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NAGA VILLAGE

A Sociological Study

Kewepfuzu Lohe

About the Book

The original form of this book is the thesis submitted in fulfillment of the requirement of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology, North Eastern Hill University (NEHU) Shillong, Meghalaya. The title of the thesis and contents is restructured and revised into the present form to enhance the usefulness of the book. This book analyses the transformation of family, religion, economic and politico-juridical institutions in the village social structure with the structural historical approach. This book describes how the Naga village positively responds to the external factors such as formal education, Christianity and new development policy of the state government in the process of modernization.

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Introduction

In the primordial past, the village social system remained relatively stable as external influences could not enter deep into it. The result was that for centuries, the real social organization, power structure and leadership, retained their traditional hierarchical character with the higher castes, landlords and kinship system maintaining the power equilibrium. But since the advent of British and Indian national movement which culminated in August 15, 1947, Indian village life has been confronted with the new challenge to be involved in the process of democratization and innovation. With many legislative and tenurial reforms and finally with the inception of development schemes of rural reconstruction, the village social system is coming face to face with new forces and factors of social change. Therefore, today the village, its social organization, its culture, its value pattern, its leadership, its economic structure, and in fact, the entire village community is positioned at the brink of the beginning of a new era. The old power structure which was based solidly on the traditional caste structure, feudalistic traditions and kinship system is now challenged by new forces of democratization in the shape of constitutional, rural panchayats, village council and Village Development Board (VDB) at the village level and entire parliamentary democracy at the national level. Therefore, changes of far reaching socio-economic importance are being ushered in by the villages themselves, greatly facilitated by innovating leadership on the one hand and the conscious attempts by the state on the other, so that the people may

be motivated to pursue their own goals and build on politically, educationally and economically sound and productive system.

It is true that the real *India* consists of villages; 74.3 percent (1991 Census of India) of the country's population are village dwellers. But it is found that, in general, the village presents a picture of poverty, malnutrition, very poor standard of public health and illiteracy. It is therefore, obvious that if the nation is to progress, the development of the rural community should be given top priority (Saksena 1978:17). The Indian village is a very complex system, with the diverse habits and tastes, social practices and traditions, area of beliefs, and social structure, somehow forming an integrated whole. Therefore, if the state intends to take the initiative in order to bring about radical change in the village community it would be easier to adopt a sociological approach (Saksena, 1978:18). Dube points out that the planning, administration and execution of rural development programs can be greatly assisted by contributions of the social scientists, whose resources and tools such as in the areas of social organization, human relations, culture and values likely to be affected by the programs will prove invaluable. Therefore, a full appraisal of their attitudes, values, sentiments and beliefs should be obtained first before launching on any schemes. The key areas that require special focus include agricultural policy and population with the objective to raise per capita from output, land tenure and land reform, studying village social structure and traditional cultural patterns in relation to development and changing technologies, and weighing problems of implementing new programs. Possibilities are improving of government administrative structures, skills and practices in order to raise the abilities of those in government to satisfy people's legitimate aspirations. (Y.Singh 1986:10).

These new tendencies in sociology have other implications as well. They define the new task of sociology as essentially social engineering and social policy science (Y. Singh 1986:10). Therefore, in order to get immense help towards better planning and execution of development programs, better administration and social harmony, the study of social dynamics¹ of rural society is strongly needed.

The specific contribution of sociology is in the area of village studies and research methodology. An important conceptual framework for the village studies conducted by an American anthropologist which influenced Indian sociologists was that of *peasant society* and *peasant culture* formulated by Robert Redfield in the course of his studies of Mexican villages. Its paradigm had many elements which harmonized with pre-existing orientations of Indian sociology. One of the most important elements was the emphasis on tradition² and its social organization; another element was the emphasis on linkage between folk and elite traditions in the understanding of both the culture and social structure of traditions. Also, implicit in its logic and methodology was a third element, which assumed great significance in the village studies in 1960, that is of unity between urban and rural social structure and traditions (Y. Singh: 1986:10-12).

The study of the Indian village began in the 18th century with the intensive survey work regarding land holding (S. Sharma: 1985:117-118). Later, the Indian village was compared with villages of Mexico, England and Africa (S. Sharma:¹ 1985:14). However, in the present century, intensive empirical studies of the economy of the village became quite popular. The early systematic studies particularly by Metcalf, Maine and Baden Powel considered the Indian village a closed and isolated system. This view, however, created a lot of resentment among several anthropologists and sociologists. The studies of the Indian village in the fifties were, therefore, based on the assumption that the Indian village was not *static* and *homogeneous*. (S. Sharma 1985: P. 117)

Like the official view of the caste system, the official view of the Indian village was that India was a land of village republic self sufficient and corporate villages. Louis Dumount refers to three meanings of the term village community: (a) as a political society, (b) as a body of co-owners of the social, and (c) as the emblem of traditional economy and polity, a watch word of Indian patriotism (Singer and Cohn, ed. 1970:13). Thus, the village community in India has been seen as a part of India's polity and economy by scholars of different dispositions including Marx and Maine.

However, the Nation of village republic, self-sufficient and corporate groups were not accepted by subsequent studies. Its dependence on wide economic and political institutions and instrumentalities has been well brought out in recent studies (S. Sharma 1985: 18).

The British administrators as well as Indian national leaders preferred to call the Indian village a republic self-sufficient and autonomous due to their respective ideological predispositions. Village even today exists as a territorial cohesive unit. Village identity, solidarity and loyalty cut across caste and community, but divisive factors also exist simultaneously. Land reforms, changes in power structure, and social and cultural mobility could be witnessed within a given village as well as village of a given area in terms of new form of stratification relations (S. Sharma 1985:18).

It is noted that the fifties and particularly the year of 1955 marked a watershed in the studies of village communities viz: S.C. Dube's (1955), M.N. Sriniva's (1955) and Mckim Marriot's (1955). These studies covered a vast range of data and experience from different parts of India. The folk-urban continuum and the little community frame works of Reddfield were examined by B.R.Chauhan, D.N. Majundar and several others. Chauhan (1974) in *Rural Studies* (a trend report) draws four lines of approach in the study of castes in relation to the village communities.

These are :

1. One village and one caste
2. One village and many villages
3. One caste and many villages
4. Many castes and many villages

The village studies are : (1) single village studies and (2) studies in two villages and (3) multi-village studies. Chauhan (1974) provides an exhaustive review of village studies, but he does not raise questions about their theoretical and methodological orientations. M.N. Srinivas (1955), S.C. Dube (1955-1958), Yogesh Atal (1971), and Ramakrishna Mukherjee (1957), raised some important questions about village studies and their significance.

A premium is given to the empirical studies over the historical ones by Srinivas (1955). Historical datas are neither accurate nor as rich and detailed as the datas collected by field anthropologists and the study of certain existing process in the past. The method of intensive field study has been promoted by Srinivas not only through his study of Rampura, but a couple of students of Srinivas, namely, A.M. Shah (1973), Andre Beteille (1966) and Anand Chakravarti (1975) who themselves carried out village studies by the method of intensive field work. Several merits of field work are noted by Srinivas. Compared to macro-survey, field work employs a different set of approaches, methods and techniques.

S.C. Dube prepares willy-nilly a case for the application of structural-functional approach for the study of the Indian village community (A.R. Desai, ed: 1959) over intensive field studies since (1) these do not provide diagnostic or even illustrative case studies for understanding structure and process, (2) village is viewed as a *biotic* community and not a synthesized community and (3) these studies lack a coherent frame of reference relevant to the structure and organization of Indian society. Let us quote from Dube to substantiate his preference for the structural-functional approach: "The concept of great and little tradition, Sanskritisation and westernisation, universalisation and parochialisation offer us a good starting point. The structural-functional approach provides us with more or less satisfactory conceptual tools for the study of village communities. 'Redfield's folk-urban continuum provides one such conceptual frame work. Yogesh Atal touches more upon the viability of the Indian village as a unit of study. (A.R. Desai 792:801).

A.R. Desai rightly observes that Ramakrishna Mukherjee's approach to the study of rural society is qualitatively different from that of Srinivas, Dube and Atal. Mukherjee analyses colonial forces and factors which led to the study of villages. He compares and contrasts village studies conducted by social anthropologists, sociologists and economists and points out that the economists have ignored the socio-cultural matrix of the village community whereas sociologist and anthropologist have ignored the economic and class

matrix in the village studies. Mukherjee prefers a combined or synthesized approach which can account for socio-cultural as well as economic expectation of village life. Mukherjee's (1957) dynamics of rural society provides a very useful analysis of caste (socio-cultural) and class (economic) relations and hierarchy.

Village studies continued to be a central theme of sociological research in the sixties and seventies as well. At the beginning of the seventies, Ishwaran observed that the changes in the village society were national-oriented and global oriented. Not only did challenges come from outside, but institutional mechanisms, also developed from within, both as a response to the challenges and as advice to meet the new demands of the village community. Ishwaran writes: "These (village) studies have generally established the need for two approaches; first, the need for analyzing social change in terms of multiple factors rather than in terms of any single factors; secondly the need to co-relate micro-anthropological studies with macro-sociological analysis. On the one hand we need intensive field studies of village life but on the other hand we need to link up such studies in order to map the morphology and content of social change in wider terms." (K. Ishwaran: 1970:2)

Multi-dimensional concepts, approaches and aspects of study is the message of the essays by Gough. The value of studies of change in local communities is that they illustrate some of the local details involved in the broad sweeps of change occurring in the total society. The community studies are not very illuminating unless made within the framework of knowledge and theory about what is happening to the larger society (Ishwaran 1970:156). Ishwaran says that the following questions have been discussed in the contributions to the volume edited by him: what is the nature of social change? What areas of the village are undergoing change? What is the constant and goal of such change? What are the channels of social change? What are the prospects for change? (K. Ishwaran 1970:14).

Let us also admit that all the studies emphasize on structure and change, history and empiricism and are based on both non-Marxist and Marxist categories on analysis. All of them have found

culturological concepts and categories inadequate for understanding the Indian village community. They see the village community neither as *isolated* nor as *isolable*. They look at it as a part of social formation at various levels such as state, nation and even global. (S. Sharma 1985:137)

Tradition as a conceptual referent in the study of social structure persisted during the 1970s and 1980s through another approach, where the focus was mainly on the historicity of social differentiation, change and modernization of social structure. The notion of social structure in this approach is defined through roles, relations and their interactions in changing historical settings. The notion of tradition is formulated through observable historical process of social change and modernization. The question was whether or not the Indian tradition could absorb the modern institutions and ideologies in scientific, technological, economic and socio-cultural fields of the western model within Indian historical experience. Milton Singer, in his several studies of religions, entrepreneurial and social institutions in South India concludes that the Indian social structure reacts adaptively to the values and cultural practices associated with modernization. The assimilation of roles, norms and institutional patterns to economic, social and technological modernization is wide spread and rampant. (Y. Singh 1986:41 ff).

The study of social structure from the perspective of tradition has grown during the 1970s and 1980s in three main theoretical and methodological directions. Structuralism which, despite locating social structure in the symbols and representations of the Indian tradition or in Indology, does not rule out universal generalizations based on comparisons. Secondly, Ethnosociology or cultural analysis approach postulates the notion of social structure from the source material drawn largely from textual tradition. For source material, it relies mainly on myths, legends and other symbolic representations as contained in oral tradition, linguistic forms, rituals and other aesthetic or expressive manifestations of meanings. It does not, however, attempt generalizations through comparison. When comparisons are made, the purpose is to explore the intrinsic character of tradition

as such by demonstrating the relationship between surface structure and deep structure, as it were.

The third is structural-historical approach. This approach is centered on the analysis of social structure in the process of change and transformation in a historical setting often under ideological canopy of modernization. It generally defines social structure as observable set of roles relation and process of social interaction. It creates tradition as cultural and historical legacy of values, beliefs and customs which are adaptive and accretive. This notion of tradition is drawn from the empirical contexts rather than the texts which serve as a source material both for structuralism and ethnosociology (Y. Singh 1986:45).

The process of social change through modernization is accretive, assimilative, and adaptive. Modernization constitutes a process of social, political, cultural and economic transformation which, by its very nature, tends to be accumulative, adaptive and that selectively promotes structural replacements and differentiation in society. Since modernization is a multi-dimensional and ideological process it gave rise to a great deal of debate in India between 1960 and 1973; (Y. Singh *Indian Sociology* 1973, 1978; Kothari 1970; as S.C. Dube 1973; M.N. Srinivas 1966; Milton Singer 1972). In this debate, not only were the issues of the cultural adaptation or synthesis raised but the discussion also focused on whether the traditional social institution, structure and values for modernization responded to the process and demands of modernization. The concluding observation was that traditional institutions, beliefs and social structure responded positively to the demands of modernization. They underwent selective adaptive changes in order to accommodate the requirements of modernization. (Y. Singh 1986:78)

The direction of change is represented in a linear evolutionary form from tradition to modernization. Traditionalization comprises the total range of changes governed by the orthogenetic pattern in the cultural and social structure. Modernization similarly represents the net balance of changes following from heterogenetic contacts (Y. Singh 1994:26). In the approach to the study of social dynamics

of a Naga village, the patterns of Yogendra Singh's structural-historical approach is followed.

The purposes of selecting Chizami village for the study of *Social Dynamics of Naga village* are as follows :

- (a) Chizami is one of the biggest, oldest traditional villages and fastest developing village in Phek district.
- (b) The first dispensary, electricity, formal educational institutions were set up in Chizami among the Chakhesang tribe.
- (c) The first graduate among the Chakhesang was from Chizami village.
- (d) The British Bungalow was constructed and during the World War II Japanese, Burmese and British came across these villages.
- (e) It is the second first village from where Christianity was spread out into different villages.
- (f) It consists of traditional Medanyi religion and Christians.
- (g) Chizami village is surrounded by five tribes viz. Sapoumi (south), Tangkhul (east), Chakrü (west), Sümi north and Khezha (south-west).
- (h) Besides, the researcher knows the local dialect.

Aims and Objectives :

In studying the social dynamics of Naga village, certain objectives are placed before the study. These objectives are drawn from the initial understanding that the study will focus on the socio-cultural processes of village structure and change. These objectives, therefore, are to study :

1. The organized pattern of the inter-related rights and obligation of the persons or group in the village social system of interaction.
2. The structural response of the village to external factors like Christianity, introduction of market system, state policy of development and power structure.

3. How socialization processes take place in the social structure.
4. The inter-relationship between Chizami village and other villages, towns, cities etc.

Survey of Literature :

Much has been written about the Nagas. In books and articles, some academic and some journalistic, various writers have attempted discussions and studies about different aspects of these people group residing in the north-eastern corner of India. Different authors have emphasized different aspects such as the national movement of the Nagas, their culture, the impact of British rule in Nagaland and the advent, growth and impact of Christianity in Naga society. Some of the important books are noted here.

A Brief Historical Account of Nagaland (1970) written by M. Alemchiba presents a general historical account of Nagas, their resistance to the British, their relations with the Ahoms, British occupation of Naga Hills and the birth of the state of Nagaland. In *British Occupation of Naga Country* (1993) Temjenyuba Ao describes the British occupation of Naga country, relationship between the Nagas in Nagaland and those residing in Manipur and the Naga tribes in upper Chindwin Burma. M.Horam's *Naga Insurgency* (1998) deals with the rise of Naga nationalism and the activities of the underground Nagas. In the book *Naga Problems and Politics* (1992), Ashiko Daili Mao discusses the evolution and composition of Naga society.

British Policy and Administration in Nagaland (1881-1947) written by Piketo Sema studies the different facets of colonial policy and administration in Naga Hills, covering the prime British period policy and administration, cultural, economics and political- colonial policies, and their impact on Naga society. Hokishe Sema, in his book *Emergence of Nagaland* (1981) traces the origins of Nagas, their contact with the British, the missionaries and the political, social and economic transformation of Nagaland. Chandrika Singh's *Political Evolution of Nagaland* (1981) stresses on the threshold of the new prosperity and political evolution of Nagaland, its democratic

system and changing face. *The World of Nagas* written by Murkot Rammuny (1988) deals with the Naga Nationalist Movement and the move towards a political solution.

The Growth of Baptist Church in Chakhesang Tribe which was written by Phuveyi Dozo (1983) stressed on the concept of supreme being, the system of worship in Naga religion and the factors leading to Christianity.

Hodson in his book *The Naga Tribes of Manipur* (1911) presents the domestic life, law and customs, beliefs and folk tales. M. Horam, who has authored several books on the Nagas, in one of his books, entitled *Naga Old Ways New Trends* (1988) describes the moods and the atmosphere among a people going through a powerful transition which has been brought about with the dawn of modernization. In his other book, *Naga Polity* (1975), Horam discusses early political institutions, the family, village and customary laws. And in *Social and Cultural Life of the Nagas* which was published in 1977, Horam highlights several significant aspects of the traditional, social and cultural life of the Tangkhul Nagas as well as the recent changes in their norms and customs.

In the book *Social Changes Among the Nagas (Tangkhul)*, published in 1993 and written by Khashim Ruivah, the author discusses the factors stimulating socio-cultural change among the people of this Naga tribe. In J.P. Mills' *The Rengma Nagas* (1936), the domestic life of the Nagas, their laws and customs, religion and economy during the agriculture years, among others, are clearly and elaborately depicted. B.B. Ghosh's *History of Nagaland* (1981) is an exhaustive history of the state including the distinctive features of civilization in this remote and ancient corner of the country. Ghosh also touches upon the social, cultural and economic processes at work among the Nagas. *Nagaland: A Contemporary Ethnography* (1992), which is edited by S. Channa, is an attempt to understand and delve into wide ranging facets of Naga society, such as the structure of the villages, religion, ethno-medicine, material culture, women, the agrarian structure, political consciousness and social change. In the book *Ancient Ao Naga Religion and Culture*, the

writer Ponger Imchen discusses the socio-cultural beliefs and practises of the Ao Nagas during the pre-missionary period, the arrival of Christianity and its impact on their (Ao) religion, their culture and society.

Christoph Voon Föver-Haimendorf's *Return to the Naked Nagas* (1976) portrays a picture of the attractive hard working life of the pre-literate Naga tribes, living megalithic culture, great stones still being dragged into circles and feasts of merit etc. J.H. Hutton, *The Angami Nagas* (1921) describes the domestic life, laws and customs, religion, folklore and language of the Angamis. *The Rising Nagas* (1974) by Asoso Yonuo is a description of the political history of the Nagas beginning from that of the early Nagas and their relations with their neighbors including the Meiteis, Assamese, and Burmese among others. Yonuo also depicts vividly British rule and how they accomplished their political desires over the Nagas through military expeditions against the village states. The book also describes the changes brought about by the British rulers, the coming and contributions of the American Christian missionaries to the people of the Naga Hills, the background of the revolt against the Indian government and the formation of the state of Nagaland. In another book *A History of Nagas and Nagaland (Dynamics of Oral Village Formation)* by V. Sanyu and published in 1996, historical account of village formation among the Nagas is given by the writer.

Much research has been conducted in numerous villages of India by anthropologists, sociologists and other social scientists. A great deal of literature has emerged out of such efforts. Much has also been written about the Nagas and Nagaland, though, as it should be, the themes, areas of study and perspectives have differed among the writers. However, there has not been an extensive and intensive study of a particular Naga village, its social structure and the different processes operating in it. Coupled with this is the fact that there is much dissimilarity between the Nagas' way of life, their culture and other components of their social-life and those of their counterparts in the mainland of India. The above realities challenged me to undertake the study of a Naga village's social structure and its

processes. The researcher strongly believes that the study of social dynamics of a Naga village will contribute to the comprehensive understanding of process at work in the Naga society as a whole.

According to the Statistical Handbook of Nagaland 1990, published by the Director of Economics and Statistics, Govt. of Nagaland, there are 995 villages in Nagaland and an attempt at understanding the social dynamics in one will greatly contribute towards a better and more holistic understanding of the social dynamics of Naga society as a whole.

Area of Study :

The Nagas comprised about 40 tribes (V. Sanyu, 1996:p2) each with its own distinct dialect. There are 15 tribes in Nagaland and others are outside Nagaland. i.e., in Burma, Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh and Assam. The present state of Nagaland has a geographical area of 16,576 sq.km. Kohima, the capital of Nagaland is situated at a height of 1444.12 metres above sea level. (Statistical Handbook of Nagaland,1994). Nagaland is surrounded by Myanmar in the east, Assam in the west, Arunachal Pradesh in the north and Manipur in the south. Nagaland comprises of eight districts viz., Kohima, Mokokchung, Tuensang, Wokha, Zunheboto, Phek, Mon and Dimapur.

Chizami is one of the biggest and oldest villages of the Chakesang Nagas in Phek District of Nagaland. Phek is bounded by the areas inhabited by Sema Nagas in the North (Zunheboto District), Tangkhul in the south (Manipur State), Burma Naga in the east (Myanmar) and Angami Nagas in the west (Kohima District). There are 96 villages within the Phek District. Chizami is 88 kms away from Kohima, capital of Nagaland and 58 kms away from Phek. It is situated between Kohima and Phek. Chizami village is located in the south-eastern part of Phek district. The whole village has been taken into account for the purpose of the study.

Methodology, Sources of Data and Field Work :

So far as the sources of data are concerned both primary and secondary sources are used. Secondary sources of data include both

official and non-official documents and published and unpublished materials. Village records, most of which are written in the Tenyidie language and comprising of magazines, booklets, personal files, seminar papers, village customary law records and church records. VDB (Village Development Board) reports were availed of for collecting relevant information for the study being pursued. The secondary data are collected from various libraries and different persons.

Primary data was society itself. It refers to the living persons and their interactions and activities in the present social system, those who have seen, experienced the various stages their society has passed through during their lifetime and who are knowledgeable about the past. These are persons who can describe not only the present and existing state of affairs but who are aware of the significant milestones that have been crossed by the society they are living in.

Field work was carried out on several occasions, especially on days of important religious or cultural festivals. For instance, during the *Ebouchüto* festival (*Medanyi* religion) this coincides with Thanksgiving Day (Christian) in November. Field work was also carried out during *Erünye* festival, Chrismass and New Year in the month of December and early January. It was also undertaken during the time of observance of the *Yikenye* festival (*Medanyi* religion) which coincides with the period between Good Friday and Easter Sunday (Christian) in April. In the course of the work being undertaken, people's participation in the festivals, in social work and social gatherings were observed. Interviews were also conducted and each focused on the following two aspects :

- (i) The origin of Chizami and its traditional social institutions and
- (ii) How modernization has taken place.

There are 19 clans in Chizami village. Some of the oldest persons and *goanburas* (headmen) of all clans were selected for interviews. In the interviews, inquiries were made about their area of migration, how they acquired their role and status in the social

structure of the village since the beginning, parenting roles and their roles and duties towards their children's spouses and in-laws. In the personal contacts with the priest of *Medanyi* religion, the pastor of the Baptist Church and the priest of the Roman Catholic Church, inquiries regarding their beliefs, religious rituals and ceremonies were made. A person who had personal experience in different fields such as performing the ritual for killing the tiger, killing wild animals and offering of the feast of *Krilo*, *Elito* and *Zatho* was also interviewed. For information about the politico-juristical system of the past and the present, Village Council Chairmen and Head *gaonbura* (GB) were interviewed besides collecting relevant data from the Village Court's records. Information was also gathered from village elders who have good knowledge about the past and retired teachers. Besides that, leaders of different social organizations in the village were interviewed. There were occasions when this researcher collected necessary information himself by participating in different occasions of festivals, and observed the techniques and activities that they involved. With these methods, all the data on social institutions i.e. kinship, religion, economics and politico-juridical rules and regulation in the village are all elicited for studies. All the respondents were very co-operative and helpful.

This thesis is divided into seven chapters. The first chapter is the introduction and it discusses the perspective of the work, theoretical approach, review of literature, aims and objectives and methodology.

The second chapter describes the formation of Naga village. It deals with its topography, migration, origin of the village, distribution of status, village organization and its relation with other villages, towns and cities.

The third chapter deals with kinship institutions, family, marriage, clan, role of family in socialization, kinship relations with other social groups, past and present systems.

Chapter four is devoted to an analysis of the religious institutions of the village. The beliefs and practices, festivals and feasts, *menyi*, taboos, *Metimi* and Christian organizations in the village are examined.

The economic institution of the village is discussed in the fifth chapter. This includes ownership of property, types of land, domestication of animals, handlooms and handicrafts, agricultural rituals, economic activities, the market system and socio-economic structure in the past and present.

In chapter six the politico-juridical system is discussed. It discusses the traditional rules and regulations and their interface with the state government. The chapter also focuses on the traditional power structure, advent of British administration and present day village council and village customary laws.

The seventh and final chapter presents a summary of the findings of the entire study.

Problem in the Field :

In the process of doing the field work, a controversy arose between the Kapfo and Tsühah clan. The Kapfo clan claimed that Thomo Kapfo was the first person who made the first fire at Thezau in the village while the Tsühah clan, on the other hand, claimed that Tsühah was the first person who set fire at Thezau in the village. In such a situation, it was difficult for the researcher to continue the field work. However, with the permission of the Village Council Chairman, K.Z. Mero, a meeting was called on April 19, 2000 at 10 a.m. in the Village Council Guest House in *Pfütse Khel* for settling the matter. In the meeting, all the G.Bs, former and present Village Council Chairmen and members, the local church pastor, the representatives of all the clans, President of CSU, VDB Secretary, Chairman of Welfare Forum, Youth Chairman and others were present.³

The meeting started with a prayer by Rev. Mese Rhakho Pastor of CBC. After much discussion and presentation of different viewpoints the matter was resolved that Tsühah was the first person who set fire at Thezau in Chizami village. The evidences are as follows :

1. The members present in the meeting listened to the statements given by both parties (K. Kapfo clan and Tsühah clan) in the meeting.

2. After hearing from both parties the members relied on the statement given by the persons who belong to other clans. N. Thopi former Village Council Chairman said that he heard from his forefather that Tsühah was the first person who set fire at Thezau.
3. Kapfo clan had erected a Memorial stone at Thezau in the village. In the stone they wrote "He (Thomo) took fire and made a big fire at Theza in Chizami village". From the above statement, it appears that Thomo was not the first person who made fire because he took fire from someone else.
4. All the members in the meeting claimed that Chizami did not take fire from another villager. All the members agreed that Tsühah was the first person who set fire by using the traditional method of *Erumeshü*.

In the meeting, the members accepted the statement that Tsühah was the first person who set fire at Chizami village. A more detailed historical description of the same is given in the subsequent chapter i.e. Chapter II (the Formation of village). This meeting not only settled the controversy but was also an opportunity for this researcher to gather useful information for his study. The meeting ended with a prayer by Khenemvü L. Mero at 4.00 p.m.

For the purpose of finding out general statements, regulation of social activities and clarification of doubts, this researcher often stayed for a week and sometimes for a month in the field. The last trip for field work was during the winter season. It was from 18th December 2000 to 29th January 2001.

A sociologist engaged in studying his own society is in a position to better comprehend the advantages and disadvantages in the village society. Sociologically, it is important to ensure that the disadvantages are minimized while the advantages retained. At the same time, the scholar who is engaged in the study of his own society is likely to be influenced by his society's problems, practices, customs, beliefs, interests, and its ethnocentrism not only in the process of data collection but also in the problem he selects for study. In view of this likelihood, therefore, the scholar should be careful to follow a scientific objectivity which is free from bias and prejudices.

On the other hand, the scholar has several advantages in studying his own society. This is because he has personal knowledge of his own culture; he knows the language and therefore does not need an interpreter. Consequently, he can easily correct and check his data.

In developing countries like India, the study of one's own society is necessary in the context of planning and directing social change. It is necessary for policy formation, evaluation of developmental projects and other areas of national growth. Another important reason for the study of one's own society is the need for self understanding. It is through a scientific study of one's own society that one can enhance one's knowledge and understanding about the society to which he/she belongs. The scholar who studies other's society may not be able to obtain all the desired information due to his/her limitations in language and perception of the local conditions.

Notes :

1. Social Dynamics refers to the study of society in terms of interrelated social processes and social change. It is the way in which people behave and react to each other in order to achieve an end and the changes in the established pattern of social relationships.
2. Tradition : A social custom passed down from one generation to another through the social process of socialization. Traditions represent the beliefs, values and ways of thinking of social groups. W.P. Scott, Dictionary of Sociology, 1988.
3. Members present in the meetings are as follows :
 1. Neilhikha Mero, Teacher, 2. Lhiwenyi T. Mero, GB, 3. Mese Rakho, Pastor, 4. Wesenyi Kapfo, GB, 5. Khenemvü L. Mero VCM, 6. Kelhizülo, Mero, Chairman VCC, 7. Kevethi Mekrisuh, Ex-Secretary VDB, 14. Neikhape L. Mero, Ex-Secretary VCC, 15. Zachütso Naro, Public Leader, 16. Kekhwekha Kapfo, VCM, 17. Khwewalo, Tsühah, President, CSU, 18. Kewekhalo Rakho Vice Chairman Town Committee, 19. Kekhwetsü Tsühah T. Mero, Public Leader, 20. Keduzü Wezah, GB, 21. Neikhalo Lohe, Deacon, CBC, Lhiwekwelo Lasuh, Treasurer, CBC, 26. Selhinyi Lasuh, Head GB.