University of Dublin

Trinity College

Conflicts in the Process of Transition from Traditional Society to Modernity: A Case study on the role of the Church amongst the Naga Tribes of South-East Asia

Being a thesis submitted for the Degree of Doctor in Philosophy in the University of Dublin, Trinity College.

By

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Trinity College Dublin
2009
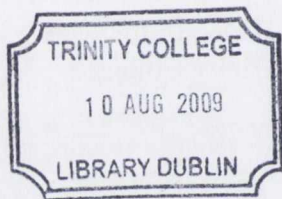
Declaration

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Summary

This thesis is an attempt to use various aspects and processes of tradition and modernity to understand and explain conflict within the Naga context. It argues that Christianity is not only a religion but it also became a socio-political phenomenon for the Nagas. It became the space where tradition and modernity met and interacted. In this light it is an attempt to examine the role of the Church as a unifying factor and as an institution of conflict resolution.

Chapter 1 gives a detailed view about each of the chapters in the thesis. It also provides the methodology employed for the thesis. Chapter 2 explores the main theoretical concepts that will be used for the thesis. The purpose of this chapter is not to give an analytical critique on the theories but to simply allow the main themes of the thesis to be clarified. Chapter 3 discusses the historical and cultural background of the political power of the Government of India that justifies India hegemony over the Naga people. It discusses the status of the Naga political identity against the backdrop of Indian nationhood, federalism and secularism. Chapter 4 gives an overview of the historical and cultural narratives of the Naga people in a more detailed manner. It discusses the main ethos of a traditional Naga social structure and how it evolved over the last century. Chapter 5 and chapter 6 look at the dynamics of conflict in Nagaland. Chapter 6 looks at the role of the Church as an institution of conflict resolution and the role it has played so far in the Naga political conflict. The primary material collected and the opinions and views of the interviewees are extensively used in these two chapters. Chapter 7 gives a critical analysis of what each chapter has to say in the light of the main purpose of the thesis. Based on such an assessment, recommendations are also put forward for future consideration. It is also the lengthiest chapter in the thesis. Chapter 8 is simply a summary of all the chapters in the thesis. It aims to reinforce the argument of the thesis as supported by the case study.

Acknowledgements

First of all I want to thank   Dr. Iain Atack, my Supervisor for taking me as one of his research students. He is everything a doctoral student could want for in their Supervisor, especially if they are just beginning to explore the   wonders, challenges and discipline of academic research.   His mentoring skills enabled me to work and develop my own set of inquiries, but his wide knowledge, insights and constructive comments influenced the shaping of the thesis I have produced. I know I would not have been able to complete my thesis in time, let alone finish it, if it was not for the gentle nudges and guidance from Iain. It was such a joy to work so closely with him over the last three years.

I thank all the ISE staff members, particularly Mary Priestman and Christine Houlahan. As a 'foreign' student there was a steady demand for various letters from the school over the years, but they never got tired of producing them with great speed and recommendation. I thank Slaine O Hagain in the Library, for her smile and kind words every time I turn up to the school, like she has for all the students.

I especially want to thank Finola McDowell, Faith Steinegger, Lorna Preston, Joanna Golisz and Colm Kelly for opening their homes, hearts and love. Again Colm who reviewed all my thesis work with particular care and attention;   Finola and Sorcha Tormey in helping with the editing; Aideen Mcdonald for compiling the bibliography. Their friendship made Ireland feel like home away from home.

My interest in the historical and political problems of our Naga people grew particularly when my dad, Kari Longchar, and his colleagues and friends Niketu Iralu, S. Takam and V.K Nuh, made me become a part of their meetings and conversations about the Nagas.   Their relentless commitment   and vision for a peaceful Nagaland remain undeterred.   Their lapses in perfection do not in anyway undermine their sincerity and dedication to their people. I also want to thank all the interviewees I had for my research for sharing their opinions and insights into the various dynamics of the Indo-Naga conflict.

The protracted, armed conflict between the Government of India and the Naga peoples is the least-known but yet one of the longest political struggles in the world. The experiences of the Nagas are at the core of the thesis.   I strongly believe that the Naga essence of village egalitarianism, love for freedom and equality is alive in their national character. That is why, despite years of suffering and political domination, I believe the Naga aspiration to determine their own political future is feasible and peaceful co-existence with India is possible.

I   dedicate this thesis to the Naga people whose history and their struggle for their political right I had in mind as I wrote, and of which people I am very proud to be a member. I thank God for His providence and for all these amazing opportunities, friendships, people, and experiences in my life.

K. Toshinaro Longchar
Dublin
7th November 2008

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Glossary

ABAM:	Ao Baptist Arogo (Church) Mungdang (Association).
BJP:	Bharatiya Janata Party (Indian People's Party
CBCNEI:	Council of Baptist Churches is North East India
CNBC:	Council of Naga Baptist Churches
CPO:	Chakesang Public Organisation
ENNC:	Eastern Naga National Council
ENPO:	Eastern Naga People's Organisation
FGN:	Federal Government of Nagaland
GoI:	Government of India
GPRN:	Government of the People's Republic of Nagaland.
INC:	Indian National Congress
ITA:	International Territorial Administration
NBCC:	Nagaland Baptist Church Council
NCMMP:	The Naga Church Minister' Mission for Peace
NEFA:	North Easter Frontier Agency
NEI:	North East India
NMA:	Naga Mother's Association
NNC:	Naga National Council
NPC:	Naga Peace Council
NPC:	Naga People's Convention
NPMHR:	Naga Peoples' Movement for Human Rights
NSCN (IM):	Nagaland Socialist Council of Nagaland (Issac-Muivah)
NSCN (K):	Nagaland Socialist Council of Nagaland (Khaplang)
NSCN:	Nagaland Socialist Council of Nagaland
NSF:	Naga Student's Federation
RGN:	Revolutionary Government of Nagaland
RSS:	Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (National Volunteer Association).
ULFA:	United Liberation Front of Assam
VHP:	Vishwa Hindu Parishad (World Hindu Council)

Aksu:	Pig Killing Feast
Chiyongsen:	Eating Together
Genna:	Taboo
Kilonsers:	Ministers
Morung:	Youth or Bachelor's Dormitory
Naga Hoho:	Naga Council/Parliament
Okar:	Adjudication
Putu Menden:	Village Council
Rajah/ Raja:	King
Sangh Parivar:	The Saffron Family or Association.
Telongjem:	Unity
Tir:	Leaders

Chapter 1 Introduction

The Naga struggle for self-determination and the protracted armed conflict between the Nagas and the Government of India (GoI)[1] of more than half a century is one of the oldest but least-known ethnic conflicts in South East Asia. The case study is of particular interest because the conflict developed in the post-World War II era, which was marked by the process of decolonisation and the emergence of numerous nation-states under the principle of self-determination within the colonial context. The conflict highlights the difficulties of the Naga tribes found in the frontiers of India and Burma to affirm their distinct cultural and political identity in their transition from a pre-literate, traditional society, to the modern era. The traditional social polity in the form of villages is the core of Naga cultural and political identity. The colonial intrusion and military exhibitions enabled various independent Naga villages to align together to protect themselves and their land. In this way partial colonialism removed the insularity of the villages. The various independent villages collectively formed a strong sense of tribal identity primarily along linguistic lines. These various tribes soon envisioned the generic term 'Naga' as a nation under which they all would become a part of not only a cultural but also a political identity.

But it was the spread of Christianity, brought by the American missionaries, which became a major characteristic of modernity that allowed the people to respond to the changes that were happening around them. When partial colonialism removed the insularity of the villages, the message of Christianity gave the villages the means, space and purpose of interaction and an awareness of each other. Christianity became the platform through the institution of the church that allowed them to 'discover' the commonalities, and in the process gave them a sense of brotherhood. Christianity provided the ideological space to translate the separate primordial beliefs and ties of all the individual villages to collectively interact and interpret. In due course this eventually contributed to their feeling of 'oneness' not only culturally, but also perceiving themselves as politically distinct under the generic term 'Naga'. Christianity did not remove the village or tribal identity or physical boundaries. But it

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[1] Hereafter Government of India will be referred as GoI.

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gave the opportunity for their many traditional beliefs, symbols, institutions and practices to be translated collectively under a single entity, thereby representing a unifying element for the Nagas. In this sense Christianity became not only a religion but also a socio-political phenomenon. It became the space where tradition and modernity met and interacted.

Furer-Haimendorf, an anthropologist, returned to the Nagas in the 1970s after three decades. His observation and the transformation of the Nagas are summarised in these words:

> "only those who have experienced traditional Naga society can appreciate the magnitude of the transformation...divided between a small inner circle of co-villagers, clansmen, and allied villages, on whose support he could depend and to whom he owed assistance in emergencies... the entire outside world, consisting not only of people belonging to other tribes, but even Konyaks (one of the Naga tribes he visited and 'studied'), living in other villages, were all potential enemies and legitimate targets of head-hunting...to an older generation of Nagas mankind...allies from among communities outside the narrow circle of the in-group...had no place in the Nagas' picture of the world...co-operation between formerly hostile villages and even across tribal boundaries could not have been more alien to the world of the Nagas ....". [2]

In this regard, the popular belief that traditional societies are static and lack vitality and are incapable of change is not correct. In the face of tremendous change and pressure, the Naga villages, through their respective tribes, collectively perceived themselves as a coherent entity to determine their own political future and to protect their culture most aptly expressed in and through their ancestral land. Therefore the Naga conflict did not arise because traditional society resisted change; the conflict developed when modern political institutions and dominant political power failed to accommodate the needs of such a group. For many tribal and indigenous people, particularly in an Asian context, the occupation of their land by newly-formed nation-states on the departure of the colonial powers marked another major transition; for the Naga tribes it was the partial administration of the British on some parts of Nagaland. But political conflict began in Nagaland when the Nagas rejected the Indian Constitution resulting in the GoI unilaterally occupying their territory and

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[2] Sanjib Baruah summarising Furer-Haimendorf, in *Confronting Constructionism: Ending India-Naga War,* Journal of Peace Research International Peace Research Institute, Osla, Norway, Vol., 40 (3), see, www.sacw.net/peace/baruahMay2003.html

annexing them into the Indian Union at the time of the colonial departure from the Indian sub-continent.

The thesis leads the reader through the various forms of traditional social structure that the Nagas had to evolve and develop in order to respond to the various forms of modernity in the form of colonial intrusion, e.g. British power, American missionaries and the GoI policy of occupation and assimilation under the rationale of an Indian 'nation' represented by secularism and federalism. The processes of modernisation within these representations affected and changed the Naga traditional society. However, the traditional culture of kinship, affiliation, and representation along tribal lines, expressed through village identity, remains intact to this day in almost every social, cultural, and political organization. The inability to explore and develop a political system that recognises and accommodates the needs of a tribal identity has escalated the political problem. The GoI's unilateral 'political arrangement' to divide and place the Nagas under different federal states of the Indian Union for the GoI's administrative purposes has not solved the problem either.

With this background in mind, the main purpose of the thesis is to understand and explore:-

(i) The role and initiatives of the Church in bringing the various tribes together under the generic term 'Naga' as a collective identity. Embracing Christianity was seen as the defining act and process towards modernity, and eventually an act of defiance to the GoI policy of occupation.

(ii) The tension between tradition and modernity in Nagaland arose when independent villages collectively organised as tribes along linguistic lines, consciously affirmed as Nagas and expressed their belief in political self-determination, but the GoI denounced such a movement.

(iii) The GoI, as the dominant power militarily, culturally and politically, responded by sending in its military force, and soon occupation of the Naga territory took place.

(iv) The political system introduced by the GoI did not accommodate the needs of a tribal system and its identity. Eventually intra-Naga tribal conflict and factionalism began to arise over the Naga collective rights for self-determination.

(v) The Church as the most enduring legacy of modernity represents not only Christianity but a Naga identity. It became the space that incorporated various essences of Naga traditional institutions and customs. During the most intensive Indian armed operation in Nagaland between 1953-1964 and between 1972-1975, the Church, as the only forum, negotiated with the GoI and the Naga national workers (who went 'underground') for ceasefire agreements.

The thesis is to argue that in the light of the various dynamics of conflict in Nagaland:
 (i) The Church, due to its role in the making of the Naga identity, can continue to be a unifying factor for the Nagas without them forgetting their individual tribal distinctiveness; (ii) The Church can be the platform to bring the various Naga factions to the 'negotiating table'; and (iii) The Church can continue to be the platform that not only speaks for the Naga people but also informs and gives them the platform to express their rights and their struggles.

Such a thesis does not promote the idea that the Church can solve all the political problems in Nagaland, nor that the problems between the GoI and the Nagas are religious in character - though mobilisation through religious lines certainly played a huge role. It does not ignore the history of religious violence, nor the potential violence that religion can promote and provoke. Rather it is to argue that the Church, as a platform, can continue to be a moral force for the Nagas.

Chapter 2 explores the main theoretical framework of the thesis. The conceptual basis of traditional society and political modernity will be discussed in the first section. It will argue that tradition is often a terminology used to categorise or construct modernity. In this light within the colonial context the term 'tribe' was often used to imply 'stateless', 'disorganised', and 'primitive' societies who were incapable of self-governing themselves, let alone be allowed to self-determine their own future. Under such a binary of tradition and modernisation, the representation of the Nagas as a tribe is regarded as traditional and therefore 'primitive' and 'backward'. The formation of the Nagas into a nation and their claim for a distinct political identity and struggle for self-determination were unilaterally rejected by the

GoI. In this context the GoI, as the representation of political modernity, mandated through its nationhood, federalism and secularism to control the tribal Nagas. For this reason the concept of ethnicity and nations, nationalism and self-determination in the light of nation-states, will be examined.

In Chapter 3, the Indo-Naga conflict will be discussed within the historical and cultural background that justifies the political power of Indian secularism. Such a political power promotes and enforces federalism, secularism and a 'nationhood' of India to all the 'nations' and 'ethnic groups' without taking into consideration the political and cultural particularities of peoples like the Nagas. The status of the Naga as a 'Scheduled Tribe' under the Constitution of India, in contrast to the political-identity claims by the Nagas, will be also highlighted. The impact of political modernity through the GoI policy of dividing Nagas into various federal units for administrative purposes, and assimilation will be discussed. Rather than empowering the Naga people towards the process of self-governing, such a strategy developed division and an internal conflict amongst various Naga power-blocks to scramble for GoI bureaucratic positions, employment and monetary resources.

In Chapter 4 the historical and traditional narratives of the Naga tribes will be introduced. The epistemology of the Naga traditional ethos will be elaborated. The chapter will also discuss in detail the various social structures found in a traditional village which is the core of the Naga identity. It will map the formation of villages into tribes as a strong cultural and social form of identity and organization among the Nagas which did not happen until the 20th century. The various landmarks, e.g. the colonists and the missionaries, in the brief 'Naga modern era' that completely removed its insularity, will be discussed. It will discuss how Naga nationalism in response to modernity was mobilised to defend their ancestral land. Such a concept was found ingrained and rooted in the Naga traditional ethos of freedom and resistance to any outside rule.

Chapter 5 will discuss in detail the dynamics of the conflict in Nagaland. It will look at the role of the colonial power, the various political actions that the Nagas

collectively undertook to declare and to endorse their political status. The forms of division found amongst the Nagas along tribal lines, along factional groups, and along artificial boundaries imposed by the GoI, will be incorporated. The opinions and views of the interviewees are extensively used in this chapter.

The primary materials from the semi-structured interview will be also used in understanding more about the role of the Church in the Naga conflict in Chapter 6. It also includes the opinions of the interviewees on how people view the Church in the Naga context and explores what role the Church can continue to play. It will also look in more detail at how the Naga Church is structured and how it functions, and will discuss what traditional elements were incorporated into Naga church practices that make it relevant to the people.

Chapter 7 (the lengthiest chapter of the work) gives a critical analysis of what each chapter has to say in the light of the main purpose of the thesis. Based on such an assessment, recommendations are also put forward for future consideration. This chapter attempts to explore various initiatives to respond to the Indo-Naga conflict as well as to the internal conflict in Nagaland. The analysis supports the argument of the thesis of the role of the Christianity in bringing together the Naga cultural and political identity. It reaffirms the argument of the thesis of the role of the church as a unifying factor and as an institution of conflict resolution. The section on 'the role of the Church as a tool for conflict resolution' is again very lengthy. It recommends that the Church can be used to re-interpret cultural reality in the present socio-political context of poverty, powerlessness, violence and marginalization of the majority people found within the subaltern Nagas. It also calls for a major shift in the political stand and the policy of the GoI as the dominant power if stability and peaceful co-existence are to be sustained in Nagaland and the north-eastern region.

The conclusion of the thesis in Chapter 8 is simply to summarise the main points of analysis of the thesis. The chapter concludes with a brief note on how the tribal experience of the Nagas can be identified by people with similar traditional and tribal societies around the world in the face of political modernisation by dominant cultures.

It also challenges how the Nagas' struggle with the GoI will enable and empower similar tribal groups, particularly found in their neighbouring federal states, to negotiate with the GoI, not in opposition, but in relational respect to each other.

1.1 Methodology

Chapters 2 and 3 are an evaluation and analysis from the reading of secondary resources. The thesis analysed various theoretical viewpoints using contemporary literature on nationhood, the development of political identities and institutions and how these discourses interact with various cultural and religious underpinnings in Nagaland. The narratives of the Naga historical and cultural background in Chapter 4 includes readings that were published locally in Nagaland state and some within India which were collected during the field trip. As already mentioned, Chapters 5 and 6 extensively use the primary materials from the semi-structured interview and unpublished papers.

The official field trip for the thesis was conducted in Nagaland from 25th April – 19th July 2007. Prior to the official field trip in 2007, primary material collected during a trip made to Nagaland from December 2005-Febuary 2006 is also used. It was during this trip that the Eastern Theological College, Jorhat, in Assam allowed access to its library. A qualitative research method was used and so it is an inductive approach to inquiry. The information and enquiry was primarily collected by conducting semi-structured interviews recorded in a Dictaphone that was transcribed and analysed. The methods through which primary resources were gathered during the field trip can be divided into four main categories: (i) Accessing the documents and reports on the peace work of the Church from the Peace Department, Nagaland Baptist Church Council (NBCC);[3] (ii) Semi-structured interviews;[4] (iii) Accessing the State Library in Kohima and the Nagaland University Library, Kohima Campus to collect local and regional publications; (iv) Collecting various papers presented at seminars in Nagaland; (v) Accessing Nagaland information and reports through the local newspapers published in Nagaland. Newspapers clippings were collected and

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[3] Hereafter, Nagaland Baptist Church Council will be referred to as NBCC.

recorded. These newspapers were accessed online as well. The main newspapers that were followed and consulted were: "The Nagaland Post", "The Morung Express" and "The Nagaland Page". The places that were visited during the field trip include Mokokchung and Tuensang districts (May 2007). The rest of the period (June and July 2007) was divided between Dimapur and Kohima.

Time was spent in the NBCC headquarters office in Kohima to get access to documents and records of the Peace Affairs Department. The Department provided access to the documentations and press releases that they issued between 2002-2006. Copies of the Peace Affairs' annual report between 2003-2007 were also provided. It also gave access to the limited documentation that the Department has about the peace work carried out by the NBCC during the 1960s and the 1970s.

In Nagaland there are various Christian denominations like the Baptist Church, the Catholic Church, the Nagaland Christian Revival Church, the Pentecostal Church and the Assemblies of God. But in the thesis, unless indicated, the Church referred to will be the Baptist denomination. The NBCC office located in Kohima is the headquarters for all the Naga Baptist churches in Nagaland state. The NBCC is the central organisation where all the tribes with their tribal Baptist Church association in Nagaland state are affiliated and represented. The Baptist churches, consisting of more than 1,352 local churches, are members of their respective tribal associations.[5] The tribal association encompasses all the villages and towns of that particular tribe within their tribal jurisdiction and territorial boundary as well as outside where churches are formed belonging that particular tribe. The Church or NBCC will imply the representation of all these tribal associations and the local churches through the mandate given to NBCC.

The first American missionaries to make an impact on the Nagas were a Baptist couple when Dr E. W. Clark and his wife Mary Mead, in 1872, decided to live with

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[4] See Appendix 1 for the questionnaire. The names of the interviewees are listed in Appendix 2.
[5] The numbers of the churches are as reported in the NBCC report of 2006. Naga Baptist Churches outside Nagaland state including those in Naga Burma are affiliated to the Council of Nagaland Baptist Church (CNBC) which is based in Nagaland state. But both NBCC and CNBC work closely.

the Nagas in Dekahaimong.[6]   They were followed by more than fifty other missionaries.   The Church saw the two worlds of the Nagas. It witnessed the Nagas in their pre-literate stage, with all their traditional customs, worship and institutions. Under the influence of the colonial intrusion and the missionaries, the Nagas began to be more interactive, and they slowly transformed into a literate society. They began their collective sense of nationhood, distinct even from their neighbouring tribes, which was distinguished by them 'being Christians'. The Church not only witnessed such a transition but became the space that allowed such interaction to take place. With the Church as the most visible and active institution of both the two worlds of the Nagas, the identification of the Nagas with the Church is still very strong.   Today almost 100% of the Nagas in Nagaland state are Christian, of which at least 90% claim to be Baptist, and the rest belong to the other Christian denominations.[7] Every Naga village of every tribe in Nagaland state has a Baptist Church.   In big towns like Dimapur and Kohima, the commercial centre and the capital respectively of Nagaland, every tribe has their own church.   The other Christian denominations reached and spread in Nagaland during the post-World War II period.

In total there were 35 interviewees taken for the semi-structured interview.   In order to include a comprehensive and inclusive opinion, the selection of the interviewees was from various tribes. The interviewees included all the fifteen recognised tribes in Nagaland state. Among the interviewees, Naga tribes living in Burma and Manipur were included.   But all the Naga tribes outside of Nagaland state could not be included, though the regional factor was taken into account. All the interviewees hold a position as a leader in some capacity, either in a social organization or within their local, tribal or Naga nation. These criteria were used for the selection of the interviewees because in a community-based society like the Nagas, the role of leader

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[6] Rev. Miles Bronson and his wife moved in 1840 to Namsang village of the Naga Nocte tribe (currently in Arunachal Pradesh state, India) and started a school.   However, the Bronsons had to leave Namsang in 1841 when tragedy struck the family.   Rev. Bronson's sister Rhoda, as well as his daughter Mary, fell seriously sick. Rhoda was sent to Jaipur (a city in India) for treatment but unfortunately died on 8th December 1841. See Rev. Linyu Keviyiekielie, Christian *Movements in Nagaland,* Kohima: N.V.Press, 2004, also see NBCC, *From Darkness to Light,* Kohima, NBCC, 1997.
[7] See Bit Henningsen, *The Church's contribution for unity and welfare in Nagaland,* published by the Council of Naga Baptist Churches, Kohima, 2007, p. 84.   V.K. Nuh, a prominent Naga Church leader and the founder of Council of Naga Baptist Churches, in his book, writes that 95% of the Nagas both within and outside Nagaland state are Christians, see his book, *My Native Country The Land of the*

has considerable influence on the general Naga public, tribe or village that they represent or come from. In total, only four women could be interviewed. An effort to provide equal gender representation was not possible, because in Nagaland, though in accordance with tribal tradition women enjoy relative freedom and equal position, the realm of the Naga political issue is often regarded as a male domain because of the strong patriarchal culture that continues to support the political system in Nagaland which is very male dominated.[8] Therefore the role of women to be visible, not only in the landscape and background of the Naga nation, but to actively engage in the decision process of the political and cultural developments, requires further research, advocacy, and grass-root education in villages, community and school.

The interviewees were also divided into four categories:

(i) Church leaders: Here 'Church leaders' refers to NBCC staff members, Church leaders at Tribal Association level or local church leaders who work directly and full-time for the Church.

(ii) Lay people: Lay people here include Nagas who usually are Christians but are not working directly or full-time with their church. Under this category are included people who are engaged in various Naga civil societies in Nagaland. They are the Naga Hoho (the traditional apex body of the Naga tribes), Eastern Naga People's Organization (ENPO), the Naga People's Movement for Human Rights (NPMHR),[9] and the Naga Students' Federation (NSF). People who are Nagas but are in the employment of the GoI also fall into this category.

(iii) Because of time constraints, only one 'Indian' who was the Head of the History and Archaeology Department, Nagaland University, was interviewed.

(iv) A representative from each of the following three factions was also interviewed:

Nagas, Guwahati, Delhi, Spectrum Publications, 2002, p. 23.

[8] Most of the traditional forms of political representation in Nagaland are exclusively for males. For instance, among the Ao Naga tribes, up to now, no females are members or are even allowed to be present at the village council (*Putu Menden*) meetings. The Naga Hoho (Council/ Parliament) which is considered as the apex body of the traditional Naga organization does not allow any women representation. The process to even include women in this organization is considered 'out of the question'. Not a single female candidate has been elected to the Legislative Assembly (state parliament) of Nagaland state since it was conferred in 1963. In the Church institution there are only three ordained women ministers in Nagaland state despite women making up almost half of the Church membership. The three ordained women ministers are Revd. Dr. Noksangchila; Revd. Sanangchila, and Revd. Dr. Kapfo. Among the Ao tribe the first and only female pastor for the village church as opposed to women pastor for women was appointed in the 1990s in Sungratsu village.

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(i) Naga National Council (NNC-A or the Accordists); (ii) Naga National Council (NNC-P or the non-Accordists); (c) National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN IM). Attempts to contact leaders of National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN K) based in Eastern Nagaland [10] were not successful and therefore they could not be interviewed.

As an academic researcher, the author attempts to be as objective as possible. But the reading, the interpretation and the articulation are conditioned by the cultural and political subordination of the subaltern Naga nation of which the author is a member. However, despite the author identifying and locating herself as a Naga and as a Baptist, the analysis of the thesis seeks to be objective and honest in its research findings, which were based on historical realities and materials that were available as well as the interviews on the role of the Church in the Naga historical and political discourse. However, during the process of research, the author acknowledged that further dialogue is required for active interaction not only between the various Christian denominations in Nagaland but also with the various religious traditions that are found within and in neighbouring Nagaland states. Having said that, the single representation of the Naga Christians till the 1940s only as Baptist changed during the 1950s. The role and contribution of the other dominations, however small-scale in number in shaping Naga identity, are beyond the scope of this thesis but require further research. But as already mentioned, the Church referred to will be the Baptist denomination in the thesis and in that regard it acknowledges that the research is limited because the representation of Church is confined to the Baptist Church only. But the author picked the Baptist Church as the case study because of its historical association with, and development in relation to, the Naga evolving identity.

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[9] Hereafter the Naga People's Movement for Human Rights with be referred as NPMHR.

[10] Hereafter Naga National Council will be referred as NNC and National Socialist Council of Nagaland will be referred as NSCN. A, P, I-M and K are the initials of the names of the current leaders of the respective factions, namely, Adinno who leads the NNC- Accordist, Panger who leads the non-Accordists, Issac and Muivah respectively, and Khaplang. Accordists and non-Accordists will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5. In 2007, some members mostly from the Sema tribe left behind NSCN (IM) and formed the Naga Unification group. It was meant to be the mediator between all the factions but it soon became a faction in itself and the media started to refer to them as NSCN (Unification). Today NSCN (K) and NSCN (Unification) merged as NSCN/GPRN (Government of the People 's Republic of Nagaland). Therefore the factions mentioned above are the four main factions in the Naga political movement. During the period of the field trip, the fifth faction, National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Unification) had not yet been formed.

The ethnographic literature of the Nagas developed through the writings of the colonial administrators of the mid 19th century, though some of the most elaborate work on the Nagas by the administrators was done only during the beginning of the 20th century. Through the writings of the colonial officers the Nagas came to be known as the "head-hunters of Assam".[11] The purpose of such writings was to serve and encourage both anthropological research and to help in the administration of the colonial expansion. Analysing the writings of the colonial officers, Abraham Lotha, a Naga anthropologist, concludes that ethnography ultimately "became the handmaiden of colonial administration, and ethnography itself became a colonial project for control".[12] To employ the colonial writings comparatively and critically with the experiences and narratives of the Naga by themselves on one hand, and to re-interpret and deconstruct the misrepresentation and location of the Naga by the colonial lenses on the other hand, remains a constant challenge in the development of a 'historical' Naga writing. The oral history and tradition of the Nagas needs to be collectively written and analysed. In-fact, such a research project has not been undertaken yet. Attempts to collect, study and preserve all the important papers/articles and books written and published on the Nagas by Nagas, Indians, outsiders and the Colonial officers is becoming increasingly important. Unfortunately it is beyond the scope of the thesis to give such an in-depth and critical anthropological analysis. However the need for such a research project is important to the process of the Naga nation.

This PhD research was conducted in the field of Conflict and Peace Studies but it covers a wide range of inter-disciplinary materials from social sciences, drawing particularly from the discipline of political science. It explores the role of religion in developing national consciousness. The thesis explores secularism and federalism as the two main foundations of political modernity in the making of the Indian Union. The Brahmanical framework appeared as a major factor in the dynamics of the Indian politics, administrative and cultural landscape. The political mechanism between the central government and its component states (i.e., federal units) is therefore highly

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[11] Quoted in Abraham Lotha, *History of Naga Anthropology (1882-1947)*, Dimapur: Chumpo Museum, 2007, p.5. See bibliography for books on early Naga anthropology by colonial officers like T.C. Hodson, J.P. Mills and J. H. Hutton.

centralised and unitary because it promotes the policy and the interests of the majority Hindus and the dominant Brahmanical power without necessarily withholding the rights of cultural particularities in the Constitution.

Against this backdrop, the thesis undertook the study of the Naga Church as an institution which facilitated the transition of the various Naga tribes, who are found located in the frontiers of north-east India, from a traditional village/tribal society to modernity. In this respect it looked at how Christianity became a modernising factor for the Naga tribes in enabling them not only to form their tribal identity but also to mobilise and express themselves as a distinct and separate political entity from the Indian Union. Therefore, when discussing the influence of the modern era on Naga society, it cannot be taken as a different entity without understanding two crucial processes of modernisation, namely, political modernity in the form of GoI occupation and Indian federalism, and cultural modernity in the form of British intrusion and Christianity.   In these interactions Christianity is not only an institution of religion but it also becomes a socio-political phenomenon for the Nagas. The development of the institutional structure of the Naga Baptist Church by replicating the tribal form of representation and its evolving political and sociological impact was researched using the primary resources. The literature reviews were critically analysed to support and elucidate the findings that were drawn through the primary resources in the thesis.

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[12] Ibid.

Chapter 2   The theoretical framework

Introduction

The purpose of discussing some of the theories is not to critique the different understandings and approaches, nor is it to apply a specific approach to establish the development of Naga political formation as a nation through tribal grouping. Rather it will explore the theoretical processes which explain the development of a Naga identity and the political formation that evolved into a sense of nationhood.   It will not only discuss the difficulties but also critique the underpinnings of social formation and groupings amongst the Nagas. This attempt can shed light on the dynamics and approaches that have shaped Nagas in their immediate transition from a pre-illiterate society to the industrial modern era.   It is at this point that the various theories on the different concepts will be put forward to address both the limitations of the Naga political approach and the conflicts of the Nagas, so a cohesive understanding of the Naga political and cultural dynamics can be developed for the purpose of the thesis.

At the heart of the Naga conflict are not only the socio-cultural issues, but also the Naga political identity as a nation and as peoples. When outsiders filtered into the Naga territory, their socio-cultural and traditional practices prompted them to resist the intrusion of the British. The arrival of the colonial officers and later the missionaries laid the basis for the Nagas' claim as a distinct political identity. But the issue that is contested is not around the socio-cultural differences from other dominant nations and powers like India; rather, it is the Nagas' claim as a separate political identity that has escalated the Indo-Naga armed conflict for more than 60 years. The Indo-Naga problem brings out a number of pressing questions on issues of tribes, peoples, nations and self-determination within the context of colonialism and the nation-state. It also highlights a form of colonialism within India in the form of cultural and political domination after the departure of Western colonialism. This challenges the general understanding that colonialism should be identified as a specific political imperialism unique to the West towards the Rest. Rather it demonstrates that it can be a political mechanism that can be used by a dominant

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power against a non-dominant nation by virtue of its common boundary and for the security and interests of the dominant culture.

The case of the Naga struggle for political identity highlights the difficulties faced by many traditional and indigenous groups in developing countries especially in Asia. The existence of indigenous people is denied by the host states or nation states, and subsequently self-determination is denied[13] because it is argued that it is a right granted exclusively within the decolonising context and processes.

The Indo-Naga conflict is of particular importance because both parties are nations, emerging out of a colonial past, with the British as their common colonial power [14] irrespective of their geographical size. In that sense, despite the long history of civilisation of 'the cultural India', both are young 'nations' in terms of the definition of the modern polity. The invasion by the newly-formed Indian Union into Nagaland was solely on the basis that Nagaland "consists of rather backward people who require considerable help when India is independent"[15] and because it is "too small to stand by itself, politically or economically". This act of invasion by the GoI was followed by a different policy of coercion, material incentives and federal statehood to a section of Nagaland within the Indian Union.

On the other hand, the developing Naga social and political structures were not strong enough to sustain the unprecedented political momentum and social dynamics that were evolving between the Naga tribes themselves. In this emerging political situation

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[13] India and Bangladesh, responding to a draft produced by the Working Group on Indigenous Population of the UN Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities in 1988 on the rights of indigenous people, pointed out the definition of indigenous peoples be limited to peoples in the "Western Hemisphere and Australia". China, India, Bangladesh denied the existence of indigenous people in their territories. See Patrick Thornberry, *International Law and the Rights of Minorities,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991, paperback edition, 1992, p. 377-78.

[14] However there is big a difference in the sense that, for India, the English were their masters, and India literally vested their sovereignty in the monarchy through "the Government of India Act 2 August 1858", See Bernard S.Cohn, Representing Authority in Victorian India, in Eric Hobsbawn and Terence Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983, pp. 165-209, in p.165. In the case of the Nagas, the English simply administered the Western and Central parts of Naga territory since 1878. Eastern Nagaland remained an un-administered area until the English left the sub-continent. No treaties were signed between any Naga villages and the British.

[15] Term used by Jawaharlal Nehru as the President of the Indian National Congress in his letter dated 1st August, 1946, to the Secretary of Naga National Council (NNC). See L. Wati, *Fact and Growth of Naga Nationalism,* Mokokchung, 1993, p.16.

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the traditional mechanism and attachments that brought the different Naga tribes together could no longer sustain or hold on to the momentum of forming into a cohesive state or administrative apparatus. So while the Nagas were located within a traditional society, they equally grappled with the issues that evolved around the building of a modern nation. The different Naga tribes collectively declared their own political identity and independence on 14th August 1947.

However, the protracted violent conflict lasting more than 60 years in Nagaland will lack political clarity and historical reality if India's response to the Nagas 'aspiration is not addressed. As claimed by the GoI the Naga might have been 'rather backward', consisting of 'primitive hill' people in the frontiers of the Indian Union and Burma, but their response to the Naga struggle and aspiration was one of high-handedness and an act of deliberate oppression. It was high-handed because the GoI was outraged when a tiny nation like the Naga peoples declared their independence, defying the colonial state, the apparatus the GoI inherited from the British; deliberate oppression, because military defence, one of the major origins of state power that is maintained to be "directed against foreign foes,"[16] was deployed against the Nagas by 1953.

In the light of these experiences and history, this thesis is an attempt to locate the various aspects and processes of political development that affect traditional society in a modern era. This understanding can be used to explain the conflict within the Naga context. It will explore the status, the legitimacy and identity of tribes and their social structure in modern politics. It will also interpret the significance, applicability, and continuities as well as the discontinuities in terms of representation, identity and historical resolution.

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the main theoretical framework of the themes that underline this thesis. The conceptual basis of traditional society and political modernity will be discussed in the first section. It will argue that tradition is often a

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[16] Michael Mann , The Autonomous Power of the State: its Origins, Mechanisms and Results, in John A. Hall (ed.), *The State: Critical Concepts, Vol. I,* London and New York: Routledge, 1994, pp. 331-353, in 340.

terminology used to categorise or construct modernity. The concept of the Nagas as a tribal society automatically implied to the GoI that they were 'stateless' and 'primitive'. This justified the occupation by the GoI even though the Nagas declared themselves as an independent nation. The representation of the Nagas as a tribe has resulted in them being perceived as 'traditional' and incapable of self-governing, let alone being allowed to determine their own future. The legal basis of the Nagas' formation as a nation, lies in their claim as a distinct ethnic political identity but their struggle for their right to self-determination were unilaterally rejected by the GoI. In this context the GoI as the representation for political modernity that was mandated through nationhood federalism and secularism, controlled the tribal Nagas. The concept of ethnicity and nations, nationalism and self-determination, in the light of nation-states representing the modern form of political identity, will be examined.

2.1   Modernity

A definition of tradition and modernity will be examined in this section in order to understand and explain conflict within the Naga context. However, it is not to analyse the multiple experiences and the ideological and philosophical underpinning of modernity. The definition is simply an attempt to provide a clear indication of the processes that are relevant and that need to be explored and can then provide the tools to analyse conflict for the purpose of the thesis. Modernity here is discussed within the political development represented by nation state, which was conditioned by various factors which are discussed below.

Understanding traditional society in the 21st century requires a degree of theorising and exploring the concept of modernity because political and cultural practices 'perceived' as traditional were the point of departure, not only to compare with but to represent modern practices. Theorising modernity is often marked by some degree of obscurity. Jacob Olupana writes that the diverse approach and view on the question of modernity and tradition indicates the lack of consensus. He writes that "there is no single modernity, but rather there are numerous modernities". [17]

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[17] Jacob K. Olupona, Introduction, in Jacob K Olupona (ed.) *Beyond Primitivism: Indigenous*

Numerous, because there are different definitions of modernity, which encompass the whole of modernity. The imposition of western Christianity, secularisation, individualism, urbanisation, rationalisation, technology, capitalism and nation state as opposed to religiosity, community and kinship are some of the major characteristics of modernity.

From a sociological view Peter Berger[18] argues that the following five categories should be taken into account in order to understand and critique the essence and characteristics of modernity: abstraction, futurity, individualisation, liberation and secularisation. Berger argues that these categories of modernity probe discussions not only around sociological, but practical, ethical, anthropological, political and theological as well as philosophical factors. Berger, discussing abstraction, links Marx's "capitalism as the source of alienation and reification," with Emile Durkhiem's relationship between "organic solidarity and anomie," and Weber's "discontent with rationalization". Here Berger argues that the abstraction of modernity is rooted in the institutional processes on which modernity rests, which are: the capitalist market, the bureaucratized state, the technologies economy, the large city with its heterogeneous agglomeration of people and the media of mass communication. He argues further that this basis of modernity has lead to the weakening and destruction of the concrete and relatively cohesive communities where human beings throughout history have derived solidarity and meaning.

The second basis of modernity for Berger is futurity which is the "profound change in the temporal structure of human experience, in which the future becomes a primary orientation for both imagination and activity". In this way 'future or time' for Berger, in principle is measurable, precise and subject to human control and takes place on three levels. On the level of everyday life, clocks and watches become dominant. On the biographical level, "the individual's life is perceived and actively planned as a career". On the level of the entire society, "national governments or other large-scale institutions map out projects in terms of a plan". Berger argues that

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Religious Traditions and Modernity, New York and London: Routledge, 2004, pp. 1-19, in p.1.
[18] Peter Berger, *Facing up to Modernity: Excursions in society, politics, and religion*, Harmondsworth [etc.], Penguin, 1979. pp. 102-112; see also Olupona, *Introduction.* His analysis on Bergers five

on all of these levels, this new temporality is in conflict with the way how human beings have traditionally perceived time and the future. Futurity has produced endless striving and restlessness according to Berger.

The third category is the modern process of individualisation. Berger argues that modernisation has entailed a progressive separation of the individual from collective entities, and as a result has brought about a counterposition of the individual and society. He poses the dilemmas that modernity brings through the conception of individual rights adhered to in Western culture against collectivity and communal solidarity found in traditional society.

Berger understands liberation, the fourth category, as an essential element of modernisation because the large areas of human life, previously considered to be dominated by fate, are now perceived as an occasion for individual choice. This trend is a fundamental rebellion against the divine human condition and a departure from the traditional religious world views. Here "tradition is no longer binding; the status quo can be changed". He argues that traditional beliefs in fate have weakened so much that individuals, whether they are capable or not, have to choose alternatives "whether they wish it or not". Ironically, these choices brought about by liberation are equally exhilarating and chaotic, making both social and individual life more uncertain.

Finally, secularisation, which Berger claims as the fifth category of modernity, "has brought with it a massive threat to the plausibility of religious belief and experience". It has meant "a weakening of the plausibility of religious perceptions of reality among large numbers of people". These views, Berger argues, have been "established by the intellectual elites and in the educational institutions of modern societies."

According to Stuart Hall,[19] modern societies are identified with the 19th century and

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categories are also used in this section to understand and interpret Berger's definition, see p.2.

[19] Stuart Hall, Introduction, in Stuart Hall and Bram Gieben (eds.), *Formations of modernity*, Cambridge: Polity Press in association with the Open University, 1992, *pp.1*-16, in pp.1-7. But Hall also points out that modern societies can trace their origins much earlier than the 19th century and can be associated with the decline of the traditional feudal system in Western Europe. Each process has

the beginning of industrialisation. Hall reinforces the idea that the process of modernity in societies is not the result of a single process, but different social processes which are political, economic, social and cultural, occurring at different times in history but which interact with each other. According to Hall, the distinct features and characteristics of modern societies are:

> 1. The dominance of secular forms of political power, and authority and conceptions of sovereignty and legitimacy, operating within defined territorial boundaries, which are characteristic of the large complex structures of the modern nation state.
> 2. A monetarized exchange economy based on the large-scale production and consumption of commodities for the market, extensive ownership of private property and the accumulation of capital on a systematic, long-term basis.
> 3. The decline of the traditional social order, with its fixed social hierarchies and overlapping allegiances, and the appearance of a dynamic social and sexual division of labour. In modern capitalist societies, this was characterized by new class formations and distinctive patriarchal relations between men and women.
> 4. The decline of the religious world view typical of traditional societies and the rise of secular and materialist culture, exhibiting those individualistic, rationalist and instrumental impulses.[20]

Hall also writes that in the cultural process two distinct characteristics should also be considered. Firstly, the ways in which knowledge is produced and classified. Hall argues that this feature is important because modern societies marked the emergence of the Reformation, the Renaissance, scientific revolution and the Enlightenment which were a result of the birth of the intellectual and cognitive world. This feature, he also argues, is constitutive to the formation, and rise of capitalism and nation-states. Secondly, the cultural construction of social identities and communities as a part of the process of forming modernity through language, images and symbols to represent differences.

Hall reiterates "the real transition to modernity" is essentially the belief that "everything is destined to be materially and culturally" put "into this new conception of social life".[21] He also points out that the changes, progress and development in the transition to modernity can surface in the form of "violence, oppression, and

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distinct features and social characteristics, and they are taken together to provide a definition on modernity.
[20] Ibid., p.6.

exclusion, in the archaic, the violent, the untransformed, the repressed aspects of social life".[22]

2.1.2 Tradition

Based on Hall's and Berger's characteristics or essence of modernity, an understanding of tradition can be drawn from what modernity is not. Since modernity is underpinned by rationalisation, traditional societies are often regarded as irrational, lacking in reasoning which finds expression in their traditional religiosity. Traditional societies are static, community–based in their identity, and strongly attached to their immediate community, surroundings and land. Their attachment to land after ceremoniously founding a place, might explain their relatively insular life. The fact that traditional religion did not encompass a salvific knowledge also spared them any missionary zeal. This is opposed to Europe's quest for knowledge, reasoning and power, along with their understanding of Christianity and missionary salvific zeal that started to define what modern society should become and believe.

Because of these reasons, when the discourses of tradition and modern narratives are discussed, the imposition of colonial history, their invasion and rule cannot be ignored. This is not only because by 1890 almost 85 per cent of the globe was under the control of the West[23], it is also because many of the conflicts and problems of the colonised world were encountered as a result of the legacy and the institutions of colonial rule, division, and the political order that was set by the Western power for the rest of emerging nations for any entry to and recognition in the modern political era. The modern society was characterized as civilised, secular, scientific, innovative, future- oriented, culturally dynamic, industrialised and urbanised.[24]

It should also be highlighted that the traditional societies found located within the

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[21] Ibid., p.15.

[22] Ibid., p.16.

[23] John C. Mohawk, Tribal traditions and western religious discourses, in Olupona (ed.), *Beyond Primitivism*, pp. 111-117, in p.117.

[24] Kwame Gyekye, *Tradition and Modernity: Philosophical Reflections on the African Experience*, New York ; Oxford : Oxford University Press, 1997, p.217.   See also Armin W. Geertz, Can we move beyond primitivism, in Olupona (ed.), *Beyond Primitivism*, pp. 37-70, p.51.

'Rest' were projected and recognised as uncivilised, rural, agrarian, pre-scientific, primitive, savage, oral and illiterate, sacred, resistant to both change and innovation by the dominant group of the colonised nation. Therefore the binary of primitivism/advanced, uncivilised/civilised, traditional/modern was a form of ideology used to espouse superiority and power that justifies the act of domination. According to Kavita Phillips, one of the reasons traditional societies or the indigenous world occupied this position as low culture or low nature was because:

> "They 'failed' to separate the natural and the cultural; as indeed they had 'failed' to distinguish between work and leisure, between the sacred and the secular. They had 'failed' to make the transitions that modernity and industrial production required, whereby they ought to have separated themselves, as self-acting autonomous subjects, from their surroundings, in order to truly act upon nature." [25]

This representation, identification and comparison between the West as modern, and non-Western societies as traditional, eventually began to distinguish the West from the Rest. The exploration, the conquest and the occupation by the West promoted a "growing sense of superiority"[26] over the Rest. The superior West to 'civilise' the 'savage', the 'barbaric natives'; the uncivilised' and the 'backward' became the rationale of such discourses. The West's knowledge and representation of the Others even developed and justified the treatment of the colonised status as sub-human and as brutes who do not possess souls.[27]

But the element of 'Otherness' as an ideology of exotica, "rather than in the terms of primitive" and as a scientific term of anthropology and natural science, did not develop until the later part of the 19th century.[28] So when 'primitivism' is used in the traditional narratives for this thesis it is not about 'primitivism' that is rooted in

[25] Kavita Philips, *Race, Resource and Modernity in Colonial South India,* Orient Longman, 2003, p.49.

[26] John Roberts, quoted in Stuart Hall, The West and the Rest: Discourse and Power, in Hall and Gieben (eds.), *Formations of modernity,* pp. 275-332, in p.291.

[27] See John C. Mohawk, Tribal traditions and western religious discourses, in Olupona (ed.), *Beyond Primitivism,* pp. 111-117, in p.115. Mohawk was talking about this concept in the context of the Spanish invasion of the Indians. Also he argues that the Spanish were using the Greek philosophers' idea about natural slavery, and lack of natural reasoning upon certain groups of people. This was used to justify the superiority of the European culture over the Indian culture in every aspect. See also Stuart Hall, The West and the Rest: Discourse and Power, in Hall and Gieben (ed.), *Formations of modernity,* pp. 275-332, in pp.309-10.

[28] Charles H.Long, A postcolonial meaning of religion, in Olupona (ed.), *Beyond Primitivism,* pp.

romanticism or the vague understanding of people in an exotic land and culture. 'Primitivism' here is defined in the way in which it is 'connected with various shades of inferiority'[29] because that is the basis upon which the Nagas were occupied, whose case study is the theme of this thesis.

John Mohawk argues bluntly that the reasons why indigenous cultural values and tradition are devalued in the West is because they are "not perceived to be a part of this quest for a utopian future"'.[30] The utopian future, according to Mohawk, is the Western belief in the idea that the human agency can produce desirable characteristics through selective breeding and can possess "qualities of intelligence, creativity, and moral superiority that they would be able to solve all the problems of mankind". This philosophy of the West, Mohawk argues, has virtually become the metanarratives for mankind.

The argument here points out that though it is highlighted that the modernisation of societies does not follow a uniform set of characteristics, the West's experience of modernity is used as the standard point of reference. Hall[31] argues that the rise of the West is a global story; or as Roberts observed, "modern history can be defined as the approach march to the age dominated by the West".[32]

This Western standard of modernity that is emulated or imposed upon different peoples with entirely different cultures, development and experiences not only reveals the frustration of the Others as reiterated by Mohawk, but it also brings about devastating effects on most communities.

The pre-modern era in the West is referred to as an agrarian society,[33] and being

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89-98, in p.94.

[29] Francis Hsu, quoted in Armin W. Geertz, Can we move beyond primitivism? On recovering the indigenes of indigenous religions in the academic study of religion, in Olupona (ed.), *Beyond Primitivism*, pp. 37-70, in p.51.

[30] John C. Mohawk, Tribal traditions and western religious discourses, in Olupona (ed.), *Beyond Primitivism*, pp. 111-117.

[31] Stuart Hall, The West and the Rest: Discourse and Power, in Hall and Gieben (eds.), *Formations of modernity*, pp. 275-332, in p.278.

[32] Quoted in ibid., p.278.

[33] See Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism, New Perspectives on the Past*, Oxford: Blackwell

traditional in that period for the West does not have the connotation of primitivism or backwardness in the way that the 'Rest' of the world is implicated. If traditional society means the pre-modern era, then such societies were not all illiterate, oral, or 'history-less' in character. As described by Ernest Gellner,[34] before the immediate transition of society to the modern era, marked politically by nationalism or nation, an agrarian society existed. This agrarian epoch was marked by the emergence of "literary and of a specialized clerical class or estate, a clerisy".[35] Though all agrarian societies were not necessarily literate, it was prevalent amongst the rulers, the priests or the clerisy of that society. Gellner continues that the establishment of literacy was important because the presence of a "permanent and a standardized script" means "the possibility of cultural and cognitive storage and centralization". He goes on to argue that the two crucial divisions of labour, i.e., the centralisation of political power "which is the state", and the culture/cognition "effected by a clerisy", were often rivals. But their presence had "profound and special implications for the typical social structure of the agro-literate polity". In this "agro-literate polity, the ruling class formed a small minority of the population, rigidly separate from the great majority of direct agricultural producers, or peasants", mostly illiterate. Gellner goes on to write that society slowly moved towards an industrial epoch when the exclusivity of literacy to a minority became universal and occupations were no longer hereditary. In other words, "universalized clerisy" called for radical change in the relationship of culture and polity, i.e., the clerisy and the state. This "high culture'' changed the whole system into an industrial system, which was sustained only by the polity, in other words the state. According to Gellner this is where the secret of nationalism lay and featured modernity through different interactions and forms of social revolution such as the Industrial, the Reformation and the Renaissance, etc. To deny this agrarian

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Publishers, 1983, reprint, 1996. Here he broadly describes the three fundamental stages in human history: pre-agrarian, the agrarian and the industrial. Gellner acknowledges the role of colonialism, imperialism and de-colonisation in the process of nationalism. But he does not explain the colonial domination by de-constructing the existing structure and history that were deemed as a challenge to the colonial expansion in the colonised world. Rather, he describes the inevitability and global conquest of Western domination in different parts of the world. On a different note, the various forms of ancient civilisation in India, China, Africa and in Mesopotamia had their own script. But the point is that the connotation of 'traditional' with primitivism developed as a justification for colonising and conquering by the West. So it is through the narratives of the West that the division and categorising of society in history is also formed.

[34] Gellner (1996), *Nations and Nationalism*, pp. 8-18.
[35] Ibid., p.8.

society, found predominantly in Western society, as a traditional society is to contradict the distinct features illustrated in an era of modernity, of which one is the emergence of secularisation and individuality in place of religion, irrationality and community kinship. To categorise only perceived 'primitive' society found in the Rest as traditional society is to nullify the distinct features of modernity. Because in this society, religiosity, traditional ownership of land, and communal interaction continue to play a hugely significant role, even in the modern era.

An impartial understanding of traditional society should also mean understanding the features found in the societies of the West before the development of the distinctive features that came to represent modernity. In this sense, traditional society should not simply be understood as a socio-political position to categorise between the West and the Rest. Rather, it should be taken as a collective point in history with various socio-cultural and political entities actively engaged in developing various modes of governance to respond to the changes taking place at various levels. For this reason, traditional societies that exist in the modern era can be the spaces in understanding the human and social development that closely interact with each other. Here, tradition is not simply an indicator of a certain period in society and history, nor a particular set of static features or practices to be categorised as bygone days. In this respect, traditional society is not a fixed entity of the past. It is a construction of the present in order to distinguish different political or social groupings for different interests while actively interacting with various socio-political developments.

However, the implication has been that since the West was civilised and the Rest were the traditional primitives, the West had justification to colonise. And because of this discourse, the definition of traditional society can no longer be described without the 'historical burden' of the 'civilized superiors versus the primitive inferiors'. It can no longer be defined simply as a construction of a modern society to categorise the past. In such discourses three distinct groups should be recognised in understanding a traditional society despite the integration, construction and interplay between such groups:

(i) Firstly, the traditional society that is understood as the pre-modern or agrarian

society, found generally in the West. This pre-modern or traditional society provided the immediate basis for transition to define the modern era.

(ii) Secondly, societies found in the Rest other than in the West that were known as traditional. The traditional Rest, which had an organised class or caste division, developed cultural institutions, and a literate-clerisy class, e.g., India and China. These societies had an ancient history of 'empire' or 'civilisation.' Their structures were further advanced by the colonial power for colonial efficiency, or destroyed when deemed as a challenge to the status quo of the power.

(iii) Thirdly, the type of pre-literate traditional societies found located within the traditional Rest, that were insular, with limited social interaction and economic needs, can be recognised as the third category. The transition to modernity, in terms of political transformation, was imposed during and after the colonial context. Such societies were people who were closely attached to their lands, with no definite social, gender, or labour division within the group. Gellner has pointed out that there is only a "tiny minority" that enters the industrial age directly from the pre-agrarian society. However, he argues that this does not affect the argument that "most of mankind enters the industrial age from the agrarian state".   This is true. But the reality is that most of this 'tiny minority' continued to interact and survive in their limited social institution until Western colonialism invaded them. Soon the demand and imposition of modern political features into their tradition, or the need to emulate modern political institutions for their survival, rights and recognition, became imminent. This constantly created conflict within their social mechanisms thereby escalating structural as well as physical violence. When the colonial power 'discovered' these people, they were classified as the 'primitives' or 'tribes'.   They were classified under that category because they resembled the human interaction and organisation that represents pre-historical society at its earliest stage. This categorisation of these people, as much as it was a political division, also implied a scientific connotation for anthropological studies.   When the colonial masters left, the 'traditional society' identified above in the second category was allowed to form the nation-state in the context of the decolonising process. However the 'preliterate traditional societies' were soon occupied by their neighbouring 'traditional societies' which was legitimised because of their 'primitivism and backwardness'. Hence traditional

society likewise developed the same political domination over the 'primitive preliterate societies'.

The third form of traditional society identified above might be comprised of only a 'tiny minority', but this is the focus of this thesis because it is this category that the Naga tribal group represents. It was under this rationale that their political organisation and aspiration as a nation was rejected by the GoI. It was because of their supposed 'primitivism and backwardness' that they were occupied and denied their right to self-determination by the GoI. The cultural terminology which was applied to identify the indigenous peoples who represented such forms of 'traditional preliterate society' found in India and along its north-east frontiers changed, according to the political developments in the sub-continent. The indigenous people who are referred to as the 'scheduled tribes' since 1950 under the Constitution of India were initially referred to in the official documents as the 'forest tribes' followed by the 'primitive tribes' (1931), the 'backward tribe' (1935), 'Adivasi - the original settlers (1948)'.[36]

2.1.3 Relevance in the Naga context

Generally, the division of the world might be between the West and the Rest as already argued. But within these discourses the so-called 'primitives' or 'tribal people' existing even within the subaltern discourse of the Rest cannot be excluded.

The relevance of the traditional readings and the rationale used by the West to colonise the Others is that it was enacted upon the Nagas by the GoI. The GoI took the mantle of their colonial master and re-enacted the role of the West as the powerful, dominant, modern system and the Nagas as the Other, uncivilised, savage, tribal and backward, therefore traditional. The GoI and not India is used here because even when the British colonised India there were two broad distinct groups: the Indian ruling caste whose positions and class in society helped them to collaborate with the coloniser to suppress the other lower castes, the outcastes and the tribals. In many ways, the power of political, economic, military and arms superiority and colonial

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[36] Sachchidanada and R.R. Prasad, Introduction, in Sachchidanada and Prasad (eds.), *Encyclopedic*

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knowledge was used by the coloniser to conquest and to redefine Indian tradition and customs for its own purpose. In that way British colonists "discovered the authoritarian possibilities in 'native custom' and harnessed it for the purpose of indirect rule".[37] The Indian feudal system and colonial rituals "reinforced each other, and together had consequences for the survival of wildlife and for peasant and tribal access to game".[38] So although, all the Others, including India, were viewed as primitive and backward by the West, the concept of primitive also existed within the culture of the Indian sub-continent. [39] There are many subaltern nations oppressed within the general subaltern narratives of India as a colonised world. The Nagas are one of the subaltern nations found located in the frontiers of the Indian sub-continent with an entirely separate history, culture, ethnicity and people that are now controlled by the GoI.

The encounters with the Euro-Americans, as well as the Indians, had socio-cultural, religious and political effects on the Nagas. In the rationale of primitivism Nagas were subjugated. For the Nagas such a connotation was an amalgamation of two opposite perceptions, from two entirely different cultures, but with the same intend to control:

(i) Firstly, western rationalisation and the colonial 'superior scientific-know-how' interpretation that saw societies like the Nagas, living in close communion with nature, with no distinction between religion, state polity and secular life, as the earliest representation of human society and therefore not cultured enough to be human. People like the Nagas were therefore termed as primitives, savage and in many cases became anthropological specimens.

(ii) Secondly, the general understanding of Indian (Hindustani) cultural civilisation expressed through the Brahmanical system within structures of the caste system. Outside the caste system lies primitiveness, [40] people who are 'outcaste' or untouchables or tribal. Such a philosophy applied not only to the 'tribal' found in

profile of Indian Tribes, New Delhi: Discovery Publishing House, 1996, pp.xvii-xxv, in p.xviii.

[37] Mahmood Mamdani, quoted in, Aditya Nigam,*The Insurrection of Little Selves: The Crisis of Secular-Nationalism in India,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006, p.54.

[38] Kavita Phillips, *Race, Resource and Modernity in Colonial South India,* p. 25.

[39] Armin W. Geertz, Can we move beyond primitivism? On recovering the indigenes of indigenous religions in the academic study of religion, in Olupona (ed.), *Beyond Primitivism,* pp 37-70, in p. 52.

[40] Kaushik Ghosh, A market for Aboriginality: Primitivism and Race Classification in the Indentured Labour Market of Colonial India, in Gautam Bhadra, et al (ed.), *Subaltern Studies X: Writings of South*

mainstream India but also to tribals like the Nagas found along the frontiers who were outside the political or cultural influence of the Brahmanical structure. Consequently like the dalits/adivasis found in mainstream India, Nagas without any trace of caste system, were considered outcaste, whose mere presence defiled upper-castes Indians. The two main differences between the Nagas and the Dalits:- (a) Nagas are not Hindunised in any form, they retained their cultural practices and had no significant contact with Indian cultural civilization until the mid 20th century. They do not share the Hindu value system. The ancestral land of the Nagas belongs to them; (b) Though forcefully occupied by the GoI, Nagas occupy their ancestral land because of their historical defiance to the British occupation and declaration of a separate political entity in 1947 from the Indian political entity.

The representation of the Nagas as tribal soon caused them to be looked upon and categorised as 'primitives', 'barbaric', 'savage', or 'junglies' (forest people). This was a perception that had enduring political as well as cultural effects on the Nagas. Tribe as a primitive social grouping was considered incompatible with modern political grouping and unable to self-govern. Therefore, when discussing the influence of the modern era on Naga society, it cannot be taken as a different entity without understanding two crucial processes of modernisation, namely, political modernity in the form of GoI occupation and Indian federalism, and cultural modernity in the form of British intrusion and Christianity.

An enquiry into the formation of nations and their determination to govern themselves in a tribal context within the modern era will be discussed in the following sections. Accordingly the representation of tribe and ethnicity as two opposite dichotomies that represent traditional and modern social groupings will be discussed. Some theorists have gone to the extent of asserting that the traditional tribal societies that have not been destroyed by modern industrial capitalism and the nation-state have been absorbed into larger social entities.[41]   The following sections will explore the conflict and interplay of these two representations in modern politics. The purpose is to

Asian History and Society, New Delhi ; Oxford : Oxford University Press, 1999, pp. 8-48, in p. 22.
[41] Anthony Giddens, _The Nation-State and Violence: Volume Two of a Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism_, Polity Press, 1985, reprinted, 1987, p.255.

question the contradiction and legitimacy of tribe within the framework of the nation-state.

2.2   The usage and representation of Tribe as 'Primitives' and Traditional

The term tribe is interchangeable with indigenous peoples, native people, native Indians or aboriginals. It has also come to be referred to as the 'first peoples, "because their people were original inhabitants of their land in which they are now either occupied or colonised. Fourth World, as opposed to the First, Second and Third World was a term referred to distinguish the Indigenous people from the Rest by the World Council of Indigenous Peoples. Social scientists have also come to refer to them as an 'ethnic group' or 'ethnicity'.[42]   But for the purpose of this thesis, the term tribe will be used, even though terms such as indigenous peoples and indigenes are favoured today to move away from the colonial ideological baggage found within terms such as tribe and natives.[43] This is because it was under colonial administration and anthropological categories such as 'primitive', 'backward' and 'uncivilised' that parts of Naga Hills were administered by the British colonial power and subjugated by the GoI.

The Oxford dictionary[44] defines tribe as a "social division in a traditional society, consisting of families or communities, held by social, economic and religious or blood

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[42] Introduction in P H Gulliver (ed.), *Tradition and Transition and East Africa,* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969, p. 5-38, p.8.

[43] Kavita Philip, *Race, Resource and Modernity in Colonial South India,* p.12.

[44] *The New Oxford Dictionary of English,* Oxford University Press, 1998, The same   dictionary also makes mention of the independent Indian tribes, the ancient Roman political division, and the tribes of ancient Israel-each traditionally descended from one of the twelve sons of Jacob. Besides the dictionary there are many definitions of the term tribes. For examples see, Introduction in P H Gulliver (ed.) *Tradition and Transition and East Africa,* p.5-3. As such, tribe is not a new social grouping that only found its way at the beginning of European colonial exploration and exploitation. As stated by P.H. Gulliver, "tribe has long been used in English, with specific reference to the biblical people of Israel and to certain divisions of ancient Rome (Latin: tribus); but since its appearance in Middle English it has acquired both the vagueness of everyday speech and a plurality of meanings which often are contradictory, dogmatic, pejorative and emotive, and both specialized and general", ibid, p.5-38, p.7. According to Lloyd Fallers, "the word tribe, in its' classical sense, properly applies to only some pre-colonial African societies, as it does to some pre-Roman European one.   Tribalism today usually means ethnic divisiveness...", quoted in Paul James, *Globalism, Nationalism and Tribalism, Bringing Theory Back In,* London : Sage, 2006, p.28.   As in modern society the twelve tribes of the people of Israel are spread all across the world "as variously diaspora nation, an ethnicity, and a religious creed; but no longer a tribe", ibid. p. 29.

ties with a common culture and dialect, typically have (having) a recognised leader".
It goes on to explain that the term tribe is broadly accepted in historical contexts. But
it acknowledges that the word is problematic in contemporary contexts because it is
used to refer to a community living within a traditional society. It further explains that
it is "strongly associated with past attitudes of white colonial towards so-called
primitive or uncivilised peoples living in remote underdeveloped places". So the
dictionary suggests that for all these reasons, the preferable alternative terms for tribe
are community or people.

Tribal people, despite having their own territorial character and cultural practices,
have found "little meaning apart from the colonial and imperial cultures in the modern
period".[45] They are rather seen as a social group that lags behind the 'Rest' because of
little or no economic development and who require only economic incentives in the
aftermath of decolonisation or when they are forcefully merged into a nation-state.
There is also a tendency to 'upgrade' tribal groupings as an ethnic group, eligible to
be a separate political entity, when the tribal grouping successfully functions and
integrates into the role of a modern nation-state. However when states in the
developing world, particularly in Asia and Africa, disintegrate and descend into civil
wars, the cause of the conflicts is often termed as 'tribal primitivism' or intractable
ancient hatred. This provides a rationale that disqualifies tribal groupings from being
capable of becoming vibrant political entities in modern terms, meaning only an
ethnic group and not a tribal group have a sense of political awareness that qualifies
the group to become a nation.   Along this line, Bassam Tibi argues that 'tribe' has a
Eurocentric connotation. "European historians," he argues, "usually refer to social
groupings in premodern periods of their own history as ethnies but refer to similar
entities in non- European history disparagingly as tribes."[46]   In other words
'tribalism' is not something seen as a European social phenomenon but one belonging
to Africa, parts of Asia and the Arab world. Adam Kuper, in 'The Invention of

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[45] Charles H. Long, A postcolonial meaning of religion, in Olupona (ed.), *Beyond Primitivism*, pp.
89-98, in p. 89.
[46] Bassam Tibi, Old tribe and Imposed Nation-States in the Middle East, in John Hutchinson and
Anthony D. Smith, *Ethnicity*, Oxford: New York: Oxford University press, 1996, pp.174-179, in p.
174. Bassam however emphasised that the Arab context does not have the negative connotation in the
adjective tribal as found in the African context.

Primitive Society', writes that anthropologists rather "over-generalized their descriptions around ethnocentrically driven evolutionary schemas." [47] Gulliver observes that tribes often "represented an early stage in the lineal evolution of human societies...".[48] These people were often regarded as primitives and remnants of the past.[49] But to pointedly categorise tribes as ancient, primitive and lacking any political structure even within social structures and administration is far removed from the reality, as will be pointed out in the Naga case.

Despite the variations in terminology, some of the salient features about tribal groups that are considered 'traditional' and therefore non-political are: their social organisation is based on close kin relationships with a strong sense of community. Theorists also acknowledge the intricate social network that underlines the honour and position of an individual in the society. For example, Levi-Strauss, writing about the social organisation of some South American tribes states, "these so-called primitives have devised systems of an astonishing complexity: exogamous moieties cross-cutting recreational or ceremonial moieties, secret societies, men's clubs and age grades".[50] The other features they share are that they are egalitarian in outlook and therefore do not have any class division or division of labour. They find their reasoning in the sacredness of nature and taboos, while their rationality is close to rudimentary tools and basic survival. Except for a few tribal groups they are historically illiterate in the sense that they do not have a written script but they have a strong oral tradition. It can be said that it was with the influence of modernity in the form of colonisation and through missionary work that literacy was introduced.

Returning to Gellner, he divides the three stages of history as: the pre-agrarian or the hunting-gathering era, the agrarian, and the industrial.[51] Anthony Giddens[52] also characterised history into three stages, with 'tribal society' as the earliest which

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[47] Quoted in Paul James, *Globalism, Nationalism, Tribalism,* p. 31.
[48] Gulliver, Introduction, in Gulliver (ed.), *Tradition and Transition and East Africa,* London :Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969. p.9.
[49] Survival International, *Tribal Peoples: A resource Pack,* Survival International. Dublin Local Group ,1995, p.3.
[50] Claude Levi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology,* Harmondsworth : Penguin, 1972, p.105.
[51] See Ernest Gellner (1996), *Nations and Nationalism,* p.5.
[52] See Anthony Giddens, *The Constitution of Society,* Polity Press, 1984, reprinted, 1993, p.195.

equates to segmented oral cultures in character. The next stage is 'class-divided society' but still traditional, and the third stage is the 'class society' which equates to capitalism and the nation-state.

Such categorisation might overlook the existence of communities that are defined as tribes in the modern era and deny recognition within the political formation of the nation-state because of their perceived 'primitivism'. Such categorisation might also suggest 'civilization' as a redeemable necessity towards tribal people from 'barbaric' practices, which could be made possible through colonial expansion or assimilation by dominant power. Assimilation, as suggested by Giddens, was often done by different policies of coercion, monetary incentives, pacification and human plantation through transferable labourers etc. Giddens' understanding of tribal community implies that tribal community cannot independently survive on its own if it is to exist. The disadvantage of categorising tribal community into a stage of history is that it dis-empowers the group of their adaptability to exist in the modern era of the 'industrial nation-state'.

Patricia Crone,[53] commenting on the concept of tribe, writes that it is the biological principle of organisation in terms of age, kinship, and gender that demarcates a tribal from a non-tribal society and not the "various factors which underlie, accompany or result from it". Crone argues that a tribe is a primitive society because as a "biological organization however diversely elaborated…it cost nothing to set up or maintain …it works best in the absence of social differentiation (the more similar people are in other respects, the more fully kinship, sex and age can differentiate their role)… ". Crone admits that there is "such a thing as a tribal state" but argues that tribe is a stateless society. Because "tribal state is superimposed on a society which is designed to cope without it and which may accordingly revert to statelessness at any time". Therefore, she points out that "only when the autonomous and self-sufficient nature of the building blocks has been undermined that we have a state as opposed to tribe". According to her, "all stateless societies" are "tribal…provided that they are more than simple bands and that they make systematic use of kinship for their

[53] Patricia Crone, The Tribe and the State, in John A. Hall (ed.), *The State: Critical Concepts,* Vol. I,

socio-political organization". Crone therefore concludes that despite the affinity, "the tribe and the modern state represent two opposite ends of the organizational spectrum, and the transition from one to the other requires a development so complex that one end of the spectrum is likely to have been forgotten long before the other is even in sight".[54]   While Crone has observed some basic 'essence' of tribal community, her understanding of tribe is rather misrepresented and therefore her conclusions narrow.

As mentioned earlier, the common feature tribal communities might share is their social organisation based on close-kin relationship, with a strong sense of community. However, these definitions of tribes do not emphasise the importance of their land and territory found deep into their ceremonial, religious, cultural and social set-up. This is important, because without the land and space they share, the presence of strong kinship and social administration would not be possible. Otherwise tribes would not exist except in the form of a "simple band" that wanders from one space to another. It is the attachment to their land that holds the people together, and it is their kin relationships that make it possible to protect their land. So kinship found in tribal society and land ownership goes together, at least among tribal communities who are settled and agrarian to some extent. To disregard the importance of land in the character of a tribal community is to separate the very essence that is sacred to their 'Being' in the form of the land being associated with their ancestors. Therefore, 'bands' who usually wander in groups of families as food-gatherers cannot be tribal in character. A collection of families does not imply a tribe in the first place.   To be a tribe in the form of a social group requires an amount of continuity that centres and wanders around some particular expanse of landscape and territorial space on which they evolved. During such a stage of 'wandering', various settlements eventually developed. Such settlements might be referred to as the 'ancestral village or territory'. This is important because the claim and concept of 'nation' by tribes and indigenous peoples developed because of their territorial character.   'Bands' do not claim to be nations. On the other hand, while there might be an absence of a common structural administration amongst these various settlements or villages, the desire to protect their land and identity that comes with the attachment to land exists. In that way a tribe is

pp. 446-473, in p. 446-447.

not only a group of families genealogically affiliated, but a larger continuation of various villages or settlements, comprising of various clans that share a common traditional culture and practices with variation in their languages. When interaction develops over time among these various villages or groups they might be held together by a belief in a common mythical ancestor.

Based on this core concept of territorial attachment and the compact geographical expanse a tribe share, 'tribe' in the Naga context is defined as:

(i) Every traditional community or people cannot be referred to as a tribe. For instance, a band or group of hunters or herders, or forest dwellers are not tribes. The various villages that made up the tribe found in Naga Hills were agriculturalist who practiced either terraced or shifting cultivation as their main occupation. In this sense, they lived in an agrarian society in preliterate times. They used communal symbols, songs and folklore to convey and represent common shared knowledge.

 (ii) Tribe for the Nagas is not an ancient social grouping. It is rather a formation in response to modern socio-political influences. But when the concept of tribe as a socio-political grouping was introduced, it was mobilised and formed along the lines of the ancient beliefs in myth, folklore and a common ancestor found in the villages. A historical myth that neighbouring villages within the same geographical area were from a common ancestor also existed. But since each independent village was able to protect, defend and provide everything for the village members, a collective unit for all the villages of a particular tribe did not exist.   Tribe as a social or political organisation was absent.   It developed only when outsiders, firstly in the form of the colonial British and eventually the American missionaries, advanced into the territory held by the villages in the Naga Hills.   The Naga Hills was located to the east of the colonial Assam tea plantations. The independent villages in the Naga Hills realised that they could not defeat the British individually.   The insularity of these villages was removed when they made alliances with different neighbouring villages against a perceived enemy which was encroaching upon their land in the mid 19th century. It was the fear of a power, much superior to them, that slowly brought them together. As a result, their insularity was gradually removed and interaction became a permanent

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[54] Ibid., p.461.

fixture. On the other hand, different missionary activities, which included writing down the language of the villagers they came to interact with, gave the consciousness that led to the development of tribal affinity based on a common language shared by various villages. Christianity provided the space and brought various tribes to interact as Nagas. Eventually, beside a common language, these villages discovered that they were sharing more or less the same village administration and form of representation in carrying out the village polity. But it was not individual villages asking for independence or claiming to be a nation - it was the collective villages through their various tribes under the generic Naga ethnic group that sought a distinct political identity.

(iii)   Village in the Naga context is understood as the traditional socio-political kinship, grouped with exclusive territorial legitimacy and independence, and with elaborate administration and representation in running the village polity. These villages were   ceremoniously founded by their ancestors and thereby shared real or mythical origins and foundations. Each village comprised of more than two clans. Each clan member is considered to be a direct descendant from their founding clan-founder who is usually a male figure.   When outsiders invaded the village, the villagers went to battle to fight, protect and defend not their tribe but their independent, individual villages. This can be understood as the classical Naga village. Therefore, a cluster of related or non-related families and individuals in a new 'settlement', and forming a village in recent times, is not a village in the Naga context. In India, or in the Western context, a form of social grouping away from the heart of the city and town might qualify as a village. Not so in the 'classical' Naga traditional ethos.

(iv)   Tribe therefore is a relatively new socio-cultural and political organisation that developed since the late 19th century.

(v)   Tribe consists of all the villages along the same line of languages which can have slight differences in dialect. A particular tribe is formed along the same geographical area, not because it is formed based on regional distribution, but because the villages with the same language share the same geographical area.[55]

(vi) A village belonging to a tribe does not transfer the village land and administration

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[55]   An exception here among the Naga tribe is the Rengma tribe where they are found settled in

to its tribe even today. Rather, the territory of each village within the tribe is respected and accepted. There can be no tribe without villages, but if there are villages with distinct languages and village polity they form a tribe. So the size of each tribe might vary from 40-200 villages.

(vii) In this sense, the tribes amongst the Nagas are traditional, not only because of their 'biological principle of organization', but because land belongs to the villages, and not to their tribe or the state, or any form of modern political government. These villages form a tribe.

(viii) Hence, the Naga people consist of more than sixty major tribes. Therefore to say that Naga is a tribe is not correct. Rather Naga is the political expression of all these collective tribes that were respectively formed by numerous villages which comprised of more than two clans in the first place.

(ix)   This oneness was enhanced when people, perceived as Nagas or who claimed to be Naga, suffered under the hands of the Indian armed forces. Resisting an aggressive Indian military regime was not as hard as developing a cohesive Naga national apparatus where representation, decision-making, social integration and power-sharing, could be addressed in a centralised apparatus. In this light, Naga nationalism was primordialistic in approach because sons and daughters of the soil, with common ancestors and ancestral land since time immemorial, were the rationale used for the mobilisation and solidarity against a perceived enemy. The primordial stance drew different Naga tribes comprising of more than 1,000 villages together. But this integration and expansion of different tribes with different languages and customs as a single political unit posed serious challenges as well. Besides the lack of a cohesive centralised apparatus to maintain the momentum, these tribes also failed to develop a platform to discuss their vital common interests over resources, power, and decision- making, other than their common fear of losing their land. These crucial issues are silenced and suppressed by some so-called dominant elitists or groups, only to give birth to a reactionary political separatism within the Naga national movement. Tribal separatism, rather than tribal integration into Naga nationhood, soon became one of the biggest challenges. Any disagreement on the mechanism of power, representation, decision-making and resources was addressed only by a vicious cycle

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Nagaland states as well as in Assam state.

of reactions along tribal lines since that was the easiest way to mobilise and the only platform to gain access to political voice, power or interest.

(x)   In the Naga case, the primordial or traditional socio-political grouping of a village enlarged its political grouping and identity with numerous villages in the form of a tribe when their social, political and cultural entity was threatened.   These tribes collectively expressed their solidarity under the generic term Naga.

(xi)   It is therefore not the existence of tribal grouping as a traditional form of political grouping that is incompatible with modern state representation, but the lack of a crucial political mechanism to support the political growth and nation-building within the collective tribal grouping that is the main challenge.

For this reason the next section will examine some of the main approaches to the concept of ethnicity, because ethnicity is often regarded as the form of political grouping that is compatible with modern state formation.

2.3   Ethnicity understood as a modern socio-political group

Since a tribal community is generally regarded as a pre-modern social group equating to a stateless stage and traditional, it is important to analyse the growth of ethnicity which makes a social group in the modern era constitute or contribute to the formation of a modern nation-state. Anthony Smith and John Hutchinson[56] in their book write that there are numerous approaches to ethnicity. They however differentiate the various approaches into two main camps, namely, primordialist and the modern instrumentalist. This section will briefly examine the primordial and the instrumentalist concept of ethnicity but it will not go into detail about every approach and theory in the two camps.

2.3.1   Primordialism

The primordialists approach ethnicity with a belief in the "antiquity and naturalness of

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[56] Introduction, in John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith, *Ethnicity,* pp. 3-16.

nation".[57]   Based on Geertz's work, the concept of primordialism according to Jack

Eller and Reed Coughlan contains three distinct ideas:

> (1) Primordial identities or attachments are 'given', *a priori*, underived,
> prior to all experience or interaction - in fact, all interaction is carried out
> within the primordial realities.   Primordial attachments are 'natural', even
> 'spiritual', rather than sociological...they have no social source.
> Accordingly, those things called primordial presumably have long
> histories. This is the aspect of primordialism which we call *apriority*.
> (2) Primordial sentiments are 'ineffable', overpowering, and coercive...if
> an individual is a member of a group, he or she necessarily feels certain
> attachments to that groups and its practices (especially language and
> culture)...they are binding...this aspect of primordialism is its ineffability.
>   (3) Primordialism is essentially a question of emotion or effect...these
> feelings make primordialism more than a mere interest theory...(e.g., class
> identities). This aspect of primordialism we shall call its affectivity.[58]

However, Ozkirimli argues that these ideas of cultural primordialism given by Eller

and Coughlan are a misinterpretation of Geertz's and Edward Shils' work. He argues

that Geertz never suggested that the objects of ethnic attachment were themselves

'given' or primordial; rather they are assumed to be "given by individuals".[59]

Explaining Geertz's works, V. Tilley writes that in fact Geertz is "making use of the

term 'primordial' more in the sense of 'first in a series...' in order to highlight the

ways in which foundation concepts provide the basis for other ideas, values, customs

or ideologies held by individual".[60] Geertz[61] himself writes that primordial bonds and

attachments through 'given' or through 'assumed' differ from "person to person, from

society to society, and from time to time". He asserted that the flow of attachment is

natural and explains that it is "spiritual affinity, rather than for social interaction".

He also points out that assumed blood ties, race, language, religion, region, and social

custom are the objects required to form ethnic ties. Geertz explored the relationship

between ethnicity, language, customs, and political loyalties in an era of 'nations',

'nationalism', attempts to   show the dilemmas and struggle of people, particularly

those coming out of colonisation.   Geertz writes that:

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[57] Umut Ozkirimli, *Theories of Nationalism: A critical Introduction*, Palgrave: Macmillan, 2000.p. 64.
[58] Jack Eller and Reed Coughlan, The Poverty of Primordialism, in Hutchinson and Smith, *Ethnicity,*
pp.45-51, in   p.45.
[59] Ozkirimli, *Theories of Nationalism,* p.72.
[60] Quoted in ibid., p. 73.
[61] Clifford Geertz, *The interpretation of Cultures*, Fontana Press, 1993, pp. 258-263.

"... the peoples of the new states are simultaneously animated by two powerful, thoroughly interdependent, yet distinct and often actually opposed motives - the desire to be recognized as responsible agents whose wishes, acts, hopes, and opinions "matter," and the desire to build an efficient, dynamic modern state. The one aim is to be noticed: it is a search for an identity, and a demand that that identity be publicly acknowledged as having import, a social assertion of the self as "being somebody in the world." The other aim is practical: it is a demand for progress, for a rising standard of living, more effective political order, greater social justice...this tension take a peculiarly severe and chronic form in the new states, both because of the great extent to which their peoples' sense of self remains bound up in the gross actualities of blood, race, language, locality, religion or tradition, and because of the steadily accelerating importance in the century of the sovereign state as a positive instrument for the realization of collective aims...".[62]

2.3.2   The instrumentalist approach

Instrumentalists on the other hand basically hold that "ethnic and national identities are convenient tools at the hands of competing elite groups for generating mass support in the universal struggle for wealth, power and prestige". [63]   The instrumentalists generally treat ethnicity as "a social, political, and cultural resource for different interest and status-groups".[64]   Instrumentalist holds the position that ethnicity is a resource created by members of a community to bring people together and mobilise them.[65] Unlike Geertz, Paul Brass argues that ethnicity and nationalism are not given.   Rather

"They are social and political constructions. They are creations of elites, who draw upon, distort and sometimes fabricate materials from the cultures of the groups they wish to represent in order to protect their well-being or existence or to gain political advantage for their groups as well as themselves...".[66]

Brass emphatically argues that ethnicity and nationalism are "modern phenomena inseparably connected with the activities of the modern centralizing state".[67] He distinguishes ethnic groups, communities and nations on the basis of levels of

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[62]   Ibid., p.258.
[63]   This is an analysis on the instrumentalist approach that is summarised by Umut Ozkirimli, *Theories of Nationalism: A Critical Introduction,* p.109.
[64]   Introduction, in Hutchinson and Smith (eds.), *Ethnicity*, p. 8.
[65]   Campbell, D., *National Deconstruction, Violence, Identity and Justice in Bosnia*, p.88.
[66]   Paul Brass,   *Ethnicity and Nationalism: theory and comparison*, Sage Publications, 1991,   p.8
[67]   Ibid .

consciousness. An ethnic group is an objectively distinct group but its members do not necessarily attach subjective importance or political significance to that fact. A community is an ethnic group whose members have developed an awareness of common identity and have sought to draw boundaries of the group. "A community becomes a nationality or a nation only when it mobilizes for political action and attains political significance."[68] However, not all groups move in this direction: some disintegrate or merge into the larger society, others retain their separate identity. Brass[69] emphasizes the role of elite competition as the basis for ethnic groups developing a subjective consciousness and making political demands, though it should go beyond elite competition. That is why, for Brass, 'ethnic category' is:

> "Any group of people dissimilar from other peoples in terms of objective cultural criteria and containing within its membership, either in principle or in practice, the elements for a complete division of labour and for reproduction, forms an ethnic category." [70]

Brass however stresses that the 'objective cultural criteria' are susceptible to change and are not fixed. He also adds that it is only during the process of ethnic transformation into nationalism that the boundaries separating various ethnic categories become clearer and sharper.

Essentially there are both similarities and differences between these two approaches. The instrumentalist also accepts the fact that the basis for the 're-construction' of nations, which is a feature of the modern nation-state, derives its formation from the pre-existing social and cultural network found in primordial ethnic groups. In many ways, tribes and ethnic communities share common features, especially within the primordial approach. However, the way that tribe as an ethnic formation or a political grouping differs within instrumentalism is the lack of, or failure in creating, vital interests and taking into account the existence of power struggle, status-group and resources into account. It is also the refusal on the part of the tribal grouping to accept

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[68] This is an analysis on Brass's definition on instrumentalism given by Ishtiaq Ahmed, *State, Nation and Ethnicity in Contemporary south Asia,* London and New York: Pinter, 1996, paperback edition, 1998, p.21.
[69] Paul R. Brass, Ethnic Groups and Ethnic Identity Formation, in Hutchinson and Smith (eds.), *Ethnicity,* pp. 85-90.
[70] Quoted in Ozkirimli, *Theories of Nationalism, p* 11.

that the grouping of the tribe as a political entity is a construction of the different villages within the tribe. This is not because they need the tribe, but because the village needs to secure the interests of its territorial character. Having said this, in the Naga context, various villages grouped together along linguistic lines to form their respective tribes when modernity, in the form of colonial intrusion, came to Nagaland. In this way the tribe did not form the villages but it was the villages that formed their own tribe. However, political tribal grouping espoused the egalitarian essence of village that existed before the formation of tribe when the social grouping was much smaller and the political context was entirely different.

The emulation of village egalitarianism into the tribal factor produced a denial of social and political reality in terms of inequality in occupation, literacy, and power in the new tribal political organization. This is because some villages were influenced much earlier by the modern feature of literacy. As a result, the individual with more education or 'clerisy' slowly assumed power and decision-making in the new political grouping. The manipulation of the majority Nagas by the growing dominant class, which controlled power and divided people along tribal lines according to their interests line, created disintegration rather than integration. In the light of the new political system smaller villages had no political representation or privileges, because the new political grouping (tribes) 'imported' the modern form of majority vote of election. The Naga tribes who were influenced much later by literacy were slowly left out in the decision-making process and power-sharing. Thereby, it created inequality and injustices because the distribution of political power and representation was unfair and misrepresented in the new political formation. The belief in egalitarianism denied the presence of power manipulated by the 'elites' over the new collective political formation of Naga ethnicity. Tribal dynamics of these kinds within the ethnic Naga society have seen the rise of tribal separatism as a political reaction in order to assert power and gain access to opportunities.

For these reasons the instrumentalist approach to ethnicity can be incorporated with the primordial approach in Naga political expression, not to elevate the position of the elite but to accept the dynamics of tribal political development in a more objective

manner.   The Naga tribes must accept the need and reality that the vital interests of each tribe can be represented in the new political mechanism. This representation should simultaneously correspond with the political expression of a Naga nation. The paradigm shift of political philosophy from ancestral egalitarianism to political interest and elite competition can help to develop and address the core issues that surround tribal politics in the evolving Naga nation. A just way of collectively channelling power and resources can be developed between the Naga tribes so that the security of the villages within the tribe becomes more feasible. Neglecting to incorporate these vital issues and failing to address them will constantly produce a vicious cycle of violence challenging the unification of the various tribes under Naga ethnicity, thus making political unification of a nation and peaceful existence difficult. Despite the inapplicability of Naga egalitarianism in Nagaland in a changed political situation, the essence of equality and justice is deeply rooted in the ethos of the 'Naga Being'.

In this sense, Nagaland is still a traditional society not because political mobilisation is along tribal lines but because it was in response to modernisation that the tribe was formed in the first place. However the traditional village network and authority continue to sway most decision-making with regard to village needs, interest and land resources. But on the other hand, the introduction of political modernisation in the form of Indian federalism in Nagaland divided the Nagas into various administrative units within the Indian Union. It is an entirely different form of representation which was incompatible with the village/tribal character of Naga ethnicity.   This has developed two forms of government amongst the Nagas. Firstly, the form of government through Indian federalism in the federal states, which is formalised and imposed upon the Nagas through the Indian Constitution without the consent of the Naga people. Secondly, the form of traditional governance found in the village and in the tribal bodies which is informal but more binding indigenously, socially and culturally. The respective tribe for the villages was formed as a result of more interaction through cultural modernisation, mainly in the form of Christianity.   This tribal formation, encouraged through Christianity, brought to various tribes a more cohesive political expression, affinity and unity in the form of Naga ethnicity.   In

this sense, Naga ethnicity is tribal in character because it is formed by the various tribes with their territorial character. But Naga as a political community is ethnic because all the various Naga tribes are based on a shared culture, ancestry and practices. They collectively envisioned a new form of political organisation in the light of a changing political environment and formed into a nation.

The Naga tribes individually faced discrimination and marginalisation outside their terrain. They feared that if they opened to mainstream India by accepting their political identity and merged into the Indian Union, they would either be assimilated or annihilated by a much more dominant and 'superior' culture. Therefore, to protect their identity, their territorial character and their cultural practices and customs, the tribes came together not only to assert their individual tribal identity but to collectively assert their desire to be under their own Naga political umbrella.

2.4 Nation and Nationalism

The tribal identity of the individual Naga tribes is a cultural right under a political system, whereas the ethnic identity of the Nagas is an assertion and declaration of a political identity as a nation collectively expressed by the Naga tribes. Naganess is therefore not only the assertion of cultural rights, but their self-determination to collectively create a political future based on their shared territory that qualifies them to be as a nation and therefore political in character. With such a forceful assertion from the tribes of the Nagas as a separate political entity, the components and features that constitute nationalism and a nation need to be examined.

Joseph Stalin's[71] classic definition of 'nation' describes it as: "primarily a community, a definite community of people…".

Renan famously proclaimed that at its heart a nation is:

> "a soul, a spiritual principle. Only two things, actually, constitute this

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[71] Joseph Stalin, Nationalism, in John Hutchinson and Anthony Smith (eds.), *Nationalism,* Oxford: New York: Oxford University press, 1994, pp. 18-21, in p.18.

soul, this spiritual principle. One is in the past, the other is in the present. One is the possession in common of a rich legacy of remembrances; the other is the actual consent, the desire to live together, the will to continue to value the heritage which all hold in common. ...nation...is the end product of a long period of work, sacrifice and devotion. The worship of ancestors is understandably justifiable, since our ancestors have made us what we are...the existence of a nation...is an everyday plebiscite; it is like the very existence of the individual, a perpetual affirmation of life."[72]

For Weber, the sense of "ethnicity and nationality is both political and cultural."[73] He argues that a nation is distinguished from communities by their political and military action, and their quest for statehood Thus Weber defines nations as:

"A community of sentiment which would adequately manifest itself in a state of its own; hence a nation is a community which normally tends to produce a state of its own.".[74]

Benedict Anderson[75] defines nations as imagined political communities. This implies finite territorial boundaries, sovereignty and self-determination to their members that is shared by widely-separated groups of individuals. But it is imagined because "the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion".[76] It is imagined as a community because, "regardless of the action, inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship."[77] Communities therefore can be artificial according to Benedict's argument.

These definitions and concepts of nation cover a wide range of issues about the origin,

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[72] Ernest Renan, Quest-ce qui'nue nation? (What is a nation ?), in Hutchinson and Smith, 1994, (eds.), *Nationalism,* pp. 17-18,p.17
[73] Quoted in Anthony D. Smith, *Theories of nationalism,* London : Duckworth, 2nd ed., 1983, p.20. .
[74] Quoted in Anthony Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism: A critical survey of recent theories of nations and nationalism,* London and New York: Routledge, 1998, p.14. See also, Smith (1983), p.2
[75] Benedict Anderson Imagined Communities, in Hutchinson and Smith (eds.), *Nationalism,* pp. 89-96, in p. 88.
[76] Quoted in Umut Ozkirimli,*Theories of Nationalism,* p.144. Anderson goes on to write that the bases for national consciousness were laid by print-languages. He points out that, in the development of capitalism the printed word and circulation gave a means of language to develop an image of antiquity in the idea of nation through unified communication and exchanges. Anderson stresses the point that "imagining does not imply falsity".
[77] Quoted, ibid., p.144. Analysis on Anderson are from ibid.

rights, nature, and future of a nation. The character of nations therefore are communities or peoples who perceive to share a same descent, who are not yet integrated and institutionalised in the political form of a state. But they express themselves as a single political identity because of their common languages or descent, settlement, or customs and traditions[78] or their desire to be as a single political entity.

Nationalism is an expression and it is an outbreak of emotion, developed when people are under strain because of a disorientating social and economic transition[79] and therefore it is psychological as much as it is ideological, social and a physical expression. It is argued that in the past two centuries it has been the driving force behind all significant political developments and was presented as a political movement as well as an ideology of the common people's victory over corrupt monarchs and regimes.[80] Nationalism as a concept might be widely contested but it is regarded as a necessary political movement for any form of political identity to be institutionalised as a nation-state. Most writers agree that nationalism is a modern phenomenon when ethnic communities became conscious of their political rights and express it in a more cohesive way.

Basically, theorists who extort the respective approaches to ethnicity continue with the same approach towards nations and nationalism.[81] This also shows that although these two concepts might not be synonymous with each other, they are still intertwined with each other. Nationalism has wide-ranging theories to 'preserve the nation' but the two main arguments around ethnicity and nationalism are between the 'givens or natural; or primordial' as opposed to the 'constructed'. 'Givens' in the

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[78] Jurgen Habermas, The European nation-state-Its Achievements and its Limits, in Gopal Balakrishan (ed.), *Mapping the Nation*, London: Verso, 1996, pp.281-294, in p.282.
[79] Charles Taylor, Nationalism and Modernity, in Robert Mckim and Jeff McMahan (eds.), *The morality of Nationalism,* New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997, pp.31-55, in p.32.
[80] Michael Hechter, *Containing Nationalism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, p.6.
[81] Like ethnicity, nationalism also shares the same two main approaches - (i) the primordial paradigm whose main exponents are G.Shil and Clifford Geertz, See Umut Ozkirimli, *Theories of Nationalism,* pp. 64-84. Secondly, scholars who subscribe to the comprehensive forms of different paradigm of modernism are for instance the Marxist as well as neo-Marxists theorists like Tom Nairn and his Uneven Development, Michael Hechter and the Internal Colonialism, Paul R. Brass and instrumentalism, Eric J. Hobsbawn and the Invention of traditions, Ernest Gellner and High Cultures, Benedict Anderson and Imagined Communities, see ibid., pp. 85-166.

sense that nations have primordial attachment and they are an organic phenomenon; 'constructed' in the sense that they are the creation of the elites and some intellectuals depending on the social and political development.

Theorists like Anthony Smith[82] have attempted to explain and understand ethnicity and nationalism by finding evidence in the existence of primordial and past existence of ethnic identities and nationalism, despite arguing that nationalism is a modern phenomenon. Smith argues that at the core of ethnicity lies the central values, symbols, traditions, myths and collective and historical memories, transmitted to the future, which he refers to as 'myth-symbol complex' (or ethno-symbolism). It is these 'ethno-symbol complexes', Smith argues, that modern nationalism seeks to revive. This in itself envisages the durability of ethnicity in the modern era more than those theories on nationalism that are promoted through instrumentalist and modern theorists.[83] Smith admits that the ethno-symbols that are derived from the 'older belief system' cannot give rise to nationalist movements in themselves. Rather they are:

> "relatively rich resources and building blocks for formulating, purveying, and disseminating images of the nation that the nationalists desire to forge, and for enthusing populations with the ideals of nationhood." [84]

Smith also admits that the elite can use elements of national identity that are based on sacred foundations and cultural resources as guarantors and guides. But he argues that this national heritage can be maintained, cultivated and stabilised with an aura of sanctity only when four kinds of cultural resources act as the pillars of national identity. These are: their authentication through a sense of community, territory, history, and destiny. In his later writings he goes on to refer to such cultural resources as "canonical and holy".[85]

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[82] See Anthony Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations,* Oxford : Basil Blackwell, 1986.
[83] Ibid., p, 15-16.
[84] Anthony Smith, *Chosen Peoples: Sacred Sources of National Identity,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003, p. 258.

Other theorists such as Paul Brass understand that ethnic identity and modern nationalism or 'nationality-formation'[86] develop "out of specific types of interactions between the leaderships of centralising states and elites, non-dominant ethnic groups, especially, but not exclusively, on the peripheries of those states".[87] On the primordial explanation that ethnic attachments are not rational and can potentially disrupt civil society, Brass is critical and puts forward two views. Firstly, this assumption ignores the "possibility that an ethnic identity may be felt or adopted for rational as well as affective reasons to preserve one's existence or to pursue advantage through communal action".[88] Secondly, he argues that there is no empirical evidence to support the view that primordial attachments because of their presumably highly-emotive character are more dangerous to civil order and less amenable to compromise than other kinds of potential conflict such as economic and class conflict. Brass acknowledges the relevance of primordial attachments and the rich cultural heritages that can be either ancient or 'newly-fashioned'. But he argues that the study of ethnicity and nationality is in part,

> " the study of politically-induced cultural change...study of the process by which elites and counter-elites within ethnic groups select aspects of the group's culture, attach new value and meaning to them and use them as symbols to mobilize the group, to defend its interests, and to compete with other group. In this process, those elites have an advantage whose leaders can operate most skilfully in relation to both the deeply-felt primordial attachments of group members and the shifting relationships of politics."[89]

In the case of India for instance, "sovereignty, unity, order, a strong state, secularism, democracy and parliamentarianism, economic self-sufficiency and the need for social and economic reform"[90] were the leading ideas of the nationalist elite. India's aspiration for secularism even though the secular Constitution borrowed heavily from

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[85] Ibid., pp. 28-59.

[86] Term used by Brass in *Ethnicity and Nationalism*, p. 9.

[87] Ibid., p.9. In this book Brass illustrates his theoretical arguments by bringing the example of the formation of the Indian Union. He studies two minority groups in India: the Indian Muslims in North India, and the Sikhs in Punjab. He consistently argues that the ethnic identity of the Muslims in North India has been influenced by the perspectives and political goals of different elite within the Muslim Community, just like policies towards Punjabis have been strongly influenced according to the relationships between the Centre, Punjab state and local elites.

[88] Ibid., p. 72.

[89] Ibid., p.75.

[90] Paul Brass, *The New Cambridge History of India, IV.1: The Politics of India since Independence,*

Hindu and Buddhist texts, declared that the Constituent Assembly and its representatives, as well as the people of India were the source of power for India. Declaring a secular India not only denied the divine right of the former princes to rule, it also resolved to ignore and consider any cultural group or ethnic demands in the new Union.

For Gellner [91] "the occurrence of nations and of nationalism is to be explained causally by the emergence of modern states and capitalism".[92] Such a phenomenon can happen only in an industrial society that is marked by a 'high culture'. On the other hand, for Eric Hobsbawn, 'invented tradition' means "a set of practices, normally governed by an overtly or tacitly accepted rule and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seeks to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition which automatically implies continuity with the past".[93] That is why, for Hobsbawn, both nations and nationalism "are products of social engineering" and "an ideological product of modern-states".[94]

These Western dichotomies, the primordialism and various forms of modernism in understanding, explaining and measuring developing nations and nationalism highlights the central problem of how to treat non-Western experiences. This is one of the central themes for post-colonial scholarship since the 1950s.[95] According to

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990, p.10

[91] Ernest Gellner (1996), *Nations and Nationalism,* p. 5. Also see, Gellner, Nationalism and High Culture, in John Hutchinon and Anthony Smith (eds.) *Nationalism,* pp.63-70,p.63. The analysis on Gellner in this paragraph is also with reference from, Anthony Smith (1998), *Nationalism and Modernism,* pp. 29-44 and Ozkirimli, *Theories of Nationalism*, pp. 127-137.

[92] Summarising Geller thesis in the Introduction in Joycelyne Couture, Kai Nielsen and Michel Seymour (eds.), *Rethinking Nationalism*, Calgary : University of Calgary Press, 1998, pp.1-61, in p. 13.

[93] Quoted in ibid., p.116.

[94] Summarised in ibid., pp. 1-61, p. 11.

[95] Introduction, Vincent P. Pecora (ed.), *Nations and Identities: Classic Readings*, Malden, Mass. ; Oxford : Blackwell, 2001, p.29. For Edward Said the fundamental problem of understanding the relationship of European empires to their Eastern colonies lay in the nature and uses of knowledge: "imperial power was informed by and enabled scholarly research on the putatively fixed nature of the Orient.". See Vincent P. Pecora(ed.), *Nations and identities,* p. 30 . Said wrote that, "Orientalism assumed an unchanging Orient, absolutely different (the reasons change from epoch to epoch) from the West.". Edward Said, *Orientalism*, Penguin Books, reprint 2003, p.96. Gayatri Spivak, Stuart Hall, Homi Bhabha, Partha Chatterjee are some notably postcolonial theorists who have contributed largely on the "imagined, socially and textually constructed character of race, ethnicity, nationality". See Introduction, Vincent P. Pecora (ed.).*Nations and Identities,* p.30. But it cannot be denied that the postcolonial theorists also developed their critique and borrowed some of their approach from the

Vincent P. Pecora, the differentiations of earlier historians and social scientists from post-colonial and cultural studies'approaches to national identity since Fanon are that:

> (1) post-colonial approaches are generally framed by imperialism and cultural, rather than political or economic colonization;
> (2) such study is often a politically engaged one   - that is, it is designed to serve the decolonization of the mind, imperialist and nationalist alike; and (3) the debate has depended far less on the historical or sociological interpretation of specific nationalist struggles than on the problem of hegemony   - that is, on the process by which new nations and minority cultures within established nations find its own voices in terms of Fanon's dialectic, neither assimilating to the dominant culture, nor reverting to an often illusory pre-colonial authenticity…"[96]

Without necessarily quoting the post-colonial struggle, the famous distinction of eastern (organic or cultural) and western (rational, or civic or political) nationalism comes from Hans Kohn.[97] Kohn argues that Western or political nationalism arose predominantly out of political occurrence and preceded the formation of the nation-state.   It arose as an effort to build a nation without having much regard for the past. Western or political nationalism expects the state to realise political values such as democracy, economic welfare and distributive justice, with homogenous culture and citizens. On the other hand, Eastern nationalism is devoid of any immediate connection with the present. Eastern nationalism developed not only at a later time but at a more backward stage of social and political development because "it grew in protest against and in conflict with the existing state pattern – not primarily to transform it into a people's state but to redraw the political boundaries in conformity with ethnographic demands and governance". Norbu[98] postulates, nationalism in Third World countries assumed an "anti-imperialist/anti-colonial stance whose vow was to replace foreign rule by native governance".   In the absence of an oriented-industrial society it is less political and more cultural. The cultural nationalists see each individual having rights which are valuable to the community,[99]

Western dichotomies.

[96] Introduction, Vincent P. Pecora (ed.), *Nations and Identities,*   pp.30-31.

[97] Hans Kohn, Western and Eastern Nationalism, in John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith (eds.) *Nationalism*, p. 162-164.

[98] Dawa Norbu, *Culture and Politics of Third World Nationalism*, Rouledge: London and New York, 1992, p. 22-23.

[99] John Hutchinson, Cultural Nationalism and Moral Regeneration, in Smith and Hutchinson (eds.),

rejecting universal citizenship rights. It is nationalism that elevated nations to pursue independence and self-determination.

Despite the various different approaches and theories 'over the means of how to preserve or create the nation', Anthony Smith argues that the 'end' to preserving the nation remains the same. Some of the main propositions at the core of the nationalist doctrine according to Smith are:

1 Humanity is naturally divided into nations
2 Each nation has its peculiar character
3 The source of all political power is the nation, the whole collectivity
4. For freedom and self-realization, men must identify with nation
5. Nations can only be fulfilled in their own states
6. Loyalty to the nation-state overrides other loyalties
7. The primary condition of global freedom and harmony is the strengthening of the nation -state.[100]

The concept and nature of nations and nationalism directly brings about questions of the relationship with statehood. In relation to this question, the concept of nation-state is not only associated with modernisation but the ultimate expression of a political identity for any nation. It is argued along these lines that the interests and loyalty of citizens can be protected only in their own state.

This directly leads to the issue of the Nagas'assertion not only as an ethnic community with political issues but as a nation asserting its 'separateness' through a state structure because of its continuity and territorial character. But their assertion was unilaterally disregarded by GoI on the basis of their 'backwardness' and 'smallness'. The political reality in modern times is that the nation-state is the only political system that is recognised and permitted as a legitimate entity. When the GoI occupied Nagaland and made it part of the Indian Union, Naga political rights as a nation were suppressed.

2.5 Nation-state and Self-determination

Walker Connor[101] distinguishes 'state' as the major political subdivision of the globe.

Nationalism, pp. 122-131, in p. 122.
[100] Anthony Smith (1983), *Theories of Nationalism*, p.21.
[101] Walker Connor, A nation is a nation, is a state, is an ethnic group, is a.., in Hutchinson and Smith

'Nation' is a more difficult concept because its essence is a psychological bond that joins, as well as differentiates, it within the sub-conscious conviction of its members from all other people in a most vital way.   David McCrone[102] writes that the 'state' operates in its own territory as the sole, exclusive power and prerogatives of rule and this unity is expressed through the medium of a unified fiscal system, a single national language, a unified legal system and a single currency.   McCrone writes that the common idea of the modern state is to characterise it as the nation-state, in which the social (society), the political (the state) and the cultural realm (the nation) are viewed as one.

The nation-state is often regarded as the ultimate achievement of a nation to attain sovereignty which, according to Hinsley, is the final and absolute political authority in the political community.   It developed in the modern world "in response to and in support of the states".[103]   Morgenthau[104] defines sovereignty as 'supreme power over certain territory', thereby making the idea of territorial integrity and sovereignty of a state inseparable.   Roberts defines state as:

> "...the presence of a supreme authority, ruling over a defined territory, who is recognized as having power to make decisions in matters of government (and) is able to enforce such decisions and generally maintain order within the state.   Thus the capacity to exercise coercive authority is an essential ingredient; the ultimate test of the ruler's authority is whether he possesses the power of life and death over his subjects."[105]

Michael Mann argues that the state contains four main elements:

> a) a differentiated set of institutions and personnel embodying
> b) centrality in the sense that political relations radiate outwards from a centre to cover
> c)   a territorially-demarcated area, over which it exercises
> d) a monopoly of authoritative binding rule-making, backed up by monopoly of the means of physical violence. [106]

(eds.), *Nationalism*, pp. 36-46, in p,36.

[102] David McCrone, *The Sociology of Nationalism: tomorrow's ancestors*, London : Routledge, 1998, pp. 88-90.

[103] Hinsley, quoted in Joshua Castellino, *International Law and Self-determination: the interplay of the politics of territorial possession with formulations of post-colonial national identity*, Hague; London: Martinus Nijhoff, 2000, p.91.

[104] Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, New York ; London : McGraw-Hill, 1993. p.13.

[105] K.Roberts, quoted in Stuart Hall, The State in Question, in   Gregor McLennan, David Held and Stuart Hall (eds.),   *The Idea of the Modern State,* Open University Press, 1984, pp.1-28, in p.1.

[106] Michael Mann , The Autonomous Power of the State: its Origins, Mechanisms and Results, in John A. Hall (ed.), *The State: Critical Concepts, Vol. I,* pp.   331-353,   in p.333. He equates the last line

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Mann argues that the 'infrastructural power' of the state that lies within the centralized institution of state is the most defining feature of the modern state. The concept of nation-state "always entails a notion of power".[107] The origin and the legitimacy of state power according to Mann arise because:

> 1. "The necessity of state: ...societies....required ...rules, particularly those relevant to the protection of life and property, be set monopolistically and this has been the province of the state. From this necessity, autonomous state power derives...
> 2. The multiplicity of State Functions: (a) the maintenance of internal order. This may benefit all, or law-abiding subjects of the state...This function probably best serve a dominant economic class constituency.
> (b) Military defence /aggression, directed against foreign foes... defence may be genuinely collective; aggression usually has more specific interest behind it...
> (c) The maintenance of communications infrastructures: roads, rivers, message systems, coinages, weights and measures, marketing arrangements...
> (d)Economic redistribution: the authoritative distribution of scarce material resources between different ecological niches, age groups, sexes, regions, classes, etc...
> 3. The territorial Centrality of the State: .this is the third and the most important precondition of state power..."[108]

The classic definition of the state in modern international law is given in Article 1 of the Montevideo Convention on Rights and Duties of the States 1933[109], where it is written that the State in international law should possess the following qualifications: (a) a permanent population; (b) a defined territory; (c) government; and (d) capacity to enter into relations with other States. The population and the government are regarded as the energy of a state, and the political authority of the state is derived from territorial sovereignty and equality of all sovereign states, which in theory, at least, is considered to be a norm of "*jus cogen*".[110]

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with military power. Centralisation here could mean, single economy and occupational system, along with educational and legal rights though there could be exceptions as well. See Anthony Smith, State-Making and Nation-Building, in Hall (ed.), *The State: Critical Concepts, Vol II,* London and New York : Routledge, 1994, p.59-89.

[107] Stuart Hall, The State in Question, in McLennan, Held and Hall (eds.), The idea of the Modern State, pp.1-28, p.14.

[108] Michael Mann, The Autonomous Power of the State: its Origins, Mechanisms and Results, in Hall (ed.), The State: Critical Concepts, Vol. I, pp. 331-353, in pp. 333-34.

[109] The Montevideo Convention on the Rights and Duties of States, 1933 which was adopted by the 7th International Conference of American States, Quoted in Castellino, *International Law and Self-determination,* p. 77.

[110] Jus Cogen in International Law is peremptory norm that is so fundamental that a state cannot

The rights of a nation to exist and the political power a nation-state enjoys as the fundamental concept of the modern state has aggravated and justified military aggression and violence toward ethnic nations, including core ethnic and ethnic communities. This is particularly true in the case of the former colonies in Asia and Africa. Because here, the collective movement of different ethnic communities for national liberation and anti-colonialism against their common colonial power and the colonial state apparatus was quickly seized upon by the "small native bourgeoisies and intelligentsia" when the colonial state bequeathed them.[111] As Gellner has written:

> "To put it in simplest possible terms: there is a very large number of potential nations on earth. Our planet also contains room for a certain number of independent or autonomous political units. On any reasonable calculation, the former number (of potential nations) is probably much, much larger than that of possible viable states. "[112]

Smith argues that the nation-state is a Western concept, and the fact that the "only real state is the 'nation-state' and that the only realized nation is the 'nation-state'" has not only created turmoil over the geopolitical map, but a destructive fruitless quest for something unattainable such as their own 'nation-state'. Along the same line, Smith proposes that it is important to distinguish between state-making and nation-building.[113] He argues that an 'ethnic core' is essential through which the process of nation formation can begin. This ethnic core can allow the state mechanism to work because the ethic core has "transmuted ethnic groups or 'nations' into a territorial nation".[114] The presence of too many ethnic cores is liable to be a 'self-defeating exercise' and therefore Smith suggested that nations perhaps can evade

contravene it through a treaty. If it tried, the treaty is void, see, ibid., p. 91.
[111] Anthony Smiths' summary on P. Worsley, S.Amin and Sathyamurthy's writings, see Hall (ed.), *The State: Critical Concepts, Vol.II*, pp. 59-89.
[112] Quoted in Daniel Philpott, Self- determination in Practice, in Margaret Moore (ed.), *National self-determination and secession,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998, pp. 79-102, in p.90.
[113] Anthony Smith, in John A. Hall (ed.), *The State: Critical Concepts, Vol.II,* pp.59-89. Here Smith is using Karl Deutch's and D. Lerner's writings to analyse the Communication theories on nation-making. Smith borrowed nation-building from the communication theorists that incorporate social mobilisation and linguistics as well as cultural assimilation, "the use of mass media and mass education" into nation-building. But unlike the communications theorists on state-formation and nation making, Smith reiterates that the problem of 'national- congruence', making states and ethnic nations coexistence difficult has remained because of the tenacious character of nationalism.
[114] Ibid., p.80.

the agendum of nationalist by re-writing it.

On the other hand Hall also argues that the claim to legitimate sovereignty of a state cannot always be 'legal' but rather founded "in sheer possession of territory, or conquest by force". But if the rule is "effectively established if 'possession' is complete and unchallenged, the intruding power's 'de facto' sovereignty will be recognized".[115] The point here therefore is that the formation of the nation-state and the causes of nationalism might differ between the West and the Rest but the justification of state power by the nation-state within its own territory by both the West and the Rest is the most defining, commonly-shared feature. The rationale and the tendency to abuse state power is one of the challenging factors in reconciling the rights of the nation and its peoples.   It should also be clear that the desire to develop into a separate nation evolves not only as a result of solidarity to a separate mythology and past, but when the ethnic community experiences oppression, or fears annihilation and discrimination at the hands of the dominant power within the new post-colonial state.   There might be subtle policy of assimilation for the 'security' and 'stability' of the state by the state power towards the weaker members of the 'constructed' new state.   However when a source of power such as military aggression towards 'foes' is operated by the state,   then the target 'member' of the   'constructed 'state has the legitimate right to exist as a nation and fight   against the illegitimate occupation by the state.

In such a political picture, self-determination as a human right, and sovereignty as the basic right of a state, contradict each other. While self-determination appeals to the rights of the people based on democracy; sovereignty is the supreme entity of a state and it empowers a state to 'exercise coercive power and authority'. It is therefore important to examine the theoretical and practicality of self-determination from a political and legal perspective.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948[116] brought self-determination as a

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[115] Stuart Hall, The State in Question, in McLennan, Held and Hall (eds.), *The idea of the Modern State*, pp.1-28, p.18.
[116] www.un.org/Overview/rights.html. After World War I, US President Woodrow Wilson, included in

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fundamental human right and the UN Charter declares that:

> "To develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and to take other appropriate measures to strengthen universal peace." [117]

But Joshua Castellino[118] writes that the Wilsonian proclamation of self-determination in post-World War I was transformed from a concept of self-governance for oppressed minorities within Europe to the norm of self-determination that changed the course of history in the twentieth century by setting free the annexed lands of Africa and Asia in post-World War II. He points out that the main difference in UN self-determination was that 'people' were no longer defined ethnically or racially. These factors were subordinated to a group of people being under 'colonial rule'. It was an unequivocal contra-distinction to the Wilsonian proposal when the UN opted for the 'territorial' over the 'ethnic'. Here the UN insisted on maintaining territorial integrity as established arbitrarily by the former colonial power thereby creating the dangers which according to Michla Pomerance[119] were: (a) the disintegration of the new heterogeneous units into competing selves and (b) endless irredentism for the purpose of uniting groups artificially divided by the colonial process. Alfred Zemmin commented that "self-determination in other words was sound and healthy to the extent it concerned itself with cultural matters and dangerous to the extent that it asserted political rights".[120]

The concept of self-determination can be divided into two camps.[121] The first defends a 'permissive'[122] right which views secession as a part of the right to national self-determination which is the 'a priori' rooted in liberal democracy theory, and is a

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his proposal the right to self–determination of minorities within multi-ethnic states as a universal principle.
[117] Article 1, see www.un.org/aboutun/charter
[118] Catellino, *International Law and Self-determination*, p.21
[119] Michla Pomerance, *Self-determination in Law and practice: the new doctrine in the United Nations*, London: Nijhoff, 1982. p. 18-20.
[120] Quoted in ibid., p.58.
[121] Xiaokun Song, A Unified or an Independent Taiwan? A normative Assessment of the Cross-Strait Conflict, in Bruno Coppieters and Richard Sakwa (eds.), *Contextualizing Secession: normative studies in comparative perspective*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003, pp. 228-233.
[122] Ibid. The permissive camp also argues that the right is given so it can be acted upon unilaterally by the party that enjoys the right but under the condition that it adheres to moral practices and does not abuse the liberal principles.

sufficient condition for a democratically-concentrated group to exercise its right if a majority desire so.

The second camp supports a more 'restricted' view of the right of secession and self-determination. This camp argues that the right to self-determination is but only an element in a wider normative discourse justifying secession. Thus the right to secession is '*a posteriori*' and remedial in essence.[123]

Daniel Philpott[124] from 'permissive camp' argues that the 'remedial rights' only approach not only denies self-determination as a general right because it deprives democratic rights but it burdens its claimants group to show that self-determination would remedy some injustices it had suffered. Philpott also states that a plebiscite is not the only test for a group to seek self-determination; but must be liberal and democratic, meet distributive justice and protect the minority in its midst.

Even though self-determination is found in the UN Charter as a right, it has no international law to promote it and therefore it is still subordinate to sovereignty. Even if laws were enforced, the enforcers remain the state, acting under the UN Security Council resolution or regional organizations like NATO or ASEAN. But the 'restricted' camp of self-determination also does not rule out the right to self-determination and the right to secession, which means both camps may just reach the same verdict in practice in concrete cases.

On a different note Marion Young[125] articulated the principle of self-determination as

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[123] Lee Bunchheit and Allen Buchanan are prominent advocates who observe that self-determination is entitled to groups only when they suffer certain kinds of threats or grievances that include prior historical wrongs such as an invasion or annexation which is 'Remedial in essence.' See Lee C. Buchheit, *Secession: The legitimacy of Self-determination,* New Haven ; London : Yale University Press, 1978, pp. 216-245. Also see Allen Buchanan, Democracy and Secession, in Margaret Moore (ed.), *National Self-determination and Secession,* Oxford : Oxford University Press, 1998, pp.14-33.

[124] Daniel Philpott, Should Self-determination should be legalized? In David C. Rapoport and Leonard Weinberg (eds.), *The Democratic experience and Political Violence*, London : Frank Cass, 2001. pp. 107-111.

[125] Iris Marion Young, Two Concepts of self-determination, in Stephen May, Tariq Modood and Judith Squire (eds.), *Ethnicity, Nationalism, and Minority Rights,* Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 2004, pp. 176-195, p. 176. Young was developing this concept based on Craig Scott's appeals for a more relational interpretation. Scott was calling to have a more critical look at the general understanding on self-determination as exclusively either as a separation and independence, or as the

"relational autonomy in the context of non-domination" as opposed to the interpretation of self-determination modeled on "sovereign independence" as it equates a principle of self-determination with non-interference. On such a relational interpretation, Young argues that self-determination for people means:

> "that they have the right to their own governance institutions through which they decide on their goals and interpret their way of life....Peoples, that is, ought to be free from domination. Because a people stand in interdependence relations with others...Insofar as their activities affect one another, peoples are in relationship and ought to negotiate the terms and effects of the relationship." [126]

It is therefore important to be circumspect while analysing the patterns of movement and evaluating the political legitimacy of a case of a claimant group's demands for self-determination. Application of a normative theory of self-determination to empirical analysis should be case-sensitive. Not all secessionist groups set political sovereignty as their ultimate goal. Those who do may change their political agenda as circumstances change. In these cases it is important to enable them to explore the ideal form of nation building and the best political alternative to implement the principle of national self-determination for the aspiring legitimate nation. But again it should be very clear that the oppressed and the oppressor, the powerful and the non-dominant aspects are recognised even in a relational discussion. In the light of all the concepts around political development, the following section will discuss the applicability and relevance of the concepts in the case of the Nagas within and in relation to Indian secularity and power.

2.6 Conclusion

The association of 'tribe', not only with traditional society but with an underlying connotation of 'primitivism' and backwardness has been problematic in understanding the formation of the Naga nation. As argued earlier, various villages aligned together along linguistic lines and were grouped as a tribe. This individual tribe cannot by itself separate and become an ethnic Naga or a Naga nation. It is only when the

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non-interference and legitimacy of the sovereign state. A part of Craig Scott's appeal made in a speech in 1995 before a meeting of the Open-Ended Inter-Sessional Working Group on Indigenous People's Rights is quoted   in ibid.

various tribes, formed by the various independent villages with their territorial character, came together to identify themselves with the generic term 'Naga' did they 'qualify' as an ethnic Naga group. The intrusion of the British colonial power initiated the process of 'tribe' but it was Christianity that provided the space and brought various tribes together as Nagas. This enabled the various tribes to explore their affinity and shared culture as collective Nagas. This allowed them in the process to prepare as a more cohesive cultural and political expression of affinity and unity in the structure of Naga ethnicity. The formation of the tribe along linguistic lines was in response to the changes that were evolving when their insularity was removed. When these tribes engaged culturally and politically because of the new interactions, the tribes soon endorsed Naga as their collective identity. Observing the political changes that were happening around them during the beginning of the 20th century in relation to the departure of the British and the formation of the Indian Union, the Nagas envisioned themselves as a nation.

The Nagas are tribal in character because the formation of the Naga nation is structured along its indigenous character of kinship found in the villages and formed by the various tribes. It is also a political nation because the Nagas are characterised by the continuity of the historical community they represent with their territorial base and the fact that they declared themselves as a separate political entity. Such a political action was taken not only to protect themselves from domination, marginalization and assimilation by a different dominant culture and people, but also because the Nagas wanted to be together under one political umbrella. Nagas were not a constituent member of the Indian Union when it was formed in 1947, nor did they endorse the Constitution of India that was amended in 1950. The Indo-Naga conflict, therefore, is not an issue of the territorial integrity of the Indian Union as envisioned by the GoI and the Indian Constitution. It is rather an occupation and domination over an independent Naga political entity by a far more powerful culture in the form of the GoI. Naga political self-determination was unilaterally suppressed by the GoI hegemony. This deliberate action and further divisive policies by GoI divided the Nagas into various administrative units within their federalism. In the process the

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[126] Ibid,. p. 187.

GoI disempowered the Naga peoples from developing a cohesive political system. On the other hand the inability of the Naga political leaders to address the particularities of tribes within the formation of the Naga nation and to develop a strong political agenda increased the domination of the GoI over the Nagas. Besides the primordial features that formed the Naga, the Naga nation-building should take on board the modernist approach in the process of their construction and formation of a political state

Naga political identity developed in opposition to Indian identity and did not see itself as a part of the political and cultural unit within the Indian Union. The opposition to being a part of the Indian Union and the oppression the Nagas endured as a result are o the main factors in forming how the Naga perceived themselves politically. While this is an important factor in the process of developing Naga political action, it is not sufficient. A Naga identity that defines the relationship between the different tribal and community dynamics within itself is very important. In other words, Nagas must explore the inherent relationship and develop the coherence that sustains them from within. Along with state-building measures, Nagas must address the nation-building process which also demands to address the political and cultural issues within the internal context.

Therefore, while discussing the Indo-Naga conflict and the evolving political development in Nagaland, two dynamics should be taken into account. Firstly, the asymmetrical relationship between the GoI and Nagas is featured in the Indian politics of domination. Secondly, the tribal dynamic within Nagaland and the development of a form of political system that both allows the tribal particularities and provides the space for the tribes to engage cohesively as a nation. It is important to recognize such dynamics featuring prominently in the light of constant political interaction between the Indians and the Nagas through the policies of the GoI. Further to this discussion, Chapter 3 will critically examine (i) the historical and cultural background that justifies the GoI's political power and domination in suppressing the political identity of a non-dominant entity such as the Nagas and (ii) the status of the Nagas as a scheduled tribe under the Indian Union.

Chapter 3   Conflict analysis

Introduction

The Indo-Naga conflict has been commented on as a protracted armed conflict in which the Nagas are termed as rebels, secessionists, guerrilla fighters, insurgent groups and even terrorists. Armed conflict in theory is defined by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) as "prolonged combat between the military forces of two or more governments, or of one government and at least one organized armed group involving the use of weapons and incurring the battle-related deaths of at least 1,000 people during the entire conflict".[127] It is true that armed conflict is a feature of the conflict in Nagaland.   But to solely analyse Naga political instability and violence as resistance to the Indian Government's occupation and rule is to undermine the historical context and the underpinning of the Nagas' internal social groupings, and the external cultural and political dynamics.   The processes of modernity in the form of colonisation, decolonisation, and the establishment of a recognised nation-state as the only legitimate political power and identity cannot be ignored. It is important to highlight all of these forms of historical, cultural and political development, because in order to address and resolve the inherent conflict, an objective perspective of the dynamics involved is required.

When a society talks about change there is always some sort of conflict.   In the human community there is always conflict because there is no human society or culture that is absolutely unchanging. Even 'traditional primitive' societies are not static.   It is therefore safe to assume that when there is transition or drastic change in society brought about by endogenous and exogenous factors, or simply because it is a community living in close proximity, there can be conflicts occurring at different levels and within the various experiences of its members. However the evolutionary changes of   equilibrium that occur according to the natural process of time are quite different to the change which can be coerced or imposed by a more powerful entity

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[127] Geoff Harris and Neryl Lewis, Armed Conflict in Developing Countries, in Geoff Harris (ed.), *Recovery from Armed Conflict in Developing Countries : An economic and political analysis,* London and New York: Routledge, 1999, pp. 3-11, in p.3.

upon another social entity.

Political realism implies that all conflicts and differences within the nation-state can be contained by coercive measures. Such an approach has proved to be far removed from the reality and has escalated cultural and political conflict along ethnic, identity and religious lines.

The transition within the Naga cultural and socio-political development needs to be interpreted within the context of the modern political reality. The nature of distributive powers and structural formations between the state-established political groupings and the tribal political groupings reveals an unequal relationship and power structure.

Conflict therefore is not always the engagement of aggression, war or violence, but is also the absence of respect and recognition of the legitimate and the basic requirements needed for growth. It is when two seemingly divergent and incompatible cultures, traditions and beliefs are thrust upon each other and the dominant culture threatens to sweep away the values and social fabric of the other. Conflict is also the refutation of any socio-cultural difference, identity, customs and tradition; it is also the denial of the presence of any inequality and the justification of such inequality. "Accepted social inequity may be an example of un-manifest conflict."[128] It is therefore imperative to understand that the manifestation of violence and armed conflicts might underline structural violence. Conflict in this sense is a multi-dimensional occurrence, and if a resolution is to be negotiated and effective, the socio-cultural, economic, political and religious parameters cannot be ignored. Analysing conflict without taking into consideration the disparity of the power and status between the conflicting parties can be inadequate. Because the abuse of power often leads to the legitimisation and rationalisation of coercion, oppression and violence.

Naga conflict developed as a result of the dramatic political breakdown of their

[128] Alan C. Tidwell, *Conflict Resolved: A Critical Assessment of Conflict Resolution*, Pinter, London

traditional society as opposed to an evolutionary social development. The conflict in Nagaland can be understood at two distinct but interrelated levels. One is the coercive policy of the GoI in reaction to the Nagas' desire to be outside of the political identity of the GoI. The other is the lack of a cohesive mechanism within the Nagas themselves to respond to the changes. It is not correct to **see** the Nagas' desire to be outside of the Indian political identity as a reaction to political modernisation. Nor is it a claim by the Nagas to be a separate modern political entity as a departure from traditional tribal characteristics. Rather, it is the inability on the part of the GoI to acknowledge a nation like Nagaland, formed by tribal groupings and based on the traditional essence of villages, as a separate political identity. It is also the staunch position of the GoI to impose its political power over the Nagas within both the Indian Constitution and the territorial integrity of the Indian Union. Coupled with this is the lack of 'national' conversation on the part of the Nagas to develop a cohesive administrative mechanism based upon the modern concepts of ethnicity and nation-building that would allow the tribes to collectively express their identity.

In the light of these understandings, the protracted armed conflict of the Nagas can be understood not only as coercion by the GoI, but also the socio-political and cultural transition that underpins Naga society as well as the Indian Union in the face of modernity. The conflicts in Nagaland can be categorized as follows:-

(i) The cultural domination of mainstream India and the legitimisation of its hegemony and power through GoI political institutions.

(ii) The struggle for a separate cultural and political identity outside of secular India.

(iii) The conflicts that have arisen as a result of the traditional practices of Nagaland struggling to cater for the needs of its people and the defence of its culture while colliding with the dominant modern political system and culture represented by the GoI. The inability to develop a cohesive administrative mechanism among the Nagas has led to inter-tribal conflict and division in the national movement mostly along tribal lines.

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and New York, 1998, p.89.

While it is crucial to understand each aspect of the conflict individually, they cannot be understood independently. To understand the Indo-Naga conflict it is important to see beyond the seemingly obvious stalemate. The protracted conflict between the GoI and the Nagas is largely due to three factors: (i) Firstly, the Nagas' determination not to abandon and compromise their claim for a separate political identity and form an 'independent sovereign state'; (ii) Secondly, despite the deployment of strong military armed forces, the GoI has been unable to coerce the Nagas into both abandoning their historical legitimacy and political identity outside the formation of the Indian Union of 1947 and endorsing the Constitution of India; (iii) Thirdly, the condition of the GoI to only talk to the Nagas within the territorial integrity of the Indian Union and Constitution.

To understand this, it is important to examine the socio-cultural setting and the political underpinning of the creation of the Indian Union. The following sections in this chapter will look in more detail at the basis of political power in India and the politics of identity within those political parameters. These conflicts are inter-related, because they encompass the very definition of not only who and what the Nagas are, but the very essence of the Naga history, their struggle and the centrality of the Naga existence and identity as defined by the GoI on one hand and the Nagas themselves on the other.

3.1 Political power

Political power is distinguished from power as:-

> "... the practical ability to exercise one's will in social life, foisting it
> upon others, if necessary; political power, as one of the most
> important manifestations of power, is characterized by the actual
> ability of a given class, group or individual to implement its will,
> expressed in policy and law." [129]

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[129] Fyodor Burlatsky, Yu. A Tikhomirov, and V.G.Kalensky, quoted in Archie Brown, Political Power and the Soviet State: Western and Soviet Perspectives, in John A. Hall (ed.), *The State: Critical Concepts, Vol. II,* pp.173-214, in p.190. Political and state power here was defined in the light of the Soviet Union political debate around political parties and authoritarianism as opposed to pluralism at the extreme opposite. But to give a sense of the meaning of power for the thesis, these definitions are

Chapter 2 has discussed that the state derives its power from the military, economic, administrative and territorial legitimacy accorded to it as well as the right to maintain its autonomous power over its subjects. It can be argued that the institution of the state is one of the most powerful channels to monopolize political power. Along this line, Fyodar Buratsky writes that:

> "State power is that form of political power which has a class character, which disposes of the monopoly right to promulgate laws and other directives, obligatory for the whole population, and which leans upon a special apparatus of coercion as one of the means of securing observance of these laws and directives."[130]

Power is the essence of demonstrating the will, action, or influences to change positively or to abuse either individually or collectively in the private or public spheres. Power is therefore never static. It is a form of activity that responds to various interactions or relationships at different level. On the other hand, political power is the most important platform through which various types of power can be mobilized and channelled. In the modern era, the state and its governmentality is the most powerful manifestation of political power because it can justify the operational mechanism of power to benefit national interest. Given the above definition and interrelatedness of state and political power, the nature of political power can be categorised broadly as follows:[131]

(i) the ability to make decisions, enforce and rule;

(ii) the sanction of the state to coerce rules and policies which are deemed important in the interests of the state and the population;

(iii) the power through which a certain group or class of people is legitimized to be in a position to make decisions and rule for or over others.

The purpose of this chapter is not to examine the institution of the state through which political power can be democratically represented and implemented in the Indian Union. Rather it is to locate the prevailing historical and socio-cultural structure in India which legitimises the manipulation and abuse of political power by a certain group through the state structure. It is in this location that the relationship of the GoI

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put forward.

[130] Quoted in ibid., p. 191.

and the Nagas will be analysed because it is in this context that the GoI hegemony and homogenisation are justified and Naga resistance continues.

3.1.1 Historical and cultural background of political power in India

The GoI did not acquire or develop political power and structure through an instantaneous event or the formation of the state itself. They developed over the centuries (pre-colonial/pre-independence era) through deliberate social and cultural structures in cultural India. For these reasons, political power within the Indian context cannot be fully analysed without the cultural narratives of Hindu India. Indian secular identity therefore is not an abstract idea. It has a huge material base in which the "Indian" culture, which "has been defined as the upper-caste Hindu culture of the Hindi belt"[132], dominated the majority population by espousing and justifying its superiority through various rituals, 'sacred' knowledge and narratives.

The colonial pre-occupation with the so-called 'primitive' was phenomenal. For the West, the 'Others' and the 'Rest' were all constructed as traditional, backward, and uncivilized people. But within the Indian context, the dominant Brahmin defined and established 'civilization' as within the caste system.[133] Beyond the caste lies primitivism. When the British came to the Indian sub-continent, they ignored the other tradition and belief-systems found in many of the cultural entities in the sub-continent. This was not only because "the Brahmanical framework better suited their interest"[134] but also because the dominant Brahmins supported the caste structure in which the majority lower caste were suppressed. As mentioned in Chapter 2 in order to stamp out their influence "the British colonialist discovered the

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[131] State power and political power will be used inter-changeably.

[132] Dev Nathan, India: From Civilization to Nations, in Kumar Rupesinghe, and Khawar Mumtaz (eds.), *Internal Conflict in South Asia,* London, New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1996, pp.18-38, in p.2.

[133] Kaushik Ghosh used the lines, "Caste, therefore, was civilization in India, in A Market for Aboriginality: Primitivism and Race Classification in the Indentured Labour Market of Colonial India, in Gautam Bhadra et al (eds.), *Subaltern Studies X: Writings of South Asian History and Society*, pp. 8-48, p.23. However Ghosh's argument does not point out the role the Brahmanical domination in promoting and legitimizing the caste system and supporting the Aryan theory along with the "Orientalists, epilogists and racial theorists of the British Empire."

[134] Braj Ranjan Mani, *Debrahminising History: dominance and resistance in Indian society,* New Delhi : Manohar, 2005, p. 191.

authoritarian possibilities in "native customs" which is the Brahmanical structure and harnessed it for the purpose of indirect rule, that is, "rule of the natives through a reconstituted native authority".[135]   Having said this, the colonialist did not have to reconstitute or discover a 'native authority' in India - it was already established by the Brahmans and their allied castes.

When Rigveda, the oldest and the most sacred text of the Vedas emerged as early as c.1200 BC,[136] the classification of varna[137] was clearly stated - clear enough for the Brahmans and the upper caste to legitimise their position as superior over the others. The term 'varna' etymologically means 'colour'; and initially 'caste' to a huge extent implied colour. The "Aryan-Brahman" invaders from central Asia that settled along the Gangetic plains were supposedly "fairer" than the indigenous inhabitants, the "non-Aryans and the Dravidians"[138] whom they subjugated through "necessary violence"[139] and eventually through the Brahmanical structure of caste system.   The 'Arya', literally meaning 'pure',[140] or Aryans, promoted the caste system for a secular purpose so that they could retain their "racial purity and impose their authority over the 'low-born' natives". This gradually changed after 900 BC, the latter Vedic period. The Aryans "attributed the genesis of caste to divine will so that it acquired a halo of religious sanctity".[141] Based on Vedic text, Manu's smriti (Manusmriti), the precursor of various Dharmashastras or smritis and various Brahmanical texts started to use terms to dehumanize and demonise the lower caste, e.g.   terms like, rakshasa

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[135] Aditya Nigam, *The Insurrection of Little Selves,* p. 54. Nigam here was using the argument developed by Mahmood Mamdani about "native customs".

[136] It is speculated   that the four collections of the Vedas namely Rig, Sama, Yajur and Artharva emerged around the c. 1200 BC; see David Ludden, India and South Asia: A Short History, p.19. However, according to new evidence and studies the original Rigveda hymns were composed c. "1700 BC in Afghanistan before the Rigvedic Aryans arrived in the Ganga-Yamuna Doab";   see Braj Ranjan Mani, *Debrahminising History,* p.46.

[137] Purusha-Sukta, (the creation Hymn) the tenth chapter of Rigveda attributing the origin of castes as supernatural reads, "When they divided the Man, into how many parts did they divide him? What was his mouth, what were his arms, what were his thighs, and his feet called? The Brahman was his mouth, of his arms were made the warrior, his thighs became the vaishya, of his feet the shudra was born. Quoted in Braj Ranjan Mani, p. 416. Historians have also pointedly argued that Purusha-Sukta "is the latest addition and interpolation." It is also pointed out that Brahmans are in the habit of interpolating and interjecting into the Vedic and various sacred texts from time to time "according to the exigencies of secular necessities and socio-religious imperatives", ibid. p. 47.

[138] Ibid., p. 52.

[139] Ibid., p.32.

[140] David Ludden, *India and South Asia: A short History,* Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.p.19.

(demon) and mleccha (the "unclean, unwashed other"). Those who opposed their rule were described as "hostile, violent, boastful, short-tempered, greedy, ungrateful, utterly undependable and unfit for any responsible work."[142] The masses, particularly the suppressed shudras, the adi-sudras or various indigenous tribes who protested and refused to live within the Brahmanic caste system were gradually termed as "nastiko veda-nindakah (anti-trascendalitic/non-Vedic/anti-casteist) as oppose to astika, or one who abides by the Vedas.[143]

Gradually, these people were condemned as out-castes, in other words outside the varna system. They became 'untouchable' because they were soon assigned to manual jobs "involving human waste and dead animals".[144] These were 'vile' professions and so those who worked in them were considered as sort of pollution and disgrace that defiled the sanctity of the Brahmans and the upper caste. Caste was soon equated to inequality, suppression and a divine power of domination endowed to the Brahmans. Aloysius bluntly writes that by caste system it means the "specific form of ascriptive hierarchy and unequal distribution of power in India".[145] He argues further that though "unevenly spread", this ascriptive hierarchy and "endogamous castes, endowed with differential distribution of privileges/disabilities and sanctified by the dominant religious categories of Karma and Dharma" was a "pan-Indian phenomenon". He also points out the fact that the pattern of Brahman hierarchy and hegemony, followed by other "literary, propertied and clean castes" over the majority exploited and polluted castes, was "remarkably uniform over different regions" despite "intra-regional differences" and has continued so "for more than a millennium".

Through various philological researches, the Orientalists espoused the idea that the ancient Indo-Aryans were kin Europeans. The Brahmans relished in the theory of the European and Indo-Aryan relationship. The Brahmans propagated that they were the

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[141] Mani, *Debrahminising History, p.47.*

[142] Ibid,, pp. 22-23, 54-58, 79-83.

[143] Ibid., p 83.

[144] Joshua Catellino and Elvira Dominguez Redondo, *Minority Rights in Asia: A comparative legal Analysis*, Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2006, p.72.

[145] G. Aloysius, *.Nationalism without a nation in India*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998, p. 25.

"torchbearers of world civilization."[146]   The influence and appeal[147] of such 'pride' can be noted in these lines: "...in the advent of the English nation in India we see a reunion of parted cousins, the descendants of two different families of the ancient Aryan race... ".[148]   Aloysius[149] points out that colonial rule not only "empowered, enlarged, elevated" but "even nationalized the upper strata of society".   He further contends that the lower strata were actually further "marginalized under the colonial dispensation". However it should be mentioned here that under pressure from missionaries, and through their works, various reforms were also made. [150]

When the British came to India, their imperial rule and law was considered dominant but they also needed the approval of the native elite for legitimacy.   This is where the role of the Brahmans as 'legal experts' in traditional and religious law stepped in. Their role in supporting and legitimizing colonial functionaries to maintain their authority over the masses along with the British is therefore undeniable.   In accordance with the Indian classical and Sanskrit teachers and interpretations, English officials determined that caste was fixed and permanent.   This interpretation became applicable legally and bureaucratically across "British India to reinvent caste as a modern legal and administrative category".[151]   As British India became more "Brahminically flavoured" because of their legal expertise and social power, the Brahman influence continued to grow.

The Brahmanic system was not fixed. It evolved over the centuries. They

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[146] Mani, *Debrahminising History,*   p.192.

[147] In an open letter (1894) addressed to the members of the legislature, Mahatma Gandhi wrote as a lawyer working in South Africa "protesting against the ill-treatment of the Indians and demanding equality on the grounds of   race." "Since the British and the Indians were from the same Aryan stock, he reasoned, how could the Britishers rule over their own blood brothers? It was unfair for one set of Aryans to rule over another set." He further went on to "describe copiously, from European scholars and administrators, the accomplishment of the Brahmins in various fields." see Braj Ranjan Mani, *Debrahminising History,*   pp.192 -193

[148] Keshab Chandra Sen, delivering these lines in a public lecture in Calcutta in 1877. Quoted in Braj Ranjan Mani,   *Debrahminising History,* p. 192.

[149] Analysis given in Mani, *Debrahminising History,* p.293.

[150] The opportunity to access education through the work of various missionaries and reformers became one of the most liberating factors for reform.   It was a major step for the Untouchables who were for centuries taunted that literacy was the privilege exclusively for the upper castes because they were too 'thick' to understand. This is discussed in more detail in the next section - 3.1.2 Political Position of the non-Aryans and tribals on the eve of Independence.

[151] Ludden, *India and South Asia,*   pp.182-183.

incorporated several of the indigenous beliefs, superstitions, narratives and sacred places. They adopted the "indigenous, black-skinned deities as their ishtadevas"[152] (gods) into their deities, gods and goddesses. Apart from the Shudras and the outcastes, they co-opted into their 'pure and refined' fold any of the warrior class that threatened their position. This policy where the British co-opt with the native elite by endowing them with various positions and local power was not new in Indian cultural and political narratives. So the presumption that the imperial British coaxed the native elite into this traditional custom is not entirely correct.[153] Such a policy gave the Brahmans influence to reassert their authority by legitimising aspiring groups/castes into a new political and social stature, thereby consolidating each others' position. This was necessary so that the majority of people comprising the lower spectrum of the society would not be in a position to threaten their respective positions.

Primarily there were two reasons for the usefulness of the tribals, the dalits, the so-called primitives in colonial India: (i) they were the living display of 'primitives' to natural sciences and anthropology; (ii) they made excellent coolies (labourers), with the lowest pay. They were the solution to the colonial demand for labour, by displacing them and transferring them as human plantation. Along these lines, writers like Dev Nathan and Govind Kelkar described the place of the primitive in colonial India as: "What imperialism and the Indian ruling classes want is that the Jharkhandis[154] become a "coolie nation", so that they can be easily suppressed as the lowest-paid workers and producers".[155]

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[152] Mani, *Debrahminising History,* p.59.   See also Ludden, *India and South Asia,* p.51.

[153] For instance, Shivaji Bhonsle, and the Maratha empire he founded during the 17th century was earlier the much despised   Shudras. However when the Brahminical dominance was challenged by the Marathais and their power was waning, the Brahmans co-opted them into the Brahmanical order by recognizing them as kshatriyas. Shivaji was invoked as the perfect Hindu king and was made one of the gods. His origin as a Shudras is not found in mainstream historical narratives. Mani, pp. 257-261.   An attempt in the 19th century by a Dalit reformer Jotiba Phule to provide a thesis that depicted Shivaji as "a shudra king and social rebel against the cause of tyranny" of the Brahmanical system provoked outrageous contempt from his contemporaries at the audacity of a semi-literate shudra.   Hindu scholars of those days ridiculed Phule by referring to him as the "shudra religious teacher" and a "shudra world-teacher." see Mani, *Debrahminising History,* p. 270.

[154] Jharkhand is the name of the state the tribal people in Chotanagpur and Santal Parganas regions occupy. They were fiercely independent hill people, so they were called 'barbaric'.   Chotanagpur region is considered by many anthropologists as the place that witnessed the transformation of Homo Erectus to Homo Sapiens.

[155] Quoted in Ghosh, A Market for Aboriginality: Primitivism and Race Classification in the Indentured labour Market of Colonial India, in Gautam Bhadra, et al (ed.), *Subaltern Studies X:*

So the advocacy that primitivism came only with the colonial English is not correct. Perhaps it reinforced the ideology but the concept already existed. Unfortunately in colonial India, the Shudras, the tribals, those outside the caste system, who comprise the majority population, were 'primitives' and were the worst affected in feudal India and the colonial nexus.

With all this association, domination and collaboration between the Indian elites and colonial English, David Ludden[156] is correct when he articulates that the Indian leaders and elites did not see "British rule as alien and tyrannical". They were aware of the various colonial political ideologies, but it was only when British reforms, legislation, acts and laws started to pinch and challenge the Brahmans' privileges, position and power, did they start to challenge the colonial authority. They started mass agitation and a national movement to fight against the 'alien rulers' who were suppressing the rights of the Indian people (the native elites) without necessarily calling for or drawing attention to structural change within the Brahmanical system.

3.1.2 Political Position of the non-Aryans and tribals on the eve of Independence

Besides their social position and power, one of the biggest advantages that categorically protected the upper castes was their 'knowledge power'. Only the upper castes could acquire literary skills. Only the Brahmans could learn Sanskrit. All the sacred works were in Sanskrit so they could translate, articulate and interpret the sacred works. These gave them reverence, power and a sense of superiority. After the Vedas, the priestly caste reveres Manusmriti as the most important work. Since Manu says that the Shudras "are not entitled to education, to amass wealth, or bear arms",[157] on the eve of independence the lower castes, non-Aryans, were still illiterate and found themselves in the same position serving the higher-caste people and the

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Writing, pp. 8-48, p.9.
[156] Ludden, *India and South Asia,* p. 209. Montagu-Chelmsford (Montford) reforms and Rowlatt Acts of 1919 can be regarded as the main reforms and acts that awoke Congress leaders to the gross violation of civil rights and inequality. The Jallianwalla Bagh massacre the same year in Amritsar by the imperial troops was the final blow for the masses to rise up against British rule.
[157] Mani, *Debrahminising History,* p.57.

Raj.

The imperial colonialists however did bring along the principles and ethos of "democracy, equality and human rights".[158] However, for the dominant and privileged groups in India, the principles of egalitarianism were "only for the 'nation' of which they were the sole representatives".[159] The colonialists and the missionaries might have had their own agenda but the Brahmans were alarmed when the lower castes and non-Aryans were given access to education. Swami Vivekananda, regarded by mainstream history as a champion of social reform and justice, expressed the fears of many of the upper caste when he wrote:

> "...and the Europeans are now educating those ignorant, illiterate low-caste people, who toil fields in their loincloth, and are of the non-Aryan race. They are none of us. This is going to weaken us and give benefit to both Europeans and the low-caste people."[160]

Literacy and English literacy in particular in British Raj, became the "hallmark of social status and mobility". Since the upper castes, especially the Brahmans, had a long-standing history and culture of manipulating and mobilising education only for themselves, their position as the main actors on the eve of imminent Indian independence to redeem India from 'alien rulers' without necessarily reforming the inequality in Brahmanical structures, became almost a divine right. Nigam points out the "new Brahmin's power accrued to him not because of his ritual superiority but because of his advantages of English education".[161] The Western and the English-language educated, who were mostly from the upper castes, were beginning to become the voice of the nation of which they wanted to be the sole representatives.

The following statistics from the Madras Presidency reflects the domination and power of the Brahmans in education and public administration: while barely 4% of non-Brahman people could read the alphabet, 80% of the Brahman populace were literate. The 1901 census accounted Brahmans as only 3% of the Presidency

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[158] Ibid., p.234.
[159] Ibid.
[160] Quoted in ibid., p.226.

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population, "but between 1897 and 1904 they secured 94% of positions in the Provincial Civil Service". Madras University in 1914 registered 650 graduates, out of which 450 were Brahmans. In 1914, delegates to the Congress from the regions accounted for 16 members, out of which 14 were Brahmans. There were no non-Brahman representatives in the Madras Legislative Council until 1901.[162]

The Indian National Congress (INC) was founded in Bombay in 1885 by some 70 English-educated Indians. The Congress soon became the parent of the India national movement, but initially the Congress only advocated for more Indian participation in various legislative councils. They also pressed that the Indian Civil Service (ICS) age limit be raised, that there were to be more quotas, and that an examination centre be also simultaneously held in India and not only in England.[163] The ICS was the bureaucratic backbone of British Raj. It trained and dispatched these elite cadres to various high posts in the central government as well as provincial governments and administration. ICS was referred to as the "iron frame" [164] or the "steel frame"[165] of British rule. After Indian independence, ICS was renamed Indian Administrative Service (IAS) and its elite cadre inherited the structural bureaucracy of the British Empire. The administrators, dominated by the higher castes in post-colonial India, took charge of "institutional cohesiveness in its decision-making structure".[166]

Other than the bureaucratic system, they not only filled most of the clerical positions but they also influenced the polices and the decisions of everyday colonial activities in India. Robert Frykenberg sums this up with the following lines:

> "The host handled most of the paper work; they had done this before
> for previous rulers. Now they did this again, and did this in such a
> way that the rulers themselves became instruments of local indigenous
> influences. Local officials, either Brahmans or non-Brahmans, who

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[161] Nigam, *The Insurrection of Little Selves,* p.238.

[162] Quoted in Mani, *Debrahminising History,* p. 316

[163] Barbara D. Metcalf and Thomas R. Metcalf, *A Concise History of India,* Cambridge University Press, 2002, p.137.

[164] Ludden, *India and South Asia*, p.146.

[165] Metcalf D. and Metcalf R., A Concise History of India, p.232.

[166] Akmal Hussian, The dynamics of Power: Military, Bureaucracy and the People, in Kumar Rupensinghe and Khawar Mumtaz (eds.), *Internal Conflicts in South Asia*, pp. 39-54, p. 50.

were of 'high' varna and ritually 'clean' by local standards, exercised a crucial, if not determining, role. In the course of time these very ingredients of the state rulership, both European and native, served to bring modern Hinduism into being."[167]

The arrival of the British gradually changed some of the traditional administrative and social systems. But coupled with their literary skill and expertise in interpreting Hindu laws and traditions, the role and opportunities of the upper castes in the new monetary, administrative and political system in British Raj meant that they continued their hegemony. Later, when the transition of an independent India was completed, the political power was controlled and dominated by the upper allied castes in the Indian Union.

The colonial narrative in India is not only between the imperial English and the 'Other' as the primitive natives, it is rather a complex but deliberate act of domination already found ingrained in the cultural and social structures when the colonialists arrived in India. The various uprisings, agitations against caste, arbitrary evictions, heavy taxation on various landless labourers, and tribal and peasant revolts that were happening as early as the Paharias revolt in 1772, and more frequently from the 19th century, were not necessarily always targeted against the English. The nature of these movements "exposed the collusive and collaborative nation in colonialism - a product of complicity between the imperial and indigenous elite against the lower castes and tribes who constituted the majority".[168]

Therefore nationalism in India is not only a product of two causes, namely: "its struggle against domination and the encounter with modernity".[169] It saw the emergence of two types of nationalism, two types of struggle against domination under the colonial rule: one for freedom from British rule, for transfer of power from the British to the Indian elite; and one against all kinds of oppression and discrimination".[170] Indian nationalism and the eventual formation of the Indian Union were not created on an ideological basis of equality, fraternity and

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[167] Quoted in Mani, *Debrahminising History,* p. 197.
[168] Aloysius, *Nationalism without a Nation in India* ,p 74.
[169] Nigam, *The Insurrection of Little Selves,* p. 36.
[170] Mani, *Debrahminising History,*   p. 296.

egalitarianism. The elite leaders of the Indian national movement did not take on the issues of "institutionalised discrimination"[171] within the Brahmanical structure under which they wanted all the lower castes and tribal people to be. They did not address the distribution of political power and the asymmetrical social relations that would challenge their domination. The "monolithic-hegemonic nationalism they espoused was propelled" [172] mainly with two objectives: firstly, "to wrest rule in the state from the British"; and secondly, "to maintain their privileges and dominance over the masses, within the traditional caste-class structure". [173]

Nationalism in India, instead of taking a stance on reformation, soon transformed into the revivalism of Hinduism based on the glorious history of Brahmanical structure, in which the institution of caste represented "stability, harmony and co-operation".[174] Patriotic credentials and national heroes of India were judged on their 'eulogisation' of the caste system as the essence of India and the survival of its nation.[175] 'Indianness' at its core therefore was connected to the governing "upper-caste Hindu/Hindi"[176] cultural tradition.

In their petty rivalries and quest for further domination, the authoritarian nature of the Hindu governing class collaborated with the imperialist. However, taking into account their association with the national movement, Nathan[177] writes that upper-caste Hindu/Hindi nationalism can be "distinguished into two distinct phases" with distinct roles. Firstly, this Hindu nationalism further divided the Indian society but in a more positive role: it mobilised the "Hindu community (more correctly: the upper caste Hindu community) in its struggle against British colonialism and its injustices". Secondly, Hindu nationalism as a divisive role became more prominent in the latter phase of the political struggle. With "the 'transfer of power', this upper-caste Hindu/Hindi nationalism" soon emerged as the "oppressor nationalism" in the new

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[171] Ibid., p.290.
[172] Ibid.
[173] Analysis given by Mani on the writings of Omvedt and Aloysius, in *Debrahminising History,* p.291.
[174] Ibid., 220
[175] Ibid., p. 20
[176] Nathan, India: From Civilization to Nations, in Rupesinghe, and Mumtaz (eds.), *Internal Conflict in South Asia,* pp.18-38, in p.24.

Indian state and "ceased to be a positive character". Nathan concludes that to support this nationalism "is now to support the oppression of the minorities, linguistic or religious".

3.1.3 Secularism and Nationhood in the Indian Union

The Indian Union emerged with the departure of the British colonial power. It emerged through the colonial encounter that cultural India had had with the British Raj. The political make-up in cultural India, and even during colonial rule, comprised of various independent raj and principalities. But the Indian state as it is found today with a centralised federal structure, bureaucracy, monetary system, administration and citizenship are recent developments. Along this argument, Rajni Kothari points out that:

> "We need to remember that the essential identity of India is cultural, not political and economic. It is one civilization that has withstood various vicissitudes and still endures, largely because of its basic identity being cultural. It never had a political center except very recently."[178]

In this new political order, "secularism and nation"[179] are regarded as the two main 'artefacts' of political modernity in the making of the Indian Union. In the context of multiple ethnicities, religions, languages and cultures, the creation of a federal state structure became inevitable when the Constituent Assembly met to draft the Indian Constitution in the political landscape of secularism and nation. The Constitution of India declares in Article 1 that "India... shall be a Union of States."[180] The Indian Union legitimatises its political power through the institution of state on the political foundation of secularity, nationhood and federalism.

Secularism in an Indian context is not about the separation of religion from the state. Rather it indicates "the state's and the political parties' neutrality towards religion and

[177] Ibid., p. 24.
[178] Quoted in Nathan, India: From Civilization to Nations, in Rupesinghe, and Mumtaz (eds.), *Internal Conflict in South Asia, pp.* 18-38, in p.18.
[179] Nigam, *The Insurrection of Little Selves*, p.222.
[180] Quoted in Hurst Hannum, *Autonomy, Sovereignty, and Self-Determination: The Accommodation*

religious beliefs".[181] It is what Rajeev Bhargava[182] termed as a "principled distance between religion and state" without necessarily entailing a complete separation. It meant that no-one will be discriminated against on the basis of religion. Every religion - Muslim, Hindu and minorities - was equal in secular India. Recognising the equality of every group and religion however did not recognise the prevalent political inequality, or the numerous communities in the new state. Responding to the Punjab Agitation which was marked by the "question of territory, resources, and the problem of Sikh nationhood",[183] the GoI, after the infamous "Operation Bluestar"[184] in a White Paper states that:

> "The Indian people do not accept the proposition that India is a multi-national society. The Indian people constitute one nation. India has expressed through her civilization over the ages, her strong underlying unity in the midst of diversity of language, religion, etc. The affirmation of India's nationhood after a long and historic confrontation with imperialism does not brook any challenge."[185]

In the aftermath of the traumatic Partition of British India in 1947 many issues around

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of Conflicting Rights, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990, p.152.

[181] Engineer Asghar Ali, Religious Conflict: A Brief Survey of the Hindu-Muslim Problem, in Mekenkamp, Monique et al., (eds.), Searching for Peace in Central and South Asia: An Overview of Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Activities, Boulder: London: Lynne Rienner, 2002, pp. 336-344, in p. 336.

[182] Rajeev Bhargava, The distinctiveness of Indian secularism in T.N. Srinivasan, The Future of Secularism, New Delhi; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007. pp. 20-59, p. 21.

[183] Nigam, The Insurrection of Little Selves, p.105.

[184] The history of the Sikhs began with their first Guru, Nanak (1469-1539) in Punjab, with Lahore as its capital. Their tenth and last guru, Gobind Singh, founded a more organized warrior brotherhood called the Khalsa. While during the 17th century, Sikhs became more militant in order to protect themselves from the Muslim rulers in Delhi; it was during the 1920s that the question of Sikh as a distinct identity from the majority Hindus began. Punjab was one of the worst affected regions in the partition of British India; Punjab alone was left with 12 million refugees, and an approximate 200,000 people were killed. However the political status of the Sikh in the Indian Punjab was not clearly discussed or debated. Punjab India was divided in 1966 when the majority Hindu-dominated area went on to form a new federal state, Haryana. Amidst violence, competition and contest among various political parties between the state of Punjab and central government in New Delhi, Indira Gandhi then Prime Minster, dismissed the state government and declared Presidential rule in 1983. In 1984 Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, leader of the fundamental Sikhism seeking for an "autonomous Khalistan" and his followers sought sanctuary in the Golden Temple in Amritsar against   attack   by the Government. The storming of the Golden Temple, the holiest shrine of the Sikhs by the Indian Army code-named "Operation Bluestar" happened on 6th June 1984. Bhindranwale, his followers, and more than a thousand pilgrims were killed in the Operation. Indira Gandhi was assassinated by her Sikh bodyguards in October that same year. In the year 1984, 83% of the population in Delhi were Hindus. When Gandhi was killed that year on 31st October, massive riots spread across Delhi, at least 2,000 of the minority Sikhs were killed in less than a week. See Stanley J. Tambiah, Levelling Crowds: Ethnonationalist Conflicts and Collective Violence in South Asia, University of California Press, 1996, pp.101-162; also see Hannum, Autonomy, Sovereignty, and Self-Determination, pp. 151-177.

[185] Quoted in Nathan, The Insurrection of Little Selves,   p. 18.

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the numerous 'nationalities', the status of independent ethnic groups along frontier lines, and caste inequality, were sidelined if not suppressed. The experience of the Partition and the rationale of 'sacred geography' justified post-Independence India to use military force to quell any form of political movement. The GoI laid down rules on how to deal with "dissident domestic, ethnic, religious, linguistic, and cultural group demands".[186] The GoI followed a strict rule that any such movement would be ignored and "treated as illegitimate" if it was weak, but "should it develop significant strength, be smashed, with armed forces if necessary".[187] The secularist Congress Government under Nehru and other 'leftists', focused their national energy on development and centralisation. According to Nathan,[188] development in this sense means the "development of the pan-Indian bourgeoisie", which given the "community-blind approach" of the state power, only helped in strengthening the dominant "monopoly of the Hindu big bourgeoisie". He further argues that people who advocated this approach "end up in the same position as the proponents of Hindutva, who also want the oppressed minorities to forget the existence of communities".

But because of the inter-relatedness between hegemonic Brahmanical narratives and the formation of the Indian Union, secularity and political identity under the Indian state continued to affirm that "Indian civilizational unity is the same thing as its national unity and national existence".[189] In this way there was no distinction between civilisation and the Indian nation in the national narratives of Indian history. According to Nathan,[190] "Nehru's 'unity in diversity' as the essence of India was secular and became the ideological basis that held the new Indian state". It is also true that this "unity in diversity" does not imply the Hindutva (Hindu-ness) "concept as a Hindu state". But he argues that it is still the same understanding of an Indian nation that is "the product of an Indian nation that was identified as a Hindu culture", even held by the liberal "assimilationists" as well. This is not to imply that

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[186] Brass, *The Politics of India since Independence*, p.7.
[187] Ibid., p. 7.
[188] Nathan, India: From Civilization to Nations, in Rupesinghe, and Mumtaz (eds.), *Internal Conflict in South Asia*, pp.18-38 , p. 26.
[189] Ibid., p.18.
[190] Ibid.

Nehru aggressively identified Indian as Hindu, but it was more a Brahmanical concept of superiority and domination by certain castes over others. In other word "it allows for the existence of various traditions, but insists on their subordination to an over-arching Brahminical framework". The fundamentalists argue that Hindu is India, and India is Hindu. The secularists argue that various religions will be accepted and respected but subordinated to the Brahmanical structure. Despite political rhetoric, the core of the debate between the secularist Hindu and the fundamentalist Hindu is not the recognition of various religions with their traditions, cultures, narratives, history and rights but the acceptance of these multiple traditions within, and subordinate to, the Brahmanical civilisation.

Nigam [191] also reiterates that the entire ethos of 'unity' and 'freedom' was "under-girded by a Hindu nationalism". Unabated, Nehru in his famous book, 'The Discovery of India', writes "Indian nationalism was dominated by the Hindus and had a Hindunized look ".[192] This is because outside the caste system there is no civilisation and therefore no glorious history to celebrate and unite, no power to justify cultural and political 'superiority '. Indian secularity therefore as argued earlier is not abstract in practice. It has a huge material base and political power dominated by the elite as produced by the cultural and civilisational values within the Brahmanical concepts.

In modern India, Nathan emphasised that there are two variations of "expression of Indianness": "One is the religious concept of Hindutva; and the other is of the 'secular' expression of Indianness as based on ancient Indian (identified as Hindu) culture."[193] The first, he argues, is a religious concept, while the latter is a cultural one; "but both together relate Indianness to the tradition of what is now identified as Hindu civilization."[194] In this way, both Indian secularists and fervent religious advocates of 'Hindutva' accept the Brahmanical concept of Hindu cultural tradition as the core of Indianness. The drive towards "Indianization" or 'Sanskritization' is also

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[191] Nigam, *The Insurrection of Little Selves,* p.70.
[192] Quoted in ibid., p.70.
[193] Nathan, India: From Civilization to Nations, in Rupesinghe, and Mumtaz (eds.), *Internal Conflict in South Asia,* p.23.
[194] Ibid. p. 23.

based upon the same Brahmanical rationale. This is promoted by attempting to create not only a homogenous, but also a uniform, Indian national culture centred on the cultural "tradition of Bharatvarsha and Aryavarta".[195]

Nonetheless, in this secular India there is political and cultural space to accommodate the dalits, the minorities, and the tribals within the federal state structure and under the Constitution. In such a cultural homogeneity, different traditions and religions will be accommodated. However this accommodation is "premised not on equality but on discrimination and the maintenance of suitable boundaries and distances, with each tradition being allotted a place in the social hierarchy".[196]

At the core of Brahmanism is the politics of power. Critiques like B.K. Ambedkar and others have argued that "Brahmanism has never stood for any consistent philosophy, doctrine or ethics, but has adjusted its hegemonic methods and principles to changing situations."[197] Ambedkar[198] highlighted Brahmins as the governing class by citing two reasons, namely: "their cultural hegemony" and, secondly, their "control of the administration". The large growth of bourgeoisie that served the India market developed as a result of the British colonial attempt to unify "military-administrative"[199] in alliance with the native elitist. The basis and processes of secular India to Indianise and forge an Indian culture are related to the "pre-capitalist culture",[200] which was dominated by the upper-caste Hindus. It is because of this power that they can create and impose various non-dominant traditions

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[195] Ibid., p.21.

[196] Ibid., p.22.

[197] Mani, *Debrahminising History*, p.17. Jotiba Phule, Ramaswami Naicker Periyar, along with Ambedkar were the pioneers against the domination of culture through the caste system in India.

[198] Arguments and analyses on B.R. Ambedkar from Aditya Nigam, *The Insurrection of Little Selves* pp. 234-236. Ambedkar was a dalit himself. He was the Chairman for the Drafting Committee for a new Indian Constitution. Ambedkar made caste system in India a political issue. His stance was for the elimination of caste system. While Gandhi worked for the emancipation of the Untouchable or the Harijan (children of god) as he called them, Gandhi and Ambedkar strongly tussled over the issue of untouchable. Gandhi being a very 'religious' man continued to endorse the legitimacy of Brahmanical practice. To justify his arguments, Ambedkar attributed the victories of the Indian Congress in 1937 with the following information: "In all the Hindu provinces, the Prime Ministers were Brahmins. In all Hindu provinces if the non-Hindu ministers were excluded, the Cabinets were wholly composed of Brahmins", quoted in Nigam, *The Insurrection of Little Selves*, p. 235.

[199] Nathan, India: From Civilization to Nations, in Rupesinghe, and Mumtaz (eds.), *Internal Conflict in South Asia,* p. 21.

[200] Ibid.

within ancient Hindu scripts. Such symbols are manipulated to define not only a "uniform, homogeneous national culture"[201] but also to become the basis of Indian cultural unity and hence the rationale for the political union of modern India.

According to the political scientist Ashutosh Varshney,[202] the defining principle that holds the Indian state with its idea of a national identity both for the "secularist and the Hindu nationalist"[203] is territory. Since the basis of the cultural and the political formation of the Indian nation is on the Brahmanical civilisation and its various sacred texts, the "territorial principle is drawn from a belief in ancient heritage". The territory of this heritage is "encapsulated in the notion of 'sacred geography' " and has "acquired political hegemony over time" because it appeals to the imagination of both the secularist and the Hindu nationalist. In Indian political discourse, phrases like "territorial integrity" and "national unity", under the auspices of India/Hindu civilization, are the most charged and powerful rhetoric.. Territorial integrity is seen as the "sacred geography" because its territorial principles were derived from the belief of an "ancient heritage". On the other hand, it brings memories of the traumatic Partition and any attempt to further separate the territory is viewed as a threat to the very essence of Indianness, thereby directing towards the Other a policy of assimilation or suppression. To see the national identity separated from the territory is perceived as "desecration of the sacred geography", which is simply unacceptable.

The cultural appeal of the primordial narratives of 'sacred geography' to the majority 80% [204] Hindu population of the Indian Union, and the manipulation of this imagination by the elitists, have unprecedented political ramifications. This legitimises and gives power to the state to enforce the "doctrine of geo-political compulsion"[205] which makes way "for a bigger, expansionist state to impose its will

[201] Ibid.
[202] Quoted in Sudhir Kakar, *The Colors of Violence: Cultural Identities, Religion and Conflict,* University of Chicago Press, 1996, p.39-40.
[203] Terms used by Kakar in ibid., when analysing Varshney arguments, p. 39.
[204] Hindu comprising of 80% of the total population of the Indian Union is cited in Mani, *Debrahminising History,* p. 249.
[205] Nathan, India: From Civilization to Nations, in Rupesinghe, and Mumtaz (eds.), *Internal Conflict in South Asia,* p. 35.

on weaker neighbors".[206] According to Nathan, such a doctrine has empowered the State to determine that:

(i) "The Himalayan ranges are necessary for the security of India and thus dictate that Kashmir must be held, even against the will of the people." It also means that a much smaller and weaker group like the Nagas in the frontier of the north-east should either be assimilated or coerced into the state for geo-political and security reasons.

(ii) The "Indian state has the right to decide, or at least influence, policy in Nepal or in Sri Lanka, so as to safeguard the 'legitimate' security interests of the Indian state." Nathan is sceptical when he writes that 'security' interest is not what is at stake, rather it is the "interest of being able to dispose of labor surpluses and exploit markets" because that is at the "heart of pan-Indian bourgeoisie".

Indian secularity was introduced so that a Union of various states and provinces would be possible by recognizing the diversities that existed. But the ideology that made a 'nation' out of the multiple smaller nations and kept the Union intact was that of the dominant Brahmanism in which the national expression was imposed. Many Brahmans in India, though they remained Brahmans or affiliated to the upper castes, seriously believed that Hindu society in India needs to be secularised and modernised. They believed that nationalism can undertake the route of new "imagination of a homogenous Hindu society as the centrepiece of the emergent Indian nation".[207] The problem, however, was that the powerful Brahmans and their allied castes wanted the change to happen on their own terms, "without relinquishing their power; merely transforming it to suit the new and emerging secular realm".[208]

3.1.4 Federalism

Federalism in principle asserts that "powers are divided between regional and central governments, with each government having jurisdiction over different areas of

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[206] Ibid.
[207] Nigam, *The Insurrection of Little Selves*, p.2.
[208] Ibid,. p.236.

government".[209]   Federalism as a constitutional framework can be contested in practice but it is often regarded as the most effective constitutional system to engage in relational and political power in the face of multiple ethnic communities and cultural diversities.[210] Like secularism, federalism in India and Asia in general is not the same as a model of "multinational federalism" as found in Spain and Belgium. Will Kymlicka defines multinational federalism as "creating a federal or quasi-federal sub-unit in which the minority group forms a local majority, and so can exercise meaningful forms of self-government", and where "the group's language is typically recognised as an official state language, at least within their federal sub-unit and perhaps throughout the country as a whole".[211] Indian federalism leans more towards a regional or territorial federalism divided along linguistic lines, but it is more centralised and unitary in relation to the federal unit and the centre. Federalism as a constitutional framework and governmentality, with the ethos of secularism but with a drive for a homogenised nation, became the basis of the Indian Union. When the Indian state was formed, it centralised the former provinces and various administrative units from the colonial system into a state structure in a federal system, and attempted to develop a homogenous cultural identity called India. The new state, led by the elitist national leaders, desired a strong central government based in Delhi to retain its hegemony through development and on various doctrines of 'stability and   security'.

According to Hurst Hannum,[212]   Indian federalism is in stark contrast with the US (United States) model of federalism. He writes that under the US model "the national government is granted enumerated powers while undefeated powers and residual sovereignty remains with the States."   The Indian Constitution on the other hand in Article 3 states that "Parliament may form new states by partition or merger, increase

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[209] Baogang He, Democratization and Federalization in Asia, in Baogang He et al (eds.), *Federalism in Asia,* Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2007, pp.   1-32, p.6.
[210] The rising difficulties in Indian diversity are: there are more than a billion population consisting of "six main ethnic groups, 52 major tribes, six major religions,   and 6,400 castes and sub-castes, besides 18 major languages and 1,600 minor languages and dialects". Quoted in Castellino and Dominguez Redondo, *Minority Rights in Asia*, p.59.
[211] Quoted in He, Democratization and federalization in Asia, in He et al (eds.), *Federalism in Asia,* p.11.
[212] Summarized by Hannum, Autonomy, *Sovereignty, and Self-Determination: The Accommodation of Conflicting Rights,*   pp. 153-155.

or diminish the area of any state, and alter the boundaries or name of any states". Such a power makes very clear "the extent to which sovereignty remains with the central government". He goes on to write that while the United States "is an indestructible union of indestructible states, the Indian Union is an indestructible union of destructible states". The Constitution provides legislative hegemony to the Central Government by endowing the Union with the power to declare emergency rule. It also allows the President of India to dissolve state governments and assume legislative and executive power over a state "if the government of the state cannot be carried on in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution". Since independence, the state of emergency has so far been invoked on seventy occasions, mostly along partisan lines by the "central government against opposition parties which have managed to form state governments". The unitary nature of the State of India is evidenced by the fact that the Constitution can be amended by a mere two-thirds majority as ascribed in Article 368. With the exception of the Supreme Court in India, courts in Asia are not autonomous and are subject to the executive power. But over the years, despite extensive discussions the Supreme Court in India has done little to prevent the unitary nature of the central government.[213]

The three distinctive[214] features of the Indian federal system are:

(a) "Parliament retains power in the context of enforcing millennially-imposed disabilities and discrimination and in innovative ways of structuring both representation and administration;

(b) Co-operative federalism is the norm rather than the exception;

(c) The democratic deficit stands, structured by the federal power, to suspend the federal principle in at least two situations: armed rebellion and external aggression".

Atul Kohli[215] expresses the views that there is a "recurring tendency in contemporary

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[213] For examples see Hannum, *Autonomy, Sovereignty, and Self-Determination,* pp. 154-155; also see He, Democratization and Federalization in Asia, in He et al (eds.), *Federalism in Asia,* pp.6-7.

[214] U. Baxi, Quoted in Castellino and Dominguez Redondo, *Minority Rights in Asia: A comparative legal Analysis,* p. 101.

[215] Atul Kohli, Centralization and Powerlessness in India, in Joel S Migdal, Atul Kohli and Vivienne Shue (eds.) *State Power and Social forces,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994, pp.89-107, pp. 91-106. Kohli analysed the role of Central Government and structure reforms in relation to the popular electoral majorities enjoyed and won especially by Indira Gandhi based on populist strategy

India towards the emergence of centralised and personality rule." Centralising power is referred to by Kohli as the "control over key national decisions in the hands of a very few (or even a single) political elite". He points out that because resources of state power are in the hands of some very few, structural changes of inequality cannot be, or various distributive reforms such as land reforms will not occur, because the elite will not act to "benefit the weak at the expense of the socially powerful".

Political change or reform within the federal system of the Indian Union is conditioned by the continuous interaction and influence that cultural and social structures have within and over the state institution. The role, policy and strategy of the political leaders in the centre cannot be separated from the "political and social hierarchies" of the dominant castes and elite groups at the "periphery". This political, cultural and social power provides the context that conditions "the nature of central rule". Nonetheless there are continuous political struggles for domination, as well as opposition. Kohli, however, summarised that "how the resulting political struggles are co-opted, repressed or utilized is essential to an understanding of how political change in developing countries proceeds" as in the case of India.

3.2 Identity politics

In the light of political mobilisation along religious and cultural discourses in a 'secular' Indian Union with strong unitary tendencies, the urge to homogenise through 'Indianization' or 'Sanskritization' is strong. The fear and strength of its intensity occurs for two reasons: (i) In the absence of a self-identification of Hindu identity, it develops only in the presence of the 'Other', for instance a Muslim. The expansion of a Hindu political power and base in secular India would be difficult to exist without the "Muslim question".[216] In India, "Hindutva (Hinduness) is the assertion of Hindu identity as opposed to Muslim identity".[217] (ii) Secondly, common Brahmanical

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and slogans developed in the 1970s. But by 1980s the Congress leaders realized that they could not implement their pro-poor strategy, and knowing they needed another electoral strategy to win seats, flirted with ethnic and religious themes, e.g. "Hindus against other Indian minorities".

[216] Kakar. *The Colors of Violence,* p.107.

[217] Thomas Hylland Eriksen, Ethnic identity, national identity, and intergroup conflict: The significance of personal experiences, in Richard D. Ashmore, et al (eds.), *Social identity, intergroup conflict and conflict resolution,* Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2001, pp. 42-68, p.55.

narratives will continue to retain the political power of the traditionally higher caste and the emerging bourgeoisie from the dominant culture. While these arguments seem radical, Hindu nationalism within secular India is real and a major challenge to the ideals of equality, egalitarianism, democracy and the security of minorities. In India, national engagement with the two principal political identities based along religious lines, the Muslims with the 'largest minority' comprising of about 12% of the total population and the majority Hindus, has diverted the issues around suppression of political rights of various ethnic and emerging nations when they were conflated to the Indian Union. A brief theoretical clarification of identity politics is needed to highlight the location of the Naga conflict within the Indian Union. Since the struggle of the Nagas is for the recognition of a collective identity as opposed to individual rights and equality as citizens of the Indian Union, identity politics here will mean collective rather than personal or individual identity.

According to Thomas Hylland Eriksen:

> "...identity politics should be taken to mean political ideology, organization, and action that openly represents the interests of designated groups based on "essential" characteristics such as ethnic origin or religion and whose legitimacy lies in the support of important segments of such groups." [218]

Ethnic groups, religion, nationalism, language, cultural affiliation and symbolic traditional practices are some of the main components of identity. Jeremy Waldron[219], in a critique on identity politics, highlights the problem of 'compossibility' (possible together). Meaning that, it is simply not possible to respect and accommodate different non-negotiable identities and values of various individuals/groups without being inconsistent to a single system or state. He also points out that the treatment of identity as non-negotiable is damaging to the liberal democratic policy of "negotiation and trade-offs". He suggests that in liberal democracy and multicultural societies, cultural allegiances and practices must be engaged in terms of reasoning rather than

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[218] Eriksen, Ethnic identity, national identity, and intergroup conflict: The significance of personal experiences, in Richard D. Ashmore, et al (eds.), *Social identity, intergroup conflict and conflict resolution,* pp. 42-68, in p.42.

[219] Jeremy Waldron, Cultural Identity and Civic responsibility, in Will Kymlicka and Wayne Norman (eds.), *Citizenship in Diverse Societies,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, pp.155-174.

"as a matter of identity" so that frameworks around justice, peace and resolving conflict can be organised through the participation of the citizens in the state.

Margaret Moore,[220] unlike Waldron, defends the legitimacy of political demands made by identity claims. She responds to critiques like Waldron's on the subjectivity of identity by advancing identity not only as individual rights and values, but as collective identities with ethical, psychological and social commitments. The central identity and integrity of a person is based on the morals, values and interests they claim to have, which suggests that they form an integral part of their relationship to the self. The state has responsibilities to regulate policies so people are not forced to experience their identity being violated; nor should it force them to conform their moral beliefs for utilitarian state power and policies. She also points out the ascriptive notion of identity, either biologically or through the ratification of their membership with a certain group by others, "whether or not the person identifies with them". Having said this, Moore acknowledges that there is an implicit limit to the legitimacy of identity claims to solve Waldron's concern with the 'incompossibility problem'. The legitimacy of a person's identity, based on their collective identity, should be in relation to the cultural practice and general interest of that particular group as opposed to the implicit value of the individual. This argument calls for respect and recognition that "other people also have identities"[221] and prevents the imposition of cultural practices upon others.[222]

Moore's defence of the legitimacy of the political demands made by identity claims is approached in the context of the multicultural societies located in the West. The rights and legitimacy of identity claims based on multicultural and multinational contest, though interrelated, are different. To understand the dynamics of the identity claims of the Nagas within the Indian Union, these differences, and the position and rights of tribes under the Indian Government, must be highlighted.

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[220] Margaret Moore, Identity Claims and Identity Politics: A limited defense, in Igor Primoratz and Aleksandar Pavkovic (eds.), *Identity, Self-determination and Secession,* Ashgate: 2006, pp.27-41.
[221] Moore, Identity Claims and Identity Politics: A limited defense, in Primoratz and Pavkovic (eds.), *Identity, Self-determination and Secession,* p.35.
[222] Moore also goes on to argue that it should be endured that the individuals in various group identities are not oppressed or abused. However, as mentioned earlier, the interest of the thesis is on the collective identity of various peoples.

Oommen's[223] distinction between multicultural and multinational is insightful and helpful in the discussion and treatment of various collective rights and claims. Multinational situations are "premodern empires, colonial plural societies, post-colonial politics and socialist states". In multinational polities, "peoples with distinct homelands and cultures, particularly language and religion, coexist in one polity". On the other hand the "New World settlements and contemporary multicultural politics" are referred to as multicultural situations. These polities, according to Oommen, are "products of the de-territorialisation of national groups who migrated to new homelands". He argues that religious communities or racial groups with their own language and homelands (ancestral or adopted) are a nation by virtue of their latter attributes. But this does not qualify such groups as "nation-groups" or claims for nationhood as their collective rights. Rather, such groups should claim collective rights as minorities "if they are co-national with other races and religious communities" and as ethnies "when they are uprooted from their homeland and become immigrants or refugees".[224]

Eriksen[225] also differentiates "conflicts involving territorial minorities and indigenous peoples confronting a more or less belligerent state" as ethnic in character, while the social movement for immigrants and anti-racism found in western Europe belong to the liberal tradition because they struggle for equality as opposed to difference. He points out that ethnicity is a membership that is ascribed, with a notion of "shared ancestry, a kind of fictive kinship", while culture refers to the "shared representations, norms and practices".[226]

The right to identity for minorities and various indigenous peoples is one of the main

[223] T. K. Oommen, New Nationalism and Collective Rights, in Stephen May, et al (eds.), *Ethnicity, Nationalism, and Minority Rights,* Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 2004, pp.121-143, in p.123. He goes on to discuss each of the six situations he mentions in the distinction. By New World he meant the colonisers who continued to settle America, Australia and New Zealand, unlike the situation in the Old World like Asia and Africa where they more or less retreated.
[224] Ibid., p. 140.
[225] Eriksen, Ethnicity, class, and the 1999 Mauritian riots, in Stephen May, et al (eds.), *Ethnicity, Nationalism, and Minority Rights,* pp. 78-95, p. 94.
[226] Eriksen, Ethnic identity, national identity, and intergroup conflict: The significance of personal experiences, in Richard D. Ashmore, et al (eds.), *Social identity, intergroup conflict and conflict*

concerns of the United Nations Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The struggle for the right to identity has seen many violent ethnic conflicts around the world. Besides the threat of physical harm and violence against the less dominant group, the subtle policy of assimilating minorities may also be an effective means of "eliminating a group through attacks upon the lives of members".[227]   If this effort becomes successful, it brings about the "death of a culture" because a different form of culture, possibly the culture of the "oppressors", is passed on to the succeeding generations.

3.2.1 Bringing it into context: The cultural and political narratives of the 'Other' Nagas

Despite the critique on the secular expression of Indianness, the Indian state within its federal arrangement has united and accommodated many different languages, ethnic and religious groups, and social particularities. Federal states have been demarcated mainly along linguistic lines, and maps within the Union have been redrawn. Despite the central authority's ability to re-organise a federal state, as Baxi[228] writes, in reality it is the "people's movements" that exercise the power.   He goes on to support the view that "new states are almost constantly born within the Indian federation along linguistic, cultural, identity axes. No doubt, both insurgent and state violence mark the birthing of new state "communities".   Ambedkar, explaining the federal system in India, rationalised that it was "not the result of an agreement by the states.   Hence, no state had a right to secede from it".[229] The Indian federation was rather "a union; it had all the features of a federal polity but it was indissoluble".[230]

Against a backdrop of secularism, development and equality, one of the main challenges of the Indian Union is to homogenise and unify the multicultural and

resolution, Oxford University press, 2001, pp. 42-68, 43.
[227] Patrick Thornberry, *International Law and the Rights of Minorities,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991, paperback edition, 1992, p. 141.
[228] Quoted in Castellino and   Dominguez Redondo,   *Minority Rights in Asia,* p. 100
[229] Summarized by Gurpreet Mahajan, Federal Accommodation of Ethnocultural Identities in India, in He, et al (eds.), *Federalism in Asia,* pp. 82-100, in p. 83.
[230] Quoted in ibid., p.82. Ambedkar was a dalit himself and was the Chairman of the Drafting Committee for a new Indian Constitution. For more of his political position, see footnote 198.

multinational identities in federal India with a Hindu value system. It has to be acknowledged that despite communal riots between Hindu-Muslim or Hindu-Sikh identities, the multiple 'nations' in the Union continue to coexist with state of India.

3.2.2 'Economic backwardness'- The Status of the Nagas according to the Indian Constitution

The interest now returns to the location of the Naga identity in relation to the secular Indian state amidst the Brahmanical narratives in Indian history. The Naga Hills, as Nagaland was called during the partial administration of the British in the frontiers, was made a part of Assam for administrative purposes during the latter part of the 19th century. Since many tribes belonging to the Nagas had not yet been identified even by the British anthropologists, Naga tribes in the eastern region were not a part of such an arrangement and remained outside any form of administration, which soon came to be known as the 'excluded area or un-surveyed area'. When the British left India, the GoI assumed, and eventually claimed, that Nagaland was an integral part of the Indian Union by virtue of the colonial partial administration in some parts of Nagaland. In typical alignment with the Indian commitment to federalism, the GoI conferred statehood to Nagaland in December 1963. In this federal arrangement, parts of eastern Nagaland, which were outside the Naga Hills administrative unit during colonial times, were merged to the state. But many Nagas, along with their territorial homeland, were demarcated by the state arrangement. Nari Rustomiji expressed the official sentiments of many Indian officials when he wrote that "the Government of India could not have been more generous than when they eventually agreed in August 1960 to separate Nagas from Assam and grant them a state of their own".[231]

The term 'tribe' is nowhere defined in the Constitution of India. The first attempt in modern India to recognize a specific group of people that had come to be referred to as 'Scheduled Tribes'[232] in 1950, thought 'Scheduled Caste' was designated during

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[231] Nari Rustomiji, *Imperilled Frontiers: India's North Eastern Borderlands*, Delhi; Oxford : Oxford University Press, 1983, p.55.
[232] Hereafter Scheduled Tribe will be referred as ST and Scheduled Caste as SC.

the 1930s.[233] It simply declares in Article 342 that the ST are "the tribes or tribal communities"[234] which the President may specify by public notification. Before the term 'scheduled tribe' was designated in 1950, it was first officially designated as 'forest tribe', followed by 'primitive tribe' (1931), 'backward tribe', (1935), 'Adivasi' - the original settlers (1948).[235] According to the 1991 census, the population included under the label of 'Scheduled Tribe' constituted 8.1 % of the India population. [236] The non-tribal looked down upon tribal because "they were outside the caste structure of the Hindu system"[237] and therefore considered to have no social status in the wider Indian society.

The Indian Constitution describes them as,

> "Scheduled tribe, means such tribes or tribal communities or parts of or groups within such tribes or tribal communities as deemed under article 342 to be Scheduled Tribes for the purpose of this Constitution." [238]

The Presidential order with regard to the specification of ST/SC was after a   detailed study of the "economic status, level of education, and the necessity of protection, inclusion into or exclusion…".[239] People belonging to ST/SC require a certification which is accompanied by a complex system verification. A person claiming to be ST/SC needs to verify:

> (i) that the person and his parents actually belong to the community claimed;
> (ii) that this community is included in the Presidential Order specifying the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in relation to the concerned States;
> (iii) that the person belongs to that State and to the area within that state in respect of which the community has be scheduled;
> (iv) if the person claims to be a Scheduled Caste, he may profess either the Hindu   or the Sikh religion;
> (v) if the person claims to be a Scheduled Tribe, he may profess any

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[233] The study of Scheduled Caste is not within the scope of the Thesis
[234] The Indian Constitution.
[235] Sachchidanada and R.R. Prasad, Introduction, in Sachchidanada and Prasad (eds.), *Encyclopedic profile of Indian Tribes,* pp.xvii-xxv, p.xviii.
[236] Castellino and Dominguez Redondo,   *Minority Rights in Asia,*   p.75
[237] M.M. Thomas and Taylor, R.W., (eds.). *Tribal awakening: A Group Study,* Bangalore: Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society, Bangalore, 1965.Tribal awakening,   p.172.
[238] Quoted in Castellino and Dominguez Redondo, *Minority Rights in Asia,* p.75 p.69.
[239] Quoted in ibid., p.70.

religion.[240]

67.76 million people were counted in the 1991 census as belonging to ST in different states/union territories in India excluding Jammu and Kashmir, constituting 8.08% of the total population of India. The land held by the ST according to the Agricultural Census 1984-86, accounted for 7.9% of the total number of land holdings in the country.[241]

The status of the Nagas in the Indian Constitution is specified and regulated as a 'Scheduled Tribe'. The main characteristics commonly applied to Scheduled Tribes are:- (i) tribal origin, homogeneous community which belongs neither to Hindu nor Muslim communities; (ii) primitive ways of life; (iii) habitation in remote and less easily accessible areas; and (iv) general backwardness in all respects".[242] The groups of peoples referred to in the Constitution as the Scheduled Tribes are "over 400 First Nations of India".[243] The so-called tribals or *adivasis* (literal meaning - original inhabitants or indigenous people) and the dalits are the indigenous peoples of India in the sense they were long settled in different parts of the Indian sub-continent before the Aryan-speaking peoples invaded.[244] However the Indian Government denies the fact that there are any indigenous peoples in the country.[245] Rather, the Indian Constitution categorises the indigenous peoples in terms of economic backwardness with a primitive living standard and who are not necessarily Hindus by religion since they are outside the caste system.

For SC it is mandatory that they are either Hindus or Sikhs.[246] A complex process of

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[240] Quoted in ibid., p.70. Buddhism was eventually included by Constitution (Scheduled Caste) Orders (Amendment) Act 1990 (see ibid., p.70)

[241] Sachchidanada and R.R. Prasad, Introduction, in Sachchidanada and Prasad (eds.), *Encyclopedic profile of Indian Tribes,* pp.xvii-xxv, in p.xix.

[242] Ibid., pp.xvii-xxv, in p.xviii.

[243] Oommen, New Nationalism and Collective Rights, in Stephen May, et at (eds.), *Ethnicity, Nationalism, and Minority Rights,* pp.121-143, in p.121.

[244] Niharranjan Roy, Introductory Address, in K. Suresh Singh (ed.), *The Tribal situation in India,* Shimla; Moti Lal Bandorsidass, 2nd Reprint, 1990, pp.3-24, in p.10. Also see Castellino and Dominguez Redondo, *Minority Rights in Asia,* p. 74.

[245] Thornberry, *International Law and the Rights of Minorities,* p. 378.

[246] See Castellino and Dominguez Redondo, *Minority Rights in Asia,* p.70. Buddhism as mentioned was included by Constitution (Scheduled Caste) Orders (Amendment) Act 1990 (quoted in ibid, p.70).

verification is carried on before the certification is issued. ST and SC are regarded "less as an ethnic-based grouping and more as an occupational grouping such as that of labourers in the unorganised sector of the economy or of bonded labourers."[247] Patrick Thornberry observes that while minority rights have an "element of permanence and include such things as the establishment and maintenance of schools, conservation of language and culture... the rights relating to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are envisaged as temporary and exceptional measures to reduce the inequalities between communities."[248] Accordingly, he points out that unlike the minority question "which is often seen as a cultural issue that of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes is seen primarily as a social and economic issue."[249]

3.2.3 The basis of the Nagas' claim for political identity

The struggle of the dalits for emancipation, despite being the indigenous peoples of India, mainly takes the liberal approach through claims for "equality, non-discrimination and equality of opportunity",[250] rather than their collective rights to preserve their cultural identity and value system. Their claim is to be integrated and assimilated as equals within the mainstream Indian Hindu population with whom they share their "religion and language".[251] This influence was possible because for centuries despite the diabolic practice of pollution, the dalits and mainstream Hindus shared the same geographical space, and the high-caste Hindus needed the dalits to do their prescribed job of handling human waste and dead animals".[252]

On the other hand, many of the over 400 First Nations were not directly influenced by the mainstream Hindu value system. On the eve of Indian independence from colonial rule, they did not claim a separate political identity. Tribal people who were not influenced by the mainstream Hindu system after their Union with India in 1947

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[247] Ibid., p. 96.
[248] Thornberry, *International Law and the Rights of Minorities*, p.267.
[249] Ibid, p. 267.
[250] Castellino and Dominguez Redondo, *Minority Rights in Asia*, p. 71.
[251] Ibid.
[252] Ibid., p. 72.

developed various identity-based tribal or indigenous liberation or 'independence movements', particularly those tribes (the Mizos, the Bodos, the Kacharis) from the north-eastern states of India.[253] The north-eastern region of the Indian Union is often termed as the land of insurgency by Indian policy-makers. Nagaland is often regarded as the centre where the insurgency began, and therefore to control the situation it is recommended that "Nagaland should be first controlled"[254] and a "multi-program approach should be adopted"[255] to defeat the "separatist forces".[256]

However, Nagas have always defended their position that they are not secessionists or separatists[257] and that their political claim is different[258] from other collective-identity claims. Besides the distinctiveness from mainstream India based on language, religion, cultural and racial origin, their legal bases are:[259]

(i) The 1929 Memorandum to the Simon Commission in which the Nagas officially for the first time expressed their desire to be left alone to determine their own future and safeguard their culture and land;

(ii) 14th August 1947, the symbolic declaration of Naga Independence.

(iii) The Naga National Council (NNC) was invited to send representatives to Delhi for the amendment of the Indian Constitution on 26 January 1950. No Naga representatives were sent or participated. Instead, on the eve of India Republic Day (26th January 1950), the NNC declared:-

> "Nagas will become a free nation. The Indian constitution cannot
> bind the Nagas. An appeal is made to India to declare to the world on

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[253] For a detail official list of various such movements from the India Army,   See A. Lanunungsang Ao, *From Phizo to Muivah: The Naga national Question in North- East India,* New Delhi : Mittal Publications , 2002, pp.357-360.

[254] Mr. Ved Marwah, former Deputy Commissioner of Police and one time Head of the Police in Mizoram state, Quoted in Lanunungsang, *From Phizo to Muivah*, p. 359.

[255] Ibid.

[256] Ibid.

[257] NPMHR (Naga Peoples' Movement for Human Rights) publication, *The Nagas: Truth and Hope for the Living*, p. 42.

[258] Given this argument that the Naga case is different from the other indigenous movements found in the north-eastern states of India does not imply that the claims of the other movements are invalid or illegitimate. If these groups face discrimination and injustices, and are ethnically and culturally distinct from the mainstream Indian society, then their collective identity claims are just as legitimate. See Primoratz and Pavkovic, Introduction in, Primoratz and Pavkovic (eds.), *Identity, Self-determination and Secession,* pp.1-11, in p. 8.

[259] See Lanunungsang, *From Phizo to Muivah*, pp. 48-49; see also, NPMHR, *The Nagas: Truth and Hope for the Living,* pp. 28-29; L.Wati, *Fact and Growth of Naga Nationalism,* pp.12-32.

Republic Day that the Nagas will be given freedom of choice to become independent."[260]

(iv) 16th May1951 Plebiscite, in which 99.9% Nagas voted for an 'independent' state.

(v) In the1952 election, the "total non-participation"[261] of the Nagas in what was the first ever democratic general election held in the Indian Union.

Based on these arguments, the Nagas continue to struggle for political legitimacy. The Nagas' claims for 'sovereignty' and 'independence' may be debatable and contested. The GoI's position on such claims so far is that the Indo-Naga solution should be within the Constitution and territorial integrity of India. A resolution to this deadlock will be discussed in Chapter 7. But failing to recognise and acknowledge the distinct Naga cultural and political identity from mainstream Indian society is a deliberate imposition of state injustice and suppression towards a non-dominant political group. It should also be very clear at this stage that the Naga political struggle is not for cultural integration or political assimilation into India; nor is it a political movement to demand 'equal treatment as citizens' under the Indian Constitution. Rather the core of the struggle revolves around the demands for 'independence' and 'sovereignty', so as to be protected from the overwhelming political hegemony and power of the GoI. It is to protect the land rights and territorial boundaries of the Naga peoples and to preserve the cultural practices and the languages of the various Naga tribes. It is an assertion that Naga identity is different from the mainstream Indian value system and therefore a separate status is required to address the issue.

The Indian federal arrangement has certainly not solved the Indo-Naga problem. The question that needs to be examined by Indian policy-makers is whether the political basis of secularism, nationhood and the existing federal system is broad enough to address the Naga problem. The Nagas did not seek to be accepted, recognized or assimilated within the Indian Union. The Nagas were historically, politically,

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[260] Quoted in Neville Maxwell, *India and the Nagas, London*: Minority Rights Group, 1973, p.10.
[261] The writer owes this term 'total non-participation' in understanding within a Naga context for this particular point in Naga history to Prof. Kolezo Chase.

socially not under the influence or even a part of the cultural Hinduness of India during pre-colonial, colonial or post-colonial period.[262] The Nagas also resisted modern Indian secularity which is an expression of Hindu hegemony because it was perceived and subsequently became a tool of domination. The cultural hegemony of mainstream India channels its political power through the institution of the state in responding to the Naga political problem. In this way Indian secularism can be self-deceiving in thinking that it could cover and accommodate all social, historical and ethnic particularities within its existing Constitution.

The Indo-Naga conflict will be historically incorrect and ethnically wrong if the formation of the cultural and modern Indian state and the process of Naga nation-building since the 'awakening' of Naga ethnicity, as separate entities, are not acknowledged. The Indian "Hindu-based" bourgeois Indianness and the tribal identity of the Nagas cannot be attributed with the same political and cultural system. As pointed out by Nathan, a clear "distinction must be drawn between the oppressor nationalism of Hindu-based, Hindi Indianness and the 'Other'-oppressed nationalism."[263] This distinction is not only in terms of inequalities between the Indians and Nagas; it is also to acknowledge historical and cultural differences and see objectively the resistance of the Nagas towards secular India based on the historical experience of the two contrasting cultural entities. The deep cultural differences and traditional ethos of Nagas from mainstream India cannot be denied. The Nagas linguistically belong to the Tibeto-Burmese family and racially to the Mongoloid race. Before Christianity, each tribe had its own gods and spirits. Today at least 95% of Nagas are Christians. The percentage might approximately stand at 80% in the Nagaland state where there is a huge influx of Indians. In contrast with the caste system in India, Naga village epistemology in essence is based upon egalitarianism, meaning sharing, equality and ownership. Future political dialogue between India and the Nagas should take into account and acknowledge that:

(i) Tribal Naga nationalism and nation-building are culturally and historically distinct

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[262] A detailed description of the Naga history, cultural practices and political development will be discussed in Chapter 4.
[263] Nathan, India: From Civilization to Nations, in Rupesinghe, and Mumtaz (eds.), *Internal Conflict*

from the Hindu-based Indian bourgeois nationalism and state building. This is important because of the cultural stigma against all tribes as outcastes, as 'primitives', by the general Indian dominant castes who usually are the people who hold the political and decision-making power through various positions in the institution of the state. This is both a culturally-, as well as a religiously-motivated, superiority, and is a secular Indian superior mentality towards the Others like the Nagas.

(ii) Provision and support for the development and investment of local resources by the Nagas themselves.

(iii) To safeguard the traditional Naga village landholding and customary law.

(iv) Integration of all the Naga-inhabited areas that have been demarcated within the Indian Union

(v) To seek a political arrangement outside of the Constitution of India considering the legal basis of the Nagas which were mentioned earlier.

(vi) The non-violent resistance of Nagas to the coercion of the GoI is clearly displayed when Nagas called for "total non-participation" in the first-ever General Election of the Indian Union in 1952. Ballot boxes were returned empty to India. Eventually, Naga leaders and freedom fighters were compelled to go underground and defend their country when Indian armed forces were deployed to the Naga Hills in 1953. It would be unfair both politically and militarily to place on an equal footing the Indian Armed forces and the Naga villagers who were simply defending their country so that they could attain the right to live as equals with dignity and in peace.[264] This asymmetrical relationship between the GoI and the Nagas is one of the defining features of the abuse of political power and domination that has led to military aggression, demarcation and various forms of political policy and decision-making towards the Nagas.

The territorial integrity of the Indian Union within the political discourse legitimised by the "sacred geography" needs greater critical reading from indigenous peoples who were not influenced by the Brahmanical structure and located in separate geographical spaces. In this perspective, a crucial piece of historical misinterpretation needs to be

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in South Asia, p.24.
[264] Archbishop Dom Helder Camara, *Spiral of Violence*, London Sheed & Ward 1975. He used the comparison between Vietnamese boys fighting in the ranks of the National Liberation Front against the

corrected. Nagas were not a part of the Brahmanical sacred 'geographical imagination'. If promoters of the 'Brahmanical concept' presumed in their secularity that Nagas would become a part of that geography like many 'Others' in the Indian Union, Nagas starkly opposed and rejected that 'imagination' in 1929 to the Simon Commission, and declared independence on 14 August 1947. Both in cultural and historical experiences, Nagas form a separate unit from both the Indian cultural civilization and political imagination. The question of Nagas seeking independence from India is therefore incorrect. Rather, based on the structural reality of cultural India and a Naga nation, on the eve of the colonial departure, the British Raj facilitated the Indian Union as a state, while for the Nagas, their political actions as an evolving nation were legitimized in their declaration that they were separate from any other political state including the Indian Union. Because of the GoI's political power and superiority, Nagas were coerced into the Indian Union, but this act of coercion does not nullify these historical facts.

The 'protracted' conflict between the GoI and Nagas is largely due to the Nagas' determination not to abandon their claim for an 'independent state' and the GoI's inability to coerce the Nagas into denouncing their historical political actions. The identity politics in the Indo-Naga case is not that the GoI themselves cannot see the distinctiveness - it is rather the reluctance to accept the legitimacy of that political identity. It is the GoI's approach of non-acceptance towards the existence of nations with cultural autonomy and territorial homelands in their Union, who were not influenced by Brahmanism and never endorsed their rule. In order to nullify such identity claims based on ethnicity or nationhood, the GoI declared economic disparity among different groups of people as the sole form of distinction, thereby making development as its sole political ideology without necessarily giving up the Brahmanical structure. In that light, a re-imagination of whether the Nagas share any similarities in the collective imagination and history of the cultural Indian civilization is required. It should also look critically at the absence of the Brahmanical concept of caste structure in the light of Naga village egalitarianism.

North American soldier. The text of Camara is used here.

But the geo-political reality is that the Indian Union and Nagaland share political boundaries, with Nagaland in a frontier of huge strategical significance to the Indian hegemony. Security and stability in the region requires both the GoI and the Nagas to negotiate and co-operate. A 'mature political dialogue' of relational inter-dependence rather than coercive political control is the way to begin.

The crucial question therefore is: is there a possibility for a political arrangement for a unique historical and political entity like the Nagas within or outside the highly centralised Indian Union?

An honourable settlement and any political arrangement between India and the Nagas cannot be reached without the acknowledgement by both parties of these historical narratives and political realities. It also has to take into account that the asymmetrical power relationship will always be there, and therefore, in the event of a political arrangement, how the Indo-Naga power relationship will work must be considered.

3.2.4   Internal Naga conflict: The impact of political modernity

Structurally the Indo-Naga political relationship is asymmetrical because of the GoI's political power legitimised by the dominant cultural structure. At the core of the Naga political cause is its struggle against the Indian hegemony. The role and involvement of the GoI as a major divisive political power in the Naga struggle is also undeniable. But Nagas must also acknowledge the responsibility that the escalating conflict between various Naga factions, usually divided along tribal lines, is more pressing. Without facilitating dialogue between all of the conflicting parties, it is not feasible to negotiate with the GoI towards any political arrangement. Unlike the problem of political identity with the GoI, the division of Nagas along tribal lines is not an issue about identity *per se*. The Naga tribal identity is threatened by the more dominant and powerful identity of mainstream India, not only through assimilation but through various forms of interaction including the GoI demarcation of the Nagas into various federal Indian states and their refusal to protect the distinctiveness. But within the

Naga internal politics, the cleavages of each tribal identity is clearly defined along distinct languages with a specific and vast expanse of traditional territory shared by the various villages of the tribe within a region. As discussed in Chapter 2, Naga nationalism and nation-making have so far been strongly promoted and held by a primordial understanding. For instance, sons and daughters of the soil, common ancestors and ancestral land, their naturalness since time immemorial, and shared culture are some common rationales they have employed.

The Naga internal conflict around factional divisions along tribal lines is not about ethnic, language or cultural rights. The tribes are not fighting because they are different to each other; rather it is the absence of space to engage beyond primordial rationale and historical memories. It was the inability of the traditional form of Naga administration and governance to respond to a new political phenomenon when all the independent villages from various Naga tribes were put together under one political umbrella. It was a failure to develop a cohesive form of political mechanism to represent the interests of all the Naga tribes. Eventually the Naga national leaders were arrested and the movement was suppressed by Indian armed forces. The political administration of the federal unit was introduced to a section of Nagas in Nagaland in 1963. Various developmental policies became key instruments to speed up the process of modernisation and integration of the tribal community with the rest of the country. Programmes and initiatives like the Five Year Plan were introduced.[265] Initiatives of this kind resulted in the injection of huge amounts of financial assistance by the GoI, which established a monetary form of economy which changed entirely the traditional landscape of the Naga polity.

Within this system there developed a structural mechanism of dependency that still prevails within Nagaland. In other words, the sole dependency on the GoI economic incentives and employment developed a lack of ownership and accountability by the Nagas over their resources, e.g., land, cultivation, etc. The federal form of elections, entirely new to the traditional Naga way of electing representatives, developed a system to 'buy votes' as vote banks during the federal state elections.

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[265] See K. Thanzauva, *Theology of Community: Tribal Theology in the Making*, Aizawl: Research and

This system lacked accountability regarding the distribution and implementation of such monetary resources coming from the GoI. In other words, only some educated Nagas or those who collaborated with the GoI benefited from these initiatives. Naga political leaders involved in the process attempted to oppress the people, particularly people from smaller and less advantaged tribes. The Naga political struggle against Indian hegemony had shifted to fighting and scrambling for economic wealth from the GoI. Such wealth was used for personal interest and for political parties and supporters either in the federal state government or the factional groups, thereby maintaining their political support and establishing their power.

The lack of accountability and failure to recognise any form of common vital interest over resources, material sustainability and benefits other than a shared historical memory, created division and inequality amongst the Nagas. Discontentment over these injustices, grievances over deprivation and the benefit gained from such schemes and resources became mobilised and framed along tribal-kin lines. Such fights and divisions obscured the common experience of Indian domination and historical oppression that all Nagas experienced. Issues around distribution of political power on a changed political platform as well as issues around material interest become taboo in Naga politics. They were instead silenced and suppressed by dominant groups either in the form of a tribe or a faction, only to give birth to a reactionary political separatism within Naga nation-making. The 'national movement' eventually was divided by serious factional rivalries and violence. The areas of conflict were around employment in the government, competition over the GoI's monetary resources, political influence and electoral position in the federal unit of Nagaland.

Tribal separatism rather than integration became a serious challenge. This vicious cycle of reaction became the only justified way of Naga politics: from the Naga National Council (NNC) and the eventual formation of the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN), which later split into the NSCN (K) and the NSCN

(IM) in 1988. In 2007 there was a further split in the NSCN (IM) camp which led to the formation of NSCN (Unification).[266] Each faction struggled to become the dominant and exclusive group so is that it justified a sense of ownership, control and leadership over the political power and positions which otherwise should be inclusive to all groups and all people. It was their competitive attempts to centralise Naga politics in and through their respective tribes, faction, and ideology. The policy implemented by the GoI over Nagas is today played out by the Nagas themselves in various forms in Naga internal social dynamics.

Having said this, it cannot be denied that there was no identity problem among the Nagas. Besides their similarities in terms of race, language, value systems and geographical location, Nagas did not collectively develop a strong inherent ideological coherence. The political division of the Nagas by the GoI is still escalating the problem. Cultural modernity in the form of Christianity united the Nagas, but they do not see themselves as a political unit of India, and their identity defined in opposition to India is not sufficient. While these contexts are important, it is not sufficient to resolve the underlying conflict found among the various Naga tribes. They need to develop an identity in relation to each tribal community within itself. But while re-defining and re-constructing Naga identity, it is important to take into consideration who is determining the Naga identity. Is it a particular dominant tribe expressing and imposing its power over the other tribes? It is essential to define Naga identity to bring every Naga tribe with their cultural particularities into a collective single political unit. A strong historical and cultural narrative and critique of the Nagas needs to be interpreted and introduced for the people. A critique on the role and place of Christianity in Nagaland also needs to be examined and developed in accordance with the struggle and tribal identities of the Nagas. The influence of Christianity played more than a religious role by not only uniting the Nagas themselves, but also in defining them as a separate cultural entity to the other tribal communities in the eastern region of Assam by the Indian policy-makers. Various survey Officials were sent to the frontiers of India and Burma soon after Indian Independence. One Lakshmidas Shrikant toured parts of the Naga Hills, and Dr.

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[266] As mentioned already in Chapter 1, NSCN (K) and NSCN (Unification) have merged as one.

Rajendra Prasad, the first President of independent India, recorded Shrikant's observation about the Nagas:

> "The Government of India have made a grant of some Rs.30 lakhs to be distributed amongst the Nagas as compensation for losses during the war and the Governor (of Assam) during his tour announced that this was going to be distributed...Mr. Phizo, the Christian leader of the Christian Nagas, who is at present engaged in securing a plebiscite on the question of the creation of a Naga territory as an independent sovereign country...He (the Governor) had been following the policy of winning them over by nice and friendly treatment. Shri Lakshmidas Shrikant thinks that along with that, a certain amount of firmness is also necessary...with this large amount of distribution amongst the Nagas and proper propaganda...Shrikant thinks it should be possible for the Government to win the Nagas over, especially when there is division amongst them as between the Christian Nagas and the non-Christian Nagas. He also thinks that in the the Naga Hills District the District Council under the Constitution should be constituted, but he understood from Mr. Duncan who is in charge, that they were not going to have elections there (the Naga Hills). He thinks it would be wrong not to enforce the Constitution in that area and it would mean practically a surrender to Phizo's demand for an independent sovereign State..."[267]

The Indo-Naga political problem and the internal dynamics of the Naga division along tribal and factional lines should not overlook the fact that Nagas are ebbing slowly into a systematic process of 'Indianization' and 'sanskritization'. In fact, this in itself is a political action. The introduction of the Bharatiya Janata Party[268] (BJP, or Indian People's Party) in the federal unit of the Nagaland state is very telling of these influences. Nagaland state leaders might have their arguments and interests but the fact is, BJP cannot be separated from the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS, or National Volunteer Association) and its mass front, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP or World Hindu Council). The RSS-VHP-BJP (collectively known as the Sangh Parivar or The Saffron Family or Association) rationalised the geographical

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[267] Dr. Rajendra Prasad, *Correspondence and Selected Documents:* January to December 1952, *Presidency Period*, Valmiki Choudhary, (ed.), Published by Allied Publishers, 1984, pp. 240-241. The record of Prasad conversation with Shrikant is dated Monday, 23rd July 1951.

[268] Historically the right-wing Hindu organization- Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh(RSS, or National Volunteer Association), was founded in 1925. Its mass front- the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP or World Hindu Council) in 1965. Its political wing- the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP, or Indian People's Party) around 1980 with Bharatiya Jana Sangh as its predecessor. Collectively they are known as the Sangh Parivar (the Saffron Family or Association). These Hindu nationalists begin to construct a new aggressive Hindu identity, nationalism and revivalism. Their rational: "Members of other religions, if they denied they were Hindus, were also denying that they were Indians". M.S. Golwalkar, quoted in Tambiah *Leveling Crowds: Ethnonationalist Conflicts and Collective violence in South Asia*, p. 245.

sacredness of the Indian Union and the ideology of India for Hindus and Hindus for India. The 'Hindi language' as a compulsory subject in schools in Nagaland cannot be underestimated either as a tool of cultural assimilation. While acquiring a new language as beautiful as Hindi is an asset, it should be taught within the cultural and political context to promote the language. Even the introduction of women's Indian attire 'salwar kameez' as a compulsory uniform in certain women's colleges in Nagaland has cultural implications as well.

3.3 Conclusion:

Studying the two dimensions of political-power and identity politics within the Indo-Naga context, three distinct features that can be dominant in a conflict situation come to light:

(i) The extremely unequal mechanism of power and knowledge between conflicting parties, i.e. Indo-Naga.

(ii) The demands for the fundamental basic needs of a vulnerable society denied and suppressed because they challenge the interests of the more powerful party, i.e. Indo-Naga.

(iii) Conflict of 'perceived' interests, power and resources, intensified because of mistrust and the lack of transparency between parties within the same power and knowledge parameters, i.e., intra-Naga, along factional or tribal lines.

It is important to recognise these distinct features because an understanding of these will give the capacity to explore alternative dynamics for creative change to address the fundamental needs that are non-negotiable, thereby finding an effective approach to resolution processes and empowerment.

The Indo-Naga conflict is not simply about inter-group conflict - the geographical and cultural lines of identity are very clear. Rather it is a polity of domination which refuses to acknowledge the differences in the political sphere but treats the Nagas as subordinates. It is coercion by the Indian state on a weaker and a much smaller

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group that was emerging as a nation. But at the same time, because of the military response on the part of the Indian state, it has also sharpened the distinctiveness of the Nagas' cultural and political identity with India. Part of the Naga history, in the absence of a written history, can be developed by looking into the history of indigenous peoples in mainstream India in comparison with the Naga traditional history. For example, gods and goddesses as well as various religious beliefs and cultural practices of tribes and indigenous peoples who came under the Aryans were assimilated into the cultural narratives of the dominant culture. Indian narratives, particularly cultural narratives on religion, were not a part of the Naga oral tradition, but the Naga political identity did not emerge from nothing. It developed within a specific socio-cultural and political narrative over a different space of time. It is important to look specifically into the struggles and the narratives of the Naga traditions and political mobilisation in relation to the Indian hegemony. In doing this, it will demonstrate common struggles of the less dominant groups in secular India but also will hopefully highlight the separate cultural narratives and political identity of the Nagas.

If the Indian basis of political modernity was 'nationhood and secularism' as expressed through federalism, Nagaland experienced the structures of political modernity through the Indian federal system, which is the issue of contention. The political form of administration that was enforced did not suit the Naga tribal identities.

A productive dialogue between the conflicting Naga parties is possible when issues around interest, power, resource-sharing, and decision-making are transparently and objectively addressed. Therefore a 'political structure' inclusive of every tribe and political group for equal representation and voice is urgently required. If Nagas do not address these basic issues there can be further splits in the Naga national movement. There is a danger that it can become regional, i.e. Eastern Nagas, Western Nagas, Southern Nagas and Northern Nagas.

A political system in Nagaland should take on board the struggle of the culturally

discriminated, economically poor and politically without power. Usually such groups are disadvantaged because they are not only tribally weaker and smaller but also they availed of the English education system much later than some more advantaged tribes who embraced Christianity earlier. Education and literacy are two of the most distinguishing features for mobility in the new political system. An evolving Naga identity should embrace tribal particularities into a collective tribal value system and a Christianity that progressively seeks to develop within the context of traditional spirituality to make it relevant. A political movement not only to find some form of agreement or solution within the federal system or outside of the Indian Union is not the only answer. A Naga political system has to address all the issues and conflicts mentioned above in relation to an ethical movement by empowering the people economically and politically. The prophetic tone of the Church can give voice to the many Nagas now struggling in the structural violence that is evolving in Nagaland.

Geoff Harris and Neryl Lewis commenting on building peace in societies that are underlined by structural violence writes: "...unless the inequalities and injustices which have been the source of tension are addressed, new cycles of direct violence are likely to occur".[269]   On the other hand, peace, for John Lederach, fundamentally aims at the "transformation of the relationships, issues, and causes that underpin the conflict and the...breakdown of trust it has engendered."[270]   For peace to be positive, addressing relational parameters, inequalities and injustices are some of the keywords against structural violence.   These three keywords should be a way to address the structural and cultural violence in relation to the sources of power highlighted between the Indo-Naga and within the intra-Naga context.

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[269] Harris and Lewis, Structural Violence and Peacebuilding, in Geoff Harris (ed.), *Recovery from Armed Conflict in Developing Countries*, pp. 29-36, in p.32.
[270] Quoted in ibid., pp.29-36, in p.32.

Chapter 4   A Narrative background of the Naga tribes of South-East Asia[271]

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is not only to explain the characteristics of the Naga cultural beliefs, institutions and traditional elements. It is also to highlight the struggle, the integration as well as the disintegration and the emergence of Naga society when inevitable elements of modernity were thrust on it by the end of the late 19th century. It also will make an enquiry into how the tryst between a fully-fledged traditional society and modernity clashed as well complemented each other.   It will discuss the present Naga predicament and challenges caused not only by the pressure and demands of a modern defined society, but also those caused by its own   established traditional practices which can divide as much as unite.   However, the aim is not to make an anthropological analysis but to give a brief historical overview of the Nagas. It will explore the internal as well as external historical, political and cultural interactions that developed over the century.

4.1   Historical background

Along the margins of south-east Asia, the Naga peoples are found located in the mountainous area bordering between India and Burma in an area estimated to be more than 120,000 square kilometres. The Naga people comprising of more than sixty [272]

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[271] The analysis of the Naga society is based on the observation of the author.   These are the books referred: R.Vashum et al. (eds), *Nagas at Work,* Delhi: Naga Students Union, 1996.;   Panger Imchen, *Ancient Ao Naga Religion and Culture,* New Delhi: Har-Anand Publications, 1993; Talitemjen Jamir and A Lanunungsang, *Naga Society and Culture Naga Society and Culture : A case study of the Ao,* Mokokchung: Nagaland University, 2005 ; Wati Longchar ,*The Tribal Religious Traditions   in North East India: An Introduction,* Jorhat: Eastern Theological College, 2000.   The author consulted Naga elders like Revd. V.K. Nuh, Rev. S. Takam, Tekachangba of Chungtia village, and Kari Longchar to confirm on that piece that was written.

[272]   Listed in, Naga Hoho (Naga Council/Parliament), Compiled, *White Paper on Naga Integration* Kohima: Naga Hoho, 2002, pp. 68-69. The tribes are-Anal, Angami, Ao, Chakhesang, Chang,Cheril, Chirr, Chiru, Chote, Heimi, Hewa, Htangan, Inpui, Kharam/Khaklak/Hkaklak, Kengu Khiamnungan, Koireng, Konyak, Kayo, Khaklak/Hkaklak, Lamkang, Laihe, Liangmai, Lainung, Lotha, Mao, Maram, Maring, Moyon, Monsang, Macharay/Makury/Makhori, Malang, Nokho/Noko, Nolang, Namshik, Nocte, Pakang, Phellongri, Phom, Pochuri, Phango, Phankem, Pangmi, Pangu, Para, Poumai,, Rangpan, Rasit, Rekho, Rengma, Rongmei, Sangtam, Salpo, Shangphuri, Singpho, Sira, Somi, Sumi, Tangkhul, Tarao, Thangal,Tangsa, Tikhir, Wangcho, Yimchunger, Zeme. Almost 50 % of these tribes are in Burma.

inter-related major tribes and sub-tribes have lived for centuries on this their ancestral land. The Nagas are a group of tribal people belonging ethnically to the Sino-Mongoloid group, and linguistically to the Tibeto-Burman family. Each tribe has their own traditional costume and form of village administration ranging from democratic-egalitarian to the chieftain system. For the purposes of the thesis, when it comes to specific traditional practices or usage of terminology and language, the examples will be taken mostly from the Ao tribe, which is one of the Naga tribes.

In the absence of written records among the Nagas until the late 19th century when writing was introduced by the American missionaries, the specific factual records of their origin, migration and existence in their present settlement is not known. However, there is ample oral folklore about the migration and the origin of the Nagas within the tribes. Different Naga tribes share folklore about where they believe their ancestors originated from, e.g., stone or cave, and these places are held in reverence by the people. For example, most of the southern Naga tribes claim their origin from a cave located at Makhel in the Mao sub-division, Senapati district, now in Manipur state. The Ao tribe believes that they emerged from 'Longtrok', *'long'* meaning 'stone', and *'trok'* meaning 'six', which represent three men and three women in Chungliyimti. The mythology of 'Longtrok', is epitomized in the following historic folksong:

> "O longtrok poker
> Tongpok, Longpok, Longjarep nangpogi;
> Lima tasen mesem mone
> Lima tasen mesemdena yur;
> Bochi asem sang' ri
> Chungliyimti ali tema pang nung
> Senden Riju yangerkone".

> "Following the emergence at Longtrok;
> The sons of Tongpok, Longpok and Longjakrap[273],
> A new land founded.
> With the founding of the new land

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[273] Talitemjen Jamir and A. Lanunungsang, *Naga Society and Culture,* pp. 24-25. Tongpok, Longpok and Longjakrap are the three males who emerged from 'Longtrok', who along with their own sisters, Lendina, Yongmenala, and Elongshe, founded their clans – Imsong-Pongen clan, Longkumer clan, and Jamir clan respectively. It is said that Tongpok married Elongshe, Longpok married Lendina, and Longjakrep married Yongmenala. Through these marriages the three main clans came into existence, and a well-knitted clan exogamy marriage evolved while they were living in Longtrok that is observed to these days.

Upon the flat land at Chungliyimti
Was the Senden Riju (the assembly fortress) erected". [274]:

The stone relics still exist in both Makhel and Chungliyimti. Any writings or objections to these beliefs in symbolic myth or legend are regarded as not only an insult but defiance to the living community. The abusers are fined a pig and the number of pigs varies depending on the offence or argument made against the individual or group.

After travelling in India and reaching as far as Assam which borders Nagaland, Claudius Ptolemy[275] in his book ' Geographia', referred to a group of people in the north-east of India as 'Nangalothae', who were living in an 'unprotected country' and who are believed to be the Nagas. 'Buranjis', the official chronicles of the Ahom Dynasty of Kamarupa (presently Assam in India) which was established in A.D. 1215, made references to the neighboring hill country of the Nagas. The origin of the term, 'Naga',[276] is still contested but this generic term, popularly used from the 19th century, became the identity through which they were distinguished and eventually recognised by outsiders and by the Naga themselves.

In an excavation, the Archaeological Department of Nagaland University[277] found systematic evidence of a megalithic burial settlement at Jotsoma village, Kohima district. However it is believed that the Nagas migrated to their present location in different migratory waves before B.C. and at the beginning of early A.D. Anthropologists suggest that their tools, stone settings, erection of large stone

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[274] Quoted in ibid., p.274.

[275] Claudius Ptolemy, *Geographia,* in Book 7, Chapter 2, translated and edited by Edwards Lurther Stevenson. This group of people have been validated as Nagas by many Naga scholars such as Kaka Kaka Iralu and Gangmumeei Kabui. See also, Naga Hoho (compiled), *White Paper on Naga Integration,* p.5; see R.Vashum, et al (eds.), *Nagas at work,* p.7; also see , Murkot Ramunny, *The world of the Nagas,* Northern Book Centre, New Delhi, 1988, p.5.

[276] Many Naga writers and scholars assert that the hill people in the hills between Assam and Burma were known by the plainsmen in Assam as 'Nanga', meaning naked, while others suggest that the word 'Naga' derived from the Kachari word, 'Nok', meaning ' warrior' or 'fighters' as they had come into violent contact with the Naga tribes. Some claim it came from the Burmese word 'Naka', meaning 'people who wear earrings' or pierce their earlobes. Along this line Niechute Doulo suggested that the closest association of the term comes from the Burmese word, 'Naka', meaning people with pierced ears. He argues that today the Anglicised form is 'Naga'. Interview with Doulo, in Kohima, Nagaland, 1st June 2007.

[277] Excavation led by Tiatoshi, since 1999, a lecturer in Archaeological Department of Nagaland University.

monuments to honour departed souls, or as symbolic monuments of reverence with religious significance, are characteristic of the megalithic culture found throughout south-east Asia. These are also signified by the forked wooden posts, as well as the celebration of the feast of merit to honour, or enhance the status of an individual. Tattooing by pricking with definite designs unique to different tribes was found amongst the Nagas.

Needless to say tensions arise whenever two cultures come in contact with each other, or a dominant modern culture comes in contact with a tribal or a less prevalent culture. The resulting reaction has been generally witnessed in four phases[278]:

1. In the first phase, the modern culture, which is essentially more dynamic and aggressive, produces a shattering effect. People following the weaker persuasion are dazed, amazed and swept off their feet. The dominant culture sharpens the distinction between the two cultures but highlights the 'uncivilized', 'primitive', or 'unsophisticated' culture of the tribe. Suddenly all their indigenous values appear outdated, out-modelled and out of tune with the requirement of contemporary demands.
2. In the second phase, the tribal community tries to find its feet. It tries to find out its strengths and the beauty of its culture. It is a period of confusion, where the community finds itself hamstrung between the attraction of the new and the attachment to the old.
3. The third phase is a logical development of the second. It may witness a synthesis of the two cultures, ending the pulls and pressures and giving stability and balance of the two communities. In some cases, violence might erupt when both parties refuse to negotiate, or simply when one party wants to assume power, or when one party struggles for its survival.
4. In some cases, the tribal community can no longer withstand the coercion, and they might succumb and be totally annihilated by the dominant culture.

The following section of the chapter will discuss some of the Naga experiences.

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[278] Developed through the concept provided by Prakash Singh, *Nagaland*, (India: Land and People

4.2   Tradition and ethos of the Nagas

Fiercely independent from any foreign control or rule, the Naga religion, culture and socio-political frameworks are traditionally communal and tribal in character. The underpinning   philosophical ethos of their society was therefore:

(i) Community living based on sharing, common shared values, respect in particular for the elderly (both men and women), and looking after the welfare of the village and its members. Allegiance and loyalty to one's kin and clan or villager was therefore crucial.

(ii) Land was not only a source of livelihood - it was the sacred space of their ancestors that in a tribal context represented the centrality of their identity, beliefs, and attachment. It is the core of their existence. There was no Naga without a village; there was no village without its lands. The collective realities of life, livelihood, social and cultural practices, identity and allegiance were all tied together in the religious understanding and the explanation found within the village.   Migration among the Nagas therefore was rare. Even during famines, they pleaded and made sacrifices to their god, but they rarely left their land.

(iii) Religiously-oriented society that found its expression in worship, sacrifices and appeasement to their gods, as well as symbolic and mythical explanations and realities of fears, wonder, defence, taboos   and freedom.

(iv) Gallantry and to be a warrior were much sought-after characteristics of every man, not only to find respect and honour in society but also to find a   girl to marry.

(v) It is an interesting ethos where youth are defined as the shining stars of the village, and the elderly as the guides and the source of wisdom and the symbol of village blessing. So, while bravery, gallantry and warriorship through headhunting in fights and battles between villages was revered and regarded as a source of pride and status in a society that demanded respect, the ethos to look after women, children and the elderly was the responsibility of the village. There was a stigma on a man who was

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series); National Book Trust, 1995 p.76.

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violent towards a woman; to collect the head of a woman[279] during war time was mocked at as cowardice and therefore could not be counted. But, because of the taboos and myths that were revered, any physical deformity at birth or death through unnatural means or disaster were regarded as a sign of punishment or a curse from god.

(vi) Compulsory *morung* or bachelor dormitory was set up in every village for every Naga tribe. Among the Ao Nagas it was known as *'Ariju'*, where every boy, on reaching the age of 12-14 years, stayed until marriage. *Ariju* usually consisted of five to seven different age groups, with elders and a *tir* or leader of the organisation. It was not only a place to sleep, it was more of a place where men were trained to attain manhood, learn their livelihood, and gain acceptance in society. Their learning included basic arts, cultivation, handicrafts like basket-making, swordsmanship and the use of farming implements, legends, mythology, folktales, folksongs and traditional customs. It was here that the elders taught the youngsters about war tactics, defense and how to defend their village and land. All village ceremonies, functions, warfare and activities connected to the village, were decided in the *Ariju*. Their courage was tested by being given difficult tasks to complete. The *tir* (leader) was chosen on the basis of all-round ability, as a successful warrior who had experienced wars, raids and brought enemy heads.

It was the duty of the *Ariju* member to be watchful of any possible intrusion by enemies. With the exception of the disabled, men were soldiers for the defence of the village from any enemies or outside attacks. Womenfolk took part in the preparation of the battle, they boosted the morale of the men-folk singing war songs of victory, participating actively in the rituals offered for success in battle and celebration. It was normal in head-hunting days for small villages to seek the protection of stronger villages, and they were symbolically presented with cows and

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[279] Many might argue that this may be because the position of a woman does not count in ancient Naga villages. Women did not go to war but they were equally involved in the preparation of the war and there is no folklore where women were regarded as less equal. So to count only the heads of men gathered in war-time to represent the gallantry of a warrior was just an understanding where bravery was recognised only when it came about through a battle that was fought with equal physical strength. However, in some cases, the heads of women were counted as more precious because the maneouvre of getting into the heart of the enemy's village, where the women and children were securely hidden, was seen as a sign of craftiness.

pigs in lieu of protection. Thus friendship or diplomacy was built and special bonding and goodwill extends even to these days between these villages. *Morung* was the political, social and cultural centre of the Nagas.[280]

The foremost socio-political unit for the Nagas was the village. Headhunting was the main source of political defence for every Naga viillage. But to attack an unarmed man or attack without declaring war was prohibited and regarded as unethical. Therefore, the fundamental concept of village in a Naga context should be very clear:

(i) Village means the traditional socio-political kin-groupings with exclusive territorial legitimacy and independence; ceremoniously founded by their ancestors and thereby share real as well as common mythical origins and foundations. This can be understood as the classical Naga village. Each villlage is a republic and totally independent in its own right and its own territory. In this sense, for a Naga, the village is the first and main political and social apparatus that binds its inhabitants, with its own village administrative council and territory. Therefore, it can be said that the village in a Naga society was not only the centre of the social, political and cultural practices but it was the centre of an individual's existence. This is the classical concept of a Naga village.

(ii) A cluster of related or non-related families and individuals in a new 'settlement', and forming a village in recent time because of social mobility is not a village in a Naga context. In India, or in the Western context, a fform of social grouping, away from the heart of the city and town might qualify as a village - not so in our 'classical' Naga traditional ethos.

(iii) Having said this, the recently-'developed' Naga villages might take on the essence as well as the practices of the 'classical' Naga village because they also branched out from the 'classical' village. Reference should be made to their respective 'classical' villages at some stage by the newly-'developed' Naga villages. A departure from the concept of the 'classical' village might question the legitimacy of

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[280] The role of the Morung was discussed and supported in the conversation the author had with Tekajangba from Chungtia village. Also see Yanbemo Lotha, *Making a Theology of Naga Community,* Creative Printers Midland: Nagaland, 2005; see also N. Talitemjen. and Lanunungsang, *Naga Society and Culture.* As mentioned by Lotha the word ' morung ' is not from any of the Naga languages. Each tribe has their own term. The Ao tribe call it Arijju, Angami tribe call it Kichuki, Lotha tribe call it Apuki, Konyak tribe call it Pann, and so on. See Yambemo Lotha, *Making a Theology of Naga Community,* p.36.

their 'Naganess.'

(iv) In this paper, 'village' is defined as discussed in (i). However, the Nagas cannot deny that the 'new settlements' are becoming pressing socio-political issues in their social discourse.

The village administration or council, central to the functioning of all Naga villages, is independent, well organised and elaborate. It is in the village council that the villagers decide which part of the village's territory should be cultivated every year (economic), which village they are taking into battle, which villages they should make alliances with and with which village or villages they should make peace with (external and diplomatic relationships).

For the Ao Nagas, for instance, the village council is known as ' *putu menden'*, *'putu'* meaning generation, and *'menden'* meaning 'seat'. In other words, the generation seats. The village *putu memden* was occupied by *'tatars'*, who were the representatives from all the clans of the village, irrespective of the size of the clan. As a result, there is no class system in the Naga village council. Since in Naga society there is no compartmentalisation between the secular and the religious, not just anyone can be a representative or *'tatar'*. Each clan unanimously chooses their own representatives on the basis of age, wealth, moral-ethical standards, ability of leadership, war skills and service. On grounds of misrepresentation of power and character, they can be called back by their clan and replaced. The *'putu menden' has* the power to execute but not to dictate or impose rules on people because they follow the dictates of the people at general village public meetings.

Writing about the importance and uniqueness of a Naga village, Andrew Gray observed:

> "Coupled with democracy of the Nagas there was the factor of independence of villages. These "village states" were linked to Greek city states, an image which the British used at the time to conjure up as the height of civilization. In this way the Naga people were regarded as having a cultural nobility which was, perhaps, one of the reasons the British excluded them from the hierarchical influence of the plains."[281]

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[281] Andrew Gray, quoted in, Panger Imchen, *Ancient Ao Naga Religion and Culture,* New Delhi: Har-Anand Publications, 1993, p. 88.

Observing the way the Ao   Naga village council functioned, Mary Mead Clark, wife of the first American missionary to the Aos, commented, "each village is a little democracy managing its own affairs, except as other villages interfere either voluntarily or by partisan invitation;   each has its headman called, *Tatars*, who are the civil magistrates".[282] Until the beginning of the 20th century, the villagers' needs were minimal and they could produce within the village all that they required except for salt. So they travelled from their village to the plains of Assam for salt and to barter for some of the products they needed. Therefore, contact with the outside world was very limited and they led an almost insular life.

The Nagas might have had an intricate refined web of kinship, village administration, customary law, taboos and religious beliefs, but they still led a simple, self-sufficient life. However, a unifying administration of villages, kingdoms, caste or class, class of priesthood, taxation, monetary transaction, written judicial court and legislation was absent.

If an individual has no village affiliation he or she has no citizenship as a Naga .   In other words Naga citizens are those whose ancestors lived in that particular ancestral land of a village. Therefore the claim 'sons and daughters of the land' is an important phrase of identity. A tribe amongst the Nagas consists of villages speaking a common language, with slight variation or accent.   Villages are usually founded by at least two/three clans.   These clans can also be found distributed in the other villages of their respective tribes. This is the basis of community living and kinship. The expanse of village land is decided between the different clans found within the village. Each clan member is allotted cultivating land by the head of the clan.   The head of the clan is collectively chosen by his clansmen and this position is rotated.   The Naga village also consists not only of a family of descendants, but of different clans. Clans are exogamous, meaning that its members cannot marry one another.   It is believed by the Naga ancestors that marriage of close relations results in birth defects.   Those who commit such acts are ex-communicated from the village and cast out.

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[282] Quoted in ibid., p.89.

Inter-village marriage is not uncommon, though rare in ancient Naga society. In the event of disputes between a member clan with another, the clan takes up the case. The clan kinship has deep support for women.   If a woman is mistreated or abused or divorced, the wife's clan takes up her case and the husband is invited to a meeting attended by the wife's clan and due action is taken.   This is because when a couple marries, the elders from the respective clans meet as a symbolic gathering or uniting of two families.   In this sense, marriage is not just only between two individuals but of two clans, and if it is a marriage of two individuals from different villages, then it is a union of two villages.

But again the allegiance and dividing line that the village and its respective tribe evoke need to be addressed.   The relation or the belief of a common descendancy held among the Naga clans has not stopped the Naga villages from going to battle against each other.   The challenge, therefore, is to discuss the political, social and cultural position and status of the Nagas.   Ascribing the individual village unit in the face of a global village is a difficult position, but how they cope and relate to such changes depends on how they rationalise traditional practices and authority into the tradition of modernity.

To talk too sensitively of cultural delicacy is to underestimate the capability of tribal society to adapt and respond accordingly to changes in environmental conditions. The heritage of their ancestors, real or imagined, who developed the ethos and foundation of their culture in response to some changes in their history, is an example. This is because culture is always dynamic and not to be dynamic means belonging to a dead community which has a static culture. The task is not how to retain their traditional and cultural practices in their purest form but how to revive and renew their cultural practices to adapt to the tradition of modernity.

4.3   Traditional Peacemaking

Naga villages despite their insularity and practice of head-hunting over the centuries

also developed a culture and traditional practices to maintain peaceful co-existence and to resolve enmity created by head-hunting wars or territorial boundaries. Various disputes and conflicts within the villages between individuals and clans, and between villages, were resolved, e.g., among the Ao through:[283]

(i) 'Adjudication' or *okar* means settling disputes between the conflicting parties by imposing a fine on the offender in term of pigs, cows, or cash. Such ruling in the traditional village court is enforced by the village council and with the support of the clan leaders.

(ii) 'Oath-taking': If the village court cannot come to a decision to settle the dispute then the ritual of 'oath-taking' is initiated. The conflicting individuals solemnly swear in front of both the village and clan elders in the name of their ancestors who are sacred figures. They believe that the god, the earth, the sun and nature are their witnesses and will act accordingly against the guilty party. An oath is "a solemn declaration of the truth of a statement. In this affirmation, the supernatural is invoked as a witness. The speaker calls upon the supernatural to effect something hurtful or calamitous". [284] Such a ceremony is performed only when a person is not trusted by the witnesses, or when a person volunteers to take an oath to testify for himself/ herself for his/her word.

(iii) *Chiyongsem*[285] literally means 'eating together'. According to Alemrenba this method "stands for traditional peacemaking and reconciliation".[286] Because of the Nagas' love for festivity and their sacred attachment to land and respect for nature, food produced in their own field and land is a part of the life they live and is blessed by their gods accordingly. On the other hand, a living animal like a rooster or pig or cow are used as sacrifice while founding a village settlement. Because of this, the

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[283] Revd. Alemrenba, *Peacemaking: Learning from Indigenous Wisdom* (unpublished paper) presented at NBCC Peace and Reconciliation Training, Tsemenyu, 18-21 May 2004. These five approaches are described by Alemrenba as a selection of the eight methods he presents in the paper.

[284] A. Wati Longchar, *The Tribal Religious Tradition in North east India,* p.61. For a more detailed process on 'Ordeal, Oath and Curse, please see ibid, pp. 58-73.

[285] In the Ao language there are two dialects: Chungli and Mongsen. In Chungli, it is Chiyongsen ; in Mongsen it is 'Jatangyongdang', see Rev. Alemrenba, *Peacemaking*, p. 4. The terms use here are Ao Chungli because Rev. Alemrenba from Longsa village whose population speaks Chungli

slaughter of a living animal is considered sacred. Therefore such a sharing is significant and almost sacred. This method "of eating together, village to village, clan to clan, family to family, or individual to individual, removes or settles the dispute". Eating together may not necessarily resolve the disputes altogether but it provides the atmosphere and the condition for the conflicting parties to remove the suspicion, fear and hatred. It leads the "hostile party" towards "a spirit of forgiveness, acceptance...". If conflicts are inherited from their forefathers and passed on to generations, descendants of conflicting parties symbolically practice *chiyongsem* to enter "into a mutually-enriching relationship".

Chiyongsem can be observed between individuals, clans and villages. A process of chiyongsem between two villages is briefly discussed here. If the conflict between the two villages over warfare is protracted then a third-party village initiates "the role of bridging the gap by taking mutual consultation with either one or both the parties when the parties reach an agreement, a date is fixed through a third-party peace negotiator to perform final reconciliation *chiyongsem*. On the appointed date the village leader of village 'A' goes ceremoniously to village 'B' where the chiefs of the two villages perform a feast call *aksu*, literally meaning 'pig-killing feast' for the *chiyongsem*. A "banana is cut in the middle and each half is distributed to the two chiefs". Feasts have a very special place in Naga traditional beliefs. The sense of community for the Nagas is difficult to define without the festivals because all "festivals and ceremonies were attached to the life of the community".[287]

(iv) *Putisu* literal translation meaning "paying the biggest price exacted by the winner of the war". ('*puti*' the biggest, '*su*' pay). When a smaller or a weaker village loses the battle, they "appeal for peace negotiation for the restoration of harmony". The winning party imposes a heavy "war indemnity" on the one either who loses the war or surrenders. According to Alemrenba "the spirit of paying *putisu* is submission, mutual acceptance". However he goes on to say that *putisu* only ceases the immediate war. The two villages must observe or perform the 'customary reconciliatory' process *aksu* for *chiyongsem* to move towards a peacemaking

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[286] Ibid., p.4.

relationship.   The traditional practice of *aksu* is widely used between villages amongst the Ao.   The main objectives of *'aksu'* are (a) "to develop a friendly relationship and peace between villages, clans and individuals;   (b) to protect *paja yim*, i.e. the tributary village by the principal village (a larger village extends "fatherly care" to a smaller village);   (c) to establish brother/sisterhood among the members of the same clan who are living in different villages; (d) to extend help and give refuge during wartime; (e) to reduce warfare between villages and build mutual relations;   (f) to establish friendship during peacetime and bosom friends are made which are known as *akangjunshi*;[288] and (g) to promote sharing and caring amongst the people across the villages, clans and families".

Aksu is performed and observed at different levels.   For instance *yimden aksu* is the highest level of *aksu* and it means the performance of *aksu* between village council members from two different villages from time to time to promote goodwill and diplomatic relations.   *Yimjung aksu* means performing *aksu* as a symbol of a 'peace covenant' between two villages after war or feud.   *Paja aksu* means the observance of *aksu* between "a tributary village and a principal village for protection". *Kidong aksu* is "between the members of the same clan of different villages for maintenance of solidarity". *Nokin-tinu aksu* means *aksu* performed between friends to reaffirm their relationship.   Such friendships are passed down to generations.

Though these are examples used among the Ao, such methods are used to varying degree by the other Naga tribes.   So there is a common understanding that Nagas can identify and apply in their present context. It is common to all Naga tribes in the field of traditional peacemaking or conflict- resolution that the elders bring the conflicting parties together. This enables them to express their differences and the reasons for their conflict. If this has become impossible, then other neighbouring villages or tribes come to help.   If it is between villages from the same tribe, then neighbouring villages intervene. If a village conflict is between two villages with different tribes and the conflict escalates to the tribal level, then neighbouring tribes can mediate in

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[287] Yanbemo Lotha, *Making a   Theology of Naga Community,* p.39.
[288] 'Akangjunshi'- Friendships develop between individuals from the same village or between two separate villages.   They symbolically exchange "rice beer, rooster, pork and other foodstuff", Rev.

the peace-making process. This is the most common traditional practice of conflict resolution. This works if the integrity of the elders handling it is unquestionable; and also it works if those who are involved in the conflict can respect the integrity of the people who are working to bring conflicting parties together.[289]

4.4 Nagas' introduction to outside cultures

The British army led by two captains, Francis Jenkins and R.B. Pemberton, entered the Angami territory (western Nagaland) for the first time in 1832. Until this stage there was no unified administration for Nagaland; nor was there a place called Nagaland. Each Naga village was an independent political entity, with its respective village as the sole form of identity, with specific territorial boundaries of its own. The English were fiercely resisted by the different Angami villages. But under the brunt of English firepower, the Nagas suffered heavy casualties but they did not become subjects of British colonial power. In 1851 Lord Dalhousie, the then-Governor General of India, laid down a definite policy of non-interference stating "our possession could bring no profit to us, and would be un-productive…as a country void of roads, void of supplies could not be defended at every point against a foe for whom hill, swamps and forests are resources rather than obstacles".[290]

Between 1854 and 1865 the Angami tribe carried out at least nineteen raids in which "232 British subjects were killed, wounded or carried off ".[291] This prompted the local administrators to take a stronger stance on the Nagas. The British policy of punitive expeditions and non-interference took a new direction when Naga villages continued frequent raids on the British subjects in the plains of the Assam tea-plantations. As a result, in 1866 the first administrative headquarters by the British in the Naga Hills was established in Samaguting. It was eventually shifted to Kohima in 1878. Another sub-division was established in Wokha in 1876 and another in Mokokchung in 1890. The years from 1878-1947 are therefore regarded as the

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Alemrenba, *Peacemaking*, p.8.
[289] This paragraph is a summary of the interviews on this particular subject with Niketu Iralu, Revd. M.K Lorrin Reangma, and Rev. Visor Zeilang.
[290] Quoted in Naga Hoho (compiled), *White paper on Naga integration,* p.8.
[291] Lotha, *History of Naga Anthropology,* p. 21.

'Administrative Period'. The administration was developed to protect the colonised Assam tea-plantations from the recurring raids from the Nagas. Between 1832 and 1880 there were forty-six battles between the British and different Naga villages. By 1890 the Southern and Western Nagas were administered by the British Empire and the 'Controlled Area' was called the 'Naga Hills'. But the British could not control or extend a unifying political administration for all Nagas villages. 80 % of Nagaland remained unexplored and un-administered when the British left the Indian sub-continent in 1947. At no point did the Nagas enter into any agreement or treaty for dependence or give up their independence to the British or to the 'plains people', as Indians were known then to the Nagas.

However, the effects of the British turbulent colonial adventure to Nagaland were disastrous as well as being the beginning of a different history for the Nagas.

1. For administrative purposes and convenience the British divided the Nagas between Assam, Manipur and British Burma and only a segment of the Naga tribes came under the British-designated 'Naga Hills' by 1881. A large number of Naga tribes and their territories remained un-administered. This administrative division was followed by the Indian Union of 1947 when GoI occupied Nagaland.

2. The reserved forests in the foothills of the Naga Hills were added to the British-colonised Assam for tea-plantations.

3. Taxation of two rupees per house was imposed on Naga people in 1878, who had never heard of currency, but this imposition failed.

4. The Naga tribal community prompted English colonial officials to become amateur anthropologists and produce important literary work. In some writings they praised the freedom and organisational skills of village administration. But these promotion by the British did not come without the distinction it strongly propagated into the mindset of the Nagas about 'backward', 'tribal', 'primitive', and 'savage' from 'otherness', 'civilized', 'cultured'. For instance, Woodthorpe describes the Angamis as: " cheerful, frank, hospitable, brave" in one paragraph and in the next characterised them as " bloodthirsty, treacherous, revengeful "[292]

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[292] Quoted in Julian Jacobs et al ., *The Nagas: Hill Peoples of Northeast India: Society, Culture and the Colonial Encounters*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1990, paperback edition,1998. Such form of colonial attitude in the writing of Woodthorpe are pointed out by Julian Jacobs et al., as " paternalistic

5. However the English also helped create the distinctiveness of the Nagas, hence sharpening the identity of who the Nagas were.

This high-handed intrusion of the British created a sense and attitude of resentment, antagonism, and defiance among the Nagas. The first taste of an encounter with modernity was harsh for the Nagas.

Dr and Mrs Clark, American Baptist missionaries, were rejected three times in their petition to be allowed to venture into Nagaland. They were only given permission after signing a declaration to enter the Naga Hills at their own risk in 1872. An English official based in Sibsagar, Assam, commenting on the contrast between the British intrusion and the missionary approach wrote in 1874:

> "History will blame the British for not extending the administration to the Naga Hills whereas an American missionary could enter, stay there two years and return with followers without harm to himself or others"[293].

The Clarks went on to stay for 39 years. More than fifty American missionaries followed the route to Nagaland. The last missionaries to leave were Reverend Mr.& Mrs Delano (1950-1955), when the GoI accused the American missionaries of igniting the Naga national movement. If the GoI was accusing Christianity of unifying and bringing together the Nagas, than it is not wrong. But if the GoI suggested that the Naga national workers were funded by foreign Christian missions, then it is a claim founded on false fabrication and propaganda by GoI.

Today almost 100% of the Nagas of the Nagaland state population claim to be Christian, of which almost 90% are Baptist.[294] The following reasons can be cited for the enthusiastic embrace of Christianity among the Nagas:
(i) Crucial was the attitude of the missionaries, and the Christian message which gave them recognition and endorsed their own ethos of   equality. The Nagas were discriminated as 'jungle people' on the basis of their 'different-ness' in look, diet,

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attitude of superiority",   see ibid., p. 24.
[293]   Quoted in Naga Hoho (compiled) extracted from *White Paper on Naga Integration*, p.9.
[294]   See footnote 7 in chapter 1.

dress and practices from the plains people whenever they ventured outside the terrain of the Naga Hills; (ii) The Nagas believed in a creator god of man and all creatures, with a concept of life after death as well. For example, the Ao Nagas' legend about the origin of humankind says that the first human-being was created by god and thereafter destroyed by a flood when the earth was overpopulated and filled with sin. The present population are the descendants of a couple who survived the catastrophe because of their virtuous deeds; a story almost identical to the Biblical story of Noah.

(iii) The missionaries introduced Christianity with a holistic approach including modern medical treatment, engineering and education; (iv) The most crucial factor that saw a mass conversion to Christianity among the Nagas was that it facilitated the awareness of brotherhood between themselves and the 'differences' with mainstream India. When this political awakening became clearer from the late 1940s, Nagas in great numbers began to convert to Christianity. The act of converting to Christianity became a political action to locate themselves outside of the dominant Indian political and Hindu cultural landscape.

The Bible was the first outside teaching to enter Nagaland. Though the missionaries had little time to explore the social and cultural implication of the local Naga religious beliefs and their anthropological significance, they nonetheless showed a deep sense of respect and caring for the fiercely independent warring Naga culture. They brought along an ethos of a holistic approach to Christianity. Christian teaching therefore did not become only a religion, but also a cultural as well as a socio-political revival and awakening.

(i) Christianity gave a sense of liberation to the Nagas from the fear of nature, spirits and sacrificial appeasement.

(ii) Head-hunting was condemned both by the British and the missionaries, but it was the missionaries who provided an alternative means to live together peacefully between villages and other tribes. For the first time there were notable movements of people venturing outside of their villages and even to other tribes with goodwill and missionary zeal. In this sense the missionaries in an indirect way installed among the

Nagas a 'communal democracy'.[295].

(iii) Christianity became the common unifying factor for the Nagas in the midst of different languages among tribes with different variations of speaking among different villages of the same tribe.

(iv) They set up the first formal school in Nagaland in 1878. Basic hygiene, and reading and writing were taught.

(v) The first printing press was established in 1884, and in the same year the first book in the Ao Naga vernacular (Gospels of Matthew and John) was translated and published using Roman letters.

(vi) The first electric light was engineered by Revd. Beng I. Anderson in 1947.

(vii) Christianity paved the way to form respectful tribal organisations, as well as a collective Naga council. The missionaries encouraged the converts to go beyond their villages and tribal community. Accordingly, the first such gathering from various villages was organised by the Ao Baptist Association and was held in Molungyimsen from 12- 14 March 1897, with the objective of proclaiming the Gospels beyond Ao land and uniting the Ao villages under the auspices of its Association. Along with the missionaries, thirty-seven delegates in total attended the meeting. Some of the resolutions at this meeting were "to spread the Gospel to all villages", "to send all children to school" and "to bury the dead bodies in graves". The second meeting of the Association was held the following year in Impur. This time, leaders from the Sema and Lotha tribes also attended. Some of the resolutions were "to spread the Gospel to other tribes and Rs.3.30 was collected for the Outreach Mission, to unite all Nagas through the Christian Church and the Impur Mission school to be for all Naga tribes"[296] the following year. These initiatives indirectly spread familiarity, goodwill and mutual understanding. The Lothas, Semas, Sangtam, Changs, Konyaks, and Phom tribes were constituents of the Ao Church Association until they formed their own respective tribal Associations. Their own tribal Church Associations were formed in 1923, 1929, 1946, 1948, and 1950 (Konyak and Phom in the same year)

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[295] By communal democracy here it means that Nagas, in spite of always being republican in structure in administration, did not develop mutual co-existence beyond their villages. Christianity provided an alternative model of living, whereby individuals as well as different villages belonging even to different tribes could become part of a larger community because of their shared history as bound by their customs and traditions to determine their future together.

[296] Kari Longchar, Ao Baptist Church Council, in NBCC (publication), NBCC, *From Darkness to Light*, Kohima, NBCC, 1997, pp.59-63.

respectively.[297]   Among the western Nagas, the Angami church took the initiative among the Chakesang, Zeliangs and Rengmas and western Semas. The unification of the villages belonging to different tribes can be viewed as the foundation of the federation of a Naga nation. The Lotha and Ao tribal Council was formed in 1923 and 1928 respectively. More tribal Councils followed.[298]   This tribal identity based on Councils was seen as a very positive step to forge the sense of a Naga national awareness.

Nonetheless, elements of traditional beliefs and symbols found space in Christianity. For example, the perception of a God to be appeased and feared is still strong. Every Naga village has a church. The Pastor or the elder of the church takes part in the village council meeting.   Before Christianity, each village ceremony or function was opened by invoking the presence and blessing of god by the village priest or medicine man. Now in post-Christianity, it is the pastor or, in his absence, the church elder. The Christian understanding of creation from Eden is taught but a church member still cannot openly condemn the traditional mythology, i.e., Ao's *longtrok*.   A feast of merit by individuals and families is no longer practised but they provide a Christmas feast for the whole village.

Politically, the Nagas are now divided under different political factions but the different Naga churches in Burma are affiliated with the Council of Naga Baptist Churches in Nagaland with its headquarters based in Kohima, Nagaland State. The language of Christianity in Naga politics is evident in the following examples: The Preamble of the Constitution of the Federal Government of Nagaland reads:

> "We, the people of Nagaland, solemnly acknowledge that the Sovereignty over this earth and the entire Universe belongs to Almighty God alone, and the authority of the people to be exercised in the territory is a sacred trust from God…,our National Assembly the (amended) Yehzabo of Nagaland this twenty-fifth day of July, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and sixty eight."[299]

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[297] Longchar, Ao Baptist Church Council, in NBCC (publication), NBCC, *From Darkness to Light,* Kohima, NBCC, 1997, p. 59-63.
[298] Ringkahao Horam, *The Genesis of the Naga political Movement,* Manipur,Mrs. Singamla Horam, 1998, p. 36.

The main aim of NSCN when it broke off from NNC in 1980 was to build up a 'Sovereign, Christian Socialist State'.[300] Phizo, the President of NNC from its inception till his death in 1990, wrote a letter to Rajiv Gandhi, the then-Prime Minister of India in 1988 wrote, "...the Indian atrocities and the crime India committed in Nagaland went far beyond what the capacity of human beings can endure.   And it is not surprising but wonderful(ly) God intervened in the matter...".[301]

The emphasis that contemporary Naga church leaders place on the Old Testament can either be explained anthropologically, as the   Naga traditional understanding of God as a fearful God who punishes whenever a nation or His people go astray is still engrained in the consciousness of the Nagas; or   theologically,   as a Protestant emphasis on the Old Testament.

In the worst Indo-Naga armed conflict during the 1950s and the 1960s, the Naga Church took the initiative to bring about the cease-fire in 1964.

As a result of the Nagas' encounter with the British   colonisers and the American missionaries, one of the common impacts was that Nagas started to venture more beyond the limits of their villages. During World War I, more than 2,000 Nagas from different tribes were deployed to Europe as part of the labour corps to serve in the allied forces.   This experience left the Nagas with a deep sense of solidarity and oneness in a foreign land in as much as they were influenced by the ideas of freedom, liberty and identity as a result of their interaction and exposure to a different political atmosphere. They felt they were discriminated against because of their lack of education and 'uncivilised' practices which included their dietary selection.[302] Accordingly, on returning to Nagaland, they formed the Naga Club in 1918 along with other Nagas who were normally Christians, comprising of different Naga tribes.

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[299] *The Yehzabo of Nagaland Constitution*, National Hoho, Gilgal Camp, Revised edition, 1996.
[300] See, Wati, *Fact and Growth of Naga Nationalism,* pp.166-167.
[301] Ibid., pp. 188-216.
[302] In the 1929 memorandum to the Simon Commission, mention is made about the apprehension and prejudices that were heaped upon the Naga tribes by the neighbouring Indians.   See Wati, *Growth and fact of Naga nationalism.*

This was the first socio-political collective tribal forum of its kind in Nagaland. The Naga Club's main objectives were to consolidate their socio-political identity and to make a distinct Naga nationality above the scattered tribal identities and develop a feeling of oneness.

4.5 Socio-political landmarks as Nagas encounter modernity

The Naga movement was a people's movement. Every village provided food, shelter, and full-hearted support to their 'freedom fighters' who had to go 'underground' when the GoI sought to 'flush' them out. The freedom fighters were the heroes, the martyrs. The Naga struggle was the people's hope. It inspired fraternity, and held the unity and pride of the Nagas. The Nagas refused to a become a part of the Indian Union. Their political desire to be left alone, as expressed to the Simon Commission in 1929, culminated in their symbolic declaration of independence on 14th August 1947. The national cause of the Nagas is as legitimate as it was when it began more than sixty years ago. It is crucial to the survival of the Naga political identity.

In 1927 the British Government set up a Commission to review the Constitutional Reforms Scheme under Sir John Simon. In 1929, the Naga Club submitted a memorandum to the Commission in Kohima asking for Nagaland to be left alone to determine its own political future in the event of the departure of the British from the Indian sub-continent. The memorandum described the prejudice they encountered, their fear of losing their ancestral land, and their desire to be a nation:

> "... our language is quite different from those of the plains and we have no social affinities with either Hindus or Muslims. We are being looked down upon by one for our 'beef' and the other for our 'pork' and by both for our want in education which is not due to any fault of ours...our country is poor, and it does not pay for its administration...we are afraid that new and heavy taxes will have to be imposed on us, and when we cannot pay, then all lands will have to be sold and in the long run we shall have no share in the land of our birth, and life will not be worth living then...leave us alone to determine ourselves as in ancient times..."[303]

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[303] Wati, *Growth and facts of Naga Nationalsim*, p.22.

In January 1953, Jawaharlal Nehru, the Prime Minister of the Indian Union, and his Burmese counterpart, U Nu visited Kohima, Nagaland. Thousands of Naga villagers walked for days to listen to the two leaders and to express themselves as well. But the Naga public were infuriated when they learned that the presentation of the NNC addressed to the Prime Minster was vetoed by Barakataki, the then-district Commissioner of Kohima.[304]   When Nehru rose to address the tribal people, whom he referred to as 'backward',[305] they demonstrated their political anger by publicly walking out. The consequences of Nehru's visit was catastrophic for the Nagas. Political relations between the GoI and the Nagas hit rock-bottom.

Soon after Nehru's visit the Indian army was deployed to Nagaland and was given unrestricted warrants to search the houses of any suspected Naga national leaders and arrest them, which resulted in the NNC leaders and the movement going underground. By 1956, there were more than 100,000 Indian army personnel[306] in Nagaland. Naga women and children were brutally raped and pregnant women were dissected by the Indian army. Sexual assaults and inflammatory actions were forced on people in Christian churches. Men were randomly killed; villagers were not allowed to go to their paddy fields which were their main source of livelihood; and granaries, fields and Naga villages were torched. Three or four Naga villages were concentrated together in an Indian army designated village, which was guarded by the Indian soldiers. The villagers were held for days without food and people were picked out randomly and shot.[307]   In 1958, the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Regulation was imposed in the Naga areas.   The Regulation warranted that even 'non-commissioned officers' had the right to fire, or use force, 'even to the causing of death'.[308] This Regulation is still on the statute book. It is estimated that more than 100,000 Nagas have been killed as a result of the protracted armed conflict of more than fifty-eight

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[304] Naga Hoho, Compiled, *White Paper on Naga Integration,* p. 31.
[305] Quoted in Nehru's letter to the Secretary of NNC, dated August 1, 1946. See L. Wati, *Growth and facts of Naga Nationalsim,* p.16.
[306] NPMHR, *The Nagas: Truth and Hope for the Living,* p. 25.
[307] For more details, see Kaka Iralu, *Naga Blood and tears;* Mar Atsongchanger, *Unforgettable memories from Nagaland, The Historical Memoranda of the Nagas and their Neighbours,* Mokokchung :Tribal Communication and Research Centre,1995.
[308] Extracted from Mar Atsongchanger, *The Historical memoranda of the Nagas and their neighbors,*

years.[309]

After the Indo-China war in the 1960s, it became clear that Nagaland, being positioned between Burma and India, held a highly sensitive and strategic point, making it very important for India from a defence point of view. Nagas are today the so-called 'divided' people between Burma and India.

The GoI officially recognised the demarcation made by the British of Nagaland between Burma and India. Nagas are further arbitrarily divided in three other states within the Indian Union: Assam, Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh federal state. The section of Nagaland designated as the 'Naga Hills' which was considered a district of Assam, was inaugurated as a new state called Nagaland state[310] on 1 December 1963, and became the 16th state in the Indian Union. The Nagaland state as allocated and defined by GoI recognises only fifteen tribes in the north-east of India, bordered on the west by Assam, in the north by Arunachal Pradesh, in the south by Manipur and in the east by Burma. This Nagaland state is 16,597 square kilometres in area, and currently has a population of 1,988,636.[311] The total area of the Nagas' ancestral homeland is estimated to be more than 120,000 square kilometres with a population of more than 3.5 to 4 million.[312]

The NNC received a major setback and the Naga freedom movement and political situation became more complicated when in 1980 a group broke away from NNC on the basis of a more radical political ideology. The group formed the National Socialist

Tribal Communication and Research Centre,1995, p. 127.
[309] NPMHR, (compiled), *The Nagas: Truth and Hope for the Living*, p.10
[310] For the purpose of the thesis, the author will use Nagaland to represent all the Nagas with their ancestral land which is demarcated between Burma and India, which in India is further split in Assam, Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland state. Nagaland as designated by the Government of Indian under the State of Nagaland Act 1962, will be used throughout the thesis as Nagaland state. Nagaland states include only fifteen tribes, whereas there are more than sixty inter-related tribes in all the Naga-inhabited area. The fifteen recognized tribe in Nagaland state are: Angami, Ao, Chakhesang, Chang, Khiamniungan, Lotha, Konyak, Kuki, Phom, Pochury, Rengma, Sumi/Sema, Sangtam, Yimchungru,/Yimchunger and Zeliang, For a list of the sixty Naga inter-related tribes see footnote 272.
[311] As per the provisional results of the Census of India 2001, which is 0.19 of the India population, which is now 1 billion. See Department of Tourism Government of Nagaland State, Nagaland India, p.1.
[312] NPMHR, *The Nagas: Truth and Hope for the Living,* p.23. It is claimed that because of the nature of conflict both in India and Burma, an official census of all the areas could not be carried out.

Council of Nagaland (NSCN).   However 1988 saw the split of NSCN into NSCN (IM) and NSCN (K). The spilt saw some of the worst Naga factional clashes in the Naga national history.   The national independence movement of the Nagas at present is divided into four main splinter groups:

- NNC (A or the Accordiist) leader based in London; camp based in Kohima, Nagaland state.

- NNC (P or the Non-Accordist) with its President based in Kohima, Nagaland state.

- NSCN (IM)   based in Hlebron, Dimapur, Nagaland state

- NSCN (K) based in Eastern Nagaland, Burma

Though it is not divided along tribal lines, the tribal-based aspect of the four main splinter groups also cannot be ignored.

4.6   Contextualisation of conflicts as Naga encounters modernity

The Nagas' encounter with modernity and the conflicts that resulted cannot be explained in just one dimensiom. It is more like an inevitable historical phenomenon that invaded the Naga society before they were prepared for any such dramatic shake-up.

While certain aspects of modernity integrated to enrich and define the very essence of the Nagas, there were also over-powering processes which the Nagas were ill-prepared to deal with. The assertion that 'primitive or tribal society' is static is an irrational observation because every human society in response to different attacks or shifts in dynamics develops traditional mechanisms to enable it to cope or defend itself. When it is developed adequately, the conflict can evolve into a positive vibrant mechanism. However, when it is not capable of an effective response, it escalates producing structural violence and armed conflict.

The source of protracted violent conflict is the denial of those elements required for the development of all peoples and societies and whose pursuit is a compelling, ontological drive and need experienced by all. These elements are security, distinctive identity, social recognition of identity, and effective participation in the processes that determine the conditions of security and identity and other such developmental requirements.[313] The Naga case is a demonstration of the denial of these elements which stemmed from: (a) a refusal to recognise and a denial of separate identity by the Indian Union;   (b) the absence of security of culture and valued relationships;   (c) the absence of effective political participation through which victimisation could be remedied; (d) the lack of a cohesive political system for a tribal society.

Political challenges are usually not perpetuated and aggravated without cultural difference. Therefore, the Indo-Naga political problem is a case of domination based on power, cultural differences, identity and coercion.

The conflicts in Nagaland are:
1. The conflict that arises as a result of Naga traditional practices struggling to cater for the needs of the people and defence of its culture while colliding with the global modern culture;
2. The ongoing protracted Indo-Naga armed conflict;
3. The intra-armed conflict that is occurring between the factional groups among the Naga national freedom fighters.

One of the main tensions that occurred during the crucial transition of Naga society from a traditional system to modernity was when the different Naga villages unified. The Naga traditional administration structure was not capable of providing a unified political umbrella and administrative platform. In other words, tension occurred in the attempt to turn individual, independent Naga villages into single political entities under the aegis of NNC.

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[313] Edward E. Azar, 'Protracted International Conflicts: Ten Propositions', in Edward E. Azar and John W. Burton (eds.), International *Conflict Resolution: Theory and Practice,* Boulder: Lynne Reinner Publishers, 1986, pp. 28-39.

As a classless tribal society based on self-sufficient farming, the Naga society did not produce a vibrant ruling middle-class. By modern definition, the Nagas have not yet produced an established class who are experts in the modern institution and in negotiating state craft.

4.7 Conclusion

Naga socio-political discourses cannot be validated without the essence of their village. With time, the functions and the character of the village might change. The village might be forced to address critical issues beyond the sacred belief of the village's geographical space and the 'pureness' of Naga identity. But villages are not only the core; they are the defining feature of being a Naga by ascribing themselves to a tribe. But in a very changed situation, Nagas need to deliberate consciously on the changing role and the essence of a village and its tribe which is the expression of all the villages in a Naga context.

Defining clear lines between classical Naga village and new village 'settlement' can be controversial and extremely sensitive. Because while the other essence of classical village - like ancestry, myth and folklore - can be transferred, borrowed or even constructed, land cannot be. In such a threshold, a code of sharing natural resources (which includes land), based on respect and recognition of ownership, is the basis for any mutual co-existence. This code is not foreign to Naga culture. In fact it is the core of Naga village epistemology - sharing, recognition, respect and ownership. It is not easy to give to 'Others', other than their 'own 'tribe', and it takes a lot of 'culture-ness' to recognise rightful ownership, than to restore to *terra nullius* (i.e., no man's land) rationale. In the initial formation of a distinct socio-cultural and political entity, the attachment that the Nagas developed based on village autonomy, fear of outside assimilation, common customs, tradition and dietary were strong enough to create the awareness of oneness with fellow tribal entity. This can be called a defensive communal interest. Today they need more that this defensive communal interest. They need an inclusive interest which includes political, economic, relational, land and power-sharing.

Preserving the Naga identity is more than their traditional attire, songs and dances. The challenge is to develop both their traditional ethos that upholds egalitarianism and the institutions that had allowed the participation of the citizen in the decision-making of the socio-political issue. Traditional and cultural practices should be vibrant and critical to be relevant in the face of the various dynamics of political conflict in Nagaland. The Indo-Naga political history should not only be events used for narratives or to justify the Naga political right for self-determination. It should rather critically read the history of various GoI policies and approaches towards the Nagas and how it affected the people. It should encourage the Nagas to examine their political position and their strategy of how to address the issues with GoI. Nagas should explore their traditional ethos as the grounding principles in their nation-making and apply them in relation to relevant modern institutions and the political system.

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Chapter 5   Dynamics of the conflict in Nagaland:

Introduction

The process of 'nation-building' amongst the Naga tribes,   such as   attempting to develop their tribal and national identity and consolidating a unified political administration   through their encounters with the outside world, has been eclipsed by the on-going Indo-Naga armed conflict of more than sixty years. In this Indo-Naga conflict, the Nagas have been labelled as rebels and secessionists who are challenging the authority and territorial integrity of the Indian Union. In the process the Nagas have been projected as primitive, violent and backward, incapable of administrating themselves, and needing a 'superior' political unit like India to rule over them.   If the Nagas were not willing to come under the control of the 'superior' rule, then India was ready to use any means to accomplish this mission.   The ancient Indian Kautilyan statecraft of "sham-dam-danda-bhed (the four options of amity, monetary inducement, force, and split to tackle the enemy)"[314] was drilled into those who refused to accept the authority of India. When the British colonial power left the Indian sub-continent, the burden of civilizing the tribes, even the un-administered area of the Nagas, was quickly taken on by the GoI.

While this chapter will discuss the Indo-Naga conflict, it will also include the internal social development, conflicts and responses of the Nagas as parts of Nagaland began to be discovered and invaded by British expeditions from 1832 onwards and the American missionaries after 1872.   The chapter will highlight that the peoples who are today known as the Nagas, until the early part of the 19th   century, did not call their fellow Naga 'Nagas',   nor were they themselves known as Nagas.   Instead, each group was known differently to different groups which were usually distinguished by language, customs, tatoos, ancestral myth and origin. The word 'Naga' is not a term derived from the people to whom it refers.   While the meaning and origin of the term 'Naga' is debated and contested, Nagas are 'Naga' people

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[314] Subir Bhaumik, The Accord that never Was: Shillong Accord, 1975, in Samir Kumar Das, (ed.) *Peace Processes and Peace Accords: South Asian Peace Studies, Vol. 2,* New Delhi: Sage, 2003, pp. 200-221, in p. 215.

because outsiders referred to them as this.

The origin of the term is still contested but this generic term came to be popularly used by the British administrators from the mid 19th century for the different groups of peoples and tribes in Burma and in the hills which are to the east of Assam. 'Naga' came to be identified with the Nagas, through which they were distinguished and eventually recognized by others, and by the 'Nagas' themselves when British anthropologists, administrators and later American missionaries wrote about them as Nagas. By 1918 different Naga tribes came together with a desire to integrate and be identified under the generic term 'Naga'. Their political identity soon became their national identity. This also became the political appeal to mobilise the thousands of different independent Naga villages and tribes, an event pioneered by Naga national leaders, particularly A. Z. Phizo.

Many have attributed the major source of conflict and division to tribalism and the allegiance to respective tribal identity in recent and present Naga history. However it should be noted that though there was a sense of awareness of their respective tribes mentioned in different folksongs and folklore, attachment to a tribe as an identity gained momentum only from the 20th century onwards. Up till then, respective villages which comprised of at least three clans or more held the core of the socio-political allegiance, kinship and identity of an individual. Life was insular and the village provided all the needs and security for an individual. The two main reasons which enhanced the tribal identity of the Nagas are:

(i) When the British invaded parts of the the Naga Hills, well-armed with rifles and artillery, for fear of British encroachment, different Naga villages were forced to ally with neighbouring villages who usually shared boundaries and spoke the same language.

(ii) When the American missionaries translated and wrote different texts of the Bible into different tribal languages for the first time, the need for a Bible for all those who converted from different tribes and spoken different languages became necessary.

The purpose of the chapter is to highlight not only the Indo-Naga armed conflict but

to bring about the encounter Nagas had with outsiders like the British and the Americans. This momentous event dramatically transformed the insular Naga life. Those encounters marked the beginning of Naga modernity from the late 19th century, and staged thereafter a period of socio-political, cultural and religious changes. These brought out the tensions that a traditional society experiences as they were daunted by the many political facets of modernity.

5.1 Protracted Indo-Naga political armed conflict

The ongoing Indo-Naga political problem is often termed as the "biggest problem for the Nagas". Other issues like dividing Nagas along artificial boundaries, their identity crisis and the aggressive imposition of GoI rule are seen as a direct cause of the political problem.

5.1.1 The Colonial factor and rationale

The Indo-Naga problem cannot be discussed without shedding some light on the historical background of the British colonial expansion. As already discussed in Chapter 4.4 since the first encounter of the Nagas with the British power in 1832 the Naga-British relationship took different phases. The Naga tribes were divided by the British into three units up to 1947: 'administered', 'controlled but un-administered', and 'free Naga'. The 'administered' were the southern, western and northern Naga tribes; 'unadministered' were the central tribes; and the 'free Nagas' were the tribes bordering Burma. These 'free Nagas' were not included under the British territory in Burma.[315]

As a result of the Simon Commission and the Government Act of 1935, the Naga Hills District came to be administered as an 'Excluded Area' within the province of Assam from 1937 onwards. But the British could not control or extend a unifying political administration for all Nagas. Except for occasional punitive expeditions, the Eastern Naga villages and tribes remained unexplored and un-administered by the

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[315] See, Kaka Iralu, *Nagaland's Rainbow in Asia's Darkest Hour (16th-20th Centuries),* unpublished

British.

Abraham Lotha, [316] a Naga anthropologist, studying the connection between anthropology and colonial administration in the Naga context argued that the British were guided by a rationale to 'civilize' as well as to protect the 'naked primitive'. For them, the Naga tribes represented a state outside civilization. He writes that when tribals were not in the direct path of the colonial expansion, the colonials often emphasized their nobility, honesty, and absence of economic and socio-political inequalities. But Lotha argues that the portrayal of the tribal as a 'Noble Savage', innocent of the historical processes, was not only naive but also served "to justify the presence of the raj and the role of missionaries as the protectors of the tribals against non-tribals". [317]

The effects of such attitudes and stereotyping, and the policies framed accordingly, have far-reaching consequences for the 'tribals'. Many of the socio-political problems in Northeast India have their roots in the Brahmanical structure in mainstream India which was further endorsed by the colonial attitudes and policies of classification and demarcation of the 'tribals'. The inability of the Indian Government to respond innovatively and ethically to Naga nationalism is due to the Indian colonial tribal policy it perpetuated which was influenced by the Brahmanical hierarchy and the evolutionary anthropological theories borrowed from the colonial powers. The Indian Government, especially through the media and the writings of the Indian army officers and Civil Service officers, continues to use a colonial discourse in its relationships with the 'tribals'. In this discourse, images of the Naga 'tribes' as primitive, backward, rebels, insurgents, and extremists are perpetuated. This is radically opposed to the Nagas' conception and representation of themselves as unconquered people; and their village epistemology of independence and dignity equates with their wish to be treated as equals.

5.1.2   Basis of Nagas' political development and India's response

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paper, 2003. See also Lotha, *History of Naga Anthropology,* p.54.
[316] Lotha, *History of Naga Anthropology,* pp. 37-64.
[317] K.S. Singh, quoted, in ibid., p. 64.

Niketu Iralu argues that the validity and basis of the Naga political struggle lie in the submission of the Naga memorandum to the Simon Commission in 1929. The memorandum elucidated the prejudice they encountered, the fear of losing their ancestral land and their desire to be a nation.

Iralu points out that on the event of the British departure from the Indian sub-continent, Burma and India might have had the historical and legal justification to extend their control over territories that were in the Empire of their colonial master. He further argues, "in the case of the Nagas, before the British empire ended, we (the Nagas) have stated that we (the Nagas) do not accept the boundaries or the administration of British India. The memorandum to the Simon Commission is the first record in writing that Nagas thought about their position, their future, and their status in the changing world, and they declared it in writing. On the basis of that declaration, the Nagas' struggle started and the whole struggle is based on the validity of that statement so the legal validity is what makes the Naga case unique"[318].

Iralu further reflects that: "The other tribes in India, they might have felt the same thing but they did not say anything when the British were leaving. But in 1929, years before the British left, Nagas had thought to that extent and stated their political desire very clearly". Iralu argues, whether the GoI likes it or not, Nagas are a nation, because they thought so and said so, and this is what builds a nation. Iralu reasoned that: "India must not try to erase that fact, because trying to suppress that fact has caused so much damage to both Nagas and Indians, and will further lead to damaging the whole north-east".

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[318] Interview with Niketu Iralu in Kohima, Nagaland, 19th June, 2007. Iralu is regarded as one of the social thinkers in Nagaland. He was appointed the Chairman of the Naga Reconciliation Commission in 2002. This Commission comprising of seven members was formed by the NBCC and the Naga Hoho (Council) when the Naga civil society entrusted them to take an initiative towards the reconciliation process. While the Commission was initiating its work, the NSCN (IM) accused the Chairman and the Secretary of the Commission as national (Naga nation) traitors. The Naga Hoho at this stage put the Commission in 'abeyance'. This prompted all the other Commission members to resign together. So the Church's attempt to work directly with the Naga Hoho, which is often considered as the traditional political apex body of the Nagas, ended without much success.

While interviewees like Charles Chase[319] point out that simply by "virtue of British colonial rule over some parts of Naga territory, Naga country cannot be part and parcel of India". However he reiterates that the "Me and my group" mindset "has not only become too small today but also impractical" in a modern globalised world. .

Nagas have widely argued that they are not Indians. Nagas regard themselves as different, culturally, politically, linguistically and socially, to the mainstream Indian populace. Tongthan Khiamnuingan reiterates that culture consists of "their way of thinking, customs and traditional practices".[320] Kaka Iralu argues that because of the differences in "race, religion, and language, the cultural by-products and the national identities of both countries are strikingly different".[321] Kaka Iralu writes that the Indian nation is a multi-diverse nation of various ethnic, linguistic and religious groups. But he pointedly writes that "whatever the multi-diversity of the Indian polity may be, I simply do not belong to any of them historically, politically, religiously and culturally".[322]

Neingulo Krome also expresses that "Gandhi might have envisioned India as unity in diversity, unity of different people and caste, but Nagas have never agreed to be a part of that Indian nomenclature".[323]

The Nagas' lack of affinity with mainstream India created extreme exclusion, discrimination, isolation, and lack of belonging. But on the other hand, a strong Naga national consciousness developed which sought a separate political identity and control over their political destiny.

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[319] Charles Chase answered the questionnaire in a written format. He is a journalist and a writer. He was also President of the Naga Journalists' Association. He was appointed as Secretary to the Naga Reconciliation Commission in 2002. (See above footnote for more detail).

[320] Interview with Tongthan Khiamnuingan in Kohima, Nagaland, 6th June 2007. He is the President of the Eastern Naga People's Organization (ENPO). Interviewed in Nagamese. The author translated the script.

[321] Kaka Iralu, *The fifty-four-year Indo-Naga Conflict: A Question of Internal Indian Ethnic Conflict or a Conflict between Two Nations*, unpublished paper, 2002.

[322] Ibid.

[323] Interview with Neingulo Krome, Kohima, Nagaland, 13th June 2007. He was the former Secretary General of the Naga People's Movement for Human Rights (NPMHR). He is the General Secretary to the Naga Hoho (Council).

The Nagas separate and in parallel with the Indian National Movement, started their own movement for achieving complete sovereignty once the British left the Indian sub-continent. By 1945, the Naga Club of 1918, which was formed by the Nagas who had returned from their First World War experience in Europe, and some 'educated' Nagas who were mostly Christians, morphed into the Naga Hill District Council. In February 1946 it became a political organisation and changed its name to the NNC.[324]

On 14th August 1947, the Nagas, under the mandate of NNC, declared their independence a day before the independence celebration of the Indian Union which is 15th August. Information was sent to the UN with a copy to the Government of India.

When the Nagas who were demarcated along the Burmese border were offered the chance to become part of Burma through the Penang Agreement of 1948, they refused to join Burma on the grounds that they were a sovereign nation along with their Naga brethren on the Indian side of Nagaland. In 1949 the Nagas demarcated into Burma formed the Eastern Naga National Council (ENNC) in agreement with the Naga National Council of Nagaland. These two organizations merged into the NNC in 1952.[325]

Revd. Zhabu Terhuja, countering allegations by the Indian media and GOI about the Naga political movement as rebels and separatists, argues that:

> "People call Nagas as separatists, rebels, secessionists, but what we are saying is, if at the time of India getting her independence, Nagas were part of India at that time, then we can be called secessionist, separatist. But the fact is that Nagas have made their point very clear to the Simon Commission 1929 and we have also declared our independence during 14 August, a day before Indian independence day. So legally, politically and historically, Nagas have every right to say we are a different people. From that point of view we are saying that the Naga political struggle is a very genuine one". [326]

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[324] See, Nehemiah Panmei, Naga Movement and its ramification, in Vashum, et al (eds.), *Nagas at Work*, 1996, pp. 85-100, in p.87.
[325] Kaka Iralu, *Nagaland's Rainbow in Asia's Darkest Hour.*
[326] Interview with Terhuja in Kohima, Nagaland, 11th June 2007. He was the General Secretary of NBCC during the time of the interview.

In the face of rampant violence and oppression against the Naga people, the Nagaland Baptist Church Council (NBCC) took the initiative to bring about the first ceasefire agreement which was declared on 6th September 1964. The ceasefire was abrogated by the GoI from September 1972. The NNC and the Naga army were banned by GoI[327]. After a long period of violence and bloodshed, the second ceasefire was signed between GoI and the NSCN (IM) on 1st August 1997. The NSCN (K) also entered into a ceasefire with GoI from 28th April 2001. In both cases the ceasefire has been extended every year for another year. 'Peace talks' are ongoing with NSCN (IM) without any concrete developments.

Commenting on the political deadlock set against the backdrop of the Naga public yearning for peace, Niechute Doulo laments that "for India, peace is cessation of 'underground' fire; for Nagas, peace means the Indian army moving out of Nagaland and the GoI recognizing the Naga struggle. For India, peace means Nagas giving up their arms and their political struggle. The Nagas, the understanding of peace is India giving up her occupation of Nagaland"[328]. Doulo reflects that peace is elusive because of such opposite views in the on-going Indo-Naga political conflict.

5.2. Division amongst the Nagas

Divisions along tribalism and factional clashes are regarded as the main sources of internal conflict in the Naga context. But it should be noted, as mentioned earlier, that though an awareness of their own tribe existed before the encounter with the British and the Americans, the tribe as the core of identity was absent prior to the late 19th century. Each village was the core of identity. Therefore in a Naga socio-political context it would not be wrong to conclude that a strong tribal identity developed and evolved to facilitate different individual villages speaking the same language and sharing the same customs, like traditional costume and religious rituals. These villages grouped together to evolve into a larger, tribal collective identity in the face

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[327] Nagas gathered in Kohima from 2-6 of September 1972, to protest at the ban and lament the return of the Indian army operation. As narrated in interviews by Revd. V.K Nuh and Kari Longchar.

[328] Interview with Neichute Dolou, in Kohima, Nagaland, 1st June 2007. He is the founder and the

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of new social developments like the British encroachment and the new teachings like Christianity. Here different tribal organisations developed their respective village procedures of forming and electing representation to the Naga Council. Tribal identity attempted to consolidate the Naga political identity as a nation by bringing and uniting hundreds of different independent villages together. But this in no way relinquished village identity, administration or independence, rather the tribal bodies worked closely with their own villages. In other words, developing a strong tribal identity was the first step that traditional Nagas took as a response to modernity in Nagaland.

However before tribal identities could be consolidated into a strong collective national Naga identity, the process was disrupted by many factors, like the Indian armed invasion, and the continuation of the colonial boundaries through the formation of Nagaland state, etc. In the process of these disruptions, fears, betrayal and an inability to share power and leadership have left the Nagas seeking further support from their respective tribal group. Tribal identity can provoke powerful and unexpected emotions and reactions due to traditional affinity and shared culture between villages.

5.2.1   Tribal Division

The political structure and social organisation cannot be fully understood without appreciating the kinship, attachment and allegiance each Naga feels towards their own tribe. It is debatable whether the tribe is a positive or a negative social structure, or whether the structural formation of social units around the tribe can be attributed as a colonial construction, but the tribe has become a strong social identity for the Naga people since the early 20th century.   While Nagas share the same cultural, racial and Tibeto-Burmese linguistic family, it is agreed by many Naga thinkers and older citizens that tribes among the Nagas began to be categorised in terms of differences along language. Interviewees like Lochumlo Lotha and Michael Kaita point out that tribes are mainly grouped along shared common language and this divides the various Naga tribes along tribal lines.

Co-Ordinator of the Entrepreneurs Associates, Nagaland.

It was pointed out in the beginning of the chapter that the tribe as a socio-political identity developed only in the early 20th century. But this is not to say that a sense of belonging to an individual tribe was entirely absent. This form of awareness was found in the shared folktales and folksongs of the various villages of a tribe. However the difference between the pre-20th century loose awareness of the term 'tribe' and the 20th century was in the functionality of the organisation of tribe and the essence of kinship that developed because of shared myth and folklore. In pre-20th century, tribe as an organised cultural and political organisation was not developed. Tribe as a social and cultural identity developed only during the beginning of the 20th century. These tribes eventually endorsed their political identity under the generic Naga term. The ancient Naga villages were situated in the high terrain which contributed to their insular life and without any outside invasion. Therefore it is logical to argue that kinship through their community living meant the village was the core of their identity and security. The village was capable of providing all the socio-economic and political needs of the people. There were cases, for example, where if a village was not capable of providing security from an attack from another rival village, they could seek help or protection from another village. When the insularity of the Nagas ended, mainly because of the British invasion, the Nagas began to become aware that there was a bigger 'Other' that was threatening their ancestral land and identity. This forced them to recognise the importance of interaction and of breaking down the insularity of the different villages and tribes for political purposes, which was facilitated by the spread of Christianity. However it should be mentioned that there is an important difference between the creation of tribal awareness in the earlier part of 20th century and that since the 1960s.

In the early part of 20th century, the awareness of tribal identity was developing collectively from the individual villages with the core object being to mobilise the people to form a united Naga political identity against the British colonial power and the Indian Union. By the 1960s, however, with the formation of the Nagaland state within India, when the sense of individual village identity was collectively tied to that of the tribe to meet their needs and security, the tribe was used as the factor to gain

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access to political power and GoI monetary resources and employment in the state. The development and power of a tribe soon came to be measured on the number of ministers a tribe had in the Nagaland state Legislative Assembly and the number of officials in the state government of Nagaland in India.

However, the interaction between the village and tribal sense of identity took place in an attempt to mobilise the Naga political body, and was based on a traditional sense of independence, administration and kinship.   The transition of the Nagas, within such a short time, from pre-literate to form their own political nation for their survival and defence against the occupation by the GoI, removed any space to develop any form of institution towards Naga nation-building.   In such a political scenario the Naga political identity was often reliant on tribal allegiance exclusively rather than on an inclusive Naga nation.

The development of tribal organisation and the bringing together of different villages under administration, followed the procedure of traditional village representation and selection. In the village representation and administration, each clan sends it representation, and the place of leader of the Council is rotated between every clan for five years.   Today it can also be seen that tribal organisation and its structure have developed very strongly and are clearly based on the village system. In the case of the Ao tribe, their territory is divided into six ranges.   Each range has villages within a defined territorial area. All villages are members of the range council and every range council sends representatives to the Ao *Senden,* meaning the Ao Council. Each clan from the villages takes turns to send representatives from the village to the range council, and each village from the range rotates to represent in the Ao *Senden.* However Nagas are not able to translate this in their national representatives and administration at a political level.   One of the main reasons for this has to do with the question of who can come under the political identity of 'Naga'. It is still contested and not fully resolved to date because it is regarded as a very sensitive issue.

Niketu Iralu   also points out that tribalism was not an issue in ancient Naga times because   there was little interaction with one another as villages,   let alone tribe as a

social organization.   Each Naga village solved their problems within their village and later on within their tribes.   But a changing world, with Indian federal elections, bureaucracy and economic development, has forced Nagas to come and work together in a situation they have not been used to. He argues that the result is that the Nagas' traditional village attitudes are not able to solve the new challenges.   This in turn is pressing the Nagas' insular social attributes and at the same time enhancing the tribal attitudes in an 'exclusive way' and this is becoming very negative and destructive. Iralu suggests that Nagas should not condemn the tribal features, in other words their kinship, because such development has equipped them with very important traditional ways of solving problems.   Instead, in the new situation, the challenge for the Nagas is to realize that tribal attributes are inadequate and these tribal 'exclusive' attitudes must change.

Akum Longchari[329] also points out that the signs of tribalism are currently re-emerging.   He remarked that while organising and mobilising could be along tribal lines, it is important to ask whether the divisions are really along tribal lines at all.   He asserts that the divisions by themselves are not along tribal lines and instead they are issues based on land or resources that are unresolved.

Arenla Longchar[330] also argues that the negative attributes along tribal lines crop up whenever there are "issues of opportunities, jobs, and resources".   She attributes this tribalism to the fact that Nagas have failed to get to know each other's culture, appreciate each other's strengths and also to accept each other's weaknesses. She voices out that this ignorance breeds fear. Nagas today fear that one tribe will become more powerful than the other and this dynamic has spilled into the area of Naga politics and this has become very dangerous.

Ahu Sakhrie points out that "Nagas are tribal minded. We are tribal minded, and

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[329] Interview in Dimapur, Nagaland, 14th June 2007.   Akum Longchari was a member of the NPMHR.   He is the proprietor and Managing Director of The Morung Express, a daily English Newspaper in Nagaland
[330]   Interview in Kohima, Nagaland, 11th July, 2007. Aren Longchar was the former Education Secretary with NBCC.   Currently she is Mission and Communications Secretary for the Kohima Ao Baptist Church, Kohima.

tradition comes with clan, tribe and is set into our system".[331] He further adds that any words that one utters are interpreted from that tribal and clan perspective, and not on right or wrong.

While discussing tribal division it should also take into account the structure of the tribal set-up in Nagaland. The attachment to a tribe does not come from the tribe itself. Rather it is rooted in their centuries-held identity around the village which collectively expressed their identity as a tribe that was formed along linguistics lines during the late 19th and early 20th century. But again these tribes collectively envisioned as a single political entity under the generic term 'Naga' declared their desire to be independent and free of any foreign rule in the form of GoI. Questions also revolve around how they might struggle to embrace their larger national identity as Nagas within their social structure and dynamics. The point made by Charles Chase is of particular interest in this regard that: "though the Naga national movement started the process of Naga Peoplehood, soon the personal equations, even emotions and slogans overtook the process of nation-building". Here he remarks that failing to adequately address the process of 'peoplehood' in the wake of sovereignty has left the Nagas clinging on to their village and tribal identities.

Tribal division is further aggravated by the division among the Naga tribes, namely between that of the major or 'advanced tribes' and the 'backward tribes.'[332] In Nagaland state, of the fifteen recognised tribes, nine are officially recognised by the Government as being 'backward tribes'. They are termed 'backward' in a Naga context since it is argued that Christianity and modern education came late to their tribal area and as a result very few held government employment. It is also argued

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[331] Interview with Ahu Sakhrie, in Kohima, Nagaland, 12th June 2007. He is the nephew of T. Sakhrie, the Secretary of the Naga National Council (NNC) in 1947. The letter by Nehru dated 1st August 1946 was addressed to the Secretary (Sakhrie), NNC. He is the Joint Director, Education Department, Nagaland State Government.
[332] The Aos, Angamis, Lothas, and Semas are officially recognised as the 'advanced' tribes' in Nagaland state. The rest referred to are the 'backward' tribes. The 'advanced tribes' were among the first who came under the influence of the American missionaries and therefore could access education by the end the 19th century. In a changed cultural situation and a new political system, people with education, usually from the four tribes held most of the key positions and employment. Among the other Nagas outside Nagaland state, the Tangkhuls are considered as an 'advanced' tribe. For a list of all the sixty inter-Naga related tribes see footnote 272. For a list of the tribes in Nagaland state see footnote 310.

that a lack of representation in any high portfolio in the Nagaland state assembly has left them out of Indian government monetary incentives and economic development like roads, schools, colleges and small cottage industries. There are reservations of 20% for competitive examinations and certain government employment sectors for the 'backward tribes'. Temsula Yimchuger observes that coming from a 'backward' tribe she can sense that the plight of the 'backward tribes' is overlooked by the 'advanced' tribes. This prompted Sangtam, coming from a 'backward tribe', to state that "tribalism is the root cause of all social evils in the Naga context".

5.2.2   Tribal structure of the Nagas

In the Ao language, tribe is translated as *kin* meaning 'nation' and 'clan' as *kidong,* literally *ki* means 'family', and *dong* 'roots' or 'tree', i.e. 'families of the same roots or tree'.   A tribe amongst the Nagas consists of villages speaking a common language with slight variation or accent and the belief that they share a common ancestor.   Villages usually are made up of at least more than two clans which can be found distributed in the different villages of their respective tribes. The belief of a common descent held among the clans of the Nagas did not stop the Naga villages from warring with each other. Therefore to understand the tribal structure of the Nagas, it is needed to understand the village set-up.

The foremost socio-political unit for the Nagas was the village.   To the Nagas a village is not only a cluster of families living together away from towns in the countryside, but each village is a republic and totally independent in its own right and its own territory. In this sense, for a Naga the village is the first and main political and social apparatus that binds its inhabitants, with its own village administrative council and territory. Therefore it is not wrong to say that the village in a Naga society was not only the centre of the social, political and cultural practices but it was the centre of an individual's existence.

Clan and village have often been regarded as the basis of community living and kinship for the Naga tribes. Kinship has been distinguished as one of the most

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important features for a group to be categorised or differentiated as 'primitive'. 'Kinship' is often used loosely by many anthropologists to refer to any non-western or indigenous society. Therefore any group of people organised largely on the basis of strong kinship can be called primitive and therefore uncivilised. For the Nagas, kinship can be traced to the founders of their clan, village, or tribe. This can be very symbolic in nature, because the ancestors in most cases are not human but mythical which gives them an aura of sacredness. Clan therefore can be understood as a group of people perceived to be descended from a common ancestor, real or mystical, which played a big role in demarcating a section of people who perceived themselves as an extended family.   The myth of the origin of the founding member or members of the particular clan is recognised. It also represents the threshold at which a way of life becomes one that holds the social structure and foundation of the people together, including the code of social practices of giving, community living, respect, protection, and taboos.

However, as Nagas came into contact with the outside world, e.g. with the British and the Indian army, socio-political and religious zeal changed. They came to realise that in order to secure and protect their villages and land they must come together. This is one of the major reasons why they were compelled to expand their identity beyond their own individual villages to their tribes. Their needs were expanding in the face of outside intrusion that was leading them to the modern era.

But the development of tribe as a strong social and cultural identity besides that of their own village identity from the late 19th century till the mid 1940s was a new process of social evolution.   The respective villagers were exploring with a growing sense of national identity as Nagas. The essence of a village was in finding the identity of the tribe and cementing the national Naga identity. The traditional representation in villages was inculcated in the selection of the tribes when in 1946 the NNC was formed based on Naga traditional village politics.   Each tribe exercised its own traditional form of selection to send representatives to NNC and that was how each tribe was represented in the Naga political movement through NNC.   But to elect the NNC leaders, for the first time in Naga history a voting system was used by

the NNC representatives to elect their officials.[333]

However in the face of misunderstanding and suspicion among different members in NNC, the members found it difficult to control and translate the allegiance of the small-scale village into the larger political Naga national entity. Some leaders took advantage of their common language and shared traditions of their villages, and found a tribal identity for political interest and power.

In terms of politics, tribal lenses eclipse the national objective due to many reasons. For example there is a fear that if a member belonging to a particular tribe brings any resolution or settlement, his/her tribe will hold on to the power and take over the Nagas. The other reason is because kinship, found in the villages and tribes, is still the basis of the Naga political network, and it is expected of the villagers and the tribes to support and show their allegiance to the tribal identity. On this basis again, suspicion arises when two members belonging to two different tribes work closely. Like for example when A. Z. Phizo, who himself is from the Angami tribe, held the Presidency of NNC in 1946, there were rumours that all the confidants of the President were from the Angami tribe, and confidential matters were exclusively written in the Angami language.

However whenever political interest is discussed, the dynamics of Nagaland state politics and the elections that are held cannot be ignored. It is becoming a large part of the Naga people's experience in Nagaland state within India, and also it is affecting the Nagas outside the boundaries of Nagaland state. In the state politics of Nagaland, the Indian elections for the state of Nagaland play a huge role. While in the respective tribal constituencies allotted to the tribes, candidates will play along the lines of village identity and seek different villages' support, in a metro-city like Dimapur, tribal lines are strongly emphasised. One of the main reasons for this is that the more candidates there are in the state legislative assembly from a tribe, the more access the tribe can gain from the monetary resources GoI allotted to Nagaland state. Nagaland statehood has spanned forty-five years, and the position of Chief Minister

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[333] This point became clearer when Ahu Sakhrie pointed out and explained this concept in the

was occupied exclusively by candidates from one of the 'advanced tribes'. In such a socio-economic situation, this served to enhance the resentment, competition and legitimate anger between the different tribes.

With the introduction of the federal state system in Nagaland from 1963 onwards, the traditional practice of selection with the consent of clans and villages was overshadowed by elections based on individual consent. This conflict between traditional selection and modern election is abused by political parties who often play on tribal allegiances.

Therefore the division of Nagas along tribal lines can be traced back to the development of the identity of the tribe on the basis of the opinion of outsiders as 'primitive' and 'backward' people, rather than as a nation with its own territory, customs and language as understood by the Nagas themselves. The ambiguous political identity of Naga as a national identity has also driven people to take on a tribal identity for survival, i.e., in order to meet the demands imposed by modernity. This also brings the imposition of outside practices while uprooting traditional polity. The challenge for the Naga tribes is to re-define and even deconstruct the understanding of being a tribe and to debate the political identity and control of Naga as a national entity in the light of Nagas' traditional identity of village and tribe.

5.2.3   Creation of Nagaland state and inter-factional division

While discussing the inter-factional division within the Naga national movement, it is important to remember that during the beginning of the Naga national movement NNC was the sole national movement and organization representing the aspirations of the Nagas. Some do argue that there was division in NNC as early as the 1950s when it was divided in its approach to resist the GoI military invasion. General Thenosalie, who was actively involved in the movement since 1950, recalls in the interview: "NNC was divided into two approaches: 'co-operation' and 'non-co-operation' against India led by T. Sakhrie and Phizo respectively". However in the face of

interview.

intense GoI military operation, Nagas were forced to take up arms. The Naga army received military training from Pakistan and China. In 1954 NNC formed the Federal Government of Nagaland (FGN).[334] The first batch of the Naga army, after receiving military training from East Pakistan, returned to Nagaland in 1962. In 1967 under the leadership of General Thenosalie, the first batch of around 200 went to Nanking Chinese army camp in Yunnan, China. It is recorded that it took ninety days to reach China from Nagaland. On 12th December 1967 a second batch of more than 300 with General Mou as its leader headed to China for training. In June 1968 when the Indian army attacked the Naga army camp, they captured one of the Nagas trained in China with his guns made in China. Holding this catch as evidence, the GoI and the Nagaland state politicians spread a lot of propaganda against NNC, stating that the FGN was bringing communism to the Naga Christians. The propaganda spread to almost all Naga villages and the Nagaland state government urged Nagas to stand against the FGN. But the Naga people stood firmly for FGN and NNC.[335]

Mention here should also be made of the fact that when East Pakistan became an independent state from Pakistan, and came to be known as Bangladesh, it became difficult for the Naga army to go to Pakistan for training. Bangladesh gave freedom of movement to the Indian army and intelligence because of India's support for Bangladesh against Pakistan. One of the factors that directly affected the Nagas was, in 1971, when General Thenosalie and two other Naga army personnel were captured by the Indian army in Dacca. This was a hard blow to the Naga people because evidence like this pushed the Indian army to be militarily more aggressive against the Naga peoples.

In 1957, Nagas employed by the GoI formed the Naga People's Convention (NPC) on the approval of the GoI. The highlight of this Convention was the 'Sixteen-Point Agreement' that created a new state, which was adopted in 1960. The main features of the Agreement, besides the creation of a separate state in the Indian Union, were the formation of a Council of Ministers and a Legislative Assembly with a Governor who

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[334] Hereafter Federal Government of Nagaland will be referred as FGN.
[335] See Kibangwar Jamir, *Naga Yimten Wadang (translation- The Naga polity)*, Dimapur: Kibangwar Jamir, 2005, pp. 40-55. Text of the book written in Ao language was translated by the author.

was to be appointed by the President of India in Nagaland state. Point No. 1 states that:

> "The territories that were heretofore known as the Naga Hills Tuensang Area under the Naga Hills-Tuensang Area Act 1957, shall form a state within the India Union and be hereafter know as Nagaland"[336].

On 1st August 1960, Nehru announced in the Indian Parliament that Nagaland was to be a state under the Indian Union. The NNC denounced the move and the GoI retaliated by sending more military troops to Naga villages. The attacks on the Naga army by the Indian army increased. On 26th August 1960 the Naga army shot down an Indian plane near Meluri area (all 9 crew men were captured alive, five were released and four were locked in a Naga jail and later released, with the Chinese government as the international witness). The Indian army that was posted in Kanjang village went to the village of Matikhru in Meluri and butchered most of the men, raped and tortured the women, and destroyed and burned down the village on 6th September 1960. On 18th February 1961, in order tò speed up the formation of statehood, NPC and the GoI selected, from various Naga tribes, forty-five Nagas who were working with GoI and thereby formed the Nagaland State Interim Body Government with Dr. Imkongliba as the Chairman.[337] All forty-five members were sworn in with an oath of allegiance to the GoI by the Assam Governor Srinagesh. Dr. Imkongliba was assassinated by, allegedly, an 'underground' national worker in August 1961.

Nagas who collaborated to the Interim Government were lavishly provided with money, clothing, food and alcohol. More power and authority were given to the Indian army to suppress the Nagas. By this stage the interim government issued identity cards for those who wanted to move from one village to another. It was difficult to be issued with an identity card, but it was impossible to travel without the card during those times. Despite such political oppression, the Federal Government of Nagaland of NNC gained momentum. About 2,000 Naga army personnel went to east

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[336] Atsongchanger, *The Historical Memoranda of the Nagas and their Neighbours*, p.78
[337] Jamir, *Naga Yimten Wadang (translation- The Naga polity)*, pp. 37-38.

Pakistan (now Bangladesh) and China to receive military training. Seeing the political situation in Nagaland, Nehru in the Indian Parliament on 19th March 1963 said that he was willing to talk about the Naga political situation with Phizo, the then-President of NNC. However the member of the Indian Parliament from Nagaland state said that it was wrong of the Central Government to initiate talks with Phizo about the Naga political situation without going through the state government of Nagaland.

In such a political situation on 1st December 1963, only a section of Nagaland became the 16th state in the Indian Union despite strong protests and rejection by the NNC who had the mandate of the Naga people to decide the political course of the Nagas. Phizo termed the NPC as a 'puppet government'[338] and did not recognize the NPC and New Delhi agreement on the status of statehood under the Indian Union. Nagas were thereby further arbitrarily divided into three other states within the Indian Union, namely, Assam, Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh. The Nagaland state allocated and defined by the GoI has only fifteen tribes.

The creation of Nagaland state in a small portion of Naga territory within the Indian Union has created many social as well as political challenges for the Nagas. It has also strained the socio-political relationship with the neighboring states of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh and Manipur because many Nagas in with their territory are associated with these states. This not only divided the Nagas along state borders within India but also caused more division and violence among the Nagas. Those who supported the formation of the Nagaland state were accused as collaborators with the GoI by the Nagas on one hand and Nagas who supported the Naga National Movement were tortured by the Indian armed forces.

Confusion over the political aspiration and identity of the Naga National Movement and Nagaland state politics within the Indian Union became widespread. By the late 1970s it was becoming commonplace to call NNC/Federal Government of Nagaland an 'underground' government and the Nagaland state government as the 'overground' or the 'puppet' state government. The creation of Nagaland state did not stop the

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[338]Lanunungsang, *From Phizo to Muivah*, p. 54.

Indian armed operation on Naga villages. So at the 3rd NBCC convention between 31st January- 2nd February 1964 more than 5,000 delegates from all the tribes of Nagaland state were present. Here they resolved that for peace to prevail in Nagaland the NNC's FGN and the GoI should talk. Here NBCC launched the Peace Mission Movement and formed the Peace Mission that same year consisting of three members, namely, Jayaprakash Narayan, B.P.Chaliha, and Revd. Michael Scott. After several negotiations between the NNC/FGN and the GoI leaders, the first ceasefire agreement was declared on 6th September 1964.[339]

The first of the eight rounds of peace talks was held on 23 September 1964 between the GoI and the NNC/FGN delegation. These talks paved the way for six rounds of Prime Ministerial talks, between February 1966-1967, with Lal Bahadur Shastri and Indira Gandhi from GoI and the Naga delegation led by their Prime Minister Kughato Sukhai. But they ended in deadlock when Prime Minister Gandhi announced that "the Naga solution could be found only within the framework of the Indian Union",[340] and the Nagas refused to accept anything other than the recognition of the existence of their sovereignty.

Also suspicion and distrust were brewing in NNC/FGN. Mr. Scato Swu, the President of NNC/FGN, was impeached and was compelled to resign. Then a section of the Naga national workers formed the so-called Revolutionary Government of Nagaland (RGN) in 1967 with Mr. Scato Swu as the Prime Minister and Kughato Sukhai as President. They were brother-in-laws and from the same tribe. But by 1973 RGN surrendered to the GoI and Mr. Swu was made a Member of the Upper House (Rajya Sabha) in the Indian Parliament. In 1972 the GoI decided to unilaterally transfer the affairs of Nagas from 'External' to 'Home/Internal Ministry'.[341]

The ceasefire was abrogated by the GoI, so from 1st September 1972 the ceasefire officially ceased to exist. The NCC/FGN and the Naga army were banned by the GoI.

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[339] Thanksgiving services were held all over Nagaland to mark their freedom from forced labour, arrest, killing, jungle armed operation, village groupings, and raiding of federal camps by the Indian army.

[340] Lanunungsang, *From Phizo to Muivah*, p.85.

[341] See NPHMR, *The Nagas, Truth and Hope for the Living*, p. 30.

This started another phase of Naga villagers being tortured under the high-handed military operation of the Indian army. Seeing rampant human rights violations and suffering, NBCC again in 1973 formed the Nagaland Peace Council (NPC) with Revd. Longri as its President. The infamous Shillong Accord was the result which was signed by five representatives on behalf of the 'underground' organisations. The most controversial and divisive section of the Shillong Accord was the first section which states:

> "The representatives of the 'underground' organisation conveyed their decision; of their own volition, to accept, without condition, the constitution of India."[342]

The Shillong Accord of 1975 created much schism among the Nagas. The Naga signatories were accused of having accepted "the constitution of India" and were regarded as Naga national traitors. The GoI agreed to have final talks after giving adequate time to the 'underground' workers. By 1976 the Shillong Accord became defunct. The aftermath of the Shillong Accord was one of the darkest periods in the Naga national movement. The Shillong Accord of 1975 further divided the Nagas into pro- and anti-Accordists. The Accord was signed when both Th. Muivah and Issac Swu, the General Secretary of NNC and Finance minister of FGN respectively, were away from home in China on a foreign mission. On their return from China in 1976, Muivah and Swu along with other anti-Accord members of NNC/FGN condemned the Shillong Accord in the strongest terms and treated it as an act of the treason.[343] The anti-Accord people in such a political crisis earnestly sought the opinion of the then-NNC President Phizo, who was in London, and urged him to condemn the Accord. But Phizo remained silent. Many of the people involved in the Accord were killed by fellow national workers who viewed it as the ultimate betrayal of the Nagas. Eventually the GoI nullified the Accord. Kaka Iralu[344] writes that the Shillong Accord was not legally binding and therefore an invalid paper because it was signed under extreme duress.

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[342] Quoted in Wati, Fact and Growth of Naga Nationalism, p. 141.

[343] A. Z. Jami. *Some important landmarks and happenings in the course of Naga freedom movement (From 1918 to date),* Oking: 2007, p.31.

[344] Kaka Iralu, *How shall then we live*, Kohima: N V Press, 2001, pp. 48-49.

It is not wrong to conclude that the Sixteen-Point Agreement produced a group of Nagas who formed a federal state under the constitution of India, and if that was the beginning of a process where Nagas engaged in killing each other, the Shillong Accord marked the end of NNC as a unified political organization.   But the legacy of NNC under Phizo's Presidency is indelible in Naga history as it established the foundation of the unification of the Nagas. Phizo today is rightly remembered as the "Father of Naga Nationalism". His life and political manoeuvres are not beyond controversy, but Phizo added vitality to the Naga movement.   He saw beyond his time and he strove to bring the Nagas together to a more organised political unit.

As a result of the Shillong Accord, and on the basis of a more radical political ideology, the NSCN was formed in 1980 in the hills of Eastern Nagaland, with Th. Muivah as its General Secretary and Khaplang as its President. It aimed to carry out the unfinished task of the NNC.   However 1988 saw the division of NSCN into NSCN (IM) and NSCN (K).   The division saw bloody factional clashes. A.Z. Jami, who worked closely with both Khaplang and Muivah, writes about the reason for the split: "suspicions and misunderstanding arose between the leaders accusing each other on this and that".[345] He however admits that the grounds and reasons for distrust are best known to the leaders. Lanunungsang writes that though the leaders can explain their own reasons, the following can be attributed to their split: "(a) communication gaps caused within the organisational set-up;   (b) development of mistrust among the leaders;   (c) a leadership crisis among the sub-system; (d) lack of political vision; and (e) short sightedness among the rank and file of the national workers mainly on tribal lines".[346]   Issac Swu, Th. Muivah and their party, left eastern Nagaland and came to be known as NSCN (IM). Khaplang and his party retained their headquarters in eastern Nagaland and were known as NSCN (K). The spilt saw some of the worst Naga bloody factional clashes in their history.

In 1990 after the death of Phizo, NNC also split in two: people who did not openly condemn the Shillong Accord who came to be known as Accordists, today under the leadership of Adinno, hence NNC (A) or NNC Accordists, and   NNC members who

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[345] Jami, *Some important landmarks and happenings in the course of Naga freedom movement*, p.31

rejected the Shillong Accord who are known as NNC non-Accordists.   The Shillong Accord stated an agreement to surrender all arms at Chedema peace camp. Even today most of the Accordists live in Chedema Transit Peace Camp arranged by the GoI. The national independence movement of the Nagas presently is divided into four main splinter groups as already discussed in the previous chapter.

The reasons for the division are varied and complicated. However, the Shillong Accord, tribal representation, lack of leadership, and a struggle for power were some of the reasons highlighted by the interviewees. However despite their internal problems and differences, there are no major political or ideological problems because all four factions claim to be fighting for Naga sovereignty.

Aren Longchar reiterates that while originally the splits might have happened because of political ideologies, today she argues that they are reduced to "leadership and power struggle".   She also mentions that the representation of tribes and leadership have become the factors in the factional division.

Interviewee X opines that the "present political movement of the Nagas is in a state of confusion because of the division."   Mr. X recalls that during the formation of the national movement, the freedom-fighters relied on the support of the Naga villagers. The movement was a public movement in itself. In contrast today, the Naga public have totally turned against the freedom-fighters because of their high-handedness. Joining one of the factions and becoming a Naga national worker has become a licence to do almost whatever the members want to do because they claim they are bringing independence.[347] Interviewees like Mr. Y lament that the factional groups have become an industrial unit where cadres join the factional groups for random extortion and personal vengeance.

Interviewee A[348] argues that the national workers themselves are confused about the ideologies associated with sovereignty and independence and therefore calls for the

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[346] Lanunungsang, *From Phizo to Muivah*,   p.7.
[347] The interviewee requested to be anonymous.
[348] The interviewee requested to be anonymous.

need of an open discussion on those concepts.

5. 3 Identity

Michael Kaita, a Naga from Burma,[349] highlighted the issue of a common identity for the Nagas who are along the borders of India and also the Myanmar borders. He reflects on the Nagas demarcated along the Burmese borders, and stated that he can see the lack of knowledge in the Nagas in Nagaland state about the plight of the Nagas in Burma. Niketu Iralu further remarks that identity is the central question because it is linked to many other questions like the "political status that will go with it. Are we satisfied with it? Do we feel safe with it? This immediately raises questions about our relationship with the powers around the Nagas, the Indians and the Burmese".

Arenla Longchar argues that Nagas cannot afford to be a people without an identity. She urges that Nagas need to go back and learn their history and traditional practices of community teaching, folklore and culture. She also reasons that the subjects should be introduced in schools and colleges.

This issue of identity highlights the strength of village and tribal allegiance, which are often used for different interests by people on different issues. However the essence of being Naga, of what it means to be a Naga when national leaders talk about Nagaland, has not been examined. This has brought about the question of who decides who is a Naga or which tribe will be a Naga, and which tribe will be excluded or included. The inability to discuss or debate who can be a Naga other than the fifteen tribes who are recognised in Nagaland state by the the GoI is debatable among the Nagas.

For NSCN (K), the Naga nation, besides the Nagas in Nagaland state, includes the Nagas in Burma, because their headquarters are based in Naga Burma which is Eastern Nagaland. This faction is dominated by the Eastern Nagas in Nagaland state

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[349] Interview in Kohima, Nagaland, 4th June, 2007. He is the President of the student organization

and Arunachal Pradesh and Burma. On the other hand, for the NSCN (IM), the priority is to integrate the Nagas in Manipur with the Nagas of Nagaland. The General Secretary of NSCN (IM) hails from Manipur. For the Nagas in Nagaland state, the influx and settlement of Nagas, particularly from Manipur, is viewed with suspicion. The Nagas in Arunachal Pradesh are not given much consideration because there are no major players from that region in the Naga national movement. Nonetheless the Naga tribes in Arunachal Pradesh endorse the Naga movement, and this has been used as a platform to mobilize the interests of the tribes collectively. The Kukis in Manipur, also found in Nagaland state, were recognized officially as one of the major tribes of the Nagas. However after the Kuki clashed with the NSCN (IM) during the early 1990s, they were no longer considered Nagas. Also, more hill tribes from Manipur since the 1990s are recognized by the NSCN (IM) as Nagas.[350]

While these are the dynamics in the internal Naga political problem, the younger generation of the Nagas in Nagaland state are confused about their political history. This has prompted Chaise[351] to state that 'Naga Peoplehood' needs to be clarified and be unambiguous.

5.3.1   Village tribal-based identity and developing Naga national identity

The strength of the Nagas, as well as the division and conflict among them, is usually understood in terms of their strong social structure based on their tribal identity and allegiance. This social dynamic questions the place for a Naga national identity which can be collectively adhered to by all the individual Naga tribes and their members.

Traditionally, in the case of the Nagas, identity was, and to a great extent still is, village-centred. Imrong Imchen, one of the interviewees recalls that as late as the

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representing the Nagas in Burma.
[350] Along this line, Abraham Lotha also reinforces this issue in his writing. He states that "before the Naga (more specifically the NSCN (IM)) conflict which began in the early 1990s, Kukis were considered a major 'tribe' in the official records of the Nagaland Government. Since the conflict, however, the Kukis are no longer considered as Nagas. After the Kuki-Naga conflict, some of the small 'tribes' in Manipur have associated themselves as Nagas thus adding to the number of Naga 'tribes'. See Lotha, *History of Naga Anthropology*, p. 3.
[351] Charles Chasie answered the questionnaire in a written format.

1950s "only individual villages held the sense of oneness and identity for many people".[352] The concept of being a Naga was still new, but villages were forging the feeling of being Naga, because amongst other things, they were collectively suffering at the hands of the Indian army for being 'Nagas', and claiming that they were an independent nation from the Indian Union. On the other hand, they also saw no ethnic, linguistic or social affinity with the country that was occupying them.

So though village identity still held the strongest attachment, an awareness of tribal identity based mainly on a shared folklore, myth and language by different villages was growing . The role of Christianity[353] as early as 1897 in bringing the various independent villages together to interact and communicate about the Gospel and education laid the foundation for future socio-political awareness and engagement.

However, conflict of interests, power and leadership, started to fall mostly along tribal lines within the NNC by the mid 1950s. Political actions or judgments were taken personally and along village and tribal lines. It became more pronounced by late 1970, when the Indian electoral system was functioning in full swing in Nagaland state. This was so because during the election, the members of the state legislative assembly and the Council of Ministers, once elected, had access to the annual budget from the GoI to the state government of Nagaland, which was often unaccounted for. In recent times, these tribes, from where the elected Ministers hail, get maximum access to this funding and employment in the government service. This has created nepotism in most levels of government administration and departments. Also the election system, while seen as the basis of a democratic representation, has been abused. It has clashed with the Nagas' traditional way of electing a representative through collective consent and approval. Therefore many Nagas see the election system as a foreign system and have developed an attitude of 'they' and 'their system', and so it does not belong to them. In the process, there are reports where villages and family collectively sell their votes to candidates for money. There are also reports that different candidates and state political parties align with different

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[352] Interview in Kohima, Nagaland, 24 June, 2007.
[353] Role of Christianity will be further discussed in detail in Chapter 6. It is also discussed in Chapter 4, in section 4.4.

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factional groups in order to gain favour and support and they use force and power to take over the ballot booths.

Akum Longchari argues that the term "Indian or Naga are mainly political identities". He points out that: "Indian nation consists of many nations; just in the same way it will not be wrong to say that the Naga nation consists of many nations, which by common consent have agreed to be a part of the political identity".[354] He further argues that Nagas are often considered as a nation consisting of many tribes, but Nagas are a nation consisting of many nations since historically Nagas founded independent village republics. Longchari further argues that it is 'their common desire, it is their shared culture, it is their shared views and shared aspirations that give legitimacy to their political identity as Nagas, in the same way that India as a nation, consists of many different nations, which by common consent have agreed to be a part of the Indian political identity. From this point, considering that Nagas have never agreed to be a part of that Indian political identity, Longchari argues that it will only be fair to say that Nagas and Indians are two completely separate political identities.

Since the Nagas have never agreed to be a part of that Indian political identity, it can be summarised that the political identity of being Naga or Indian are two separate political identities. Naga as a national identity is still a developing concept.

The solidarity of being Naga as a common identity is strongly apparent when Nagas are outside the fringes of their territory. When individual Nagas see themselves in a situation outnumbered by the 'other', they become the 'minority other' who are looked down upon as tribals which is translated as 'backward' and 'un-civilized' in mainstream Indian society. Their natural response and struggle against this disparity results in them taking even a greater ownership of their nation as a nation under siege by the GoI. But on the fringes and comfort of their own Naga territory, the tribal identity becomes more pronounced, not only because of their social structure and set-up, but because of different interests, particularly Nagaland

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[354]Interview with Akum Longchari.

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state politics which come with huge monetary incentives.

5.3.2   Artificial Colonial boundaries

One of the biggest problems that indigenous people struggle with is over land and land ownership.   Land was not only a source of livelihood to the Nagas, it was the sacred space of their ancestors, which in a tribal context represented the centrality of their identity, beliefs and attachment, which is the core of their existence. There was no Naga without a village; there was no village without its lands. The collective realities of life, livelihood, social, cultural practices, identity and allegiance were all tied in with the religious understanding and the explanation found within the village. Migration among the Nagas therefore was unknown. Even during famines, they pleaded and made sacrifices to their gods, but did not leave their land. In the course of history, indigenous lands have been fragmented and artificial boundaries have been drawn up, and Nagas have had this similar experience as well. Along this line, Akum Longchari[355] brings the example of Longwa village of the Konyak Nagas where the artificial international boundary between India and Burma runs through Ang's (the village chief) house.   In other words, half of the village is in Burma and other half in Nagaland state which is occupied by India. Nagas are today divided between Burma and India.   In India the Nagas with their territory are further divided into the states of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh and Manipur. Only a fraction of the Nagas and their territory was inaugurated as the Nagaland state, under the Indian Union on 1st December 1963. This has created a form of 'division' on the subject of Naga identity along Indian state lines and outside of those enforced state boundaries.

Integration of the Nagas in different Naga states, with Nagaland state as the point of alignment, as Akum Longchari points out, "immediately threatens the Nagas in Nagaland state when Nagas of other states are coming to join them, and the Nagas in Nagaland have to share their resources; and there is even fear of a new social change"[356]. While Nagas are divided by the GoI through political boundaries, Nagas have created an identity of their own.   Tensions are also brewing among the Nagas

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[355] Interview with Longchari.

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themselves over GoI monetary incentives, economic developmental programmes, and government employment which is one of the biggest employment agencies and sources of income in Nagaland state. This is having an effect on the internal dynamics within the social fabric. So the questions of divided identity and resources which need to be addressed politically between Nagas themselves and even among the divided Nagas along state lines, between Burma and India, remain. India on one hand has recognized that it is a political problem. With Burma, not much has been done so far because of Burma's own socio-political dynamics. On the other hand, Nagas divided along artificial boundaries have not attempted to discuss this issue cohesively on a political platform.

While the Naga identity is still in the process of developing, there are political issues which make it difficult for the Nagas to take ownership of their political position because of the GoI domination. This brings about the question of the territorial integrity of the Indian Union from the perspective of the GoI which will be discussed in Chapter 7.

5.4 Conclusion

It is clear that Naga nationalism was activated as a result of the external factors that were thrust upon the Nagas. The desire to be independent from a British colony such as India or Burma furthered the political identity of the Nagas as a nation of different collective tribes who shared common customs, culture and beliefs. It was also a spontaneous response from the different Naga tribes to form a collective nation, a nationality according to the political needs and demands of their time. However in the light of divided and changing identities and a changing political scenario, Nagas need to once again re-examine the basis of Naga Peoplehood and Nationhood and their claim of sovereignty. How can Nagas respond to the alarming tension between their own traditional tribal identity and their modern national identity to live peacefully, not only amongst themselves, but also with their neighbouring countries like India and Burma? Are there natural processes for society, or are there external dynamics that

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[356] Ibid.

may alter the processes? These aspects need to be examined. The Nagas' division along political boundaries can also be seen where Nagas in the Nagaland state of the Indian Union enjoy high economic incentives from Delhi and therefore more development than the Nagas in Burma and the other Nagas in the states of Assam, Arunachal and Manipur. This has resulted in some internal tension among the Nagas themselves. These themes and questions will be analyzed in Chapter 7. The next chapter will look into the role that Christianity and the Church is playing in forging the Naga identity, and their response and influence in the conflicts as highlighted in the chapter.

Chapter 6   The role of Church in the conflicts in Nagaland: Research Findings

Introduction

Politics and religion, specifically Christianity are often regarded as the greatest obsession of the Naga people.[357] The reasons for this can be found in the fact that the two main factors that thrust the Naga people into an era of modernity were firstly the advances of the British colonial power, and secondly the arrival of the missionaries. According to General Thenosalie [358] "politics and Christianity are the two pillars which have pushed and built Nagas thus far". In the hearts of Nagas with their short history in the modern world, the unsolved political issues around identity, self-determination, and nationalism are the main problems they face.

The ideology of nationalism brought about both by a desire to be independent and the fear of losing their land has appealed to different Naga tribes helping them to forge together as a single national entity. But the indifferent response of the power parties, like the Colonial British and the newly formed Indian Union of 1947 and their failure to understand the strength of nationalism surging from 'un-administered, un-civilized natives like the Nagas, became detrimental to the political life in Nagaland.

In later years in the Naga political movement, the differences in the understanding of the modern political concept of independence and sovereignty   by various political parties and players created major political disparity among the Nagas. The ambiguity that underpinned those core political concepts and the inability to discuss them openly as a Naga nation, in a coherent structural platform, promoted division along factional groups and tribal lines for the Nagas.

  The lack of unity among different Naga national political groups has often been cited by Nagas themselves as one of biggest obstacles for the Nagas to come to an acceptable permanent settlement with the GoI.   An upsurge in fratricide, violence,

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[357]Charles Chasie, *The Naga Imbroglio: A Personal Perspective,* Guwahati: United Publishers, 1999, p.81.
[358] Interview in Kohima, Nagaland, on 10th July 2007. He is the General Secretary of Naga National

corruption, and economic disparity has occurred as a result.

It is in the face of these issues and problems that the role of Church has become central in Naga society because Christianity came at about the same time as modern history began in Nagaland. In the process, Christianity has become one of the most important surviving institutions, and it exists as a catalyst of changing times when individual villages and developing tribal concepts were attempting to evolve a Naga national identity, in   contrast to the 'them' and 'they' attitude that   the Nagas   have developed towards the state government system   of Nagaland and the states in which they are forced to be with, as constituted by the GoI.   Christianity   despite being labelled by some as an   'import' from the   West,   has   been inculcated into the making of Naga identity, thereby creating a sense of belonging and with an attitude of 'us' and 'our' to the Church. However this is not to deny the fact that the American missionaries were not conditioned by the concept of the salvific Christ, nor is it to deny that they escaped the western binary of the 'civilized' and the 'primitive'. Mary Mead, the first missionary (with her husband) in her memoir about the Naga converts wrote,

> "Mine album is the savage beast, where darkness broods and tempests rest without one ray of light; To write the name of Jesus there, and point to worlds all bright and fair, and see the savage bow in prayer, is my supreme delight."[359]

Panger Imchen also pointed out that the later missionaries "prohibited all cultural song, dances, stories, folklore and festivals on the grounds of immoral behaviour such as excessive drink and waste of wealth and energy."[360] The traditional culture and practices were all regarded as 'sin' from the Christian missionary perspective. Even traditional costumes were seen as 'sin' if not inappropriate in a 'civilised' world. The missionary burden to save the souls of the 'savage' Nagas prompted the missionaries, according to M. Alemchiba, to advance the perception that,

> "Every ceremony (traditional) should be abolished...the tendency was

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Council (Panger or Accordist).   He has been with NNC since the 1940s.
[359] Quoted in Panger Imchen, *Ancient Ao Naga Religion and Culture,* p.149.
[360] Ibid., p.157. Here drink means the traditional Naga beer.

> to abolish abruptly the old things and substitute individualism for the strong community feeling ...the result was a conflict not necessarily a conflict of arms, but of culture...."[361]

The result of such an approach towards Naga cultural tradition was that traditional musical instruments, folksongs and music were prohibited in churches. Instead, western music and hymns were introduced.[362] This is an example of how the new mindset of the Nagas was slowly responding to the new changes by believing that their culture and all associated were inferior. This pattern was reinforced by the fact that outside methods of representation, administration and rule were enforced upon them. In this respect, 'decolonizing' the historical , political, and cultural narratives of the Nagas through the lenses of western experience and interpretation is important for the Nagas in affirming their identity and to contextualise the realities of contemporary social-cultural and political conflict.

However the purpose of the chapter here is not to examine the role of the missionaries in the socio-cultural development, or the departure of the Naga from their customs and traditional practices. The purpose of the chapter is to take into account the unprecedented changes that were taking place in the Naga socio-cultural and political landscape beginning from the mid 19th century. The reality of these narratives is that changes were taking place. In the centre of the change were the British colonial power, the American missionaries and the independent native Naga villages. The British came to Nagaland with their imperialistic policy of expansion, and to safeguard their economic interest, particularly the tea-plantations of Assam that bordered the Naga villages which were constantly raided by the Nagas. The American missionary zeal perhaps was also intertwined with the imperialistic narratives of conquest and superiority. The difference however was the missionaries' message of brotherhood, humanity, salvation and forgiveness, against the backdrop of Naga social headhunting practices, religious appeasement and fear of their own unforgiving spirits and gods , appealed more than the English colonial intrusion.

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[361] M. Alemchiba, quoted in Panger Imchen, *Ancient Ao Naga Religion and Culture*, p.158.

[362] As late as the 1990s, churches in Nagaland did not use their traditional musical instruments nor did they sing gospel music tuned in traditional tunes. The common hymnal books for every tribal church association are almost all translations of English hymns..

6.1 The Naga Church as a vehicle to modernity: a rationale to the Naga understanding

Against the backdrop of such changes, the Nagas responded by embracing Christianity as brought by the missionaries. In the process Nagas lost some of their native 'innocence', but in the process they also explored and discovered themselves and their surroundings. This was made possible by the missionary zeal that was infused in them by the Americans. Christianity gave them the perspective to identify and develop the basis of a collective identity which provided the solidarity for a unified Nagahood. It is true that Nagas associated Christianity as western and as a form of modernity. If the invasion of the English was the beginning of the modern era in Nagaland, the conversion to Christianity can be regarded as the defining act towards modernity. However it is interesting to note that in due course Nagas did not feel Christianity as western or an import. The salvific message that Christ is the saviour of all mankind appealed to the Naga understanding of equality and this aided in the assimilation of Christianity as their own. Another important difference worth mentioning is that Nagas who were employed by the British to be coolies, interpreters, and clerks were paid by the British. Whilst in contrast the Nagas employed to work as pastors and teachers by the missionaries were supported by the Nagas themselves. This gave the Nagas a sense of belonging, ownership and responsibility. Panger Imchen writes that the American missionaries did not depend on foreign aid for church 'planting'. He goes on to say that the early Naga Christians were able "to take over full responsibility and soon proved to be an indigenous church with self-support, self-propagation and a wide-ranging vision for evangelization when the missionaries left in the mid 1950s".[363]

So although the missionaries' lack of understanding of the socio-religious system of the Nagas resulted in abandoning elements of traditional practices and worship, it is correct to say that the distinctive Naga features of independence, decision-making, communal festivals and traditional representation were transferred and incorporated

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[363] Imchen, *Ancient Ao Naga Religion and Culture,* p.162.

into the Christian church. In what way the Naga churches responded to the theological teaching and doctrine is not within the scope of this thesis. It is rather (i) an attempt to understand the role the Church played as an institution in that particular process of transition in history; (ii) and in that socio-political and historical context, tradition and modernity are used as tools to differentiate, understand and explore the mechanisms of conflict in Nagaland, and that the role the Church played particularly in the phase of those changes and when political violence began to emerge.

Many modern theorists regard secularisation as one of the key characteristics of modern era. But in the case of the Naga conflict, if any intervention is to be productive which should encompass all the tribes of the Nagas, then the role of Naga Christian churches becomes critical. This is because religion played an overtly comprehensive role in the Naga pre-Christian era. Land was sacred. Every aspect of life, i.e. cultivation, harvesting, sowing, war, village meetings, festivals, birth, death, was understood and endowed with sacred meaning. When Christianity replaced their traditional beliefs, rituals waned but the many old beliefs and understanding did not perish, they simply found a new receptacle in the form of Christianity. This is one of the reasons why Christianity became such a unifying factor, when new Naga Christians renounced head-hunting and ventured from their villages to spread the Gospel to neighbouring villages. While many critics have maligned Christianity as a western religion or product, and accused tribal people who converted to Christianity of renouncing their way of living for 'western beliefs', Nagas to some extent found Christianity as an expression of their already existing beliefs of their own god, of good and bad, and life after death.

Having argued the importance of the Naga Church in the resolution of conflict, there are two points that need to be highlighted to prevent any misunderstanding:
1. This is not to attribute a religious character to the Indo-Naga conflict, nor that can the Church exclusively lead to a socio-cultural, economic and political change and resolution in Nagaland.
2. Nor is it ignoring the violent history aggravated and generated by Christianity or its churches over the centuries, nor the potential it might hold in this regard

for the Nagas.

In the Naga context, while exploring the potentials to bring about the multi-dimensional resolution to the conflict which is on-going in Nagaland, the intervention of the Church has played a crucial role in the last sixty years. It can continue to contribute with new vigour if its platform is used in a constructive way and if it takes the opportunity of the new possibilities in the modern era.

6.1.1 Traditional meeting places transit into Church building

One of the most revered places among the Naga villages was the *morung* or the bachelors' dormitory house as explained in Chapter 4. The main *morung* was symbolically placed in the centre of the village. In big villages usually more than one *morung* existed for different sections or sectors of the village. It was here that all the issues relevant to the village, namely, socio-cultural and political representation were taught, discussed and decided. It was the assembly sitting-place, the platform and the execution of the communal Naga villages. When Christianity came, the *morung* was regarded as a heathens' place by the missionaries, and as a result it lost its significance and gradually disappeared from Naga villages. In its place, the Church and its buildings took centre place. The church building was usually constructed in the centre of the village, making it the exchange and assembly point for the villagers. If the *morung* in some villages did not have the same significance as in most tribes, then their parallel social institution followed the same fate as that of the *morung,* being replaced by the church as the foremost social institution.

In essence, the Church replaced the central role of the *morung* in the social life of the Nagas. In the words of Revd. Terhuja, "in one way our *morung* has become the church platform".[364] However the teachings were no longer about the oral history, song, folklore, dances, *gennas* or taboos as observed by the villagers; nor was the discussion about political affairs or which village to fight. The Church instead taught how to read and write in Roman letters, sing and play western musical

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[364] Interview in Kohima, Nagaland, on 11th June 2007.

instruments, basic hygiene and the gospel. The missionaries installed the importance of formal education in the Nagas and the need to evangelise to their neighbouring villages. The missionaries did not take into account the sacredness of land in a Naga context, nor the close inter-relation between the socio-cultural, politics and religion at the heart of the Naga being. Instead they encouraged and clearly laid down the importance of the separation of Church and state. After the missionaries left Nagaland, the Naga Church adhered to the doctrine of the separation of the Church and the state. This is important to note because the response of the Church to the Indo-Naga political conflict and the intra-Naga conflict was and continues to be determined by this doctrine.

Mention should also be made here that the missionaries did not involve themselves or interfere in the village independent administration and representation. They encouraged the new converts to refrain from practices they deemed as sinful, which usually meant all the traditional customs and practices. But though the rituals and traditional ceremonies stopped, many of the beliefs and observations were assimilated by Christianity.

6.1.2 Christianity as an identity and ideology

The common resistance especially displayed by the Angami villages against the British power, which came with more superior weapons, may have developed for the first time when there was a serious threat posed to their land, which represented their survival and livelihood and their independent way of living. These fears among the different villages may have been an impetus that brought about a desire to come together to fight and to protect themselves whenever required. The suspicion and fear about the British spread around the different villages in the Naga Hills. When the first missionary, Dr. Clark, entered Dekhahaimong village in the Ao area, news spread and that particular village was severely threatened by other surrounding villages. When the Dekhahaimong villagers responded that he was a missionary, the other villagers' skeptical response was, "you will find sooner or later that this great *rajah* (king, in Hindi) preacher is a disguised agent of the

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Company.   Has he not the same white face?".[365]

There is no doubt that there was a growing sense of   identity,   or at least a need to have a collective defence mechanism, against the British invasion in the late 19th century and 20th century amongst the 'people' who were referred to as 'Nagas' by the British.   But Christianity, with the message of brotherhood and one God, provided the vehicle to help forge a common identity through evangelisation to different villages, including villages of different tribes.   In this way, while Christianity was also one of the main changes introduced to the Nagas, its teaching not only catered to the spiritual needs of the people but also became an ideology in uniting them.

Babu, an Indian historian teaching in Nagaland University, observes that, historically, the feeling that all the Nagas are ethnically one was brought firstly by the British, but the interaction of the Nagas was enabled through Christianity. He further argues that, before Christianity, each Naga tribe worshipped their own separate   spirits and gods. But when Nagas became Christians,"they   started to   worship one God."[366] Babu argues the fact that Naga Christians began to worship one God was a strong ideological force, which provided the ideological role which is required in any struggle. He further mentioned that Christianity was symbolic in the sense that when abuses were committed in churches (and church buildings were burned down during the intense Indian army operation in Nagaland), the feeling of a recognised identity, irrespective of village and tribe, became even stronger.

From the beginning, the first missionaries encouraged the converts to go outside their village with the Gospel and emphasised the spread of literary education. By the late 19th century, students from all parts of Nagaland were sent to Impur and eventually to Kohima to learn and receive formal education. This lead to the process whereby the Nagas travelled not with the sole purpose of war,   or head-taking, or individual

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[365] Quoted in   Imchen, *Ancient Ao Naga Religion and Culture,* p.151. Agent of the Company here referred to the East India Company which first came as traders to India, which was later taken over by Her Majesty.

[366] Interview with Dr. Babu, in Kohima, Nagaland, 25th June 2007. He was the then Head of the Department of History and Archeology, Kohima Campus, Nagaland University. He was the only ' Indian' or 'non-Naga' that was interviewed.

village trade with Assam, but in pursuit of sharing and learning. Christianity united the Nagas as a people, which paved the way for politics to unite them as a nation in the modern political sense.

This is not to imply that there was no initial opposition and resistance from the Naga villages against the new Christian culture. Three new 'village' settlements had to be established in the Ao tribe alone when the situation against the new converts to Christianity became tense. Misunderstanding arose when the missionaries discouraged the new converted boys from sleeping in the *morung*, attending and part-taking in the traditional festival and communal religious ceremonies.[367] There were cases when fines were imposed and also where individuals and families were expelled from their village for converting to Christianity. [368]

But gradually, as more Naga villages embraced Christianity, the struggle to be an independent nation also became more persistent and urgent. Nagas in great numbers began to convert to Christianity beginning from the late 1940s, which served to make the political statement that they were not Indians, as the latter were mostly Hindu.

So Christianity in Naga society went through a series of processes:

(i) Firstly, it served as one of the factors to bring about radical changes in Nagaland;

(ii) Secondly, it became the vehicle to respond to the changes that were happening;

(iii) Thirdly, it was a socio-political action that served to enhance their difference from Indians;

(iv) Fourthly, but not least, as an act towards modernity. In this regard Revd. O. Alem[369] argues that to go back "to our forefathers' religion is to go backward to the ancient era".

6.1.3 Traditional practices incorporated into Church practices

(i) People representation structure: The traditional way of people's representation

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[367]See Imchen, *Ancient Ao Naga Religion and Culture*, pp.156-159.

[368] Interview with Nuklu Phom in Dimapur, Nagaland,15th July, 2007. See also Imchen, *Ancient Ao Naga Religion and Culture*, p.158.

in administrating the affairs in ancient Naga villages is one of the most enduring practices found in modern Naga society. Neingulo Krome points out that, "Naga democracy is strongly communal". [370] This is also a clear indication that representation in the public sphere is core to the functioning of the communal Naga co-existence. The structure and practices of representation followed in villages, according to their respective tribes, have found expression in their system of representation at respective tribal level. The first tribal council was formed among the Lothas in 1923 only. Because of the representation based on the rotation of different kin classification, or elected chieftain in consultation with the villagers, it strongly upheld the importance and distinction of clans, villages and range within the tribe. One of the reasons why the tribe identity has developed as a strong entity can be found in its ability to translate the structure of village representation into that of the collective village of a tribe in the respective tribal councils. But the traditional forms of representation have not been translated into the forms of representation in the Nagaland state Legislative Assembly.

Instead, the representation imposed by the Indian Government, based on election and individual voting, does not work and has caused major havoc between clans, villages and tribes. This has also created confusion over the accountability and relationship of the leaders with the people. This has sparked fears among the tribes of being sidelined in the representation in the state Legislative Assembly. This form of representation highlights the exclusion of both people and small tribes in decision-making processes. The absence of any indigenous structural representation among the Nagas as a nation in the Nagaland state has lead to some of the internal Naga conflicts, rivalries and enmity. Therefore there are two parallel existing political institutions in Nagaland: (a) the Naga traditional village representation which finds expression in the respective tribal councils; and (b) the Indian state legislative assembly which elects the representation through individual rights and voting. The two contrasting methods of electing representatives is creating instability in the region. In the traditional form of representation there is a sense of belonging and participation. In the modern method of election it enhances everything that divides Nagas from clan, village and along

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[369] In discussion with Revd. O.Alem, in Shamator, Tuesang, Nagaland, May 2007.

tribal lines. It also adds further divisive elements brought about by the Nagaland state political parties and the main political parties existing in the Indian Union.

It can be argued that different tribes among the Nagas have different forms of people representation. For instance, the Ao villages are governed by the elders with representatives from different clans, while the Sema and Chang tribes have hereditary chieftains. However, despite different forms of governance found in the Naga tribes, the very ethos of independence and participation of the people in their own affairs through communal kinship, and accountability of their representative, is found in all cases. To ignore this traditional representative mechanism is to invite chaos, division, and disengagement from the political process at a grassroots level. Nepuni Piku comments that "the traditional process of decision-making and representation will decide what kind of society and what kind of relationship the Nagas have tomorrow". [371] He argues that the development of different organisations or groups is democratising, but he is cautious of the fact that it can polarise the society if the collective decision-making of the Nagas, through the discretion of the Nagas, is not incorporated into the modern framework. He further argues that if there is no transparency in the present process of decision-making, that this is a danger where the process can be hijacked by the state itself and by other power-vested individuals and groups.

The relevance of Naga representation in relation to the Naga Church is to highlight how the Church incorporated it into its structure. Every tribal association in the Nagaland Baptist Church Council usually takes into account the traditional structure of representation found in their respective village as translated to the tribe. In the case of the representation of the Ao Baptist Association for example, which comprises of 133 local Baptist churches, and 44 fellowship churches[372], it is run in a very similar way to the traditional form of representation.

Every Ao village has a Baptist church building. In some rare cases when the church

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[370] Interview   in Kohima, Nagaland, 13th June 2007.
[371] Interview with Nepuni Piku, Dimapur, Nagaland, 14th June 2007.
[372] Quoted in , Talitemjen and Lanunungsang, *Naga society and culture,* p. 361.

elders are not well represented, or when there is division in the village between different sections or clans of the village, a separate church building may be constructed. In other words there can be two churches in such a case, which however is very rare. Representation begins from the village. In the village church, while the pastor can be a qualified theologian belonging to another village, the selection of the church elders must take into consideration the clan representation and the section/sector of the part of the village they come from. Participation of the individuals in the service may, for example, involve prayer-offering or allotting time to present a short exhortation to the villagers before the actual pastoral sermon.

The tribal Baptist Association level consists of all the Ao villages (which are divided into six geographical ranges) and the Ao Baptist Churches located in various towns outside of the Ao area. For example, Ongpangkong, one of the ranges comprises of twenty-two villages. There are eighty-one Ao villages. [373] The churches that fall under this range have a collective organisation known as the Ongpangkong Telongjem (meaning Unity). While the organisation has full-time staff, who are usually from one of the villages of the range, the other seasonal office bearers, like the President or Vice-President, are taken by rotation from all the twenty-two villages. The selection based on village is not written as a part of any rule or constitution but it is accepted as the shared norm for people representation. The other ranges also follow suit.

When all the six ranges of Baptist organisations and the different Ao Baptist churches located in towns in or outside of Ao territory come together to form the Ao Baptist *Arogo* (Church) *Mungdang* (Association), (ABAM) the same form of representation applies. Each village sends representation to their respective range and each range sends representation to the Ao Baptist Association. Even if positions in seasonal office and on committees under ABAM are filled by a Baptist member living in one of the towns, and representing the town church not be affiliated to any village, the number of members from a village and from which range the village is, is taken into consideration.

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[373] The numbers of the Ao village is given by Revd. Imtitoshi, Mission Secretary of the Ao Baptist Association. In Nagaland state according to the 1991 Nagaland Government census there is 1225

The next level is the Nagaland Baptist Church Council (NBCC) which comprises of all the tribes in Nagaland state and is seen as the apex body of the Naga Baptists. The Executive Secretaries of every tribal Baptist organisation take a turn in the position of the President and Vice-President of NBCC. At NBCC, it is not so much the individual village but the tribe to which the member of a cabinet in NBCC belongs. Here also the local church and tribal Baptist Association of an intending Cabinet candidate should be consulted. Otherwise they are viewed as a member who does not have the backing of his/her people which is very important in the Naga kin-relationship context. It is unofficially understood that there are already too many staff members from the Angami and Ao tribes.   In the NBCC Council meeting, every associate tribal member has seven representatives to amend any of the NBCC minutes.   However for large tribal Associations, like the Ao, Angamis, Konyaks, etc, an extra representative is given to every extra 5,000 members, from 50,000 members onwards.[374]

Since 2006, the Peace Department of NBCC, in a symbolic move to represent all tribes and people, requested every tribal organisation to send a representative to become a member of the Peace Committee.   Individuals who have public trust and standing are usually nominated by their tribe.

(ii) Communal festivals and others: When the missionaries came, they encouraged converts to stop taking part in the traditional festivals. They also discouraged the feast of merit given by rich families to feed the whole village because they thought they consisted of too much 'merry making' and drinking of traditional beer. Families who gave feasts of merit or the rich man's feast were highly regarded in the society because it was not all rich men who gave these feasts. But the love of communal festivals did not diminish. In later years the Christmas celebration became the main festival. The symbolic distribution of portions of meat during pre-Christian times was followed in all Christian celebrations and festivals which featured meat-cutting. Individual families giving Christmas feasts to the whole village is in parallel with the

villages.
[374] Interview with Kari Longchar, Dimapur, Nagaland, 10th June 2009. Longchar is the Peace Director in NBCC.

pre-Christian Naga practice of the feast of merit.[375]   The Church also advocates the traditional practice of clan or other related exogamy marriage principles.

Panger Imchen's observation about the Ao society in the following lines can be applied   to the Nagas in general as well:

> "Unlike other societies where there is always a mixture of different religious philosophies and their subsequent cultural heritage, separation between secular and church, and the distinction between social life and religious life, the Ao society is such that there is hardly any separation."[376]

One of the constant challenges for the Church is how to continue to raise as a platform for a common shared identity its message of peace and unity in the midst of so many layers of social identities, affinities and relationships.

6.1.4   The Church's approach to the Naga political conflict

The missionaries' message of oneness and peace through Christ appealed to the senses of the Nagas.   This message allowed the order, passed by the British administrators, to make head-hunting punishable successful, in an attempt to stop the practice among the warring Nagas. As a matter of fact it was the American missionaries, as early as 1878,[377] who opened the first modern school where reading and writing, in addition to Bible literature, were taught.   Till then there was no script or written languages for any of the Naga people.   The first historical written memorandum, to the Simon Commission in 1929, where the Nagas first expressed their desire to be left to govern themselves in the event of the departure of the English from the Indian sub- continent, is a testament of such educational initiatives. But as mentioned earlier in the chapter, the missionaries strongly advocated the separation between the state and the church.   So even when the American missionaries left in the early 1950s, the Naga Church leaders continued to advocate that principle.   This

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[375] Revd. O. Alem also draws this comparison in conversation with the writer in April 2007, Nagaland. He is the Executive Secretary of Ao Baptist *Arogo* (Church) *Mungdang* (Association) (ABAM.

[376]   Imchen, *Ancient Ao Naga Religion and Culture,* p.160.

[377] See ibid., Mrs. Clark, the wife of the first missionary, set up the school in 1878, initially with 30 in the boys' school and 12 in the girls' school. See also Chubatola Aier et al., *Talesen: Reflections on Education Among the Ao Nagas,* Mokokchung: Ao Students Conference, 2003, pp.34-35.

section is not to explore why the missionaries advocated the principle of the separation of church and state, and why the Naga Church as an institution, despite being embedded in the cultural practices   where   socio-political aspects and religion are associated   as a single entity, followed that policy. This section will briefly explore how the church as an institution approached and viewed the   Indo-Naga violence, and how the political crisis shaped its role and position.

Kari Longchar reflecting about the beginning of the Church's role in the growing Naga political consciousness writes:

> "Angamis were the primary target of the British government in the 19th century, and at later periods Angamis became the 'nerve centre' of Naga nationalism under the leadership of A. Z. Phizo.   So also among the Naga churches, Angamis were the first to take up the responsibility of nation building."[378]

In June 1947, the Angami Baptist Church Council (ABCC) was the first church institution among the Nagas to express "its happiness over the united stand taken by the Nagas under the umbrella of Naga National Council (NNC)".[379]   Eventually on 31st August 1947 all Angami churches "observed a day of prayer to ask help and guidance over the political developments".[380]   This is an example of how the Church responded to the changing times of the people. But the Nagaland Church's active response to the Naga political conflict can be divided into two phases:

(i) Firstly, the years between 1957-1975:   This period saw the Church   taking an active role in bringing about negotiations between the Indian Government and the NNC. During some of the worst periods of Indo-Naga bloodshed, the Church advocated peace and succeeded in bringing both the GoI and NNC together in talks and brought about the first ceasefire agreement in 1964. However, when   the Shillong Accord was signed in 1975 under the initiation of the Church, it brought about a huge division in the Naga movement. After this the Church withdrew from playing an active role in the political issue until the 1990s.

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[378]   Revd. L .Kari Longchar, *NBCC Peace Work, Peace and Reconciliation*, Seminar Paper, March 2003, Unpublished paper, p.1.
[379]   Ibid., p.1.
[380]   Ibid.

(ii) From 1996 onwards: Division between the Naga national workers since 1988 brought about much violence in Nagaland, this time more amongst the Nagas than with the Indian security forces. When factional clashes became most rampant, the Church responded by again forming another Peace Mission, re-named the NBCC Peace Committee. This period saw the Church's attempt to bring the different factions to the table for dialogue through appeals, healing and reconciliation. The Church has so far been unsuccessful in its persuasion to bring the four different factions together to talk out their differences.

In both of the above periods, the Church did not state its opinion of what the political status of the Nagas as a nation should be, for example whether Nagas should continue to claim independence, sovereignty, or an autonomous status, or settle for the Nagaland statehood being conferred to a section of Nagas within the Indian Union.

These two phases reflect the dynamics that caused the violence in Nagaland and how the Church responded according to the social and political developments of the period. Initially, in the first phase, it was the Indo-Naga conflict. In the present role of the Church, priority has shifted to bringing the different Naga factions to a common table. This is not, however, to imply that the Indo-Naga political problem is resolved. The unresolved Indo-Naga problem underpins the internal dynamics of the Naga factional differences. Some of the different political Accords and Agreements that the Nagas were forced to sign as a result of the Indo-Naga crisis have led to various political ramifications.

In the light of such complex social, historical and political underpinnings, the Church's response to the conflict is basically motivated by its belief that peacemaking is the responsibility of the Church. After the deployment of the Indian security forces in 1953, terror and violence were rampant in Nagaland. During such a situation, when Naga political leaders went 'underground' and there were no other institutions to address the cause of the people's suffering, a group of Church leaders met in Kohima in February 1957 to appraise the Naga social and political situation.

The result was the formation of the 'Naga Church Ministers Mission for Peace.'[381] Their prime source of motivation was clearly the Christian concept which is captured in the following lines:

> "The vision of the crucified Lord has already become blurred to many Christians. How can we take up arms against one another when we know that we are standing under the shadow of the Cross on which the Prince of Peace was crucified. There is no time for misunderstanding and indecision among ourselves. Now is the time for us to decide what we really want to be. Through the prayers of the Church of Christ, this power of love of God in Christ Jesus is stronger than the hatred of man".[382]

The statement above expresses the central theme of the Church rationale in their response to violence in Nagaland. The Church leaders, as individual Nagas, might support the Naga national movement, but as an institution the Church did not play any direct political participation. The manifestation of conflict in the form of rampant political violence and bloodshed, and the cessation of violence, between the Indian and Naga armies and between Naga factional rivalries, was the deepest concern of the Church. The Church did not provide any political modality for conflicting parties to enter into negotiation; nor did it advocate a political settlement. The Church asserted that the responsibility to create a political modality and reach a political settlement should come from the politicians and leaders of the conflicting parties. The Church, in the light of the political conflict, saw its place and role as a mediator between conflicting parties and groups as they preached non-violence.

Having said that, in line with the Naga political movement, the formation of the Naga Hills Baptist Church Council (later renamed NBCC), independent of other neighboring Christians in the Assam province who had decided to be in the Indian Union, was a very strong political position. When moves were made to start the Assam Christian Council in 1936, Nagas became aware of such initiatives, and the Naga Christians made a decision to form their separate Council, even though they were all Christians. Records which were found in the Ao Baptist Church

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[381] O.M.Rao, *Longri Ao: A biography,* Calcutta: Christian Literature Centre, 1986. p.79.
[382] Quoted in Ibid.

Association annual meeting minutes of that year read:

> "..mentioned about the presence of a delegation of five Angami
> Church leaders who counseled the gathering that Nagas would not join
> at a council with the plain people but would rather come together as
> one Naga group."[383]

The following year in 1937, one of the signatory members of the Memorandum to the Simon Commission in 1929, Neisier, an Angami ordained minister, at the Ao Baptist Church Association annual meeting told the audience that:

> "Nagas would not join the proposed Council of Churches (with
> Assam) ...because they were under the British and it was better to
> remain so. His statement was welcomed by the Ao Christians
> there."[384]

The Naga Christians declined to join Assam Christian Council, and in 1937 the Naga Hills Baptist Advisory Council came into being. Revd. Keviyiekielie writes that the convention's aim "...was to bring all the Naga Baptists from the the Naga Hills for common interest, fellowship and witness".[385] In 1953 the Naga Baptist Council was renamed as the Nagaland Baptist Church Council (NBCC). The development of a separate, independent Church entity is an indication of a clear sense of distinct socio-cultural identity and ethnicity, if not a political identity, in the minds of the Nagas, in the midst of major political upheaval on the eve of the departure of Britain as well preparations happening in the colonial Indian sub-continent. It was a very strong political implication because during the colonial rule in India, parts of Nagaland[386] were called the Naga Hill District and placed under the Assam administration zone. So though NBCC made no direct political statements, the positions NBCC, as an institution, has taken were in response to the desire of Naga peoples for dignity, freedom and peace.

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[383] Quoted in, Rev. Keviyiekielie Linyu, *Christian Movements in Nagaland,* Kohima: N.V.Press, 2004, p.105.

[384] Quoted in   ibid., p.105.

[385] Ibid., pp. 105-106.

[386] At this stage there was no term like Nagaland. Only a part of the Naga-inhabited areas was called the Naga Hills District, and the eastern part of Naga Hills, inhabited by the Nagas but un-administered by the British were referred to as the North-East Frontier of Assam (NEFA). Thenosalie in an interview (10 July 2007, Kohima, Nagaland) said, that the term 'Nagaland' that

This position by NBCC as an institution captures the imagination, reality and needs of the Naga masses. It has the grassroots connection through the traditional way of representation as emulated by the Church. Especially during the early period of the 20th century, tribal Church Associations were the first, and the most structured, collective forum. The majority of the signatories of the memorandum to the Simon Commission in 1929 were also Christians, of whom two were ordained ministers.[387] So it can also be argued that although Naga villagers had a sense of freedom and independence, the 'educated' Nagas who were usually Christians and church workers, worked with other concerned Nagas[388] who envisioned the essence of modern freedom by demanding a separate Naga collective political identity as early as 1929.

The next two sections will discuss some of the major initiatives taken by the Church to resolve the Indo-Naga armed conflict, and intra-Naga factional clashes.

6.2   The Church's Role in the Indo-Naga Conflict

This section will examine why and how the Naga Church formed the Peace Mission and its role and initiatives. It will also make an attempt to see the main contributions it made as a result of its influence and initiatives.

6.2.1   Beginning of the Naga Church Ministers' Mission for Peace (NCMMP)

From the year 1953 Indian security forces started to raid Naga villages. By 1956, Indian armed forces of over 100,000[389] were deployed to Nagaland with the intention of repressing the political fervour and momentum of self-determination in Nagaland. The Naga national workers were far outnumbered in power, organization, ammunitions and manpower by the Indians. This forced the Naga national workers

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includes all the Naga-inhabited areas was used first by the Naga National Council in the 1940s.

[387] Linyu, *Christian Movements in Nagaland,* p.104.   There were 20 signatories, of which Neisier and Zhapuzhulie were the two ordained ministers.

[388] The Nagas who went to the World War I as part of the labour corps brought huge zeal and enthusiasm to the growing sense of Naga awareness.   But it can also be argued that they were also mostly Christians who went as labours to the war.

[389] NPMHR, *The Nagas: Truth and Hope for the Living,* p.25.

to go underground and resulted in Nagas taking on the Indian army through guerilla warfare. The Indians were ruthless in their repression of the Nagas. Nagas of four and five villages were concentrated in a designated space and their movements were closely monitored by the Indian armed forces. The Indian state law provided immunity and unprecedented power to the armies with the 'Armed Forces (Special Powers) Regulation of 1958. The Act granted power, even to "non-commissioned officers", the right to "fire upon, or otherwise use force, even to the causing of death..". Clause 7 read:

"No prosecution suit or other legal proceeding shall lie in any court of law against any officer of the Armed forces in respect of anything done in any part of Kohima, Mokokchung districts of the the Naga Hills-Tuensang Areas on or after the 23rd December, 1957...".[390]

It was a period when the Indian Army as equally hated and feared by the Nagas. They patrolled in almost every single Naga village. Nagas at this point of history were developing their sense of national identity. However there was no cohesive political administration or political alliance to advance their cause. The 'Naga Church Ministers Mission for Peace' was formed in 1957 by the Naga Church leaders when such social responsibility was thrust upon them because there was no other institution at that time to mediate for the Nagas with the Indian Government. These Church leaders acted as mediators between the Naga national leaders who were underground and the Indian army. They toured all over Nagaland visiting villages and listening to stories of their tragedies and fears and abuse in the hands of the Indian army. They preached about peace and non-violence. They reasoned with the Naga people that "Our Lord's teaching about revenge is: Turn your other cheek".[391] They visited Naga prisoners, preached the Gospel and administered holy communion. Recalling the tour, one of the team members, Revd. Kenneth Kerhuo, writes:

"Those days were filled with exciting moments of walking through deep forests, crossing swelling rivers in mid-summer, clearing the paths between the villages as people had already stopped visiting their neighboring villages due to insecurity and fear, and clearing the spikes along the path that were planted for defense".[392]

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[390] Quoted in, Mar Atsongchanger, *The historical Memoranda of the Nagas and their Neighbours,* p.128. See Appendix 3 for full text of the Regulation
[391] Rev. Longri, Quoted in Rao, *Longri Ao: A biography,* pp. 81-82.
[392] Quoted in ibid., p.79-80.

Revd. Longri Ao writes how the team met the Naga underground prisoners in jail:

> "In Mokokchung, we found one hundred and twenty men, women and children locked up by the Indian army…we sang together the hymn 'In the Cross' and all said the Lord's prayer. I read to them from Matthew 6 - God clothes the lilies and feeds the birds. Do not be anxious".[393]

Touring Naga villages and holding meetings with both Naga national leaders and Indian army officials gave the Church the opportunity to develop relationships and credibility on both sides and laid the foundation for arrangements for negotiations.

6.2.2   Formation of Nagaland Baptist Church Council (NBCC) Peace Mission in 1964

In 1958 the Executive Committee of the Baptist Church appointed three Secretaries, one for each of the then-existing three districts in Nagaland, namely Kohima, Mokokchung and Tuensang. The appointment of Kenneth Kerhuo, a man committed to the cause of peace, as the Executive Secretary of NBCC in 1959, added to the momentum of the peace work. Following a resolution at the 3rd Nagaland Baptist Convention at Wokha between January 31st and February 2nd 1964, a special committee of the NBCC was set up and the NBCC Peace Mission was launched. The Special Committee which comprised of   nine members, appointed Kenneth Kerhuo, Shihoto, and Longri Ao for the Peace Mission. The NBCC invitation to Jayarakash Narayan, B.P. Chaliha and Rev. Michael Scott to become   a part of the NBCC Peace Mission was accepted and they arrived in Nagaland in April 1964.[394]

After four months of relentless meetings and negotiations with representatives of the Government of India and the Federal Government of Nagaland (FGN), the Peace Mission tabled a draft proposal for a cease-fire.   This was accepted by both sides and signed by them in August 1964. The ceasefire took effect from 6th September 1964, amidst great jubilation, relief and thanksgiving services from people all over

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[393] Quoted, ibid., p.81.
[394] Longchar, *NBCC Peace Work*, 2003, pp. 1-2.

Nagaland. The people were celebrating their freedom from jungle operations, concentration of villages, raiding of Naga Federal Camps, searches of villages by the Indian army, arrests, aerial actions, forced labor and political fines.

The first round of talks between representatives of the GoI and FGN began on 23rd September 1964 at Chedema village, on the outskirts of Kohima. The Indian delegation was led by its Foreign Secretary, Y.D. Gundevia, and that of the FGN by Jerenkokba.[395] Welcoming the Indian delegates Jerekokba said:

> "By the Grace of the Almighty, and through the unreserved efforts
> made by the members of the Nagaland Peace Mission and unstinted
> co-operation of the Nagaland Baptist Church leaders, the long-desired
> ceasefire efforts came into fruition only a few days ago…it is our great
> hope that through this present conference we can create an atmosphere
> conducive to ease tension not only essential for the people of Nagaland
> and of India but will be a contribution towards lessening the explosive
> situation in South east Asia …".[396]

After four rounds of talks, the Peace Mission brought out its own peace proposal, containing points, recognizing the positions of both sides and emphasising the need to make peace everlasting and urging the two sides to find a common meeting-point. Later, after the eighth round of talks, in April-May 1965, a team of peace observers, consisting of Dr. M. Aram, Miss Marjorie, Miss A. P. Das and N.Chaudhari, was appointed.

Dissolution of the Peace Mission: The first to leave of the three invited members to the Peace Mission was Jayaprakash Narayan in February 1966. Following the Naga underground protest against one of his alleged pronouncements, "if the government of India desires, she can liquidate the Naga rebels".[397] He resigned citing that the Naga Federal leaders had no confidence in him

B.P.Chaliha, the then-Chief Minister of Assam tendered his resignation soon after the train sabotages in Assam. The first attack was on 3UP Assam Mail in July 1965 and

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[395] Ibid., p.2.
[396] Quoted in Ibid., p.2.

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the second targeted the 23UP passenger train in November 1965. The Naga 'guerrillas' were suspected of these incidents. In the first case, at least eleven people were killed and thirty-two people injured.[398]

Revd. Michael Scott was forced, in an order of expulsion by the Indian External Affairs Minister in the *Rajya Sabha* (Uper House), to leave the country immediately. While Scott was receiving medical treatment in Shillong, he was deported from Guwahati Airport to London in May 1966. The Indian security forces seized all his documents and tape-recorded materials. That was the end of Peace Mission.

Prime Ministerial Level Talks: However, following the FGN demand to raise the level of talks to political and ministerial level, talks with the then-Prime Minister of India, Lal Bahadhu Shastri were scheduled for 15 and 16 January 1966. But FGN sought a postponement, and before new dates could be fixed Shastri passed away. Nevertheless, the talks did not break down and between February 18th 1966 and 5-6 October 1967, six rounds of talks were held at Prime Ministerial level. The Indian side was led by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi while the Naga side was led by Kughato Sukhai, the Prime Minister of the Federal Government of Nagaland (FGN).[399]

At one point, the Indian External Affairs Minister, Dinesh Singh, said that "Nagaland could have complete autonomy apart from Defence, External Affairs, Communication and Currency".[400] However the Naga leaders remained firm in their demands for complete Naga independence. The GoI rejected such demands and Indira Gandhi announced that "the Naga solution could be found only within the framework of the Indian Union",[401] and the Nagas refused to accept anything other than the recognition of the existence of their sovereignty.

6.2.3 Formation of Nagaland Peace Council (NPC) in 1973

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[397] Quoted, in ibid, p.8
[398] Nirmal Nibedon, *Nagaland the Night of the Guerillas,* Delhi: Lancer Publishers, 1983. p.134.
[399] Longchar, *NBCC Peace Work,* 2003, pp.8-9.
[400] Quoted in ibid., p.8.
[401] Lanunungsang, *From Phizo to Muivah*, p.85

The ceasefire was abrogated by the GoI from 1ˢᵗ September 1972 when the Naga National Council (NNC) and its government wing FGN, and the Naga army, were banned by the GoI as unlawful on 31ˢᵗ August 1972. Once again, armed conflict resumed and the Indian armed operation intensified in Nagaland. Dr. Aram issued a statement on 1ˢᵗ September 1972, that the Nagaland Peace Observer team stood automatically dissolved as it had lost its basis. Writing about the abrogation of the ceasefire, Kari Longchar writes:

> "From September 2-6, thousands of people gathered in Kohima and mourned for the slaughter of peace and protested against the banning of NNC, FGN and Naga army. After 5 days on September 6 a huge stone was taken to and buried at the heart of Kohima as the token of burying peace". [402]

In 1972, GoI decided to unilaterally transfer the affairs of Nagas from 'External' to 'Home Ministry Affairs of India.'[403]

This followed a systematic policy, where the Naga freedom-fighters were hunted not only by the Indian army but by the State Government of Nagaland as well. The Nagaland State Government formulated on 2ⁿᵈ May 1973 a secret joint directive for a counter-insurgency operation in Nagaland, "for the conduct of civil and military operation with an objective for a successful conclusion of the problem". [404] The innocent Naga public were the worst victims of such counter-attacks and operations.

Unable to be silenced and unwilling to tolerate the rampant violation of human rights and violence, the Naga Peace Council (NPC) was formed in 1973, at the 37ᵗʰ NBCC Annual session with Revd. Longri as the President, to restore peace. NPC urged the underground Nagas to stop the violence and demanded that the GoI repeal the 'Unlawful Activities Prevention Act of 1968', release political prisoners and start peace negotiations.

On 2 February 1975, the NPC appointed a Liaison Committee consisting of five

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[402] Longchar, *NBCC Peace Work, 2003* p.11.
[403] NPMHR, *The Nagas: Truth and Hope for the Living,* p. 30.

members and framed general guidelines for its functioning. They were also entrusted to bring the contending parties for political talks. Accordingly, the Liaison Committee proposed that: (i) the solution should be honourable to all concerned; and (ii) should be acceptable to both parties and there should be no pre-conditions for the talks. [405]

While the Federal Government of Nagaland accepted the guidelines suggested by the NPC in September 1975, GoI insisted that talks should be within the framework of the Indian Constitution. GoI rejected proposals by FGN and instead the signing of an Accord was forced in Shillong on 11th November 1975 under controversial circumstances. The controversy and uproar of the Shillong Accord, led to the split of NNC and the birth of National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN). The NSCN was further divided in 1988. Naga National Council (NNC) also split into two groups in the early 1990s.

The Nagaland Peace Council, which was formed by the Church, was blamed by the Naga national workers for facilitating the Shillong Accord and decided to withdraw its active participation in the Naga political conflict. So, the NPC kept a low profile thereafter. Peace work continued to be carried out through the Church (NBCC) at local and tribal level. Only in 1998 NBCC officially set up a new Peace Committee with the objectives of bringing mutual understanding and reconciliation to the different groups of the Naga national workers (who are now referred to as the 'underground') when factional violence intensified.

6.3 The Church's role in inter-Naga factional Conflict

The first phase of the role of the Church as mentioned earlier was in bringing the Naga national leaders and the Indian Government together for political talks and negotiations. However the infamous Shillong Accord was the final blow to the underlying differences within the Naga National Council and the Accord saw the beginning of the split within the national movement.

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[404] Quoted in Kari Longchar, *NBCC Peace Work*, 2003 p.11.

The NSCN was divided into two factions NSCN (IM) and NSCN(K) in 1988 amidst much killing. The faction violence became more intense with the split of NSCN. It is estimated that more than 200 cadres were killed during the process of their split.[406] Again at this point in Naga history the NBCC Executive Committee was entrusted with the responsibility of peace making in 1995. It was during this time that in 1996 General Pevozo (from the Chakesang tribe) of FGN was assassinated by NSCN (IM). In response the Chakesang Public Organization (CPO, the apex body of the Chakesang tribe), issued a Quit Notice to all the Tangkhul tribe in Phek district in Nagaland state. Chakesang territory is designated as the Phek district. Tangkhuls were targeted because the NSCN (IM) top leaders including its General Secretary Th. Muivah, are from Tangkhul tribe. In retaliation, NSCM (IM) issued execution orders to twenty-four CPO leaders. In such a situation as this, NBCC mediated successfully between the two parties to withdraw their respective orders.[407]

In 1997, between February and March, NBCC church leaders and the Executive Committee toured all the Naga tribes and districts visiting the different headquarters with the message of peace, reconciliation and unity.[408] During this period the Indian army and Naga factions clashed as well. It was also routine for the army to keep the village or area in which the clashes took place to be kept under high military surveillance. In many cases villagers were held on suspicion for interrogation and tortured. So the NBCC also worked for the ceasefire between the Naga factions and Indian security forces.

In 1997, for the second time in the Naga conflict, a ceasefire agreement came into effect between GoI and the NSCN (IM). This was followed by another independent ceasefire in April 2001 with the NSCN (K). However these ceasefires did not lead to ceasefire between the factions.

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[405] Ibid., p.11.
[406] Interview with W. Shapwon Heimi, at Kedima Peace Camp, Kohima Nagaland, 25th June 2007. Heimi an Executive member of the NNC (Accordist) faction.
[407] Kari Longchar, NBCC Yimjung Mapa, (NBCC Peace Work), 2007, p.11, translated by the author.
[408] Ibid.

6.3.1 Formation of NBCC Peace Committee

In 1998 to support the NBCC Executive Committee, the NBCC formed the Peace Committee with three members. The understanding of the Peace Committee was not to take any monetary support from the Nagaland state Government or from any of the factions. This was laid down as the basis to create the Peace Committee position of 'complete neutrality' which would enable them to bring about a ceasefire between the different factions among the Nagas.

In 2001, the NBCC appointed a Director of NBCC Peace Affairs and increased the number of Peace Committee Members. The Peace Affairs Department organised training in peace-building, workshops, seminars and consultations with every Naga Baptist Association under the NBCC, and their tribes.

In 2000, the Nagaland Christian Forum (NCF) was formed consisting of all the other Christian denominations to work for peace. However the key player continued to be NBCC.

In 2001, all the Naga civil society, the Naga Hoho (Council), the Naga Students' Federation, Naga Mothers' Association, the Naga People's Movement for Human Rights, Tuensang-Mon Public Organisation, and the Nagaland Christian Forum came together and formed a Co-Ordination Committee. This Committee organised the Naga National Reconciliation Movement. In 2002 the Naga Civil society entrusted the Naga Hoho and the NCF to work on the reconciliation process. The NBCC and Naga Hoho formed the Reconciliation Commission comprising of seven members. While the Commission was initiating their work, the NSCN (IM) accused the Chairman and the Secretary of the Commission as national traitors of the Naga nation. The Naga Hoho at this stage put the Commission in 'abeyance'. This prompted all the other Commission members to resign together. So the Church's attempt to work directly with the Naga Hoho, which is often considered as the traditional political apex body[409] of the Nagas, ended without much success.

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[409] Naga Hoho (Council/ Parliament) is often regarded as the apex body but Naga tribes from

The NBCC however amended their resolution that though the common venture between the Naga Hoho and NBCC was not successful, the NBCC would continue with its peace work. In 2002 the NSCN (IM) invited NBCC, along with various groups from civil society, to one of their consultations to discuss peace in Nagaland. At the meeting, the NBCC reiterated their resolution that peace was only possible through reconciliation of all the factions. The NSCN (IM) accepted the proposal of reconciliation, invited all the other factions, with seven representatives each, to Kohima village between 9-11 August 2002 for a consultation. Every faction responded positively in writing, but just days before the set date, NSCN (IM) killed Mr. Lawrence who was the Angami Region Chairman of NSCN (K). The meeting was suspended.[410]

The NBCC responded by issuing a press release in the Nagaland newspapers appealing for peace and reconciliation. They also publicly condemned killings, extortion and kidnapping by all factions. In times of emergency when there is prolonged fighting between different factions in a specific area or village, the Peace Committee members go the area in question and call for a ceasefire.

In the wordsof the Peace Affairs Director, NBCC, "we (the Peace Affairs Department of NBCC) are more of a fire brigade, there is constant fighting and killing and when situations are tense, we rush to the spot for immediate relief".[411] The reasons he gives are lack of human resources (the only fulltime staff is the Director), lack of expertise in the area of political conflict resolution, and lack of commitment on the part of the factions for any political dialogue. Interviewee X[412] argues that this is because, "the factional groups and national movement have become a unit industry, and are making a living out of the extortion and tax they collect".

The Church also clearly promotes the separation of state and Church. But the Church needs to revise its position from only preaching and appealing about peace and

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Eastern Naga- inhabited area is affiliated to the Council.
[410] Kari Longchar, NBCC Yimjung Mapa, (NBCC Peace Work), 2007   p.12.
[411] Interview with Kari Longchar, Dimapur. Nagaland, on   10 June, 2007.

forgiveness to enabling conflicting parties to enter into a dialogue by proposing some modality. The Church approach to solely focus on the intra-Naga faction, without taking into account the role of India, has also made its own work more difficult.

The ceasefire between the GoI and NSCN (IM), which is more than ten years' old, and also with NSCN (K), has not resulted in any concrete political understanding. On the other hand India has held separate talks with different factions, thus creating more suspicion, rivalry, and enmity between Naga factional groups. In the light of this situation, it is necessary for the Church to seek mandatory sincerity, political support and commitment on the part of India to the political crisis, as the Naga Church attempts to bring negotiations between the different factions.

6.3.2 NBCC Proposal for Healing and Reconciliation

On 29th September 2006, the NBCC launched the Naga Reconciliation Movement and came out with the "NBCC proposal for Healing and Reconciliation of the Naga People." While the proposal gives the major events in Naga political history, the proposal projects two mains themes. The first theme of this proposal was urging the Naga factions to forgive each other in the name of Christ and come together. The second proposal states the position of the Church about the Naga political struggle. In this booklet the Church gives its position on to the Naga struggle as follows:

> "The NBCC affirms the right of the Nagas to struggle for their aspirations as a people. But she takes no position on what the ultimate political outcome should be. That is the domain of those engaged in politics. The responsibility of the Church is in ensuring that the methods and means adopted in our struggle for our aspirations do not violate God's ethical and moral values which decide whether societies succeed or fail..."[413]

In the same proposal, the Church recognises that the political struggle of the Nagas for over six decades "has been to defend their right of choice for self-determination, a

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[412] The interviewee preferred to be anonymous on this quote.
[413] The *NBCC's Proposal for healing and Reconciliation of the Naga people*, Kohima: NBCC, 2006, p.4.

right given to them by history".[414]

The Church also expressed in the booklet that the factions in the Naga national movement have been produced because of serious political and ideological differences. It however affirms that it "cannot deny that the root causes that have produced the factions are unyielding personal and tribal agenda, distrust, resentment, provocations, revenge and counter revenge".[415]

The Church also strongly promoted the spirit of non-violence and stated that, "whatever the factional compulsions may be, violence begets violence…killing of lives for factional victory cannot be equated with sacrifice for the Naga cause". [416] The Church also acknowledges that, "today, the scene is different with internal division and fighting among the Nagas. To the common people (Nagas), Indo-Naga politics is fast losing its popularity as factionalism has taken place".[417]

The Church described its willingness to facilitate the grounds for the factions to come together, even though "NBCC is not obliged to participate as a party to the political discussions".[418]

The Church proposed six steps to move forward towards healing and reconciliation. In these steps however it simply discuss the role of prayer, Bible study, confession,, forgiveness and a call where "all the different national groups give an adequate hearing to the voice and conscience of the public". The only point that encompasses a sort of a active role of participation or action was the step which sought to encourage a "series of round-table talks, at the level of *Kilonsers* (Ministers of different factions) who have plenipotentiary power from their parties, in a place

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[414] Ibid., p.5.
[415] Ibid., p.5.
[416] Ibid., p. 5-6.
[417] Ibid., p.7.
[418] Ibid., p.22.

proposed by the Church…".[419]

The essence of healing and reconciliation is much needed in Nagaland. According to Akum Longchari, "out in the street when we talk to the people, everyone says we want healing and reconciliation"[420] and in this sense he argues that the "time is ripe". But he also posed the question that maybe healing and reconciliation are still a distant dream because the approaches are wrong. Longchari also affirms that the process of healing and reconciliation in the Naga context has to start from the Church. However, he argues that the process needs more than an appeal and persuasion: "it needs a position" and that is why he thinks that the NBCC approach is inadequate or irrelevant because it "confines too much to the spiritual realm and does not engage enough with the issues." He argues that a pluralist approach is required: an approach that involves mediation, and negotiation that involves listening, resolution and reconstruction. He asserts that it is not possible to sustain a reconciliation process unless there is also a degree of reconstruction. He argues that in the process of political polarisation in Nagaland, people have different opinions about the same incident and he thinks a common understanding of the same event is important.

Like many of the interviewees, Nepuni Piku [421] acknowledges that he has heard about the healing and reconciliation process proposed by the NBCC. But he also suggests that the very concept of what healing and reconciliation involve and mean in a Naga context, is crucial for its success. He also said that the Church needs to go through the whole process of Naga political events and he argues that a common understanding of reconciliation is important for the Nagas. He expresses that the current involvement of the NBCC is not clear from their booklet.

Niketu Iralu [422] also affirms that healing and reconciliation are the central responsibility of the Church and therefore they should involve the Church in getting to know the people and the different tribes along with their fears and insecurities.

[419] Ibid., p.22.
[420] Interviewed in Dimapur, Nagaland, 14th June 2007.
[421] Interview in Dimapur, Nagaland, 14th June 2007.

As argued by G.Gaingam,[423] the healing and reconciliation initiative might be the only way out for the Nagas to a solution and for lasting peace, but there are several issues the Church needs to take into account as they envision that process.

Discussing the difficulties of reconciliation among the different factions, H.S. Rokokha [424] argues that the accusations and suspicion between the factions are deep. For instance, the NSCN (IM) accuses the NSCN (K) of being agents of the Indian Government and army. So the argument given by NSCN (IM) for not reconciling with NSCN (K) is that since they are agents of the Indian government, the NSCN (IM) will not associate with NSCN(K). So their condition for reconciliation is that the NSCN (IM) will accept them under their fold only when the NSCN(K) apologise.

The NSCN (K) refute such an accusation, and the argue that they are willing to unite with the NSCN(IM) but without the Tangkhul tribe. On the other hand, the NSCN (K) and the NSCN (IM) accuse NNC of having accepted the Indian Constitution by signing the Shillong Accord in 1975, and therefore they cannot unite with them. The NNC response is that they (NNC) are the original Naga movement and that the other factions are dissidents and should come to the NNC. It is in the light of these accusations and counter-accusations, accompanied by attacks and killings, that a basis of reconciliation is sought.

K.H. Zhimomi writes that while the NBCC initiatives for healing and reconciliation are crucial he argues that:

> "NBCC has to keep in mind that the principles of politics and spirituality are quite opposite in nature, so the initiative for healing and reconciliation which is to forgive one another through spiritual consideration may not be practical. Therefore, NBCC while dealing with political healing and reconciliation must arm itself with a political vision and understand the ground reality where the parted parties are positioning to differ their right and stands." [425]

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[422] Interview in Kohima, Nagaland, 19th June 2007.

[423] Gaingam answered the questionnaire in a written format, Dimapur 2007. He was former Vice-President Naga Hoho (Council) and President, United Naga Council, Manipur.

[424] Interview, in Kohima, Nagaland 7th July 2007. Rokokha is the President of Sumi Hoho (Council) and the Secretary, Sumi Literature Board.

[425] Zhimomi answered the questionnaire in a written format, Diphubar, Nagaland, July 2007. He is the Assemply Speaker of Naga Hoho.

Imrong Imchen opines that "tribal line, ideological line and all the divisions are instigated by 'overground politicians".[426]   He further argues that these politicians and different interest groups are using the factional groups as their instrument to keep personal power and economic gain, and therefore they want to keep the Naga political division and issue alive.   He also points out that they want to keep the issue alive for fear of facing the consequences of their actions and justice from the people once they lose the protection of their militant factional group and "they will have nowhere to hide".

The general impression through the interviews is that though people have heard about the proposal they have no knowledge about the process or implementation of the proposal. They suggested that the Church might lack the ability to implement policies and proposals effectively especially when it comes to the present political dialogue. They need to embrace a strategy other than just the spiritual healing and reconciliation in the light of the complex Naga political crisis.   It needs to come up with some practical political process of dialogue and negotiation for the Naga factions other than only reconciliation.   The Church as the basis of a unifying factor for the Nagas, also needs to develop some basic principles of modality for Naga and Indian political process to evolve. The Church needs to challenge and outline the role of state politicians and state government in the process of such Indo-Naga dialogue. While the Church might not be a direct party to such political negotiation, it can be the institution that expounds that   such modalities and principles are adhered to and advocated by the parties involved. It can be an independent observer on behalf of the people.

6.3.3   A place for the Church in the present Naga context

The opinion that in a Naga context the Church is more than a "religious institution, more than a spiritual unification, it is a strong factor for social and political

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[426] Interview 24th June 2007, Kohima, Nagaland. 'Overground' politician here means politicians in the state Government of Nagaland.

unification, a meeting place of all Nagas" [427] is agreed upon by many Nagas. This has prompted K.H. Zhimomi to capture the simplistic approach of the general Naga Christians in these few lines:

> "Strictly speaking, political and spiritual responsibilities are different but in the context of our Naga society, the role of the Church involvement is necessary. Because Nagas are all Christians who believe that everything can be successful by believing in God, and as the Church is for God, the Church can be involved in the socio-political struggle besides their spiritual responsibilities."[428]

Neingulo Krome, in this regard, points out that the "Naga churches have in one way or the other always been involved in the socio-political aspect of the Naga struggle".[429] This is a natural process because he argues that both the Naga struggle and the Church are all a part of Naga life. He also claims that Nagas "cannot stay away from that larger identity of being members of the Church because whether we are good or bad Christians, we all claim to be Christian". He also argues that "these members of the Church are the same members involved in the political movement of the Naga people". In that way he says that "whether the Church wants to be involved or not the Church is complementary to the social political state". He however commented that the Church today is withdrawing from "social responsibility" and that it is important for the Church to come to the front again, because according to him, "in the Naga context though we have other platforms, the NBCC has the most effective mechanism, in the sense that every Church is a member of the NBCC". He also reasons that though the NBCC covers only the area and tribes within Nagaland state and not the whole Naga area, he says that "every decision is from within Nagaland state and much of the opinion also comes from here."

Therefore the more pressing question is not whether the Church should be involved in the socio-political issues but rather should the Church address issues it has failed to act on as an institution and whether it could take them up through its platform. It clearly depicts two dilemmas the Church is struggling with: (i) one within the

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[427] Imrong Imchen, in an interview in Kohima, Nagaland, 24th June 2007.
[428]   Zhimomi had a lengthy discussion with the author about the Naga political crisis on 16th June and 1st July 2007 in Diphuhar, but he decided to give the answers to the questionnaire in writing.
[429] In an interview, Kohima, Nagaland, 13th June, 2007.

Church itself on whether to be involved equally in the spiritual and social needs of the people; and (ii) the expectation of the Naga people of the institution of the Church to meet and address almost every aspect of the spiritual, psychological and socio-political needs of the society. It is a huge demand for the Church workers to meet these challenges as they are trained to tend specifically to the spiritual needs of the people.

The tendency for the Church to solely attend to the spiritual needs of the people is to make the Church a place for "singing, dancing, hallelujahs and praying"[430] only. The risk here is that the Church can become irrelevant to the needs of people by withdrawing from the realities and suffering of the people. For instance Revd. V.K.Nuh observes that "the Church today is failing the Naga people while maintaining pulpit preaching and outside missionary exchange".[431] Akum Longchari also comments that "when one focuses more on the spiritual aspect, we lose touch with the reality and with the issues of the grassroots. This disconnects the institution from the people".[432]

The risk for the Church in being involved in political issues is that it may be seen as just another political party and lose its role as a moral platform. Given the historical and social position of the Church in Nagaland, the main question for the Church to answer lies in its vision to continue to retain its role as a platform of unity in the light of continuing challenges to the Naga identity. Such a challenge requires the Church to be in constant conscious reflection, offering practical action, and advocacy.

According to Niechute Doulo[433] the Church should be more caring and inclusive of all Nagas, not only in Nagaland state but also of the Nagas particularly in Burma. While there are people who argue that conflict is escalating among the Nagas because they are "reluctant to forgive",[434] Doulo opines that besides the Gospel of forgiveness,

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[430] Niechute Doulo, in an interview in Kohima, Nagaland, 1st June 2007

[431] In an interview in Kohima, Nagaland on 7th June 2007. Nuh is Secretary of Council of Naga Baptist Churches (CNBC). He is also the author of more than five books on Naga history and political struggle.

[432] Interview in Dimapur, Nagaland, on 14th June 2007.

[433] In an interview in Kohima, Nagaland, on 1st June 2007.

[434] Chingang Konyak, in an interview in Kohima, Nagaland, 4th June 2007. He was a Konyak Bible

the Church should also be clear on the principles of justice. He further argues that since in Nagaland, the Church is a big lobbying institution it can be used to teach Naga history, and that Naga theologians should be oriented in their history. This, according to Doulo, is not a question of politics, but rather a question of identity.

Tongthan Khiamnuingan[435] argues that the development of social justice and democratic process is important for the Nagas. By this he also means that the reservation of resources in term of central government grant and representation in the process of decision-making for the Nagas should be justly distributed and equally represented by all the Nagas. This is important because he reiterates that these are the causes for the misunderstandings, tribal conflict and unhappiness. He also suggested that there is a need for all Nagas to unite under one Naga apex body. However he also reasons that the Church should be the forum to initiate and organize such an institution. This is because the Church has the confidence of the people. He observes that a closer relationship between the Church and different tribal organisations is needed, simply because all the leaders in the tribal organisations are Church members as well.

Lochumlo Lotha points out that besides reconciliation for the unification of the different Naga factional groups, "reformation of political institutions"[436] for fair representation and to oppose nepotism is important. She points out that the NBCC should work with other social institutions and tribal councils in reforming the state election system to bring wider mass participation, franchise and accountability.

Neingulo Krome points out that while it is important that the Church as an institution interacts with different factional groups to bring them together, the Church should also use the platform of every church to convey the message of political unity and identity more effectively, because according to him it is the "most effective platform".

Translator and Executive Secretary Konyak Baptist Association. He is now Pastor of Konyak Baptist Church, Kohima.

[435] In an interview in Kohima, Nagaland, 6th June 2007. Interviewed in Nagamese. The author translated the script.

[436] In an interview in Kohima, Nagaland on 6th June 2007. Lochumlo Lotha is one of the few women who contested in the state legislative election. Lotha unsuccessfully contested in the 1987 Naga state general election.

[437] On the other hand Niketu Iralu reiterates that the "spiritual responsibility of the Church includes their concern for the issues involved in the socio-political aspects of the Nagas".   However he comments that:

> "The Church is not qualified to say whether the Nagas should be more than sovereign, or sovereign, or less then sovereign.   In other words the political status of the Nagas is not the words of the Church but the Church must be fully interested in the quality of the relationships among   human beings, tribes, villages, in other words we need to have unity, mutual goodwill, understanding and mutual trust."[438]

G. Gaingam points out the need for the NBCC to initiate and enable all Naga Church leaders, particularly those involved in peace work, to have one "united stand to speak to the Naga groups of national workers".[439] Kari Longchar states that besides attempting to "bring together the different Naga groups, the NBCC needs to be a bridge between Nagas and the GoI and its neighbours like Manipur, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh and Myanmar".[440]

Concern over the lack of physical infrastructure and other developments in Nagaland was expressed. In this respect many of the interviewees vehemently expressed the view that the Government can play a crucial role.   But again some expressed the view that the Church can use her platform to educate the Nagas and make the people aware of the resources coming for development and bring their leaders into accountability.

The general consensus among the thirty-five interviewees was that, while the Church cannot take a direct political stand on the Naga political status, it is still the most important organisation to bring the different factions together.   It was also observed by many of the interviewees as mentioned above that the Church is the most effective platform to mobilise mass participation because of its wide grassroots level network. As Niketu Iralu comments, "every village has at least one Church with a pastor and

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[437] Interview in Kohima , Nagaland on 13th June 2007.
[438] Interview in Kohima, 19th June 2007.
[439] The author meet G.Gaingam on the 1st of July 2007and had a prolonged discussion over the issues around the present and past Naga political issue.   But Gaingam preferred to answer the questionnaire in a written form.

deacons. It has presented a strong link to the people". [441] In a communal community like the Nagas, the social standing that the Church enjoys is highly influential. Many commented that Christianity as a religion is one of the strongest binding forces which has brought the Naga people to a common platform. In that sense the Church was the first link to the world. Thirty-four interviewees argued that the Church can be the unifying factor for the Nagas in terms of factional as well as tribal divisions. It was also argued that despite some criticism that the Church might encounter from certain quarters of Naga society, the Church cannot abandon its role as a peace mediator. There were also suggestions that the Naga Baptist Church should have closer connections not only with the Naga tribal council but also with other Christian denominations like the Catholics, Revivalists, Pentecostals, etc.

6.4 Conclusion

The Church is more than a religious institution in a Naga context. It is a part of the socio-cultural and political process of the people. It is also historical because traditional institutions and practices collapsed almost at the same time that outside influences came to Nagaland. Akum Longchari states that, "traditional institutions were a place of gathering, a place of sharing, a place of learning, a place of story-telling, so when Christianity came the church replaced those traditional institutions".[442] In almost all the villages, the Church became the focal point, because in a changed socio-political environment, there were no other institutions to enable an assembly point. It is here that the Church has the legitimacy of the people as it is the "only organisation that has grassroots level."[443] The "challenge before the church today is to be a catalyst for change in both the social and political spheres",[444] as expressed by Geoffrey Yaden, which seems to be the general understanding of the majority of Naga people.

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[440] Interview in Dimapur, Nagaland, 10th June 2007.
[441] In interview Kohima, Nagaland, 19th June 2007.
[442] Interview Dimapur,Nagaland, 14th June, 2007.
[443] General Thenosalie in an interview in Kohima, Nagaland, on 10th July, 2007.
[444] Geoffrey Yaden, *Role of Church, NGOs and educational institutions in Peace Building*, (un-published paper), presented in Peace Channel Workshop, Dimapur, Nagaland, 30th June 2007.

In a socio-cultural structure, where religion and kinship have always played a big role, the Church role in envisioning peace and in coming up with some sort of workable political negotiation or modality for the conflicting parties, like the Naga factions and eventually Indo-Naga, is extremely important for the dignity of the Naga identity. What is required of the Church is, once again, to assert its role in Naga society and determine the direction that Naga society can take, instead of simply reacting to the undesirable consequences of modernization in the socio-political structure of Nagaland. It requires careful deliberation and to bring within its platform expertise and different knowledge skills from civil society, and to develop a process of nation-building with some practical workable measures and theoretical approaches.

Based on what has been discussed in the previous chapter, the next chapter will discuss the issues and areas that are crucial to Nagas today. It will explore the role of the Church in addressing those issues associated with its attempt to bring peace, healing and reconciliation, not only within the intra-Naga conflict but in the larger Indo-Naga picture as well.

Chapter 7   Analysis   and Recommendations

Introduction

The previous chapters have discussed the various associated theoretical concepts and the narratives of the Naga historical and evolving socio-political dynamic in comparison with the cultural and social structure of India in the light of the Indo-Naga conflict. It has highlighted how the processes of modernisation have affected the Naga traditional society. Based on those previous discussions, this chapter is an attempt to critically explore ways to respond to the impact of political modernity on the Naga tribal structure and political identity. This chapter is an attempt to explore some tools to resolve the protracted conflict of more than sixty years between Indians and the Nagas as well as the internal Naga conflict. Such an initiative calls to scrutinise the structural institution and to challenge the inequality existing between the conflicting parties. It is also to enable the Nagas to critique themselves and develop a political mechanism of co-existence through power sharing and delegating resources. It is hoped that the chapter may develop not only a form of political and cultural debate but suggest some structural initiatives so that sustainable resolution can begin.

Based on the various chapters, this chapter will address three main issues:

(i) The Indo-Naga on-going 'peace process':   the challenges

(ii) Addressing intra -Naga conflict

(iii) Exploring the Church as a tool for conflict resolution

The section on 'exploring the role of the Church as a tool for conflict resolution' is the lengthiest of the three sections. This is because the argument of the thesis was to build around the rationale that since the Church was the space where traditional practices and modernity interacted to develop a Naga culture and political identity, the Church can continue to play a unifying role for a Nagaland divided along tribal and factional lines.

7.1   Indo-Naga   on-going 'peace process' : The challenges

According to John Darby and Roger Mac Ginty,[445] the essential criteria that define a peace process are:

(i) The protagonists are willing to negotiate in good faith.

(ii) The key actors are included in the process.

(iii) The negotiations address the central issues in the dispute.

(iv) The negotiators do not use force to achieve their objectives.

(v) The negotiators are committed to a sustained process.

A peace process can be summarised as an agreement to begin a political dialogue between conflicting parties. For the dialogue to be successful the parties should at least respect and acknowledge the legitimate dispute and position of each of the parties. A condition that affirms that none of the parties resort to coercive measures or political manipulation is equally important, especially if the conflicting parties share an asymmetrical power relationship.

Over the last few years some positive changes have taken place in the Indo-Naga relationship. The first ceasefire was in 1964, but it was the second ceasefire that came on 1st August 1997 between the GoI and NSCN (IM) and eventually with NSCN(K) on 28th April 2001,[446] that can be considered a 'peace process' which can lead to potential political negotiations. This ceasefire was significant because it emerged after a landmark statement made in 1995 by Narasimha Rao, the then-Prime minister of GoI. Mr Rao stated that the Indo-Naga problem is a political problem and can be only solved through "political talks and dialogue".[447] This statement by Rao as 'political' was important because since GoI unilaterally transferred the problems of Nagaland from the 'Ministry of External Affairs to the Ministry of Home Affairs' in 1972, the Naga political issue had been treated as a "law and order"[448] problem. The

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[445] John Darby and Roger Mac Ginty, Introduction: Comparing Peace Processes, in Darby and Ginty (eds.),*The Management of peace Processes*, Basingstoke : Macmillan, 2000, pp.7-8.

[446] NPMHR, *The Nagas: Truth and Hope for the Living*, pp. 30-31.

[447] Quoted in Lanunungsang, *From Phizo to Muivah*, p. 190. The statement was made after the meeting between the NSCN(IM) collective leaders who are designated as the President Issac Chichi Swu, General Secretary Th. Muivah and Mr. Rao in Paris. This Prime Ministerial meeting between India and Naga representatives was the first of its kind after such meetings prior to the 1964 ceasefire.

[448] NPMHR , *The Nagas: Truth and Hope for the Living*, p. 30.

statement also was an indirect acknowledgment that GoI policy of armed aggression and assimilation has not solved the problem of the Indo-Naga conflict. Eventually, the ban imposed on NSCN by GoI on 27th November 1996 on the grounds that they were terrorists and that their activities openly "propagate anti-national activities in collusion with forces inimical to India's sovereignty and national integrity..."[449] was also lifted on 26th November 2002.[450] The arrest warrant on the NSCN (IM) collective leaders was also withdrawn by the Nagaland state Government. Since then the ceasefire with GoI has been extended each time for one year with both NSCN (IM) and NSCN (K). The statement again served to reinforce the idea that the GoI accepted that its previous politics were inadequate.

An agreement between GoI and NSCN (IM) on 14th June 2001 read, "the ceasefire agreement is between the Government of India and the NSCN as two entities without territorial limits".[451] The term 'without territorial limits' meant the Naga inhabited areas not only in Nagaland state but also Nagas demarcated in the states of Assam, Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh. However, this announcement brought serious objections from the three Indian states. It was interpreted by the other states that such a declaration implied impending unification of all Nagas under a political unit, thereby delimiting the territorial boundary of their respective states by conceding Naga inhabited areas. By 18th June 2001 widespread street protests and strikes particularly in Manipur state saw the destruction of many government buildings including the State Legislative Building. The government police in retaliation fired at the protestors killing at least eighteen people in Manipur.[452] Tensions were running so high that Nagas residing in the valley of Imphal[453] (the capital of Manipur) fled to

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[449] Quoted in Lanunungsnag, *From Phizo to Muivah*, Full text in pp-369-370, p.369. NSCN here meant both the IM and the K. NSCN was termed as an "Unlawful Association".
[450] Longchar, *NBCC Peace Affairs Reports*, 2003, p.5.
[451] Quoted in Lanunungsang, *From Phizo to Muivah*, p.197. This agreement was signed in Bangkok.
[452] Jamir, *Naga Yimten Wadang (translation- The Naga polity)*, p.85.
[453] In Manipur state the Meiteis is the ethnic term used to distinguish the people living mainly in the lowland and valleys of Imphal as opposed to people living in the hills. The Meiteis number about 1.4 million, constitute 57% of the Manipur state population. The Nagas are one of the hill peoples found in Manipur state. Tangkhuls, Maos, Kabui and fourteen other tribes are the Naga tribes in the Hills situated in Manipur state. The various tribes including the Nagas found in the hills located in Manipur state comprise about 30% of the state population but the hills comprise 90% of the state's population. Manipur state is demanding GoI to amend the Indian Constitution to guarantee "the inviolability of Manipur's border". Sanjib Baruah, *Confronting Constructionism: Ending India-Naga War*, Journal of Peace Research International Peace Research Institute, Osla, Norway, Vol, 40 (3),

their traditional homeland in the hills in Manipur state.

The chief ministers from the three states[454] of India went to Delhi to meet the then-GoI Prime Minister Atal Vajpayee. That evening, on 27th July 2001, the Home Minister of GoI made an announcement that the ceasefire between GoI and NSCN (IM) would be within Nagaland state only. The three words 'without territorial limits' were dropped from the cease-fire agreement. Nagas in Nagaland and the states of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh and Manipur, in protest at this announcement, organised a general strike on 31st July 2001.[455]

The reality is that today after more than fifty rounds of 'peace talks' between GoI and NSCN (IM) there are no tangible developments towards any form of agreement, let alone a political solution. GoI has also acknowledged that there is no significant development in the Indo-Naga political talks. No such 'peace talks' have been initiated between GoI and NSCN K) so far. The main reasons for the inability of GoI and NSCN (IM) to come to any form of agreement is because GoI has maintained that any form of talks or political arrangement will be within the Constitution of India and the territorial integrity of the Indian Union. Such a stand had been maintained since 1952 when Jawaharlal Nehru meeting the Naga delegation said, "no part of India as constituted today, including Nagaland, can be separated from India".[456] Territorial integrity since then has been the position of every Indian leader when it comes to the issue of Naga self-determination. The GoI's fear of the disintegration of the Indian Union is valid, because 'independence' in the case of the Nagas might encourage various separatist and ethnic movements to seek a similar path. However if the Indo-Naga problem has to be resolved, then in the light of the Nagas' historical and legal basis that has been discussed in the earlier chapters, some negotiations with a political will have to be pushed forward. Political will here mean the desire of both parties, GoI and the Nagas, to go beyond the rhetoric of 'peace talks' and 'ceasefire'. It means a commitment by both parties in the 'peace process' to negotiate and re-examine some of the 'negotiable conditions' they refuse to surrender.

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pp.321-338, see   www.sacw.net

[454] Arunachal Pradesh, Assam and Manipur.

[455] Jamir, *Naga Yimten Wadang (translation- The Naga polity), p.* 85.

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However the current 'peace process' which began with an agreement on a ceasefire has brought major challenges. If any positive development is to be expected then a major structural shift as well as some critical interpretation is necessary from both GoI and the Nagas. Some issues need to be addressed and clarified for the current 'peace processes' between GoI and the Nagas to be productive which are as follows:

(i) The issue of contention between GoI and the Nagas needs to be very clear. Nagas need to examine what 'independence or total sovereignty' means, and spell them out clearly. GoI has to acknowledge the legal basis of the Naga position and explore an arrangement or a solution outside of the present Indian Constitution. The 'political identity' of the Nagas because of their historical struggle and self-determination as a nation can be accepted by GoI. This political identity is non-negotiable by the Nagas. However what can be deliberated in the peace process is an agreement on a 'political arrangement' for the Nagas. GoI also knows that the existing political reality of the 'federal arrangement' of Nagaland state to a segment of the Nagas is not the solution to the Naga conflict. The Naga people must also critically examine the political situation they are currently in. They can look beyond the rhetorical ideology of independence and total sovereignty. Besides the historical construction of Naga political identity and their territorial homeland, they can also look into the practicality of the state structures that includes the 'material base of economics and bureaucratic institutions'.

(ii) The present Indo-Naga 'peace process' brings two realities into perspective:

(a) The inability of the Naga factions to engage in dialogue with each other. The irony of the ceasefire agreement with GoI is that it has intensified the accusations and killing between the factions, particularly the NSCN (IM) and NSCN (K).[457]

(b) The GoI continues to follow a policy of 'divide and rule' by engaging in separate negotiations and different clauses of ceasefire agreements with both NSCN (IM) and

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[456] Wati, *Fact and Growth of Naga Nationalism,* p. 54.

[457] A press release issued by the Council of Ministers of the Nagaland state Legislative Assembly captures such a violence. "The ceasefire is a license to kill, to assassinate, to ambush, to kidnap, to rob, to extort and to intimidate with a view to creating fear psychosis in the minds of the people of Nagaland with naked tactics of terrorism", ouoted in Lanunungsang, *From Phizo to Muivah,* p. 194. This statement was made in 1999, before a cease-fire was agreed between GoI and NSCN (K), but the intense violence and enmity between NSCN (IM) and NSCN (K) remains unresolved to date.

NSCN (K). This policy has created much antagonism and competition between the factions. So far it is GoI and the NSCN (IM) that are holding the 'political negotiations' or the 'peace talks'. If any form of negotiations through the peace process is to be 'legitimate' and 'transparent', then GoI should also acknowledge and involve the contribution of all the other factions.[458] In a Naga context, to disregard one would mean to reject the representation of the people or tribe the faction represents. GoI, as a key player, may understand the Naga power distribution and social set-up for the peace process to be successful. The maturity of Indian democracy in dealing with the Naga issue can be tested in their long-sighted political decision to either hold inclusive or exclusive talks with the factions. At an initial stage, exclusive talks with different factions can be seen as a preparatory ground for negotiation, but if that is the prime agenda of the GoI, it is a dividing, rather than a unifying factor. If GoI manipulates the peace process and, for its own interest, comes to a settlement with a single factional entity, Nagaland would be in a worse situation than in the aftermath of the Shillong Accord.[459] A ceasefire after all is only a partial concept of a peace process.

The basis of Naga unity among the various tribes and factions will be discussed in section 7.2 but the next two sub-sections will discuss the two levels of challenges Nagas need to address in their journey for a political settlement: firstly, Nagas' negotiation regarding boundary realignment with the neighboring states; secondly, seeking a tangible political arrangement with GoI. The political Indo-Naga conflict should discuss an arrangement with GoI but because of the political instability in the north-eastern region of India, GoI can no longer unilaterally act without the consent of the Nagas should an arrangement be agreed upon. These arguments are presented in the following sub-section.

7.1.1   The Naga and their neighbours[460]

Assam, Arunachal Pradesh and Manipur are the three federal states in India where

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[458] The basis of unity for the faction will be discussed in more detail in the next section, i.e., 7.2
[459] Shillong Accord already discussed in Chapter 5 section 5.2.3.
[460] The neighbours here refer to the federal states of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh and Manipur where

'Naga-inhabited areas' are placed by GoI. The political uproar from the majority ethnic groups found in the three states, particularly in Manipur state, against GoI's extension of the ceasefire agreement 'without territorial limit'[461] with NSCN (IM) in the year 2001, clearly revealed the fragile political situation of the north-eastern region in India.[462] Because of the protracted nature of the Indo-Naga conflict, the political arrangement is no longer between GoI and the Nagas alone. The political position and formation of Manipur, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh have to be accounted for too, because any form of political arrangement with GoI within or

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Naga-inhabited areas are placed by GoI for administrative and political convenience.

[461]   'Without territorial limit', as mentioned earlier was interpreted by the other states that such a declaration implies impending unification of all Nagas under a political unit, thereby delimiting the territorial boundary of their respective states allotted by GoI, by conceding Naga-inhabited areas. In protest at such an agreeemnt in Manipur state on 18th June 2001 a mob destroyed and burned government buildings. Eighteen people were killed in the clash between the police force and the people.   Since 2002, 18th June is observed each year as the 'State Integrity Day' of Manipur.

[462]   For instance in Assam there are various organization seeking an autonomous administrative unit or independence. Among them, the United Liberation Front of Assam (UlFA) is the most powerful.   It claims that Assam is a 'nation' and therefore entitled to self-determination based on sovereignty and complete independence. It also puts forward the idea that Assam was never a part of India until it was annexed by the British in 1826. The issue around the 'illegal immigrants' from Bangladesh is a major political discourse in Assam. The huge number of Bengali settlers brought as labourers during the colonial time in Assam and the majority of Assamese people have clashed over linguistic identity. Another conflict in Assam is the Bodo tribal group in Assam seeking a separate federal state. It was partially settled when the 'Bodoland Autonomous Council' was granted. However there are several tribal groups in Assam like the Karbis and the Kachari who are seeking special status within or outside of Assam. The majority Manipuri or Meiteis in present Manipur state are the oldest group with a recorded history in the north-eastern region. With their own script and distinct language, their 'civilization' goes back 2,000 years. A kingdom before, and ruled as a princely state during the colonial period, Manipur became an independent kingdom when the British left India.   The king signed the 'Instrument of Accession' entrusting defence, communication and foreign affairs to GoI, four days before 15th August, Indian Independence day.   In 1949 the King of Manipur renounced its autonomy and without consulting the opinion of his ministers signed with New Delhi the 'Manipur Merger Agreement'. The circumstances under which he signed are a matter of controversy and contention. The Manipuris (Meities) felt alienated and further betrayed when the 'relatively unknown political Naga entity' was given statehood within the federal framework of GoI in 1963. By 1964, various movements began in Manipur to demand recognition as a federal state in the India constitution. They eventually were conferred with statehood in 1972. After persistent demands, Manipuri as an official Indian language was recognised in 1992. Reportedly there are eighteen insurgent groups active in Manipur. Manipuris have resolved to oppose any form of political peace process between GoI and the Nagas that affects their Manipur state territorial integrity. On a different note, one of the contentions of the Indo-China war in 1960 was over the territorial claim that some parts of Arunachal Pradesh state, formerly North-East Frontier Area (NEFA), belong to China. In 2007 China refused to give a visa to one of the Indian bureaucratic delegation visiting China who was from Arunchal Pradesh. The Chinese Embassy argued that since Arunachal Pradesh is part of China, the bureaucrat from Arunachal did not need a visa to enter his own country. Because of security sensitivity, Indian armed forces are stationed along the borders of Arunachal and China. See Kristoffel Lieten, Multiple Conflicts in Northeast India, in Monique Mekenkamp et al (eds.), *Searching for Peace in Central and South Asia,* pp. 407-432; Sanjib Baruah, *Confronting Constructionism: Ending India-Naga War,* pp.321-338; Samir Kumar Das, Nobody's Communique: Ethnic Accords in Northeast India, in Das(ed.), *Peace Processes and Peace Accords,*   pp.120-14.

outside the Constitution of India will significantly affect these three states.

The federal state of Nagaland was inaugurated on 1st December 1963. Nagaland as defined within the Indian Union is 16,597 square kilometres with a population of 1,988,636.[463] But Nagas are distributed in the district of North Cachar Hills in Assam; the Tirap and Changlang districts in Arunachal Pradesh; and the Urkhrul, Senapati, Chandel and Tamenglong districts in Manipur.[464] Nagas live in the northern part of Burma under the administrative divisions of Sagaing and Kachin state[465] under the townships of Lahe, Layshee, Khamti and Nanyun.[466] The total area of the Nagas' ancestral homeland is estimated to be more than 120,000 square kilometres with a population of more than 3.5 to 4 million.[467]

The NSCN (IM) leaders in 2001, countering the allegation of the other three states that the Nagas were seeking the inclusion of their state territories to expand Nagaland, announced that "Nagaland belongs to Nagas, we don't have greater Nagaland or smaller Nagaland, we have just 120,000 sq. km. of land that belongs to us".[468]

If any negotiations are to make progress then the hard bargaining of the territorial arrangement regarding the 'ancestral homeland' of the Naga tribes in these three states has to be discussed. This is important because the Nagas share more affinity with the neighbouring tribal as well as various groups found in the three neighbouring states than with mainstream Indians. Here the issue of identity becomes more contested and inter-related.

Various Naga civil society, like the Naga People's Movement for Human Rights

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[463] As per the provisional results of the Census of India 2001, which is 0.19% of the country's population, which is now more than 1 billion in. See Department of Tourism Government of Nagaland State, Nagaland India, p.1.

[464] Nuh, *My native Country*, p.6. Also see A. Lanunungsang, . *From Phizo to Muivah*, p. 248.

[465] Naga Student Federation (NSF), A brief complication of some of the activities for the tenure 2003-2005, p.105. Also see, Aglaja Strin and Peter Van Ham, *The Hidden World of the Naga: Living traditions in Northeast of India and Burma*, p.16.

[466] Nuh, *My Native Country* , p.6.

[467] NPMHR, *The Nagas: Truth and Hope for the Living*, p.23. It is claimed that because of the nature of conflict both in India and Burma, an official census of all the areas could not be carried out.

[468] Quoted in Lanunugsang, *From Phizo to Muivah, p.*197.

(NPMHR),[469] the Naga Hoho (Council/Parliament),[470] which is regarded as the apex body of all the various Naga tribes, affirm that the "unification of Naga area"[471] is a must for any political settlement between the Nagas and GoI. It can be pointed out that the contention of the territorial integrity of the Indian Union claimed by GoI is valid only if Nagas seek an 'independent state' because the external boundaries will then have to be re-drawn. But even if the unification of the Naga-inhabited areas is the basis for any political arrangement, it brings about the question of the 'territorial integrity' or the 'federal boundary' of the three neighbouring states because internal boundary re-alignment is a necessity in any case.

As already discussed in Chapter 3, the Indian federal system under the Indian Constitution in Article 3 has given the power that by law the Parliament can :

> "(a) form a new state by separation of territory from any State or by
> uniting two or more states or parts of states or by uniting any territory
> to part of any   state;
> (b) increase the area of any state;
> (c) diminish the area of any state
> (d) alter the boundaries of any state;
> (e) alter the name of any state." [472]

"Parliament may form new states by partition or merger, increase or diminish the area of any state, and alter the boundaries or name of any state - makes clear the extent to which sovereignty remains with the central government".[473] Hannum argues that "the Indian union is an indestructible union of destructible states."[474] Nagas have their own independent legal basis to put forward the argument that it is their 'birthright' for all Nagas to live together under one political umbrella. Even if the Nagas choose to go by the Indian Constitution,[475] the claim for the unification of all

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[469] NSCN(K) often accuse NPMHR as one-sided and speaking for their rival faction NSCN(IM)

[470] Eastern Nagas are officially members of the Naga Hoho. They have their own Eastern Naga apex body call Eastern Naga People's Organisation (ENPO). ENPO formed their own organisation citing that Naga Hoho sidelines often do not represent the interests of the Eastern Nagas. Having said that, Naga Hoho and ENPO work together on various issues.

[471] NPMHR, *Symposium on the Unification of Naga areas*, New Delhi,   2004,   p.1.

[472] The Constitution of India Article 3.

[473] Quoted in Hannum, *Autonomy, Sovereignty, and Self-Determination*, pp.153-155.

[474] Ibid.,   pp.153-155

[475] Nagas, so far, have not officially endorsed the Indian Constitution.

Naga-inhabited or contiguous areas is still possible and legitimate.[476]

However despite the latest formation of various federal states in India like Jharkhand, Chattisgarh and Uttaranchal[477] in 2000, the case of the states of the north-eastern region, particularly Manipur,[478] because of the reasons discussed earlier,[479] remains more problematic. The issue around territorial integrity, territorial negotiation, boundary re-alignment is, and will be, one of the biggest issues not only for the GoI for an Indo-Naga political settlement but also for the neighbouring states. This is naturally crucial because territorial legitimacy is the basis of any nation formation. Territory holds the key to sustenance, power, control as well as conflict. 'Not an inch of Naga soil'[480] will be surrendered is an understandable statement. Ancestral Nagaland might be 120,000 square kilometres, but if negotiations are to make some headway, then territorial re-aligning of the Nagas, re-drawing the colonial boundaries of the Indian Union and some of the 'space' of the Naga territory outside 'Nagaland state', without delaying a workable political settlement of Nagas, can be feasible. How Nagas can prepare themselves for such potential integration will be discussed in the next section of intra-Naga conflict. But the following three points might be discussed as a basis with neighbouring states for such an arrangement so that Naga unification can be made possible:

(i) Naga tribes with their ancestral territory in Arunachal Pradesh, Assam and Manipur may discuss the potential possibilities to 'exchange' some territorial space with the states with which Nagas are currently aligned.

(ii) The 'mutual exchange' of such territorial space may not be negotiated or included where the villages or towns are inhabited. Rather, territorial space of

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[476] Dr. R. Vashum also points out that the hurdles of Naga unification are the opposition from the neighbouring states and various political parties and the Indian elite. However he also suggests that the unification of the Nagas is possible constitutionally. See, Dr. R. Vashum, Possibilities and Problems of Naga Unification: A Critical Reflection, in NPHMR (2004), *Symposium on the Unification of Naga Areas*, 2004, pp.30-35,p.35.

[477] For a detailed description about the movement and recognition of the three new states, see Ashok Behuria, Demands for Autonomy: Internal Weaknesses of a multiethnic, multicultural, and multinational state, in Monnique Mekenkamp et al (eds.), *Searching for Peace in Central and South Asia: An Overview of Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Activities,* pp.345-361.

[478] Ibid.

[479] See Footnote 461 and 462 for more details.

[480] Such statements come from all the factions in Nagaland. So far there are no dialogues at least in any public forum or by any civil society or political parties where the concept of negotiating parts of 'Naga ancestral territory' is seen as a feasible option.

conflicting parties (i.e the Nagas and the three federal states) could be negotiated over areas not inhabited so displacement of villagers does not occur. A 'forest reserve' or unsettled land, contiguous to the conflicting parties, can become a part of the 'mutual exchange' territorial deal.

(iii)   GoI must guarantee that the Naga tribes or the land belonging to the groups in the federal states that 'mutually exchanged' their respective ancestral territory will be compensated. The monetary compensation for this deal should be used for the sustainable development and rehabilitation of those particular Naga tribes and the various groups in the other three federal   states.

Such a political 'bargaining agenda' for the sake of a peace process on the part of the Nagas can open up the possibility to negotiate with their neighbouring states and the GoI with whom they will continue to share a common border. It is also for the regional stability of the north-eastern region that such a 'bargain proposal' will develop some form of political dialogue between the GoI, the Nagas and the three neighbouring states. Such a proposal will be a shift from the adamant political stand by each of the conflicting parties about their territorial integrity and ancestral homeland that has,so far,   blocked any possibility to negotiate. A moral reflection on the amount of violence, instability, enmity and suffering that is caused by protecting and by "attaching too much sacredness to land"[481] can enable Nagas and the neighbouring states to explore together such a negotiation.

7.1.2   The Indo-Naga problem: The legal and political background

The main position of the GoI towards the claims and struggle of the Nagas is: the Naga struggle can be solved only within territorial integrity and the Constitution of India.

GoI has rigorously imposed its political power through economic and military might. It can also be argued that GoI has not followed up its commitment to the on-going

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[481] Marc Gopin, *Between Eden and Armageddon: The Future of World religions, Violence and Peacemaking,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000. p. 17. Gopin is discussing the 'sacredness to land' in the context of Jewish religious beliefs.

peace process with the same intensity. India's policy towards Nagas is conditioned by GoI's valid fear of disintegration of the Indian Union, since secession by many cases of separatist and ethnic movements in a country like India would be chaotic. However, other than in the north-eastern region and in Jammu and Kashmir, the possibility of such an event in the future is unlikely. Nonetheless such a political situation will also change the south Asian region, so the GoI doctrine of geo-political stability and security is also valid. But the issues will not be solved by the present GoI's political complacency, nor can it continue this way.   As argued in the previous chapters, because of the historical rights of the Nagas, the Naga conflict is not an issue of secession. Rather the Naga issue should be placed in the light of the colonial context. Naga territory has been occupied, and demarcated by the GoI for their administrative purposes and political conveniences.

The traditional ways of acquiring land or territory are: discovery, symbolic activities, contiguity, occupation, prescription, *Uti Possidetis*[482] equity, cession, accretion.[483] Based on the above-mentioned criteria, the Indo-Naga conflict can be established as occupation, meaning international acquisition of territory which at the time was not under the sovereignty of any other state. GoI displayed an actual intention to occupy (*animus occupandi*), followed by the actual display and exercise of state functions over the territory (*corpus occupandi*), which are the requite policies for occupation.[484] The occupation was not through conquest or agreement for accession to the Indian Union; nor was there any treaty signed between the two parties. The occupation was simply on the basis of geographical proximity and contiguity of India and Nagaland, and GoI's hegemonic position. But because of the policy of *animus occupandi* and *corpus occupandi,* the modality of conquest in the Indo-Naga struggle cannot be ignored. That is to say it involves possession of the territory by force, intention to retain territory and an ability to hold onto its sovereignty.[485] The forcible occupation

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[482] This principle meant that the newly-created states in the post-colonial period accepted the same boundaries as the colonial territories for which they were substituted.

[483] Surya P. Sharma, *Territorial Acquisition, Disputes and International Law,*The Hague ; London : M. Nijhoff, 1997, p.40-141   and p. 183.   However neither current scholarly opinion nor jurisprudence of the international tribunals or courts regards the orthodox structure of modes of title as satisfactory.

[484] Ibid., pp, 51-64.

[485] Ibid., p. 143.

of Nagaland and formation of 'Nagaland State' in 1963 as the sole territory of the Nagas by GoI, thereby enhancing her administrative power, does not equal 'surrender' or the legitimacy of GoI rule. The unilateral annexation by the occupying powers and the policy of the occupation has today been officially repudiated by the international community. It forbids the alienation of sovereignty because the law of wars, or the aspects which constitute the law of belligerent occupation, continue to apply in the occupied territory. This law states that military occupation does not displace the sovereignty of the conquered unless the occupant withdraws, or a treaty of peace is concluded which transfers sovereignty to the occupants.[486]

Jawaharlal Nehru meeting the Naga delegation in 1952 stated that "no part of India, as constituted today, including Nagaland, can be separated from India".[487] This statement should be examined in the light of occupation. This is an important contention to be clarified because territorial integrity since then has been central to the position of every Indian leader when it comes to the issue of Naga self-determination. Re-drawing territorial boundaries internally within the state or externally is a controversial issue. The colonial boundaries which were often demarcated without considering cultural and ethnic affinity were ceded as a single administrative unit for colonial purposes and they were almost well defined. This became the norm of legitimate acceptance in international law when de-colonisation began. In the Indian context, except for the partition of India and Pakistan, the colonial boundary was the *'jus cogen'* when the English left the Indian sub-continent in 1947. In view of all these considerations the following arguments in the context of the Indo-Naga territorial contention are put forward.

Firstly, as argued in the previous chapters, Nagaland was never a part of British India because Nagas entered into no treaty with the British in any form. Allegations or statements to the effect that Nagas were subjects of the English or the Manipuri or some Indian Raja are still not possible because the concept of Naga as a political identity developed only during the 20th century. Not only because there was no 'Naga'

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[486] Sharon Korman, *The Right of Conquest: The Acquisition of Territory by Force in International Law and Practice.* Oxford : Clarendon, 1996, pp. 221- 224.
[487] Wati, *Fact and Growth of Naga Nationalism,* p.54.

as a collective political identity but also because no single 'raja' or single chief ruled the villages. There was simply no individual in a position assigned to enter into any form of negotiation with groups who might have a culture of 'raja' or 'king' or feudal system. Soon, as a result of the Simon Commission of 1929 memorandum, the Act of 1935, regulated their territory as an "excluded area".

Secondly, even if Nehru's "India of today" meant 1952 or the immediate period of post-colonial independent India, it is still incompatible because Nagas symbolically declared their independence on 14 August 1947 and subsequently the Naga peoples did not adhere to the Constitution of India that was framed in January 1950.

The Wilsonian concept of self-determination was defined along ethnic and racial lines. But in post-World War II the definition of self-determination was no longer based on these criteria but rather they were subordinate to a group of people who were collectively under colonial rule. If Nehru understood self-determination in a post-World War II context and therefore claimed Nagaland as a unit in the Indian Union, then the position of the Nagas during the British Raj should be put into perspective.

Here it would mean that Nehru subscribed to the principle of *Uti Possidetis*, meaning "new state will come with the same boundaries that they had when they were administrative units within the territory or territories of a colonial power",[488] thereby creating a new heterogeneous Union. The logical abstraction to this calculation is to question whether the Naga territorial terrain was a British colony. Only the central part of Nagaland was partially administered by the British as an 'excluded area' as opposed to the British Raj. The rest of Nagaland comprising Eastern Nagaland remained an 'un-administered area'. To subscribe to this principle of territorial acquisition because Nagas were 'backward' as claimed by Nehru is not only to reject the sedentary socio-political set-up that was very well organised among the Nagas villages, but to deny the right of Naga existence because it disregarded the foundation and evolution of the Naga society. It was because of such an existence that despite being located in a socio-political fault-line with India to the west and Burma to the

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[488] Castellino, *International Law and Self-determination*, pp.109-111.

east, the Naga villages over the centuries did not succumb to the politics, religion or culture of the two giants but have survived with their unique identity.

Indian policy-makers might argue that Nehru statesmanship and political vision saw that Nagas were 'incapable of administering' themselves, and in his philosophy for the "… widest tolerance of belief and custom…"[489] wanted to 'protect' the 'tribal' in the Indian Union. But after seeing the self-determination of the Nagas he could have respected the will of the Naga people and sought a democratic 'arrangement' with the Nagas as a protectorate or as an International Territorial Administration (ITA).[490]

For instance, consider the notion of "protected states" which is a "variation of the protectorate concept".[491] It is an "arrangement of protection under which a protected entity maintains a sufficient degree of internal control and influence over its external affairs to preserve is legal independence as a state".[492] The other concept is the ITA or transitional administration and its activities which normally includes "formally-constituted, locally-based management structure operating with respect to a particular territorial unit, whether a state, a sub-state or a non-state territorial entity…".[493]

Instead GoI unilaterally occupied Nagaland and violated the self-determination of the Naga peoples. The only grounds on which Nagaland was occupied were that they were a vulnerable, evolving small nation, comprised of 'tribal' communities, who had not yet developed a cohesive bureaucratic political mechanism, despite their collective claim as a nation and their symbolic declaration as an independent country. In this light Nagaland is not a territorial unit that belonged to GoI or to the Indian Union. Rather it is a non-state territory "with distinct legal personality derived from their

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[489] Jawaharlal Nehru quoted in Gertjan Dijkink, *National Identity and geopolitical Visions, Maps of Pride and Pains*, London : Routledge, 1996, p. 29.

[490] Hereafter International Territorial Administration is referred to as ITA. Arrangement with individual state as an associated state, or a trust territory also can fall under ITA. See, Ralph Wilde, *International Territorial Administration: How Trusteeship and the Civilizing Mission Never went away*, Oxford University Press, 2008, p. 4.

[491] Carsten Stahn, *The Law and Practice of International Territorial Administration, Versailles to Iraq and Beyond*, Cambridge University press, 2008, p.46.

[492] James Crawford, summarized by Carsten Stahn, *The Law and Practice of International Territorial Administration*, pp.46-47.

[493] Quoted in Ralph Wilde, *International Territorial Administration: How Trusteeship and the Civilizing Mission Never went away*, p.46

self-determination entitlement". [494] Nagaland is a separate territorial unit which is 'Non-self-Governing Territory' in character because it is a territory "whose peoples have not yet attained a full measure of self-government". [495] The UN General Assembly states that such a territory:

> "...has...a status separate and distinct from the territory of the State administering it; and such separate and distinct status under the Charter shall exist until the people of the...territory have exercised their right of self-determination in accordance with the Charter". [496]

When viewed this way, Nagaland is entitled and qualifies for 'external self-determination'. In fact GoI does not claim that Nagaland, as in the territory, does not belong to the Nagas. Rather GoI argues that Nagaland territory is a part of the Indian Union precisely because in the absence of a 'governing-territorial unit' Nagaland was 'assumed' to be a part of the Indian Union. When Nagas refused and rejected the occupation of a much 'superior' state power, GoI forcibly occupied Nagaland by means of military operation and imposed its 'alien government' to subjugate the Nagas within their own (Naga) territorial unit. Nagas might not yet have formed as a 'state' but "it is not *terra nullius* but enjoys legal status akin to that of a state, insofar as it is territorially-based in character".[497] This territorial character is found in the basis of Naga identity which is the village, and there can be no village without its territorial unit. If Nagaland was forced to become a part of the Indian state, it was because Nagaland was colonised and it was divided into four administrative units within the Indian Union. But Nagaland as a 'territorial unit' that was occupied "has a dual status: it is part of the territory of that state (pending...the outcome of a self-determination consultation), and because of the self-determination entitlement, it is also a distinct judicial unit".[498]

At its most, GoI is exercising an administrative control over Nagaland by sole virtue of its political power through occupation in violation of the Naga people's will. All

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[494] Ibid., p.153.
[495] UN Charter Art. 73, quoted in ibid., p.155.   This Article 73 can be usually applied only to colonial territories including other dependent, Mandated, and Trust territories. See ibid, pp.155-156.
[496]   Quoted in Ibid, p.157.
[497] Ibid., p.157
[498] Ibid., p. 158.

these reasons therefore do not support the GoI's political position to solve the Naga political problem within the Indian Constitution and their territorial integrity. GoI therefore needs to look at the Naga problem through a new political lens.

7.1.3 Indo-Naga problem: Seeking a political 'arrangement' before a 'settlement'

There is no doubt that the Indo-Naga political relationship is clearly asymmetrical. The political reality is also that it will continue to be so because of the enormous political power GoI has in the form of economic, military and cultural hegemony. Therefore any form of negotiation between the GoI and the Nagas must acknowledge and address these power dynamics. A potential peaceful co-existence and productive peace process must agree that:

(i) GoI must be willing to accept the political rights of the Nagas as equal and as legitimate as those of any nation;

(ii) GoI has to accept the political reality that the Naga political problem cannot be settled within the Indian Constitution.

Based on these two requirements, Nagas must clearly spell out what political arrangement or settlement they want to achieve in their talks with GoI. Statements like 'independence', 'sovereignty' and 'autonomy' are not enough. Not because they are irrelevant but because they are all contested, debatable and sometimes rhetorical statements.

The reality is that Nagas, in the light of their on-going intense factional violence, and in the absence of any cohesive administrative and economic mechanism, are not yet prepared for self-determination towards a 'nation-state'. Besides the "defined territory and a permanent population"[499] which the Nagas possess, the requirement to have "government or effective government" as "central to its claim for statehood" is

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[499] The Montevideo Convention on the Rights and Duties of States, 1933, which was adopted by the 7th International Conference of American States, Quoted in Castellino, *International Law and Self-determination, p.* 77. See Chapter 2, section, 2.5 for more details.

absent. [500] Without giving up their political aspiration for an independent 'nation-state', Nagas can negotiate an alternative form of 'intern' political arrangement with GoI. Besides the primordial essence they share, Nagas must analyse the political and cultural interests, needs and fears that brought various Naga tribes together in the first place, to envision a political settlement for the future. Based on those findings, Nagas can develop a political settlement that caters and protects those rights that are important to them. The main fears of the Nagas are:

(i) In the light of the Indian political and cultural hegemony and GoI intensive policy of assimilation through 'Indianisation', the Naga distinct cultural and political identity will be suppressed. Nagas fear that their ancestral land will be soon taken away and occupied by the Indians and their 'superior' culture. Based on these arguments, Nagas began their political struggle for self-determination and 'independence' as early as 1929.

(ii) Nagas are still antagonistic and suspicious towards the intensive military operation conducted by GoI, particularly during 1953-1964 and 1972-1975 to suppress the Nagas. ,

Naga people, as a nation, should critically examine their current capital as well as political situation. Political slogans like 'independence' or 'total sovereignty' so far have been used by the various factions to assert their political mandate and control over the Naga cause. One is labelled a betrayer or pro-Indian and accused of collaborating with the 'enemy' if they depart from the concept of 'independence'. Besides the rhetorical slogans, the Nagas must also critically examine the basis of 'nation-state' if their self-determination means a sovereign state. The various Naga factions, along with Naga civil society, should propose a feasible and more realistic political arrangement for the immediate future that will eventually facilitate them to realise their political self-determination of 'independence ' in the future if they decide to choose so.

The proposal of autonomy as the "principal remedy for the resolution of

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[500] Crawford, *The Creation of States in International Law,* p. 55.

self-determination conflict"[501]   can provide a potential 'arrangement' for the Indo-Naga conflict.   Until the late 1980s, autonomy was viewed with suspicion and associated with various self-determination and secessionist movements, thereby leading to the disintegration of the state. However, since the 1990s, the idea of autonomy eventually came to be associated with the only form of arrangement that can effectively guarantee the "maintenance of the territorial unity of states threatened by ethnic strife".[502]   But autonomy as a political 'arrangement' cannot be a permanent settlement for the Nagas. It should be treated as a 'political passage' for the Nagas to prepare for their self-determination by exercising actual responsibility and authority "with respect to persons and property within the territory" of the Naga-inhabited areas, before their "right to exercise, such authority with respect to other States".[503]

In this way, autonomy has been defined by various writers. Michael Hetcher defines political autonomy as "a state of affairs falling short of sovereignty".[504] Hurst Hannum and Richard Lillich describe is as:

> "Autonomy is understood to refer to independence of action on the internal or domestic level, as foreign affairs and defence normally are in the hands of the central or national government, but occasionally power to conclude international agreement concerning cultural or economic matters also may reside with the autonomous entity." [505]

Farimah Daftary, however writes that it means:

> "Powers are not merely delegated but transferred; they may thus not be revoked without consulting with the autonomous entity…the central government may only interfere with the acts of the autonomous entity in extreme cases (for example when national security is threatened or its power have been exceeded."[506]

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[501] Marc Weller and Stefan Wolff, Recent trends in autonomy and state construction, in Weller and Wolff (eds.), *Autonomy, self-governance and Conflict resolution: Innovative approaches to institutional design in divided societies*, London : Routledge, 2005, pp. 262-270, in   p.261.
[502] Ibid., p. 261.
[503] Crawford, *The Creation of States in International Law,*   p.55. Crawford was defining the criteria of 'government' and 'independence' along these lines. It can be understood as the distinction between 'internal' sovereignty and 'external' sovereignty as defined by Wheaton, mentioned in ibid.
[504] Quoted in Weller and Wolff, Self-determination and autonomy, in Weller and Wolff (eds.), *Autonomy, self-governance and Conflict resolution,*   pp.1-25,p.11.
[505] Quoted in ibid., p. 12.
[506] Quoted in ibid., p. 13.

Autonomy therefore can be defined as a legal and political right, empowered upon the ethnic or the 'nation' found in the conflicting state. Political power here means that the state recognises the historical narratives, the political struggle, and the distinctiveness of the political and cultural identity of the group.

Will Kymlicka[507] writes that though minority nationalism can be found globally, the response by Western democratic states is distinct from the Rest. The discourses around justice have prompted Western states to accommodate such claims through some form of territorial autonomy by adopting a federal system. Justice here means the right given to the minority for self-governance. Unlike the West, the states in various parts of the world view such form of minority claims for more autonomy as a threat to the existing states and therefore they become an issue of national security. Kymlicka argues that unlike multi-culturalism the model of autonomy that accommodates minority nationalism involves "serious realignment of political power and economic resources".[508] Though such an arrangement might vary, three elements are included:

> "(a) territorial autonomy; (b) the minority's language is accorded the status of an official language in that territory - either as a co-equal official language with the majority language or indeed as the primary sole official language; (c) the self-governing region has control over education all the way from primary (elementary) through to post-secondary education, including universities in their own language where numbers warrant." [509]

After all that has been discussed about autonomy within a federated system, at the outset an outsider can point out that India has a federal government and therefore the federal unit enjoys an autonomous status. But as discussed already in Chapter 3 'federalism' in the Indian context is not a relational system between the Centre and

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[507] Will Kymlicka, Justice and Security in accommodation of minority nationalism, in May, et at (eds.), *Ethnicity, Nationalism, and Minority Rights,* pp. 144-175. He was writing this paper specifically between Western democracies and Eastern and Central Europe (ECE), but its implication and arguments can be used universally and in the context of Indo-Naga conflict as well. Kymlicka also in this papers goes on to point out the various arguments put forward by the ECE for resisting minority claims and acknowledging their rights.
[508] Ibid., p. 147.

the federal units - federalism is centralised and unitary in character. Because of such a federal character, even the definition of autonomy is changed within the Indian context. Therefore autonomy should be understood within the Indian federal definition which is endorsed by the Indian Constitution and the accommodation of autonomy as defined above can only be realised by changing some basic Indian political underpinnings. For instance, the denial of the existence of indigenous people in the Indian sub-continent, the political stand that every ethnic or 'nation' struggle should be resolved only within the Indian Constitution and the declaration that India is but one nation. The denial of 'multi-nation' in the Indian nation and the political discourses that the distinctiveness present in the Indian Union are primarily based on cultural, language and economic disparity or backwardness for peoples like the Nagas.[510]

Ashok Behuria[511] points out that "autonomy in the Indian case has been primarily used to denote the demands of plural regional-ethno-national identities for a greater degree of self-administration within the larger federal framework of the Indian constitution". If an ethnic group on the other hand seeks autonomy "to promote the idea of self-determination outside the purview of the Indian federation, it is usually termed secessionist, antistatist, and antinational". Behuria terms the former connotation of autonomy is based on an "integrationist model of autonomy", whereas the latter is a "disintegrationist model of autonomy". Any attempt to change the "centre-state (federation unit) relations in favor of the states (units), has been viewed with suspicion and as a prelude to "secession" which would in time lead to the disintegration of the Indian state. Behuria argues that India as a state has not reached the stage to accommodate greater autonomy because such a demand would involve "redefining the centre-state relations". This is because, as Behuria points out, "the Indian state has not yet grown out of the postcolonial inertia of unitarian federalism". Because of such a "unitarian federal system", GoI could not tackle such demands for greater autonomy without violence.

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[509] Ibid, pp. 147-148.
[510] All these concepts are already discussed in Chapter 3.
[511] Ashok Behuria, Demands for Autonomy: Internal Weakness of a multiethnic, multicultural, and multinational state, in Mekenkamp et al (eds.), *Searching for Peace in Central and South Asia: An Overview of Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Activities,* pp. 345-356, in p.346.

India as a state should critically examine its unilateral federal tendency which would require to devolve its centralised power to some degree. In all fairness, having said this, GoI has accommodated various groups along economic and language lines and recognised them as separate entities from an administrative and electoral point of view. But in the case of the Nagas, besides the legal arguments mentioned earlier in this section, the affinity with the mainstream Hindu-India cultural value system, which is the most dominant factor, is absent. It is also true there are numerous ethnic, language and cultural groups who, despite the unitary federalism, are happy to be accommodated as a federal unit within the Indian federal system. One of the main reasons is because despite their ethnic or economic disparity, and despite religious entities being refused to be treated as a legitimate source of political struggle in the secular ethos of Indian equality and unity, the majority of people in India share the Hindu value system. They share common symbolic emblems and rituals. This Hindu value system is the basis of Indian civilisation and the source of political power. Nagas do not share any of their caste-structured social polity nor their symbolic rituals or social decorum.

Because of all these reasons, the Naga struggle was not mobilised to be integrated into that cultural and political entity of the Indian Union. Rather it was to preserve their distinctiveness and maintain their cultural identity by asserting their political rights and identity that Nagas collectively rejected the Indian basis of political modernity, i.e., secularism, federalism and nationhood. In this way Indian secularism is self-deceiving in thinking that it could cover and accommodate all social, historical and ethnic particularities within its existing Indian constitution.

The first step is for GoI to recognize that Nagas because of their political rights are a nation and have a right to self-determination. In this regard GoI must abandon policies that attempt to assimilate the Nagas into the mainstream Indian culture, language and value system. The GoI approach of flexing its military might to suppress the movement can stop. The Armed Forces (Special Power) Act which grants power to

"non-commissioned officers" [512] the right to 'shoot to kill' or use force, to arrest if he/she thinks necessary, was imposed in 1958. This Act gave full immunity in court to any armed force personnel against any gross violation committed against Nagas. The Act should be revoked immediately. GoI still cannot make the connection that the political instability in Nagaland is primarily because of their initial armed response to an otherwise initially non-violent Naga political movement.

Nagas cannot completely enjoy their human security as collective peoples if their political identity is denied. If structural positive peace is to be achieved, then the unjust imposition of the dominant political identity needs to be addressed. The main source of tension between GoI and the Naga people is the claim that they are a nation and form a separate political entity distinct from the political identity and experiences of the Indian Union. M. Young defines this imposition as "cultural imperialism," that involves the "universalization of a dominant group's experience and culture and establishing it as the norm." [513] The basis of power-sharing and political arrangement between India and Nagas cannot be 'just' if the right of Naga identity and the differences between the Indian and Naga cultural experiences are not acknowledged.

As argued by Kymlicka, justice in the case of minority nationalism requires the power to self-government within a more relational federal system, not as subordinates but as confederates. Within a Naga context, autonomy should mean that the Nagas have complete control and ownership over their natural resources and territory. It also means the territorial integration of all the Naga inhabited-land is important for their self-governance. A form of 'mutual' arrangement for realigning internal boundaries with the neighbouring states can be negotiated. It also can mean that Nagas can enjoy the political right to sing their 'national anthem', fly their 'national flag' and display 'national emblems'. Their political status ought to be in the passport issued to the Nagas either by Nagas themselves or by the GoI so that political status of the Nagas is specifically catergorised. Nagas should have the political power to monitor

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[512] See Appendix 3 for full text of the Armed Regulation. Numerous protests and applications to repeal the Act remain unheeded by GoI explaining North East of India is politically a 'disturbed area'.
[513] Quoted in Mortan Deutush, Justice and Conflict, in Morton Deutsch et al., (eds.), *The Handbook of Conflict Resolution: theory and practice*, San Francisco, Calif. : Jossey-Bass ; Chichester : Wiley [distributor], 2006, pp.43-68.

their own immigration policy. The ownership of the village territorial space by the villagers should be upheld.   Any ownership or transfer of such territory belonging to a traditional village that has already been transferred to or bought by private enterprise should continue to be in the jurisdiction of that particular village.

The rights of the Nagas may not be specified in the Indian Constitution.   It should rather be a supplement to the Indian Constitution. The status of the Naga political power (not the political identity) cannot be unilaterally revoked by the President of India or the Indian legislative members of the central parliament. In fact, political issues regarding Nagas should not be decided in the central parliament. It should be in consultation with the President of GoI and the Governor[514] of Nagaland, who should be selected in consultation with the Nagas and not only by the President as regulated in the Indian Constitution. The only exception should be in times of national security when India is threatened physically by military troops along it borders with Pakistan, China or Burma. Even during such a time the President of India would not be able to revoke the political power of the Naga Parliament without an emergency meeting with the represented members of that Parliament. Nagas can also enter into an agreement that any military ties with neighbouring nation-states will be politically severed. Nagas may also enter into an agreement that when such political power is accorded to them they will not abuse the good faith of the state of India by entering into any military alliance with other nation-states. Nagas must also regulate a legislation that their traditional practices, particularly in terms of the position of women in the political sphere, treatment of immigrants in Nagaland, and recognition of minority villages and tribes within their 'nation', should be aligned and in recognition of the UN Charter of Human Rights.

Naga political history may be allowed to be taught in the educational system. There should also be an agreement with GoI that the Naga educational system will be recognised in the Indian Union and vice versa. Since Naga identity is not mobilised along linguistic lines, it will be difficult to have a common *lingua franca* national

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[514] A more appropriate designation can be used instead of Governor. The fact is this position is a representative of the Nagas to GoI who communicates with GoI and for the people of the republic of the Nagaland.

language other than English. But in the respective tribal Naga areas their tribal language as a subject can be taught compulsorily, and provisions can be made by the Government for schools to teach the tribal languages. There is a huge need for textbooks in the languages of the various Naga tribes. This provision can go under the preservation of the cultural identity of each Naga tribe. The egalitarian ethos of the Nagas' culture can not only be perceived as a 'romantic traditional concept' but articulated as the philosophical underpinnings of   Naga political and social thought.

The self-government and self-legislation of an integrated Nagaland can comprise of an independent Naga parliament represented by every tribe. In such an arrangement the representation of the Naga tribes in Burma should be accommodated and reserved. A special status and a separate legal provision could be implemented for them. The position of two Governors in Nagaland, appointed by the President of GoI in consultation with the Nagas, can allow one to represent GoI in the Naga Republic and the other to represent the Nagas in the Indian Union. The number of Naga representatives elected to the Indian Parliament of both the Upper and the Lower Houses can increase and should continue to represent Nagaland. It should not necessarily aim to seek GoI parliamentarian endorsement and electoral votes for Naga judiciary and legislative regulation, but to develop bilateral and diplomatic relations between the two Parliaments.

Giving Nagas a government of their own will develop an attitude of 'our government and responsibility ' rather than 'them and the Indian government' attitude towards any bureaucratic and government institutions. Such a shift in attitude will give Nagas a sense of ownership over the institution of government and demand accountability from their political leaders who run the government in the new 'political arrangement'.

The federal system of India does not meet the need of the Naga tribal identity and Nagas as of now are not yet 'prepared' to be an independent nation-state. So going by their legitimate needs, rights and the legal basis of the Nagas, a greater autonomy seems to be a feasible political arrangement for the immediate future. But any such

political arrangement should not be a final political 'settlement'. It is rather an 'interim arrangement' until Nagas are fully informed and prepared in the new political system to decide and govern themselves.

7.2   Addressing Intra-Naga conflict

The Naga movement was a people's movement. Every village provided food, shelter, and whole-hearted support to their freedom-fighters. The freedom-fighters were the heroes and the martyrs. The Naga struggle was the people's hope. It inspired fraternity and held the unity and pride of the Nagas. The national cause of the Nagas is as legitimate now as it was when it began more than sixty years ago. It is crucial to the survival of the Naga political identity, but today it tells a different story. Naga people, particularly the young, are turning their back on the Naga political struggle because of factional division, violence and rampant extortion. The vicious cycle of violence is becoming a norm in almost every aspect of Naga society. A cycle that rationalised violence and killing as 'just' has created a culture of fear that has aggravated hatred, division, and brought extensive poverty and suffering in Nagaland.

The Church and various civil societies are working relentlessly for peace in Nagaland. The need of the hour is Unity, Peace, Healing, and Reconciliation, as rightly pointed out and called for by civil society and the Church, including the conflicting factions, which is very telling of Naga society. This section is an attempt to re-focus the lenses on the present Naga socio-political situation. It is to critically question what is becoming of the Naga people as a nation. Yes, the role and involvement of GoI as a major divisive political power in the Naga struggle is undeniable. But GoI cannot make them into a nation, nor can it break them as a nation. These are questions Nagas need to answer themselves. It is in articulating these questions that the fears, suffering, and challenges of the Naga can be given a voice.

7.2 .1   Addressing Intra-Naga conflict: Basis of Unity

At the core of the Naga cause is its struggle against the Indian hegemony, domination

and homogenisation, but the escalating conflict between Naga factions as a result of this is more pressing. Without facilitating dialogue between all the conflicting parties, it is not feasible to negotiate with GoI towards any feasible political arrangement. A productive dialogue between the conflicting Naga parties can be possible when issues around interests, power, resource-sharing, and decision-making are transparently and objectively addressed. The arrangement of power-sharing if applied with a political will, will have:

> "the potential for transforming potentially destructive conflicts to a more positive one. They do so by satisfying the interests of disadvantaged and politically-active communal groups and by engaging them and representatives of dominant groups in political frameworks that permit joint decision-making"[515]

Therefore a 'political structure', inclusive of every tribe and political group for equal representation and voice, is urgently required. If Nagas do not address these basic issues they have not yet seen the last of further splits in the Naga national movement. There is a danger that it can become regional: Eastern Nagas, Western Nagas, Southern Nagas and Northern Nagas. The immediate need is the unity of the various factions divided more or less along tribal lines. Every Naga civil society and the Church have appealed for unity but without much success. In fact the factional division is an interplay of the various Naga tribal relations and interactions. Therefore the cause of the division in the Naga political movement is along factional lines so much so that it can be drawn along tribal lines without necessarily declaring tribal affiliation.[516] So the basis of the Naga sense of unification should go beyond factional

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[515] Kumar Rupesinghe, Introduction, in Kumar Rupesinghe (ed.), *Conflict transformation*, London: Macmillan Press, 1995, pp.vii-xiv, p. ix. He also discusses assimilation, containment, pluralism and regional autonomy along this context used for power-sharing.

[516] The main leaders of Naga National Council (NNC) for instance were from the Angami tribe, so today even after the split of NCC into two groups, the general empathy of the Angamis and Chakesang tribe are towards NNC. However, when NNC did not denounce the Shillong Accord of 1975, a section of Nagas formed NSCN in 1980. Over leadership clashes, top Sema leaders from NNC formed the Revolutionary Government until they surrendered to GoI a few years later. The formation of the Revolutionary Government was seen as a betrayal by many Naga nationalists. In 1988 when the NSCN split into two: NSCN (IM) President is from the Sema Tribe and General Secretary is from Tangkhul tribe and so are the top leaders. However the Tangkhuls are from outside Nagaland state and other rival factions consider them as outside 'Nagas'. NSCN (K) is lead by Khaplang. He is from Konyak tribe found in Eastern Nagaland, but his village is located in Burma. Konyak is one of the biggest tribes among the Nagas found in Burma, Nagaland state and Arunachal Pradesh. Many Naga tribes along that area support the NSCN (K). Also because NSCN (K) headquarters are based in Naga Burma, it has

unity and should take the following into consideration:

(i) Recognise the historical injustice and 'legitimate' grievances of less dominant tribes who have so far lacked political power because they were influenced by 'literacy' much later than the so-called 'advanced tribes' (i.e., Ao, Sema, Lotha and Angami) as opposed to the 'backward tribes' under Nagaland state government.

(ii) Members of the dominant tribes particularly the Angamis, Aos, Lothas, Semas and Tangkhuls must acknowledge the fact that they share collective responsibility for inflicting grievances on the other tribes. In fact their call for unity, forgiveness and reconciliation cannot truly begin without giving up the politics of domination and their competitive attempts to centralise Naga politics in and through their respective tribes and ideology.

(iii) Only after empathising can people in asymmetrical relationships enter into concrete and open dialogue. The dialogue will enable members of both sides to acknowledge the fact that there are 'victims and vulnerable people' even within the dominant group. Therefore it is not the particular tribe but a section of people, a group of elite that manipulates the power. This can allow the 'victimised' tribes to see that they themselves cannot be fully exploited if a section of their own people, or elitists from the 'non-dominant', do not collaborate with the elite of the dominant tribes or groups.

(iv) This process is important not to cause division among tribes, but to increase

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a huge influence for the Nagas in Burma to give them a sense of Naga identity. In 2007, some members, mostly from the Sema tribe, left behind NSCN (IM) and formed the Naga Unification group. It was meant to be the mediator between all the factions but it soon became a faction in itself and the media stated to refer to them as NSCN (Unification). The Sema tribal Council at their general meeting resolved that all Semas will support the Naga Unification faction. NSCN (IM) responded by banning the Sema tribal Council. Clashes between NSCN (IM) and NSCN (Unification) saw one of the bloodiest factional clashes in recent years. Soon NSCN (K) and NSCN (Unification) merged as NSCN/GPRN. In April 2007 some alleged Tangkhuls belonging to NSCN (IM) cadres apparently harassed some Semas belonging to the NSCN (K) faction in Dimapur town. Miscreants went to Wangrum colony, the unofficial settlement in Nagaland state for Nagas from Manipur. The miscreants burned most of the residential buildings except the Church building. NSCN (IM) accused NSCN (K) of being behind the attack.   Of all the factions NSCN (IM) has the biggest armed cadres, reportedly of about 5,000. They are also the most resourceful in terms of 'knowledge-based power.' It is also because of their initiatives that the Naga struggle has been recognised by various international groups and organisations. Because of this many of the Naga intellectuals and civil society work closely with them and endorse their organisation as the faction that can bring a political settlement for the Nagas. The power of the NSCN (IM) however does not go down very well with some sections of the Nagas. But it should also be argued that if NSCN (K) or the other factions were politically more powerful, it would result in the same cycle. The enmity of NSCN (IM) and NSCN (K) escalated further when NSCN (K) declared a 'quit Tangkhul (tribe) notice from Nagaland state'.   NSCN (IM) took that as a statement targeted at them. Currently NSCN (K) and Naga (Unification) are working together.

tension against the power of domination, so that polarity and division is no longer along tribal lines but against corruption and exploitation, against domination and power abuse .

(v) Developing a practical basis of power-sharing for decision-making and representation that is inclusive of all tribes.

(vi) Develop a strong ideology based on the respective belief systems of the Naga tribe. Some of the crucial beliefs here are the eco-human reality of traditional Naga spirituality which should be translated and connected to their relationship with nature and land and Christian ethical beliefs on accountability and justice.

(vii) Nagas must wake up to the inequality existing in the social spectrum. The egalitarian ethos of traditional society is no longer justifiable. Peaceful co-existence cannot be envisioned without waking up to this reality. The political rhetoric in Naga discourses that they are a classless society, and therefore inequality does not exist, is no longer correct. Various interests and agendas are there. Elite competition exists; inequality is growing. Division in terms of economic and political power is increasing. Naga villages might have been egalitarian during their ancestors' time, and the purest form of democracy might have been practiced, but the ethos of egalitarianism and democracy, unfortunately, in a very changed socio-economic and political situation, is no longer in practice, though the essence remains.

(viii) The Naga public should critique the factions' call for 'just killing' against each other according to the law of the land. Nagas can begin the search to develop an alternative method to aspire for their 'just cause.' A critical reflection on the justification of armed violence between factions is needed. It also calls for a drastic shift in the 'satisfaction', 'honour', and 'power' they perceive is brought in destroying and 'weakening' the perceived 'enemy' and 'faction'.

(ix) Political questions must be addressed for negotiations and peace to become feasible. Political questions within the Naga context mean the power of domination which is usually based on an asymmetrical or an over-powering and controlling relationship.

Such a relationship demands conflicting factions, not necessarily uniformity, but a

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NSCN (K) is also on friendly terms with both the NNC factions.

willingness to engage their differences through dialogue and active participation. This becomes possible only when the conflicting parties acknowledge each others' position as equal Nagas in their negotiations in terms of cultural knowledge, armed cadres and social power. In such a protracted conflict like in Nagaland, any process of dialogue between warring factions can neither be selective nor based on the legitimacy of the majority. The 'advanced' tribes have a tendency to exclude the minorities and smaller tribes. It calls for an effort to deliver justice by acknowledging existing structural inequalities and exploring social and tribal integration even within a Naga context.

7.2.2 Addressing Intra-Naga conflict: Cultural and Territorial integration

Territorial negotiation is and will be one of the biggest issues not only in Indo-Naga arrangements but also among the Nagas. For this reason, the territorial integration of all Nagas and the 'settlement' of 'potential' Nagas who 'may' be 'displaced' in a 'bargaining' process need to be openly and transparently deliberated. Nagaland 'state', having a majority Naga population, may become the base and may take the responsibility that is inclusive of all Nagas in the decision-making process. Nagas should once again 're-imagine', 're-construct', and 're-think' their vision and political action. Such an open dialogue could not be deliberated mainly because of two interrelated but contradicting causes:

(i) Firstly, Nagas in Nagaland state, despite the struggle with the Indian hegemony, are "comfortable" in the federal arrangement, and the opportunities that come along with 'statehood' particularly for the 'advantaged, so-called 'advanced tribes'.

(ii) Secondly, 'fears of all of the Nagas outside of Nagaland state' to be 'overlooked' by 'Nagas within Nagaland state' in the event of a political arrangement is strongly expressed by the case of the Tangkhul tribes. Their assertion is that they should not be 'treated as outside political back-ups, but as equals.' But there are many non-dominant tribes who are not in a position to do so. In such political play, various major tribes in Nagaland state have 'sought alliance' with the Tangkhuls to reassert their claim for leadership and control in the Naga political struggle to 'overpower potential rivals'. Nonetheless such alliances have seen further division in the Naga

struggle because, though it is an aspiration for equality and recognition, it has rather translated into a struggle for power and domination at the expense of the Naga cause.

The lesson to be learned here is that Nagas in Nagaland state should appreciate and acknowledge the fear and struggle of all the Nagas outside Nagaland state. They should recognise the legitimate rights of Nagas outside Nagaland state as equals, as brothers and sisters, with equal opportunities in every political decision. Nagas, outside Nagaland state should also appreciate the fear of the Nagas in Nagaland state of sharing the opportunities and their 'comfort zone' and 'space' when approached with an aggressive drive of violence and threat which is ignited by the fear of the 'Other'. Concrete measures should be introduced in the political structure to accommodate all the respective Naga tribes so that violence and unwarranted fears can be replaced. Smaller tribes who had been excluded, and therefore lacked the political opportunities in decision-making, cannot be sidelined. This is the only way forward.

Territorial integration of the Nagas cannot guarantee solidarity nor cessation of direct and structural violence. Therefore while facilitating dialogue between the contesting factional groups, the Church, as a moral body, and civil society should engage to remove structural inequality in Naga society among different social groupings, i.e. faction, tribe, region, etc. Besides territorial integration, socio-cultural and psychological integration of these groupings through various community-based activities, inter-tribal interaction is important. Community-based activities here mean organising collective tribal festivals, more initiatives among Nagas to learn different Naga languages. In this respect the Church can become a key platform. Churches in Kohima and Dimapur will continue to be the central location for all the tribes because of their political and commercial significance. Instead of each tribe having each Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday services in separate church buildings throughout the year, collective services can be organised. Programmes could be developed where the pastors or Church leaders from a particular tribe can exchange their pulpit.[517] Any

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[517] In Kohima, the capital of Nagaland state, for instance, every Naga tribe from Nagaland state and most Naga tribes from Manipur have their own respective church building. Since Kohima is divided into various areas or sectors, each sector have its own church building which is associated with the

attempt to bring a political settlement without the collective agreement of the factions and the basic cultural integration and political agreement of the various Nagas under a different Indian federal unit will be premature to the peace process, because even Nagas themselves have never lived together as a unit.

Land, in the Naga context, unlike many communities, does not belong to the State. It belongs to a village and the tribe. While the essence of Naga village life, i.e., ancestry, myth and folklore, can be transferred, borrowed or even constructed, land cannot. It is not easy to give to 'Others', other than one's own (tribe and village). It takes a lot of 'cultureness' to recognize rightful ownership, than to restore a *terra nullius* rationale to control and occupy the land. In such a threshold, a code of sharing, including natural resources and land, respect and recognition of ownership, are the bases for mutual co-existence among the Nagas when 'settlements' are accommodated and when populous mobility surges. This code is not foreign to Naga culture. In fact, it is the core of their village epistemology, i.e., sharing, recognition, respect and ownership. In the absence of documented legal papers, these principles have kept the traditional boundary of traditional villages intact to date.

Having said this, oral traditional practices are no longer enough. The leaders from every Naga village administration and tribal council must seriously deliberate, with a political will, on the rights of the community to the land of the village so that villagers are not rendered landless. Traditional and customary oral law is not enough. They need to codify them for the interests of the people who are most vulnerable to the present socio-economic and political changes as well as for legal reference.

Pressure should be mounted on the education system so that the 'image', myth and legends of all the 'Other tribes', other than their own, overarched by nation-making themes and critiques are introduced. Inclusion of modern Naga cultural and political history is urgently needed.

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mother church of their own tribe in Kohima. For instance, Kohima Ao Baptist Church have more than six associated churches in each major areas. These associated churches work with the mother or the main church.

7.2.3 Addressing the Political Structure: The beginning of Factions in the Naga Struggle

Naga nationalism and nation-making have so far been strongly promoted and held by a primordial understanding. For instance, sons and daughters of the soil, common ancestors and ancestral land, naturalness since time immemorial, are some common rationales which are important. Along with these, the role of myth and national heroes, imagined or real, are required in the process of Naga nation-making. What is missing however, is the recognition or relegation of any common vital   interests over resources, material sustainability and benefits, and the failure to address the distribution of power. The crucial issues around interests are becoming taboo in Naga politics. They are instead silenced and suppressed by some dominant group either in the form of a tribe, faction or an elitist group, only to give birth to reactionary political separatism within Naga nation-making.   'National movement' is divided by serious factional rivalries and violence. Tribal separatism rather than integration is becoming a serious challenge. This vicious cycle of reactions seems to have become the only justified way of Naga politics, from NNC and the eventual formation of NSCN, which was later split between the NSCN (K), the NSCN(IM) and NSCN (Unification).

There is no doubt that the Indo-Naga political relationship is clearly asymmetrical. But an objective reading sheds light on the fact that a relationship of 'exclusivity' might have developed unconsciously or consciously within the NNC. This has continued within the Naga factions today. The problem when a group becomes dominant and exclusive is that it justifies a sense of ownership, control and leadership over the political power and positions which otherwise should be inclusive of all groups and people. This naturally leads to suspicion, anger and enmity that spins into violent encounters. This can further lead to political reaction, in the sense that a reactionary group can be formed and collaborate with other non-dominant groups who could be at the receiving end of the dominant dictates. The political reaction of the non-dominant groups is justifiable. The problem however with such political domination and reaction is that it can take on sectarian or tribal tendencies. It can also

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lead to a mind set of 'them' and 'us'. In the initial formation of a distinct socio-cultural and political entity- the attachment the Nagas developed based on village autonomy, fear of outside assimilation, common customs, tradition and dietary habits were strong enough to create an awareness of oneness with a fellow tribal entity. This can be referred to as a 'defensive communal' interest. Today Nagas need more than this defensive communal interest. They need to develop an 'inclusive interest' which includes political, economic, relational, land and power-sharing. Therefore a 'political structure' inclusive of every tribe and political group for equal representation and voice is urgently required.

The relationship and co-existence between the 'independent entiy' of a village', the tribe, and the Naga nation need to be deliberated and re-examined. It would not be wrong to accept and assert that Naga nationhood is still evolving. But the time is already ripe for Nagas to develop a written collective "national unified customary procedure" in compliance with their Christian value system and fundamental human rights. A common regulation around their fundamental traditional practices on land rights would be timely. This can be formulated in consultation with representatives from village and tribal leaders from both the Hohos and the Church (Baptist as well as the other Church denominations) both at the tribal and collective tribal level . Each tribe can first develop their own "common, standard customary legislation." Eventually at the collective tribal level, a "unified customary procedure/statute" can be deliberated and formulated.

7.3   Exploring the Naga Church as a tool for conflict resolution

The underlying theme throughout the thesis is an analysis and response to the conflicts experienced by the Nagas as an emerging nation. It is analysed   particularly within the context of political modernity in the light of the Naga struggle for self-determination whose cultural and political landscape were changed by the encounters with the colonial exploration and the American missionaries. The conflict of the Nagas further intensified when the political foundation of modern India namely 'nationhood, federalism, secularism' as espoused in the Indian Constitution refused to

accept the particularities and distinctiveness of the non-dominant entity of the Naga cultural, political and historical basis.

The transition in the formation of the Naga identity from the last quarter of the 19th century is a phenomenon. From non-literate, individual village-based tradition, it led to the introduction of not only a literate community but to the development of a consciousness and a sense of awareness to form tribal identity among the villages along linguistic lines, and to the collective tribes becoming a nation. Many factors have played a role in enabling and responding to such changes. But as argued in Chapter 4 and the following chapters, the role of Christianity through the institution of the Church has been central in forming major cultural and political developments in Naga history as distinct from other neighbouring hill and tribal people and mainstream India in particular.

The concept of and term conflict-resolution might mean different things to different people and disciplines. But for the purpose of this section, in the light of the conflict discussed throughout the thesis, conflict-resolution will encompass a broad approach that requires "prevention, management and transformation", keeping in mind that the "key goal should be strengthening the conflict-resolution capacity of societies and communities within conflict area".[518]   In the light of this scope, conflict-resolution is not simply focused on the process of analysis, negotiation, resolving conflict or reaching settlements. Neither should it assume that "conflict-resolution rests on an assumption of harmony of interests between actors, and that third party mediators can settle conflict by appealing to the reason and underlying humanity of the parties".[519] Rather it demands "transformation that requires real changes in parties' interests, goals and self-definitions".[520]

Given the dynamics of conflict in Nagaland it certainly cannot be resolved without taking into consideration the disparity of cultural and political conflict between the parties, nor the lack of a collective cohesive mechanism among the various tribes in

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[518] Hugh Miall et al, Calling for a broad approach to conflict resolution, in Mekenkamp and et al (eds.) *Searching for peace in South and central Asia* ,pp. 29-35, in p.29.
[519] Ibid., p.33.

Nagaland. Resolving conflict in Nagaland demands that the parties recognise the cultural and political identity of the non-dominant parties both within the Indo-Naga, as well as the intra-Naga, relationships. The appeal by the dominant culture to the universal features of equality, freedom, humanity and brotherhood, without recognising and addressing the issues around security, marginalization, identity and cultural particularities, is injustice in itself.

7.3.1   (i) A reading on the Church approach to Conflict and future prospects

When in the 1950s the intensive Indian armed operation began in the Naga Hills, the Naga Church was the key player in bringing the first ceasefire agreement in 1964 between the Naga national workers and GoI. The role of the Church to facilitate meetings between GoI and the Naga national leaders so an agreement may be reached changed, however, when the dynamic of the conflict changed. By the late 1980s the violence was not only between the Indian armed forces[521] and the Naga factions but between the various factions within the Naga national movement. The focus and energy of the Church as a 'peace-making' institution shifted from attempting to bring ceasefires between Indian armed forces and Nagas to attempting to stop the factional violence between the Nagas.

The peace attempts and the role of the Naga Church during such crucial times of direct violence and confrontation between various conflicting parties are commendable. In the absence of any cohesive governing mechanism, the Church became the main body that spoke on behalf of the Naga people. Church buildings   in times of violence became the main refuge for the people. It was where the people met to pray, to share their concern and support each other. The Church addressed the fears of the people in the worst possible time, and it has a huge influence and mass support within the Naga context. However if it has to play a more active and significant role in bringing sustainable peace in Nagaland it has to develop a more comprehensive and broader approach to conflict. The current role of the Church generally is more like a

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[520] Ibid.

[521] The violence between Indian armed forces and various Naga factions ceased when the ceasefire was agreed between GoI and NSCN (IM) in 1997 and NSCN(K) and GoI in 2001. Having said this,

'fire brigade'[522] approach where Church leaders and concerned members rush to the location of fighting saying prayers and reading out Bible verses and flying white banners while shooting goes on. An approach based on 'individual incident-based' and press releases with condemnation for bloodshed and appeal for cessation of violence after such incidents needs a more conceptual framework, strategy and vision.

The inability of the Church to go beyond 'incident-based' action is contributed mainly by three closely inter-related reasons which need to be critically examined:

(i) The position the Naga Church holds to the doctrine of the separation of the Church and the State. This was a position developed and reiterated by the American missionaries.[523] Nagas need to discuss this position in their own cultural and political context where Church was and continues to be the only organisation that reaches grassroots masses as well as reaching beyond village and tribal allegiance. American missionaries who came to Nagaland came from a very different cultural context. Besides being a fully-fledged industrial society with a strong evolving state mechanism, the Church was only one of the many existing social institutions in the American context. But for the Nagas, the Church was not only an institution but it was one of the main social and cultural institutions. On the other hand, with almost 100% of Nagas in Nagaland state professing to be Christian, and 90% as Baptist, and politics being carried out by people who share the faith, makes it crucial for the Church to re-examine their stand.

(ii) But within the Naga context, 'state' equals politics. The general understanding of 'politics' by Nagas means access to GoI monetary resources without accountability by entering the 'state election'.[524] Elections in general are marred by fights within and between various villages over candidacy nomination, rallying over vote banks, distribution of money, excessive consumption of alcohol.. If statistics in Nagaland

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shooting between various armed state battalions and police with the factions continues to take place.

[522] An analogue used by the L. Kari Longchar, the Director for Peace Affairs, NBCC, in explaining the role of the Church in an interview 10th June, 2007.

[523] The Missionaries left behind the practice of the separation of Church and State they adhered to in their home (America) Church. American missionaries left the issues around legal and other administration in the hands of the English administrators, which was an unwritten but mutual understanding between them. When the missionaries left, the Nagas continued to follow suit.

[524] It is a common term used at least in Nagaland state that when people say, 'He/she is entering

state show that there is a huge voter turn-out for an election, it is because the candidate, who is from a bigger village or who has a powerful mechanism to use force and might, or has the support of one of the factions, has taken control of the polling booth. Such a party usually ends up casting all the voters' vote for their candidate. In turn, the key agents and supporters 'control' and demand monetary funds from the candidate once he is in 'power'.[525]

(iii) The Church and the Nagas on the other hand have not fully realised the role of Christianity and the historical 'burden' it carries in the transition from a traditional society to the modern era. Nor has the impact of Christianity on the construction and evolution of a national Naga identity been fully analysed in Naga cultural and political discourses. The absence of such an analysis in Naga discourses, and the reluctance on the part of the Church and the people to hold such a debate, have restricted the Nagas from using one of its most influential platforms. The Church has also failed to deconstruct the perception of 'heathen' and 'barbaric' imposed upon Naga traditional customs and practices. Such an attitude has prevented the Church pulpit not only from highlighting the Naga political situation and identity but also from using it as a more effective tool to bring about social and cultural integration, which would help in the creation of a sense of Naga 'one-ness' and unity amongst the various Naga tribes. Developing a Naga Christianity which is inherent in the Naga, without giving up the essence of the Christian message, is essential.

The Naga Church needs to address these dilemmas amidst the complex dynamics of the Naga conflict by presenting its platform as an effective tool of conflict-resolution. The Church and its members can begin by questioning how far the Church is willing to go in committing to the Naga conflict? This might sound like a very simple question but it holds the potential for the Naga Church to transform the political and cultural landscape of Nagaland. The Church must move beyond its official

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politics', it is implied that he/she is contesting an election.
[525] The election system in Nagaland State is so corrupt that in the 2003 state election the number of votes exceeded the voter population in a constituency. Bribery, capturing of voting booths, repeated voting are commonplace. Because election days are marred by violence and gunshots, people in general do not venture to the voting booth. According to the Chief Election Commissioner of Nagaland state, in the state Assembly election of 2008, 250 candidates contested for 60 seats. It was estimated that each candidate spent an average of rupees 5 lakhs amounting to a total of rupees 1,250 lakhs (figures quoted in Morung Express (Newspapers). If 1 euro = rupees 56 , rupees 1,250 lakhs = euro 2.25 million.

position of recognising the legitimacy of the Naga political struggle and denounce violence. It calls for the Church to critically articulate its role in the context of the Naga cultural and political development and allow its pulpit to be used as a platform to actively engage the people. It also requires the Church to go a step further and differentiate the distinct but interrelated dynamics of conflict in Nagaland and its role at each level. The challenge of the Church is to 'de-missionarise' or de-colonise the minds of the Nagas that the association, interpretation and hermeneutic of Christianity with Naga reality and traditional custom is not heathen or sinful or 'anti-Christ'.[526] The Church should espouse a theology that incorporates the traditional Naga belief system without necessarily altering the salvific knowledge and monotheism in Christianity.

7.3.1 (ii) A structural change: Giving a voice to the suffering of the Naga peoples

The obvious conflict is the Indo-Naga political struggle on one hand and the intra-Naga factional and tribal division on the other. For the Church, the suffering of the majority of Nagas, between the political hegemony of GoI and the power struggle in which the culture of tribalism is manipulated, consisting of violence within Nagaland, is the third level of Naga conflict which needs to be addressed. This is because neither the GoI, nor the factions, nor the Nagaland state bureaucracy will take up these issues unless a platform creates moral pressure and takes the initiative to speak and empower the people. The Church should take up the cause of those who are affected by the factional violence or by abuse at the hands of the Indian armed

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[526] A form of tribal theology in the light of tribal living and culture was introduced during the 1990s in the 'Eastern Theological College' in Assam, India. Some of the founders included Naga theologians. There was huge uproar in Naga churches. Some Naga Christians believed that such work was 'anti-Christ', when some of them went on to claim that they can find salvation in Naga traditional gods. This is a personal choice in its simplest sense without going into the theological debate. Depending on the village, the Nagas traditionally have various gods, goddesses and spirits with different names ascribed by each tribe and their importance. The point is that amidst a Naga world of different gods, goddesses, and spirits divided along villages, tribes and languages, the Christian God has given a common expression for the Nagas culturally and politically and a sense of 'oneness and brotherhood' to come together in the face of increasing marginalisation and oppression. In that way it inculcated, within the Christian belief, cultures that were inherent in their belief system. It also provided the space, if not the platform, to interact and to respond to the changes they were facing when their insularity was removed. Critiques on missionary work should take these into account. The Church's teaching also therefore should take this interpretation and significance into consideration.

forces. It should capture the reality of the economic burden of the poor Nagas, the killing and use of coercion upon the people, and the fear and despair of the Naga nation.[527]

Capturing the affects of such political turmoil in Nagaland, Geoffrey Yaden[528] writes that today Nagas are "intimidated by gun-toting elements and silenced either by fear or confusion or despondency". He calls such a political situation a culture that "promotes a dreadful silence".[529] The role of the Church can be to make the people become "conscious of their plight"[530] and allow them to speak collectively, by giving them a platform. The Church can give a platform to the Naga people to express their determination for a political change by expressing that the factions have lost sight of the Naga political cause to struggle against the political hegemony of GoI. The role of the Church can continue to be "one of the instruments of that still-faltering voice" [531] by defying that culture of 'dreadful silence'. It is to challenge the pattern of reluctance that Naga society exhibits and confront the various issues that

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[527] The despair of the Nagas is captured in these lines "the Naga struggle is very close and dear to us but today we are afraid of the national workers instead of the security forces of India" (quoted in NagalandPage newspaper). Because of the intensive factional shooting in villages, villagers have asked for the presence of the Indian Reserved Police Force as security. On the other hand, extortion in the form of various 'tax-collection' has become part and parcel of factional groups. Extortion by Naga faction cadres was reported in different parts of the three neighboring states of Nagaland state. NSCN (IM) and NSCN(K) each, and sometimes the NNC factions, annually cut between 20% to 25% of the salary from every government employee in Nagaland state. Taxes are collected from businessmen according to their income. Tax collection from each village is not excluded. Villagers are not only obliged but forced to feed and provide lodging to any faction group that turns up unannounced at the village. In an interview, one village elder reported anonymously: "It is not just about the amount of money we pay, but also the negotiation, threats, process of collection, and 'nature and place' of payment and much more" (quoted in Sashinungla, *The Dynamics of Extortion,* Northeast Herald, 20 December 2003). The economic burden of the Naga public in particular is enormous. On the other hand, NSCN (K) and NSCN (IM) both issue threats and *azahs* (death warrants) to any individual who does not comply with their tactics. Cadres who are defectors are tracked down and killed in many cases by the factions and are termed 'betrayers of the national cause'. V.K. Nuh in 1998 wrote that "90% of Nagas were rural, 85% living below the poverty line, 2% enjoy 30% of the state share, 64% identify their names with a thumb impression, 5% local production, 50% of the budget goes outside, 95% resources are not tapped" (see V.H. Nuh, *My Country, My People* pp. 4-5). In 2002 he wrote again that only 1% was the privileged class, 5% middle class, 25% better-off group and 69% living below the poverty line (see Nuh, *My native country*, p.7).
[528] Geoffrey Yaden, *Role of Church, NGOs and Educational Institutions in Peace Building* (unpublished) A 'paper presented in Dimapur, Nagaland, 30th June, 2007, p.2. He is also the Editor of the Nagaland Post, the first Nagaland English daily Newspaper.
[529] Ibid., p.2.
[530] Paulo Freire, *Cultural Action for freedom*, Penguin Education, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1970, p.17. Freire was writing this in the context of his educational theory that can be introduced in developing countries to break the culture of silence against domination and suppression.
[531] Ibid., p.17.

plague them through any "conscientious and consistent effort other than on resting on vain hope that any movement is progressive".[532] This is because in the present Naga culture of 'dreadful silence' the "masses are 'mute', that is they are prohibited from creatively taking part in the transformation of their society".[533] The people are also alienated by the power-blocks in Naga politics, namely the GoI, the militant factions and the institution of bureaucracy who are "responsible for their silence".[534] The Church must promote the awareness that healing, reconciliation, unity and peace cannot be achieved without challenging the 'dreadful silence'. The platform of the Church is to once again inject hope so the Nagas can reclaim their "right to a voice"[535] and give the people their role to articulate and determine their own political self-determination . If the 1,352 churches[536] who hold services every Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday were to continuously seek to use their pulpits to make the suffering and issues of the people, not only as individual or tribal cases, but collectively Naga issues, then a sense of awareness would begin to filter into the consciousness of the Nagas. Such a move would slowly alleviate the sense of powerlessness amongst the majority powerless Nagas.

In this Christian-dominated Naga nation, Nagas must be challenged to develop a theology that espouses beyond physical church construction, attendance, and buildings. It should develop a clear theology on justice, respect, ownership, recognition, integration, and sharing. It should advocate non-violence that comes out of strong ethical Christian principles. A theology that does not wish away unjust suffering and structural inequalities as the Cross, but sees a responsibility to fight for such a plight as the Cross. A theology that unceasingly seeks to fight for freedom and

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[532] Geoffrey Yaden, *Role of Church, NGOs and Educational Institutions in Peace Building* p.2.

[533] Paulo Freire, *Cultural Action for freedom*, p.30. Again, Freire was articulating this argument in the light of the culture of silence where the majority of people are oppressed and dominated. He is also writing how this education and literacy process would encourage people to dialogue and speak out by bringing education into their social reality.

[534] Ibid., p. 30.

[535] Ibid., p. 17.

[536] This number represents the Baptist churches only found in Nagaland state under NBCC as of 2006. Quoted in Henningsen, *The Church's Contribution for Unity and Welfare in Nagaland*, p.82. Every village in Nagaland has a Baptist church with a pastor, a women's pastor, and a youth pastor, each supported by its deacons, elders and various committee members, like prayer, finance, advisory committees. Such appointments also take into consideration the Naga traditional social structure of clan, sector and village (village if it is in a town). In big villages there can be two or three churches with the same component. There are also committees for women, men and youth groups.

equality, so that in its strength, the chains of bondage and suppression break under the moral agent of truth, love and non-violence. But calling for non-violence, peace and reconciliation cannot be workable without addressing the structural mechanism for violence. Non-violence is more than renouncing and condemning the act of direct violence. It goes further than appeals. It needs a position because at its core, non-violent action "is an active technique of struggle" against unjust structural powers and voicing out vital issues, people's interests, and common concern that are denied by deep fear and antagonism. Naga Christianity should interpret Naga cultural heritage, especially in terms of land ownership, distribution of wealth and justice, a platform for the poor, powerless and weak in society, the position of women and accountability of leadership to people, to make it relevant. The 'Naga Church' must inculcate within its structure the ethos of 'egalitarianism' that their Naga forefathers adherently practised.

Peace in Nagaland should not be simply seen as a political arrangement between GoI and the national workers but the collective survival of the Nagas. It is not only the role of some Church leaders or its member who work for 'peace', but it calls for all the Church leaders to be trained in the political and historical issues of the Nagas - their past, their present, their future so that in promoting peace through their respective church pulpits it can form a collective movement of mass participation.

The important question for the Naga Church is therefore not whether to keep out of politics but how to maintain their integrity as conscience-keepers and keep the tone of a prophetic role. If the Church decides to go this far, it must be willing and prepared for potential opposition. Opposition will come from the power-blocks in the form of GoI or the factional groups who might see such a serious public movement and commitment from the people as a threat to their power, control and interests. Interest groups or individuals who benefit from the presence of such a spiral of violence and the culture of 'dreadful silence' in alliance with such power-blocks might oppose such a move. This means that in some cases the Church might have to sever links with some individuals who oppose the opposition of the Church to their domination. Because in Nagaland almost every Naga member is a member of a

Church. In some cases the Church has to bear some financial cuts from individuals who withhold support in the   form of tithes or 'donations'. Usually these people are the ones who have close ties or connections with the power-blocks. This is the sacrifice demanded to enable the Church to provide conditions to give back the voice, rights and hope to the people and bring about some form of structural change and peace in Nagaland.

Such a call is more than a religious duty. It is an ethical and moral vocation that comes from the fusion of Naga spirituality with the Church. The prophetic Church does not speak to substitute for action; nor should it speak for publicity's sake and to gain a reputation for "instant problem-solving". It speaks by insisting on genuine theological 'space' amid the political pressures and worldly assumptions of the time and by posing more difficult questions and giving a fresh conceptual framework within which those questions can be viewed.[537]

7.3.2 (i)   The question of the Naga Church and Politics

Nagas must wake up to the inequality existing even within their tribal social spectrum. The egalitarian ethos of traditional society is no longer justifiable. Peaceful co-existence cannot be envisioned without waking up to this reality. Political questions must be addressed for negotiations and peace to become feasible. Political questions within the Naga context refer to the power of domination which is usually based on growing asymmetrical or an over-powering and controlling relationship between the Nagas.

To directly align and be involved in the bureaucracy of the Government is not the domain of the Church. But to expose corruption and impose moral pressure on the bureaucratic system that marginalizes and exploits the smaller tribes and villages, the illiterate and the poor, the excluded people in society, so that they can be empowered

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[537] Keith Clements, *Learning to Speak: The Church's Voice in Public Affairs,* T & T Clark, Edinburgh,

in the process is not only the role of the institutional Church, but at the heart of practical Christianity. The Church must give voice to the many subalterns existing within the subaltern Naga nation.

Cultural reality in social terms should be reinterpreted in the present socio-political context of poverty, violence and marginalization. The role of the Church in the context of the suffering of the Naga people in the light of GoI hegemony and intra-Naga factional clashes has been discussed in the previous section. The next question now is what is the role of the Church in the Indo-Naga and intra- Naga factional violence.

7.3.2 (ii) The Church's role in the Indo-Naga political conflict

The negotiation of a political arrangement between GoI and the Nagas may be left in the hands of the various factions and the Naga politicians. In the current 'peace process', GoI know that the one-sided peace talks with NSCN(IM) is not working. It is rather becoming a divisive factor in internal Naga politics. NSCN (IM) though they are the more stronger faction in terms of numbers of armed cadres, 'knowledge-based' control, without admitting to the other factions, knows that after 11 years in the peace process it has not achieved any tangible arrangement. NSCN(IM) has also accepted the fact that in the present political climate of Nagaland they cannot unilaterally bring any form of political arrangement. Such a development would produce potential 'civil war' and Nagas would be further disintegrated. NSCN (IM) therefore is asking the Naga civil society, the Church, and the various factions to come and support their 'peace talk' with GoI. But NSCN (IM) insist on this 'clarion call' without giving up their politics of domination and any arrangement is insisted through their political agenda and expression.

In such an Indo-Naga problem intertwined with intense intra-Naga factional politics, the Church has a twofold role. In the case of the Indo-Naga political problem, the Church as an institution that represents the interest of the Naga people should put

1995, p.146.

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pressure on GoI that the peace process should be initiated not only with NSCN (IM) but also with the other factions. It should impress upon GoI that for any political arrangement to be honourable, legitimate and acceptable it should be inclusive of all the Naga factions and not only with NSCN(IM). The Church should also impress upon the GoI that since they are the party that holds the 'hegemonic' political power and 'bureaucratic mechanism' they should insist that the Naga national leaders of various factions come together to the negotiation table after a specific period of time . The term 'together' here means that the four factions should be represented and come with a common agenda for Naga political self-determination. The Church along with the Naga Hoho (Council/ Parliament) and various regional tribal organizations like the Eastern Naga Peoples Organization (ENPO), the Naga tribal organization in Manipur, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh should collectively impress on GoI that the Naga people should be allowed self-determination and to recognize their political and cultural distinctiveness and identity. While attempting peace initiatives between parties in the Intra-Naga conflict, a commitment from GoI to refrain from any 'divide and rule policy', or to manipulate 'players'- (policy makers or individuals-Nagas or Non-Nagas) including media, (Naga or Indian), to divert peace initiatives is essential.

These initiatives are very important because the political conflict with GoI is upstaged by the intra-Naga factional clashes. There are no pressure groups who are speaking for the Naga people. Meanwhile it has allowed GoI to increase its political influence, manipulation and power over the Naga people. The Church can not only speak out but can become the platform that allows the people to come together and speak collectively.

7.3.2 (iii)   The Church's role in the inter-factional conflict

In the intra-factional conflict the Church is already working for the various factions to come together but is without much success so far.[538] However the church has not

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[538] After much negotiation and ground work the Church and various civil societies brought the various factions together where praying, singing and counselling was conducted in October 2008. It concluded on 9th October with a football match. However within two days there were reports where factions

provided any practical modality except a call for healing, forgiveness and reconciliation under the cross of Christ. Such a message is important in a Christian dominated nation like Nagaland, where the symbol of the cross and the message of forgiveness have played a huge role. But since the Naga problem is political in nature, the Church should also have a practical and concrete strategy to bring justice so that reconciliation and healing will be feasible. The prophetic voice of the Church must overcome the polarity amongst different political factions and tribes. For peace to be feasible a process of delivering justice that channels reconciliation is required. Justice here is the equality of all groups with equal representation and rights to build credibility and confidence in groups. The two basic conditions for unity between the factions are:

(a)The historical or contemporary domination of one faction/tribe which needs to recognize the rights and equality of the other factions/tribes. It should be insisted upon that a single faction does not represent the interest or aspiration of all the Nagas. Rather each faction represents a section of the Nagas. In other words it is to dispel the attitude that a single faction is the legitimate 'guardian' of the Naga national or political cause.

(b) the other factions/tribes cannot exclude the tribal/faction identity of the dominant group while excluding the domination of the group.

In dealing with the factional issue which is a 'specific' part of the whole conflict in the sense that the various factions are not willing to commit to negotiate with each other. In this respect the three processes of conflict resolution can be emulated to deal with this 'specific' factional problem. A process that will enable the factions to make a "decision to meet and negotiate, secondly a decision to negotiate and thirdly

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members were killed by rival factions. The NSCN (IM) has also invited various factions with the initiatives of various civil society in the presence of Quakers groups from UK and American Peace groups in Thailand. However such moves have not stopped the factions involvement in direct violence and counter-allegations and accusations. Especially between NSCN (IM) and NSCN(K) together with NSCN (Unification). Also the Nagaland Gaonbura (village elders) Federation and the Nagaland Dobashi Association (Dobashi meaning people who know two languages was an office formed by the English. They were Nagas who along with their local language spoke either Assamese or English so they could be employed as interpreters. This Office exists to this day. They function today to assist the Deputy Commissioners of their respective districts in the judicial system along customary laws). The joint Forum of the two offices was formed on 6th June ,2007. On 7th December, 2007 this Forum was able to bring all the factions to agree to sign a Cease-fire. However this agreement was violated when three cadres belonging to the NSCN (K) factions were killed in January 2008 supposedly by the NSCN

a decision to structure the agenda in order to keep the process focus on the issues"[539] is necessary. Keeping this model in mind the Church can develop their role as a mediator beyond the religious rhetoric to bring the various factions together.[540] The reality is the Naga struggle for self-determination towards autonomy or 'total independence' is difficult to envision unless the Nagas display their ability and vision to administer themselves with coherence and democratic governance. The main rationales the Church can emphasise and include as it continues its role as a mediator between the factions are:

(i) the first practical step towards a 'self-determination' for the Nagas given the current political reality is for the factions to come to a common table to negotiate with each other.

(ii) To come to a common table to negotiate does not imply that the factions should become a single entity.

(iii) To constantly remind the factions that the 'common table to negotiate' is not the platform to counter accuse each other of the killings, violence and the political 'mishaps' committed and inflicted to each other. It should acknowledge the legitimate grievances but continue to emphasize that the 'common table to negotiate' is organized so that such act of violence, killing, and manipulation will be prevented and will not happen. In the event of 'untoward' incidents outside the 'negotiating table', a commitment from the factions that the 'talks' must not collapse and continue will also be essential.

(iv) To 'negotiate' means to come to a common understanding and agreement to decide on what the 'political arrangement' with GoI would consist of. To succeed in reaching an agreement for a 'political arrangement' with GoI, the factions should come to a common understanding and agree on a common agenda for negotiation.

(v) The place of power-sharing so that each faction is given a legitimate representation in the event of a new 'political arrangement'.

(vi) Representatives of Naga Hoho and ENPO may also be included.

(IM) faction. Counter retaliation followed. Kari Longchar, *NBCC Report*, 2008, p.7.
[539] Barbara F. Walter, Re-conceptualizing Conflict Resolution as a Three stage process, Daniel Druckman and Paul F. Diehl (eds.), *Conflict Resolution, Vol.* London : Sage, 2006, pp. 206-216, in pp. 202-210.
[540] The attempt of the Church so far as mentioned already is a call to come and unite on the basis of healing, reconciliation and forgiveness 'at the Cross of Calvary'.

(vii) The Church as an independent mediator[541] should ensure and constantly remind all the parties that all factions have equal power, rights, and representation so that any tendency for 'domination or manipulation' by a faction will not be entertained.

(viii) The representatives from the various factions might initially be from the middle level

(ix) The Church might also assert to the factions as well as to 'outside sympathizers'[542] that no single faction is the sole representative of the Naga cause unless all the various factions conclusively speak in a voice in consultation with the people. But each faction represents the interest of a section of the Naga people.

(x) In this regard a 'Drafting Committee' to explore potential 'political arrangements' with GoI can be represented by all the factions in consultation with the Naga Hoho and ENPO and independently mediated by the Church.

The Church should make it clear that by calling the faction together it does not mean that they must forsake their factional representation in the event that they cannot merge together as one. A move by some factions to merge as one factional[543] entity however should be welcomed. The possibility that each faction can become regional political parties in the event of the new political arrangement to represent the various interests of the Nagas can be explored.

Such an emphasis calls for a major shift in the thinking and philosophy of the various factions that are now following a path that endorses the campaign to fight until one wins total control and the other 'surrenders' to the winners' agenda. A modality by the Church that the voice of all the factions are equally represented, respected and recognized is so crucial. The Church not only as a moral body but as a representative of the people should not only facilitate and mediate but make sure

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[541] The Church should request the presence of the Quakers and the American Baptist Church should deem them necessary, since the two organizations are already involved with the Naga struggle.

[542] 'Outside sympathizers' might include International observers, human rights organizations, or media who without knowing the entire dynamics of Naga factional representation or upon hearing the argument of a lone faction will assume that 'this faction' speaks and represents the Nagas. In this respect NSCN(K) have accused various Centre and civil societies based in the Netherlands, the UK etc who have promoted the Naga cause through the reading of the NSCN(IM). Such a tendency has alienated the other factions and instead might prevent forthcoming peace-building initiatives.

[543] For instance NSCN (K) and NSCN (Unification) have declared recently that they will merge as one political representation and be known as NSCN. Cynics might say that their merger is to counter the

that the interests of the people are taken into account.

An "internal" peace process within the factions and with the Naga public is important if the present ongoing "external" peace process is to have any substantial meaning. On the other hand the Nagas can also not pass by the opportunity that is in front of them. How do Nagas start that process? How can different warring groups or factions along tribal lines shrouded with suspicion and violence build confidence ? Dialogue, which is called "the newest and oldest"[544] theoretical development in communication, is the element that the Nagas may need to embrace to correct and edit the perception of the perceived "rivals" or "enemies". Naga tradition is dominated by dialogue with equal hearing, representation and opportunity for conflicting parties and groups.

Dialogue in relationships, according to LittleJohn and Domenici[545] makes it possible to explore the rules that are used to communicate with one another as well as the contexts of meaning and differences and makes it possible to explore common ground. Dialogue also gives people the opportunity to create new context and to learn significant new things. It opens space to acknowledge differences and then to look for areas of common ground. Such kinds of dialogue can be risky, as it leads to unfamiliar communication, which then might lead to the discovery of uncomfortable new things. Such a process provides the opportunity for conflicting parties to learn and to become sympathetic to the person once despised. It challenges the power that gave them justification to hate the perceived enemies. Since such a process risks disclosure, it requires a safe environment to make it possible.

How can Nagas develop such a process of dialogue? Less the 1% of Nagas are underground and the rest are overground publicly.[546] The majority of these

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more powerful NSCN(IM).
[544] Matson and Montagu, quoted in Stephen W. LittleJohn and Kathy Domenici, *Engaging Communication* in Conflict, Thousand Oaks ; London : Sage, 2001. p.22.
[545] Ibid., pp.23--45.
[546] In Nagaland 'underground' refers to the cadres of the various factions who are directly involved in the 'national cause' of the Nagas. 'Overground' refers to the rest of the Naga public. But there are also cases where some miscreants 'overground' claiming to be 'underground' move around demanding and extorting money from the public. They used this cover because the Naga public are generally afraid

overgrounds in one way or the other have direct or indirect affiliation or sympathy to one of the four factions because of tribal connections or various personal gains and interests. Because the risk is lesser within the overground, the Nagas' initial appraisal of the situation can begin with them. It can start within villages, between villages, and among tribes. Local churches, in co-operation with their respective village councils, can work out the process. The modality for the purpose of the dialogue can be as simple as building respect and re-examining shared values with new eyes and re-assessing relationships. A forum for relatives of victims or the victims of different factions can be a challenging initiative. This can be the groundwork to bring together different factions which later can be elevated to engaging national workers and stakeholders in dialogue. This is where the Church, along with the Naga Hoho and other civil society, can play a crucial role. Having said this the Church can make a clear statement that its role as a non partisan and non tribal mediator is not compromised by being involved in the petty interest and politics of 'tribal elections' and state elections

7.3.2 (iv) The Church's role with the neighbouring states:

Nagas must first realize that they cannot develop as a nation in isolation. In order to begin to develop a more vibrant and meaningful social, cultural and political relationship with the neighbouring states is needed. In fact these states comprise of various cultural communities of which most of them are tribal like the Nagas. These people are equally marginalized groups under the Indian hegemony and the bureaucratic state system. The political status of these 'non- Naga tribals' might be different from the tribal Nagas in the sense that they might not have the 'legal' basis like the Nagas to claim to be a separate nation from India. But the suffering and the powerlessness of these tribals under the pressure of the political power of GoI cannot be disregarded and dismissed.

The Church cannot negotiate the political arrangement or form formal links with the bureaucratic system of the neighbouring states. But the Church can communicate and

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of the underground' because of the threat and direct violence they use over people who refuse to give in

reach out beyond territorial and political boundaries drawn up by GoI. Such a dialogue needs to emerge with various civil society found in the neighbouring states. Dialogue over cultural and political power should be initiated with the huge tribal community in the neighbouring states to see the political struggle of the Nagas in the wider picture of the tribal oppression by mainstream Indian hegemony. The support of the tribal people for the Naga struggle in the wider picture of the tribal political discourse is key for Nagas and the tribal struggle in general. The Naga political struggle with GoI should also empower the various tribal communities evicted from their ancestral lands, or pressured by GoI assimilations policy by highlighting the tribal conditions.

In such a cultural reality among various tribal communities in the neighbouring states, the Church should reach out to the various Churches found in the various tribal areas. The platform of the Church should in return be used to re-connect with the various civil societies. The Naga Church as a member of the Council of Baptist Churches in North East India (CBCNEI) can use this forum to pose and address the question of why the various tribal political and social movements for legitimate causes in North East India (NEI) had began to employ the culture of violence against themselves. This is a collective issue the peoples in NEI should address. The persecution of the minority Christians in India, CBCNEI should also seriously reflect on the political and cultural implications on the tribals in NEI.[547]

The Naga Church must not only make an event of visits to neighbouring Churches but make it a part of a regular process. The Naga churches in Dimapur and Kohima, where there are various churches belonging to different tribal communities from neighbouring states, must become involved in a more interactive rather than isolated way. There were initiatives where a group of Nagas under the initiation of NPMHR visited Delhi to communicate with the people of India in January 2000 and it concluded with a peace march which saw the participation of not only Nagas but

to their demands.

[547] The federal state Nagaland, Meghalaya and Mizoram in NEI are the only states where there are majority Christians in India. Christians form slightly over 2 percent of the total population of the Indian Union.

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followers of Gandhi, and civil and democratic rights groups from India.[548] In 2001 Naga public leaders, under the initiatives of the Naga Hoho, visited the Asom Sahitya Sabha in Assam.[549] Such visitations should be more streamline and become a regular fixture.

The Naga Church as a moral voice should not keep its prophetic tone confined to Nagas exclusively. The neighbouring states have on many occasions accused Naga factions of causing violence, and demanding unsustainable amounts of money within their administrative jurisdictions which extend beyond Naga inhabited areas. The Church can raise its voice against such actions of coercion by the Naga factions. The Church should raise its voice whenever Naga factions abuse their power over helpless villagers and tribals. The Church may not be able to interfere in the issue of taxation imposed by various factions on neighbouring states who have to communicate through Naga territorial boundaries. But the Church can denounce unfair taxation so that both Nagas or 'non-Nagas' are not burdened with taxation by each faction and on fluctuating rates. Nagas cannot expect neighbouring states to respond to the Nagas friendly gestures and enter into a more meaningful relationship without addressing at least by some Naga civil society the issues that affect the people of those states.

Nagas should reach out to the open minded Indian masses and progressive political parties; despite the differences in experiences and beliefs, it is to the underlying basis of humanity, and security that they must appeal. The critique, is to voice out against the oppression and manipulation of the weak and powerless of the Nagas and the many Indian subalterns, caught in the powerful nexus of the cultural and highly centralized political structure of the Indian state politics. In dealing with this they must envision a peaceful co-existence in the shared humanity of both the Nagas and the Indians of different caste and religion in a socio-political space conditioned by equality, trust, justice, and respect.

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[548] NPMHR, *The Nagas: Truth and Hope for the Living,* p.45-46.
[549] Asom Sahitya Sabha in Guhawati is the biggest Cultural organisation in Assam. They were hosted by the President of the organization Mr. Homen Bor Gohainnas and also by the then Chief

7.3.3 The Church as a platform for Naga Unity: Shaping the Naga collective sense identity

The Naga identity needs a coherence that can sustain itself. Otherwise the only content of identity will be the opposition in relation to India that enhances the Naga collectiveness only against an 'outsider'. Such a perception has brought division among the tribes in Nagaland. And in a more changed socio-economic and political system it has enhanced the tribal distinctiveness instead of bringing them together. Such an attitude has led the Naga to scramble against each other for political power and eventually for GoI monetary incentives because it is an identity based on 'tribal exclusivity'.

The need for Nagas to determine a Naga identity within Naga terms is an important aspect in creating a sense of their unity. What is the culture of the Nagas ? What unites them? Christian and tribal characteristics are common denominators to all Nagas. A new identity based on Christianity and tribal identity and spirituality that is unique from Indian secularism and religious identity is required. Nagas need to define themselves not only culturally but also politically by presenting the common interests, and challenges their political aspiration presents. It is not only to idealize their aspiration but to assess and confront the reality of their situation and propose constructive principles for their growth.

The attachment to various symbolic representations Nagas practices should be enhanced by interpreting the historical significance it represents. For example the rooster as a source of personal friendship, the feast over pig killing, stone pulling, the mithun as the symbol of merit, the *morung* as the central place of traditional Naga social life and polity, the practice of head-hunting, hornbill, village gate etc. At a more epistemological level the respect for and the position of women in society, the traditional belief of life after death and the belief of a good and bad life, etc. At a more practical level is the essence of village identity to every Naga, the component of territory, clanship, and jhum (shifting/slash cultivation) or terrace cultivation inherent

Minister of Assam , Tarun Gogoi.

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to every Naga village. The recognition of tribe along linguistic lines but formed by such independent villages. The feeling of kinship that comes as a result of such shared commonalities is important. The realization of Naga identity in relation to each tribe in recognizing not only the commonalities but also the differences is just as important.

An examination of the question of the evolving 'Naga-ness' as a collective identity should be taken by the Church, the various tribal groups in Nagaland, and the civil societies. Here are some pointers that can be taken into consideration that can contribute in the political definition of being a Naga:

(i)   Collectively a group of tribes are Nagas because they recognize and aspire to be not only a distinct tribal group but a distinct ethnic one, with their own distinct culture and socio-political action of self-determination since 1929.

(ii) Individual tribes are not Nagas. Nagas are not those tribes or peoples who refer to and identify with 'Naga' as 'simply' a group of 'backward head-hunting ' people, who lived in the hills located to the east of Assam. Nagas are those tribes that accept and identify themselves with the political identity of Naga as a separate nation. These are the tribes who live contiguous to each other with specific territorial expanses and boundaries.

(iii) In an ontological meaning, an individual cannot claim to be a Naga if the individual cannot claim their roots in a specific village that comes under one of the Naga tribes.   Because under Naga political and structural formation there can be no tribe formed along linguistic lines without the villages. On the other hand village is not an abstract concept. There is no village without its own territory that is formed by at least more than two clans, and myth and legends of its own founders. That is why there can be no political Naga identity if it was not claimed collectively by these tribes who are formed by the numerous independent traditional villages. The concept of a Naga political nation might be a recent formation that complies with an instrumentalist or a constructivist approach. But the basis through which it emerged is strongly attached to the primordial approach. The 'immemorial village authority' is strongly enshrined in the Naga nation. The tradition of their village practices, and customs are securely sealed in the high place of their very being and the glorious past

of their forefathers. Its origin, its genesis - compared only to something akin to the sacredness, to the very spiritual existence of their perpetual soul. The traditional cultural practices and taboos; their religiosity and observances of kinship are highly regarded.

(iv) Nagas collectively endorse and accept that the first missionary was Dr. E. W Clark and his wife Mary Mead, followed by various missionaries. They also agree that the message of Christianity opened their rather insular individual villages for more interaction and awareness of each other. In due course this eventually contributed to their feeling of 'oneness' not only culturally but also politically. Christianity provided the ideological space to translate separate primordial beliefs and ties to be collectively interacted with and interpreted.

(v) The sense of marginalization due to their distinct customs and practices they encountered during their trips to the plains of Assam.

(vi) Naga villages were subject to the armed operations of India as early as 1953, not because they were economically 'backward' tribes under a secular India but because they claimed they were Nagas, with a distinct political status and identity. GoI saw the Naga movement, as new as their claim for nationhood might be as 'a legitimate movement' and capable of challenging the newly formed Indian Union. GoI validated the claims of the Naga as a nation by unilaterally occupying Nagaland and distributing it to various administrative units.

The Church must reaffirm the basis of Naga identity so that their politics is not marred and disintegrated by tribal division. In a changing socio-political and economic landscape Nagas must also ask what does Christianity and tribal identity mean to the Naga people who are politically powerless, economically poor and culturally discriminated. Without a deliberate effort to bind and highlight the meaning of 'Naga-ness', in a Naga reality fragmented by factional clashes for domination and caught in the vigorous policy of GoI hegemony, many Naga citizens will be left 'exhausted' and disillusioned'. The reality is Nagas collectively have never lived together as a single unit under one political umbrella. Despite its political attempts to be united, there is no guarantee that the suffering of the Naga people will be alleviated if a political system that appreciates the historical grievances is not acknowledged.

There should be space within the political Naga identity to recognize 'legitimate' grievances within a particular tribe or towards another. Usually this manifests itself in the smaller tribes being unhappy about the dominant tribes' attitude and behaviour. The role of the Church is to seek collective responsibility for the 'perpetration' and to demand 'accountability' for such acts. To provide the conditions for equal representation and for the political voice of every group to be heard is a continuous effort. The Church can give a platform to the oppressed people and villages from 'the perceived advanced tribe or the perceived power blocks' to work together with the other 'disadvantaged tribes' who suffer marginalization even at the hands of the more powerful Naga tribes. The Church can reinforce in their doctrine the cultural characteristic of each tribe based on respect and recognition.

The role of Christianity is important in terms of language because the first priority for any tribe, big or small, once they have attained literacy is to produce a Bible and Christian hymn book in their own language. In this regard the Church should take into consideration that their missionary zeal does not over look such potential conflict.

The common experience of marginalization and oppression of all Nagas under GoI should be highlighted . There is so far no comprehensive report on the armed operation of the Indian army in Nagaland. The Church should take up this process of historical documentation. [550] Since every village in Nagaland has a church, with preparation it is a feasible project. It should be an account of the direct killing and injury inflicted upon the Nagas during the armed operation and the famine that occurred as a result of GoI's military action. It would serve to be a complete documentation of GoI act of violation against human rights, culture and land. As sensitive as it maybe, the Church must identify families who were directly affected and who lost loved ones as a result of the Naga factional violence. This would help to expose the futility and madness of Naga violence. People of various tribes, who are affected directly under different factions by violence, can be a potential driving force for Naga unity. Such a move is not to polarize but to provide conditions for the

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[550] See accounts from authors like Mar Atsongchar, Kaka Iralu etc. They are excellent examples but accounts of only some incidents of suffering. In fact such wide scale documentation of armed oppression over such a long period is nearly impossible for individuals.

'power blocks' and factions to prepare, to critique and to shift their perceptions of their role in the Naga nations cause. Such an initiative is also daunting as it makes the declaration that Naga 'objectivity' is no longer narrowly focused along tribal lines.

Various models of study, analysis and therapy may have to be introduced and applied to bring a healing processes to a society fragmented by violence and bloodshed like the Nagas. The place of political reparation, restitution, justice and accountability must also be taken into account.   But if the wounds and betrayal of such magnitude and within cultural and kin members are to go beyond ' bitter national memories', then a process "should take on an indigenous, religious character".[551] A process that "had deep cultural roots" that can affirm the "identity and does honor"[552] to the Nagas so that the 'bitter memories' without being forgotten can lead to build stronger relations and sustainable peace. The role of the Church is to utilize their teaching "to heal deep injuries and to reconstitute a cultural and spiritual identity that responds to the need for uniqueness but that does not need to do this by way of hatred of the outsider".[553]   The common Naga custom found ingrained in their village tradition to make peace or open their 'village gate' to 'perceived enemies' who have betrayed or inflicted bloodshed on them are often done symbolically.   For instance by presenting 'a living animal' and 'communal eating' with communal activities like fishing or clearing forest is very symbolic. Monoliths or huge slates of stone are erected   to commemorate such an event. Spears and Naga swords are communally exchanged.[554]

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[551] Marc Gopin, *Between Eden and Armageddon,* p.171. Gopin was bringing such an approach in the context of Jewish history and how religious can be utilised in conflict resolution.

[552] Ibid., p. 171.

[553] Ibid., p.175.

[554] Communal here implies the participation of the two conflicting villages in such activities as meeting in the *morung* or at the village gate. Each village might take turns to host the other. Feasting together with speeches, dances and forefathers songs, where pigs, cows or mithuns are served is a cultural sign of friendship among all Naga villages. The identification of such practices in the myth, the narration of Naga villages and culture is very deep. However in Naga culture women are not allowed to participate in any political conversation. The Naga Church can emulate such cultural practice. But the space of the Church can also to deliberate the position of   women not as subordinate and as a 'body' only to 'bear' the continuity of the 'nation' prescribed by men alone. The Church should raise the position of the women as active participants and contributors to the making of the Naga society who also bear the brunt of such violence and therefore need equality in the healing process.   This is not to contradict and abandon Naga tradition but to revive it to make it living and relevant.

The protection and recognition of Naga political identity is needed. But in a changed political environment, it should not be in opposition but in negotiation, and in relation to the other tribal communities of the neighbouring states, the Indian subalterns and GoI in general.

7. 4 Conclusion

These on-going peace processes must lead the Nagas to re-assess their conflicts: where they stand, their strategy and their objectives. The Government of Nagaland state must also be ready to pave the way for any potential form of government that will come as a result of a new 'political arrangement'. The Naga collectively should take into consideration the political aspect of modernity. They can unanimously negotiate with GoI,   the form of political arrangement that will allow them to live out their political aspiration when they have 'matured politically' to be sovereign in the truest sense of nation-state if they decide to do so.

Intra Naga conflict in the form of the various factional fighting should not be viewed as a negative aspect of the distinctiveness of each tribe but rather it urgently needs a political structure to address the needs and interests of each tribe. In this regard the factions with their militant tendencies though a major   part of the problem for Naga unity are not the source of the Naga problem. Rather factionalism is a response to the political system that is currently imposed upon them. If the problem of factionalism was not there in Nagaland there would be another form of   a ' divisive mechanism'. The problem is rather the inability of GoI to address the Naga political issue and its assumption that all 'backwardness and tribal primitivism' can by solved either by   military power or economic development under the aegis of secularism and equality.   It is also the lack of a political system that meets the needs and accommodates the tribal polity, culture and identity like that of the Nagas. Therefore Naga factions, the civil societies, the Church and GoI must engage together in exploring a political structure that accommodates the Naga tribal polity and culture. It should be a structure that upholds a cohesive administrative mechanism, and institutions that allows them to integrate, but also respects their tribal particularities

within them. Any political structure should defuse enduring historical domination and struggle for complete control. The process and cycle of power struggle has brought about to prominence the differences rather than the commonalities of the tribes. A Naga form of tribal federalism that allows a tribal sense of identity but allows space for interaction may be feasible. While acknowledging the tribal differences, cultural modernity especially in the Naga context through Church should cultivate creative ways of interaction to solve Naga divisive problems. Such a process and development is not only for the Nagas but for GoI to evolve itself as a nation, as a federal, secular and democratic state to address the various minority issues that are threatening its stability and Union.

The prophetic role of the Church is to lay down the moral and ethical responsibility and accountability the Naga have to each other, their community, the tribes and the wider world in general. The Church can expose the reality of existing indifferences in politics in the scramble for power. The Church must champion and bring all parties, weak and strong, to engage in continuous dialogue. The Naga Church above all should reinforce hope in a society fragmented by violence, hate and fear.

Chapter 8 Conclusion

Dignified and independent, yet communal in character, the Nagas have an amazing history of folklore, customary practices, a unique structural and territorial village administration and historical resistance to any colonial occupation. The Naga 'modern' history however has been eclipsed by Indian armed operation, specifically deployed to break the basis of Naga people-hood and their self-determination. Nagas within and outside the federal unit of Nagaland state have collectively endured political violence at the hands of the GoI simply because they were Nagas. Naga history is one of suffering, state violence and a continuous struggle for survival against assimilation, division and marginalization. Their ancestors might have been categorised as 'backward', as 'primitives' and 'junglees' (forest people) but they clearly recognised and articulated that if they joined the new India Union, they would be rendered landless and would lose their identity and culture to a far more dominant political and cultural power. The challenges before the Nagas seemed insurmountable.

The extensive military, economic and political pressure from GoI, in the absence of a political system that allows Nagas to evolve as a nation, has fragmented the Naga political struggle. The Naga factional division and the vicious cycle of both structural and direct violence have remained unsolved. The reality is GoI can no longer control the Naga political rights under the auspices of Indian secularism and national security. The Naga political movement for self-determination on the other hand is in a difficult situation because of the various factions' reluctance to agree to talk with GoI with a unanimous voice. The Naga cannot evolve as a nation by blaming the GoI's divisive policies towards factions and tribals. The GoI might be in a much superior political position and more powerful but the Nagas must also accept their responsibility in the building of their nation.

As already discussed in the earlier chapters GoI can approach the Indo-Naga problem with a political will and commitment to build sustainable peace through relational dialogue. The first step is to acknowledge the 'uniqueness' of the Naga political position and the GoI's responsibility of their political occupation. The second

measure is for GoI to acknowledge that the Indo-Naga issue cannot be resolved within the Indian territorial integrity and the Constitution of India. The reason GoI must change its position is not because the Nagas are seeking to secede from the Indian Union, or because they are stirring an 'anti-national' movement against GoI in the India Union. The reason why GoI should change their stance is, firstly, because the Nagas thought themselves as a nation and declared their determination to be a separate political entity before Indian Independence from the British colonial power. Secondly, as already discussed in the Chapter 3, Nagaland did not belong to the Indian 'sacred geography'. The national imagination of Hindu India might like to endorse the idea that the Indian sub-continent was all under the influence of the Brahmanical structure and the Hindu belief system. In fact this rationale underpins the justification of GoI's occupation and the marginalization of the Nagas in mainstream India. However this is   politically contradicted by the Nagas and strongly highlighted in the cultural belief- system of the Naga village epistemology and egalitarianism of recognition, equality, respect and sharing; as opposed to the Indian hierarchical structure that justifies 'un-touchability' based on 'primitivism'. Thirdly, the condition in which the Nagas were occupied and divided into various federal units does not make the GoI as the sovereign power over the Nagas. The GoI is at its most is exercising administrative power over the Nagas, made possible because of its political power. But because of the historical violation of the will of the Naga people, the GoI has the moral responsibility to develop in consultation with the Nagas a 'political arrangement'. It must be an interim arrangement that allows the Nagas to self-govern and prepare themselves politically so that when the time is 'ripe', an informed and prepared Nagaland can determine without coercion either to merge with the Indian Union or become an 'associated state' with GoI or to be independent and sovereign as a nation-state. Such a provision should allow the Nagas the right for 'external self-determination'. The GoI can extend such a political commitment by receiving the various Naga factions as equals, not because each faction is powerful and can hold political talks, or because GoI can manipulate one faction more than the other, but because for mmoral and political reasons, the GoI cannot violate and abuse the political will of the Naga people any longer.

Within the internal Naga political dynamics, the recurring pattern of factional divisions in the Naga political movement is one of the major challenges. This has been attributed to the GoI dividing the Nagas into various federal units within the Indian Union. This has contributed to the Nagas' inability to develop a cohesive political system that encompasses their traditional form of tribal structure. It is in this light that the role of the Church as a unifying factor and as a platform of conflict resolution has been discussed throughout the thesis. The Church is today confronted with such a responsibility because of the historical and cultural role it has played over the last hundred years as the institution and the space that has incorporated within the structures and traditional culture of the Naga peoples. The British colonial power may have removed the insularity of the Naga villages, but it was Christianity that provided them with the tools to address such a historical change. As discussed in Chapter 4 the institution of *morung* which was at the heart of every Naga village was transferred to the church building which soon was constructed in every village and town. During one of the worst military operations by GoI against the Nagas, the Church became the mediator to bring the first ceasefire between GoI and the NNC.

Today the challenge before the Church is how to become more relevant in the new cultural and political realities that are faced by the Naga people. The traditional methods discussed in Chapter 4 of bringing various conflicting parties together could be incorporated in peace processes with the factions. Such a method like *Chiyongsen*[555] can provide the conditions for the factions to come together. Since such an approach is found in every Naga tribe, the involvement and the participation of the general masses becomes more active and meaningful. But since unlike the 'pre-literate' era of the Naga villages the political conditions are more complex and protracted, the Church can incorporate, in such a mediating role, some modalities to be honoured by the various factions. The call of the Church for peace and reconciliation needs to be supported with some concrete practical measures. Such an initiative can be reinforced by the presence of each tribal representative along traditional structures to involve and participate in the political dialogue with the factions.

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[555] See Chapter 4 for more details.

The immediate challenge for the Nagas and the Church is to bring the various factions together to negotiate. But if the process of Naga nation-building has to evolve into a more cohesive cultural and political mechanism, then the issue of tribal identity has to be addressed. A culture of sustainable peace can begin only through addressing the structural formation of Naga society. If such a shift has to be made, then the Church should address the tribal identity that has developed in Nagaland as a response to modernity. The collective endorsement of the villages to their own tribe is today a strong social and cultural identity in Nagaland (as already discussed in Chapter 5). The tribal organisation in an expanded version followed traditional village representation. This system of representation is not only being used in the tribal sense, it is the fabric of the organisation of the Nagas themselves. In this way, though the tribal identity is a recent development, it is considered traditional because it incorporates the village structure, and the village myths and customs are taken as the tribal character. The tribe does not overtake the village administration or the territory - rather the strength of the villages reinforce the tribal identity.

Tribal identity is strong not only because it gives a sense of kinship, attachment and belonging but also because of those opportunities it gives to certain groups to gain access to political power and GoI monetary resources which are meant for development and employment.[556] The organization of tribal identity therefore can be manipulated for vested interests and benefits. It is this aspect of manipulation along tribal lines that is emerging as the main social and political problem in Nagaland. It is not only divisive for the Nagas but is detrimental to the national cause, reinforcing the fact that tribal lenses eclipse the Naga national objective. This is not to take the stand that Nagas should do away with the tribe because tribalism is a major Naga problem. Such an argument is to deny the very core of Naga identity which is the village. Rather the challenge is how people can be mobilized along the traditional organization in the present Naga context to give a platform to speak out collectively against that culture of fear that 'promotes the dreadful silence'. To be able to speak

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[556] In practice, however only the immediate relations, the closer kin members, or village to which the individual represents benefit most from such GoI resources. Accountability of funding as discussed already in chapter 7 is generally absent because participation of the people in decision making is

against the power blocks in Nagaland who abuse the rights of the people's self-determination, who instigate violence, and who suppress the voice of the people, is of paramount importance. The culture that prevents the Nagas from criticizing their current political movement of violence against each other and the suffering endured by the majority of Nagas is internal repression. Such a culture of repression can only be removed and overcome by the tribal organization that can mobilize people to speak out against domination and marginalization propagated by the various power blocks in Nagaland.

How can the platform of the Church with the tools of traditional culture address the big question of Naga nation-building. The Church as a common platform for the Nagas must search for a vision to unify and develop a political identity that is safe, just, sustainable and equal. The concept of the tribe as a strong social entity in Nagaland needs to be critically examined by the Church. The Church has pioneered as a mediator before but it should not be expected to provide a solution on its own. The Church is relevant in the Naga political and cultural transformation today, not necessarily because it preaches Christianity from the pulpit. It is relevant because the traditional practices of the Naga cultural institutions are incorporated within the Church. As discussed already in Chapter 6, at the time of transition from the village and tribe, the making of the Naga Church provided the platform.   Christianity came at the same time, and outsiders came and it helped the Nagas to respond and relate to each other during such cultural changes. In fact converting to Christianity and attending a church became the defining act of modernity. The Church is within the narrative and making of Naga historical, political and cultural development. The core of village representation, administration and beliefs in egalitarianism survived along with Christianity. The Church continues to have a grassroots connection through traditional ways of representation and the *morung*[557] in every Naga village has been replaced by the Church. Because of these factors a critique on the work of the American missionaries and Naga Christianity should take such underpinnings into account .

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absent.

Besides the teaching of biblical sermons, the Naga Church should take the initiative to re-educate themselves on their historical, political and cultural foundations. As pointed out in Chapter 7, one of the main reasons the Church is withholding this is because it is in a dilemma over the separation of Church and politics. This has prompted the understanding of the Church as a mediator only in situations of direct violence as a 'fire brigade'. The Church therefore should shift its general understanding of contesting in 'the Indian elections' or entering the bureaucratic mechanism of the government as politics. The Church should not only be a mediator to bring together conflicting parties in direct violence to talk or negotiate. The Church should look at a more wider picture of how it can continue to allow its platform as a mediator to guide and educate the people to face up to the challenges of modernity that come in the form of various political questions involving marginalisation and exclusion. The Church through its grassroots connections should use this traditional village representation and participation to empower the Naga people. When Nagas were still organised along the village entity, Christianity became the ideology that united the Nagas. Today it should have a dual purpose- one that not only unites the people but also reaches out to the people who are marginalised because of the political and economic impact of modernity. Since the core of the Nagas and the church representation is the village it should look at the core of the village identity which is the land.

The issue of land is a major problem for Naga villagers. The most marginalized are the poorest. Naga political identity starts from the territorial village. In a changing economic and political situation, the very character of the village, espoused through its territory, is fading. The villagers have come to the point where they have to sell their clan land and their reserved forest to survive, to avail of basic education, basic health care or meet various extortion taxes from various factions. The land is bought by rich (unaccounted money) Naga 'tycoons' who in the first place misappropriated the resources of the village and the funding for village development. The space that holds that identity (i.e. the territorial village) is shrinking to individual landholdings. This is a clear indication towards a direction where the most vulnerable villagers end

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[557] See Chapter 4 for more detail on *morung,*

up working as labourers in the large landholders' 'plantation'.[558]

For the people's movement to have an impact on the situation, people should seek to revive the village ethos of egalitarianism. The culture that holds Naga identity, and the voice of the powerless, should be taken up by the Church. The Church must lead the Nagas to seriously deliberate on the rights of villagers with regard to community land with a political will so that villagers are not rendered landless. Traditional and customary oral law is not enough. The codification of village territory belonging to villagers is needed for the interests of the people who are most vulnerable to the present socio-economic and political changes.

The internal dynamics of the Nagas, social as well as political, however cannot independently solve the Indo-Naga problem. As discussed in Chapter 7, the Church as a tool of conflict-resolution and as a unifying factor should therefore address the Naga problem both within its internal structure as well as with the GoI. Understanding the formation and the way tribal organisation functions therefore is very important. Such an understanding of both the Naga tribes and the traditional method of representation found in the tribal structure can bring unity and more cohesion among the Nagas. Such cohesion can become possible if the Naga political structure takes into consideration the representation of all the recognised Naga tribes. Such a structure should give the platform for the tribes not only to represent the issues of their respective tribes but the issues concerning the Nagas collectively. The Church should introduce, in consultation with the tribal council, such a political structure.

The introduction of such a traditional form of representation can provide the mechanism for the Nagas to unite. This is important because today the absence of Naga collective unity is the greatest obstacle to a political settlement with GoI. Such a mechanism will also pre-empt the domination of only a single faction or a single tribe. The basis of power-sharing should be inclusive of all the tribes with respect to the traditional practice of egalitarianism. Thereby it gives each Naga tribe and village a common platform, a sense of equality, responsibility and accountability. It is to

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[558] Explained in interview by   Kari Longchar, Kohima, 10th June   2007

reinforce the political and tribal concept that culturally and politically all tribes are equal in the Naga context. No tribe has the authority over any tribe to coerce its will or identity upon weaker tribes or express the political identity of the Nagas exclusively through their tribal or factional position. Having said this, the historical domination, particularities and the legitimate grievance of a tribe should not be overlooked in the name of Naga equality. Such a political system is to counter the growing elitism and domination of various power blocks in the form of GoI, the factions or the bureaucratic domination and abuse of power found in the Nagaland governmental institutions.

Therefore Naga unity is more than the unity of the factions. The unification of the Nagas is necessary not only to fight the domination by the GoI, but to develop themselves as a nation. It calls for a political will to enter into negotiations about the territorial issues with their immediate neighbouring tribes and states. Such a call for unification invites all the Naga tribes in Nagaland state, outside of Nagaland state and in Burma to reflect upon their fears, suspicions and needs. It is a challenge particularly to the Naga tribes in Nagaland state, especially the 'advanced tribes' in their 'comfortable' position' to consider the interests, the grievance and the sense of 'outsider' perceived by the Naga tribes outside Nagaland state.

The Church can expect opposition and accusations from the GoI for promoting the inclusive rights of the Naga tribes within or outside the Nagaland state. The Church can also expect to encounter opposition from the power-blocks of the Nagas - the factions and the bureaucrats in the current political system that have their own interests in protecting their power and positions. Such interest may be far removed from the interest of the Naga national cause. Chapter 7 has clearly highlighted the culture of 'dreadful silence' that is prevalent because people who speak against or contradict the interests of such power-blocks are either threatened or killed on the grounds of being 'anti-national'. The plight of the people should be exposed by the Church by identifying individuals, villages and groups that are directly affected by this culture of violence and silence. The existence of village and tribal representation through the platform of the village can take on the violence and domination of the

factions and the power-block of GoI. Because the social inequality in Nagaland and the political inequality with GoI can be addressed only through the participation of the people through village and tribal networks. Traditional representation and the Church platform can be a tool of conflict-resolution because the Nagas are not fighting because they are different. It is present in Naga politics today because of the divisive political system introduced by GoI and the Nagas' inability to evolve a coherent political mechanism.

In the present Naga cultural context such a challenge to reach the majority of Nagas will be possible only if the institution of Church changes its position and allows the 'pulpits' to be opened for such a mobilisation. The majority of Nagas will continue to be powerless if such a platform is not given. The purpose of the 'pulpit' is dual in the sense that it allows the people to be informed, and it gives the people the chance to mobilise and speak out. Thereby they will be empowered without being dependent on the Church. The platform of the Church will give their collective voice a chance to articulate their economic and political reality and confront the domination and manipulation of the various power blocks.

The Church can empower the people so that power-blocks in Nagaland can no longer mobilise Nagas against each other along tribal 'kinship'. The Church therefore needs to understand and re-articulate the internal underpinnings of the Naga struggle to shift the position of Church and politics. Politics for the Church should mean that the people are empowered by education and that the majority of Naga people have a voice to speak against social and political injustices. It requires the Church to train its leaders in the political and historical issues of Nagaland. The Church along with the tribal councils should develop a more inclusive and broader approach to address the Naga conflict. The Church should also understand the historical and cultural narratives of India[559] that empower and justify the political power of GoI.

Nagas through the Church and their various tribal councils should maintain cordial relationships with their neighbouring tribal groups. The problems between the Nagas

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[559] See chapter 3 for more details and explanation.

and the other tribal groups should be addressed through their traditional network. The Church can denounce the extortion of money in the name of a 'national tax' by the various factions. It should also speak for the tribal groups outside of the Naga group who are affected because of the violence of the Naga factions. The struggle of the Nagas should inspire other tribal groups to remove the structural violence of inequality and powerlessness. Nagaland is considered as the 'mother of insurgency' in north-east India. The Naga should continue to appeal for support for their struggle to their neighbouring tribes in the light of wider tribal suppression in the Indian context. Naga experiences can also enable similar struggles of tribes in neighbouring states to bring their suffering under Indian hegemony into the limelight and demand structural change. It also is hoped that the disarming of the Naga factional cadres will show the way to the numerous militant groups in north-east India to disarm and take up their cultural and social movement against marginalisation through people movement which is supported by their traditional and religious institutions.

Tradition has survived in the face of modernity and it has helped the Nagas to survive and develop their political identity. A political arrangement between GoI and the Nagas must take into account the tribal particularities and identity of the Nagas. It can be a form of a federation where all the Naga tribes are represented in their parliament. Like the Church, as already discussed in Chapter 6, such a political system can allow each tribal group to have a minimum vote of five or ten irrespective of population or size for all the tribes. However, for every 5,000, a population over 60,000 can carry an extra vote. A combination of both rotational and selectional representation like the traditional method of representation as well as an election system can be introduced and further deliberated upon. Representation for the Naga tribes in Burma should be reserved. The education of the village identity as the core of the formation of Naga identity can be used to forge a unifying factor through the Church. The tribal system of representation can be transferred to the Nagaland political system.

Economic development and investments no doubt are among the major considerations in Nagaland, as well as the psychological wounds of war and violence, and the reconciliation of various groups and factions. The reality is that the Nagas as a nation

have never lived under a single political umbrella. The formation of a government that suits and meets the nature and character of tribal identity is extremely important. It cannot simply be based along democratic elections with representation based on majority democracy. Democracy based on a majority has a tendency to exclude the minorities and smaller tribes.   Any successful form of government should take into consideration the tribal lines of organization and kinship, found strongly ingrained among the Nagas. The transfer and distribution of political power is extremely important to bring stability and peaceful co-existence to the region. The introduction of a new judicial procedure based on customary law, in consultation with and in compliance with international and regional law, also needs extensive research. The introduction of various infrastructural developments and investment in human and natural resources are necessary. Economic growth should be people-centered. An education system that promotes critical reading of historical as well as contemporary socio-economic and political systems and the applicability of such reading is important. Such an educational system should also introduce a culture of peace, resistance to direct violence, a sense of justice and equality in relation to reconciliation, respect, and accountability.   In such a context the political will and co-operation of GoI and Nagaland, with its various political institutions and bureaucratic system in the new 'political arrangement', and the political parties involved, will all play the most decisive   role for change and reform.

The main role of the Church is to continue to be a moral force to keep all the political institutions and mechanisms accountable for the interests of the majority subaltern within the Naga nation. It is to conscientise[560] the majority Naga masses so that the people by using its pulpit as a platform, will be enabled to perceive, interpret and react in relation to the immediate surroundings of their environment and the realities that are impacting on them. The Church should be independent of political manipulation, party politics, interests and domination. The Church, along with the various traditional tribal organizations and civil societies, has to work to make sure that such transitional or structural change in Naga society is for the interests of the

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[560] Paulo Freire summarize conscientisation as the process, " in which men, not as recipients, but as knowing subjects, achieve a deepening awareness both of the socio-cultural reality which shapes their lives and of their capacity to transform the reality." Freire, *Cultural Action For Freedom,* p. 51.

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Naga people. Such a role of the Church is important in the presence of Indian hegemony and the evolving Naga politics of power and domination. To be aware of the cultural reality of the Nagas and to keep that tradition alive is to appeal to the village epistemology of recognition, respect, equality and freedom. It is to appeal to the sense and essence of Naga egalitarianism even in the absence of such politics in the current political situation. It is to keep such a traditional ethos alive in the Naga national character. It is to empower and guide each and every member of the Nagas to fight against poverty and for freedom from their fear of domination and suppression by various power blocks.

The role of the Church in becoming a vehicle for the traditional customs of the Naga people in the transition to the modern era, and as a unifying factor in responding to the various changes and divisions, might not be an experience common to all tribal people. However the conventional assumption that the problem in traditional societies is merely a lack of economic development and therefore can be solved by economic packages and reforms is one-sided. Such an analysis fails to understand the complex social formation, attachments, interaction, and structure found in tribal societies. The Naga problem is a case in point that the relentless policy of the use of state power to homogenise social and cultural particularities, without recognising the political identity and cultural distinctiveness cannot resolve or suppress political struggles. Such a conclusion further calls for a relational approach and inter-dependence, as opposed to the coercive policies used by the institutions of state. Instead of the political system that attempts to suppress or instigate the abandonment of tribal identity, a different form of political system is called for, one that recognises tribal identity and culture in alignment with the basic values of universal human rights.

Appendix 1

Names of interviewees
1. Ahu Sakhrie*
2. Akum Longchari *
3. Arenla Longchar *
4. B. Taku Longkumer
5. Charles Chasie *
6. Chumbemo T. Ngullie (NSF)
7. Colonel Phungthing (The   NSCN(IM) faction).
8. Dr. S. Victor Babu*
9. G.Gaingam*
10. General Thenosali (The NCC Non-Accordist faction).*
11. H.S. Rokokha*
12. Imrong Imchen*
13. K. H. Zhimoni (Naga Hoho)*
14. Katey Pochury
15. Lochumlo Lotha*
16. Michael Kaita *
17. Mr. Minlien
18. Neidenou Angami (NMA)
19. Neingulo Krome (NPMHR/Naga Hoho)*
20. Niechute Doulo*
21. Niketu Iralu*
22. Nepuni Piku*
23. Nuklu Phom*
24. Ongmang Chang
25. Rev. Keviyiekielie Linyu,
26. Rev. V.K. Nuh*
27. Rev. Visor Zeilang
28. Revd. Chingang Konyak
29. Revd. L.Kari Longchar*
30. Revd. Zhabu Terhuja*
31. Reved. M.K Lorrin Rengma*
32. Sangtam*
33. Temsula   Yimchuger *
34. Tongthan Khiamnuingan (ENPO)*
35. W. Shapwon Heimi (The NNC, Accordist faction).*

* Interviewees who were directly quoted in the thesis.

Appendix 2

Format of the Questionnaire for the Interviewees

To ....

I am a PhD student at Trinity College, University Dublin, Ireland, with "Conflicts in the process of transition from traditional society to modernity- A case study on the Naga tribes of south east Asia", as my working title.   I thank you for consenting to be interviewed and give your time to contribute your valuable insights to some of the questions, which is attached below. This primary data from you will hold a significant theme of my academic analysis for the paper.   Confidentiality of the interviewee will be respected and maintained. Thanking you once again.

K.   Toshinaro Longchar

Questions:

1.   Do you think Nagas are indigenous people? If 'yes', what should the rights of indigenous people like the Nagas be?   If not, why?
2.   Do you consider Nagas yourself as Indian, or Indians as Nagas?
3.   What are the main problems and issues that the Nagas as a people are facing today?
4.   Do you think the Nagas are divided/united along tribal lines?   In what way?
5.   What are the main reasons for the factional division within Naga National Movement?
6.   Do you think traditional Naga culture and modern political practice clash or complement with each other?   In what way?
7.   What are the traditional and cultural practices that are crucial to the survival of the Nagas?   How can Nagas retain them?
8.   What is your opinion about our Naga political struggle? What is the process of traditional peace-building and conflict resolution in your community (tribe)? How can we apply it to our Indo-Naga or intra-Naga conflict?
9.   What were the main factors that brought about a feeling of 'oneness as Nagas' among different tribes?
10. How important is the Church in Naga society today?   Why?
11. Should the Naga Church be involved in the socio-political aspect of our Naga struggle in addition to their spiritual responsibility? Why?
12. What is your opinion about the recent "Healing and Reconciliation" initiative taken by NBCC?
13. What other measures/initiatives should NBCC take in the political conflict of the Nagas? How?
14. Do you think Church can be the unifying factor for the Nagas? Why?
15. What is the solution to the Naga problem which has been going on for over half a century now?

Appendix 3

The Armed Forces (Special Powers) Regulation of 1958
(Published in the Gazette of India, Extraordinary, Part II, Section I, dated the 5th
April, 1958) Promulgated by the President in the Ninth Year of the Republic of India

A Regulation to enable certain special powers to be conferred upon members of the
Armed forces in disturbed areas in the State of Nagaland.
In exercise of the powers conferred by Article 240 of the Constitution, read with sub
paragraph (2) 18 the President is pleased to promulgate the following regulation made
by him-

Short Title   Extent, Commencement and Duration –1.
(1)This Act may be called the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Regulation, 1958].
(2) It shall extends to the whole of the State of   Nagaland. (3) It shall come into force
at once. (4) It shall cease to have effect on the 5th of April 1972 and upon such cesser
section 6 of the General Clause Act.,1897 shall apply in relation thereto as if it had
then been repealed by a Central Act

Definitions – 2   In this Regulation- (a) "armed forces" means the military forces
and the air forces operating as land forces, and includes any other armed forces of the
Union so operating; (b) "disturbed area" means an area which is for the time being
declared by notification under section 3, to be a disturbed area;   (c) all other words
and expressions used herein, but not defined.and defined in the Air Force Act, 1950
(45 of 1950), or the Army Act, 1950 (46 of 1950) shall have meanings respectively
assigned to them in those Acts.

Power to Declare Areas to be Disturbed Areas –3.   If, the Governor of
Nagaland is of   the opinion that the whole or any part of such State of Nagaland is in
such a disturbed or dangerous condition that the use of armed forces in aid of the civil
powers is necessary, he may, by notification in the Official Gazette, declare the whole
or, as the case may be, such part of the State of Nagaland, to   be   disturbed area.

Special Powers of the Armed Force – 4.   (1) Any Commissioned officer, warrant
officer, or non-commissioned officer not below the rank of Havildar of the armed
forces may,   in a disturbed area- (a) if he is of opinion that it is necessary so to do for
the maintenance of Public order, after giving such due warning as he may consider
necessary, fire upon or otherwise use force, even to the causing of death, against any
person who is acting in contravention of any law or order for the time being inforce in
the disturbed area prohibiting the assembly of five or more persons or the carrying of
weapons or of things capable of being used as weapons or of fire-arms, ammunition or
explosive substances; (b) if he is of opinion that it is necessary so to do, destroy any
arms dump, prepared or fortified position or shelter from which armed attacks are
made or are likely to be made or are attempted to be made, or any structure used as a
training camp for armed gangs or absconders wanted for any offence; (c) arrest,
without warrant, any person who has committed a cognizable offence or against
whom a reasonable suspicion exists that he has committed or is about to commit a
cognizable offence and may use such force as may be necessary to effect the arrest;

(d) enter and search without warrant any premises to make any such arrest as aforesaid or to recover any person believed to be wrongfully restrained or confined or any property reasonably suspected to be stolen property or any arms, ammunition or explosive substances believed to be unlawfully kept in such premises and may for that purpose use such force as may be necessary.

Arrested Persons to be made over to the Police – 5. Any person arrested and taken into custody under this Regulation shall be made over to the officer-in-charge of the nearest police station with the least possible delay, together with a report of the circumstances occasioning the arrest.

Protection to Persons acting under Act –6. No persecution, suit or other legal proceeding shall be instituted, except with the previous sanction of the Central Government, against any person in respect of anything done or purported to be done in exercise of the powers conferred by this Regulation.

Indemnity of Officers of the armed for certain act-7. No prosecution, suit or other legal proceeding shall lie in any court of law against any officer of the Armed Forces in respect of anything , done in any part of the Kohima and Mokokchung districts of the Naga Hills- Tuesang Area on or after the 23rd December, 1957, and before the commencement of this regulation which might lawfully have been done in a disturbed area by the said period, including the arrest of any person or recovery of any person or property and shall be as valid as if they have been done at a time when this Regulation was in force.

Note

This Act provides and empowers the members of Armed Forces in disturbed area of Assam and the then Union Territory of Manipur to use armed force for the maintenance of Public order even to the extent of causing death against any person who is acting in contravention of any law or order for the time being in force in the disturbed area. Such powers have been specified and detailed in Section 4 of the Act.

Under Section 3: the Governor of Assam or the Chief Commissioner of Manipur may declare whole or any part of the State or Union Territory to be a disturbed area if in their opinion such area is in such a disturbed or dangerous condition that the use of armed forces in aid of civil power is necessary.

The Armed Forces (Assam and Manipur) Special Powers Act 1958 has been amended. It is now Called: 'The Armed Forces (Assam and Manipur) Special Powers (Amendment) Act 1972'. The main amendment was in section 3 of the Act. It read "...the Governor....of the Administrator...or the Central Government". The other sections remain the same.

* At present the Regulation extend all the federal states in north-east India. The beginning of the sentence now reads: "An Act to enable certain special powers to be conferred upon members of the armed forces in disturbed areas in the State of

[Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura]."

Source
Mar Atsongchnger , *The Historical Memoranda of the Nagas and their Neighbours,* Tribal Communication and research Centre, Mokokchung, Nagaland 1995.

* Authors note.

Appendix 4

Shillong Accord 1975

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

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

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

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

Dated Shillong,
November 11, 1975
Sd/- (I. Temjenba)
Sd/- (S. Dahru)
Sd/- (Z. Ramyo)
Sd/- (M. Assa)
Sd/- (Kevi Yalley)
On behalf of the Representative of theUnderground organisations.

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

Supplementary Agreement of January 5, 1976
Implementation of Clause II of the Shillong Accord of November 11, 1975.
1.   It was decided that the collection of arms, initially at collection centres, would

commence as early as possible, and will be completed by 25th January, 1976. Initial places of collection to be decided through discussion between Commissioner, representatives of underground organisations and the members of the Liasion Committee.

2.   Once all arms are collected, these will be handed over to Peace Council team at the respective places of collection.

3.   Peace Council team will arrange to transport the arms from collection centres to Chedema peace camp and arrange guards, etc., for safe custody of arms.

4.   Similar arrangement at agreed place/places will be made in Manipur with the concurrence of the Manipur Government.

5.   The underground may stay at peace camps to be established at suitable places, and their maintenance will be arranged only by the Peace Council. Any voluntary contribution from any source will be made to the Peace Council who will utilize the fund according to necessity.

1. Sd/- (Biseto Medom Keyho
 2Sd/- (Pukrove Nakru)
3. Sd/-(Z. Ramyo)
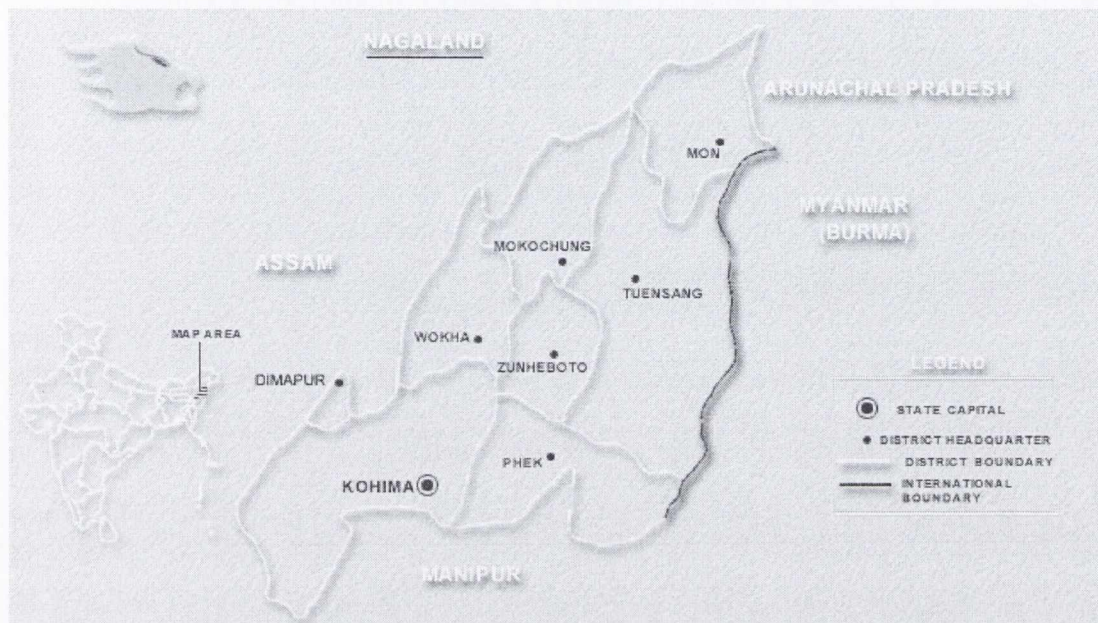4.Sd/-(I. Temjenba)

Sd/-
L.P.Singh
Govenor

Place: Shillong
Dated January 5, 1976
Source: www.satp.org

Appendix 5

NSCN-IM's Announcement of Ceasefire Agreement with Government of India

Chairman

NATIONAL SOCIALIST COUNCIL OF NAGALAND

Dated Oking: 25 July 1997

Announcement of the Cease-fire Agreement between the Government of India and the National Socialist Council of Nagaland.

I hereby announce this day, 25 July 1997, to every citizen of Nagalim wherever they may be, that a Cease-fire Agreement has been entered into between the Government of India and the National Socialist Council of Nagaland to bring about a lasting political solution to the long drawn out Indo-Naga issue. The Agreement reads:
"For securing a peaceful political solution, discussion has been held between the Government of India and the NSCN leadership. It has been mutually decided to cease fire for a period of three (3) months with effect from the 1st of August 1997 and embark upon political level discussions."
Sd/-

(ISAK CHISHI SWU)

Source: www.satp.org

Appendix 6

Text of Cease-fire ground rules agreed upon between the Government of India and the National Socialist Council of Nagaland-Khaplang (NSCN-K)

On May 28 2001, the Government of India (GOI) declared a cease-fire agreement with the National Socialist Council of Nagaland-Khaplang for a period of one year. This followed a round of discussion between the GOI's representatives led by Dr. P.D. Shenoy and representatives of the NSCN-K led by Mr. Tongmeth Wangnao Konyak. The following are the ground rules to be observed by both sides.

1. These ground rules will be valid only for the State of Nagaland.
2. Enforcement of ground rules will be the responsibility of the GOI. The GOI and the NSCN will jointly implement the ground rules. Contentious issues relating to the implementation of the ground rules will be resolved by a Cease-Fire Supervisory Board (CFSB) comprising five representatives each of GOI and NSCN and a Chairman to be nominated by the GOI.
3. The NSCN would not undertake offensive operations like ambush, raid, sniping and attack leading to death/injury/damage or loss of property against anybody. The NSCN would also act in a manner as not to cause harassment/damage or loss of property or injury to the civilian population.
4. There would be no offensive operations like ambush, raid and attack leading to death/injury/damage or loss of property against the NSCN by the Indian Army, Paramilitary Forces and the Police. However, the Government of India reserves its right to continue operations against all other militant groups who are not a party to the 'Cease-fire'.
5. NSCN will notify to the CFSB, the list of all their camps. The CFSB would, after due scrutiny, finalise the list of the "designated camps" where all the armed cadres of the NSCN would be located within three months.
6. In the interest of promoting the peace process, there will be no movement in uniform and/or with arms outside "designated camps".
7. Movement of NSCN cadres from one "designated camp" to another will be carried out for mutually agreed purposes and with intimation to the Security Forces and CFSB. The modalities of this would be finalised by the CFSB.
8. The NSCN would refrain from blockade of roads and communications and from any activity which would disturb the functioning of local and, State Governments and of economic or developmental activities as well as essential services.
9. The NSCN will refrain from extending any form of support or assistance to other militant groups.
10. During the course of the cease-fire, the NSCN will refrain from acquiring any additional arms/ammunition military equipment.
11. The NSCN will refrain from extortions, forcible collection of money and supplies and intimidation of individuals including Government officials.
12. The NSCN will refrain from forcible recruitment of armed cadres.
13. Patrolling by the Indian Army, Paramilitary Forces and the Police would continue to prevent infiltration of militants and arms as hithertofore. However, patrolling within one Km of the "designated camps" decided after due consultation in the Cease-Fire Supervisory Board (CFSB) will be carried out, with intimation to them. It is noted that no such camps are located/will be located in populated areas,

and/or near Highways, Indian Army/Para Military Forces Posts, Police Station/Police Posts etc.

14. Protection of convoys and patrolling of roads would continue to be undertaken by the Indian Army, Para Military Forces and Police.

15. Security Forces will retain the right to enforce measures necessary to uphold the laws of the land and prevent any disturbance to peace.

Source *: Ministry of Home Affairs*

www.satp.org

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