

INDIA—THE LAND AND THE PEOPLE

# NAGALAND

PRAKASH SINGH



565  
33

65

**NAGAS' RIGHT  
TO SELF DETERMINATION**

---

---

## THE AUTHOR

---

---

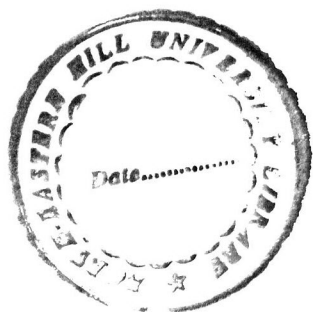
**DR. R.VASHUM** is from Marem Village, Ukhrul District (Manipur). He did his schooling in a few schools in Ukhrul district and Imphal (in Manipur). His Pre-University and University (B.Sc.) were done in D.M. College of Science, Imphal. He obtained post-graduate degree in Anthropology (Social) from the University of Delhi. He was awarded Doctor of Philosophy from the University of Delhi (Department of Anthropology) for the research work- 'Nagas and the Question of Self-Determination...'. He has participated in many academic seminars and conferences even as he had coordinated them. He has to his credit several books published and a couple of dozens of articles and book reviews in leading journals. Some of his published works include, "Indo-Naga Conflict: Problem and Resolution" (2001), "Extraordinary Laws in India . . ." (co-edited, 2002) and "State, Development and Identity in South Asia" (co-edited, 2002).

Right from his School days, he has been a very active social worker in the regional and national levels holding key executive positions. He is currently in the faculty of sociology, SOSS, Indira Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi. He is also Visiting Fellow of Developing Countries Research Centre, University of Delhi. He has a wide range of academic interests some of which includes areas related to social change, tribal transformation, social stratification, social movements, ethnicity and identity, nationalism, self-determination, self-identification, human rights, collective rights, social democracy, social justice, social/cultural ecology, marginalised society, methodology, philosophy of social science, and synthesis of inter-disciplinary ideas and approaches.

# NAGAS' RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION

—AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL-HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

R. VASHUM



**MITTAL PUBLICATIONS**  
NEW DELHI (INDIA)

Gen

S.10-11

F241  
1548

No part of this work may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the copyright owner and the publishers.

First Edition 2000  
Second Edition 2005  
© R. Vashum  
All rights reserved  
ISBN 81-7099-774-7

**NEW LIBRARY**

Acc No... 305313<sup>2</sup>

Acc By... R.

Date... 18/6/09

Class by... [Signature]

Sub.Heading by... [Signature]

Enter by... [Signature]

COMPUTER

NE  
954.165  
VAS, 1;3

Showroom:

4594/9, Daryaganj,  
New Delhi - 110002  
Phone: 23250398

Published and printed by Krishan Mittal for Mittal Publications,  
A-110, Mohan Garden, New Delhi-110059, India.  
Tel.: 25351493, 25351976 Telefax: 91-11-25351521  
E-Mail : mittalp@ndf.vsnl.net.in Gram : Mittalbox  
website : www.mittalbooks.com

## FOREWORD

---

---

The Naga people as a whole is passing through a tumultuous journey of defining the multiple contours of its identity and of assertion of the same in diverse forums. It is an orchestration of double transcendence and double trauma.

At one level defining Naga identity itself is a process with two loci. It is a process of shift of locus of action from longstanding tribal identities like Angami, Ao, Sema, Zemi, Liangmei, Rongmei to larger entities forged through a process of alliance cum fusion like Zeliangrong, Chakesang and so on, encompassing progressively expanding realms of life. This is not a smooth journey, there are many psychic and social bumps; there are many twists and turns. To those who want to hold on to age-old identities, the experience is a traumatic one; to those who see in expanded identity or in alliance of identities fulfillment of deeper aspiration, every action in this direction harbours the bliss of transcendence. The feel of the transcendence — of overcoming collective existential roadblock may be sublime in nature over a length of time, or it may be momentary; it may even be rooted in pragmatic calculation of advantage in political or economic or social realm.

There are transcendence and traumas of another order. When the Nagas are recognised as a people by Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organisation (UNPO) at the international level, providing nationale for networking with peoples having by and large analogous social organisation and historical experiences globally, it carries with it, the feel of transcendence — a mystique sensation of reaching an existential milestone after trudging a long, rough terrain of collective helplessness, pain and anguish. But perception of peoplehood of any collectivity and acting and asserting in terms of the mandate of peoplehood, however, nebulous and undefined it may be, generally attracts negative and coercive response from the holders of state power. This again is a global phenomenon, as found in UK with reference to the Irish, in Russia

with reference to the Chechenians, in Pakistan with reference to the Baluch, in France with reference to the Corsicans, in Spain with reference to the Basques, in Turkey with reference to the Kurds and so on. Indian state is designed in the same mould and functions accordingly. The coercive power of the state with fluctuating intensity has been in operation against the Nagas who link up their self-perception of peoplehood as the launching pad of a nation-state of their own. Exercise of the coercive power of Indian state, technically legitimised particularly under the Assam and Manipur (Armed Forces Special Powers Act) 1958 and its subsequent amendment has been a traumatic experience for all Nagas, irrespective of their political orientation. Also to those in India who are aware of the ground reality and at the same time are proud of the civilizational values nurtured in this land, the manner in which the Naga people's national aspirations and assertions has been handled is a matter of great disappointment.

Whatever might have happened in confrontational situations in other countries already mentioned, things could have been different in India. Under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, India had won its political freedom, through a by and large non-violent struggle. Gandhiji did not theorise, but, through his multifarious activities, the goal that he projected to the peoples of India was not that of mere acquisition of power, but of attainment of emancipation, Gandhiji wanted a minimal state for free India. In fact he had great distrust about state as an institution. He went to the extent of describing state as an evil. But, for the management of human affairs on a large scale, he accepted minimal state apparatus as a necessary evil—obviously as a coordinating body serving a constellation of decentralised communitarian societies, each informed by the deeper structure of its civilizational value crystallised through continuous negotiation between its ecology and its history.

In this perspective free India could have been the nucleus of an emancipated world order informed by historical-ecology-specific civilisations or culture clusters, contributing to and drawing upon overarching endeavours of humanity as a whole to deepen and widen the amicus of civilized living.

Though Gandhiji might not have said so, in his frame, taken to its logical conclusion, state (except when it serves as a transitional instrument in redesigning the hegemonic world order — the centres of hegemony being a states or a coterie of states or a caucus of non-state institutions with concentration of economic, and social power)

is anti-body of civilization. The primary motive force of civilization is compassion-empathetic fusion of self with animate and inanimate 'others'. At the operational level the primary frame of civilization is ethics, not as an instrument for sustaining societal goal, but as an expression of the eternal sublime permeating social living of human individuals. In contrast the primary driving force of state is monopoly of coercive power suffused by fractured education, fractured ideology, fractured morality and so on.

By the time India attained her political freedom Mahatma Gandhi was already marginalised. Free India, pushed aside the heritage of her own freedom struggle and went all-out for state building in the conventional way, rather than promoting a multi-civilizational communitarian social order. India tried to forge an artificial homogenized nation in the western sense of the term and create a nation-state for this artificial entity. While this was bad enough, a powerful section of Indians spoke of and worked for a civilizational state.

Nation-State building experiment which has been carried out in different parts of the world, has evolved certain norms, however fragile the same maybe, of accommodating the susceptibilities of the minorities inhabiting the so-called national territory and also certain pragmatic functional modalities to meet the minimum needs of the marginalised and dominated sections of the citizens. Civilizational state is unbound by any of these constraints. By definition civilizational state tends to deny multi-layered, multi-historical, multi-fluvial nature of the claimed civilization. It tends to define behavioural pattern of the elite, which is no more than the outer pulp of civilization, as the core of the candidate civilization and try to purge out or put under its seize all the other civilizational endeavours, through harnessing and flaunting the coercive power of the state. The product of this miscegenation is neither vibrant civilization nor stable state. The product is a monster, ferocious looking outwardly but weak inwardly.

If India could win its freedom through non-violent means—through invoking the values of empathy and active resistance to foreign imposition, India could have made a creative effort to accommodate the aspirations of all the peoples willy nilly brought on the common platform of action during the colonial rule—even though the actions of some of the national entities were not moving in the same direction. The dominant political elites of India need not have tried to draw legitimacy for their harsh reaction to divergent

actions of some peoples from the Transfer of Power Act passed by the British Parliament. Those in the helm of affairs in India should have tried to respond in terms of the logic of their own freedom struggle.

To have a balanced view it should be recorded that the Constituent Assembly tried to give a frame of accommodation of the aspiration of the Nagas and several others distinct peoples of North East India through the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution. But subsequent experience of its functioning in the areas where it could be operationalised, shows that it was a rickety frame. It is not surprising that the Naga leadership refused to accept it.

The response of the Indian leaders who took over State power from the British was certainly marked by arrogance and by underestimation of the political perspicuity of the Naga leadership.

This analytical appraisal does not mean that Indian leadership should have agreed to Naga demand of recognition as a separate entity without any serious discourse for mutual accommodation. The emerging world order required a common polity to thwart the designs of some powers aiming at neo-colonial domination of the erstwhile colonies.

In mid-1960s under the leadership of Jai Prakash Narayan an attempt was made to make up the lapse. The Peace-Mission under his leadership appealed to the Nagas to voluntarily accept Indian citizenship. Such an initiative might have a chance of success in the early 1950s; it came too late. Besides one wonders whether Jai Prakash Narayan was not rather hasty in abandoning his mission at the very first sign of Naga wavering in that confidence in him.

As documented by Vashum in the present monograph even those Nagas who aspired for a distinct-political identity outside India, were not unanimous about their approach to the issue. Even if they entertained a common objective, there were differences of opinion among the top leaders about the tactics to be followed. Also there was a fundamental difference about the means. At the initial stage, by and large the Naga leaders thought of achieving their goal through non-violent means. But by mid 1950s the dominant leadership of the Nagas felt fully disillusioned by the nature of response of the Indian Government and took to the violent path of struggle. It should however be recorded that with a few exceptions, physical violence has been perpetrated by the Nagas against only those individuals whom they rightly or wrongly perceive to have strategically

important antagonistic roles against the peoplehood or national assertions of the Nagas. But the same cannot be said about inconsiderate extortions from almost everyone in residing in Naga dominated areas. It is generally believed that the top leadership tries to systematise collections in terms of prescribed norms, but it is difficult to say that such attempt has been completely successful. One wonders, what would have been the course of events had the dominant Naga leadership stuck to their original decision of holding on to non-violent path for assertion of their right to self determination. Perhaps in that case, while on the one hand Naga identity assertion movement would not have been fractured as at this moment, on the other it might have evoked the best not of the multi-faceted, multi-stream civilizational values of Indo-Burma subcontinent. Perhaps the monstrosity called civilizational-state as propagated by some, holding positions of power in India, would have never have been thought of.

The concepts of nation, nation-state are rooted in European history coinciding with capitalist path of development underpinned and sustained by colonial exploitation of distant lands and imperialist conquests. There is mono-national state. All nation states are multi national; all nation states contain within their ambit first class citizens, second class citizens and so on. Civilizational values do not necessarily generate state. Pre-capitalist Kingdoms were not state with fixed boundaries. These were polities with frontier regions. Most of these Kingdoms were plutocracies, but accommodated peoples with diverse cultures sustaining a core of civilizational values with different degrees of intensity. In the pursuit of their cultures and ways of life peoples exercised and enjoyed considerable autonomy. Right to self determination of peoples is right to remove plutocracies. Right to self determination is not however a single layered enterprise. Right to self determination of peoples is certainly to be envisaged in terms of immediate social milieu; but like a concentric circle its operational range goes on expanding until it covers the global order of organised living of humankind, sweeping away all plutocracies, all centres and citadels of hegemonic domination. This is the meaning of emancipated world order referred to earlier.

There is a growing realisation that humanity is one collective entity. Emancipated world order has to be perceived in totality. This cannot be achieved over-night. This has to be achieved through a long drawn process. While ultimately state as an institution is to go;

even the United Nations is to be replaced by an organisation which may perhaps be named "Global Community", in the pilgrim's progress to this temple of humanity, the states of the disadvantaged countries may serve a nesting role, as envisaged by Samir Amin, one of the leading intellectuals of modern time. But nesting role of the states of disadvantaged countries—countries which had been subjected to colonial exploitation and domination for a fairly long time, must be seen as a transitional one; sooner or later they also must be divested of their role as monopoly holders of power of any type.

As it is, with development of modern technology and expansion of communication network, recognition of human rights through the intervention of various international agencies and also at the same time through manipulation of multinational capitalist enterprises, state as an institution, is being divested of many of its roles. While the process of recognition of and respect for human rights is to be vigorously promoted so that democratic, equitable social order comes to prevail every where, the subversion by international and transnational capitalist power centres, of the functional scope of those states in the disadvantaged countries which are promoting or which have the potential of promoting people-friendly polities and programmes, has to be resisted.

While right to self determination is an inalienable right of every people (I am deliberately avoiding the term nation which is a western concept on its way to be pushed out of humanist lexicon) the exact form that right to self determination of a people takes or should take, depends on the historical social ecological milieu in which the concerned people is situated at a particular point of time. It can take the form of assertion of a separate state of its own as a transitional phase till state system becomes anachronistic in the world order; it can also manifest itself through creation of non-state institutions through which civil society can creatively regulate its own affairs giving no space to state or non-state centres of hegemony at any level. It can also lead to the creation of institutions complementary to the state so that the vacuum created in the socio-political space through the retreat of the state is not usurped by global hegemonies.

The Naga right to self-determination is to be perceived in this holistic framework. Vashum has presented the factual details of the course of events leading to the self identification of the Nagas as a people; he has also presented the chequered history of confrontation

between the Naga militants and the Indian state. Apart from these, he has also included in annexure useful information about the institutional structures created by the Naga leadership to give political expression to their peoplehood or as they would prefer to call, their nationhood. In dealing with such a sensitive matter it is extremely difficult to completely eschew subjectivity. Vashum being himself a Naga, has certainly given a faint touch of subjectivity, without any rancour. If he has expressed a tinge of the bitterness while mentioning the atrocity perpetrated by the army at Oinam in Manipur, those who are in the Know of the event would not only fully justify him, would even go to the extent of saying that he has been much too cautious.

Taken as whole Dr. Vashum has produced a useful monograph. Those who are interested in the current Naga situation cannot afford to miss it.

**B.K. Roy Burman**

I-1779, Chittranjan Park, New Delhi

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

---

---

There are so many persons to be given my hearty thanks for their valuable contributions in many ways. But, I feel, I should not leave out a few names which automatically comes into my mind. The first thanks will go to my Ph.D. supervisor, Prof. J.S. Bhandari who forwarded my research proposal (on the self-determination of the Nagas) to the Department of Anthropology and to the University of Delhi for being considered to work for my Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.). I take him as some one more than my supervisor. One quality that always impressed me is the 'freedom' that he gave to develop myself without being imposed. I also thank the University of Delhi for allowing me to take up the topic, "Nagas and the Question of Self-Determination: An Anthropological-Historical Perspective" for my Ph.D. programme and for the subsequent conferment of Ph.D. degree upon me. I express my gratefulness to the University Grants Commission (UGC) (of India) for granting me Junior and Senior Research Fellowship, without which I would be in different situation altogether.

I would also like to thank eminent academicians of the University of Delhi for their suggestions and advice during the course of my research, some of whose names are: Prof. I.S. Marwah, Prof. Vinay Kumar Srivastava (both from the Deptt. of Anthropology), Prof. Manoranjan Mohanty, Prof. S.K. Chaube (both from the Deptt. of Political Science), Prof. Andre Beteille, Prof. Xaxa (from the Deptt. of Sociology), and a host of others including native historian Prof. Gangmumei (History Deptt., Manipur University) just to name a few.

I would also like to express my gratitude to my informants (Nagas and non-Nagas) and friends for the cooperation and help extended to me. I express my special thanks to Mr. Ramthing Kasar for his great concern and encouragement towards me throughout my research. I am also grateful to my nephew K. Rammathot who was with me throughout even in the most busy and difficult

situations. Prof. B.K. Roy Burman, an eminent Social Scientist deserves a special gratefulness for having provided me insights during my research and more so for having consented to give 'foreword' to this book.

Last of all, I am thankful to my parents, brothers and sisters and family members who have been a great encouragement in my quest for knowledge.

**R. VASHUM**

## PREFACE

---

---

The world is shrouded with contrasts and oppositions and seemingly incompatible interests, world views and ideologies. The 'particular' and/or the 'specific' seem to have come to fore again to challenge the what is called the 'general' and/or 'universal' and even the reverse order would be true. Almost on similar line, the 'dialectics' (to use Hegel's term) between 'parochialism' (sic) and 'universalism' appear to be surfacing more prominently. The trend of emerging 'nationalism' and 'universalism' and/or 'globalisation' also seem to be rather at loggerheads. The oppositions of the 'small' (community) and the 'big' (community), the 'strong' and the 'weak', the 'rich' and the 'poor', the so-called 'higher'/'upper' human being/caste and/or class and the 'lower', the 'oppressor' and the 'oppressed', the 'exploiter' and the 'exploited', the 'ruler' and the 'ruled', the 'coloniser'/'neo-coloniser' and the 'colonised', the 'sovereign state' and the 'non-sovereign state', the 'alien' and the 'indigenous', the 'intruder' and the 'resistor'/'defender' and the list of oppositions goes on. In between these opposing entities are found many more strata which are usually difficult to define in concrete terms. And in the heart of all these oppositions, lie the 'problem', and/or 'conflict' which regularly or of and on haunts human society in one way or the other. These oppositions are seen to be stigmatic to the society. But to be sure, most of these problems have been either created or augmented by human society as much as it has been a victim to the scheme.

There are, however, situations that are out of man's control and grasp. This does not however mean that man is destined by the creator to be in sharp contrasts for every thing. Who authorises some to rule, exploit, and suppress 'the other'? Who endorses some people(s) to decide the future of 'the other' and by coercion? What is it that sovereignty is imposed upon 'the other' that has nothing to do with it? What is it that 'people(s)' and/or 'nation(s)' should be used as 'commodities' that could be sold and bought by the stronger

and powerful ones where the weak is reduced to an entity but 'pawns' for 'the others' to gratify or play with? These questions seem to be radical in composition. But I do feel that these are not void. It is happening in our midst. If humanity do not realise these evil character, then, 'peace' would be far fetched or we may never experience it even in the millenniums to come. For it is obvious that where there is no culture of equality, justice, and respect for each other, there could be anything- destruction, conflict, etc. but minus 'peace'. All these contradictions which are main causes of inter- and intra-conflicts revolve round the principle of the right of/ to self-determination. The right of the Nagas to self-determination (to be independent/sovereign) is seen at this background.

The author is in a way associated with the Naga national movement since childhood, unconscious though. I still remember the love and care I was given by an elderly Naga underground cadre (he was a Pochuri Naga) when I was just a little child (may be about three-four years then). He would lovingly hold my hand, drag and walk along while my younger brother would be on his shoulder. He would give us boiled eggs. One day, I remember him say that he would be going away from the place (my place). I felt very sad and that memory still lingers in my mind even today. That could be the time when the Naga undergrounds had to leave their camps in the villages (in this sense 'my village' and my 'residential area') after their cease-fire (1964-1972) with the Indian government discontinued. Since then, it took me long years (not until late 1970s) that I began to feel the wave of the national movement. It has been long years then that I have been also caught in the whirl of the 'unrestness' of the Nagas for quest for self-determination. It was, of course, not without mixed situations, experiences and feelings whether or not I liked it.

The quest for understanding the Naga struggle grew in my college and university days. The keenness to and excitement to understand the problem motivated me to opt for the study of the Naga national movement for my Ph.D. work at the University of Delhi. I was happy that the University of Delhi had accepted my proposal and later conferred Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) on me for the piece of work, entitled, "Nagas and the Question of Self-Determination: An Anthropological - Historical Perspective."

This book is the result of my few years' research coupled with the past experiences. I would not claim that this is an exhaustive work or the most authentic one *per se* on the Naga national movement.

But like any other scientific enquiry, I would present some of the findings and experiences that I had encountered. The Naga national movement is a dynamic one and is still continuing. One needs to look at the movement at this backdrop.

Many people would question the objectivity and reliability of the data for my being an 'insider' (I shall be discussing this issue in the chapter on 'Methodology'). In this regard, I would only say that it had more merits than otherwise for my being a Naga myself. My training and experiences of field work in Anthropology (for over a decade now) has also helped me immensely to this effect.

The present work will mainly focus on the trends of the Naga national movement since its inception (and even before), the notion of self-determination, and the perception of the Nagas on the right to self-determination of the Nagas. A word of reminder and caution: Whatever I have mentioned in this book are all mine and I shall be responsible for the shortcomings thereof.

**R. VASHUM**

## PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

---

It is my pleasure to do the Second Edition of my book "Nagas' Right to Self-Determination: An Anthropological-Historical Perspective." This Edition is effected due to two main reasons – one, to meet the demand of the readers as the stock of the first edition was getting exhausted; second, to update recent developments of the Indo-Naga Peace process.

To this end, a few additions and omissions have been made wherever necessary. However, due care is taken to preserve the originality of the earlier text.

Lastly, my due appreciation to the publisher for his wonderful performance and also to the readers for showing immense interest for the work.

**R. Vashum**

# CONTENTS

---

<i>Foreword</i>	v
<i>Acknowledgement</i>	xiii
<i>Preface</i>	xv
<i>Preface to the Second Edition</i>	xix
<i>Glossary</i>	xxiii
1. Introduction	1
2. The Nagas – A General View	9
3. Methodology and Field Experience	25
4. Self-Determination – Conceptual Framework	37
5. Naga National Movement – A Historical Account (-to 1947)	57
6. Naga National Movement – A Historical Account (Since 1948)	77
7. Self-Determination – Perception of the Nagas	111
8. Conclusion	145
<i>Appendices</i>	159
I. The Yehzabo of Nagaland	159
II. Naga Memorandum to Simon Commission	175
III. The Nine Point Agreement	177
IV. A Letter from Jail	179
V. A Letter to the President of India	194
VI. The Sixteen Point Agreement	198
VII. The Question of Nagaland State	202
VIII. Nagaland Peace Mission's Proposals	204
IX. Shillong Accord	209
X. Desai-Phizo Talk	211

XI. Declaration By the Government of India	215
XII. Punjab Security of State Act, 1953	217
XIII. The Assam Maintenance of Public Order (Autonomous Districts) Act, 1953	224
XIV. The Armed Forces (Special Powers) Regulation, 1958	226
XV. The Armed Forces ( Assam and Manipur) Special Powers Act, 1958	229
XVI. The Armed Forces (Assam and Manipur) Special Powers (Amendment) Act, 1972	231
XVII. Regulation 5 of 1962 (The Nagaland Security Regulation,1962)	232
XVIII. Statement of the United Nations on Naga Affairs 1995	236
XIX. Agreed Ground Rules the Indo-Naga Cease-Fire 1997	238
XX. 4th Naga Consultation on Indo-Naga Talks	240
<i>Bibliography</i>	243
<i>Index</i>	251

# GLOSSARY

---

Athang	High
Ahng	Governor
Ahza	Command/Order
Alee	Foreign
Ato Kilonser	Prime Minister
Chaplee	Currency/Money/Finance
Etangiter	Intelligence
Hoho	Assembly/Parliament/Union
Ino	Mister
Inoli	Miss
Kautaga	Free Nagaland
Keeya	Defence
Khapur	Member of Regional Judiciary/ Sub-Deputy Collector
Khunak Ngeu Khum	Sovereign Republic of Nagaland
Kilonser	Minister
Kilo	Home
Kuknalim	Victory to Naga Land
Leacy	Member of Regional Assembly
Longwipu	Chief of the Army
Lota	Agriculture
Lashika	Ambassador
Mayan	Supreme
Menoung	Truce
Midan	Chief
Nisa	Judge
Oking	Headquarters/Capital
Pantong	Deputy
Peyu	Commissioner
Raka	Rupee
Rali-Wali	Information and Publicity
Razu-Peyu	Sub-Divisional Officer/Range Officer/ Group Officer
Riyam	Court
Runa Peyu	Village Registrar/Chairman/ Village Representative

Sangmy	Treaty
Tatar	Member of Parliament
Woshino	Vice President
Yaruiwo	President
Yehza	Law
Yehzabo	Constitution
Yessacy	Constituent
Yezzasa	Constituency
Zamla	Legislature
Zhi Ralha	National Flag

## INTRODUCTION

---

The concept of self-determination is certainly a hot topic shrouded in controversy with many takers and rejecters since a few decades ago as the concept is inextricably linked with the principle and idea of 'right' - 'human right' (supposedly individual right in essence), 'natural right' and 'collective right' among others which are the quintessential bases of human survival, dignity, integrated development, progress and realisation of the world they would like to be in their own right. The concept is also closely associated with the notion of 'societal pluralism', 'cultural relativism', and 'co-partnership' and related notion of 'just' and 'peaceful' co-existence.

The concept has not been without debate and controversy for quite sometime because of the vagueness of the term- lacking in general acquiescence and acceptable definition, so that, it tends to not having the status of a legally binding obligation as to the right to enforce and/or implement (cf. Borgohain 1999:151). Thus, while this idea is welcomed by the oppressed, ruled, colonised, and subjugated peoples and/or nations as much as it is also used to demonstrate their aspiration and desire, the existing sovereign states, the rulers, the colonisers, subjugators, and the exploiters would generally abhor such ideas as illogical, irrational, disintegrative and/or destructive until they can not avoid them by the increasing pressure from all fronts within and without.

The unrest and struggle of the subjugated and exploited peoples and nations for liberation from any form of oppression, colonialism, neo-colonialism *et al* have made it more relevant in discussing the notion of the right to/of self-determination. Although, the term was generally attributed to Woodrow Wilson since World War I,

the idea of self-determination could be traced back centuries ago. Every society has their own way of survival and regulation of lives systems. We have a good instance in the Old Testament (Bible) where Moses demonstrated the right to self-determination and liberated the Israelites from the bondage of the Egyptians. The struggle of the Israelites that we find in the bible has been a great bearing and influence on the modern liberation movements.

The two World Wars have passed and we are still faced with a grim situation of nationality struggle and other struggles for liberation from various oppressions and exploitations. The reasons are not too far to seek. It is the human desire to determine their own way of life without interference from outside that has caused much conflict among the oppressors/rulers and the oppressed/ruled as the latter have challenged the authority of the former for recognition of their rights to live in dignity and for self-determination. While the oppressors wanted to continue their control over the oppressed for their own vested interests, the latter tried to come out of the exploitative and/or hegemonic system. Thereby we have movements- revolt, revolution, liberation and/or nationality struggle in various ways. The objective of all these movements is just one, that is, that they want to determine their fate/future and to rule by themselves after their own ethos. The contradiction is often very sharp. These contradictions of the interests of the ruler and the ruled are also equally true with the many existing sovereign states.

What is more pathetic is the situation of colonisation/neo-colonisation being accompanied with exploitation, oppression, assimilation and even annihilation. They have been forced to conform to the dictates of the rulers or face dire consequences. In such situation, although the oppressed peoples/nations never want they are forcibly made to lose their own identities and adopt an alien culture and way of life through various means including legalisation. The movements/struggles persistent to face the onslaught of the colonisers/rulers get themselves liberated. This has happened in various parts of the world, especially, after the World War II. We also find many movements of lesser intensity who are still existing while some of them have discontinued for one reason or another. Most of the liberation movements as we see them are usually at the cost of the lives of hundreds and thousands of their brothers and sisters. History says that there has also not only been homicide and extermination against fellow human beings

but also belonging to different nations in the process of colonisation and oppression.

There has been great change on the validity of self-determination on the eve of the World War II and after. The swelling addition of members of the United Nations since its inception in 1945 is an indication to this trend. However, there seems to be one more crucial 'Chapter' (among some other Chapters) that has not been sufficiently dealt with, that is, the struggle of the indigenous peoples who are struggling for their right to self-determination. While few states have been implementing the right to/of self-determination in the recent past, many existing states have kept it with themselves for reasons known to them and to many which can not be justified in any case. A quick survey of these cases with special reference to India deems to be relevant.

Almost all the existing sovereign states have been formed on a multi-national bases, be it by forcible occupation or with the consent of the Union partners. For the states which have not been consented by the people concerned while forming the new States have experienced movements of peoples/nationalities for independence. However, we find similarities and differences of the nature of self-determination in different parts of the world.

In Asia, to quote Young, "there was frequently a cultural or historical logic to the units of imperial rule: Burma, Malaysia, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, even India (but not Indonesia or the Philippines)...In Africa, colonial territories only rarely had the slightest historical pedigree or cultural coherence (Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Rwanda, Burundi, Swaziland, Lesotho are the exceptions). They were also far from fragmented"(1993:10-11). These two regions were under the colonial powers of the west by and large. In these two continents, the States liberated from the colonial powers were after the scheme of the pre-colonial territories. The notion and principle of 'nationality' and 'nationhood' was absent. This is one main reason why it had given rise to many national/ethnic movements for self-determination in Asia and Africa in the post-colonial era. The current situation of the movement for self-determination in East Timor (that she has recently succeeded in separation/secession from Indonesia) and also Aceh (both in Indonesia) are relevant experiences. The struggle of the Tamil nationalists in Sri Lanka for independence is also a prominent example of the struggle for self-determination.

The concept of nation-state in Europe is generally said to be born a few centuries ago since the French Revolution of 1789. Although, states in Europe were supposed to have been formed on the principle of 'nationality' and 'nationhood', there were also several vestiges of multi-nationalities problems left behind. In the recent past, there has been break up of the established States in Europe like those of the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia. The religio-political conflict in Ireland, the struggle of the Basques in Spain and France for recognition of the right to self-determination (to restore sovereignty of the past), the Flemish question in Belgium are some of the examples of the movements of self-determination in Europe.

In Latin America, the assertion of the rights of the indigenous peoples to self-determination is also quite in current. The struggle of the Quebecers in Canada is not a new case either. Even in the middle-east the struggle of ethnic groups for self-determination is prevalent (For example, the struggle of the Kurds for creation of independent Kurdistan which are now under the States of Iraq, Turkey and Iran). There are ethnic/indigenous movements in the Australasia (like those of the Maories of New Zealand, Australian aboriginals, etc.), for recognition of their rights to self-determination.

India is one apt case where almost all these syndromes of various types of movements for self-determination are found. For instance, there are so many movements for autonomy within the (quasi-) federal States of India like the various demands for autonomy under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India in North-East India and similar autonomy demands in other tribal areas of India including cases of Ladakh in Jammu and Kashmir, Darjeeling in West Bengal among others. There are also various tribal groups, in India (other than the tribals of North-East India) who are demanding for implementation of Sixth Schedule (which as of now is applicable only in the tribal region of the North-East India) with some more powers in their respective regions. Even those tribal groups who come under the Fifth Schedule feel that the Schedule has not been able to provide them enough power and authority to develop their areas and determine their way of life themselves. These tribal groups, mainly, from the mainland India, are demanding the status of the Sixth Schedule with more powers for their respective areas and/or regions.

On the other hand, the tribals in the North-East India who are

already under the Sixth Schedule (like the Bodos, Karbis, and North Cacharis) and Autonomous Councils under State Acts (like the District Autonomous Councils in Manipur) are demanding for separate statehood as they find the existing Schedule/Council incompatible with the way they want to develop. The cases of statehood demands are also prevalent in many parts of India like those in Jharkhand, Uttaranchal, Chhattisgarh (that have now gained statehood for themselves), Telangana, Vidharba, Seemachal, Mithila, etc. These demands are within the Union of India.

The third type of movement for self-determination in India is the struggle of various peoples for independence/sovereignty to be separated from India. These cases are reported from Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, Nagaland, Manipur and in some parts of Arunachal Pradesh, West Bengal, etc. Some of these struggles have geographical contiguity with other neighbouring sovereign states. For instance, the Nagas' claim for self-determination is beyond the Indian Union. About half of the Naga areas fall under Myanmar. Likewise, Kashmir issue has international geographical dimensions as they are located in both the States of India and Pakistan and also because these two States have been claiming over Kashmir even as they had divided them. It has also international connotation because of the fact that the Kashmiris are struggling for sovereign 'Azad Kashmir' which even goes beyond the purview of the States of India and Pakistan as the Kashmiris desire it.

The Indian State is one such State which was supposed to have been formed with the consent of the component partners of the Union, by and large. But the various separatist movements in pre- and post- independence of India had raised doubts of the sincerity of the component nationalities. The once princely States like Manipur, Kashmir, Tripura, etc. and the ethnic groups/nations like the Nagas, Bodos, etc. have been claiming that the Indian State had annexed their countries forcefully. This has resulted in confrontations between the Indian State and the groups who are fighting for independence. Some movements of independence or autonomy have been suppressed while others have been still going strong till today. This has necessitated to look afresh at the nationality question in India taking Naga national movement as a case.

The question of self-determination or for that matter, national (ethnic) self-determination of the Nagas is a relatively modern

concept. In modern sense, the awareness of the Nagas, to determine their own way of life by themselves (Nagas) and to live as nation-state, could be dated to the early 20th century A.D. In other words, this period marks the emergence of Naga nationalism, perhaps, for the first time in the history of the Nagas. Before this period viz., early 20th century, if there was anything as Naga nationalism, it was only in an incipient form. The resistance of some sections of Naga tribes against the entry of the Ahoms into the Naga Hills in the early 13th century and the aftermath conflicts between them on one hand, and sections of Naga society/tribes who countered the British force in the Naga Hills in the early 19th century and the aftermath consequences till the early 20th century.

However, it is felt that the Nagas' ethos of the past life had immense roles to play in the emergence of Naga nationalism. The national (ethnic) self-determination of the Nagas is a socio-cultural, economic and political problem. However, these problems are seen as rallying round the political issue, in main, and this political issue is the focus of my present work. The Naga political problem had been given shape by several social, cultural, and geopolitical forces from within and without the Naga Hills, while the immediate causal factor could be attributed to the Nagas' encounter with the outsiders, the non-Nagas, particularly, the British. It is interesting to note that the perception of the Nagas on the concept of self-determination had been changing with time and space.

Some pertinent questions as to the right of the Nagas to self-determination may be posed. In the first place, one could ask as to whether the Nagas have the right to self-determination (independence)? If so, how and why? The answer to the former is still a problem for India and the Nagas to come to the understanding. It seems to be at poles. The Nagas advocate that the Nagas did not share anything with India, either in physical make up or in socio-cultural and political aspects. The Nagas say, "we want to live as a people and with our own taste (ethos). We were not conquered by any power (force) except the British who conquered some portion of our Nagalim (Naga Land) but without interfering the freedom to live in our own way. It was an 'accidental' and 'symbolic' conquest. When the British go away, the Nagas should be reverted to their original lives (freedom) as India and Burma do. There are no two opinions on this. If the Nagas want to have certain adjustment with any State and/or nation, then that is our prerogative to do so. It is no business of the outsiders. Our case

is not separation or secession from any existing State, but pure and simple a matter of our own decision and desire to live - as a sovereign people - as a nation-state. This is our inalienable right. No matter how mighty a power, we will fight until our right to self-determination is restored and recognised."

This view of the Nagas is not shared by India and Myanmar (erstwhile Burma) who have divided the Naga people and Nagalim since the late 1940s (after attaining their independence from the British rule). India and Myanmar assert that they have inherited the Naga Lands from the British after the transfer of power to them. So they feel that the assertion of the Nagas for independence is nothing but secession which is antithetical to their (India and Myanmar) views. At this, the Nagas would reply that the Nagas are not 'commodities to be transferred and inherited among the powerful by virtue of their physical strengths.' Such polar positions/stances, opinions and/or interests have led to the conflict between the Nagas and India on one hand and the Nagas and Myanmar on the other. The conflict has now crossed the five decade mark but without any convincing sign of its solution. One of the main reasons for this irresolution of the problem would be the gap of mutual understanding, lack of good will and the elements of suspicion between the conflicting parties.

As one goes through the book, the reader would discover some of the answers to the above conflicting views and stances by way of understanding various perspectives. These scenarios of the Naga national movement or the Nagas' struggle for national self-determination, or in other words, the origin, developments, successive events of the movement in general, attitudes, peoples' participation and trends of the Naga national movement for independence are thus covered in this book.

The main aim of this piece of work is then :

- (i) To understand the origin, developments and holistic picture of the Nagas' struggle for self-determination (sovereignty);
- (ii) To understand mainly the emic (native) views, perceptions and attitudes of the Nagas on the notion and practice of self-determination.

The book is organised into eight different but connected chapters among other presentations. An introductory chapter outlines, mainly, the background of the work, the problem, the notion of self-determination and its practices with special reference

to India and the Nagas. Chapter two deals with the brief ethnographic account of the Nagas including their pre/history. The main aim of this chapter is to shed light on the situation of Naga society past and present.

Methodology and field experiences are discussed in chapter three. Here, among others, certain debates are brought up, especially, on the use of 'anthropological' and 'historical approaches and implications of anthropology sharing frontiers (areas and interests) with other cognate disciplines including even the use of methods and techniques. In this connection, 'participant observation' as one of the most useful methods and/or techniques is also discussed among other techniques. The chapter also includes discussion of the selection of methods and techniques for the research conducted and their advantages citing some of the field experiences.

The concept of self-determination, its historical background, definition, types, interpretations, usages, and practices with special reference to India and the Nagas are presented in chapter four. Chapters five and six are all about the Naga national movement in a historical perspective, delving into the life and ethos of the Nagas of the distant past, the emergence of Naga nationalism, and their movement for self-determination. In chapter seven an attempt is made to present an analysis of the perception of the Nagas on the notion and practice of self-determination. It is a reflection of the Nagas' experience of their struggle for independence. This is followed by a concluding chapter (chapter eight) which is basically an evaluation of the problem of the thesis with minimum remarks.

Necessary notes are appended at the end of every chapter. Appendices and indices are supplied immediately after the references to enable the reader for better understanding by having access to the full text for cross comparison and/or verification, when necessary. This is so because most of the texts are just made a passing reference in the course of the discussion in order to keep the flow of the discussions.

Nagaland, a turbulent tribal land waking up from its dreamy isolation into the din and clatter of the twentieth century. Here the tensions and passions of a tribal society mingle with the mainstream of Indian nationalism.

The book presents a multi-dimensional picture of the land, its people and their aspirations. It throws new light on crucial phases in the political evolution of the Nagas, and exposes the sinister role of foreign powers in setting the peaceful Hills aflame with insurgency.

Prakash Singh, a member of the Indian Police Service, served in Nagaland from 1965 to 1968. This gave him the opportunity to study the Naga way of life and understand the political currents and cross-currents of the area. He was also Director-General of Police, Assam in 1991. The other top assignments he held were as Chief of Uttar Pradesh Police and Director-General of the Border Security Force. A very distinguished officer, he was awarded the 'Padmashri' by the Government of India for his outstanding contribution to national security.



**Rs 48.00**

**NATIONAL BOOK TRUST, INDIA**