

**SOCIAL STRUCTURE, ECOLOGY AND DEVELOPMENT**  
**THE CASE OF THE MAO AND ANGAMI NAGAS**

**Dissertation submitted to the Jawaharlal Nehru University**  
**in partial fulfilment of the requirements**  
**for the award of the Degree of**

**MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY**



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**INDIA**

**.2003**



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Date : 3<sup>rd</sup> Jan, 2003

**CERTIFICATE**

This dissertation entitled, "**SOCIAL STRUCTURE, ECOLOGY AND DEVELOPMENT: THE CASE OF THE MAO AND ANGAMI NAGAS**", submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of **MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY** of this university has not been previously submitted for any other degree in this university or any other university and is my original work.

  
(H. WILSON)

We recommend this dissertation to be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

  
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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

At the outset I express my profound gratitude to Prof. K.L. Sharma whose guidance and expert advice have gone a long way in shaping this dissertation. It was indeed a great experience to work under him. I also express my gratitude to the UGC for providing me scholarship(JRF) without which this dissertation may not see the light of day.

My heartfelt thanks goes to Bijoy Khuraijam for sacrificing his invaluable time in completing this dissertation on time. I also extend my heartfelt thanks to Apu, Suan, Kaisii and Chander who have helped my work in various capacities. Above all, I am forever indebted to my family members, especially Athi, for the encouragement, love and care.

My special thanks goes to M.Sani Kayina whose wisdom and knowledge in matters relating to the conservation of trees and plants has inspired me to work on forests conservation. My thanks also goes to Dr. Ashikho Daili Mao, Apu, and Kaisii for providing me their invaluable knowledge and information during the preparation of this dissertation. Also, I warmly extend my thanks to Prof. Ehsanul Haq for his affection and support.

My due gratitude to the Librarian and staff members of the School of Social Work, Delhi University, Ratan Tata Library, DSE and Teen Murty for providing me some of the requisite materials for

writing this dissertation. Further, I sincerely offer my appreciation to the staff of the Centre and School Office of the School of Social Sciences for extending their cooperation in no uncertain terms. Last but not the least, I am grateful to Mr. Satish and Prem Raj for getting my dissertation typed inspite of the paucity of time.

I owe a lot to my Supervisor Prof. K.L. Sharma for his insightful and valuable suggestions. However, the form in which the dissertation has been presented and the ideas expressed are mine. The entire responsibilities for any shortcoming in this work is mine, and I alone is accountable for that.

*- H. Wilson*

## INTRODUCTION

The object of this research work is to examine the role of social structure in the management and conservation of forests in a particular tribal setting of North-East India. It is said that forests have not only been sources of livelihood for the tribal for generations but also much of their social organization and culture are woven around the forest.<sup>1</sup> For them, nature is an extension of society itself and trees and forests in their habitat were manifestations of past and for future generations and thus parts of their own flesh and blood.<sup>2</sup> In many areas more than 50 percent of the income of the tribal are derived from forest products<sup>3</sup> and in North-East India forest not only forms the basis of shifting cultivation, it also provides them with myriad life-sustaining resources which are critical for survival, where few alternative exist.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, in the tribal economies of North-East India, forestry and agriculture are closely interlinked. This dependence of the tribal people on forest resources was institutionalized through a variety of social and cultural mechanisms.<sup>5</sup> Through their social structure and culture, the tribal communities

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<sup>1</sup> B.K. Roy Burman, "Land Productive Activities and Protective Organization in Tribal India", in H.S. Saksena (ed) 1998a, *Perspective in Tribal Development : Focus on Uttar Pradesh*. Lucknow: Bharat Book Centre, P.6.

<sup>2</sup> B.P. Singh, "The Eastern Himalaya : Wetlands, Forests and Beliefs" in *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. XXXVI, No.31, Aug.4, 2001, P.2972.

<sup>3</sup> B.K. Roy Burman, op.cit., p.8.

<sup>4</sup> Tiplut Nongbri, "Timber Ban in North-East India : Effects on Livelihood and Gender" in *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. XXXVI, No.21, May 26, 2001, p.1896.

<sup>5</sup> Ramachandra Guha, 1989, *The Unquiet Woods: Ecological Change and Peasant Resistance in the Himalaya.*, Delhi : Oxford University Press, p.29.

had drawn a protective ring around the forests. Indeed in North-East India as elsewhere, many traditional tribal religious beliefs, folklore and tradition as well as traditional rules exist in restraining the utilization of forest resources. Any collection of forest products for sale, for instance, is not allowed, or requires prior permission of the clan or village.<sup>6</sup> The harvesting of timber too was allowed only for house construction, and even that often required prior permission from the clan or village.<sup>7</sup> This was true for the Naga society in general and the Mao and Angami Nagas in particular. Their social structure, which was organized around clans and village communities and their cultural beliefs and tradition often play important role in conservation and regeneration of forests and its resources. For them the use of forest land underlies all other aspects of their society. They were depended on the land and forests in which they live and work. To aid such interaction and dependence, they learned to interpret the signs of nature, thereby developing their socio-cultural ethos.<sup>8</sup> This has been well recorded in folk songs and folktales. Worship of nature and respect for nature was manifested by a sustainable way of utilizing natural resources.<sup>9</sup> They see their life as intricately woven with forests and nature and the symbiotic relationship with forests were represented through their social

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<sup>6</sup> DN, "Managing NTFP : Problems of Unregulated Commons" in *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. XXXVI, No.25, June 23, 2001, p. 2217.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> U.A. Shimray, "Equality as Tradition: Women's Role in Naga Society" in *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol. XXXVII, No. 5, Feb. 2, 2002, p. 376.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

structure and cultural norms. Thus for the Nagas, like all other indigenous tribal people in India and elsewhere, forests were not merely trees and plants but were also social and cultural phenomena.

The Naga situation as well as other tribal communities in North-East India must be distinguished from the tribal situation in the rest of the country. Unlike the tribal communities elsewhere in India where their traditional right over forest and other resource base were been progressively dispossessed by the state through successive forest policies and developmental activities, the tribal in north-east India in general and the Nagas in particular were marked by continuities of communal control and self-management over land and forests. Moreover the Naga in general and the Mao and Angami Nagas in particular does not suffer from land alienation as other tribal in India and its rights over land and forests were safeguarded by the constitution. Due to this constitutional safeguard and also because of certain political reasons, the forest policy of the country hardly extend to the Naga areas. With the exception of setting up some few Forest Beat Posts and lackadaisical afforestation programmes, practically the National Forest Policy remains non-existence especially in Mao and Angami Naga areas.

In the light of the above fact, it become important to examine how Naga social structure and culture conserved and manage the natural resources



particularly that of forests. To address this research issue, it is my endeavour to examine the role of the Mao and Angami social structure in the management and conservation of forests. This is done with a view to unravel answers to certain questions that have occupied me for quite sometime. As a person who was born and brought up in close relationship with forest, I vividly remember that in my boyhood days the Mao and Angami areas, especially the Southern Angami have thick forest coverage with rich flora and fauna. Today in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, unfortunately the contrast between now and then is very prominent. Why did they preserved forests in the past? Do the social structure and beliefs system play significant role in the conservation of their forests? What were the methods adopted by the Maos and Angamis for the conservation of forests? What are the forces of change that has led to the gradual disappearance of their forests? Are the social structure and its methods of conservation of forest able to withstand the onslaught of these forces of change? What are the social mechanisms adopted to meet the challenges? This research work humbly attempts to find answers to these questions.

Before we tried to answer to these questions in the subsequent chapters, it will not be out of place here to have a quick general overview of the people of Mao and Angami Nagas, their history and ecological habitat as a backdrop to our further discussion. Though the Mao and Angami constitute two distinct Naga communities yet the two groups are not only neighbours but also share

similar principle of social structure as well as cultural practices with some certain micro variations. Anthropologists, historians and administrators considered the two groups as kindred tribes.<sup>10</sup> Hutton writes that "the *Memi* (Mao) and Angami Nagas differ in little but language."<sup>11</sup> In fact, Hutton has dwelt on length about the Mao while dealing with the Angami Naga in his celebrated monograph of the 'Angami Nagas'.

The Maos are a major scheduled tribe of Manipur belonging to the Naga community. They are distributed mainly in the Senapati District of Manipur and inhabit the hill ranges to the extreme north of the state bordering Nagaland State with the Angamis as their immediate neighbour. 'Mao' appears to be appended to the present tribe of the same name by the neighbouring tribe of Maram and the people call themselves as Ememei, descendants of Momiio.<sup>12</sup> The assertion of T.C. Hodson that Mao is a Meitei name given to the village of Mao does not have corroboration since the Meitei gave the name of *Ngamei* to the Maos and Angamis.<sup>13</sup> The neighbouring tribe Angami refers to them as *Shipfomei* since they trace their origin to Makhrei or Maikhel village, which is

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<sup>10</sup> See R.Brown, 1879, *Statistical Account of Manipur*. Calcutta : Office of the Superintendent of Govt. Printing, pp. 31-33; T.C.Hodson, 1911, *The Naga Tribes of Manipur*. Delhi : Low Price Publication, pp.2-25; Gangmumei Kabui, "Genesis of the Ethnoses of Manipur" in Naorem Sanajouba (ed) 1998, *Manipur, past and Present*. Delhi : Mittal Publication, Vol. 3, p.27; M. Horam, 1975, *Naga Polity*. Delhi : Venture of Low Price Publications, pp.27-33; J.H. Hutton, 1969, *Angami Naga with some notes on Neighbouring Tribes*. Delhi : Oxford University Press (First Edition 1921).

<sup>11</sup> J.H. Huton, *Ibid*, p.7-8.

<sup>12</sup> Gangmumei Kabui, *op.cit.*, p.31.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid*.

situated in the Mao area.<sup>14</sup> Initially they have established a sixteen confederation of villages with the chief of Pudunamai village (Pfosemai) as its titular head<sup>15</sup> but now comprises around thirty villages with Mao town serving as a hub of commercial and tourist centre.<sup>16</sup> The natural habitat is characterised by hills of varying altitude and thick green forest.<sup>17</sup> The forest coverage is estimated to be 22,5900 hectares. Oak and Eng are very common in these forests. Ever green forest interspersed with various species of bamboo is a common appearance in these forests.<sup>18</sup> Esii peak (Mt.Tenipu), the highest mountain peak in Manipur (2995 metres) is situated in the Mao Naga territory. The National Highway 39 passes through the territory of Mao area. According to 1991 census they form about 10% of the Scheduled Tribes population in the State<sup>19</sup>. (Total Mao Population in 1981= 50,715. Athparia 1998:120). Their dialect is known as *Emela*. While the Mao Naga have close connection with other Naga communities as their areas, especially the Maikhel Village had been an ancestral home to most of the Naga communities, yet their cultural and structural affinity were much stronger with the Western Nagas such as the

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<sup>14</sup> R.P. Athparia, "Mao" in M. Horam, S.H.M. Rizvi and K.S. Singh (ed) 1998, *People of India: Manipur* Culcutta : Anthropological Survey of India., Vol. XXXI, p.120.

<sup>15</sup> Gangmumai Kabui, op.cit.

<sup>16</sup> S.C. Bhatt, 1997, *The Encyclopaedic District Gazetters of India: North-Eastern Zone*. New Delhi : Gyan Publishing House. Vol. II, p.443.

<sup>17</sup> R.P. Athparia , op.cit.

<sup>18</sup> S.C. Bhatt, op. cit., pp. 441-442.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, p.444.

Angamis, Semas, Rengmas and Lothas.<sup>20</sup> In fact the Mao Nagas were considered to be "one of the most 'civilised' tribe in the past. That was the reason why even the migrated Naga tribes like the Angami Nagas, Chakhesang Nagas etc. etc. too followed the traditions and customs with minor variations practiced by the Mao Nagas"<sup>21</sup>.

Angamis are major Naga communities of Nagaland state. Their original name is *Tengima*. The word 'Angami' is a distortion of the Manipuri word *Gnamei*. Angamis were called *Tsungumi* by the Sema, *Tsungung* by the Lotha and *Mour* by the Aos<sup>22</sup>. During the British period the word 'Angami' was used for several tribal groups: *Chakroma*, *Tengima*, *Chakrima*, *Kezami* and *Memi* (Mao)<sup>23</sup>. At present, with the exception of the Chakroma section which are included in the Western Angami group, the Chakrima, Kegami and Memi (Mao) sections have been separated from the Angami, forming distinct tribal groups.<sup>24</sup> Hutton identifies four distinct groups among the Angamis: the *Khonoma* group, *Kohima* group, *Viswema* group and the *Chakroma* group.<sup>25</sup> At present three groups were identified on geographical distribution: Northern

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<sup>20</sup> M. Horam, op.cit., p. 36.

<sup>21</sup> Ashikho Daili Mao, 1992, *Nagas: Problems and Politics*. New Delhi : Ashish Publishing House, p.4.

<sup>22</sup> N.K. Das, "The Naga Communities: Angami" in N.K. Das, C.L. Imechen and K.S. Singh (ed) 1994, *People of India Nagaland*. Culcutta : Anthropological Survey of India. Vol. XXXIV, p.63.

<sup>23</sup> J.H. Hutton, op.cit., p.335.

<sup>24</sup> N.K. Das, op.cit., p.64.

<sup>25</sup> J.H. Hutton, op.cit., p.15.

Angamis, Western Angamis and Southern Angamis.<sup>26</sup> To the South of the Southern Angami area lies the territory of the Mao Nagas.

The Angami country broadly forms the present day Kohima district of Nagaland state. Their territory forms an irregular plateau with elevated ridges and peaks. Kohima, the district headquarters and the State capital, is situated on a saddle, north of the Japfu-Barail intersection. Japfu and Ezyphu are eminent peaks of the Angami area. Kohima District in which the Angami Naga is located has a forest coverage of 109424.33 hectares. The streams are being intelligently used for terrace cultivation. The National Highway 39 passes through the territory of Angami Naga. According to 1991 census, the Kohima district has a population of 3,87,581 in which more than 50% were constituted by the Angami.<sup>27</sup> The three different sections of the Angami speak their own distinct forms of dialect at home, but the common Angami language is based on the Tengima dialect. The tradition of Angami like many other Nagas point to Mao village of Maikhel as their ancestral home of their tribe from where they migrated to the present geographical habitation<sup>28</sup>. To date the Angami Priests from all Angami villages do not fix the dates of any of the annual festivals but await orders from the Chief of Maikhel.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> N.K. Das, *op.cit.*

<sup>27</sup> Verinder Grover and Ranjana Arora (ed) 1998, *Encyclopaedia of India and Her States*. New Delhi: Deep and Deep Publications, Vol. 9, p.481.

<sup>28</sup> J.H. Hutton, *op.cit.*, pp.6-7.

<sup>29</sup> Gangmumei Kabui, *op.cit.*, p.33.

The origin of the Naga is shrouded in mystery and is encapsulated in folklore and legends. History upholds the existence of a people known as 'Naga'. In 4<sup>th</sup> century A.D. Ptolemy, the great Greek geographer and historian has referred the existence of Nagas in India's North-East.<sup>30</sup> Also in 9<sup>th</sup> century A.D. the Ahom Chronicles make a reference to the Nagas.<sup>31</sup> Many scholars concluded that Naga have come from the Eastern part of the world and belong to the Mongoloid racial stock. Their culture and tradition has been link with the natives of Borneo, Philippines, Formosa and Indonesia.<sup>32</sup> Most Naga communities point to Maikhel and its surrounding area as their place of departure and the Maikhel tradition is quite prominent in the history of Naga migration.<sup>33</sup> Maikhel as seen earlier is a Mao village, about 40 kms. from South-East of Kohima. Angami referred to as *Mekhoromia*, which means 'the place of departure'.<sup>34</sup> As a point of dispersal and migration, the following archaeological evidence of Maikhel are important.<sup>35</sup>

- (i) A Menhir called Tamaratu (*Tamara* = departure; *Tu*=stone) with engraving of man and animals.

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<sup>30</sup> See Ibid, p.22; M. Horam, op.cit., p.20.

<sup>31</sup>M. Horam, p.7.

<sup>32</sup> See Ibid, pp..27-39; Gangmumei Kabui op.cit., pp.21-29; Visier Sanyu, 1996, *A History of Nagas and Nagaland*. New Delhi : Common wealth Publishers, pp.5 -35.

<sup>33</sup> M. Horam, op. cit., pp. 30-31.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Gangmumei Kabui, op.cit., p.33.

- (ii) A wild pear tree called Chetebu Kaji planted at upper Sajauba near Maikhel at the time of dispersal. It was forbidden to cut a branch of the tree, wherever a branch breaks down a genna is observed. It is believed that if anybody breaks the branch, he will die.
- (iii) A peepal tree (Marabu), a sacred tree believed to have grown out of the tomb of the first woman who died at Maikhel, a very old oak tree.
- (iv) Three stone megaliths called *Lino Tu* are the stones in memory of the dispersal of the Nagas.
- (v) Some polished stones known as war stone, famine and calamity, rain and thunder stones along with a sacred shield made of an animal skin are preserved in the headman's house of Maikhel.

As to the origin of the word 'Naga' several views were put forward. According to Hutton the word 'Naga' is an European lengthening of the Assamese 'Naga' (Pronounced *Noga*) equivalent to the Hindustani 'Nanga' meaning naked. Yet other writers like Peal and E.A. Gait support the theory that the word 'Naga' simply means 'people' or 'folk'. Horam observed that "whosoever first called the Nagas by that name and whatever the word may

mean, the Nagas themselves knew each other by the name of the tribe to which they belong."<sup>36</sup>

Since the Mao and Angami Nagas are located in different administrative set up a brief description on the right of land and forest ownership as recognised by the law of the state and Constitution of the country will not be out of place here. Under the *Manipur Land Revenue and Land Reforms Act, 1960 (MLR and LR Act 1960)* lands are declared as government land and individual ownership of land can only be conferred by the government.<sup>37</sup> This Act is not enforced in the hill districts and land ownership in the tribal villages are vested with the hill villages as per their customary arrangement. Further, under the Act the transfer of tribal land to non-tribal is restricted. The Manipur Forest Rules, 1971, which was formulated under the Indian Forest Act, 1927 is concerned with the administration and management of reserved and protected forests in Manipur. <sup>38</sup> The reserved and protected forests account for about 32 percent of the total forests and the remaining 68 percent are under the control of tribal population.<sup>39</sup> Thus in Manipur, by and large land and forests in tribal

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<sup>36</sup> M. Horam, op.cit., p.24.

<sup>37</sup> Yambem Laba, "Manipur : Discription of a Fragile Ecosystem" in Anil Agarwal , Derryl D'Monte, Ujwala Samarth (ed) 1987, *The Fight for Survival: People's Action For Environment*. New Delhi: Centre for Science and Environment, p.80.

<sup>38</sup> For detail see Vijay Kumar Dewan, 1986, *North-Eastern Region Forest Act Rules*. Allahabad : Orient Law House, pp. 270-306.

<sup>39</sup> Yambem Laba, op.cit., p. 80.



areas, which constitute around 91 percent of the total geographical area of the state, remain under the ownership and control of the tribal themselves.

In Nagaland the ownership of land including forests, is determined by traditional law which is protected by Article 371 A of the Indian Constitution. Article 371 A provides that unless the Legislative Assembly of Nagaland so decides, no Act of the Indian Parliament will apply to the State of Nagaland in respect of:

- (1) Religious and Social practices of the Nagas.
- (2) Naga customary laws and procedures.
- (3) Administration of civil and criminal justice involving decisions according to Naga customary law and
- (4) Ownership and transfer of land and its resources.<sup>40</sup>

The *Nagaland Jhum Act 1970* recognised the customary rights of the village on the Jhum Land for a specified period.<sup>41</sup> It prevented the sale or transfer of jhum lands outside the village without the permission of the state. In areas of Terrace cultivation, individual rights to land were recognised.<sup>42</sup> The

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<sup>40</sup> R.C.Verma, 1995, *Indian Tribes Through The Age*. Govt. of India : Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, p.153.

<sup>41</sup> Gopalakrishnan, 1991, *The North-East India: Land, Economy and People*. New Delhi : Har Anand Publication, p.167.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

Nagaland village and Area Council Act of 1978 entrusts the management of village forests to the Village Council.<sup>43</sup> Thus in Nagaland ownership right of the Nagas over land and forest were clearly protected by the Constitution as well as by the state government.

## **1. Methods of Study**

This research work has relied on the available literatures and other secondary sources on the Mao and Angami. Since literatures on the Mao Naga are few and far in between, appropriate insider's view through participant observation method were used whenever required with outmost care. This method includes intimate discussion with my community elders and knowledgeable friends besides my own understanding and experience of being a forest dweller. However the use of this method in this research work is very limited and is employed only when the existing literatures and other sources lack adequate information relating to the Mao community only. The approach adopted for the whole study is basically couched in Durkheimian tradition.

## **2. Chapterisation**

The present research work is divided into four main chapters. Chapter I examine the conceptual and theoretical aspect of social structure, ecology and development. In social structures, theoretical views of Radcliff-Brown, Evans-

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<sup>43</sup> Govt. of Nagaland, 1986, *Nagaland Code*. Vol. III, Kohima, p.18.

Prichard, S.F. Nadel, Raymond Firth, Levi-Strauss and Edmund Leach were considered. In the next section forests have been viewed as a dimension of ecology and show how forests and tribal people maintain a symbiotic relationship. Development has been considered from the economic perspective to the holistic and sustainable approach. Finally the chapter conclude by locating tribal development in India within the development discourse.

Chapter II and III are the heart and soul of the whole research work. In chapter II social structures of the Mao and Angami are examine in threadbare and its role of conservation and management of forests are considered.

Chapter III basically examines the various forces of change and development, which have serious implication toward the traditional system of forests conservation. New social mechanism to withstand the onslaught of change has also been dealt with.

The dissertation thesis ends with conclusion that encapsulates the main interweaving ideas and assessment of the points raised in the course of the research.

## CHAPTER - I

# SOCIAL STRUCTURE, ECOLOGY AND DEVELOPMENT : CONCEPTS AND THEORIES

### I. SOCIAL STRUCTURE:

Social structure is one of the central concepts of sociology, but it has not been employed consistently or unambiguously. Though one of the most frequent terms in sociology, it has no specific and universally accepted meaning.

The explicit idea that the study of social structure should be an objective for sociological inquiry seems to be due to Spencer who refers to "the Induction of Sociology - general facts, structural and functional as gathered from a survey of societies and their changes"<sup>1</sup> Spencer was too much fascinated by his biological analogies to make clear which he meant by the structure of society. The term appear again in the work of Durkheim but he also left the term vague. Many later sociologists and social anthropologists have tried to give it a more precise meaning, but their conceptions of social structure diverge widely.

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<sup>1</sup>Edmund R. Leach, "Social Structure : The History of the Concept" in David Sills (ed) 1968, *International Encyclopedia of the Social Science*. USA: MacMillan Publishing Co. Inc., Vol. 14, p.482.

Radcliffe - Brown who had systematically developed the concept of social structure, defined it as a network or system of social relations including persistent social groups and differentiated social classes and social roles.<sup>2</sup> He regards it as "a part of the social structure all social relations of person to person... In the study of social structure the concrete reality with which we are concerned is the set of actually existing relations at a given moment of time, which link together certain human beings".<sup>3</sup> According to him although social life constantly renews the social structure thereby bringing about changes yet the general structural form remains relatively constant over time. It is this structural form that Radcliffe-Brown advocated in the study of social structure. In his formulation, the theory of social structure follows the organic analogy very closely; thus comparative social morphology is concerned with studying and classifying the different types of social structure and social physiology with studying how particular types of social structure function. Thus morals, law, etiquette, religion, government and education are all parts of the complex mechanism of social physiology by which a social structure exist and persist.

Evans Pritchard also deal social structure as a sets of social relations, relations between members of a society and between social groups.<sup>4</sup> For him

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<sup>2</sup> A.R. Radcliffe - Brown, 1979, *Structure and Function in Primitive Society*. London : Routledge & Kegan Paul, pp.190-192 (First Published 1952).

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, pp 191-192.

<sup>4</sup> E.E. Evans-Pritchard, 1972, *Social Anthropolog*. London : Routledge & Kegan Paul, pp. 16-124 (First Published 1951).

social structure deals with uniformities and regularities in social life that give some sort of order in society whereby its members could live together. "It is only because people know the kind of behaviour expected of them, and what kind of behaviour to expect from others, in the various situations of social life, and co-ordinate their activities in submission to rules and under the guidance of values that each and all are able to go about their affairs. They can make predictions, anticipate events, and led their lives in harmony with their fellows because every society has a form or pattern which allows us to speak of it as a system, or structure, within which, and in accordance with which, its members live their lives. The use of the words structure in this sense implies that there is some kind of consistency between its parts, at any rate upto the point of open contradiction and conflict being avoided and that it has greater durability than most of the fleeting things of human life".<sup>5</sup>

According to him a total social structure "composed of a number of subsidiary structure or systems, and we may speak of its kinship system, its economic system, its religious system and its political system. The social activities within these systems or structure are organized around institution such as marriage, the family, markets, chieftainship and so forth; and when

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid, pp. 19-20.

we speak of the function of these institutions, we mean the part they play in the maintenance of the structure".<sup>6</sup>

While Radcliffe-Brown thought of social structure as relationship of general and regular kind between people, S.F. Nadel on the other hand, suggested roles as the element. He emphasized that social structure refers to the network of social relationship which is created among the human beings when they interact with each other according to their roles in accordance with the patterns of society. He included in social structure not only relationship between actors or persons but also ordered arrangement and interrelationship between sub-groups and similar subdivision of society.<sup>7</sup>

According to Nadel to describe social structure, one must consider three aspects of roles (a) the allocation principles that provide actors with roles (b) the degree to which given roles have authority over other roles- the command over action aspect; (c) and the degree to which given roles command the various resources and benefits of the social system.

For Raymond Firth too social structure applied to ordered social living. He define social structure thus, "Life in a community means organisation of the interest of individuals, regulation of their behaviour towards one another,

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid, p.20.

<sup>7</sup>S.F. Nadel, 1969, *Theory of Social Structure*. London : Cohen & West Ltd. , p.13 s(First Published 1957).

and grouping of them together for common action. The relationship thus created between them can be seen to have some kind of plan or system, which may be called the social structure".<sup>8</sup>

In social structure he include different types of groups which the people form and the institution in which they take part. He sees social structure to be based upon definite principles of sex, age, locality, kinship, roles and status.

However he make a distinction between social structure and social organisation. He did not agree with the structural determinant theory which explain the behaviour of individuals as being primarily determined by social structure. He introduce the concept of social organisation to account for many consideration of human behaviour in which alternative modes of procedure are presented to individuals, and in which their personal choice, decision and adjustment are made.

He sees social organisation as an expression of the dynamic aspect of social structure. All societies, as Firth points out, provide for the 'systematic ordering' of social relations by 'acts of choice and decision'. Though people would look to 'structure' as to a reliable guide to actions, they also take decision which may effect the future structural alignment. Again only the

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<sup>8</sup> Raymond Firth, 1975, *Human Types: An Introduction to Social Anthropology*. London : Rev. ed., p.88 (First Published 1938).



concept of organisation, not of structure, can express these instances of variance and change.<sup>9</sup> He speaks of organisation as being 'complementary' to social structure and as representing, in being, the working arrangements of society, whereby a group (so and so structured) 'is kept in being'.<sup>10</sup>

Levi-Strauss conceived social structure as an explanatory construct meant to provide the key to the observed facts of social existence, the principles or formulas accounting for its character, and hence the logic behind social reality. He therefore insisted that the "term social structure has nothing to do with empirical reality but with models which are built up after it", and these must be such that "they make immediately intelligible all the observed facts".<sup>11</sup> He is interested in how far empirical system correspond (or fail to correspond) with the theoretically possible transformations of a single (mathematical) structure.<sup>12</sup> The emphasis is on the analysis of 'unobservable' but detectable structural relations between 'conceptual elements' in social life (e.g. relation of opposition and contrast). These conceptual elements are seen as the ultimate object of study in social science and the structural determinants of social reality. His emphasis on binary contrast permeates his whole structuralism. One of this which is our immediate concern, is his conception

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<sup>9</sup> Raymond Firth, 1971, *Elements of Social Organisation*. London : Rev. ed., pp. 35 & 40 (First Published 1951).

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, p.10.

<sup>11</sup> Claude Levi-Strauss, 1963, *Structural Anthropology*. U.S.A: Penguin Books Ltd., pp. 279-280.

<sup>12</sup> Edmund R. Leach., op.cit., p.486.

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of dual organisation or what is also known as moieties. Dual organisation is been defines as "a system in which the members of the community, whether it be a tribe or a village, are divided into two parts which maintain complex relationships varying from open hostility to very close intimacy, and with which various forms of rivalry and co-operation are usually associated. These moieties are often exogamous..."<sup>13</sup> However these moieties may lost its exogamous features and the exogamous clans, sub-clans or lineages may become an important regulating mechanism for marriages.<sup>14</sup> Apart from this, common features of Dual organisation often include matrilineal descent; two cultural heroes-older and younger brothers or twins associating with mythology and the bipartition of the social group is "often continued into a bipartition of the universe into animate and inanimate objects, and the moieties are connected with such characteristic opposites as Red and White, Red and Black, Clear and Dark ..."<sup>15</sup> There may be a dichotomy of power between a secular chief and a sacred chief, or a secular chief and military chief along with dual organisation. Finally, the moieties are linked not only by the exchange of women, but by the "furnishing of reciprocal prestations and counter-prestations of an economic, social and ceremonial nature".<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Claude Levi-Strauss, 1969, *The Elementary Structures of Kinship*. London : Eyre and Spottiswoode, P.69 (First Published in France, 1949) .

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.



The most important consequences of dual organisation is that "individuals are defined in relationship to each other essentially by whether they belong or do not belong to the same moiety"<sup>17</sup> Dual organisation is not an institution but "a principle of organisation, capable of widely varying and, in particular, of more or less elaborated application".<sup>18</sup> In some cases, it applies to sporting competition, while in others it extends to political life or to religious and ceremonial life or a marriage system or to economic exchanges or sometimes just some of these.<sup>19</sup> According to him, in all these forms, there is a difference of degree, not of kind; of generality, not of type. To understand their common basis, we must, according to him, direct our inquiry to certain fundamental structures of the human mind rather than to a certain period in the history of civilization or in regions where they occurred.

Edmund Leach also consider social structure as model "which exist only as logical constructions in his (anthropologist) own mind"<sup>20</sup> and not the actual existing social realities. For him a model is clearly a representation of a structure with the parts articulated or related in such manner that manipulation of them is possible for the illustration of further relation. It is the ideal patterns - the social relations which are regarded as 'correct' - which are expressed in the model which gives the structural description of a social system. However

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid, p.71.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, p.75.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, pp. 74-75.

<sup>20</sup> Edmund R. Leach, 1964, *Political System of Highland Burma: A Study of Kachin Social Structure*. UK: Fletcher and Son Ltd., p.5.

in practical situation this model does not always conform to social realities. His main concern is the interaction between the model and the practical situation and their compromised reality. In his study of the Kachin social structure he has examined the verbal categories of Shan and Gumlao underlying two distinct organisation and show how this two model in reality are not distinct but a compromised category called gumsa. To account for consideration of structural change, therefore, he emphasis that application must be made to the observation of what people actually do in their normal everyday life to give a basis for a dynamic consideration. The reality situation "is in most cases full of inconsistencies; and it is precisely these inconsistencies which can provide us with an understanding of the process of social change."<sup>21</sup>

He holds that social structure in practical situations (as contrasted with the sociologist's abstract model) consists of a set of ideas about the distribution of power between persons and groups of persons. Individuals can and do hold contradictory and inconsistent ideas about this system. They are able to do this without embarrassment because of the form in which their ideas are expressed. The form is cultural form; the expression is ritual expression. Both ritual and cultural form makes explicit the social structure, ritual being defined not in supernatural or metaphysical aspect but as symbols expressing of social status. The structure which is symbolised in ritual is the system of socially approved 'proper' relation between individual and groups.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid, p.8.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, pp. 15-16.

From our discussion so far there emerge different uses to the concept of social structure. Though varied in its interpretation and approach yet what can be said about social structure is that it entails the notion of pattern social arrangement and network of relationships. It not only persist and continue but also change and therefore dynamic. Family, kinship, tribe, nation, religion, social role and status, gender, age, locality, economy etc all constitute in the conceptualisation of social structure.

## II. ECOLOGY

Ecology is the study of the interrelation between organism and their environment. As sociologist we are interested in the interrelationship between human being and their environment. By environment here we mean the natural environment.

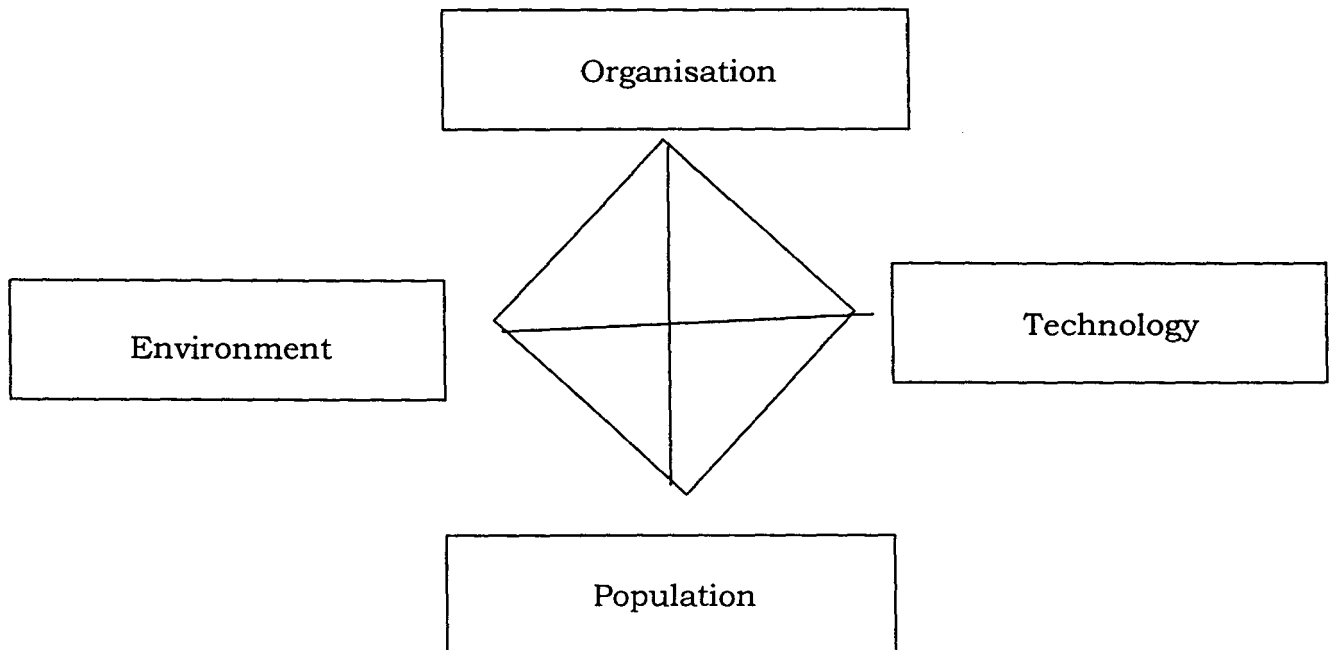
Amos Hawley, one of the pioneer in ecological studies, conceived ecology "as a study of the morphology of collective life in both its static and dynamic aspect".<sup>23</sup> The main task of human ecology is the analysis of community structure in terms of the organisation of sustenance activities, that is, the way a population organizes itself for survival in a particular habitat.

Otis Dudley Duncan and Leo Schnore are two of the most articulate spokesman of the ecological perspective in contemporary sociology. According to them ecology deals with society as the functional organization

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<sup>23</sup> Amos H.Hawley, 1950, *Human Ecology: A Theory of Community Structure*. New York: Ronald Press, p.67.

of a population in the process of achieving and maintaining an adaptation to its environment. According to them the central concern of the ecological perspective is the analysis of the problems of 'cultural diversity' and 'social change' in terms of the interaction between social organisation and environment. Duncan identifies four categories of variables that constitute 'the ecological complex' or ecosystem: population, organisation, environment and technology.<sup>24</sup> These categories can be remembered by using the mnemonic acronym of POET. However, these categories only "provide a somewhat arbitrarily simplified way of identifying clusters of relationship in a preliminary description of ecosystem processes".<sup>25</sup> The ecosystem may be graphically presented as:



**Figure 1 : The Ecological Complex**

(Hauser and Duncan, 1959, p.683)

<sup>24</sup> Otis Dudley Duncan, "From Social System to Ecosystem" in Michael Micklin (ed.) 1989, *Population, Environment and Social Organisation: Current Issues in Human Ecology*. USA: The Dryden Press, p.107.

<sup>25</sup> O.D. Duncan, "Human Ecology and Population Studies" in Philip M. Hauser and Duncan (eds.) 1959, *The Study of Population*. Chicago : University of Chicago Press, p.684.

The four sets of variable are in reciprocal relationship and the lines in the presentation above are meant to suggest the idea of 'functional interdependence'.

The crucial element in ecological perspective is the reciprocal relationship between population and environment. "The interaction of population and environment is seen as culminating in a system of relationships between differentiated parts which gives the population unit character and enables it to maintain its identity."<sup>26</sup>

### **III. Forests and People : An Ecological Dimension.**

Forest and people have an intimate relationship. This is especially more so for the forest dwellers who have not only directly depend on it for their survival but also have developed their societies, evolved their customs and woven their myths around and within them.<sup>27</sup> Therefore forest should not be merely viewed only as trees safeguarding the environment and providing industrial raw material and revenue but also as an ecological habitats for millions of people whose very life system and society revolves around them.

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<sup>26</sup> Amos H. Hawley, "Ecology" in David Sills (ed.) 1969, *International Encyclopedia of the Social Science*. USA : MacMillan Publishing Co. Inc., Vol. 4. p.330.

<sup>27</sup> Joe Human and Manoj Pattanaik, 2000, *Community Forest Management: A Casebook from India*. London : Oxsam Publication, p.22.

Anthropologists and social scientists have observed that there is a symbiotic relationship between the forest dwellers particularly the tribals and their forests. What this mean is that their relationship is not unilateral but that the tribals depend on the forest and the forest in its turn depends on them for its preservation and continuity.<sup>28</sup> Walter Fernandes et al. best explain this relationship in the following words, "They (tribals) get from it everything from food, fuel, housing, medicine and recreation to social, religious and cultural identity. There was a symbiotic relationship between them and the forests which ensured the fulfillment of their daily needs and the protection of the environment".<sup>29</sup>

The ecological adaptation of the tribals to their forest is central in their lives at every level; material, social and spiritual. At the material level, forest provides them food, fuel, fodder, fertilizers, housing, timbers, implements, medicines and other basic necessities of life. For food the forest dwellers are dependent to a great extent on shifting cultivation and minor forest produce.<sup>30</sup> Given the extent of their dependence, the tribals ensure its preservation through their culture and traditional belief and establish a relationships of

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<sup>28</sup> John Deeny and Walter Fernandes, "Tribals: Their Dependence on Forest, Their Traditions and Management System" in Walter Fernandes (ed) 1992, *National Development and Tribal Deprivation*. New Delhi: Indian Social Institute, p.49.

<sup>29</sup> Walter Fernandes, Geeta Menon and Philip Viegas, 1988, *Forest Environment and Tribal Economy: Deforestation, Improvement and Marginalization in Orissa*. New Delhi: Indian Social Institute, p.50.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, p.150.



mutual dependence. Their culture and social structure were geared to maintaining a balance between human and ecological needs. According to Fernandes such a balance was essential because given the extent of their dependence there always was the danger of over exploitation if social control was not exercised. As a part of this control there evolved taboos and prohibitions concerning the use of forest resources. These controls were legitimised by giving a religious basis through myths. Thus there emerged tales of gods and goddesses who were angered by the cutting of certain species and destroyed the village as a whole and the offender in particular. Whole sections of forest were protected for such purposes as dancing, initiation into adulthood and burial. Others have 'sacred groves' where the spirits of the forest reside. All forms of vegetation in such a sacred grove, including shrubs and climbers are under the protection of the reigning deity of that grove, and the removal, even of dead wood, is taboo.<sup>31</sup> Through religion, folklore and tradition the tribal communities thus drawn a protective ring around the forests. In such forest area not only did the forest have a tremendous influence in moulding religious and spiritual life, the inhabitants also exhibited a deep love of vegetation, often acting 'entirely from a sense of responsibility towards future generations' by planting species whose span of maturity

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<sup>31</sup> Madhav Gadgil and V.D. Vartak, "The Sacred Uses of Nature" in Ramachandran Guha (ed.) 1994, *Social Ecology*. New Delhi : Oxford University Press, p.83.

exceeded a human lifetime.<sup>32</sup> Forest were thus treated as a renewable resource and as a life support system that had to be preserved.

However the symbiotic relationship between forest and the tribals must also be seen within the broader context of the relationship between the tribals and their land, the extreme value, both material and religious, attached to the land and forest by them.<sup>33</sup> Such attachment arises out of the intimate relationship between the indigenous and tribal people and their land, a relationship that is best describe in the following words:

"Indigenous people's ancestral territories are not just their economic base, there lands are intimately bound up with their cosmologies and identities as communities, and as peoples. The landscape that they occupy is at once their home and the sacred abode of spiritual beings whose invisible presence explains the functioning of the visible world. They see themselves as stewards holding the land of their ancestors in trust for future generations".<sup>34</sup>

Joe Human and Manoj Pattanaik broadly categorize three types of traditional forest community in India.<sup>35</sup> They are as follows:

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<sup>32</sup> Christoph Von Furer Haimendorf, 1955, *Himalayan Barbary*. Delhi : Oxford University Press, pp.62-63.

<sup>33</sup> Verrier Elwin, 1988, *A Philosophy for NEFA*. Itanagar : Government of Arunachal Pradesh, p.66 (First Edition 1957).

<sup>34</sup> Marcus Colchester, 1999, *Forest and Indigenous People's of Asia*. London: Minority Group International, p.7.

<sup>35</sup> Joe Human and Manoj Pattanaik, op.cit., p.39-45.

(i) **Hunter-gatherers** :Though the numbers of hunter-gatherers are now minuscule yet these groups are scattered from the Himalayan foothills in the north to the forests of Cochin in the South. Such hunter-gatherers as survive today exist largely by making their skills and knowledge of the forests available to the new owners of their homelands, the local Forest Departments. Some are employed in the capture of elephants, others collect such forest products as honey on behalf of the Forest Departments and merchants.

(ii) **Shifting Cultivators**: The second groups are the shifting cultivators. They are a large group consisting mostly of tribal peoples, scattered throughout the country but found in greatest concentrations in the tribal forest belt across north-central India. Shifting cultivation goes by many names : swidden, slash and burn, jhum (North-East India), kumri, podu (Orissa) and bazodo among many tribal communities. The essential feature of this forms of cultivation is its shifting nature. Shifting cultivators clear a patch of forest by axe and by fire, cultivate it for a few years (depending on how long its fertility lasts), and then move on to a new patch, returning to recultivate a former patch only after many years of fallow. While shifting cultivation has often been called 'primitive' by mainstream Indian Society, in reality it is highly sophisticated, having been developed over several millennia by close study and understanding of the ecology of forests and of

the interaction of plants, animals and human beings within them. Shifting cultivation is regarded by many academicians as a rational form of agriculture in the context of forest environments world wide.

Shifting cultivator communities use their forest much as city dwellers use shops, popping into them when they need something. They have a vast amount of knowledge about their environment which are learned within their communities and are handed down, refined and passed on over the generations. There is a deeper moral and spiritual interconnectedness with their forest. They are themselves as part of the forest, not separate from it. As we have seen, there is a symbiotic relationship between them and the forest.

**I. Forest artisans :** The third group which had a close relationship with India's forests are specialist artisanal communities, such as basket weavers dependent on bamboo, smiths who use charcoal for their furnaces, potters reliant on fuel-wood for firing; tanners and dyers dependent on barks and shrubs; and silk makers utilising wild silk cocoons.

Over the years the symbiotic relationship between forest and forest dwellers particularly the tribals had undergone tremendous changes. Under the tremendous pressure of development and commercialisation and also of changes in the situation of the forest dwellers, the symbiotic relationship

appears to be on the verge of a break down. The situation of mutual constructive dependence has now being replaced by destructive dependence, whereby survival of the people necessitates no more the preservation but the destruction of the forest.<sup>36</sup> The patterns of customs, traditions, practices, beliefs, rituals and rules which ensured a balance between human needs and environmental preservation has change today. This is best explain in the following words: "We noticed that in most areas there is a lack of interest among the younger generation in the traditional beliefs and values. Myths and traditions that were generally handed down from one generation to the next are no longer remembered. In some places the forest dwellers do not remember these myths or the reasons why they practice certain rites while in some others they show lack of interest by saying that their forefathers remembered them or that those are old tales. However in most places the traditional rites and ceremonies are practiced even today though generally with some modification. This is directly linked to the extent of destruction necessary for survival.."<sup>37</sup>

Thus, the attitude of the tribals themselves has changed today. Many tribal families destroy forests for survival either for shifting cultivation or by selling firewood and timbers. The cycle of shifting cultivation has come down

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<sup>36</sup> Walter Fernandes et al, op.cit., p.170.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid, p.171.

to as little as four years and since the land is not left fallow long enough for the forest to grow again, plants of all species irrespective of their religious value are cut. Due to the pressure of various factors, the tribals has now often became destroyers of the very forests which they had preserved for centuries.

## I. DEVELOPMENT

Development is a term which is used in many different senses, and often vaguely defined. Nevertheless, as pointed out by K.S., Shukla, the economic aspect of development has invariably occupied a pivotal position and influenced all other aspects.<sup>38</sup>

In order to understand the current term of development it would be worthwhile to briefly trace the career of the concept. Early usage of the concept of development defined it in terms of social evolution, and the metaphor of growth was also implied in this. Development was thus conceived of as organic, immanent, discretionary, cumulative and irreversible. Also, it entailed the idea of structural differentiation and increasing complexity.<sup>39</sup>

The next stage in the concept of 'development' was the idea of economic growth measured in terms of growth of Gross National Product

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<sup>38</sup> K.S. Shukla, 1987, *The Otherside of Development*. New Delhi : Sage Publication, p.8.

<sup>39</sup> S.L. Sharma, 1986, *Development : Socio-Cultural Dimensions*. Jaipur : Rawat Publication, p. 1.

(GNP). Thus development meant the capacity of static national economies to generate and sustain an annual increase in their GNP<sup>40</sup>. In this conception the trickle down effect of overall per capita GNP was expected to provide more jobs and economic opportunities, ensuring wider diffusion of the benefits of growth.

But in the developing countries things did not work out the way the economist had predicted. The social benefits of growth remained confined to a small section of the population without reaching down to the person in the street. It was increasingly felt that getting the growth job done was not enough. This gave rise to the Marxian perspective in development analysis, calling into question the simple GNP growth conception of development. The GNP conception came under fire primarily for its lack of concern for distribution. Accordingly, development got redefined as redistribution with growth or a trinity of economic growth, equity and self-reliance.<sup>41</sup>

A more serious challenge to the GNP conception came from those who underscored the lack of correspondence between economic growth and the satisfaction of basic needs of people. This resulted in the re-interpretation of development as an endeavour to provide for the basic needs of people. The

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<sup>40</sup> S.C. Dube, 1988, *Modernization and Development: The Search for Alternative Paradigm*. New Delhi : Vistaar Publications, p.2.

<sup>41</sup> S.L. Sharma, op.cit., pp.5-6.

element of key importance in this perspective is the fulfillment of the basic needs of people, measured in terms of the provision of necessary services or an increase in the life chances of people.<sup>42</sup> The beginnings of the basic needs conception of development is traced to the UND's development programme as well as the development approach of such other international agencies as ILD and the Overseas Development Council.<sup>43</sup>

Side by side with this attention on development as the fulfillment of the needs of the people, a dialectical perspective was also developed, also known as dependency school of thought. This school of thought argued that under-development is a created condition and under-development of the Third World is a result of the development of the first world.

Paul Baran thus argued that development does not necessarily travel from the centre to the periphery. On the contrary under-development of the periphery is the result of the development of the centre. The expansion of industrialised and capitalist nations creates and perpetuates under-development. Thus, development and under-development are two sides of the same coin. Andre Gunder Frank goes a step further and predicts that under the capitalist order under-development is likely to be a permanent feature.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup>Ibid p.2.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid, p.8.

<sup>44</sup> Andre Gunder Frank, "Development of Under-development" in R.Bryan Robert, Robert G.Cushing and Charles Wood (ed.) 1995, *Sociology of Development*. UK:Edward Elgar Publishing Ltd., Vol. I, pp.195-208.



Advancing the 'centre - periphery' thesis, he also observes that the centre (colonial power) directly exploited the periphery (colony) in colonial times and developed at the expense of the periphery. In the neo-colonial phase, he pins down unequal exchange as the root cause of under-development in the periphery. In the international context, thus development implies liberation from dependency on an unequal exchange. This calls for drastic changes in the relationship among nations, particularly between the developed and developing. Extending the centre-periphery thesis to the national context, Frank maintains that the national structures are less unequal. Just as there are more developed (centre) and less developed (periphery) nations in the world there are dominant and dominated classes within each nation. Development in the national context therefore means the liberation of the masses from the dependence on dominant classes. Such a liberation implies the restructuring of class and power relations in any individual country.

Dependency explains a great deal but not all. As S.C. Dube has rightly remark, "All the ills of under-development cannot be attributed to rich countries. Is self-criticism not necessary ? What correctives has the third world devised in the last three-four decades? It should perhaps give some recognition to the small benefits that have accrued to it from western domination in the form of infrastructure organisation and ideals. The continued economic growth in rich countries has enabled growth rates of

output, in some less developed countries which are much higher than in the past<sup>45</sup>

Nevertheless the western development paradigm has not yielded the desired result in the third world countries. As a result, the idea of development has sunk deep in people's minds, while the project of development, backed by powerful global, national and local interest, has produce a growing divide between the elites and the people. It is a divide that has affected the intellectual community as well and there has developed a ranging debate on what should constitute the agenda of development. It is the slow realisation of the larger contexts of growing misery and destitution in the third world countries that the search for alternative development emerges.

The third world endeavours towards development efforts itself have undergone at least three phases - imitative, reactive and experimental<sup>46</sup>. In the first phase Western ideas and models were uncritically adopted, some adaptations were made and a few elements were borrowed from the Soviet model. In the reactive phase new ideologies were projected - African socialism, basic democracy, the Indian path of development, i.e. mixed economy and so forth. These had more rhetoric than substance, all that they did was to add a few dia-critical marks to the existing paradigm of

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<sup>45</sup> S.C. Dube, op.cit., p.44.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid, p. 42.

development. This phase was followed by experiments with different strategies - control, decontrol, import substitution, export promotion, industrialisation, population control, community development and intensive agricultural development, poverty eradication, employment generation and so forth. Yet all these models and strategies has failed to satisfactorily address the widespread prevalence of poverty, misery and destitution in the third world countries. Therefore currently the search is for an alternative and more viable, organically linked and comprehensive strategy of development.

Sociologist like S.L. Sharma viewed that too much emphasis should not be laid on the economic aspects of development.<sup>47</sup> Till now in the discourse of development, the missing dimension is the socio-cultural aspect of development. Hence development thought, says S.L. Sharma, should include the socio-cultural dimensions. Economic factors are means to this end, namely, planning for goals which enable men to live as human beings. Man is not an isolated human being but a moral and social person. The foundation has to be from the economic factors but ultimately development has to be conceived in holistic terms. Accordingly, development should be defined as "the improvement in the overall quality of life including the physical, the psychological, the social and cultural"<sup>48</sup>Physical quality of life can be

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<sup>47</sup>S.L. Sharma, op.cit., pp.17-21.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid, p.20.

improved by an increase in life expectancy, by such measures as improved water supply, good food, proper housing etc. An improvement in the psychological quality of life entails the idea of life satisfaction including positive mental health. The improvement in the social quality of life means an increase in the strength of family stability, interpersonal bonds and social solidarity. Finally, in the cultural quality of life which has to do more with the moral order of society than just the life style or material artifacts needs to be emphasized.

Rajni Kothari also writes that development has to be conceptualised in terms of comprehensive and holistic perspective.<sup>49</sup> In this holistic approach socio-cultural, political, environmental and economic goals and policies should be integrated. Development should be economically and socially more just and politically more participatory and democratic as well as environmentally sound. He put a premium on people's participation in the decision making process of development as not only an integral model of development of a just society but also for promoting autonomy and dignity of all human beings.

To be more viable and realistic, development process and strategies should take the account about people's perception of development. Andrew Webster writes that, "If people do not like what they see, or interpret

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<sup>49</sup> Rajni Kothari, 1988, *Rethinking Development: In Search of Human Alternative*. New Delhi : Ajanta Publication, pp. 1-47.

development programme in ways that are significantly divergent from developers intentions then no matter how economically viable they are on papers, they may be completely impractical socially. It is, then, important to consider preceptions of 'development from below' from the ordinary folk who live and work in the factory, streets, rice fields, sugar plantations, mountain villages and so on."<sup>50</sup>

Critics like Ted Trainer has totally rejected the unidimensional and conventional conception of development.<sup>51</sup> He argued that the ends and means of development can be conceived in a totally different way. His formulation is that basic development objectives can be achieve with very little monetary wealth or on the volume and size of the GNP by enabling to reorganised the local communities and people of the developing countries to come together to provide for themselves the necessary conditions and systems to meet the requirements for satisfactory development. In this way it becomes possible to enrich people and regions by making them poorer in conventional economic terms. The success of this model depends on whether people are able to organise their local resources to produce what they need via relatively simple technologies. Thus for Ted Trainer, appropriate development is essentially

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<sup>50</sup> Andrew Webster, 1984, *Introduction to the Sociology of Development*. London : Macmillan Publishers Ltd., p.36,

<sup>51</sup> Ted Trainer, "What Does Development Mean ? A Rejection of the Unidimensional Conception" in *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, Vol. 20, No. 5/6, 2000, pp.95-112.

about organising existing and usually sufficient local productive capacity to meet basic needs and enable a high quality of life.

Jean Dreze and Amartya Sen conceived development in terms of expansion of substantive human freedoms and not just by economic growth or technical progress.<sup>52</sup> Though economic growth and technical progress are important yet they have to be appraised in terms of their actual effectiveness in enriching the lives and liberties of people rather than taking them to be valuable in themselves. They are concerned with the opportunities that people have to improve the quality of their lives. The crucial role of economic and social opportunities is to expand the realm of human agency and freedom, both as an end in itself and as a means of further expansion of freedom. As means and ends of development, freedom is also seen in promoting participatory development, and through it, further advancing the quality of life that people can enjoy.

Lately the concept of sustainable development has been added in the alternative paradigm of development. Human beings have always exploited the resources available in their natural surroundings for their benefit. However rapid economic development has made human beings rapacious in their exploitation of natural resources. Considerable concern therefore has been

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<sup>52</sup>Jean Dreze and Amartya Sen, 2002, *India : Development and Participation*. Delhi : Oxford University Press, pp. 1-11.

expressed about the disastrous impact that economic growth was having on natural environment. One of the consequence of this growing concern was the 1972 UN conference on the Human Environment held in Stockholm in June 1972.<sup>53</sup> This conference signaled the arrival of the environmental concerns on the international policy agenda and was a prelude to a series of United Nations Meetings that attempted to reconcile environmental issues with the goals and strategies of development. It was in the Stockholm Conference which first propounded the concept of 'Eco-development', implying a process of ecologically sound development of positive management of the environment for human benefit.

From these concern and initiative there emerged the idea that economic growth could be promoted in a 'sustainable' fashion that would limit the environmental damage caused to future generation. Moreover, such growth was needed as a means to eliminate poverty and inequality, which were themselves a threat to the environment.<sup>54</sup> The current thinking of development generally acknowledge that long term development is sustainable only when it is upheld without causing major environmental destruction.

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<sup>53</sup> Wilfred Beckerman, "Economic Growth and The Environment: Whose Growth ? Whose Environment?" in *World Development*. Vol. 20, No.4, p.481, 1992.

<sup>54</sup> R. Bryan Robert, Robert G. Cushing and Charles Wood (ed.) Vol. II, op.cit., p. xxvii.

Sustainable development is being defined by the World Commission on Environment and Development as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generation to meet their own needs. It contains within it two key concepts:

(a) the concept of 'needs', in particular the essential needs of the world's poor, to which overriding priority should be given and

(b) the idea of limitations imposed by the state of technology and social organisation on the environment's ability to meet present and future needs".<sup>55</sup>

What it means is that sustainable development is a development which satisfies the basic human needs and aspirations of all categories without at the same time destroying the natural resources on which such development depends. "A world in which poverty and inequity are endemic will always be prone to ecological and other crises. Sustainable Development requires meeting the basic needs of all and extending to all the opportunities to satisfy their aspirations for a better life. Living standards that go beyond the basic minimum are sustainable only if consumption standards everywhere have regard for long term sustainability. Yet many of us live beyond the world's ecological means, for instance in our patterns of energy use."<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987, *Our Common Future*. England : Oxford University Press, p.43.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid, p.43-44.



However making the concept of sustainability precise has prove difficult. It is not plausible to argue that all natural resources should be preserved. Successful development will inevitably involves some amount of land clearing, oil drilling, river damming etc. Also the operational substance behind such definitions raised certain problems.

Anil Agarwal however takes political content of sustainable development as important in operationalising the concept of sustainable development. He argued that sustainable development will be the outcome of a political order in which a society is so structured that it will learn fast from its mistakes in the use of its natural resources and rapidly rectify human-nature relationship in accordance with the knowledge it has gained. The political order according to Anil Agarwal will be one in which decision-making is largely the prerogative of those who will also suffer the consequences of those decisions. Sustainability thus demands the creation of a political order in which firstly, control of natural resources rests to the maximum extent possible with local communities who are dependent on those resource; and secondly, decision-making within the community is as participatory, open and democratic as possible. The more this happen, "the more we will move towards sustainable development".<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>57</sup>Anil Agarwal, "What is sustainable Development?" in M.L. Dewan (ed.) 1995, *Towards a Sustainable Society: Perception* . New Delhi : Clarion Books, p.21.

David Simon too argued that sustainable development should include active local involvement in the planning and control of development programmes and projects.<sup>58</sup> He emphasizes the need to pay attention to the political economy of development, or the recognition that political and institutional interests on a national and international scale inevitably affect the possibilities of local projects. These interest need to be mobilized in favour of sustainable development. Michael R. Redclift too argue that the interests and decision making processes of all relevant actors need to be considered. Providing forums to hear and negotiate different interest and understandings of what development means becomes an essential part of sustainable development.<sup>59</sup>

A brief mention should also be made about the antagonism between development and environment. Development is generally held responsible for damaging the ecology. On the other hand environmental activist are often accused of being 'anti-development'. Equally there is also a divide between the developed and the developing countries on these two issues. The developing countries sees the developed west as taking too much concern with environmental issue which is obstructing their effort for rapid economic

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<sup>58</sup>David Simon, "Sustainable Development: Theoretical Construct or Attainable Goal?" in *Environmental Conservation*. Vol. 16, No. 1, Spring, 1999, pp. 46-47.

<sup>59</sup>R. Michael Redclift, "A Framework for Improving Environmental Management: Beyond the Market Mechanism" in *World Development*. Vol. 20, No. 2, 1992, pp.255-259.

development. While it may be argued that the industrialised nations, having enjoyed the fruits of unthinking exploitation of nature, have now suddenly become environmentally conscious, and are obstructing the developing nation in their march towards material progress, in the long term interest of the earth and the human societies, environment management must be taken seriously by one and all. In fact development and environment may not be totally antithetical and on collision course as it appears to be. Taking on this position, Jean Dreze and Amartya Sen locate the environmental concern and its possible solution within the developmental process itself.<sup>60</sup> Seeing development in terms of increasing the effective freedom of human beings brings the constructive agency of people in environment-friendly activities directly within the domain of developmental achievement. Development is empowering and that power can be used to preserve and enrich the environment, and not just to decimate it.

Having examined various views on Development, we can say that development is a process of wholesome growth and advancement of society not only in terms of material and economic advancement but also entails advancement in social, cultural and political realms. It also contain the idea of sensitivity to natural environment as well as people's empowerment through

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<sup>60</sup>Jean Dreze and Amartya Sen, *op.cit.*, pp. 218-228.

their involvement in sharing developmental benefits by participating in the decision making process of development.

### **Tribal Development in India**

In the context of the above discussion, the question of tribal development pertaining to India should also be located. In India, tribals constitute 8.1 percent or 67.76 million (1991 census) of the total population and inhabit 20 per cent of the land mass of the country.<sup>61</sup> Concentrated mostly in the mountain belt and forest tracts of the sub-Himalayan region in the north and north-east, the hilly terrain across central India and in the Southern most parts of the Western Ghats they are isolated from the majority Indian communities and have remained socially and economically backward.<sup>62</sup> It has been the endeavour of the government of independent India to bring tribes to the general national level of education, health, economic and political participation through a process of planned development efforts.

Tribal development was not a new idea to the newly independent India but the old policies of tribal development and change, 'segregation' and 'assimilation' were found inadequate and a new policy popularly known as 'integration' was put on the anvil.

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<sup>61</sup> B.K. Roy Burman, 1998a, op.cit., p. 13.

<sup>62</sup> Tiplut Nongbri, "Introduction" in Ashish Bose, Tiplut Nongbri and Nikhlesh Kumar (ed.) 1990, *Tribal Demography and Development in North-East India*. Delhi: B.R. Publishing Corporation, p. 1.

The policy of isolation or segregation whose main proponent was Verrier Elwin, argued that tribals would be safer and happier in isolated pockets or 'park' where they could preserve their cultural traits better.<sup>63</sup> But this policy was criticised on the plea that it cannot lead to tribal advancement because of its 'isolationist' nature. Simultaneously the social workers and religious reformers were in favour of complete 'assimilation' of the tribals into broader socio-religious formation of mainstream India because it considered tribal social customs and practices as 'inferior'. Both these policies were criticised after the Indian people took over from the British. Jawaharlal Nehru has been very outspoken in condemning the imposition of the Hindu way of living on tribal population reared in other tradition.<sup>64</sup> It was due to the vision of Nehru and other constitutional makers who were concerned with bringing tribal people into the mainstream of Indian society that the approach of integration was adopted.<sup>65</sup> It chiefly aimed at developing the tribal people without disturbing their permanent cultural mooring. It was agreed that for 'integration of tribals' into the national mainstream, their economic and educational standard were to be raised at par with other fellow countrymen. Columns were provided in the Indian constitution in support of such an approach. Thus constitutional protection were accorded to the Schedule Tribe and Schedule Caste through protective measures like affirmative action,

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<sup>63</sup> See Nadeem Hasnain, 1991, *Tribal India*. Delhi: Palaka Prakashan, pp. 164-166.

<sup>64</sup> Haimendorf, "Tribal Problems in India", in Romesh Thapar (ed.) 1977, *Tribe, Caste and Religion*. New Delhi: Macmillan India Ltd., p. 4.

<sup>65</sup> Nandita Haksar, "Law and The Self-Management of Tribal Societies in North-East India" in Bhupinder Singh (ed.) 1998, *Antiquity to Modernity in Tribal India*. Delhi: Inter-India Publication, Vol. II, p. 164.

reservation in educational institutions, services and other job oriented facilities as well as in representing public offices. The Fifth and Sixth Schedules were also added to the Constitution to provide special administration to those states which have large pockets of tribal population and tribal majority states respectively. In the former the union government could give directions to the state and the Governor was given a special power for overseeing the administration of Scheduled Areas. In the latter, provision was made for the establishment of Autonomous District Councils, which could make laws relating to the management of land and forest, shifting cultivation, village administration and matters relating to tribal customs and practices.

Nehru's tribal 'Panchsheel' is prominently advocated in the fundamental principles of the policy of tribal integration. It emphasized that:

"(i) People should develop along the lines of their own genius and should avoid imposing anything on them. We should try to encourage in every way their own traditional arts and culture.

(ii) Tribal rights in land and forest should be respected.

(iii) We should try to train and build up a team of their own people to do the work of administration and development. We should avoid introducing too many outsiders into tribal territory.

(iv) We should not over-administer these areas or overwhelm them with a multiplicity of schemes. We should rather work through, and not in rivalry to, their own social and cultural institutions.

We should judge results not by statistics or the amount of money but by the quality of human character that is evolved."<sup>66</sup>

These Panchsheel remains the most important reference point in the formulation of tribal policies and development in the country. Consequently welfare and development of the tribal communities have been the national goal and special responsibility of the central and state governments. Beside protective measures such as stopping land alienation, freedom from bondage and rehabilitation of bonded labour and protection of their interest in land and forests, promotion of the economic interests of the tribals has been one of the basic planks of planned development.<sup>67</sup> Special tribal development strategies and programmes such as special Multipurpose Tribal Blocks, Minimum Needs Programme, Tribal Sub-Plan and general special employment programmes such as Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY), Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS) and Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) [Implemented in rural India in which 40 to 50 percent were exclusively reserved for Schedule Tribe (ST) and Schedule Caste (SC)] were implemented to increase

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<sup>66</sup>Jawaharlal Nehru, "Forward" in Verrier Elwin, 1988, *A Philosophy for NEFA*. Itanagar: Govt. of Arunachal Pradesh, p.V

<sup>67</sup>Sachchidananda, "Tribal Development: Challenges in the Nineties", in Mrinal Miri (ed.) 1993, *Continuity and Change in Tribal Society*. Shimla: Indian Institute of Advanced Study, pp. 338-342.

the income of tribal people and add to their existing assets thereby improving their levels of living. Since 1999 JRY and IRDP have been restructured as Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojana (JGSY) and Swarn Jayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY) in which 22.5 and 50 percent of the benefits will accrue to the SC/ST respectively.<sup>68</sup> The Government is also implementing the Rural Employment Generation Programme (REGP) and the Pradhan Mantri Rozgar Yojana (PMRY) throughout the country to enhance employment opportunities and to empower economically the unemployed educated youth of the country including communities belonging to SC/ST<sup>69</sup>

The impact of welfare and development efforts of the government, however, has been only skin deep. While it has given rise to a new class of elite with advanced education and training who man the government bureaucratic machinery, and proliferation of political leaders with improved standards of life and status, it has not made much dent on the abject condition of the majority of the tribals. On the other hand the developmental effort has increased the dependence of the tribals on the administration<sup>70</sup>. This is the negation of the concept of development. Development as seen, required communities engaging in self-management, putting their house in-order, prioritising their needs, solving their own problems and raising their own resources to meet their urgent needs. The basic issue of tribal development is

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<sup>68</sup> Kurukshetra, June 1999. New Delhi: Ministry of Rural Development, pp. 11-14.

<sup>69</sup> Kurukshetra, April 2002, op.cit., p. 2<sup>nd</sup> cover.

<sup>70</sup> Sachchidananda, op.cit., p. 343.



not that nothing has been done for them but that plans have not been tailored to their needs and their involvement in planning and implementation stage has not been sought. They were merely treated as passive recipients of benefits and not as active actors in decision making of their own development. It is no wonder than that benefits meant for tribals get diverted to the pockets of exploiters and corrupt officials.<sup>71</sup>

As a matter of facts, developmental interventions and commercial exploitation in tribal areas, which are rich in natural resources, has eroded the resource base and the social and cultural heritage of the schedule tribe population in India.<sup>72</sup> The last four decades of development in India through dams, factories and mines have made the tribals victims and refugees of development.<sup>73</sup> It has been estimated that the proportion of tribals displaced by the developmental projects, mining and industrial undertaking varied between 52 to 100 per cent whose rehabilitation has been somewhat mythical.<sup>74</sup> In the pursuit of economic and technological development, within a framework controlled by economic and political power elite from local to global level, the tribal peoples are being progressively dispossessed of the resources which were traditionally under their control. As a result to this they are being pauperized,

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<sup>71</sup> Tiplut Nongbri, op.cit., p. 4.

<sup>72</sup> Sachchidananda, op.cit., p. 338.

<sup>73</sup> Amar Kumar Singh, "Development, Deprivation and Discontent of Tribals in India" in Amar Kumar Singh and M.K. Jabbi (ed.) 1995, *Tribals in India: Development, Deprivation and Discontent*, New Delhi: Har Anand Publications, p. 16.

<sup>74</sup> N.K. Behura, "Tribes of India: Planned Development", in Amar Kumar Singh and M.K. Jabbi, Ibid, p. 112.

marginalized and are being progressively alienated from other segments of the society.<sup>75</sup> Forests which have been sources of livelihood and culture of the tribals have been gradually dispossessed by the state in the name of development and scientific management. The alienation of collective rights to tribals in respect of forests and forest products seem to have become a greater factor for pauperisation of the tribals and their disaffection all over the country.<sup>76</sup> Thus a contradiction come to prevail in the development process of the tribal vis-à-vis the country. While on the one hand tribal policies and the constitution sought to uplift the tribal communities in India through affirmative action, protection and developmental plans and programmes, on the other the developmental process of the country has left the tribals pauperized, marginalized and alienated. This process of development run counter to the holistic and sustainable conception of development in which it means expansion of substantive human freedoms, improvement in the overall quality of life and satisfaction of the basic human needs and aspirations of all categories without at the same time destroying the natural resources on which such development depend. It is antithetical to the conception of development as economically and socially more just and politically more participatory.

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<sup>75</sup> B.K. Roy Burman, "Need for Paradigm Shift for Tribal Development" in S.K. Gupta, V.P. Sharma and N.K. Sharda (ed.) 1998b, *Tribal Development: Appraisal and Alternatives*, New Delhi: Indus Publishing Company, p. 84.

<sup>76</sup> B.K. Roy Burman, 1998a, op.cit., pp. 6-8.

In North-East India in which large number of tribals inhabit, the tribal situation is relatively different. Four out of the seven units (Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Nagaland) are not only tribal-majority states, but their economy and society abundantly reflect features significantly different from other tribal pockets of the country.<sup>77</sup> In the remaining three states, the tribal population is four times that of the national average in Manipur and Tripura while in Assam it is more than one and a half times.<sup>78</sup> Unlike other tribal region of the country, social institutional arrangements did not face similar interference and communal control over land and forests continue to be its characteristic feature.<sup>79</sup> Continuity and stability of the tribal social structure remain significant features of the north-east tribal situations.<sup>80</sup> In this context Roy Burman points out that "by and large in north-east India the right of tribal peoples to self-management is recognized, though with many constrictions. Paternalistic surveillance operates there also. In the rest of India, the over-riding ethos continues to be paternalistic in its thrust."<sup>81</sup>

However, economic backwardness, poor communication and scarcity of trained manpower resources characterize the tribal region. In the post-independence period, a massive programme of development of the tribal areas

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<sup>77</sup> M.N. Karna, "Aspects of Tribal Development in North-Eastern India", in Ashish Bose, Tiplut Nongri and Nikhlesh Kumar, op.cit., p. 8.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid, p. 9.

<sup>81</sup> B.K. Roy Burman, 1998b, op.cit., p. 87.

of the region has been undertaken, both under the general sector as well as the special sector of tribal welfare. The North Eastern Council which was established under an Act of Parliament in 1972 was intended to facilitate effective socio-economic development of the region.<sup>82</sup> However, the typical strategy adopted for tribal development in the region is a gradual increase in the privatisation of land, capital productivity and market orientation.<sup>83</sup> Though the specificity of tribal social structure in the region has been recognised, the approach to development has not yet taken cognizance of it in the formulation of developmental policies and programmes. The current policies and programmes of tribal development are not in tune with the tribal social structure and values. Instead, the development programmes place much reliance on selected groups of people who are expected to actively participate in developmental efforts. Accordingly, the state permits the lion's share of resources to be generated and appropriated by the proprietary class through interests, rents and profits.<sup>84</sup> A class of contractors, merchants, traders and businessmen has consequently grown and their assets multiplied manifold. This path of development is thus accentuating social inequality and sharpened the stress and strain in the region. Within the region itself it has led to considerable regional imbalances and uneven development. Since different

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<sup>82</sup> M.N. Karna, *op.cit.*, p. 12.

<sup>83</sup> V. Xaxa, "Tribal Development in the North-East: Trends and Perspective" in Ashish Bose, Tiplut Nongbri and Niklesh Kumar, *op.cit.*, p. 27.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid*, p. 22.

zones are inhabited by different tribal groups, this uneven development is accelerating social inequality along ethnic or tribal line.<sup>85</sup> Besides, the path of development in the region in general and the tribals in particular through numerous programmes and schemes has kill the traditional initiative of the people and has led to the growth of sponsored society.<sup>86</sup>

In the context of Naga Society, C. Von Fürer-Haimendorf has recently observed: "Though unlike other tribal populations the Nagas have not suffered from encroachment of alien settlers on their land, they have been subjected to many outside influences aiming at a transformation of their life-style. The dilemma with which they are now faced is not in the failure of the efforts of the government to raise their standards of living and change their outlook, but in their very success of opening Naga society to the modern world. By injecting large funds into Nagaland, the central government has created a situation in which Nagas have become used to innumerable commodities of outside origin. At present all these goods are bought with money disbursed by government agencies in the form of salaries and wages for road-work and other public projects. But the pattern of production of the Nagas themselves has hardly changed, and their agriculture which is practised in the traditional manner of shifting cultivation do not yield a surplus which could be used for the purchase of the many now available manufactured goods. Should the flow

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid, p. 29.

<sup>86</sup> M.N. Karna, op.cit., p. 16.

of funds provided by the central government ever be turned off, the Nagas would be in urgent need of producing goods marketable outside Nagaland in order to pay for all the imports essential for the maintenance of their raised standards of living, and so far it is difficult to see how such a transformation of their economy could be achieved."<sup>87</sup> It is this kind of dependent and sponsored development that has brought gradual disintegration of traditional socio-economic arrangements without creating a just and prosperous order. Proliferation of techno-bureaucratic structure for supervising development plans and programmes has undermined the role of social structure in the management and use of traditional resources; while marketisation and unequal distribution of developmental fruits has put a severe stress on resource base especially that of forests on which the culture and livelihood of the Nagas and other tribal communities are closely intertwined. This aspect is further discussed in Chapter 3 by taking the case of the Mao and Angami Nagas.

The overall picture of tribal development in India is that while the tribals have undoubtedly benefited in varying degree of the developmental efforts of the Government yet it has come at the cost of serious erosion of the traditional resource base and socio-cultural set up. Besides development itself is largely couched in economic-growth paradigm thereby giving little or no recognition to the peculiarities of tribal social structure, values and socio-

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<sup>87</sup> Christoph Von Fürer-Haimendorf (1980), Quoted in B.B. Kumar, 1993, *Modernization in Naga Society*. New Delhi: Omson Publications, pp. 5-6.

political organization. It has thus failed to take a holistic approach of tribal development. The failure of the developmental policies and programme become apparent when we examine Nehru's Panchsheel vis-à-vis the developmental operation in tribal areas. In this regard Roy Burman observed: "while Nehru's Panchsheel is frequently referred to as a sacred formula, in actual operation it has been violated more often than not. Tribal rights in land and forests have not been respected.... Through fifth schedule of the constitution, the colonial paternalistic thrust has been retained, the committees of MPs and experts has prescribed how tribal grassroot organisations should function, while indulging in rhetorics about respect for tribal traditional organisations, through tribal sub-plan approach plethora of schemes have been introduced in tribal areas and for supervising the same techno-bureaucratic structure has been proliferated. Through accounting jugglery a misleading picture of financial input for tribal development is being dished out to the people. While the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution claims to reflect autonomy urge of the tribal peoples, operative apparatuses have been reduced to subordinate organs of the state and not forums for reflecting the dynamics of persistence and change of tribal communities. These have served a social freeze... Traditional knowledge system of the tribal peoples has been undermined and their intellectual property rights have not been ensured. Their displacement from their homes and habitats on the plea of implementation of development projects in national interest has taken a menacing form which

cannot be checked by any administrative action or humanitarian plastering unless the basic issue of vacating encroachment on their land and forest by the state during the colonial period and afterwards is decided, and a framework of new partnership is created".<sup>88</sup>

Therefore, to day what is needed is not procedural change. But change in the basic assumptions about the place of the tribal people in the wider society; and also shift in the decision making power, role of implementing agencies including the voluntary agencies and institutional arrangement for enabling the tribal people to be masters of their own destiny.<sup>89</sup> A holistic and sustainable approach of development suited to the needs and aspirations of the tribals are urgently called for.

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<sup>88</sup> B.K. Roy Burman, "Paradigm Shift in Tribal Policy During Ninth Plan", in Bhupinder Singh and Neeti Mahanti (ed.) 1997, *Tribal Policy in India*, New Delhi: Inter-India Publication, pp. 28-29.

<sup>89</sup> B.K. Roy Burman, 1998b, op.cit., p. 89.



## Chapter II

### FOREST AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE: THE CASE OF MAO AND ANGAMI NAGAS

#### I. The Mao and Angami Social Structure

In Naga society village has been the unit of political, social, and religious aspects of life and therefore it has provided the infrastructure to the Naga Social Structure. Within the village clan and sub-clan were the basic unit of social structure of the Naga society. Among the Angami, clans often lived in distinct fortified habitational clusters known as *Khel* with defined boundaries within the village.<sup>1</sup> Among the Maos too clans occupy a definite portion of the village and were strictly exogamous.<sup>2</sup> In this aspect Hutton writes, "...so distinct is the clan from the village that it forms almost a village in itself, often fortified within the village inside in its own boundaries and not infrequently at variance almost amounting to war with other clans in the same village".<sup>3</sup>

An important principle of social structure among the Mao and Angami was the existence of some elements of dual organisation or the moiety system and its segmentation into various exogamous clans and sub-clans. The

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<sup>1</sup> J.H. Hutton, 1969, *Angami Naga With Some Notes on Neighbouring Tribes*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, p.109. (First Edition 1921).

<sup>2</sup> T.C. Hodson, 1911, *The Naga Tribe of Manipur*. Delhi: Low Price Publications, p. 71

<sup>3</sup> J.H. Hutton, op.cit., p. 109.

Angamis believed that their tribe descended from two brothers “who came out of the earth. From the elder of these two sprung the division of the Angami known as *kepezoma* or *pezoma* and from the younger the other, the *kepepfuma* or *kepepvuma*.”<sup>4</sup> It is also called *Thekronoma*. Each of this were called a *Kelhu*.<sup>5</sup> This dual system, however, was “not evenly distributed. Among the *Tengima* proper some villages are found entirely *Pezoma*, others entirely *Pepfuma*. While others again are mixed.”<sup>6</sup> Later the *pezoma* split into *Thevoma* and *Satsuma*.<sup>7</sup> In fact the *Satsuma* had been very few in number so that for all practical purposes, the *Kelhu* remained as *Thevoma* and *Thekronoma*<sup>8</sup>

In course of time the *Kelhus* split further into more exogamous units known as *Thino* “ which have been mentioned as forming the units of Angami society. These “*thino*” all trace their descent to some ancestor. The *Kelhu* was thought to have been the original exogamous division of the Angamis. It is believed that the next stage was to allow inter-marriage between members of the same *Kelhu* provided that they were of different villages. The inter-*Kelhu* exogamy must have given place to inter-*thino* exogamy very early among them”.<sup>9</sup> Thus *Kelhu* exogamy was replaced by *Thino* exogamy. In the early

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid, 110.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, p. 113.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, p. 111.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, p.113.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, pp. 113-114.

decade of 20<sup>th</sup> century there had been indications of *Thinos* further splitting into exogamous units called *Putsa*. These “*thino* were until recently an exogamous units, though their place is being rapidly taken by the Kindred (*Putsa*), and though inspite of the strong disapprobation of the elders of the clan, who prophesy barren marriages or idiot and diseased children as a result, marriage even within the kindred are not nowadays unknown.”<sup>10</sup> According to Hutton *Putsa* is a "Kindred which is a more coherent body than the *Thino* and the relative positions in which the individual stands towards the clan is well illustrated by the few formalities and duties that accompany adoption. His personality is so far bound up with his Kindred and clan that it is quite in accordance with Angami feeling to hold the clan, and still more the Kindred, responsible for the misdemeanours of the individual.”<sup>11</sup> According to Hutton the *putsa* “would seem to be in the actual process of becoming the real exogamous unit, but has not yet finally becomes so, as the prohibition, which until comparatively recently applied to marriage within the *thino* still applies to inter-marriage between the more nearly related *putsa*.”<sup>12</sup>

The account of Hutton in this regard with reference to the *Memi* (Mao) is vague.<sup>13</sup> The fact however was that like the Angami, the Mao Naga also

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid, p. 114.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, p.115.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, p. 116.

<sup>13</sup> See J. H. Hutton, op.cit., pp.111-112 and on footnote p.117.

have elements of dual system. Its origin was similar to that of the Angami, but they were not called *Chakrima* and *Chovoma* as Hutton had written.<sup>14</sup> In fact the elder division was called *Chapremai* and the younger one the *Pfonimai*. Originally they were believed to be exogamous social division. According to the Mao mythology, from the very beginning God has assigned certain function to each of these moiety: political and ritual function to *Chapremai* moiety and peace making to *pfonimai* moiety.<sup>15</sup> Consequently while *Chapremai* moiety enjoy a nominal political and ritual function with its titular head at Pudunamai village (Pfosemai), the *Pfonimai* moiety enjoys some sort of diplomatic function.<sup>16</sup> However, there was also a group called *Makreipadeina* with four villages under the headship of Maikhel (Makhrail).<sup>17</sup> Excepting Maikhel, the abode of Naga departure, its surrounding three villages were either of *Chapremai* origin or *Pfonimai*. Each of this moiety was called *Opemai*. As in the case of Angami, in course of time the *Opemai* splits further into a number of exogamous patrilineal clans (*Opfuta*) which were further

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<sup>14</sup> Most probably *Chakrima* and *Chovoma* (Ma= people in Angami) refers to the clans of *Chakre Chovow Enu* (the present Song Song village which is usually referred as Mao Town). *Chakrima* (Chakrimi) is now a separate village, which is about 10 km. from Song Song village. Its official name is *Chawainamai*. *Chovoma* most probably refers to *Chakre Chovow Mai* (Mai = people in Mao), the present Mao Song Song village.

<sup>15</sup> N. Saleo, *Mani Thini: Observance of gennas among the Mao Naga*. AIR Recording Document, Imphal. Dated. 6.9.2002 p.2.

<sup>16</sup> See J.H. Hutton, op.cit., pp.210-211, pp.337-338; Also T.C. Hodson, op.cit., pp.83-84; and Gangmumei Kabui, "Genesis of the Ethnoses of Manipur" in Naorem Sanajaoba, (ed) 1995, *Manipur: Past the Present*. Delhi: Mittal Publication, Vol.3, p.31.

<sup>17</sup> See. J.H. Hutton, op.cit., pp.337-338 also see T.C. Hodson, op.cit., p.84.

divided into a number of sub-clans (*Opfumai*).<sup>18</sup> The names of each *Opfuta* were derived from the names of the male ancestors. There was no social hierarchy among these divisions. Its members observed common rites and rituals for birth, marriage or death.<sup>19</sup> Marriage within the sub-clan was forbidden though like the Angami intra-clan marriage do take place but were rare. What Hutton has observed about the distribution of '*Kelhu*' of the Angami were also true about the Mao. Some villages were entirely '*Pfonimai*' or '*Chapremai*' and in some case mixed. This rule however was an exception to Maikhel and Makhan villages who called themselves as '*Makhraimai*' and '*Ekhramai*'. However the dual system as was existed among the Mao and Angami Naga does not seem to continued into a bipartition of the universe into animate and inanimate objects or connected with opposite character as has been defined by Levi Strauss.

What we have then is a series of groups each split in its turn into more groups, and each losing as it splits up, its formerly exogamous character. The '*Kelhu*' and '*Opemai*' breaks up into '*Thino*' and '*Opfuta*' which in their turn lose their exogamous status to the '*Putsa*' or '*Opfuta*' into which they were divided into 'Kindred'. *Kelhu* or *Opemai*, '*Thino*' or '*opfuta*', '*Putsa*' or '*Opfumai*' were

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<sup>18</sup> R.P. Athparia, "Mao" in M. Horam. S.H.M. Rizvi and K.S. Singh. (ed) 1998, *People of India: Manipur*. Calcutta: Anthropological Survey of India, Vol. XXXI, p.121.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

all patrilineal and patronymic.<sup>20</sup> These shows the dynamism of social structure among the Mao and Angami. All these social divisions have equal status in relation to each other. Because certain level of property management was associated with lineage and clan groups, the individuals were strongly tied through kinship relations and obligations. These relationship and obligations include labour pools among kinsmen for rendering help to individual members during construction of house and terrace fields, paddy transplantation and harvesting, cutting and harvesting of timbers and observation of common rites and rituals for birth, marriage, sickness and death. As seen the clan and Kindred groups were responsible for disciplining its members.<sup>21</sup>

The smallest unit of social structure is the family or extended household. The nuclear family, consisting of a married couple and their unmarried children, is characteristic of the Mao and Angami community. However extended family also exist.<sup>22</sup> All members of the family live in a common household, and acknowledge certain reciprocal rights and obligations. Age and sex were main ordering principles in family system. The oldest male member, generally the father enjoys the most respected position in the family.<sup>23</sup> Among the Mao in the past when children were old enough they left the house

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<sup>20</sup> J.H. Hutton, *op.cit.*, p.117.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid*, p. 115.

<sup>22</sup> Common extended family usually composed of the married couple with their married sons and grand children, or married couple with their unmarried children and married son etc.

<sup>23</sup> N.K. Das, *op.cit.*, p.67.

to sleep in youth dormitory (Morung). The boys sleep in *Ikhruchi* and girls in *Ilochi*.<sup>24</sup> Youth dormitory serves as a training and guard house as well as a club house. It was also an important institution for marriage.<sup>25</sup>

The Mao and Angami society is patrilineal and male ascendancy is complete with them. The essential feature of their family was that its members were descended from the eldest male resident in the house, the mother being, under the rule of exogamy, brought in from another clan or sub-clan. The household was a true social unit. There were gennas, temporary taboos, imposed on households as units in the structure of society viewed from a religious aspects.<sup>26</sup> The family structure was breached by the marriage of its members. The sons set up for themselves. The daughters were removed by the law of exogamy into another clan or sub-clan. Among the Mao the severance of the woman from her clan of origin was not complete, as the duty of revenge, should she be hurt, was with her clan of origin.<sup>27</sup>

Formal and ceremonial marriages among the Mao and Angami, in the past, had been very complicated involving many traditional gennas, rituals and formalities.<sup>28</sup> Traditionally marriage was arranged by the parents of the groom

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<sup>24</sup> See J.H. Hutton, *op.cit.*, p.343.

<sup>25</sup> Sani K. Alexander, "Indigenous Culture of Mao Tribe" in *Makhrerihrii Shipai News Letter* Vol.2 No.3 Sept.-Nov. 2002, p.7.

<sup>26</sup> There were several gennas which every household have to observed during birth, marriage, death etc. For detail see J.H. Hutton, *op.cit.*, pp.189-334, and T.C. Hodson, *op.cit.*, pp.164-186.

<sup>27</sup> T.C. Hodson, *Ibid*, p.71.

<sup>28</sup> For traditional rites and rituals of marriage, see J.H. Hutton, *op.cit.*, pp.219-225 and 243-244.

and the bride through negotiation. This type of marriage was called *Nathunako* and *Shieshakeri* among the Mao and Angami respectively. There was no bride giving or bride receiving group in the two communities.<sup>29</sup>

According to Sani Alexander, during the process of marriage engagement among the Mao, the properties to be given to the newly wed couple by both the parents were clearly agreed upon. The enlisted properties during the engagement cannot be altered by both sides of the family.<sup>30</sup> Bride price or dowry were not prevalent among the Maos. However, during marriage negotiation, the boy's family presents a traditional shawl and an iron blade to the girl's family.<sup>31</sup> Its acceptance was considered to be an indication for accepting the proposal. The presence of these articles within a house symbolises the conjugal harmony of the couple.

Among the Angami, bride price consists normally of one or two pigs, some fowls, a few pair of hoe and more particularly a spear.<sup>32</sup> The item of spear was received by a member of the clan or lineage of the bride. This implied a sort of political alliance established through the marriage between two descent groups. The bride also brings definite gift articles to her husband's

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<sup>29</sup> See N.K. Das, op.cit., p.66-67 and also R.P. Athparia, op.cit., p.121.

<sup>30</sup> Sani K. Alexander, op.cit., p.7

<sup>31</sup> R.P. Athparia, op.cit., p.121.

<sup>32</sup> See N.K. Das. op.cit., p.67.



house, which includes landed property.<sup>33</sup> Another way of marriage among the Mao and Angami was elopement. They were treated as unlawful marriage.

Monogamy was the rule of marriage. Polygamy was discouraged. The rule of residence after marriage was patrilocal and neolocal. Divorce were rare. A divorce may be initiated either by the man or the woman on account of misconduct or incompatibility. The children were at liberty to stay either with the father or the mother, in case of a divorce. The village court decides divorce cases. Among the Angami if a woman was found guilty of committing adultery, she loses her personal landed property to the husband.<sup>34</sup> Remarriage was possible for a divorced woman, widow remarriage and widower remarriage were both permitted.<sup>35</sup>

Among the Mao and Angami, land is an important form of property, which is divided according to the traditional rule of inheritance. As a rule the youngest son inherit the family house while the eldest son inherit the best field. However this rule can be modified by verbal direction of the bequeather so that all the sons can inherit equally.<sup>36</sup> Among the Angami, daughters were also given a share of parental property. If the daughter dies without any heir, then her property was reverted back to her agnatic core. For the Mao, if there were

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid, R.P. Athparia, op.cit.

<sup>36</sup> For detail see J.H. Hutton, op.cit., pp.135-140.

no sons, the daughter take all land purchased by her father during his lifetime,<sup>37</sup> but the nearest male relative takes the inherited house.<sup>38</sup> Personal property, including cash and cattle was bequeathed to daughters absolutely.<sup>39</sup>

The status of Mao and Angami woman compared to the status of a man was lower in certain aspect such as inheritance of landed properties, punishment on adultery, religious rites and rituals etc. yet in aspects such as marriage and divorce, she enjoy equal right and status with man.<sup>40</sup> In fact Naga society in general had a marked sense of equality based on community participation irrespective of gender. In social and cultural matter, all have equal right. “ Many women in more civilised parts of India may well envy the women of the Naga Hills their high status and their free and happy life; and if you measure the cultural level of a people by the social position and personal freedom of its women, you will think twice before looking down on the Nagas as ‘savages’ ”.<sup>41</sup> Woman in Naga society plays a significant economic role within and outside her family. Colonel McCulloch described the role of Naga women in 1854: “In the grey of the morning the females of the family are astir and the village resounds with the blows of the long pestle in the wooden mortar beating out the rice from the husk. This finished, lunch is cooked both for the

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid, p.137.

<sup>38</sup> T.C.Hodson, op.cit., pp.103-104.

<sup>39</sup> J.H. Hutton, op.cit.

<sup>40</sup> See J.H. Hutton, pp.167-176.

<sup>41</sup> Von Christoph Haimendorf, 1939, *The Naked Nagas*. London: Methuen and Co., p.101.

family and pigs. Later, the women proceed for water, which they fill into bamboo tubes and bring on their backs in baskets. Then they go for firewood, and this brought, they set about internal economy of the house; that is, to see to their husbands' drink being in proper quantity and quality, to their spinning or their weaving, or any of the other household occupations, an act in which they have no pride".<sup>42</sup> Although women were generally excluded in Naga traditional Village Councils yet it must be stated that the activities of women in Naga society in general and the Mao and Angami in particular were neither authorised nor imposed by the patriarchal community. It was an unprejudiced system existing in Naga society that allows women to maximise their potential skill and participate in socio-cultural and economic fields.<sup>43</sup>

The political and administrative structure of the Mao and Angami differs slightly. This pertains especially to the significance attached to the institution of chieftainship. While among the Mao the '*Mohvu*'<sup>44</sup> plays a significant role in political and religious life of the village, the Angami '*Pehumas*' (chief) enjoy very nominal powers.<sup>45</sup> Like the other Nagas, each village of these two tribal communities was an independent unit. Each village, "functioned in a pure democratic form resembling the ancient Greek City

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<sup>42</sup> McCulloch, 1859, *Valley of Manipur*. Calcutta: Hian Publication, pp. 47-48.

<sup>43</sup> U.A. Shimray, "Equality as Tradition: Women's Role in Naga Society" in *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. XXXVII, No. 5, Feb. 2, 2002, p. 376.

<sup>44</sup> In Mao parlance '*Mohvu*' literally mean king.

<sup>45</sup> See R.R. Shimray, "Village Communes of the Nagas" in *Naorem Sanajaoba*, op.cit., pp.312-333; And also see J.H. Hutton, op.cit., pp.142-144.

States" <sup>46</sup> Each village among the Mao Naga was headed by a '*Mohvu*' assisted by a Council of Elders. According to Hodson, the position of *Mohvu* was "of considerable value".<sup>47</sup> The '*Mohvu*' had certain duties and privilege. His duties were both secular and religious. The *Mohvu* was "the religious head, the chief judge, the chief administrator and also the chief commander at the time of war and head hunting".<sup>48</sup> In matters relating to "religion, agricultural, forest and cultural affairs the chief-in-council was the supreme".<sup>49</sup> In selection of the chief, the hereditary principle was the general rule. However the hereditary *Mohvu* can be removed by the villagers if he violated the perennial customs and traditions of the people. <sup>50</sup>

*Mohvu* enjoys certain privileges. After the harvest every "villager has to give him tributes usually a basketful of paddy and Mao Naga special wine as a mark of acceptance of his divine rulership over the villagers".<sup>51</sup> He was also entitled a hind leg of any animal killed during a village ritual hunting.

The Council of Elders was a representative body of clans. "Each clan sends one or more representatives from the eldest family of the clan. This too

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<sup>46</sup> Ashikho-Daili Mao, 1992, *Nagas: Problems and Politics*. New Delhi: Ashish Publishing House, p.4.

<sup>47</sup> T.C. Hodson, op.cit., p.99.

<sup>48</sup> R.R. Shimray, op.cit., p.329.

<sup>49</sup> J.N. Das, "Customary Land System of Hill Ethnoses of Manipur" in Naorem Sanajaoba, op.cit., p.57.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Ashikho-Daili Mao op.cit., p.5.

is hereditary but in absence of a suitable man, the best and the ablest from the clan is generally selected by the clansmen." <sup>52</sup>

The Mao customary system of justice recognised the principle of equality "before the Naga Customary Law." <sup>53</sup> The criminal and civil justice was based on oaths and ordeals.<sup>54</sup> No one would like to expose himself to the consequences of false oath. A false swearer stands the risk of expulsion from the community, and refusal to take oath entailed punishment. <sup>55</sup> Heavy punishment awaits the thieves and murderers. Though all forms of homicide were punishable by expulsion from village according to the customary law, intentional homicide was considered most heinous form of crime and therefore the perpetrator and even his kindred were banished from the village for seven years and a fine of ten bulls. <sup>56</sup> Depending on the cases, disputes were settled by the clan council or village court (Okremai) or tribal council.

Although every Mao village has a '*Mohvu*' and was an independent entity, yet a titular head of the sixteen village confederacy was vested on the '*Mohvu*' of Pudunamai village (Pfosemai).<sup>57</sup> His position was nominal and ceremonial. He proclaimed six gennas every month and were observed by

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<sup>52</sup> R.R. Shimray, op.cit., p.323.

<sup>53</sup> Ashikho-Daili Mao, op.cit.

<sup>54</sup> See T.C. Hodson, op.cit., pp. 109-110 and J.H. Hutton, op.cit., p.144-148.

<sup>55</sup> False oath taking are reported by Hutton through manipulation of words and fraud every now and then. See J.H. Hutton, Ibid, p.145.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid, pp.148-150 and T.C. Hodson, op.cit., p.106.

<sup>57</sup> Gangumei Kubui, op.cit., p.31.

thirteen of the sixteen Mao village. <sup>58</sup> The remaining three villages remained under the head of Maikhel village, although in theory all the Mao villagers were under the titular head of Pudunamai Village. Certain gennas proclaimed by the *Mohvu* of Maikhel were observed not only by the whole Mao villages but also by the Angami, Chakeshang, Tangkhul and others who trace their departure from Maikhel. <sup>59</sup> The formation of two groups among the Mao villages is being explained by Hodson as arising due to religious schism. <sup>60</sup>

Among the Angamis, the institution of village chief was not much significant. At best "the chief's position probably gave him no power except on the war path."<sup>61</sup> For all religious and sacred duties, *Kemovos* (village priest) execute the function. According to Hutton, in deciding disputes, "question of custom would be, and still are, referred naturally enough, to the oldmen of the clan ..., the decision of oldmen in regards to the matters of customs is more or less final..."<sup>62</sup> However '*Chapi*' the traditional council of Angami village maintain social and politico-jural order. <sup>63</sup> It was headed by the oldest male member of the village. Each clan had representatives in the *Chapi*. The major function of a *Chapi* was to settle disputes within a village. Oaths were administered in formal manner, in the settlement of disputes. Punishment in the

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<sup>58</sup> See J.H. Hutton, pp.337-338.

<sup>59</sup> Benjamin K.S.Banee, "The Mao Naga" in Naorem Sanajaobao, op.cit., p.419.

<sup>60</sup> T.C. Hodson, op.cit., p.84.

<sup>61</sup> J.H. Hutton, p.142.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid, p.143-144.

<sup>63</sup> N.K. Das, op.cit., pp.69-70.

form of fines and excommunication were imposed by the *Chapi*. There was thus an element of gerontocracy in Mao and Angami society.

The Mao and Angami society was basically a religious and spiritual society. Their religion was animistic to a large extent. They believe in a sort of continuity among man, nature and supernatural forces. There was nothing like a family, clan or village deity. Though they had a vague idea of the deities and spiritual beings (Oramai or Terhoma) yet they had a "very clear idea of how gods should be served, and that whoso serves them otherwise shall die, if not physically, atleast socially." <sup>64</sup> Gods and spirits were believed to be present every where, some are malevolent, others benevolent. The Maos also believed that "the sky is the male principle and the earth the female, and that an earthquake is as it were their conjugal embrace, whence all fertility, all growth on the earth, has its origin". <sup>65</sup> *Kemovo* was the chief religious specialist among the Angami. He was recruited from their respective lineages. Among the Mao, '*Mohvu*' perform all the religious rites and rituals of the village. The religiosity of the *Mohvu* was such that "it is dangerous to bring it into contact with any substance that is employed in intercourse with powers whose modes of action transcend the ordinary calculable. He bears the brunt of it all ... A plague, it

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<sup>64</sup> J.H. Hutton, op.cit., p.177.

<sup>65</sup> J.H. Hodson, op.cit., p.127.

may be of boils ... will come in upon the village through him by the breach of one of his gennas. The solidarity of the social structure rests on him."<sup>66</sup>

Social and religious life and in fact the whole edifice of social structure of the Mao and Angami were maintain by *genna*. The term *genna* means anything that is forbidden or prohibited.<sup>67</sup> It is usually used in two ways : (1) It may mean ritual holiday of a village or (2) It means forbidden or taboo.<sup>68</sup> According to Hodson, the term is applied "in its primary sense to the mass of prohibitions, permanent and temporary, periodic and occasional, which form so important a part of the tribal law of these (Naga) societies. All the rites and festivals observed by social units in this area are characterised by a prohibition of the normal relations with other social units, so that the term has come to be applied to all occasions and festivals at and by which the social unit concerned consolidates and concentrates itself."<sup>69</sup> There were personal gennas at the time of birth, marriage, sickness and death. There were gennas of the household, lineage, clan, village and the whole tribe. There were gennas on food, crops, land, forest, rainfall, fire and natural disasters. And there were gennas relating to religious rites and rituals, feast, festivals and merry making. The life of the Maos and Angamis were a life of gennas. It is neither necessary nor possible to

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid, p.141.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid , p.164 and J.H. Hutton, op.cit., pp.189-190.

<sup>68</sup> A. W. Davis, *Assam Census Report, 1891* cited from T.C. Hodson, op.cit.

<sup>69</sup> T.C. Hodson, Ibid, pp.164-165.



elaborate all the gennas in this work <sup>70</sup> but simply to point out the fact that it was comprehensive and encompassing so much so that gennas become a total mode of social living. Gennas were social facts par excellence which were endowed with a power of coercion by virtue of which it control and maintain the social structure and its units.

The whole gennas and its application can be understood by the term *Chino* and *Mani*, and *Kenna* and *Penna* among the Mao and Angami respectively. <sup>71</sup> *Chino* and *Kenna* were the prohibition laid on a unit of the community in its interaction with others as well as social and natural surrounding. *Mani* and *Penna* were the prohibition laid on the whole community. It includes the idea contained in *Chino* and *Kenna* but goes further. *Mani* and *Penna* entails entire abstention from work in the fields by the community (ritual holiday) as a whole, when such abstention is proclaimed by the '*Mohvu*' and *Kemovo* of the Maos and Angamis respectively. The essence of it is that the individual should not leave the village to go to his fields or cultivate. *Mani* and *Penna* were proclaimed in accordance with the traditional Mao and Angami lunar calendar respectively in matters relating to agriculture, feast and festivals, religious sacrifices and offering, stone and gate pulling, ritual hunting etc. Sometime they were proclaimed to 'prevent' natural disasters such as earth-quake, hailstorm, fire, diseases etc., or after such disaster.

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<sup>70</sup> For detail, see J.H. Hutton, op.cit., pp.189-238 and pp. 337-352; and T.C. Hodson, *ibid*, pp.164-186.

<sup>71</sup> J. H. Hutton, op.cit., pp.190-193.

Whoever violates the '*Mani*' and '*Penna*' proclamation were blamed for any 'negative' consequences and were therefore appropriately punished by the village community. As such no one dared to violate the 'collective conscience' of the community.

The entire clans, village and tribe joins in annual festival of '*Saleni*' and '*Chithuni*' (Mao) and '*Sekrengi*' and '*Therangi*' (Angami).<sup>72</sup> '*Saleni*' and '*Therangi*' were celebrated in June to ensure good terrace cultivation. '*Sikrengi*' was celebrated by the Angami in March to ensure good health of the people. '*Chithuni*' a post-harvest feast symbolising the end of a year and the beginning of a New Year was celebrated by the Mao in January. All these festivals were celebrated with folksongs, dances and feast as well as religious rites and gennas. On these important sacred occasion and feast, *Mohvu* and *Kemovo* proclaim '*Mani*' and '*Penna*' in their respective villages. The whole lineage, clan and the community comes together and celebrate in unison and reaffirm their collective solidarity. Also inter-villages friendship was periodically reasserted through a clan based festival during which visit with the members of a friendly clan in another village were exchange.<sup>73</sup>

The social structure of the Mao and Angami was not static and not always deterministic. Changes in the social structure takes place through the process of structural fission and fussion brought about by personal choice,

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid, pp.197-213 and pp.337-350.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid, p.211.

decision and adjustment. Moreover the social structure as described can also be seen as a 'model', an expression of an ideal that were considered 'correct' and 'ought to be'. In the real world, realities are sometime compromise. This explains change and adaptability of the social structure. As a rule marriage within a clan was forbidden but intra-clan marriage do take place. This entails personal choice and adjustment which effect the future structural alignment. The ease at which the exogamous units continuously redefined speaks of its flexibility and dynamism. Marriage as a rule was ceremonial with elaborate rituals and involves culturally specified amount of bride price but marriage also takes place without or with very little rites and ceremonies and bride price can always be negotiated depending on the economic status of the parties involved. <sup>74</sup> Elopement takes place which often put strain on structural relationship thereby redefining its relationship. As a rule inheritance of landed properties were the exclusive reserved of the sons, especially the eldest and the last but it was not always so because the will and choice of the father can modify the rule so that all the sons, even daughters, get equal landed property. Chieftainship as a rule was based on the principle of inheritance but in newly established villages, where no descendants of any chief had migrated, the chief were usually elected by the villagers.<sup>75</sup> Also the chief might be removed. Observance of gennas also depends on personal interpretation and convenience

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<sup>74</sup> See Ibid, p.220

<sup>75</sup> See J.N. Das, op.cit., p.57.

as has been reported by Hodson.<sup>76</sup>In oaths taking words can be manipulated or other means of fraud can be resorted. All these shows that social structure is not a static and 'as if' reality. Reality is often a negotiated order because there are rules and practices which can be bent, negotiated and compromised. These were then the vibrant working arrangement of society and its structure.

## **II. Social Structure and Forests Conservation: The Interface**

The Mao and Angami Nagas were basically forest dwellers. They depend on forests for all the basic necessities of life. Myths, legends and beliefs were woven around forest and trees which ensure the continuity of relationship between them and forest. Their close kinship with forest were institutionalised through various social control mechanism which ensure a symbiotic relationship between them.

The social structure of the Mao and Angami have a close relationship with the conservation of forests. The value and belief system which maintain the continuity of social structure of the Mao and Angami reinforced this relationship. In order to understand these aspects we will have to examine firstly, the pattern of ownership and control over land and forests as well as its modes of uses through the consideration of clans and village communities as well as gender, status and age. Secondly, certain norms and religious belief system which have a bearing on forests conservation will also be examined

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<sup>76</sup> See T.C. Hodson, p.168.

keeping in view their closed connection with social structure. It is generally accepted that ownership and control of land and its resources is fundamental to the identity and survival of tribal society.<sup>77</sup> The Mao and Angami Nagas too have maintained their identity through their mode of ownership and control over land and forests.

Each village of the Mao and Angami Nagas possesses a well-defined area of territory, not only of cultivated and terraced land, but of jhum and waste land as well. Land and forests ownership of the two Naga communities were governed by Naga customary laws and tradition. According to Naga customary law, "all land, including forests, is privately owned by individuals, clans and villages... Every bit of land has an owner and the Naga dictum is that there is no land without an owner. Though the boundaries are not marked, they are known to the people concerned and are respected by them."<sup>78</sup> Thus three general pattern of ownership over land and forests exist among the Mao and Angami: (a) individual ownership (b) clan ownership and (c) village ownership. Homestead, terrace field and some jhum land and forests were own by individuals, but considerable amount of jhum land and forest were owned by clans and village as a whole.<sup>79</sup> While individual ownership of terrace fields was treated absolute, ownership of jhum fields and forests was usually not

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<sup>77</sup> Verier Elwin, op.cit., p.62.

<sup>78</sup> Alphonsus D'Souza, 2001, *Traditional Systems of Forest Conservation in North-East India: The Angami Tribe of Nagaland*. Guwahati: North Eastern Social Research Centre, p.16.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid, p.44, also see J.N Das, op.cit., p.57.

absolute because "under certain circumstances others have access to such fields and land".<sup>80</sup> All the communal property of land and forests were controlled by the clan and village elders through their traditional clan and village councils.

Cultivation or agriculture was the main occupation of the Mao and Angami. Therefore land use pattern basically pertain to their mode of agriculture. Land use for agriculture among the Mao and Angami involves two types: (a) Terrace cultivation and (b) Jhum cultivation. Terrace cultivation of the Mao and Angami has been hailed as an ingenious engineering feats by many Anthropologists and scholars.<sup>81</sup> Hodson remarks, "We have large Mao village with extensive terraced fields magnificently irrigated with water brought from considerable distance in channels so well aligned... By means of long and assiduous labour, a field may be built up and provided with water so that the large terraces represent the expenditure of a vast amount of energy and farming ability, as well as much practical engineering skill."<sup>82</sup> It can be easily seen that terrace cultivation among these two communities was a way of ecological adaptation to their mountainous ecological habitat for their livelihood.

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<sup>80</sup> Alphonsus D'Souza, *Ibid.*

<sup>81</sup> For the construction and preparation of Terrace field, see J.H. Hutton, *op.cit.*, pp.72-73.

<sup>82</sup> T.C. Hodson, *op.cit.*, p.50.

Jhum cultivation were done on the higher and steep slopes where it was not possible to construct irrigation channels or difficult to cut terrace for wet cultivation. Jhum had not been extensively practice by the Mao and Angami.<sup>83</sup> Jhum cultivation in Mao and Angami area may be "best described as dry cultivation rather than jhumming in the strict sense. This was because there was no significant shifting or rotation of fields."<sup>84</sup>

Forests were used in many ways. The two communities depend forests for construction of houses, timber, firewood, charcoal, grass and foddors, medicinal herbs, edible wild fruits and leaves, tubers and roots, household furniture, utensils and arts etc. Forest provides the hunting ground for these people. Forest forms a total part of their culture and tradition. What was significant about forest and terrace field was its continuity. Brown in 1873 writes, 'The terrace are relieved by occasional patches of open jungle, and the slopes of the hills immediately underneath the village are always well wooded'.<sup>85</sup> "If forest are not kept there will be less water and less soil for the *Panikhetis* (terrace field). There is a sharp boundary between the land under forests and the land under *Panikheti*. This is because the fertility of the *Panikheti* directly depends on the amount of land people can manage to keep

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<sup>83</sup> See Ibid, p.51, J.N. Das. op.cit., p.57. J.H. Hutton, op.cit., p.141 and B.N. Bordoloi, "Tribal Land Tenure System and Land Alienation in North-East India" in S.N Mishra (ed) 1998, *Antiquity to Modernity in Tribal India*. Delhi: Inter-India Publication, Vol. III, p.27.

<sup>84</sup> Alphonsus D'Souza. op.cit. p.49.

<sup>85</sup> Quoted in Verrier Elwin, 1969, *The Naga in Nineteenth Century*. Bombay: Oxford University Press, p.589.

under forest."<sup>86</sup> There was thus a continuity and balance between terrace fields and forest. Forests were considered by the Mao and Angami as essential for a successful cultivation of their terrace fields. There was also continuity of forest and jhum field. The Mao and Angami ensure that plenty of alder trees were grown in their jhum fields. These jhum fields were "plentifully supplied with pollarded alders, which were doubtless saved when the fields were first cleared of jungle".<sup>87</sup> In this way a synchronization of jhumming with the cultivation and pollarding of alder trees takes place.<sup>88</sup> The branches of the alder trees were cut before a field was brought under cultivation. The leaves and smaller branches were burnt for ashes that serve as manure, and the bigger branches were cut into small pieces to be used later as firewood. The process was repeated every after two years or so. The roots of the alder do not go deep, but spread sideways and quickly develop nodules (colonies of bacteria), which help in further enriching the soil by fixing nitrogen. The spreading of the roots also prevent soil erosion. Dry rice, maize, vegetables, potatoes, garlic, chillies, etc. were raised in this type of jhumming. Thus we have a jhum cultivation which not only preserved the trees but also provide firewood and multiple cropping throughout the year. Indiscriminate felling of alder trees does not take

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<sup>86</sup> K. Peseiyie and T. Imchen, 1984, *Nagaland: Panhikheti on Mountain Slopes*. Kohima: Department of Agriculture, Govt. of Nagaland, p.21.

<sup>87</sup> J.H. Hutton, op.cit., pp. 76-77.

<sup>88</sup> Detail information on the alder tree and its cultivation is provided by I. Zeliang and R Kevichusa, 1985, *The Use of AlderTree*. Kohima: Dept of Agriculture, Govt. of Nagaland, pp. 1-75.



place because the Mao and Angami knows that successful jhumming greatly depend on these trees.

What was significant about terrace cultivation and jhumming among the Mao and Angami was the crucial role played by women in agricultural operation. Women do most of the work with simple implements. Because of the predominance of females in cultivation, women have a greater say in agricultural operations, and consequently a relatively high social status of women.<sup>89</sup> Forests were usually considered as the realm for the work mainly of men whereas fields were the arena where mainly women toil. Cutting of firewood and timber were the exclusive work of men. As there was a continuity between agricultural field and forests, Mao and Angami women were also a repository of vast indigenous knowledge and skills in conservation and use of forest resources. It is said that local or indigenous knowledge is not an indivisible whole. It is acquired through labour, the interaction with natural processes to produce the means of subsistence, and other factors.<sup>90</sup> In line with the division of labour between the gender, there is also a corresponding distribution of local indigenous knowledge.<sup>91</sup> It is then easy to see that cultivation of alder trees and their uses for agricultural and domestic purposes were a part of indigenous knowledge system which the Mao and Angami

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<sup>89</sup> Alphonsus D'Souza, *op.cit.*, p. 52.

<sup>90</sup> Wang Qinghua, "Forest Management and Terraced Agriculture: Case Study of Hani of Ailao Mountains, Yunnan" in *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. XXXVI, No. 30, July 28, 2001, p. 2849.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*

women know more about than men. Similarly women certainly have a knowledge edge over men about certain type of trees in the immediate surrounding forest of fields that were best suited for fuel and fodder, their regeneration and harvesting. They were particularly knowledgeable about seed varieties of trees and plants and storing techniques, skills which they put into effective use in their daily agricultural task of meeting the family's needs. Men, on the other hand tend to know more about timber trees and medical knowledge about local forest resources.

However it must be stated that it is not that women alone have a holistic ecological knowledge of nature's processes. To the extent the two tribes do have such knowledge, it seems to be part of such knowledge of all, men and women alike. While it is true that women use and manage forest resources as part of her agricultural task yet when it comes to the decision about management of forests as a whole for the clan or village community, it is the male elders of the village and clans that have a crucial say. At the level of the clan and village as a whole, the job of management of forests was essentially a male one. Here the village and clan elders usually old men played the crucial role in decision on regeneration and conservation of forest resources. Though Naga women in general and the Mao and Angami in particular enjoy relatively high social status yet it was the traditional practice of Naga society where

women were normally excluded from the traditional clan and village councils that manage the forests and other common natural resources.

Among the Mao, the Village Chief (*Mohvu*) and the Village Council of Elders manages the village forests and land on behalf of the people of the village, whereas for the Angami the village elders through the Village Council manage the same.<sup>92</sup> Forests owned by different clans in every villages were managed by the elders of the clan themselves.<sup>93</sup> Access to such forests were reserved for its own members but for any extraction of forest produce from such forest prior consent from the respective clan elders were required. Since the clan forest remains within the jurisdiction of the Village Council, therefore its utilization also come under the watchful eyes of the village elders as a whole.<sup>94</sup> The Village Council were usually composed of old men and they were the guardian of community resources including forest. They enjoy higher status with certain duties and privileges. Any dispute with regard to the use of forests or its boundary was settled by the council of old men through a traditional system of reward and punishment. Their decisions were usually respected and treated as final by the villager.<sup>95</sup> They decide at what sacred time should the villagers harvest certain type of trees and plants or trees which were suitable for village gate, image making of dead people and timber for construction of

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<sup>92</sup> B.N Bordoloi, "Tribal Land Tenure System and Land Alienation in North-East India" in S.N Mishra, op.cit., pp. 27-34.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid, p. 34.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> See J.H. Hutton, op.cit., pp.143-144.

houses as well as their conservation and regeneration. Among the Mao sacred grove do exist but were not related specifically to clan or family but to village community as a whole. Species such as cane which were rare in the Mao areas but nevertheless very important for traditional crafts and warfare were given sacred character and their grove were conserved through religious beliefs and injunctions. Should the need for their utilization arise, the village elders usually old men perform due rites and prayers addressed to the spirit of the grove and then proceed on to harvest them with great care. Only old men can entered the grove and cut them in a particular manner so that they were not destroyed. It was considered to be genna to look back at the grove of cane after they were cut and carried away. In any case no one can cut more than the amount prescribed by the village elders. Any breach of these norms were believed to be punished by the spirit of the grove in the form of death and destruction. Since the village community have a high stake in maintaining such a sacred grove, therefore it become a special responsibilities of the village elders to manage and conserve them.

Among the Angami as soon as boys and girls reach puberty, they were divided into a certain age grouping or “*Kikra*” at successive intervals.<sup>96</sup> Village life and work were organized on these age-levels. They work in the fields of each one by rotation. They jointly collect fodder, fuel and other forest products

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<sup>96</sup> K. Terhuia, “Status of Women in Naga Society” in *New Frontiers in Education*. Kohima, April-June, 1990, p.180.

and maintain the village life.<sup>97</sup> Though certain trees or patches of forests were not associated with particular age-set group yet when venturing out to forests they have to follow the custom and tradition upheld by their elders in not over-exploiting the forest resources on which their very life support system revolves.<sup>98</sup> Wood curving, weaving, thatching, basketry and other essential ecological knowledge and skills were learned at this stage. Among the Mao these traditional knowledge and skills were mostly learnt at their youth-dormitory. In Vishwema village, an influential village of Southern Angami, the age-set system operates at clan level.<sup>99</sup> *Pithi-Ketsami*, *Mechu-Chu*, *Khrisha-Mehu-Chu*, *Khrisha-Chu* and *Nhachu-Chu* were five age-sets in which the elders belonging to *Pithi-Ketsami* and *Mechu-Chu* were fully responsible for carrying out the jobs of tribal adjudicators, peace-makers and religious specialists.<sup>100</sup> Management of land and forests of the clan as well as the village were carried out at these levels. They were the formal and informal politico-jural leaders on whose shoulders rest the functioning and control of village resources including forests.

In the past the collective management and control of land and forests at the maximal tribal group of the Mao and Angami appeared to be weak or

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<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> N.K. Das, "Introduction" in N.K. Das, C.L Imchem and K.S Singh (ed) 1994, *People of India: Nagaland*. Calcutta: Anthropological Survey of India, Vol. XXXIV, p. 58.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid, pp. 58-59.

almost non-existence due to the very nature of political organization in each Naga villages.<sup>101</sup> In Naga society villages virtually form an independent entity with its well defined boundary of land and forests. Whenever there were boundary disputes between villages, these were either settled through negotiation or through battles.<sup>102</sup> Nevertheless among the Mao, informal traditional Area Councils (*Enu Choro, Enu Chia*) and even tribal council (*Enu Chiachoro*) existed whose main function was to arbitrate inter-village disputes including matters relating to land and forests. These traditional Area Councils were usually represented by the elders and Chiefs of six, ten and sixteen villages respectively. These traditional Tribal Councils still exist and in modern time they are taking decisions with regard to ecological safeguard such as prohibition of forest burning, indiscriminate felling of trees and reckless exploitation of natural resources among others.

While private individual ownership of some forest land was a fact, the idea that forests were a common natural resources in which clans and village as a whole have residual rights was accepted. Such residual rights can be exercised in case of need by any villager, but not an outsider. These can be seen in the norms regarding access to forests and forest produces.

According to traditional law of the Maos and Angamis, an owner can sell his land or forest according to his will. But there were various restriction as

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<sup>101</sup> See Verrier Elwin, 1969. op.cit., pp. 47-48.

<sup>102</sup> B.N Bordoloi, op.cit., p. 32.

to whom he can sell it to. In the past selling land to someone from another village was out of question because of the existence of rivalry and enmity between the villages. Among the Angami his clansman have the first right to buy.<sup>103</sup> If there was no buyer among his clansmen, he can sell it to someone within the khel. Only when there was no buyer within the khel, he can sell it to someone in the village. At the same time the law forbids the sale of land to non-Nagas. Among the Maos, selling to outsiders can be done only with prior consent of the clansmen and village elders.<sup>104</sup> The sale of land or forest owned by a clan can also be done only by common consent. When an individual sells the land owned by him, his family usually retains the ownership of the trees grown on the land and the buyer of the land must not only respect such ownership but also conserve them. The buyer of the land can also buy the trees or he can reach an agreement that the trees will not be removed within a certain period of time. Also when selling an ancestral land or forest "the owner retains a small fragment in nominal ownership lest he die or suffer misfortune".<sup>105</sup>

In Mao and Angami area most of the jhum lands were owned by the clan and villages as a whole. One can cultivate on this land after it was agreed upon by the respective clansmen, or the village elders as the case may be. He

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<sup>103</sup> Alphonsus D'Souza, *op.cit.*, pp.45-46.

<sup>104</sup> J.N. Das, *op.cit.*, pp.55-56.

<sup>105</sup> J.H. Hutton, p. 141.

can also cultivate by a "system of grap under which the man who wishes to cultivate goes and sets a mark<sup>106</sup> on the land of his choice, and provided no one else has been there before and that he has not attempted to get much land as to deprive the other members of the clan an opportunity to obtain a similar amount...."<sup>107</sup> These general conditions were applicable to forests as well, and even to individual trees.

The owner of a piece of forest can cut trees for timber or firewood. If his needs were not met, he can get it from the common clan or village forests with the consent of the clan or village elders. At the same time he could not exaggerate his needs. But in any case he was not allowed to sell them.<sup>108</sup> A similar norms exists for collecting fodder, medicinal plants, thatch grass, edible fruits, canes etc. Moreover a tree was never cut and uprooted completely.<sup>109</sup> Two or three feet of the tree trunk were usually left. Among the Mao weeds and grass were placed on the surface of the trunk in order to protect them from direct sunlight and dew so that its branches can grow very fast. It was a genna not to do so. Also a firewood should be first burnt from the larger portion so that there would not be rapid depletion of firewood stored in the house. To do otherwise was *chino* (genna). The general principle was that trees and forests should not be wasted. Any destructive method invites censure and punishment

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<sup>106</sup> Among the Mao it was done through a bundle of weeds tied on a tree pole or on the branch of a tree.

<sup>107</sup> J.H. Hutton, op.cit.

<sup>108</sup> Alphonsus D'Souza, op.cit., pp.46-47.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid, p.48.



in the form of fines by the clansmen or the village community as a whole. Thus, Naga social structure and ownership pattern of land and forest forbids indiscriminate felling of trees.

There were also certain traditional religious belief system of the Mao and Angami which reinforce the role of social structure in maintaining a harmonious relationship with forest. These traditional belief system gives legitimacy to the role of social structure in its conservation of land and forests.

Maos and Angamis believed that all trees have their spirits but spirits of peepal tree, wild pear tree, bamboo and cane groves and some other big trees were considered to be more powerful and therefore were greatly feared.<sup>110</sup> Among the Mao some of these trees can be cut only on certain sacred occasion with due rites and rituals. Forests themselves were believed to be the abode of spirits and therefore one has to pluck a leaf (Kholongo or tsoheh) and puts it behind his ears whenever he venture out to the forest.<sup>111</sup> The existence of fear psychosis as well as reverence for trees and forests insured its protection and conservation.

Belief in the spirits of trees has a bearing on which tree is suitable for timber for building houses and which one for firewood.<sup>112</sup> Those trees that were used for timber cannot be used for firewood. Some trees were used for

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<sup>110</sup> Ibid, p.54.

<sup>111</sup> K. S. Benjamin Bance, op.cit. p.249.

<sup>112</sup> J.H. Hutton, op.cit., pp.190-191.

making images employed as substitute for humans in the funeral rituals of those who died away from home and whose bodies were not found. Such trees cannot be used for firewood. Trees with blemishes like crossed branches or injured bark were not suitable for timber. Only particular types of trees can be used for village gates. Under no circumstances can such trees be used for firewood. Only the best tree can be used for making village gate. Before the tree was cut for village gate a prayer was addressed to the tree by the village Chief or Priest so that its spirit was not destroyed.<sup>113</sup> Such a belief exists also about the timber used for the construction of a house, particularly the house posts. Besides, it is common to find a large tree near a village gate, and it is said to be a guardian of the gate. Among the Mao, Pear tree, Peepal tree and Oak tree were considered sacred, as these trees were associated with the Naga history of departure.<sup>114</sup> Consequently they were conserved and maintained by the village communities. It was generally agreed that one has to steadfastly follow these belief system failing which great misfortune and disaster were believed to strike upon the family members, clansmen and the village community as a whole in the form of natural calamities, famine, diseases, death and destruction.<sup>115</sup>

Thus the social structure of the Mao and Angami through the analysis of clans and village communities as well as gender, status and age reveal the

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<sup>113</sup> N. Saleo, *Koro Kosii (Gate Pulling)* ' unpublished material .

<sup>114</sup> K.S. Benjamin Bane, op.cit. pp.,418-419.

<sup>115</sup> See gennas from J.H. Hutton, op.cit., and T.C. Hodson,op.cit.

crucial role of the social structure in the management and conservation of forests. Their social structure through its communal pattern of ownership right over land and forests and its various control mechanism which were legitimized and reinforced by a set of traditional beliefs defined the relationship of forests with the people of the Mao and Angami. As such these two Naga communities can be seen as structurally and culturally oriented toward sustainable use of forests and its conservation. The symbiotic relationship was established in which the needs of man and forest were balanced out through the constructive role of social structure. The structure itself was not 'barbaric' or 'primitive' as they say, but one of civilisation of a different kind. It was this 'civilisation' that had made a difference in the forest coverage of the Naga Society in the past.

## Chapter III

### CHANGE AND DEVELOPMENT: IMPLICATION IN FOREST CONSERVATION

There is no society in the world which is static and does not change. Today the Naga society is in the process of rapid change and transformation due to the operation of several factors. This process of change has its share of implication toward the traditional management and conservation of forests.

It is true that Nagas during the pre-British days lived their isolated lives in their respective villages, which were more or less like village republic. But even in the remote past, there was always varied level of political, social and economic relation not only between villages of the same tribe and different tribes but also with their neighbourhood plain people. In the neighbourhood of Mao and Angami, the Manipuri, Kachari and Ahom Kingdoms had flourished with whom they had economic, political and social relations. Commenting on this aspect, Hodson wrote: "The Manipuri were the Benjamin of the tribes who supported them and have gone on doing so ever since".<sup>1</sup> The Angamis love for trade and commerce were commented by Mc Culloh who in 1859 wrote: "Many of them find their way down to the marts in Cachar and Assam, some

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<sup>1</sup>T.C Hodson, op.cit., p.12.

have even gone as far as Calcutta in pursuit of trade".<sup>2</sup> The political relationship was maintained through hostility as well as peace agreement with the kingdoms of their neighbourhood which were further cemented by inter-marriage and friendship.<sup>3</sup> This contact and interaction brought varied level of changes in their political, economic and socio-cultural life. Their contacts also produced converging trends in social structure. Large number of Assamese families migrated in Naga areas during the Burmese War who were gradually absorbed as a part of the clan and village in due course of time.<sup>4</sup> Also the corresponding clans between various tribes were the result of inter-tribal contacts and the resultant convergent trend. Naga society had always witnessed such trends and resultant change.<sup>5</sup>

Since the first British expedition of 1832 in Naga territory and the subsequent establishment of colonial administration,<sup>6</sup> there was more and more opportunity for the Nagas to come in contact with each other and the outside world. They were exposed to wider contacts during the first world war, when many of them including Maos and Angamis were sent to Europe as members of labour corps. Second World War brought greater exposure and heightened their contacts with the outside world, when Naga inhabited areas,

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<sup>2</sup> McCulloch, 1859, *Valley of Manipur*. Calcutta: Hian Publication, p.71.

<sup>3</sup> See M. Horam, 1975, *Naga Polity*. Delhi: Low Price Publication, pp.5-7.

<sup>4</sup> B.B. Kumar, "Modernization of Naga Society: Some Observation" in B.B. Kumar (ed) 1993, *Modernization in Naga Society*. New Delhi : Omsons Publications, p.143.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, p.144.

<sup>6</sup> See M.Horam, op.cit.,pp.7-20.

especially in Mao and Angami areas, become literally a battlefield between the Japanese and Allied soldiers. The bloodiest battle was fought in Kohima (1944) between the Japanese and the Allied Soldiers.<sup>7</sup> The experiences of the two World War had helped the emerging Naga elite to think of their future and thus was born the Naga movement.<sup>8</sup> As early as 1918 the 'Naga Club' was formed to espouse the cause of the Nagas.<sup>9</sup> The legendary figure of Naga Movement Mr. A.Z. Phizo belongs to the Khonoma village of the Angami community.

Along with the British administration comes the Christian missionaries in Naga areas which has caused radical social and religious transformation among all sections of the Naga society. It was Rev. C.D. King who in 1880 started the mission work in the Angami community.<sup>10</sup> The Kohima church was established in 1883 at Kohima and a school was also established there in the same year.<sup>11</sup> The advent of Christianity in Mao area starts when W. Pettigrew opened a Lower Primary School at Mao Song Song in 1903.<sup>12</sup> In 1927 the first

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid, p.16.

<sup>8</sup> See N.K. Das, op.cit., p.73 and M. Horam, op.cit., pp.16-20.

<sup>9</sup> M. Horam, Ibid, p.16.

<sup>10</sup> S.K. Barpujari, "Chairtainty and its Impact on the Nagas: An Assessment of the Work of the American Baptish Mission" in Sebastian Karotemprel (ed) 1984, *The Tribes of North-East India*. Calcutta: Firma KLM Pvt. Ltd., p. 106.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Souvenir Committee, *Amazing Grace*, Mao Baptish Churches Association Platinum Jubilee, Jan 10-13, 2002, p. 16.

Mao church was established at Punanamai.<sup>13</sup> Now all the Mao and Angami villages are numerically dominated by the followers of Christianity.

The Christian Missionaries proved to be a harbinger of progress and deserve the credit of stamping out certain savage practices, putting down sanguinary and reprehensible customs and practices such as head hunting, tribal warfare, inter-tribal feuds etc. As a result the Nagas by and large settled down to peaceful living devoting themselves to agriculture and trade.<sup>14</sup> However the advent of Christianity gave a serious jolt to many of their social institutions, customs and belief system. Under the tenets of Christian faith, the Mao and Angami today have given up animistic belief in spirit of trees and forest and their elaborate traditional rules of tree felling which in the past played an important role in forests conservation . Taboo regarding to sacred grove have been greatly undermined. 'Gennas' are no longer observed as effectively as in the past. Thus the protective ring provided by the traditional religious belief system to the forest has been greatly undermined in modern time. Today they no longer give legitimacy to the control mechanism exercise by social structure in the conservation and management of forests.

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid,p.17.

<sup>14</sup> G.P. Singh, "The Impact of Modernization on the Naga Society in 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries: A Historical Perspective" in B.B. Kumar, op.cit. p.64.

The Christian Missionaries were also the pioneers in the field of education, literature and medical services in the Naga society.<sup>15</sup> Although education initially served as a means for the propagation of Christianity yet in the 20<sup>th</sup> century the opening of many schools in Naga villages paved the way for the educational development of the people. Education has now spread to the nook and corner of every Naga villages. While modern education widened mental horizon of the Nagas yet it severed their link with their own past. They grow up without knowing their history and its rich cultural heritage. Naga history and cultural heritage are yet to find a place in the curriculum of modern education. The modern education is a "system of de-culturalisation of our social life. It is a repudiation of those cultural values upon which our heritage is based. When that foundation collapses, everything collapses as well".<sup>16</sup> The traditional way of conserving forests also collapse. Today Morungs or the 'Naga School' no more exist and with it the indigenous Naga art of wood carving, weaving, basketry and knowledge and skills relating to ecological conservation lost all its sheen. On the decay of traditional institution and cultural heritage, there emerge a spirit of 'new individualism'. The educated Nagas "feels that he is a unit independent of other units and must have the right to think for himself".<sup>17</sup> The growth of the new spirit of strong individualism had undermined the family and clanish ties which were once

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<sup>15</sup> S.K. Barpujari, *op.cit.*, p.108.

<sup>16</sup> M. Alemchiba Ao, "Modernization in Naga Society: Change in Attitudes, Values, Aspirations and Social Structure" in B.B. Kumar, *op.cit.*, p.23.

<sup>17</sup> V. Venkata Rao, "Modernization of the Naga Society" in B.B. Kumar, *op.cit.*, p.54.



very important elements of Naga life. The spread of Christianity and modern education gave scope for inter-tribal marriages and marriages with non-Naga. Such inter-marriages have also eroded family and communal ties to a great extent. <sup>18</sup> Thus strain and crack appeared in the social structure which further diluted its control mechanism in the society.

After the British India control of the Naga areas came to an end with the transfer of power to India in 1947 the Naga Movement was launched for an independent Naga land which later acquired the form of armed underground movement. In the process, the state of Nagaland was formed in 1963 although a large number of Naga territory were not included in it. Also keeping in consonance with the policy of integration after India's independent, constitutional safeguard were made to protect the right of the tribal people, including the Nagas, and also special provisions were incorporated for reservation in government jobs and state legislature as well as Parliament for their speedy political and economic development.

Hectic development activities such as opening of new educational institutions, new roads, hospitals, banks, markets, industries etc. in Nagaland state in particular and other Naga areas in general were undertaken by the central as well as state governments through planning efforts. Special developmental programmes and schemes were introduced. In Nagaland state, developmental

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<sup>18</sup> K. Peseyie, . "Educational Development and Social change in Nagaland". *Highlander*, Vol. 1, Sept. 1995, pp.15-20.

activities resulted into flow of money on unprecedented scale.<sup>19</sup> In such a situation the Mao and Angami are not left untouched. Today the literacy rate is high among the Mao and Angami. Primary education was, in fact well developed in the Angami area even prior to India's Independence.<sup>20</sup> Health care systems are well developed. Apart from the rural hospital in Mao, there are primary health centres in all accessible areas. The Mao circle has better means of communication and electrification.<sup>21</sup> In fact, the National Highway 39 which was constructed and strengthened during the Second World War passes through the territory of Mao and Angami which has immensely benefited the two communities in terms of commercial venture and trade. With the development and expansion of Kohima as the Nagaland State capital and an important market centre, many Angami Villagers have now turned toward urban areas for better economic avenues.<sup>22</sup> Also through Village Development Board, almost every Angami Village has been covered by Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP). Through tribal sub-plans and IRDP, nationalised banks in Mao areas have extended financial assistance for development of pig-farming, poultry and dairy farms.<sup>23</sup> Apart from that, banks have also extended financial assistance for potato growing and agricultural development. A regional potato farm was established in Mao area for the

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<sup>19</sup> B.B. Kumar, *op.cit.*, p.144.

<sup>20</sup> N.K. Das, *op.cit.*, p.74.

<sup>21</sup> R.P. Athparia, *op.cit.*, p.126.

<sup>22</sup> N.K. Das, *op.cit.*, p.73.

<sup>23</sup> R.P. Athparia, *op.cit.*, pp.125-126.

production of good potato seeds in the region. In recent time, due to Indian Government 'Look East Policy' and effort of globalization, the Maos in particular are actively participating in border trade with the South-East Asian countries. Many of them have flourishing business establishment. Also both the communities are getting the benefit of reservation in government jobs and educational institution. Today many of them hold high ranking important official position in both the central and state government, as well as in state legislatures. All these developmental efforts had helped the Mao and Angami innovators to become rich in many villages.

Through various developmental efforts and activities, development and modernization have taken place in contemporary Naga Society but the fruits of this achievements are yet to percolate to all the villagers of Naga society who are the torch-bearers of Naga culture and civilization.<sup>24</sup> The development machinery has failed to produce participation of the Naga masses in developmental process. Instead of the Naga masses deciding their developmental needs and formulating their developmental plans and implementing them, it is the politician, bureaucrats and influential elites which decides their 'needs' and implement developmental programmes and activities through creation of new centre of power. It is no wonder then that widespread pilferage of developmental fund and corruption has taken deep root in all the

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<sup>24</sup> M.C. Goswami, "Modernization in Nagaland: Retrospect and Prospects" in B.B. Kumar, op.cit., p.130.

administrative and developmental machineries operating in the Naga society today. Under these circumstances, the rich are getting richer and the poor, poorer. Thus the development machinery so far has failed to develop the Naga society into self-sustaining and self-supporting economic entity.<sup>25</sup> Instead it has created a situation in which their society was made to increasingly depend upon the state agencies for welfare and development measures. This 'sponsored development' coupled with unequal distribution of developmental resources and benefit in Naga society has a serious implication on their forests.

In order to fend themselves and to meet the needs of their childrens' education, poor Naga cultivators are forced to clear fell the forests for jhum cultivation. In Mao and Angami areas there has been a large-scale extension of jhum cultivation in contemporary times thereby destroying large tract of forests.<sup>26</sup> After the setting up of Regional Potato Farm by the Government of Manipur in Mao area, potatoes are being extensively cultivated by the Maos in these jhum fields for cash on 'scientific' line, that is, by using heavy artificial fertilizer and urea.<sup>27</sup> Under its impact forests are being continually destroyed. Meanwhile, the traditional alder cultivation has diminished thereby disrupting the continuity between forest and jhum. Thus in this case, poverty and inequity of developmental benefit serves as causes for the destruction of forests. Also,

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<sup>25</sup> B.B. Kumar, *op.cit.*, p.145.

<sup>26</sup> For Angami area see, Alphonsus D'Souza, *op.cit.*, pp.59-60.

<sup>27</sup> This has seriously contaminated the source of drinking water of the Mao Villages.

this case uniquely demonstrates how a wrong strategy of developmental efforts can cause ecological disaster.

Today under the forces of market economy, commercialization and development, culture of consumerism has spread in Naga society.<sup>28</sup> The markets are full of goods creating acute demand for money.<sup>29</sup> This resulted in cutting down of forests for sale in the market as firewood and timbers. As seen earlier and will be seen more afterward, the traditional form of social control exercised by social structure has weakened today and in Mao and Angami areas "there are instances of powerful villagers defying public opinion with impunity."<sup>30</sup> The elite class of Naga contractors and businessmen in collusion has exploited this situation with contractors and businessmen of 'Meetei' and 'Marwaris'<sup>31</sup> along with active connivance of corrupt government officials.<sup>32</sup> Under their patronage widespread logging and extraction of timber had taken place in the forest of Naga areas in the name of 'development'. The extracted timber were then carried by scores of trucks as 'phanta' to places like Dimapur and Guahati and then routed to as far as 'Calcutta, Delhi and Madras.'<sup>33</sup> The corrupt government officials " distribute the forest and their resources to rich contractors and companies for huge amount of bribe."<sup>34</sup> This commercial

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<sup>28</sup> See M. Alemchiba Ao, *op.cit.*, pp.21-25.

<sup>29</sup> B.B. Kumar, *op.cit.*

<sup>30</sup> Alphonsus D'Souza, *op.cit.*, p.60.

<sup>31</sup> See Yambem Laba, *op.cit.*, p.83.

<sup>32</sup> See R. Mehrotra, "Modernization, Urbanisation and Economic Development in Nagaland, Some Random Reflection" in B.B. Kumar, *op.cit.*, p.95.

<sup>33</sup> Yambem Laba, *op.cit.*

<sup>34</sup> Apam Muivah, "Background to the Indigenous Peoples Rights: World Bank and its Forest Policy" in R. Vashum (ed) 1996, *Nagas at Work*. New Delhi: Naga students Union Delhi Publication, p. 107.

activity has seriously affected the forest coverage in Mao area. Within a short span of time, large tract of virgin forests has disappeared thereby triggering not only ecological crisis but also seriously affecting the culture and economic activities of the Maos. Due to the timely intervention of the Supreme Court in 1996, which prohibited on the extraction of timber in the North-East, the logging activities has stop as of now. However the damage had already been done and it may take another fifteen-twenty years to regenerate the forest coverage. The intervention of the Supreme Court speaks volume of the declining authority exercised by social structure and its control mechanism. It also speaks volume on ways in which the affairs of the state are run by corrupt politicians and bureaucrats in this region. It also proves that commercial logging and extraction of timber are far more destructive in Mao areas than the extension of shifting cultivation per se.

While the policy of integration has certainly brought the Naga society into the national political and economic mainstream yet it also brought some undesirable consequences to traditional social structure and its politico-administrative system and institutions. Today there is a growing political consciousness among the Nagas due to the introduction of adult franchise and electoral politics in their society. But the electoral system has institutionalised certain social evils, such as corruption, which are unknown in the past and poses a threat to the Naga society.<sup>35</sup> The economic and political integration

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<sup>35</sup> M. Alemchiba Ao, *op.cit.*, p. 25.

with the national mainstream has produced the emergence of 'neo-rich and neo-political elite, which put strain in many areas. The Neo-elite's capacity to undermine the authority of old elite, the new political system and adult franchise has brought division in the society, village and clans.<sup>36</sup> In this situation the authority of the village chief and traditional village council has declined. Consequently, the traditional administrative system, customary law and judiciary of the Nagas were affected too. The introduction of 'modern' legal system has often interfered in the functioning of the Naga customary laws and justice system. The Manipur Law Commission cites actual instances of how interference by the police and their disregard for traditional village courts causes further tensions in Mao Naga area.<sup>37</sup> The Commission reports that many times the SDO or the Deputy Commissioner also do not respect the decision of the traditional village court.

Today in every village of Mao and Angami, the modern statutory Village Councils or Authorities exist side by side with the traditional councils. Different clans of the village represent it. Its main function is to maintain peace and order in the village and dispense justice according to customary laws.<sup>38</sup> Every village in Angami area also has a Village Development Board (VDB) whose main function is to look after the development schemes. Some big

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<sup>36</sup> B.B. Kumar, op.cit., P.145.

<sup>37</sup> See Nandita Haksar, "Law and the self-Management of Tribal Societies in North-East India" in Bhupinder Singh (ed) 1998, *Antiquity to Modernity in Tribal India*. Delhi: Inter-India Publication, Vol. II, pp.189-190.

<sup>38</sup> N.K. Das, op.cit., p.70.

villages in Mao area also have Village Development Council (VDC) although it is not statutorily constituted. The regional council in Angami area is called the Area Council whereas in Mao area the Ememei Council is the apex body of all the Mao people. Every village sent its representative to the apex council after a consensus is reached at the clan level in their respective villages. Development, inter-village disputes and other major political and economic issues including forest are taken up by the apex organisation. It can be seen that although the traditional authority structure has declined yet new structure were established to perform newer function to meet the needs of changing time. However as already seen, the new political system and electoral politics has often put strain on its smooth functioning. Issues often got divided on political lines and sometime conflicts and acrimony take place threatening the solidarity of villages and tribal group as a whole. This has serious repercussion on traditional forest conservation system and its control over forest resources.

The role and contribution of the Mao and Angami women as seen earlier, were always in a sustainable form. Their pattern of life style still bears a close resemblance to what McCulloch described long ago. However, today they are getting educated and becoming conscious of their important positions and roles in the society. In a rapid milieu of social change and challenging situation, women's intervention can not be lost sight of. It is usually recognized that de-forestation affect more to women as they have to work miles to collect



fuel, fodder and other forest produce to run the family.<sup>39</sup> In Uttarakhand (now Uttaranchal) the adverse effect of de-forestation on their lives have led them to initiate Chipko Movement against the reckless plunder of forest wealth.<sup>40</sup> It appears that in Mao and Angami society too, de-forestation in recent time have started affecting the lives of women as they also have to trudge more distance to collect more firewood and other forest produces to meet the needs of the family. This obviously has added more burden to their already preoccupation with domestic and agricultural activities. In recognition to this fact the Mao Naga Women Welfare Association which was set up in 1962 by some educated Mao women has its main objective of checking the degradation of forests in Mao areas, among others. Since 1971 they have been creating awareness for the need to conserve forest resources by organizing seminars and workshops from time to time.<sup>41</sup> Given that women play important role in agricultural and ecological activities, Mao and Angami women should also be included in clans and village authority system to strengthen local forests management and conservation. In fact among the Angami, women are now included in modern statutory Village Councils and Village Development Boards.<sup>42</sup> They are now expected to play more important role for the welfare of their society including forests. The Mao people should also follow their Angami neighbour.

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<sup>39</sup> Rakesh Agrawal, "Conserving Forest in Uttarakhand: People's Initiative in *Economic and Political Weekly*. Vol. XXXVII, No. 38, Sept. 21, 2002, p. 3882.

<sup>40</sup> For detail see Ramachandra Guha, *The Unquiet Woods: Ecological Change and Peasant Resistance in the Himalaya*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 153-184.

<sup>41</sup> L. Ashipro, "A Brief Introduction of the Mao Naga Women Welfare Association" in *Newslink*. Imphal: Naga Women Union, Manipur, March 1996, pp. 7-8.

<sup>42</sup> N.K. Das, *op.cit.*, p.70.

Though the authority and control mechanism exercised by the traditional social structure in the conservation and management of forests have been weakened in recent time by various forces of change and development yet the basic structural features of the society have remained intact.<sup>43</sup> Though diluted, the Nagas are still not deterred in upholding their customary laws and cultural values, which form so important in their social life, including conservation of natural resources. Also new forms of social control are slowly emerging, the most important of them being the activist role adopted by the student associations and youth organisation at the village level. In most Southern Angami Villages, "Students' associations have been issuing notices not to indulge in wasteful practices, and promoting tree plantation."<sup>44</sup> In Mao area, besides the activist role of the Mao Students' Union, the Mao Naga Women Welfare Association and the Ememei Council are also making effort to check exploitation of forests by promoting forests conservation for sustainable use of forest resources. The state government of Manipur and Nagaland should support such initiatives for the best interest of sound ecological development.

The principle of sustainable development demands that more power be delegated at the grass root Village Authority level so that traditional management and control over the use of land and forests can be strengthened. Decentralization and people's participation in developmental effort can

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<sup>43</sup> N.K. Das, "Tribal Formation and Social Change in Nagaland" in B.B. Kumar, op. cit., pp.32-33.

<sup>44</sup> Alphonsus D'Souza, op.cit., p.61.

effectively safeguard the over exploitation of forests. Developmental effort as well as conservation and management of forests should be at the same time rooted at the base of traditional social structure because the traditional power structure in the village despite its weakened position is still a force to reckon with. In fact, it is an evolving and dynamic entity and with adequate government support it can be channeled into effective institution for development and natural resource management of every Naga Villages. In this context Alemchiba suggests that the modern Naga Society should be planned by utilising the traditional structure as base both for administration and development without creating new centres of power.<sup>45</sup> Without this understanding declaration of certain forest area as reserved forest or introducing alternative arrangement for jhum cultivation or simply afforestation programme of the government will not be effective. For successful afforestation programme, it has to take into account not only the local requirements but also their cultural and structural features, which underlie their society. So far the afforestation programmes in Mao and Angami areas suggest that only exotic varieties of pines and eucalyptus have been introduced without taking into consideration the local requirements. These can hardly be called sustainable alternatives based on their social structure and culture. As most of the forests in Mao and Angami areas are owned and managed

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<sup>45</sup> M. Alemchiba Ao, *op.cit.*, p.26.

communally, Joint Forests Management can be easily implemented by taking into account the local requirement.

Though Christianisation has eroded much of the traditional animistic religious belief system of the Mao and Angami yet "the pre-changed socio religious practices still survives."<sup>46</sup> A sizeable Angami continue to practice traditional religion and in most villages of southern Angami area, "those who practice traditional religion are an influential group in religious matter..."<sup>47</sup> Even the Christian section of the Angami follow the ritual associated with the agricultural calendar, announced by traditional religious leaders.<sup>48</sup> The same is also true of the Mao. In fact, Christianization is not totally anti-thetical or contradictory to Naga tradition and culture. Both co-exist and re-inforce each other.<sup>49</sup> Horam also observes that since India's independence, the Baptist Churches in Naga areas are managed solely by the Naga Baptists and they are genuinely interested in salvaging the lost traditional culture of the Naga and under their sound leadership Christianity is bound to be both "Naga in form and content" and not "western."<sup>50</sup> Therefore, today Christianity should provide suitable substitutes to the ideological support that traditional Animism accorded for the protection and conservation of forest.

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<sup>46</sup> N.K. Das, 1994, op.cit., p.71.

<sup>47</sup> Alphonsus D'Souza, op.cit.

<sup>48</sup> N.K. Das, op.cit.

<sup>49</sup> W. Kayina, "Tradition and Modernization" in *Communique*. Delhi, 1998-99, pp.14-16.

<sup>50</sup> M. Horam, op.cit., p.126.

## CONCLUSION

Our main concern is the examination of the role of social structure of the Mao and Angami Nagas in the management and conservation of forests vis-a-vis the process of change and development. We have examined the views of Radcliff-Brown, Evans-Pritchard, S.F Nadel, Raymond Firth, Levi-Strauss and Edmund Leach on the study of social structure. Radcliff-Brown, Evans-Pritchard, S.F Nadel and Raymond Firth conceptualised social structure in terms of pattern and ordered social interaction. For Racliff-Brown this pattern interaction applies to concrete empirical social realities at a given moment of time. Various social institution and particular types of social structure were treated as performing important functions, which contribute for the existence and persistence of social structure. S.F. Nadel gave particular important to role in the conceptualisation of social structure. Raymond Firth sees social structure to be based upon definite principles of sex, age, locality, kinship, roles and status. However he did not agree with the structural determinant theory and therefore introduced the concept of social organisation to account for many consideration of human behaviour in which alternative modes of procedures are presented to individuals, and their personal choice, decision and adjustment are made.

Though Levi-Strauss and Edmund Leach too viewed social structure as pattern and ordered relationship, their theoretical analysis differs from others. For Levi-Strauss social structure is an explanatory construct meant to provide the key to the observed facts of social existence, and the logic behind social reality. Therefore for him social structure has nothing to do with empirical reality but with models which are built up after it. He is interested in how far empirical system correspond (or fail to correspond) with theoretically possible transformation of a structure. His main concern is his conception of binary opposition which are treated as structural determinants of social reality. Leach also conceptualised social structure as pattern of social behaviour but viewed it as ideal or model of social reality. His main concern is the interaction between the model of social structure and the practical social situation and their compromised reality thereby accounting for its dynamism. Some of these theoretical views were taken into account for our explanation of the Mao and Angami social structure.

In order to understand the role of social structure in the management and conservation of forests we have examined the pattern of ownership and control over land and forests as well as its modes of uses through the consideration of clans and village communities as well as gender, status and age. Certain norms and religious belief system which have a bearing on forests

conservation have also been examined keeping in view their closed connection with social structure.

In Naga society village has been the unit of political, social and religious aspects of life and has therefore provided the infrastructure to the Naga social structure. Within the village, it is the clan and sub-clan that form the basic unit of the social structure of the Mao and Angami Nagas. Elements of the moiety system prevail in these societies and provide the principle of social organization. But these moiety system does not continued into a bipartition of the universe into animate or inanimate objects or connected with totally opposite character as has been defined by Levi-Strauss. In the past moiety serves as a exogamous group but in course of time it split up into different component of exogamous clans and sub-clans and form the basic unit of the Mao and Angami social structure. This segmentation largely explain the dynamism and flexibility of the social structure. Since management of land and forests were closely tied with lineage and clan groups, the individuals were strongly integrated through kinship relations and obligations. These relationship and obligations include labour pools among the kinsmen for rendering help to individual members during construction of house and terrace fields, paddy transplantation and harvesting, cutting and harvesting of timbers and observation of common rites and rituals for birth, marriage, sickness and death. The clan and kindred group were responsible for the behaviour for its

members. Certain belief and institutional system maintain the order and continuity of social structure. And among the Mao and Angami this is being provided by their animistic religion and their customary law and justice system. It is through these that the social structure maintains its identity and disciplined its erring social units. This is applicable not only to the mode of social interaction and relationship but also equally extends to its relationship with the natural environment and to their modes of sustenance activities. As the Mao and Angami society depends largely on their forests for its sustenance therefore their structural mechanism were geared toward achieving and maintaining a balance ecological adaptation by establishing a reciprocal relationship with forests. Through the authority system of the clans and village as well as the communal ownership over land and forests, modes of forest exploitations and sustenance activities were regulated. Principle of equity and sustainable use of forest resources permeates the whole mechanism of control exercised by social structure. Though large portion of forests and land were also owned by individual members of the society yet its right of transfer and disposal of its resources ultimately rest with the authority of the clan and village as a whole. Thus the Mao and Angami social structure forbids indiscriminate exploitation of forests.

The primary sustenance activities of the Maos and Angamis were their prized terrace cultivation. They also practiced Jhum/dry cultivation but not



extensively. In both these types of cultivation they ensure the continuity between forest and their terrace/Jhum fields because they considered forest as essential for a successful cultivation of their fields and therefore ensured for its protection. What was significant about terrace and jhum cultivation was the role of women in agricultural operation. Forests were usually considered as the realm for the work mainly of men whereas fields were arena where mainly women toil. But since there was continuity between forests and fields therefore women were repository of vast indigenous knowledge and skills in conservation and use of forest resources. However decisions about management of forests as a whole for the clan and village community were done by male elders of clans and village. In this context male village elders usually old men play crucial role in decision on regeneration and conservation of forest resources. In all sacred occasion, the role of old men were always important. Thus access to sacred grove can be done only by them. Age-groups were also organised in the villages which have a bearing with the conservation and management of forests. The eldest age-group usually control and manage forest, while the young group socialize and learnt ecological knowledge and skills through their *Morung* and in everyday agricultural and domestic tasks.

The religious belief system, which was operationalised through the enforcement of *gennas* reinforced and legitimized the role of the social structure as guardian of forest. Thus the religious belief system of the Maos

and Angamis ensured that certain trees were used for specific purposes or that certain trees can be cut only on sacred occasions with due rites and rituals. Forests were believed to be the abode of spirits and its destruction therefore brings misfortune and disaster upon the clansmen and village community as a whole. Any breach of *gennas* by members of the society whether relating to forest or social living were blamed for any adverse consequences on the clans and the village community as a whole. Thus these two Naga community can be seen as structurally and culturally oriented toward sustainable use of forest and its conservation. In this way the symbiotic relationship was established in which the needs of man and forest are balanced out through the constructive role of social structure.

Today, various forces of change and development has undermined the mutual constructive dependence on forest and consequently the role of social structure in the conservation and management of forests were affected. While Christianization proves to be a harbinger of progress yet it also give a serious jolt to the traditional belief system of the Maos and Angamis which once served as important legitimizing ideology in the conservation of forest. The spread of modern education has widened the horizon of the Mao and Angami people but also produce spirit of individualism thereby undermining individual ties and obligation to the clan and commune system. More over modern education serves as agent of de-culturisation of the Naga society at large and as

a result heralded the collapse of cultural heritage, including traditional forests management and conservation. The economic and political integration with the mainstream of the country has certainly brought development and progress in Naga society today but also institutionalized certain undesirable practices (e.g. corruption) thereby threatening the moral fabric of the society. The emergent of neo-elite and the introduction of new power centres have not only failed to capitalize the role of social structure in forest conservation but also work effectively to undermine the authority system of the social structure. The new system is largely responsible for commercialization and destruction of forest in Mao and Angami Nagas.

No doubt, development has taken place today, albeit slowly, but the conceptualization of development in conventional term has not ensure its equitable distribution nor has its assumption on trickle down effect prove effective. In theory, holistic approach of development were adopted but its implementation not only suffer serious lacunae but also produce distorted social result whereby the rich are getting richer, the poor poorer. The development machinery so far has failed to develop the Naga society in general into self-sustaining and self-supporting economic entity. This has cost dearly to the forest situation today in the Mao and Angami society as well.

Though various forces of change and development have weakened the authority system of the social structure, yet it still remains as a functioning and effective entity in the conservation and management of land and forests. Therefore, development and forest policies of the government can be implemented effectively by utilizing this traditional authority system of social structure without creating many centres of power. Decentralized management of development and forest can only ensure effective conservation of forest in the context of the Mao and Angami Nagas as their society are still structurally and culturally oriented toward forests management. Also activist role of the civil society with regard to the conservation of forest needs to be recognized and appreciated by the state. Above all Christianity should provide adequate ideological support in the management and conservation of forests.

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