define an ethnic group. The focus of his investigation lies in the ethnic boundary that defines the group, not the cultural matter it encloses. These boundaries are social boundaries though they may have territorial counterparts. He says that the persistence of ethnic groups in contact implies not only criteria and signals for identification, but also a structuring of interaction which allows the persistence of cultural differences. In his view, the organizational feature is a systematic set of rules governing inter-ethnic social encounters.³¹

Abner Cohen defines an ethnic group as a collectivity of people who share some patterns of normative behaviour and forms a part of a larger population, interacting with people from other collectivities within the framework of a social system. The term ethnicity refers to the degree of conformity by members of the collectivity to these shared norms in the course of social interaction. He considers ethnicity a variable which in any socio-cultural milieu is interdependent with many other variables.³²

Paul Brass brings out two central arguments in his work on ethnicity and nationalism. The first is that ethnicity and nationalism are not given but are social and political constructions. They are creation of elites, who draw

31. F.Barth. 'Ethnic groups and Boundaries' in W.Sollors (ed.) Theories of Ethnicity: A classical reader. p.296-97.

32. Abner Cohen 'The lesson of Ethnicity' in W.Sollors (ed) op.cit., p.370-71.

upon, distort and sometimes fabricate materials from the culture of the groups they wish to represent in order to protect their well being or existence or to gain political and economic advantage for their groups as well as for themselves. His second argument posits that ethnicity and nationalism are modern phenomenon inseparably connected with the activities of the modern centralizing state.³³

With due reference to the aforementioned theories and approaches, two central arguments will be brought forward in this study. The first is that the Nagas are a distinct ethnic group. The second is that, in order to understand the Naga issue, it is important to understand the ethnic identity of the Nagas.

CHAPTERIZATION

Chapter I as seen is the introduction, Chapter II will look at the Naga issue through diverse perspectives especially that of the British Administrators, the Government, the Church and the so called Naga Separatists/irredentists. In Chapter III, the focus will be on the various approaches and theories of ethnicity. The purpose of this chapter is to enable the understanding of diverse interpretations of the ethnicity factor.

33. Paul Brass. Ethnicity and Nationalism: Theory and Comparison, See Chapter-I.

In Chapter IV the two central concerns of this study will be discussed. The first being the existence of the Nagas as an ethnic group and the second being the need to understand Naga ethnic identity in order to have a better understanding of the Naga issue. The permutations and combinations of various theoretical perspectives will be undertaken in order to understand the Naga reality.

CHAPTER - II

PERSPECTIVES ON THE NAGA ISSUE

Considering their own ethnic, linguistic and cultural diversity, the tribal people of North-East India have been struggling for a long time to preserve their distinctive group identity vis-a-vis the rest of India. Broadly characterized as of Tibeto-Mongoloid stock,¹ they do not share what is described as the Mainstream Indian history and ethos. Since the establishment of British political rule over the then greater Assam,² and the subsequent transition of their sovereignty to Independent India, there have been endemic assertion of autonomy in this region. Most of the major tribal groups, including the Nagas, the Mizo's the Khasis and the Meities have revolted against the Indian state at different times.³ It was the Nagas, their goal an independent Nagaland, who paved the way for subsequent self

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1. 'The Nagas', Oking Publicity and information service. Government of the Peoples' Republic of Nagaland. Nagaland Post January 14, 1999, Further Clarification in Chapter four under Racial identity.
 2. Greater Assam comprised of the present Assam and the present states of Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh.
 3. Anjoo, S. Upadhyaya, 'Quest for self determinations in the Indian sub-continent: The recent phase', in Donald clark and Robert willamson (ed.); Self-determination: international perspective, pp.159.

determination movements in the region.⁴ This movement for self determination by the Nagas has persisted over the last five decades. In order to analyse the factors that have contributed to this phenomenon and to make an assessment of the legitimacy of such a movement, it becomes important to look at the Naga issue from diverse perspectives. The purpose of this chapter will be to look at the Naga issue from four perspectives: The Historical/Colonial administrators' perspective, the Christian missionaries/church perspective; the Government of India's perspective and; the so called Naga insurgent's perspective.

HISTORICAL/COLONIAL ADMINISTRATORS' PERSPECTIVE:

Historically speaking, the Nagas were neither a part of India nor of Assam prior to the British colonization of this region.⁵ Like other tribes, the Nagas had their own small states which were ruled by themselves.⁶ There is no mention of the Nagas in the chronicles of the early Hindu kings of Kamrupa from 4th to 13th century A.D. Some accounts are found in the Buranjis, the chronicles of the Ahom kings of Assam beginning in the 13th

4. Ibid, p.160.

5. Amalendu Guha, Nationalism; 'Pan-Indian and Regional in Historical perspective', in Social Scientist, no.129, Feb., 1984, p.61.

6. Bhawani Singh, Politics of Alienation in Assam, Delhi, 1984, p.25.

century A.D.⁷ With the advent of the Ahoms in the 13th Century A.D., the Ahom-Naga relations were marked by a policy of appeasement on the part of the Ahom rulers. Nari Rustomji notes-"The policy of the Ahom rulers vis-a-vis the tribes had been one of conciliation. Their concern was that the hill people should confine themselves to their habitat in the mountains and forests and that no provocations should be offered that might cause them to raid the villages in the plains.

The growing corruption and inefficiency of the Ahom administration, however, provided opportunities to the hill people to raid the villages in the plains for plunder and as they could do so without punishment, on account of the virtual breakdown of governmental authority, their spirit of aggression had progressively increased.⁸

By the nineteenth century, the Ahoms were vanquished by the British. The Nagas on the other hand, continued their forays into the empire of the East India Company. The British followed, to a large extent, their predecessor's policy vis-a-vis the tribal people in the hills. British policy with regard to the Nagas may be broadly divided into two phases according to the nature of its change-they are pre and post 1875 policy of inaction, followed by the policy of interference.

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7. Amiya K.Das, Assams Agony, a Socio-Economic and Political analysis, New Delhi, 1982, p.270.
 8. Nari Rustomji, Imperilled Frontiers, India's North-Eastern Borderlands, OUP, Delhi, 1981, p.23.

It was as early as 1832-33 that the British first came into direct contact with the Angami Nagas, when Captain Jenkins and Pemberton led seven hundred (700) Manipuri troops within the Manipur valley to construct a road between Assam and Manipur. They had to literally fight their way through the whole Kutchha and Angami Naga country. Several expeditions were sent between 1844-1877 to conciliate the disturbing tribes and nearly all the local officers at that time considered that the only plan likely to succeed with the Angamis was to boldly enter the hills and capture their chiefs. This they did in 1850 after a bloody battle. But the Naga raids continued, numbering upto twenty two in 1851 itself. Consequently, due to the impracticality of having troops in the Naga hills, it was then decided to withdraw the British troops.⁹ Lord Dalhousie, the Governor General had approved these orders saying, "I dissent entirely from the policy which is recommended of what is called obtaining a control, that is to say, of taking possession of those hills and of establishing our sovereignty over their savage inhabitants. Our possession of those hills could bring no profit to us and could be as costly to us as it could be unproductive".¹⁰ But this stance could not be maintained longer. The hill men continued with their raids and

9. Alexander Mackenzie, The North-East Frontier of India, Delhi, 1979, p.101.

10. N.N.Acharya, Historical documents of Assam and Neighbouring states, New Delhi, 1988, p.203.

in 1862, the commissioner had reported, "the non-interference policy is excellent in theory but government will probably be inclined to think that it must be abandoned", Finally commissioner Hopkinson recommended gradual occupation of the Naga hills.

It was decided that a new district of the country inhabited by the Nagas named as Naga Hills District be established with headquarters at Samaguting.¹¹

The Naga question however was not so easily solved. Attempts at more intimate relations with the hill men revealed more clearly the wretched state of inter-tribal warfare which prevailed. So Captain Butler, the Deputy commissioner since 1872 had for sometime urged the government to adopt a bolder policy. In 1873, Sir George Campbell, the Lt. Governor thought that the only satisfactory course was to establish political control and influence over the tribes without any assertion of actual sovereignty over the tribal areas. This plan was accepted. In 1874, the Naga Hills were made over to the charge of newly appointed chief commissionership of Assam.¹² This picture represents the overall British inaction and non-proliferation in the Naga system. In 1873, even when political control was envisaged, there was

11. Daniel Kent (eds.) Census of India, Series 15, Nagaland: Part II, A, Delhi, 1975.

12. Alexander Mackenzie, op.cit, pp.118-120.



direction not to hamper with the sovereignty of the tribal areas. Such a sharp distinction between local and supreme authority left the Naga tribes to their own.

Such being the history of Early British intercourse with the Nagas, it is implicit that the extent of British penetration into the polity, society and economy of the Naga hill people was very much limited. However, the post 1875 British policy showed a cautious policy of slow intervention, but without any damage to the socio-economic framework.

In 1877, the political officer, Naga Hills was authorized to act as an arbitrator in internal feuds with power to enforce his award and thus put an end to the anarchy and bloodshed that prevailed in the Naga Hills. In the same year, the secretary of state wrote, "In the opinion of his Majesty's government, an attitude of indifference could no longer be maintained. The facts now reported show that in the interests of our own subjects and for the sake of the Nagas, a more active policy should be adopted towards the tribes".¹³ In 1878, the political officer was further empowered to reduce the Naga Hills into political subjection. Gradually the headquarter of the district was moved to Kohima. On November 14, 1878, Kohima was occupied following which the political agent arrived on 23rd March 1879.

13. Home Department, Government of Assam, February, 1881.

The Government of India act 1919 empowered the Governor general in council to declare any territory in British India to be a backward area under section 52A of the Government of India Act 1919.

Accordingly in 1921, the Naga Hills were declared to be backward. Many members of the legislative council demanded separation of the hills from the plains. Finally, through the government of India act of 1935, the Naga hills came under the category 'excluded Areas'.

In 1941, Sir Robert Reid, the Governor of Assam extended a new proposal that the entire hill tracts starting from the Bay of Bengal upto Chindwin district should be constituted into a province with sixteen districts. The Reid plan envisaging the creation of North-Eastern hill province was approved by Churchill but was vetoed by the labour government. In support of his recommendation for a separate area for the North-East from the rest of India, Reid stated, "those of us who, before 1947, were speculating on the future of the hill areas were very much anxious that they should not be made the plaything of Indian Politics, and when I retired in 1943, I tried to rouse interest in this problem at home. But everyone was rightly concentrating on winning the war, and anyhow India's North-East frontier was much too small to hope for any special treatment in the post-war discussions. We had thought of setting up some sort of agency to embrace the whole North-East frontier fringe, and to

exclude it from the general run of Indian Politics with which it had no affinity. But the only way to ensure this would have been somehow to separate this area from the territory being handed over, and British India without qualification was being transferred to the successor government of India and Pakistan. So it would not work. The North-Eastern frontier fringe might within the meaning of the reform act of 1935 be an excluded Area, but it was still part of British India".¹⁴

Meanwhile, Sir Reginald Coupland, a constitutional expert, reviewed Sir Robert Reid's proposal and brought out what came to be known as 'Coupland Plan'. This plan envisaged that the Government of India and Burma might have a treaty with the British and each should take a share of responsibility for the areas as 'Trust Territory'. In support of the Plan, he stated, "there is one major area which seems to call for special treatment, the hill tracts of the North-Eastern frontier of Assam. They adjoin similar hill tracts on the North-West frontier of Burma. The inhabitants of both areas are alike in race and culture. They are not Indians or Burmans, but of mongolic stocks. In no sense do they belong to the Indian or Burman Nation".¹⁵

14. Sir Robert Reid's notes, Shillong Raj Bhawan Record, pp.9-10.

15. Naga Students Federation, 'The Naga Problem: An Account' Proceedings of Seminar Held on 14th Dec., Delhi 1995, p.6-7.

The Nagas were responsive to these government plans. In 1945, Mill, advisor to the Governor for tribal affairs, received a Memorandum from the Nagas stating, "we the Nagas are not ready to take our place in a democratic constitution or to compete with the sophisticated so called Indian politicians. We the Nagas became dependent only on the British. It is immaterial to us who rules, Hindustan or Pakistan as long as we are the subjects of the British, under the great king of Britian".¹⁶ This memorandum is significant in the context of the contemporary freedom struggle in India and proposed transfer of power from the British crown to the Indian population. It is striking in the sense that the Nagas considered themselves to be comfortable under the British Raj though it never shared with them their aspirations and were rather severely criticized by Indian Nationalists for total negligence of hill people. While Nationalistic standard characterized British policy to be anti tribal, the tribals seemed to be satisfied with that. The cause behind such an attitude may be analysed. The British Policy in the Naga hill was that of a gradual and slow intervention, especially in the sphere of administration. In the cultural sphere, there was little or no interference as a result of which the tribal identity lay intact. It was a sort of Politics of alienation between the hills and the plains people

16. V.Venkata Rao, A Century of Tribal Politics in India, New Delhi, pp.55-73.

and it suited the Naga tribal psychology which was not ready for dramatic changes at the cultural level. Ethnically they considered themselves to be from a distinct stock apart from the rest of the people of India. The Nagas had a distinct social life, manner of living, law, custom, and religion and these were the phenomenon which the British never touched upon.¹⁷ In the words of Rustomji, "The British policy-and herein lay its success-was one of least interference. It was the missionaries and not the administrators who were the main harbinger of change in the way of life of the tribal people".¹⁸

CHRISTIAN MISSIONARIES/CHURCH PERSPECTIVE

In one respect, the beginning of Christian missionary work in the Naga hills differed from that of other hill areas. In the Khasi, Jaintia, Garo, Mizo, and Mainpuri hills, the missionaries entered after the British had established a reasonable degree of control. In other words, the cross followed the British flag, but however in the case of the Nagas it was the other way around.¹⁹ The first work among the Nagas in the Ao area, began

17. Lipi Gosh, *Insurgency in Nagaland: 'The historical roots'* in B.Pakem's (ed.), Insurgency in N.E. India, Omsons, New Delhi, 1998, pp.336-350. See also Alemchiba, *op.cit*, pp.132-133.

18. Nari Rustomji, *op.cit*, p.25.

19. H.K.Barpujari, The American Missionaries and North-East India (1836-1900, A.D.), Spectrum, Delhi, 1986, pp.XI.

eighteen years before British administration was established there. There was never the close personal relationship between the missionaries and British officers in the Naga hills that one finds elsewhere and in fact, the attitude of the British officers towards the missionaries was sometimes hostile.²⁰

Christianity was introduced by the American Baptist missionaries in Nagaland. The first American Baptist missionary who came to Naga hills was Reverend Mills Bronson as early as 1838. He worked among the Nagas upto 1871. But it was Dr.E.W. Clark who started his evangelical works among the Ao Nagas in 1871, that laid the foundation for the advent of Christianity in Nagaland.²¹ Since then Christianity has been all along playing an important part in bringing about unity of all Nagas irrespective of their age old inter-village and inter-tribal feuds and rivalries. It has acted as a centripetal force in uniting the different Naga tribes of Nagaland, Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh etc, under a common identity 'Naga'.²² F.S. Downs says that in Christianity, 'conventions and councils as well as in assemblies, different tribes were brought together which fostered a sense of tribal and

20. Fredrick, S.Downs, Christianity in North-East India, ISPCK Delhi, 1976.

21. L.Wati, Fact and Growth of Naga Nationalism, Nagaland, 1993,pp.7-8.

22. H.K.Barpujari, 'Assertion of Naga Ethnic Identity' in B.Pakem (ed.) Nationality, Ethnicity and Cultural identity, Omsons, Delhi,1990,p.319.

regional identity for the first time", which in turn provided the foundations for modern conception of political identity though this was not a conscious objective of either the missionaries or the churches".²³

Lately, there have been accusations against Christian Missionaries of instigating the Nagas to demand independence or separation from India. There is no evidence in record to prove Christian churches' involvement in the Naga demand for self-determination or independence in the period preceeding or following the independence of India. The surreptitious activities of a political nature of a few individual foreign missionaries should not be construed to mean that either the church or Christianity is at fault. One should also take note of the fact that Nagas corporate and community spirit is greater than their 'religious sentiments'. Due to this feeling they could come together on matters of common interest, be it religious, social or political.²⁴

A unique feature of the political developments in the hill areas of the North-East is the prominent role played by Christians. The politically active tribal leaders in the hills are mostly Christians, and hence in these areas Christians played a leading role in political developments of all kinds. When

23. F.S.Downs, op.cit, p.165.

24. Barpujari, H.K. Paper 'Role of Christianity in Naga intigration' presented at the U.G.C. Seminar, Manipur University, 1985.

there was conflict between different political philosophies and objectives within a single hill area, the leadership on both sides was made up of Christians. The Naga and Mizo rebellions were led by Christians who sometimes sought general public support for their movements by describing them as something akin to Christian crusades; but the peace movements in both areas have been initiated by the churches and the leaders of the government who reject the separatism of the rebels are also Christian.²⁵

The identification of Christianity with political activity in Nagaland has had both positive and negative effects. Positively, it has contributed to the development of strong, self-confident and self-sufficient Christian communities. For better or for worse, Christianity has become the established religion in the greater part of Nagaland. Negatively the Christian involvement, especially in the rebellions, has reinforced the suspicion of the Indian public in general that Christians at least in Nagaland are anti-national in the larger sense of Indian nationalism. Foreign missionaries have gradually been removed from the region, the whole of which is classified as a restricted area. Fear of separatist political activity similar to that of Nagaland has led the government to severely restrict if not prohibit entirely Christian evangelistic activity in Arunachal Pradesh.²⁶

25. The peace movements were sponsored by the official Church leadership which had always been opposed to violent rebellion. Violent rebel activity was never officially supported by the Church in Nagaland. See also, Longri Ao, A biography by O.M. Rao, CLC, Guwahati, 1986.

26. Chaube, Hill Politics, p.38.

There are also those in Independent India who suspect that the tribal Christians of the North-East are not whole heartedly committed to Indian nationalism, and the reason for this is that Christianity was established among them by missionaries whose primary purpose, in the words of S.P. Sinha was to 'keep imperialism alive,²⁷ or in the more moderate words of N. Ray: Naturally, these missionaries, some of them very well meaning and pious souls determined to save these communities of people from everlasting damnation, as they saw it, were all a part of the great establishment of the foreign rulers, and consciously or unconsciously their mission was directed toward upholding and strengthening that establishment.²⁸

Though a number of responsible scholars question this sort of reasoning,²⁹ it is a fact that it is widely believed in India. This has tended to further separate the Christians in the North-East from their erstwhile coreligionists in the rest of the country and, more generally, contributed to

27. F.S. Downs, op.cit., p.84.

28. Singh, Tribal Situation in India, p.19.

29. M.N. Srinivas and R.D. Sanwal point out that this sort of argument is, in fact, inimical to national integration: "Blaming the 'rebelliousness', 'inherent separatism', or similar other 'ills' of the North-Eastern Hill Areas (NEHA) tribes upon such favourite whipping horses as the 'legacy of colonialism', 'conservatism of the tribes', 'Ethnic Myopia', or 'activities of foreign missionaries, only helps in diverting attention from identifying the real factors responsible for weak integration". In *ibid.*, pp.72-73. One could add that there have been significant "separatists" agitation in North-East India itself among the Hindu Manipuris and Ahoms as well as several Hindu or Semi-Hindu plains tribes of the Brahmaputra Valley.

suspicion directed towards all Christians in India. It has also tended, and this is perhaps the most unfortunate result of all, to convince the tribal Christians themselves that their religion makes meaningful integration with the rest of the country unlikely.³⁰

THE GOVERNMENT PERSPECTIVE

Writing on the government's attitude to the Naga issue, Elwin says, "it knew that the whole of the area now to be included under Nagaland was undisputed Indian territory and had always been recognized as such; the many different tribes living there were enjoying all the privileges of Indian citizenship and were already specially protected on the very points which had excited them to demand separation. The fact that in the composition of these tribes there were different elements was no more a justification for their separation from India than the multi-racial elements which can be traced in almost all different groups that compose the Indian population."³¹ The Indian government was not convinced that the demand for complete separation from India was really supported by more than a minority of the entire population and that, where it was supported, it was for the wrong

30. F.S. Downs, *op.cit.*, p.85.

31. Verrier Elwin, Nagaland, p.79.

reasons.³² Elwin adds that the people of Tuensang, until some of them were roused by a visit from Naga agitators in 1953, not only had no desire for separation but had welcomed the initiation of development activities.³³ He further substantiates his argument by mentioning the various provisions, measures and steps undertaken by the government to protect the Naga way of life. He says that such arguments have always been common among imperialists anxious to justify their rule over weaker nations. But it was not so in the case of the Nagas as they are not foreigners but are members of the one Indian family.³⁴ We then see that, Elwin being the advisor to Nehru on tribal affairs, completely endorses the legitimacy of the Government's actions with regard to the Nagas.

Shifting the focus of study to the years immediately preceding Independence and the following years after independence, we see that various National leaders had different opinions on the issue of Naga independence. To Gandhi, the Naga issue seemed to be very simple when he said on July 13th, 1947, "Nagas have every right to be independent. We do not want you to feel that India is yours, that this city of Delhi is yours. I feel that Naga hills is mine just as much as it is yours, but if you say that it

32. Ibid., p.79.

33. Ibid., p.79.

34. Ibid., pp.80-81.

is mine, then the matter must stop there. I believe in the brotherhood of men but I do not believe in force and enforced union. If you do not wish to join the Indian Union, no one will force you to do that. The Congress will not do that."³⁵ In similar lines, C. Rajagopalacharya told the Naga delegation which waited on him in Shillong on the 28th of November 1949, "India wants to be friendly with you. India does not want to deprive the Nagas of their land. Nagas are at full liberty to do as they like, either to become part of India or be separated if that would be best for their interest to be isolated."³⁶ The views of Nehru on the Naga issue may be divided into two phases. The pre and the post independence. In 1944, Nehru writing in jail had this to say about the future of the Naga Hills: "It may be desirable to fix a period of, say ten years after the establishment of the free Indian state, at the end of which the right to secede may be exercised through proper constitutional process and in accordance with the clearly expressed will of the inhabitants of the area concerned".³⁷ But after independence Nehru was very precise. While considering "freedom very precious", he emphasized that the "Independence Nagas are after, is something quite

35. Alemchiba Ao. A brief historical account of Nagaland, INC., Kohima, 1970, p.173.

36. Ibid., p.174.

37. Jawaharlal Nehru 'The Discovery of India', as quoted in Neville Maxwell, India and the Nagas, Third World Unity, Reprint series 5.

different from the Individual and group freedom. In the present context of affairs both in India and the world, it is impossible to consider, even for a moment, such an absurd demand for Independence of the Nagas.³⁸

In his letter dated 13th May 1956 to B. Medhi, the Chief Minister of Assam, Nehru gives certain pointers with regard to the governments approach to the Naga issue. In the course of the letter he writes, "These Naga troubles and revolts have a larger significance for us in the international sphere and they give a handle to our opponents everywhere. More particularly, of course, Pakistan takes advantage of them".³⁹ On the question of the basic policy to be pursued, he writes, "there can be no doubt that an armed revolt has to be met by force and suppressed. There are no two opinions about that and we shall set about it as efficiently and effectively as possible."⁴⁰ Quite, contrary to the above he continues "But our whole past and present outlook is based on force by itself being no remedy. We have repeated this in regard to the greater problems of the world. Much more we must remember this when dealing with our own countrymen who have to be won over and not merely suppressed."⁴¹ From the above it is

38. V.K. Anand, Conflict in Nagaland, p.66.

39. B. Medhi Papers, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, Delhi.

40. Ibid.

41. Ibid.

seen that there was a wide gap between the ideal and the actual modus-operandi in dealing with the Nagas by Nehru. The ideal revolved around goodwill while the actual relied to a great extent on brute force.

In the same letter, commenting on the mornings' (13th May, 1956). Times of India article on the Nagas, he says, "This article is not a fair one and puts the blame entirely on our side. Even the facts are not correctly given. Nevertheless, there is some truth in this article and I feel that we have not dealt with this question of the Nagas with wisdom in the past. We must not judge them as we would others who are undoubtedly part of India. The Nagas have no such background or sensation and we have to create that sensation among them by our goodwill and treatment. We shall have to think how we can produce this impression and what political steps may be necessary."⁴² From the aforementioned statements, it appears as though Nehru concedes the distinctness of the Nagas from the rest of India. On the policy front, there are much contradictions. On one hand there is immense stress on the use of the armed forces, while on the other hand there is mention of goodwill and tolerance as already mentioned. It is obvious that the force approach has been more popular with the government than the goodwill approach. Hence the issue persisted throughout Nehru's tenure.

42. B. Medhi Papers, op.cit.

Nari Rustomji who single handedly administrated the North-East frontier Agency in the 1950's, describes the period of crackdown by the Indian security forces as a 'dark and senseless' part of India's History. There was extreme brutality, first from the Indian Army side because the soldiers were ordered to soften up the Nagas. Their opponents retaliated strongly and 'it was not long before it was a matter of doubt as to who was softening whom.'⁴³

Delhi's policy on the North-East in the late 1960's and 1970's was handled by a handful of men and women. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi directly met with leaders of the underground when they visited New Delhi for negotiations.⁴⁴ But the most damaging aspect of the governments policy emerged when B.K. Nehru was made the Governor of Assam and Nagaland in the late 1960s. He was irked by the red carpet treatment that the Naga delegations recieved whenever they were in Delhi for negotiations, and especially irritated by fellow Kashmiri T.N. Kaul, the then foreign secretary and advisor to Indira Gandhi on Naga affairs, for being too soft with the Nagas.⁴⁵ B.K. Nehru won the support of both Indira Gandhi and the home ministry, pushed Kaul out of the negotiating line, assumed the sole

43. Nari Rustomji, quoted by Sanjoy Hazarika in The Strangers of the mist, pp.96-97.

44. Sanjoy Hazarika, op.cit., pp.101-102.

45. Ibid., pp.102-103.

responsibility for negotiating with the Nagas, and placed New Delhi on a firm path of collision with the rebels.⁴⁶ In the 80's and 90's too, there has'nt been much change in the policy front with regard to the North-East. Force is subscribed to as the best remedy. At present Manipur, Tripura and Nagaland have been declared as disturbed areas and put under the disturbed areas act of 1958.

NAGA NATIONALIST PERSPECTIVE

The formation of the Naga club in 1918 by a few government officials and leading Naga chiefs for the first time provided a common platform for leaders of different tribes of Nagaland. Before long it turned into an effective political forum of the Naga tribes. When the Simon Commission visited Naga hills in 1929, a strong delegation representing different Naga tribes submitted a memorandum to it that their hills should be kept under direct British rule in order to "save them from being overwhelmed by the people of the plains". "You are the only people who have ever conquered us and when you go, we should be left as we were", the delegation pointed out. The memorandum concluded with the demand that, "If the British government, however, want to throw us away we pray that we should not be

46. Ibid., p.103.

thrust to the mercy of the people who could never have conquered us themselves and to whom we were never subjected, but to leave us alone to determine for ourselves as in ancient times."⁴⁷

According to a modern Naga intellectual Asoso Yonuo, "the asking for the exclusion of Nagaland from the proposed reforms, however precise in presentation contained considerable political significance. It emphatically pointed out the obvious desire of the Nagas for the restoration of their independence that the British snatched from them."⁴⁸

The formation of the Naga National Council (NNC) in April 1946 out of the Naga Hills District Council (NHDC) was "a major step in the consolidation of Naga Nationalistic forces".⁴⁹ The leadership of the NNC was provided by the educated section of the Nagas. In the beginning, the political objectives of the NNC was solidarity of all Nagas including those of the unadministered areas and the inclusion of their hills within the province of Assam in free India with local autonomy and adequate safeguards for the

47. Chaube. S.K., Hill Politics in North-East India, p.66.

48. Ibid., p.9.

49. H.K. Barpujari, 'Assertion of Naga Ethnic Identity, A Historical background' in B. Pakem (ed.), Nationality, Ethnicity and Cultural Identity, pp.309-320.

interest of the Nagas.⁵⁰ At the time of its formation there existed various schools of thought within the NNC. The first supported the aforementioned view. The second believed in the integration of the contiguous tribal areas of Naga hills, NEFA, Manipur and Burma to form a 'British governed crown colony', 'Trust Territory' or 'mandatory state'. This view was earlier expressed in the 'Reid plan' as well as the Coupland plan. The third school propagated the retention of some special relationship with India until sufficient experience had been attained to govern an independent Nagaland. While the last school vehemently stood by the demand for complete independence.⁵¹ It is this first school which initially succeeded in its endeavours. The best proof being the nine point or Hydari agreement signed between the NNC and the government's representative Mr. Akbar Hydari The then Governor of Assam in 1947. This group led by the likes of Mr. Sakhrie⁵² came to be known as the moderates within the NNC. However with the return of A.Z. Phizo from Burma into the political arena of Nagaland, an independent Nagaland outside the Indian constitution became the demand of a section of the NNC led by him. Consequently on the 14th

50. Elwin, op.cit., p.51.

51. V.K. Anand, op.cit., p.62.

52. Mr. Sakhrie was killed on Phizo's orders for betrayal of the Naga cause. See Sanjoy Hazarika, op.cit.,pp.99.

of August, on the eve of the Independence of India, the NNC under the leadership of Phizo declared their independence.⁵³ Gradually, with the passage of time, fissures within the NNC became more prominent. Today, as already mentioned in the introduction, there are four Nationalists groups within Nagaland. They are the NNC (A), The NNC (K), the NSCN (I-M) and the NSCN(K).⁵⁴ As all these groups have a singular aim of achieving a Naga Nation, they will hereafter be collectively referred to as the Naga Nationalists (NN), in the following analysis.

The Naga Nationalists perspective on the Naga issue is clearly defined in the manifesto of the NSCN which declares:⁵⁵

- (a) National existence:- we stand for the unquestionable sovereign right of the Naga people over every inch of Nagaland whatever it may be and admit of no other existence whatever.
- (b) Political institutions:- we stand for the principle of peoples supremacy, that is, the dictatorship of the people through the Nationalist Socialist Council and the practice of democracy within the organization.

53. Barpujari, op.cit., p.316.

54. Refer to the introduction.

55. Appendix J., Manifesto of the NSCN, in Sanjoy Hazarika's, Strangers of the mist, p.368.

- (c) **Economic System:-** we stand for socialism because it is the only social and economic system that does away with exploitation and ensures fair equality to all the people.
- (d) **Religion :-** we stand for faith in God and the salvation of mankind in Jesus, the Christ, alone, that is, 'Nagaland for Christ'. However, the individuals freedom of religion shall be safeguarded and the imposition of this faith on others is strictly forbidden.
- (e) **Means :-** we rule out the illusion of saving Nagaland through peaceful means. It is arms and arms alone that will save our nation and ensure freedom to the people.
- (f) **Self-reliance and the policy of united front :-** we stand for the practice of the principle of self-reliance and for the policy of united front with all the forces that can be united with.

From the above it is evident that the Naga Nationalists would stop at nothing short of complete independence, and this they presume can only be achieved through arms and arms alone.

More than a decade before the above NSCN manifesto was written, The President of the Federal Government of Nagaland, on the occasion of the Naga Republic day in 1966 stated, "In the strict sense of the term, the

word, 'Self-determination' has no application to the Nagas whatsoever - being ever free. The truth finds its own expression that for the Nagas there is no victory or defeat. Sovereignty is our own and it will not be a victory when it is rescued from the hands of imperialists. As for defeat, the Nagas will never suffer it except by total annihilation".⁵⁶

In a letter to the then Prime Minister Nehru, dated Oct. 24th 1952, Imkongmeren, the vice-president of the NNC wrote, "you can get our land, but not the hearts of our Naga people. It is not necessary to catalogue all our differences. We ask you to leave us alone. We ask you to take away your government from our country. We do not want them. The longer you force the Nagas to live under your government, the worse the situation will become".⁵⁷

In recent years, the stand of the Naga Nationalists has not changed. They demand nothing less than complete independence though the means to achieve the same may have changed.⁵⁸

56. Speech of the President, Federal government of Nagaland on the occasion of Naga Republic day, Phezhu: Jotsoma, 1966, p.4.

57. Imkongmeren, Vice-President, NNC, Letter to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru dated Oct. 24, 1952, in the Naga Herald, vol.2, Jan-Feb., 1953.

58. T.H. Muivah, op.cit., where he says that past experience points to the fact that a military solution is not possible (refers to introduction).

CHAPTER - III

APPROACHES AND THEORIES OF ETHNICITY

In the arena of global politics today, we witness simultaneously two fundamentally opposing tendencies. The first is towards unification and integration of states at the international level and of centralization at the national level. This is seen by the unification of Vietnam, Yemen and Germany as also by sovereign states entering into larger regional groupings like the European Community, the North American Free Trade Association (NAFTA), the organization of African Unity (OAU), Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), etc. More recently, nation states are also becoming vulnerable to globalist influences in which corporate and multinational interests and national bureaucracies are becoming part of a common nexus, assisted in the process by international institutional structures of finance, trade, technology, intellectual property and economic deals. This kind of shaping of a common mindset alongside the formal educational system is lending a weighty structure to, what Rajni Kothari calls, the homogenizing thrust.¹

1. Rajni Kothari, "Foreword" to Basu, Sajal, Regional movements : Politics of language, ethnicity - Identity, IIAS, Shimla, 1992, p.VII.

The second trend is fragmentation and demands for autonomy and decentralization. The Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia and Pakistan have already disintegrated. From the Australian aboriginals to the Welsh, from the Armenians to the Tamils, from the Ainu to the Yanomani, the ethnies around the world are mobilizing and engaging themselves in political action, sometimes in violent conflict and confrontation, to establish their identities, to defend their rights and privileges, to present their grievances and to ensure their survival.² This trend broadly called "ethnicity" emphasizing the right of a community to maintain its identity, of pluralism, of return to the roots of life and culture has become a major cause for the renewed instability of state frontiers.³

The Naga separatism and irredentism,⁴ then, undoubtedly is an example of the second trend which A.S. Narang has broadly called 'ethnicity'. The purpose of this chapter is not to analyse or evaluate various

2. Stavenhagen, Rodolfo, Y., The Ethnic question: Conflict development and Human rights, U.N. University Press, Tokyo, 1990, p.157.

3. A.S. Narang, Ethnic identities and Federalism, IAS, Shimla, 1995, p.15.

4. A.D. Smith says that separatism is the classic political goal of ethnonational self-determination where the aim is to secede and form one's own sovereign state. While Irredentism is a phenomenon where an ethnic community, whose members are divided and fragmented in separate states, seek remification and recovery of the 'lost' or 'unredeemed' territories occupied by its members. See his book 'Ethnic revival', Cambridge Univ. Press, N.Y., 1981, pp.16-17. Also to be further classified in the following pages.

approaches and theories on ethnicity. Nor is it to provide a solution or an alternate model. Rather, this chapter has been incorporated as an important part of the dissertation with the intention of enabling the understanding of the phenomenon of 'Ethnicity' in general and 'Naga ethnicity in particular'. And in order to do so, it becomes necessary to take into account the diverse approaches and theories of ethnicity.

The theories and approaches to ethnicity are wide ranging. If we place them in a continuum, on one pole we have the primordialists with their primary focus on culture and their belief that ethnic categories and identities are the given entities in society and in life and that basic group identity consists of a given set of endowments. On the other pole are those who believe that ethnic conflict as such does not exist and that it is merely an expression of underlying social and political conflicts between classes, population segments, or interest groups within the wider society for the fulfillment of economic or political interests.⁵ Within these two poles, the models have been variously described as primordialist, cultural pluralist, modernist, developmental, political economy, elite competition, Marxist and neo-Marxist, situational, instrumentalist, subjectivist etc.⁶

⁵ S. C. Duba "Ethnicity - Myth and Reality". World Focus. April-May, 1994, p.5.

PRIMORDIALIST AND CULTURAL PLURALIST APPROACH

There are writers like Kellas who suggest that "human nature and human psychology provide the necessary conditions for ethno-centric and nationalist behaviour, and such behaviour is universal."⁷ This leads to the premise that, while forging of unity through political organization subsumes the autonomy of the individual and the sanctity of his choice in owing allegiance to what ever structures he prefers, there pre-exist certain socio-cultural structures which the individual is born into and shapes his beliefs, orientation and behaviour patterns. People invariably retain an attachment to their own ethnic group and the community in which they were brought up. As symbolic interactionists (e.g. Mead 1934, Blumer 1962, Turner 1968, Strauss 1919, Coffman 1959), Social anthropologists (e.g. Cohen, 1974, 1977; Warner 1959) and some other theorists (e.g., Duncan 1969, Berger and Luckmann 1966, Gusfield 1981) have argued, there is an interdependence between the individual and collective process of identity formation. Thus individuals expect to recognize themselves in public institutions. They expect some consistency between their private identities and the symbolic contents upheld by public authorities, embedded in the

7. G. James Kellas, The Politics of Nationalism and Ethnicity, Handmills, Mac Miillan, 1991, p.19.

social institutions, and celebrated in public events. Otherwise, individuals feel like social strangers, they feel that the society is not their society.⁸

The cultural pluralist approach, evolved by Furnivall and Boeke and continued by Smith, Schermerhorn, Kuper and Van den Berge has a similar framework. It sees ethnic groups and cultural communities as the principal social formation in contemporary states, or as at least co-equivalent with and not reducible to any other kind of formation such as class or interest. Cultural pluralism encompasses within a single society the co-existence of various groups having institutional system (e.g., Social structures, value systems, belief patterns) which are mutually incompatible. In such a culturally divergent situation, the structural requisites of a political order leads to the subordination of one group by the other. In the process, characterized as these societies are by domination, separation and instability, they are defined by dissents and are pregnant with conflict.⁹

Anthony Smith divides the present spate of political separatism into two groups, territorial and ethnic.¹⁰ The former is based mainly on political boundaries and geography. For instance, the dominant immigrant groups of

8. Albert Breton, Centralization, Decentralization and Inter-Governmental Competition, Kingston : Institute of Inter-Government Relations 1990, p.461. Further clarification in the following chapter.

9. A.S. Narang, op.cit., p.21.

10. A.D. Smith, The Ethnic Revival, Cambridge Univ. Press, N.Y., 1981, pp.12-13.

the thirteen (13) colonies of North-America shared their culture and social institutions with Britain; even on the eve of independence, it was not cultural differences that constituted the basis of their claim to autonomy, but geography and political remoteness from the centres of power, exacerbated by economic grievances.¹¹ Ethnic separatism in contrast, is based upon cultural differences and the sense of cultural distinctiveness. Ethnic movements make their claims by virtue of an alleged 'community of culture' in which the members are both united with each other by a shared culture and differentiated from others by the possession of that culture. They are, moreover, different not only from their rulers, but also from their neighbours in one or more significant cultural dimensions. It is by virtue of this real or alleged cultural individuality that ethnic movements claim a communal solidarity and the recognition of their political demands. In these cases, political separatism is based upon the ideology of cultural diversity and the ethic of cultural self-determination. Ethnic separatism, then, is based upon the reality or myth of unique cultural ties, which serve to demarcate a population from neighbours and rulers; and, as a result, separation became not only an end in itself, but a means of protecting the cultural identity formed by those ties. The uniqueness of each ethnic community demands

11. Ibid., p.12.

political separatism, so that it can run its own affairs according to inner laws of the culture community, uncontaminated and unmolested by external influences.¹²

Speaking in the modern context, Smith broadly lays down six strategies that are open to ethnic communities incorporated in polyethnic states.¹³ They are:

Isolation: Here the ethnic community chooses to stay aloof from society as a whole, as with the Ottoman Millets, the Chinese in pre-colonial South-East Asia, the Druze, Bedouin, Parsees, Armenians, as well as the more enforced cases of the Jews in medieval Europe and the Burakumin in medieval Japan.¹⁴

Accommodation: Here the ethnic community aims to adjust to its host society by encouraging its members to participate in the social and political life of that society and its state. Often, individual members try to assimilate to the host society, or at least become acculturated, for individual advancement. Many second-generation members of white ethnic communities in America chose this path. They gave up the purely defensive

12. A.D. Smith, op.cit., p.13, also see his book, 'Ethnic origins of Nations, p.21.

13. A.D. Smith, op.cit., pp.15-17.

14. Cohn and Wagatsuma in DC Reuck, A. and Knight, J. (eds.) (1967), 'Caste and Race, Ciba Foundation, London.

but collective orientation of their more isolated fathers, in order to break into the wider society, but on an individual basis. They refused to accept anything resembling a 'pariah' status, believing that western, particularly American, societies were fluid and open enough to accommodate them, and allow them to ascend the ladder of wealth and influence. Generally speaking however, such individuals remain linked to their community; they live in two worlds, albeit uneasily, in the public world of work and politics and the private world of family life and culture.¹⁵

Communalism: It is a situation where ethnic communities begin to act as pressure groups controlling an 'ethnic vote' and trading it for political concessions. The overall aim is to influence the direction of state policy towards the interests of the ethnic community.

Autonomism: An autonomist movement aims to secure benefits from maintaining its links with the overall state structure, while asserting the political identity of the ethnic community which it represents. In practice, there are various degrees of autonomy given to ethnic communities on the scale from minimum cultural rights to maximum 'home rule' federalism.

Separatism: This is the classical political goal of ethnonational self-determination, as sought by most of the East European communities in

15. Glazer, N. and Moynihan, D.P. (1964), Beyond the melting pot, MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass, p. Introduction.

the last century, and by the Bengalis in Bangladesh, the Eritreans, Kurds, Ibo, the Tamils in Srilanka, as well as by the Scottish National Party and the Parti Quebecois of Canada to name a few. In each case, the aim is to secede and form one's own sovereign state, with little or no connection with former rulers.

Irredentism: Here, an ethnic community living in geographically contiguous states seeks reunification and recovery of the 'lost' or 'unredeemed' territories occupied by its members. This is possible where the ethnic community has its membership living in adjoining states or areas; such was the case in the Balkans and Eastern Europe, where Bulgarians, Poles and Greeks sought to recover their lost territories and members. It is also not uncommon for an ethnic community to pursue a strategy of secession from the state where most of its members live, and then carry on to an irredentist strategy in order to complete its ethnic complement and vice-versa.

The main emphasis of this approach has been on ethnic groups as given entities of the social order, actors of politics rather than those acted upon. However, at least in the modern world, it cannot be denied that while one is born and belongs to an ethnic group most persons have multiple social attachments which cross-cut one another. Therefore there is a need to look for other factors that also influence ethno-nationalism rather than merely explaining it in terms of identity.

MODERNIZATION APPROACH

In the operational sense, modernization means the attainment of relatively higher levels of variables, such as education, per-capita income, urbanization, political participation, industrial employment, media participation etc.¹⁶ Karl Deutsch, the most prominent theorist of the school, argued that the communications revolution that began in the nineteenth century with railroads, telegraph, widespread book publishing, secular state-supported educational systems, and other aspects related to the industrial transformation of the world helped bring people together, broke down ancient divisions and isolations, and enabled the concept of nation-hood go well beyond the yearnings of a few romantic historicists. In the process of nation-building, argued Deutsch, people will lose their local, parochial identities and loyalties in order to identify themselves with the larger economic and political unit, the nation. Yet this has not been so. In fact, these very elements that were thought to objectively unify styles of living, have provided ethnic groups with the means of subjectively recognizing themselves as conscious entities. Walker Connor points out that the available evidence about the pattern of ethnic dissonance in the world, at

16. A.S. Narang, *op.cit.*, p.22.

various levels of modernization, indicates that material increase in social communication and mobilization intensifies cultural awareness and exacerbates inter-ethnic conflict.¹⁷

In post-colonial societies the early nationalist leadership in its passion for modernization and nation-building, glossed over the ethnic differences which had their roots in the processes of colonial rule, colonial emancipation and national mobilization. The colonial period had brought about a high degree of politico-territorial integration through an efficient, centralized, coercive machinery of the government. However it also helped cultural and ethnic groups organize themselves politically. The nationalist movement also mobilized ethnic groups, both strategically and ideologically. The notion of self-determination, the prime mover of independence movements in the colonies, derived from the concept of freedom as much as it did from the conception of nation as a definable unit of people with political will of forming a sovereign state of their own. Colonialism, at one stage, provided a solution to the identity problem. It made available a ready basis for shared identity of various peoples, the identity of exploited and subjugated people in search of all round self-expression. But after independence various sectional groups sought due recognition. Thus modernization, both in developed and

17. Walker Connor 'The Politics of Ethno-Nationalism,' Journal of International Affairs, vol.27, no.1 (1973).

developing societies, is inter alia a source of aggravation of stratificational inequalities, alienation of the individual and groups. With substantial increase in communication and inter group contact the divisive sense of ethno-national uniqueness has been reinforced rather than disputed.¹⁸

Modernization theory also provides a clue to ethnic assertion in the present day world in terms of "material values" competing with the material interests in the developing societies. In this context some observers link ethnicity in the modern era with the advance of science and the decline of religion. With the expansion of the realm of the secular 'scientific state' and the erosion of the religious coloration of the community, people are confronted with the dilemma of rationality versus community (religiosity). The goal of Ethnic historicism, it is suggested, is to revive the ethnic community through a rediscovery and renewal of ethnic communal identity and a reconstruction of mores and attitudes that had existed at some time in the past.¹⁹

Thus it is seen that the modernization approach does not explain the ethnic phenomenon in its totality. For that, we have to also take into account economic and political explanations. One such approach is the

18. Walker Connor, op.cit.

19. A.S. Narang, op.cit., p.26.

political economy approach which is generally considered to be either associated or influenced by Marxism.

MARXIST APPROACH

According to McAll, all Marxist approaches to ethnicity view ethnicity as a social construct which does not have the same reality or salience as class. Ethnicity in traditional Marxist approaches is seen as a mask that hides the class identity of actors and is exploited by capitalists. Thus Marxists urge us to see through the masks of ethnicity themselves to the roles and actors that are concealed behind them, and second, in a program of political action there is a need to expose the division of the working class on the basis of ethnicity for what it is: a form of self-deception that can be only of benefit to capital.²⁰

Since the late 1960s this reductionist approach has come under criticism and newer Marxist approaches to ethnicity try to go beyond the instrumental role of ethnicity in capitalism to its legitimate role in nationalist movements against imperialism (eg. Nairn, 1975, Laclan, 1977; Saul, 1979) in the third world context. Other Marxists have moved to the roles of being the players and have shown the devastation that ethnic markers can cause to the psyche of the oppressed (eg. Fannon, 1952; Sivananda, 1981).

20. McAll (1990: 74).

For McAll, "Ethnicity in established industrial capitalist societies is thus not so much the expression of primordial identities, regionalism, linguistic differences, or differences in way of life but the expression of social inequality. In established capitalist societies, class relationships and the different patterns of consumption to which they give rise generate the collective awareness and articulation of differences that I have referred to... as the ethnicity of class... ethnicity is not the mask that conceals class, nor an alternative to class as the basic explanatory concept, but an integral part of class: the luxuriant, tangled foliage that both conceals and reveals, nourishes and is nourished by its roots, and is thus part and parcel of the plant."²¹ While his contribution acknowledges the independent role of ethnicity, it is still, in the final analysis, a product of class inequality. Thus, for Marxists ethnicity continues to be either a legitimate expression of nationalist sentiments against imperialism or as functional to capitalism.

POLITICAL ECONOMY APPROACH

This approach has both liberal and Marxist interpretations. However within both these schools there are differences with regard to the preference for one or the other aspect of economic activity. One aspect of this is the

21. McAll, op.cit., p.222.

factor of regional inequalities. Several scholars have pointed out 'that modernization and industrialization in large, multi-ethnic societies tend to proceed unevenly and often, if not always, tried to benefit some ethnic group or some region of a country more than others. Watson, for instance writes, "the post-1945 world has experienced that it was unevenly distributed, not just socially but in particular, geographically. More broadly, the development or modernization process gave rise to spatially differentiated results. Where negative results coincided with a national minority, the potential for a political movement was very likely to be activated, it was noted that the grievances articulated by the minority nationalism were often to do with economic and social disadvantage or exploitation."²² Watson also points out that the major source of difficulties of minority nationalism in the 1980s has been economic "stagnation". With world recession and unemployment, there was a growing concentration in all countries on economics. Hence social and Political considerations in policy content came a poor second. Such policies gave added impetus to the growth of minority nationalism.²³

22. Michael Watson (ed.), Contemporary Minority Nationalism, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1990, p.196.

23. Ibid., p.205.

In the erstwhile colonies, the situation is even more complex. The economic development paradigm had shown its ineffectiveness by the early seventies.²⁴ Stavenhagen points out that here the governing elites had modernized rapidly, but the large masses of the population remained in a state of poverty. Post-colonial capitalist development produced large scale poverty by breaking up pre-capitalist modes of production and forms of social organization, furthering the market economy and one-crop agriculture, uprooting people from their traditional habitats, creating urban squalor and a growing landless proletariat. As the third world economies became increasingly incorporated into, and subordinated to trans-national capitalism, internal polarization and inequalities increased between social classes and regions.²⁵ Arising out of such inequalities and nonfulfillment of aspirations is also the feeling of relative deprivation which some scholars say is a significant causes for ethno-nationalism.

RELATIVE DEPRIVATION APPROACH

According to this approach, it is not just the poorer regions that develop nationalism. The rich regions may also be nationalist if they

24. A.S. Narang, op.cit., p.28.

25. Stavenhagen, Rodolfo Y., op.cit., p.12.

perceive relative deprivation within the state or in political and cultural matters. Ted Robert Gurr in his classical study, 'Why Men Rebel', refers to relative deprivation as a gap between the expectations and perceived capabilities of a person vis-a-vis his economic situation, political power and social relation to others.²⁶ D.L. Sheth also points out another aspect, that is, in the process of development some minorities have done better than the majority. Those who have done well feel that they could do much better if only their future was not tied with others in the structure of a single state. Those who feel deprived also seek the same solution: to have their own state so that, once free of their deprivor, they can develop better.²⁷ Writing along the same lines, Rothchild maintains that politicized ethnic assertiveness today appears to be keenest among those who have been the least successful and those who have been the most successful in meeting and achieving the norms, standards, and values of the dominants in their multi-ethnic states. The former resent at their failure while the latter are resentful because their economic success is not reflected in full social and political acceptance. Given the complexity of modern life and the overlapping groups which demand attention from the existing power structure, ethnicity appear to be a

26. Ted Robert Gurr, Why Men Rebel, p.27.

27. D.L. Sheth, 'State, Nation and Ethnicity: Experience of Third World Countries', EPW, March 25, 1989, p.620.

rational organizational principle readily available to the political elite as well as those who seek to replace it.²⁸

Ethnicity, accordingly represents an effort by the deprived groups to use a cultural mode for political and economic advancement. However, inequality in terms of power between two groups need not per se invoke conflict. According to Phadnis, the preconditions for such conflict seem to be : (i) a socially mobilized population; (ii) the existence of symbolic past connoting its distinctiveness; (iii) the selection, standardization and transmission of such symbol pools to the community by the leadership; and (iv) a reference group in relation to whom a sense of relative deprivation (real or imaginary) is aggregated.²⁹ But, even this approach by itself does not provide a comprehensive account of Ethnicity. There are others like Paul Brass who think that ethnicity may be explained in terms of "elite-competition."³⁰

ELITE-COMPETITION APPROACH

Elite competition according to Brass, is the basic dynamic which precipitates ethnic conflict under specific conditions which arise from the

28. Joseph Rothchild, Ethnopolitics: A Conceptual Framework, New York: Columbia University Press, 1987, p.22.
29. Urmila Phadnis, Ethnicity and Nation Budding in South Asia, New Delhi, Sage, 1990, p.27.
30. Paul Brass, Ethnicity and Nationalism, New Delhi: Sage, 1991, Introduction.

broader political and economic environment rather than from the cultural values of ethnic groups in question. He says that Ethnic identity and modern nationalism arise out of specific types of interaction between the leaderships of centralizing states and elites from non-dominant ethnic groups, especially but not exclusively on the peripheries of these states. Ethnic self-consciousness, ethnically-based demands, and ethnic conflict can occur only if there is some conflict either between indigenous and external elites and authorities or between indigenous elites.³¹ This theory is consistent with the assumption that ethnic identity is itself a variable, rather than a final or given disposition. The cultural forms, values, and practices of ethnic groups become political resources for elites in competition for political power and economic advantage. Thus there are two central arguments which Brass posits. That ethnicity and nationalism are not 'givens' but are social and political constructions. They are creation of elites, who draw upon, distort, and sometimes fabricate materials from the cultures of the groups they wish to represent in order to gain political and economic advantage for their groups as well as for themselves. And the second argument is that ethnicity and nationalism are modern phenomenon inseparably connected with the activities of the modern centralizing state.³²

31. Paul Brass, *op.cit.*, pp.26.

32. Paul Brass, *op.cit.*, introduction.

Harrowitz says that though the movement for ethnic or cultural revival may begin at the elite level. It cannot end there. The alienated intelligentsia may be anxious to rediscover its lost roots, but the very loss of those roots disqualifies it from providing anything more than initial moral and perhaps financial leadership. For, the western-educated elite is likely to be ignorant of customary religious practice, deficient in local historical knowledge, unread in local literature, and perhaps not even fully competent in its own language. He concludes that in the final analysis, it is dependent on an indigenous intelligentsia to carry forward the movement to assert their ethnic identity.³³

The main shortcoming of this approach is evident from the fact that in many cases in the modern history, it is found that ethnic groups had fought as groups not simply because the elite made them do so but purely for psychological reasons or a sense of cultural deprivation either because of discriminatory treatment by the state identifying with the majority or because of an excessive centralizing state culture.

There is yet another school of thought, which originated among Latin American writers, that brings to the forefront the internal colonialism approach to Ethnicity.

33. Donald L. Horowitz, 'Ethnic identity' in Glazer, Nathan and Moyanihan Daniel, P. (eds.), Ethnicity: Theory and Experience, Harvard University Press, 1978, p.14.

INTERNAL COLONIALISM APPROACH

The main argument behind this contention is that the capital world economy and imperialist state expansion have led to a differential distribution of state resources and employment opportunities among ethnic groups. Within this approach are various explanations called cultural division of labour (Hechter, 1975; Banton, 1983), uneven development (Gellner, 1969), and dual market analysis (Edwards, 1979; Piore 1979). These perspectives assume that ethnic mobilization are a reaction of ethnic groups to their disadvantaged position in society, i.e., that of an internal colony or in the peripheral labour market. They view ethnic groups to be segregated into subordinate economic positions which lead to occupational and residential segregation along ethnic lines, or a hierarchical ethnic division of labour, which in turn favours ethnic solidarity as it provides organizational as well as self interest basis for solidarity. Thus, uneven economic development and political dominance by a core group sets the stage for ethnic solidarity among the dependent periphery. Manisha Desai is of the view that in all the above analysis there is a coincidence of class and ethnicity.³⁴

34. Manisha Desai, 'Contemporary Approaches to Ethnic Mobilization', Indian Journal of Social Work, vol.LVII, no.1, Jan., 1996, p.14.

Labour market explanation likewise dwells on the issue of labour market segregation. Some theorists emphasize on cultural division of labour in which various ethnic groups are segregated into various occupational niches, while others point to the importance of "split labour markets" (Bonacich, 1972), where they argue that rather than capitalist manipulating the labour market ethnically, it is the ethnically segregated labour force itself which monopolizes the advantages of the dominant ethnic group and prevents other ethnic groups from entering the market which leads to ethnic mobilization among the excluded and the included groups.

Like many other approaches, this model on ethnicity has its shortcoming in the fact that its focus is primarily on economic explanations, therefore to a large extent neglecting the cultural and political variables. When ethnic differences are used consciously or unconsciously to distinguish the opposing actors in a conflict situation, ethnicity becomes a determining factor in the nature and dynamics of conflict. Therefore the significance of ethnic and cultural loyalties and identities is not always dependent on economic factors. It may have its own independent basis. In this context, some writers, point to the phenomenon which they call cultural deprivation.

CULTURAL DEPRIVATION APPROACH

This approach draws its literature from the belief that ethnicity arises from the feeling of insecurity among ethnic minorities due to their fear of

getting lost amongst the vast majority. This may be either because of the discrimination and oppression by the majority, the state identifying itself with the majority, or the homogenization process arising out of modernization and the process of nation-building.

Driedgere points out four types of discrimination by the majority against minorities: differential treatment; prejudicial treatment; disadvantaging treatment; and denial of desire. The first two types are attitudinal and the last two behavioural discrimination.³⁵

The fears of minority ethnic groups about loss of their cultural identity arise from two sources. The first is the dominant majority, usually politically powerful too, questioning the so-called privileges or rights of minority and attempting to impose its own religious or cultural values as that of the whole society. It means making the political ideology of the core group also the basis of nationalism in the state. This belief system naturally results in strong pressures towards assimilation of the non-dominant groups. The second fear arises from the ideology of the modern state to equate the state with nation. This modern centralized nation-state, even in formal democracies, thinks of regions and local units as its subordinates and agents. Any challenge from them is considered as anti-national and subversive of national unity.³⁶

35. Leo Driedger. (ed.), Ethnic Canada: Identities and Inequalities, Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman, 1987, pp.10.

36. Sajal Basu, Regional Movements: Politics of Language, Ethnicity - Identity, IIAS, Shimla, 1992, p.VIII.

Michael Watson points out that from the 1960s' onwards, considerable number of national minorities are no more ready to 'go meekly to their doom'. He says that such refusal has been strongly expressed in party and electoral assertions and at times violent assertion of political and cultural demands, summed up in the need for self-determination.³⁷

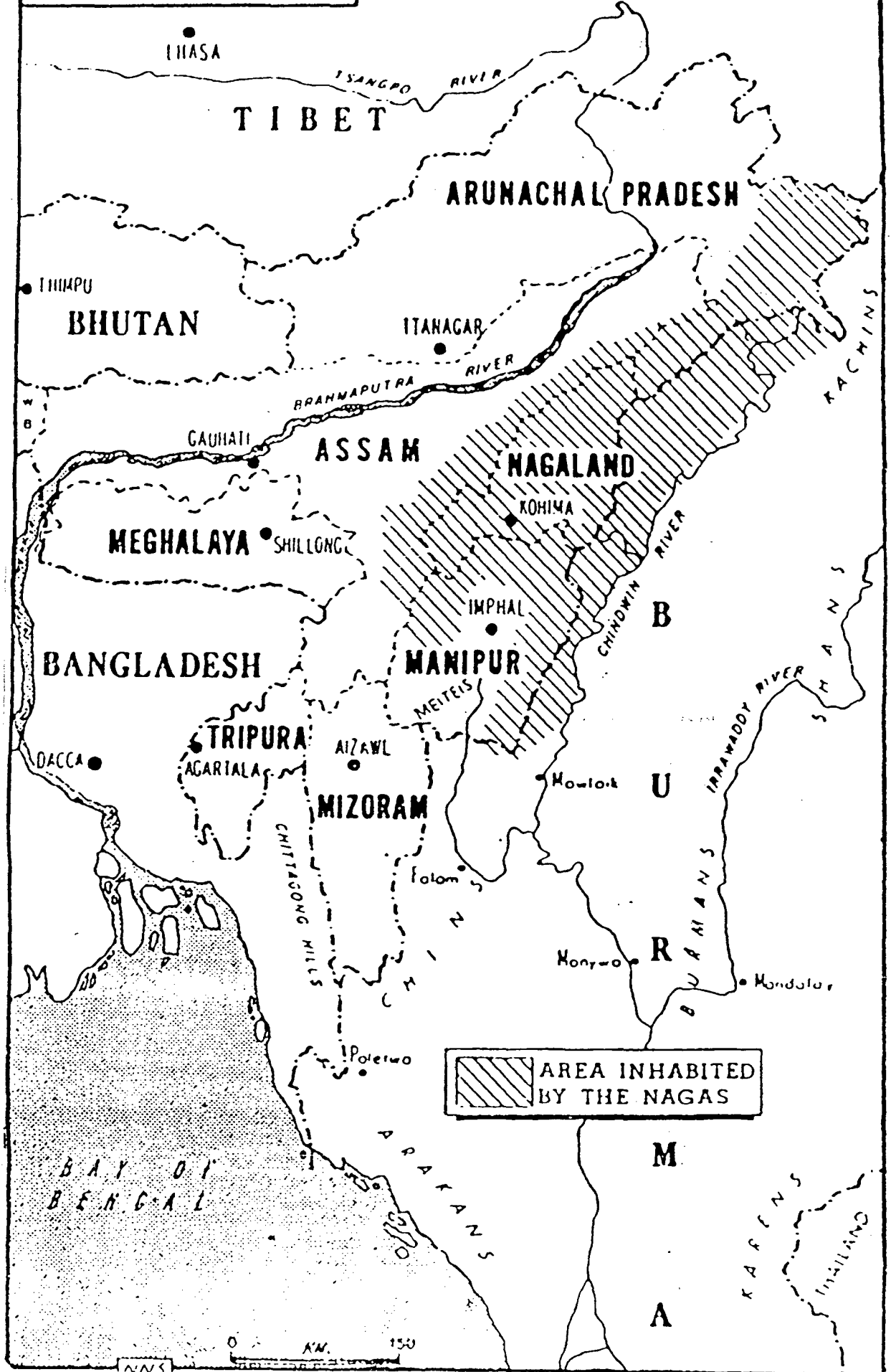
From this perspective it is suggested that ethnicity among ethnic groups is a result of loss or fear of loss of identity which in turn is due to increased social pressures from the dominant groups in a modern society.

Thus it is seen that there are diverse ways in which ethnicity has been looked at and analysed. However most writers accept the fact that no single theory or approach can explain the phenomenon in all its aspects and in all types of situations. There is a general agreement that ethnicity can be better understood through multiple approach rather than through a single approach or theory. The choice of approaches and theories has necessarily been selective as well as brief, given the limitations of presenting all the approaches in a single chapter exhaustively. Nevertheless, it is hoped that the approaches dealt with in this chapter enables the understanding of, the diverse interpretations of ethnicity in general, and Naga Ethnicity in particular.

37. Michael Watson (ed.), *op.cit.*, p.195.

NORTH-EAST INDIA

CHINA



LHASA

TIBET

ARUNACHAL PRADESH

BHUTAN

ITANAGAR

ASSAM

NAGALAND

MEGHALAYA

SHILLONG

KOHIMA

IMPHAL

BANGLADESH

MANIPUR

TRIPURA

AIZAWL

MIZORAM

DACCA

AGARTALA

Howlok

MEITEIS

CHITTAGONG HILLS

Falam

Monywa

Mandalay

AREA INHABITED BY THE NAGAS

BAY OF BENGAL

M

A

0 150 KM

CHAPTER - IV

ETHNIC IDENTITY AND THE NAGA ISSUE

There is some legitimacy to finding that forms of identification based on social realities as different as religion, language and national origin all have something in common, such that a new term is coined to refer to all of them "ethnicity". What they have in common is that they have all become effective foci for group mobilization for concrete political ends.¹

From the above definition given by Glazer and Moynihan, it is seen that religious identity, linguistic identity and racial identity, all contribute to the phenomenon "ethnicity". This chapter will look at the various identities of the Nagas with the intention of enabling the understanding of two central concerns of this dissertation. The first is that the Nagas are a distinct ethnic group and the second is that the Naga issue is closely related with the ethnic identity of the Naga. But before looking at the various identities of the Nagas, the etymology of the term Naga will be briefly dealt with.

1. Glazer and Moynihan (ed.), Ethnicity: Theory and Experience, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1975, p.7.

THE ORIGIN OF THE WORD NAGA

The derivation of the word "Naga" is obscure. It has been explained to mean "hillman", from the Sanskrit Naga, a mountain. It has been linked to the Kachari word Naga, a young man or Warrior. Long ago, Ptolemy though it meant "naked". It has nothing to do with Snakes as usually belived.² It has generally been believed writes captain J. Butler," that the term 'Naga' is derived from the Bengali word nanga, meaning, "naked, crude, barabarous."³ The term Naga was recorded in the earliest "Buranjis" i.e. in the history of Ahom kings of Assam, its meaning was hill people. According to W.C. Smith in "The Ao Naga Tribes of Assam", they are so named in the Buranjis or history of the kings of Assam dating from thirteenth Century A.D.Till now the older generation of Assam call them 'Noga'. The inherent characteristic feature was their internecine feuds, warfare and reputation as head-hunters.⁴

William Robinson writes, "The origin of the world Naga is unknown, but it has been supposed to have been derived from the Sanskrit word (nanga) and given to the Nagapeople the paucity of their clothing, but there seem little foundation for this etymological derivation as the term has never

2. V. Elwin, Nagaland, pp.5-6, 1997, Spectrum Publications.
3. M. Alemchiba, A Brief Historical Account of Nagaland, 1970, p.23.
4. Tajenyuba Ao: British Occupation of Naga Country, 1993, pp.1-2.

been known to be applied by the Bengalis to either the Khasis or the Garos with whom they were far better acquainted than the Nagas: and besides, the Garos are habitually accustomed to a greater degree of nudity than any of the Naga tribes with whom we are acquainted.⁵

Meanwhile a few Naga Scholars have done some substantial work on this contentious issue discounting the views of the colonial writers. R.R. Shimray in his work, "origin and culture of the Nagas," opined that it was derived from the Burmese word Naka meaning pierced ears. According to a press release by the NSCN, the name 'naga' is derived from the Burmese word 'Naka', as also endorsed by Shimray above, meaning 'people with perforated ears'. The release adds that, the Nagas who pierced their ears to accomodate big wooden plugs and other ornaments, were given this name while they were passing through the Burmese territory during their migratory stages thousands of years ago from southern China to the Naga Hills. ⁶ M. Horam has also brought out the probable derivation of the word Naga from Naokhoka meaning a very brave child, in the Tanghkul dialect (A Naga tribe of Manipur).⁷

5. William Robinson: 'A Descriptive Account of Assam', in V. Elwin's Nagas in the 19th Century, 1841, pp.83-84.

6. 'The Nagas', issued by oking publicity and information services. Government of the Peoples Republic of Nagaland. Nagaland Post, January 14, 1999.

7. 'Nagas at work', A. Naga Students Union, Delhi, Presentation, 1996, p.64.

The name "Naga" was not in general use among the Nagas until recently. Today it has become widely popular, and irrespective of which tribe one belongs to, in the context of the wider world, the term Naga has come to be an umbrella term for all the tribes that constitute it as mentioned earlier.

RACIAL IDENTITY OF THE NAGAS

The Nagas fall under the Indo-Mongolian folk living in the North Eastern hills of India.

They belong to the Sino-Tibetan speaking mongoloid group which is confined only in a small area in India, particularly in the North-East, this is one of the reasons why this race is less studied even today.

It is generally assumed that those tribes which are spoken of as the 'Nagas' have something in common which distinguishes them from the many other tribes found in North-East India.⁸ The term Naga has come to stay and is synonymous with the new found sense of identity which compels the Naga tribes to differentiate themselves from the neighbouring hill tribes. There are some special marks by which Naga tribes are distinguished from their neighbours and some common ties by which the Nagas are bound

8. Henry Balfour, in 'Preface' to J.H. Hutton's, The Sema Nagas.

together as one people. Dr. W.C. Smith, a Christian missionary as well as a sociologist from America has given thirteen outstanding characteristics of the Tibeto-Burman tribes of Assam, which he attaches racially to the "Indonesians", that is the people of Malaya and the islands of Indonesia, and furthers states that Nagas fall under one or the other of the following characteristics. They are:

1. Head Hunting
2. Common sleeping houses for the unmarried men which are taboo to women.
3. Dwelling houses which are built on posts or piles.
4. Disposal of dead on raised platform.
5. A sort of trial marriage or great freedom of intercourse between the sexes before marriage.
6. Aversion to milk as an article of diet.
7. Tattooing by pricking
8. Absence of any powerful political organization.
9. The double cylinder vertical forge.
10. The loom for weaving cloth.
11. A large quadrangular or hexagonal shield.
12. Residence in hilly regions and a wide form of agriculture.
13. Betel chewing.

In the same manner, W.C. Smith after careful study of the cultural traits and physical characteristics of the Nagas, classified them as Indonesians. In dealing with Nagas affinities outside the Asiatic mainland, he took the Dyaks and Kayans of Borneo, the Batak of Sumatra, certain groups of Formosa, the Igorot and the Ifugao and several other groups in the Phillipnes as typical examples.⁹ Like the Nagas as well as many of the mainland Indian tribes, the Dyaks build their houses on piles about twelve feet high. Roth exhibits a horn used by several tribes of Borneo, which is almost identical with the one used by the Nagas. Dyaks like the Nagas also use large hexagonal shields. They live in hilly terrain and carry on crude agriculture. Barrows writes of Igorot as head hunters and as having bachelors homes..¹⁰

Dr. S.K. Chatterji, supported by other scholars, consider that the classical word "Kirata" is the equivalent of what today we call "Indo-Mongoloid", a word which itself is useful as defining both the Indian Connection of the people to whom it allies and their place within the central milieu in which they have established themselves as well as their original racial affinities and he includes among them "all those sino-Tibetan speaking tribes, mongoloids of various types and among them the Nagas too."¹¹

9. W.C. Smith, *op.cit.*, pp.153-160.

10. Quoted by Alemchiba, *op.cit.*, pp.12-16.

11. Dr. S.K. Chatterji: 'Kirata-Jana-Kriti', J.R.A.S.B., vol.XVI, 1950, 2; p.149.

LINGUISTIC IDENTITY

"Language", says Herder, "expresses the collective experience of the group."¹² Language is a powerful mode of transmission of culture of one area to another. Although there are only three broad speech groups to be found in tribal India, the multiplicity of dialects is one of the most complicated problems to be faced in planning rehabilitation.¹³

Language, "acts as an important symbol of group consciousness and solidarity." We ought to respect a tribe's desire to preserve its language but between this desire and achievement there is still a long gap. This truth has to be acknowledged. The language spoken by the Nagas falls under the Tibeto - Burman language. The Tibeto-Burman languages are divided into three different groups:

- i) Tibeto-Himalayan Languages
- ii) North Assam Languages
- iii) Assam Burmese Languages.

The language spoken by the Nagas come under the first group. In course of time it became a tonal language like the Kachin language in Burma. Thus in such languages, a particular word having the same spelling

12. Anthony D. Smith, The Ethnic Revival, Cambridge University Press, 1981, p.45.

13. D.N. Majumdar & T.N. Madan, An Introduction to Social Anthropology, Manohar Publishing House, 1986, pp.220.

holds many different meaning depending upon the pitch of tones. For example, in Ao, Azu means blood, dog, thatch, or oil seeds. In Chang, Lang means stone, horn, thatch or rain. Likewise in Phom also, Wong means bamboo, force, horn, climb or rice.

The linguistic topography of Nagaland is remarkable for very complicated and numerous dialectical variations. In some areas the dialects differ from village to village, and in earlier days men and women in the same household sometimes had to use different forms of speech. But despite these differences, a common thread runs through all the Naga languages as they all belong to the Tibeto-Burman family. They are, as, Mr. Das Shastri, a philologist who has worked in the North Eastern India for a number of years, points out, highly tonal; the vowels do not conform to any known definite category and appear to be indistinct; the consonants, specially when they occur at the end of words, are glottalized; aspiration characterizes liquids and nasals; locative variety predominates in the case system and the conjugational pattern presents an extremely rich variety of moods and well classified tenses, negatives are mainly prefixed or suffixed, infixation occurring in a few instances; classificatory terms, both numerical and nominal are in use.

For a long time Nagas of different groups have talked to one another either in broken Assamese or in English and the Nagas themselves observed

with some amusement that at a conference at which they demanded separation from Assam, many of the speakers made their speeches in the Assamese language. Assamese has been useful to the Nagas for the purpose of trade and to promote unity between the different tribes. Many Nagas are now acquainted with Hindi and English.¹⁴ Very little is known about the dialects of the Naga people. The Nagas had no written literature of their own. The Nagas had no written literature of their own. The Nagas were introduced to the art of writing after the advent of the missionaries.¹⁵ They had complex linguistic diversity. Each tribe had one or more dialect/s which was unintelligible to the other tribes. The Ao dialect placed in the central sub-group of the Naga language, by sir George Grierson¹⁶ in his linguistic survey of India, is divided into a number of dialects, Chungli, Mongsen and Changki. A.W.Davies opined, "Chungli, and Mongsen are so dissimilar as to be practically different languages, though these two dialect speaking tribes in many instances live side by side in the same village."¹⁷ Most of the tribes have their own languages named after themselves. For instance, the

14. V. Elwin: Nagaland, pp.12-13.

15. P.T. Philip: The Growth of Baptist Churches in Nagaland, 1983, pp.8-9.

16. Sir, George Grierson in J.P.Mill's, The Ao Nagas,pp.284, 1903 Calcutta.

17. A.W.Davis: 'The Aos in 1691 Census of India'. Assam Vol.1, pp.241-4 in V.Elwin's Nagas in the Nineteenth Century. O.U.P. 1969.

Angamis speak Angami and the Aos speak Ao, some tribes are divided into sub-tribes which speak their own dialects. Therefore Naga is a term applied to different tribal groups who are linguistically diverse to one another and who are not in a position to understand one another's dialects unlike other tribes who have a common dialect like the Mizos.¹⁸

Since writing has only recently been introduced, the clear identity of being a standard language is not yet fully established in any of the Naga dialects. However enormous vocabulary have been borrowed from outside sources. Although other languages words have been incorporated into their languages for more meaningful communication they have deep awareness for their separate identity of language and culture and the significance of education through mother tongue.¹⁹

Everyone appears to be proud of their own language and it is unlikely that anyone of these languages will disappear soon. An interesting feature of this diversity of dialects is that, the different groups are bound together as one people, as Nagas.²⁰

18. H.Kamkhenthang: 'Identity crises Among the tribes of Manipur'. p.278, in B.Pakem's (ed.) Nationality, Ethnicity and Cultural Identity in North Eastern India, 1990.

19. Dua Hans R.: Language Planning in India. p.272, Harnam Publications, 1985.

20. M.Alemchiba : A Brief Historical Account of Nagaland, 1970, p.216.

RELIGIOUS IDENTITY

Naga religion is of a type common throughout tribal India. There is a vaguely imagined supreme creator and arbiter of mankind, and many minor deities, ghosts and spirits of trees, rivers and hills; all nature is alive with unseen forces. There are priests and medicine-men who placate these spirits, banish all those who give diseases, attract all those who help and guard, and who take the lead in the rites and festivals which stimulate the processes of agriculture, bless the marriage bed and protect the craftsman at his work.²¹

From time immemorial the Nagas of various tribes had their own distinct belief with identical forms of worship though the name of god differed from tribe to tribe, according to the different dialects of the tribes. Robinson, speaking on ancient Naga religion writes, "among the Nagas we discern apprehension of some invisible and powerful beings. These apprehensions however seem at first to be suggested to the mind rather by the dread of impending evil, than to flow from gratitude for blessings received."²² Likewise Philip says that Nagas worship the supernatural, such as gods, ghosts, demons and other spirits. They fear the supranational

21. V.Elwin, Nagaland, Spectrum Publications. Delhi. 1997,p.10.

22. W.Robinson. 'A descriptive accounts of Assam', in V.Elwin, Nagas in the nineteenth Century. Oxford univ. Press., 1969,p.502.

powers. However, Naga religion appears very simple and has no deep rooted philosophy in it. Some tribes, such as the Angamis, Aos, Konyaks and Semas, have faith in a supreme god. Ukepenuopfu is the supreme benevolent god of the Angamies. Likewise Alhou is the supreme god of the Semas. He adds that the spirits of ancestors are worshipped especially in times of trouble. Therefore offerings are made to appease the spirits of the ancestors. The Nagas are also aware of the presence of duality in nature, good and bad, god and satan.²³

However, with the advent of Christianity, the old religion was quickly swallowed within half a century.²⁴ Writing on Christianity and the Nagas, Barpujari says that among the factors that are involved in bringing the consciousness of ethnic identity of all Nagas the impact of Christianity cannot be minimised. He adds that Christianity has been all along playing an important part in bringing about unity of all Nagas irrespective of their age-old inter-village and inter-tribal feuds and rivalries. This religion has been acting as a centripetal force in uniting the different Naga tribes of Nagaland, Manipur, and Arunachal Pradesh, under a common identity

23. P.T. Philip - The Growth of Baptist churches in Nagaland. CLC Guwahati, 1983, pp.37-39.

24. Bendangangshi, Glimpses of Naga History, Naga Patriots from Soyim Mokokchung. 1993, pp.15-19.

"Naga".²⁵ Writing in the same vein, Downs says that in Christian conventions and councils as well as in assemblies different tribes were brought together which fostered a sense of tribal and regional identity for the first time which in turn provided the foundations for modern conceptions of political identity though this was not a conscious objective of either the missions or the churches.²⁶ He adds that Christianity provided an ideology that helped the tribal people maintain their identity in the face of serious erosion of their traditional religious, social and political institutions.²⁷

Thus from the foregone discussion we see that the cultural identity of the Nagas are seen in several common aspects which all the Nagas share. Racially all the Nagas belong to the Indo-Mongoloid group. Linguistically all the Naga dialects fall under the Tibeto- Burman language and in modern times all the Nagas find a common identifying element in Christianity. These are some of the factors upon which the identity of the Nagas, as a distinct ethnic group, has its base. It is mostly on these lines that the separatism and irredentism of the Nagas rest upon, largely substantiated by

25. H.K.Barpujari, 'Assertion of Naga Ethnic Identity: A Historical Background' in B.Pakem (ed.) op.cit., pp.317.

26. F.S.Downs, Christianity in N.E.India, p.165.

27. Ibid., p.185.

the fact that historically, Nagaland has no connection whatever with India.²⁸ A subtle recognition of this fact can be seen in Nehru's letter to B.R. Medhi where he writes, "we must not judge them as we would others who are undoubtedly part of India. The Nagas have no such background or sensations and we have to create that sensation among them by our goodwill and treatment."²⁹

Similarly, Anand writes, because the Nagas could not write until recently for want of a script, the events of their early periods, particularly the struggle, migrations and wars could not be chronicled and were lost to oblivion. Thus deprived of their early history replete with conflicts, the memorized information, that could not go very far back, helped them only to retain the synthesis that had started developing under the British. This growing realization of a common origin, background, anthropology and history, quite different from other Indians gave them the first indications of being a separate group.³⁰ However he writes that the Naga arts, crafts, music and folklore depicting scenes of war, head-hunting and games of chase only showed common values. The general conventions and manners,

28. A.Z. Phizo, "The fate of the Naga people, An appeal to the world". Vauxhall bridge road, London, July 1960, pp.1.

29. Bishnuram Medhi Papers, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, Delhi.

30. V.K. Anand, Conflict in Nagaland, 1980, p.48.

community singing and dancing, and rituals and festivals projected more of cultural similarities than differences.³¹

The view of the Nagas as a distinct ethnic group is an appropriate example of the definition of ethnic given by E.Hunter and Philip Whitten ; 'this term refers to any group of people within a larger cultural unit who identify themselves as a distinct entity, separate from the rest of that culture. Along with this element of self-identification, this group usually has a number of other characteristics which show its distinctiveness and put social distance between itself and other. These characteristics may include a separate language or dialect, distinctive traditions and social customs, distinctive dress, food and mode of life, and a circumscribed land base".³²

Verrier Elwin, speaks of the Naga attitude in four propositions; 'Nagas are not Indians and do not want to become Indians'. 'Naga territory is not, and has never been a part of the Indian territory'. 'Nagaland was never conquered by India. It was conquered by the British and once the British left India it should revert to its original free status'. 'The Nagas are determined to have complete independence. They are determined not to join

31. Ibid.,p.51.

32. Quoted by D.Sairkia and D.N.Majumdar, in B.Pakem (ed.), Nationality, Ethnicity and cultural identity in N.E.India,p.27.

the union. They will die before losing their independence'.³³ Anand gives some factors which according to him jointly helped the concept of a separate Naga nation to crystallize.³⁴

1. A Common Origin, history and group feeling.
2. Attachment to a specific territory.
3. Love for freedom.
4. Unity of Moral, Spiritual, social and economic institutions.
5. Distinct cultural characteristics.
6. Likeness of dietary habits
7. Similarity of religions, ideas and concepts.
8. Appearances of common friends and enemies.
9. Encouragement from foreign elements.
10. Psychological mal-adjustments.
11. Inspiration from the creation of Pakistan and Israel and,
12. Love for fellow Nagas.

He says that, on account of the numerous variations from the Indian way of life and the insignificant among the Nagas themselves, a common group feeling started developing in the area. The Nagas began helping each

33. V.Elwin, Nagaland, p.73.

34. V.K.Anand op.cit.,p.53.

other more and the growing love and regard for other Nagas furthered the feeling of oneness to attain an inter-tribal all Naga character.³⁵ For Rustomji, the Naga issue has been due to the problem of cultural disturbance and maladjustment.³⁶

Nevertheless, there are scholars who are of the view that though Naga Ethnicity may have a strong base in its unique cultural identity it cannot be explained by identity alone. Besides the approaches discussed in chapter three, there are three more theories known as the three 'C's, which are given by some scholar with regard to the Naga issue. They are, "the theory of colonial conspiracy", "the theory of christian conspiracy" and "the theory of communist conspiracy", which indicate the role of external factors.³⁷ The view has from time to time been advanced that the Naga issue has been mainly fomented by the mischievous scheming of neighboring countries, more particularly China and Pakistan. Rustomji says that while there is evidence that India's neighbours have taken advantage of the unsettled conditions along the frontiers, it would be incorrect to brand them as the root cause. Tribals have, it is true, been supplied with arms and ammunition

35. V.K.Anand, op.cit.,pp.51.

36. Nari Rustomji op.cit.,pp.69.

37. G.Das, 'Understanding the insurgency phenomenon in India's North-East: An analytical framework' in B.Pakem's (ed.) *Insurgency in N.E.,India*, pp.177. also refer to chapter II. Also N.Rustomji op.cit., 1997, p.69.

by India's less friendly neighbours, they have been offered asylum across India's frontiers when pursued by security forces, they have been trained, clothed, fed and helped to recuperate before recrossing the frontier and resuming their hostile, anti-government activities. But had it not been for the deeper causes underlying the disturbances, the question of tribal seeking support from neighbours would not at all have arisen.³⁸

However, speaking from the anticipated cultural deprivation and the economic approach, Das says that a major phenomenon which generated the Naga movement was the growing discontent among Naga tribes due to their inability to adjust themselves to the emerging socio-political situation on the eve of Indian independence and the impending withdrawal of British administration. He says that the above conditions made the Nagas feel that a measure of special protection and privileges would be bestowed on them. He argues that traditional Naga leaders - such as , village headman and some educated elite among the different tribes of the Naga hills - became apprehensive of losing their separate identity, the consciousness of which was encouraged by the British administration. He says that the fear of interference and exploitation by the plainsmen and the assumed danger of encroachment upon their 'cultural autonomy', were linked with a fear of

38. Nari Rustomji, *op.cit.*, pp.68. also see A.S.Narang.*op.cit.*,pp.36.

losing their customary ownership of the hills³⁹. The political problem of Nagaland according to Das is essentially on outcome of growing urge on the part of the Naga population for the special recognition of Naga ethnic identity as also of anxiety to safeguard their customary socio-economic rights against the interference of and amalgamation with the plains people of India. Such feeling of insecurity and consequent urge for solidarity and unity was not born just at the time of Indian independence but had been growing for quite some time during British rule in Nagaland.⁴⁰ However, a strong feeling of Naga self identity as also a negative image of plains people developed on the eve of Indian independence and the impending withdrawal of British Raj.⁴¹ Thus it is seen that Das sets out to give a socio-economic explanation for the Naga problem, but instead gives very strong arguments in favour of Naga ethnic - identity as being the major cause for this movement.

The socio -economic argument further explains that this area remained isolated from the mainstream of the country for centuries. Even after independence, it missed the benefit of planned economic development

39. N.K. Das, "The Naga movement" in K.S. Singh (ed.) People of India, Vol. XXXIV. Anthropological survey of India. Seagull Books, Calcutta, 1994. p-39.

40. N.K. Das, op.cit., p.40.

41. Ibid., p-50.

for the periods up to the third five year plan. As a result of remoteness, isolation and lack of infrastructure, the cost of development is higher. This deters investment which alone can create employment opportunities. These adverse economic factors have fuelled the insurgency in Nagaland.⁴² Barpujari says that, "above all, insurgency in the North-East is the symptom of the growing disease that the body politic of every state is rickety to the extreme, with rampant corruption, disparity in income and total lack of industrial, agricultural and economic development which otherwise could have provided useful employment to the misguided youths."⁴³

For Verrier Elwin, the causes of the Naga movement differed from those which have excited tribal people in other parts of India and of the world. There was, in fact, no colonizing of the hills by outsiders; no one expropriated Naga land; there was little or no interference in tribal forest rights; there was little commercial exploitation and except in regard to head-hunting, no official interference whatever in Naga culture or social custom. He attributes the Naga movement mainly to psychological anxiety and suspicion which according to him can be as tormenting as actual wrong, and can be as strong an incentive to revolt.⁴⁴

42. Documentation, 'Insurgency in Nagaland', Link May 22, 1994, p.27.

43. H.K. Barpujari, 'Insurgency in N.E. India: A case study of the NSCN' in B. Pakem (ed.), Insurgency in N.E. India, Omsons, New Delhi, 1997, pp.324-25.

44. V.Elwin op.cit., pp.78.

Writing from the perspective of colonial conspiracy and Christian conspiracy, V.K.Anand says, "with the foreign missionaries acting as midwife, some British political leaders generated the Psychological backdrop for the birth of the Naga demand for a separate homeland".⁴⁵ He further adds, "whereas the English administrator and missionary started taking the place of his friend, philosopher and guide, a misrepresented image of an Indian began to be accepted by the Naga who started believing himself to be a super being. The forging of unity and conception of a Naga nation, as distinct from the main Indian body, hastened the process of transferring the Naga fears and instinct of self-presentation from individual level to group level. The separations between the Indian and the Nagas, which was physical, became mental after Independence. Thus psychological maladjustment gave birth to the conflicts of minds, the starting point for the Naga insurgency".⁴⁶ But we see that the arguments put forward by Anand here contains only two aspects out of the twelve aspects which according to him jointly helped the concept of a separate Naga nation to crystallize. The other aspects mainly regarding the distinct cultural identity of the Nagas definitely have an important role to play too. In 1964, the Naga Peace

45. V.K.Anand op.cit., p.57.

46. V.K.Anand op.cit., pp.59-60.

mission⁴⁷ of which Jaya Prakash Narayan was one of the member, acknowledged the fact that the Nagas constitute a separate region and that any union of the Nagas with India had to be a voluntary one. The mission appreciated "the desire of the Nagas for self-determination" and their struggle for the preservation of their way of life. Jayaprakash Narayan explicitly declared: "There can be no doubt that the struggle led by the Naga Federal government cannot be regarded as a mere 'problem of law and order'. It is most certainly a struggle for National freedom. It does not aim at overthrowing a government, but it certainly aim at throwing out a government, namely the government of India, which it regards as established here by force..., the Naga people are unquestionably a nation."⁴⁸

In post-colonial states, there is a tendency to view ethnic groups and their aspirations as threat to the unity and territorial integrity. In the name of 'nation-building' minority dissent or opposition is conveniently swept under the carpet by labelling it as separatist. It is lamentable that the ruling class in none of the post-colonial states has woken up to the futility and danger of clinging wholly to the notion of a nation-state. Neither has anybody recognized the fact that most post-colonial states are not as

47. The peace mission comprised of three members Rev. Michael Scott, B.P. Chaliha and Jaya Prakash Narayan.

48. Udayan Misra, 'The Naga National Question', EPW, April 8, 1978.

homogeneous or unitary in the sense as their ruling establishments would have us believe; but that they constitute a plurality of different races and communities with each having its identity rooted in separate customs, history and language.

There have been many explanations given for the understanding of the Nagas issue. This chapter, as it has been seen, has mainly argued from the distinct ethnic identity perspective due to various reasons. The most important being that, other explanations, (like relative deprivation, cultural deprivation, resource allocation, internal colonialism, and political economy) are not totally adequate in this case because the Naga movement started prior to India's independence. Such being the situation, there is a need to understand the Naga question in its ethno-historical perspective. And in this regard Lipi Ghosh⁴⁹ says that fostering the tribal identity perhaps is the easiest answer to resolve the Naga question.

49. Lipi Ghosh. 'Insurgency in Nagaland: The Historical roots' in B.Pakem (ed.) Insurgency in N.E.India, p.349.

CONCLUSION

The Nagas are divided into various tribes, sub-tribes and clans with differences in customs, traditions, dress, languages, polity etc, and yet, it is in this diversity that the unity of the Nagas are found. Writing about the search for a new awareness among the tribals of Manipur, T.S.Gangte says that the new identity of the different groups of Nagas being one people under the Naga identity is indeed a "Spectacular Phenomenon". He adds that the emergence of the Nagas in the political limelight of the whole North-East region during the fifties and sixties under the leadership of Phizo attracted the smaller tribes to take shelter under the political umbrella of Naga identity. The term Naga, Gangte further says, has become a "prestigious ethnic identity' for many hill tribes of Manipur in particular and North-East India in general.¹ It is seen that a Naga whether he is Angami, Sema, Ao, Konyak, Tangkhul or Mao prefers to call himself a "Naga" despite his separate tribal entity.

The Nagas had been living in relative isolation for centuries. It was only from the first quarter of the last century that they were brought into real contact with the outside world by several agencies, the most prominent of

1. Gangte.T.S. "Search for New Identity among the tribals of Manipur" in man and life, vol. X,nos.3-4, July-December,1984,p.180.

which was British rule and Christianity. The British Administration over the Nagas virtually began with the occupation of Samaguting (now chumukedima) in 1866 and continued till the transfer of power to Indian hands on 15th of August 1947. In these eight decades, the British followed a policy of least interference in the internal affairs of the Nagas giving due regard to the continuance of the tribe's village administration, land system, customary laws, social customs and communal institutions. Therefore, the traditional life patterns of the Naga tribes remained largely unchanged, except for inter-tribal feuds and head-hunting which diminished due to British intervention.²

Notwithstanding the limited objective of colonial rule, western education and christianity brought about a gradual change in the Naga world view. This new awakening became more profound with the dawn of the present century when the world was witnessing rapid changes which the Naga society was also exposed to. The formation of the Naga club in 1918, was a milestone in the history of Naga politics, where for the first time, leaders of different Naga tribes found a common platform to express themselves. The formation of the Naga National Council in April 1946 however brought to the forefront the Naga aspirations and sentiments. The

2. Udayan Mishra, Naga Nationalism and the role of the middle class in Datta Ray.B. (ed.), The emergence and role of middle class in in N.E.India, pp.154.

most significant fact about the council was that for the first time, the term 'National' was used and the council was composed of twenty nine members representing different tribes on the basis of proportional representation.³ The leadership of the NNC was provided by the educated section of the Nagas. In the beginning, the political objective of the NNC was solidarity of all Nagas including those of the unadministered areas and the inclusion of their hills within the province of Assam in a free India with local autonomy and adequate safeguards for the interest of the Nagas. This demand which was purely irredentist was well received in the circle of the Indian National Congress. However, the nature of demand changed from irredentism to separatism after A.Z. Phizo took over the leadership of the NNC. In the meantime, the scheme of a 'crown colony' could not gain ground due to the peculiar political and constitutional situation facing the country on the eve of Indian Independence as well as due to the change of Government in Britain. In July 1947, a Naga delegation headed by Phizo met Gandhi in Delhi for pressing their demand for independence.⁴ After getting a favourable response from Gandhi on the 14th of August, on the eve of India's independence, the Nagas under the leadership of Phizo declared Nagaland

3. Misra, U. 'The Naga National Questin" E.P.W. vol.XII,no.14, April 8th, 1978,p.619.

4. See the Government perspective in Chapter II.

independent. This declaration by itself marked the beginning of a new chapter of confrontation and conflict, of armed insurrection by a section of the Nagas and counter-offensive launched by the Indian Security forces. Thereafter, the assumption of direct leadership of the NNC in December 1950, by Phizo, referendum of May, 1951, boycott of general elections of 1952, establishment of a parallel government in 1956, followed by a period of armed insurrection, boycott of general election in 1957, attainment of statehood by Nagaland in December 1963, Peace mission and cease fire agreement of 1964, the shillong accord of 1975, the formation of the NSCN in 1980, and cease fire agreement since August 1997 have been the important political development in Nagaland.

Barpujari says that the "political unrest or separate tendencies of some of these tribes was the endeavour on their part for the assertion of separate identity, political and cultural following British pull out of India". He believes that the Nagas were inspired, by no less extent, by the insurrectionary movements beyond the borders of Burma, Malaya or Indonesia in the wake of the Japanese invasions.⁵ Admitting that these factors are involved in bringing the consciousness of ethnic identity of all Naga, the impact of Christianity in this regard cannot be minimised.

5. H.K.Barpujari, The American Missionaries and North-East India,p.144.

Christianity has all along played an important part in integrating the Naga society.⁶ It is seen that while the British administrators took up purely administrative responsibility over the Nagas, it was mainly the Christian missionaries which brought about social change among the Nagas. Some writers are of the view that it was the values and principles and feeling of brotherhood imbibed on the Nagas by the teachings of christianity, which provided the foundations for the modern conceptions of political identity.⁷ There have been many accusations levelled at the Christian missionaries. Especially that of inciting the Nagas to rebel. However this is not true as today in India it is seen that communities which otherwise have had no contact with Christians are in the midst of such movements as that of the Nagas. The Bodos of Assam, the Meiteis of Manipur, the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) are existing examples. Moreover one should also take note of the fact that Naga corporate and community spirit is greater than their religious sentiments. As a result of which the Nagas come together on matters of common interest, be it religious, social or political.⁸ Similarly B.G.Vergheese says that within little more than the span of a century,

6. See Church perspective in Chapter II.

7. F.S.Downs. op,cit.,p.165.

8. H.K.Barpujari, Role of Christianity in Naga integration. Paper presented at the U.G.C. Seminar, Manipur University, 1985.

Christianity brought 98% of Nagaland and most Nagas of the Manipur hills into the field. This has been a factor in promoting a common identity as the Nagas, who are several, have forged a strong sense of oneness in more recent times.⁹ Prakash Singh gives three reasons why Christian missionaries were highly successful in Nagaland. The first is that, the protective British Umbrella helped the missionaries. Secondly, the early pioneers were undoubtedly men of grit and determination and they had a tremendous crusading zeal. Finally, the missionaries had the vision and foresight to identify themselves completely with the tribals in whose midst they lived.¹⁰

The governments response to the Naga question has been a mixture of brutal force and goodwill.¹¹ However the predominant policy has been that of the use of force. Such intolerance and imperviousness have in most cases unnecessarily complicated things. Writing on these lines, B.Datta says that the tendency to brand all group aspirations and demands, without going into the merits of each, as anti-national, secessionist and extremist and to harp on the slogan joining the national main-stream with a holier-than-thou attitude is

9. B.G.Vergheese, op.cit.,p.83.

10. Prakash Singh, Nagaland, N.B.T. New Delhi, 1972,p.174.

11. Refer to Nehur's letter extract in Chapter II, under the sub-heading, 'The Government perspective'.

both self-deceiving and self-defeating.¹² In Independent India, when the government adopted various political and administrative measures in Nagaland, as a state of India, the Nagas treated that to be a great danger to their traditional set up. It revealed that the Nagas could not share pan-Indian Nationalism. While on the other hand, there developed a tendency to blame the tribal cultural identity to be responsible for the forces of separatism. Lipi Ghosh says that, "it is unfortunate that till today, government attitude is to spur insurgency by tightening security measures and imposing a strong and alert police force."¹³

The continuing political unrest in Nagaland has been variously called, Home rule, extremism, irredentism, terrorism, separatism, etc. depending on the vantage point from which it is looked at. For instance, G.A.Shimray, the chairman of Nagaland University union said, "we were born free and we want to live free. You call them (the Nagas) insurgents, we call them National workers".¹⁴ It is seen that how any social phenomenon is perceived is a relative concept. Therefore in order to make an attempt to

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12. B.Datta. Ethnicity, Nationalism and Sub-Nationalism in B.Pakem (ed), Nationalism, Ethnicity and cultural identity in North-East India,p.39.
 13. L.Ghosh, Insurgency in Nagaland, in B.Pakem (ed.), Insurgency in North-East India,p.348.
 14. 'NSF appeals Britian to free Nagaland from India', a report by special correspondent, The meghalaya Guardian, 22 June, 1994.

understand the Naga issue, keeping in mind its historical perspective, the ethnic identity of the Nagas has been looked at from various perspectives. Among the various approaches to the study of ethnicity, the primordialist approach has been emphasized on in the case of the Nagas. This is mainly due to three reasons. One being the distinct similiar if not common history of all the Naga tribes. The second being the distinct racial, linguistic and religious affinities of the Nagas as compared to the rest of the population of India, and thirdly the very fact that the Naga movement for independence preceeded India's very own independence. An important feature of the third factor is that, given this scenario, other explanations for the phenomenon of 'ethnicity' as given in the third chapter become redundant to a large extent. This is because the question of relative deprivation, unequal resource allocation, internal colonialism, resource competition etc, does not arise in a situation where Naga ethnicity manifested itself much before the establishment of India as a nation as said before. Hence we see that the already existing racial, linguistic, religious and cultural distinctiveness of the Nagas as compared to the rest of the people in India laid down the necessary conditions for the emergence of Naga ethnicity. While the advent of British administration and Christian missionaries provided the sufficient condition for the rise of political consciousness among the Nagas, though this was never intended at least by the Christian missionaries. However, the other

perspectives cannot be discarded completely especially the anticipated cultural deprivation and psychological maladjustment arguments of Rustomji, S.K. Das and V.K. Anand as already mentioned.

We then see that the Naga movement in the initial years was mainly based on the distinct history of the Nagas substantiated by their distinct cultural and racial identity. But the resurgence of this movement in the 1990's cannot wholly be attributed to the distinct identity factor. This later phase was largely fueled by the existing socio-economic conditions in Nagaland. Among the most important reason is the total absence of employment avenues for the youth in the state, where the government is to a large extent the only source of employment generation.¹⁵ As a consequence, a large number of educated unemployed youth found solace within the ambit of the movement. However, unlike elsewhere, in Nagaland, the important consideration for socio-economic development is not so much on account of class consciousness as in group consciousness. The question of step motherly treatment has also been stressed from time to time. What is actually behind the slogan of underdevelopment is the group consciousness which thrives on common identity of culture, language race

15. S.K.Chaube, Tribal Societies and the problem of Nation building in B.Pakem (ed.), Nationality, Ethnicity and cultural identity in N.E.India,pp.24.

and religion. This is seen from the very fact that though huge financial assistance had been pumped into Manipur and Nagaland, the so called insurgency continues unabated. Naga ethnicity, then, is a perfect example of the definition of ethnic as given by E.Hunter and Philip Whitten, "this term refers to any group of people within a larger cultural unit who identify themselves as a distinct entity, separate from the rest of that culture. Along with this element of self-determination, this group usually has a number of other characteristics which show its distinctiveness and put social distance between itself and others. These characteristics may include a separate language (or dialect), distinctive traditions and social customs, distinctive dress, food and mode of life, and circumscribed land base".¹⁶ Therefore we see that the quest for identity of self and ones own ethnic group is a natural human behaviour, where identity of an ethnic group may be on the basis of religion, occupation, language, territory etc. And in this respect, the arguments of the Nagas runs that they never surrendered to pre-British and British sovereignty. They never signed any agreement with the Raj. In the pre-British Ahom period they were not a part of the Indian subcontinental administration and even in the British period, though geographically they

16. D.Saikia and D.N.Majumdar, 'Some Characteristics of Ethno-Cultural Identity of North-East India' in B.Pakem (ed.) op.cit., pp.27.

were under India, their socio-economic set up remained outside the purview of the colonial rulers. So with the departure of the British, they could not be annexed by the Indians.¹⁷

Thus it is seen that, though in the later years other factors have definitely contributed to the ethnic movement of the Nagas, the Naga demand for separatism and irredentism has its roots strongly embedded in the distinct history as well as the distinct socio-cultural identity of the Nagas.

17. L. Ghosh, 'Insurgency in Nagaland' in B. Pakem (ed.), Insurgency in North-East India, Omsons, Delhi, 1990, p.348.

APPENDIX-A

The Naga-Akbar Hydari Accord

TRIBES REPRESENTED AT DISCUSSIONS ON THE 26TH, 27TH AND 28TH JUNE, 1947, AT KOHIMA¹

Western Angamis.
Eastern Angamis.
Kukis.
Kacha Nagas (Mzemi).
Rengmas.
Semas.
Lothas.
Aos.
Sangtams.
Changs.

HEADS OF PROPOSED UNDERSTANDING

That the right of the Nagas to develop themselves according to their freely expressed wishes is recognized.

1. Judicial --- All cases whether civil or criminal arising between Nagas in the Naga Hills will be disposed of by duly constituted Naga Courts according to Naga customary law or such law as may be introduced with the consent of duly recognized Naga representative organizations: save that where a sentence of transportation or death has been passed there will be a right of appeal to the Governor.

In cases arising between Nagas and non-Nagas in (a) Kohima and Mokokchung town areas, and (b) in the neighbouring plains districts the judge if not a Naga will be assisted by a Naga assessor.

2. Executive -- The general principle is accepted that what the Naga Council is prepared to pay for the Naga Council should control. This principle will apply equally to the work done as well as the staff employed.

1. See, Bishnuram Medhi Papers, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, Delhi.

While the District Officer will be appointed at the discretion of the Governor Subdivisions of the Naga Hills should be administered by a Subdivisional Council with a full time executive President paid by Naga Council who would be responsible to the District Officer for all matters falling within the latter's responsibility, and to the Naga Council for all matters falling within their responsibility.

In regard to: (a) Agriculture -- the Naga Council will exercise all the powers now vested in the District Officer.

(b) C.W.D. -- the Naga Council would take full control.

(c) Education and Forest Department -- The Naga Council is prepared to pay for all the services and staff.

3. Legislative -- That no laws passed by the Provincial or Central legislature which would materially affect the terms of this agreement or the religious practices of the Nagas shall have legal force in the Naga hills without the consent of the Naga council. In case of dispute as to whether any law did so affect this agreement the matter would be referred by the Naga Council to the Governor who would then direct that the law in question should not have legal force in the Naga Hills pending the decision of the Central Government.

4. Land -- That land with all its resources in the Naga Hills should not be alienated to a non-Naga without the consent of the Naga Council.

5. Taxation -- That the Naga Council will be responsible for the imposition, collection, and expenditure of land revenue and house tax and of such other taxes as may be imposed by the Naga Council.

6. Boundaries -- That present administrative divisions should be modified so as (1) to bring back into the Naga Hills District all the forests transferred to the Sibsagar and Nowgong Districts in the past, and (2) to bring under one unified administrative unit as far as possible all Nagas. All the areas so included would be within the scope of the present proposed agreement. No areas should be transferred out of the Naga Hills without the consent of the Naga Council.

7. Arms Act -- The Deputy Commissioner will act on the advice of the Naga Council in accordance with the provisions of the Arms Act.

8. Regulations -- The Chin Hills regulations and the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulations will remain in force.

9. Period of Agreement-- The Governor of Assam as the Agent of the Government of the Indian Union will have a special responsibility for a period of 10 years to ensure the due observance of this agreement; at the end of this period the Naga Council will be asked whether they require the above agreement to be extended for a further period or a new agreement regarding the future of Naga people arrived at.

APPENDIX-B

The Sixteen point Agreement

The points placed by the delegates of the Naga People's Convention before the Prime Minister on July 26, 1960 as finally recast by the Delegation in the light of discussions on 27th and 28th and July, 1960, with the Foreign Secretary.

1. THE NAME

The territories that were here-to-fore known as the Naga Hills Tuensang Area under the Naga Hill-Tuensang Area Act 1957, shall form a State within the Indian Union and be hereafter known as Nagaland.

2. THE MINISTRY INCHARGE.

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

3. THE GOVERNOR OF NAGALAND.

- 1) The President of India shall appoint a Governor for Nagaland and he will be vested with executive powers of the Government of Nagaland. He will have his headquarters in Nagaland.
- 2) His administrative Secretariat will be headed by Chief Secretary stationed at the Head quarters with other Secretariat staff as necessary.
- 3) The Governor shall have special responsibility with regard to law and order during transitional period and for so long as the law and order situation continues to remain disturbed on account of hostile activities. In exercising this special responsibility, the Governor shall after consultation with the Ministry, act in his individual judgment. This special responsibility of the Governor will cease when normalcy returns.

4. COUNCIL OF MINISTERS.

- 1) There shall be council of Minister with a Chief Minister at the head to assist and advise the Governor in the exercise of his functions.
- 2) The Council of Ministers shall be responsible to the Naga Legislative Assembly.

5. THE LEGISLATURE.

There shall be constituted a legislative Assembly consisting of elected and nominated members as may be necessary representing different Tribes. (Further a duly constituted body of Experts may be formed to examine and determine principles of representation on democratic basis.)

6. REPRESENTATION IN THE PARLIAMENT.

Two elected members shall represent the Nagaland in the Union Parliament, that is to say, one for the Lok Sabha and the other for the Rajya Sabha.

7. ACTS OF PARLIAMENT.

No Act or law passed by the Union Parliament effecting the following provision shall have legal fore in the Nagaland unless specifically applied to it by a majority vote of the Naga Legislative Assembly.

- 1) The Religious or Social practices of the Nagas
- 2) Naga Customary laws and procedure.
- 3) Civil and Criminal justice as far as these concern decisions according to Naga customary law. The exiting laws relating to administration of civil and criminal justice as provided in the Rules for the Administration of Justice and Police in the Naga Hills District shall continue to be in force.
- 4) The ownership and transfer of land and it resources.

8. LOCAL SELF GOVERNMENT.

Each tribe shall have the following units of rule making and administrative local bodies to deal with matters concerning the respective tribes and areas.

- 1) The Village Councils.
- 2) The Range Councils.
- 3) The Tribal Councils.

These Councils will also deal with disputes and cases involving breaches of customary laws and usages.

9. ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE.

a) The existing system of administration of civil and criminal justice shall continue.

- b) Appellate Courts
 - 1) The District Courts (for each district,) High Courts and Supreme Court of India.

10. ADMINISTRATION OF TUENSANG DISTRICT.

- 1) The Governor shall carry on the administration of the Tuensang District for a period of 10 (ten) years until such time when the tribes in the Tuensang District are capable of shouldering more responsibility of the advance system of administration. The commencement of the ten year period of Administration will start simultaneously with the enforcement of detailed workings of the Constitution in other parts of the Nagaland.
- 2) Provided further that a Regional Council shall be formed for Tuensang District by elected representative from all the tribes in Tuensang District, and the Governor may nominate representative to the Regional Councils. The Deputy Commissioner will be the Ex-officio Chairman of the Council. The Regional Council will elect members of the Naga Legislative Assembly to represent Tuensang District.

- 3) Provided further that on the advice of the Regional Council; steps will be taken to start various Council and Courts, in these areas where the people feel themselves capable of establishing such institutions.
- 4) Provided further that no Act or Law passed by the Naga Legislative Assembly shall be applicable to Tuensang District unless specifically recommended by the Regional Council.
- 5) Provided further that the Regional Council shall supervise and guide the working of the various Councils and Tribal Courts within Tuensang District and where ever necessary depute the local officers to act as Chairman there of.
- 6) Provided further that Councils of such areas inhabited by a mixed population or which have not as yet decided to which specific tribal council to be affiliated to, shall be directly under the Regional Council for the time being.

And at the end of ten years the situation will be reviewed and if the people so desired the period will be further extended.

11. FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FROM THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA.

To supplement the revenue of the Nagaland, there will be need for the Government of India to pay out of the Consolidated fund of India.

- 1) Lump sum in the Nagaland and
- 2) a grant-in-aid towards meeting the cost of administration. Proposals for the above grants shall be prepared and submitted by the Government of Nagaland to the Governor of Assam for their approval.

The Governor will have general responsibility for ensuring that the funds made available by the Government of India are expended for the purposes for which they have been approved.

12. The Naga Delegation wished the following to be placed on record.

"The Naga delegation discussed the question of the inclusion of the Reserve Forests and of contiguous areas inhabited by the Nagas. They were referred to the provisions in Articles 3 and 4 of the Constitutions, prescribing the procedure for the transfer of areas from one State to another".

13. CONSOLIDATION OF CONTIGUOUS NAGA AREAS.

The delegation wished the following to be placed on record.

"The Naga leaders expressed the view that other Nagas inhabiting contiguous areas should be able to join the new State. It was pointed out to them on behalf of the Government of India that Articles 3 and 4 of the Constitution provided for increasing the area of any State, but that it was not possible for the Government of India to make any commitment in this regard at this stage".

14. FORMATION OF SEPARATE NAGA REGIMENT.

In order that the Naga people can fulfil their desire of playing a full roll in the defence forces of India, the question of raising a separate Naga Regiment should be duly examined for action.

15. TRANSITIONAL PERIOD.

- a) on reaching the political settlement with the Government of India, the Government of India will prepare a Bill for such amendment of the constitution as may be necessary in order to implement the discussions, the draft Bill, before presentation to Parliament will be shown to the delegate of the N.P.C.
- b) There shall be constituted an Interim Body with elected representatives from every tribe, to assist and advice the Governor in the administration of the Nagaland during the transitional period. The tenure of office of the members of the Interim Body will be 3 (three) years subject to re-election.

16. INNERLINE REGULATION.

Rule embodied in the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation, 1873, shall remain in force in the Nagaland.

APPENDIX-C

SHILLONG ACCORD

The Shillong accord of 11 November 1975 between the Government of India and the underground Nagas.

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

1. Shri I.Temjenba
2. Shri S.Dehru
3. Shri Veeniyi Rahkhu
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 others, the Governor was assisted by the two Advisers for Nagaland, Shri 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, Aram, Shri L.Lungalang, Shri Kenneth Kerhuo and Shri Lungshim Shaiza, participated in the discussions.

3. The following were the outcome of the discussion:

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

Dated, Shillong
11 November, 1975,
I Temjenba; S Dehru;
Z Ramyo: M Assa;
Kevi Yallay
On behalf of the representatives
of underground organisations.

L.P. Singh
On behalf of the
Government of India.

APPENDIX-D

Manifesto of the National Socialist Council of Nagaland

Nothing is more inalienable for a nation, big or small, than her sovereignty. No moment, either, is more challenging for a people than the time when their free existence of Nagaland is more at peril than ever before. It is high time for the revolutionary patriots to declare their national principles, their views and their aims.

1. NAGALAND AND THE NAGA NATIONAL COUNCIL

We live in a world of constant change. But the forces causing the change are not always the same. They develop and perish according to the different given conditions, stages and times.

To us, the forces that defend the righteous cause of sovereign national existence and further the just cause of the people along the inevitable course are alone patriots and revolutionaries, in that they try to pull the wheels of history back. All the reactionary traitors lean upon one another; all revolutionary patriots stands as one, supporting one another; there is no via media.

The Naga National Council was the only authentic political organisation of the people of Nagaland. It was this council that boldly took up the historic national trust, that is, the safeguarding of the right of the sovereign existence of Nagaland. With all its resoluteness, the Council faced ups and downs and it was never deterred by setbacks here and setbacks there. It had withstood the bitter period of the past three decades or so, turning neither to the right nor to the left-- although there had been marked degeneration in its integrity and vigour. Our country could exist and we owe it to the National Council and to the thousands of patriots who have unsparingly laid down their lives and to the unprecedented endurance of the people, thanks to the leadership Naga National Council had given to the people in their past trials and tribulations till the time of its failure to condemn the treacherous Ministry and the Accord of treason of 1975.

The sober reality, however, is that our country is still under heavy occupation of the enemy troops. What are we to do with this? The enemy will never withdraw of its own accord. In no circumstances should we allow

ourselves either to count on the sensibleness of the enemy. Because it is always suicidal. History has sufficiently warned us against the possible repetition of such error. Politics is successful but only when backed by arms. We are safe so long as we fight to save ourselves. Therefore, we have to fight... If negotiations, however, would be indispensable, they should be done only from a position of strength. Any attempt, therefore, at negotiated settlement at the moment would undoubtedly mean doing away with oneself, if not, it is traitorous in motive.

Facts must be acknowledged in spite of whatever turn the world might take; people must be told the truth so that they may understand their country and know what is what. The enemy is superior, therefore, our war will have to be a protracted one. We are in the course of active defence. Who will lead us through this long war? It is the most decisive issue. Is this the Naga National Council still? It has got to be reasoned out.

True, facts must be admitted and it is a fact that the most ignominious sell - out in the history of Naga people ever since the time the first bullet of freedom was fired, is beyond dispute the notorious 'Shillong Accord'. That Accord deserved an outright official and open condemnation by the Ministry that surrendered arms and consented to such sell-out. This failure left the country in a dangerous political mess. Nationwide danger was thus brought about. Any earnest appeal in a time like this for guidance, and letters of determinations to fight to the last were never vouchsafed; no imperative given. The helpless unyielding were left entirely to themselves....

NAGALAND AND THE NATIONAL SOCIALIST COUNCIL

The world is changing fast but the Naga National Council has failed to keep pace with changing conditions. It has not understood the world and Nagaland; it has isolated itself from the people; it has not promised the people any future from the danger of the forces of domination, exploitation and assimilation. All the old forces have yielded and are drowned without a trace and any contrary claim is just a claim to save one's own face, and not to save the nation. All have fallen and Nagaland remains to be saved. Where is the way to save our nation now? Where is the Council that upholds the cause of the sovereign Nagaland and the salvation of the people?

We declare we are revolutionary patriots. Let no traitorous nor reactionary bounds be on us. To us the sovereign existence of our country,

the salvation of our people in Socialism with their spiritual salvation in Christ are eternal and unquestionable. It is because life has meaning and that is in freedom alone. Only the revolutionary patriots are diametrically opposed to all the anti-national, anti-people forces. Because: We refuse Nagaland to be gotten for gold; we refuse Nagaland to be weighed in terms of silver, wine and women; we refuse Nagaland to be valued for one's status. Indeed, our Nagaland shall forever refuse to perish together with any leadership or organisation that has failed and betrayed her cause, that has no promise of future for her people. Time moves on, and we have to move along, although the Naga National Council does not, for we have to redeem Nagaland. Therefore, in this irreconcilable world, our National Socialist Council declares:

(a) National existence

We stand for the unquestionable sovereign right of the Naga people over every inch of Nagaland whatever it may be and admit of no other existence whatever.

(b) Political institution

We stand for the principle of people's supremacy, that is, the dictatorship of the people through the National Socialist Council and the practice of Democracy within the organization.

(c) Economic system

We stand for Socialism. Because it is the only social and economic system that does away with exploitation and ensures fair equality to all the people.

(d) Religion

We stand for the faith in God and the salvation of mankind in Jesus, the Christ, alone, that is 'NAGALAND FOR CHRIST'. However, the individual freedom of religion shall be safeguarded and the imposition of this faith on others is strictly forbidden.

(e) Means

We rule out the illusion of saving Nagaland through peaceful means. It is arms and arms alone that will save our nation and ensure freedom to the people.

(f) Self-reliance and the policy of United Front

We stand for the practice of the principle of self-reliance and for the policy of United Front with all the forces that can be united with.

SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF NAGALAND:

Ask not what the Maker has in store for us. In His righteousness, He has given us all that is ours. Let us understand our country and our freedom and hold them fast, for what have the people that doubt their freedom and that of their country? They are only fit to be ruled, nay, they are already ruled. They are the people to be pitied most. Without her freedom Nagaland too has nothing. Truly, when freedom falls, everything falls. Your country is challenged; your freedom is in peril. Arise and look! It is time, it is our today; we should never fail her, for no amount of sermons and lamentations can save her tomorrow. We have chosen Nagaland and her freedom forever; we will never part with them. Indeed, it is the war we have to fight; it is the war we have to win. We shall accept no summons to bow down; our Nagaland shall never put her hands up. We shall live only in freedom. This alone is the way to our salvation. Praise the Lord! We hold the promises of history.

LONG LIVE NAGALAND!

LONG LIVE THE NATIONAL SOCIALIST COUNCIL OF NAGALAND.

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