

# LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY IN NAGALAND-A STUDY IN SOCIAL GEOGRAPHY

Abstract

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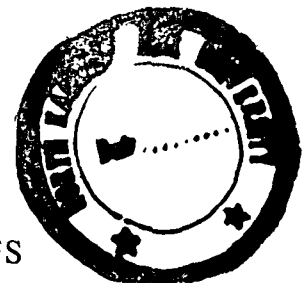
**IMTITEMSU**

*A Dissertation*

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT OF  
THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

( M. PHIL )

To



DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY  
SCHOOL OF ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

*North Eastern Hill University*

SHILLONG

1991

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## ABSTRACT

### Statement of the Problem

Spatial distribution of languages is of paramount importance in geographical patterning of culture. Language is not only a means of communication, but it also reflects the culture and social character of the people "as language is continuum in time". As the vehicle of communication language performs a variety of roles within a region and across regions. While it facilitates easy communication and social intercourse within a region, it may act as a hinderance to inter-regional communication and social integration. The factors which have been responsible for differentiation in the patterning of languages are rooted in history and geography. In the present study, an attempt has been made to examine the nature and extent of linguistic diversity, the historical and environmental basis of this diversity and its geographic patterning, with a view to examining its implication in the context of changing socio-economic profile of this region.

### Study Area

For the present study, Nagaland has been selected as the state provides an opportunity to understand socio-cultural evolution of smaller groups living in more or less

complete isolation even within the same ecological setting. Nagaland faces perhaps, the most difficult problem of inter-tribal and inter-regional communication due to the prevalence of so many languages within a small area.

### Objectives

The main objectives of the study are:

- 1) To develop an understanding of the process of linguistic evolution in Nagaland.
- 2) To analyse the patterns of distribution of languages at various levels of spatial aggregation.
- 3) To ascertain the bases and extent of linguistic diversity in the study area.

### Source of data

The present study is primarily based on data collected from the secondary sources. Data pertaining to physical setting have been collected from published books and articles dealing with Geology and Mining, Agricultural Census, Forest Statistical Handbook, Research papers and other relevant sources. Published books, Gazetteers, Journals and reports on various aspects of Nagaland have been referred to collect information regarding the historical past, origin, migration and social composition. District Census Handbooks

and District Statistical Handbooks have been consulted for a broad understanding of the distribution pattern of various languages in the state.

### Methodology

As geographical factors have influenced in a variety of ways the evolution of patterns of socio-cultural behaviour, the nature of interaction between physical environment and the society has been analysed with reference to physical setting, Soil, Climate etc. The pattern of distribution of languages provides us not only an idea about the possible problems in the region but also help us in developing a sense of cultural evolution. The cultural evolution of the region has been analysed with a reflection on the historical past by analysing origin, migration and socio-cultural traits of the inhabiting tribes.

The distribution of languages has been attempted at various levels of spatial aggregation. The data at the circle levels have been analysed with reference to percentage of speakers to total speakers in the circle. The bases of diversity has been examined by identifying and analysing the possible nature of determinants responsible for diversity. For the measurement of the extent of diversity, the index of diversity has been calculated with the help of a measure

proposed by J.H.Greenburg. The study is supplemented with suitable maps so as to interpret and identify the analysis properly.

#### Research Question

The following research questions are set before the study.

- 1) To what extent the physical factors play role in the distribution of languages in Nagaland ?
- 2) What is the nature and extent of linguistic diversity in the state and what are its implications ?
- 3) What are the problems of linguistic diversity in the study area considering its location and economy ?

#### Chapter Scheme

The first chapter deals with the research setting which includes- statement of the problem, objectives of the research, an overview of available literature on the subject, data base and methodology employed in the study, research questions and chapter scheme of the study. The second chapter emphasis on the physical setting which includes physiography, climate, drainage, soil and natural vegetation of the region, which might have influenced cultural evolution and linguistic diversity in the region.

The third chapter is an attempt to trace the historical background of the Nagas, which includes origin of the Nagas, their migration, cultural traits and some aspects of social composition. The studies helps in understanding the present socio-cultural structure of the Nagas and changing social pattern of the various Naga groups. The fourth chapter examines the pattern of distribution of languages at various levels of spatial aggregation. For a clearer understanding of the distribution of languages, various languages have been grouped into three: Scheduled language, Naga language and Mother-tongue language.

The fifth chapter examines the bases and extent of linguistic diversity in the state. The bases of diversity have been explained by taking into account of several bases of linguistic diversity such as physical, socio-cultural, economic and political. The measurement of the extent of diversity has been calculated with the help of a measure proposed by J.H. Greenburg. The measure ranges from a value of 0 (complete homogeneity) to 1 (infinite diversity). In the sixth chapter an attempt has been made to discuss the problems arising out of the complex pattern of distribution of languages in the state. The concluding chapter provides a brief summary of the findings of the study.

## Findings

Physiographically, Nagaland is an extension of the young Himalayan mountain system. Its terrain is characterised by dissected ridges, spurs, deep gorges and steep slopes. All the above factors gave rise to the economic backwardness and social and physical isolation. The various legends about the origin of different Naga clans indicates that most of these clans have different hypothesis about their origin and always considered themselves different from other clans. The similarity in affinity between the Nagas and the people of the hilly tracts of Indonesia, Borneo, Sumatra, Formosa and Philippines indicates that the Nagas might have migrated from South East Asia. In Naga society patrilineal descent is followed and marriage cannot take place between the persons of the same clan. The religious composition of the state reveals that 80.21 per cent of the total population is christian. The concentration of tribal population is also very high (83.99 %).

Most of the speakers of Scheduled language with the exception of a few namely - Assamese, Hindi and Bengali show a concentration only in a few areas having some form of urbanisation. The name of those circles having urban segment of the population are Dimapur sadar, Kohima, Mokokchung, Tuensang sadar, Nagenimora, Zunheboto, Mon, Wokha and Phek.

The Naga language speakers who constitute the bulk of the population, show a tendency to cluster and concentrate in small mutually exclusive territories with clear-cut boundaries of their core areas. Their distribution outside their core areas show a sharp reduction in their percentage. The pattern of distribution of various Naga languages reveals that in the south, southeastern part of the state where the topography is extremely rugged, there are speakers of many languages though, the number of these speakers of languages is quite less. On the other hand, western part bordering Assam and central part of the state where hills are low and slopes are gentle have fewer linguistic groups, however, the number of speakers of these languages is relatively more. Among the other Mother-tongue languages only the Nepali speaking people seems to have penetrated a large part of the state with significant presence in many circles.

Economic backwardness fostered by difficult terrain and environmental condition did not provide scope for development and failed to attract people from both within and outside. They lived in self-sufficient village economy. Since trade and exchange between tribes were extremely limited, inter-tribal contacts were also rare. The self-sufficient village economy was characterised by a strong community feeling and the chiefs or rulers of a particular community had a strong centralised administration. Thus, physical, social,

economic and political isolation between the tribes provided excellent ground for the germination and fostering of multiple tongues within a small area. Lack of interaction gave rise to the evolution of distinct cultures, languages and dialects. These factors are largely responsible for the lack of a common Naga language to develop and the absence of bilingualism or multilingualism in the state.

Linguistic diversity is obviously very high at the state, however, the diversity became insignificant at the circle level. At this level the speakers of only one language became conspicuous. No Naga group understand the other, hence, there is no Naga language that can be a lingua-franca in Nagaland. Though, inter-tribal communication gap is apparent, however, within a particular linguistic group normal communication is never affected by dialectal differences. Nagamese is the most widely used media language through which the Naga communicate themselves. English is the second media language, however, it is confined to the few educated people. It has been observed that the most pertinent problem in the state is the tendency in favour of linguistic exclusiveness of the minority groups.

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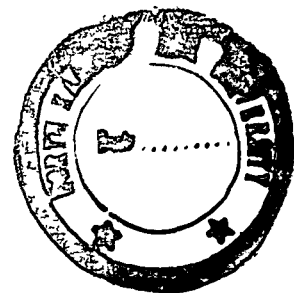
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Lower Lachumiere, Shillong - 793001 (Meghalaya)

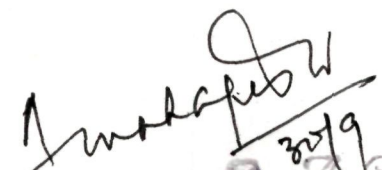
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## CERTIFICATE


This is to certify that the Dissertation entitled "LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY IN NAGALAND-A STUDY IN SOCIAL GEOGRAPHY" submitted by Mr. IMTITEMSU for the Degree of Master of Philosophy (M.Phil) in Geography is a bonafied study to the best of my knowledge and belief. The researcher has given due acknowledgement to quotations and references of other reputed studies.

The study may, therefore be present before Examiners for due evaluation.

  
Dr. A.C. Mohapatra  
30/9/91

Prof & Head  
Department of  
Geography  
N.E.H.U, Shillong

Department of Geography  
North Eastern Hill University,  
Shillong-793014.

  
(Dr. Ali Ahmad)  
30/9/91  
Supervisor  
Department of Geography  
North-Eastern Hill University  
Shillong- 793014.

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Shillong

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(IMTITEMSU)

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**CHAPTER 1**

**INTRODUCTION**



POSITION OF NAGALAND  
IN INDIA, 1981

200 0 200KM

FIG-1.1

## INTRODUCTION

During the last forty years or so, geographical studies are increasingly addressing to problem related to society. The study of social groups in their spatial context is attracting increasing attention as more and more geographers try to understand the interplay between human society and their physical surrounding.

In India social geographers have been emphasising the need for the study of social problems arising out of the distribution of social phenomena. However, researches in this area has been largely inadequate. It is needless to emphasise that an understanding of the social milieu of a region is essential for geographers to analyse the processes of development and change in any region. It is more true in the case of the tribal areas of the North-East Region of India. Most of these tribal groups have lived in social and physical isolation for thousands of years and had developed distinct socio-cultural traits in due course of time. For the present study, Nagaland has been selected as the state provides an opportunity to understand socio-cultural evolution of smaller groups living in more or less complete isolation even within the same ecological setting.

### Statement of the Problem

Spatial distribution of languages is of paramount importance in geographical patterning of culture. Language is not only a means of communication, but it also reflects the culture and social character of the people "as language is continuum in time". As the vehicle of communication language performs a variety of roles within a region and across regions. While it facilitates easy communication and social intercourse within a region, it may act as a hindrance to inter-regional communication and social integration. The factors which have been responsible for differentiation in the patterning of languages are rooted in history and geography. While these historically evolved patterns suited to the needs of earlier times and in close confirmity with physical factors, they have significant implication in the present context of increased mobility and social and economic transformation.

The linguistic geography of Nagaland poses perhaps one of the most complex mosaic in terms of geographic patterning of languages. More than a dozen languages are spoken within this hilly state which supports a very high proportion of tribal population. The state faces the most difficult problem of inter-tribal and inter-regional communication due to prevalence of so many languages within a

small spatial extent. In the present study, an attempt has been made to examine the nature and extent of linguistic diversity, the historical and environmental basis of this diversity and its geographic patterning, with a view to examining its implication in the context of changing socio-economic profile of this state.

#### Overview of Literature

Number of books and articles have been written on Naga society, culture and economy. Studies on the social geography of Nagaland include those of Hutton, Mills, Smith, Furer Haimendorf etc. All of them deal at length the socio-cultural traits and political organisation of the Nagas. In the same lines Alemchiba(1970), B.B Ghosh(1982)and Lanusosang have discussed the socio-cultural and political organisation and the changes taking place in the Naga society at present. Tajenyuba provided valuable information on the subjugation of the Nagas by the British and its impact on the socio-cultural life of the Nagas following their contacts

The patterning of languages has been studied by Ali Ahmad for the whole of North-East. He has highlighted the process of their evolution, diffusion and unification

as well as the impact of linguistic diversity on the process of development in the region. Linguistic studies of Nagaland poses a tremendous challenge to many of the young researchers as the region remains a terra-incognita for academicians. Grierson's work "on the linguistic survey of India", continues to be the only most exhaustive work on linguistic geography of the region. The study provides valuable insight into the origin of the Naga languages and its relationship with other tribes of the same linguistic family. Marrison's work on various languages of the Nagas and their inter-relationship is also worth mentioning. Another important study includes the work by C.Khalong who highlights the linguistic groups of Nagaland and indicates how language acts as a medium of cultural diffusion.

#### Objectives

The main objectives of the study are:

- 1) To develop an understanding of the process of linguistic evolution in Nagaland.
- 2) To analyse the patterns of distribution of languages at various levels of spatial aggregation.
- 3) To ascertain the bases and extent of linguistic diversity in the study area.

### Source of data

The present study is primarily based on data collected from the secondary sources. Data pertaining to physical setting have been collected from published books and articles dealing with Geology and Mining, Agricultural Census, Forest Statistical Handbook, Research papers and other relevant sources. Published books, Gazetteers, Journals and reports on various aspects of Nagaland have been referred to collect information regarding the historical past, origin, migration and social composition. District Census Handbooks and District Statistical Handbooks have been consulted for a broad understanding of the distribution pattern of various languages in the state.

### Methodology

As geographical factors have influenced in a variety of ways the evolution of patterns of socio-cultural behaviour, the nature of interaction between physical environment and the society has been analysed with reference to physical setting, soil, climate etc. The pattern of distribution of distribution of languages provides us not only an idea about the possible problems in the region but also help us in developing a sense of cultural evolution. The cultural evolution of the region has been analysed with a reflection on the historical past by analysing origin, migration and socio-cultural traits

of the inhabiting tribes.

The distribution of languages has been attempted at various levels of spatial aggregation. The data at the circle levels have been analysed with reference to percentage of speakers to total speakers in the circle. The bases of diversity has been examined by identifying and analysing the possible nature of determinants responsible for diversity. For the measurement of the extent of diversity, the index of diversity has been calculated with the help of a measure proposed by J.H Greenburg. The study is supplemented with suitable maps so as to interpret and identify the analysis properly.

### **Research Question**

The following research questions are set before the study.

- 1) To what extent the physical factors play role in the distribution of languages in Nagaland ?
- 2) What is the nature and extent of linguistic diversity in the state and what are its implications ?
- 3) What are the problems of linguistic diversity in the study area considering its location and economy ?

### **Chapter Scheme**

The first chapter deals with the research setting which includes- statement of the problem, objectives of the

research, an overview of available literature on the subject, data base and methodology employed in the study, research questions and chapter scheme of the study.

The second chapter emphasizes on the physical setting of the region in order to understand the physical landscape of the region which includes physiography, climate, drainage, soil and natural vegetation.

In the first section of this chapter the region has been divided into three broad physiographic regions and an attempt has been made to understand the salient physiographic features of these regions.

In the second, third, fourth and fifth sections of the same chapter some aspects of climate, drainage, soil and vegetation have been studied in order to get an insight into the significant landscape features of the region which might have influenced cultural evolution and linguistic diversity in the region.

The third chapter is an attempt to trace the historical background of the Nagas, which includes origin of the Nagas, their migration, cultural traits and some aspects of social composition. The studies helps in understanding the present socio-cultural structure of the Nagas and changing social pattern of the various Naga groups.

The first section of the chapter deals with the

origin of the Nagas based on various legends and traditions of different Naga tribes. The second section is an attempt to highlight the affinity of the Nagas in common with the other tribal communities in order to establish the original place of their possible migration. The third section of the chapter emphasis on the possible route of migration of the various Naga tribes and their later movement within the state of Nagaland.

The fourth section of this chapter has been devoted to study certain significant traits of Naga society, ei. settlement pattern, socio-political systems and other socio-cultural traits to understand their real functioning as a distinct social group. The last section of this chapter emphasis on some aspects of social composition which mainly includes linguistic, religious and tribal compositions.

The fourth chapter examines the pattern of distribution of languages in the state. For a clearer understanding of the distribution of languages, various languages have been grouped into three; Scheduled language, Naga language and other Mother-tongue. An attempt has also been made to analyse at various levels of spatial aggregation. In the first section of this chapter distribution of Scheduled languages have been discussed. In the second section the Naga languages and in the third section of the chapter distribution of other Mother-

tongues have been discussed.

The fifth chapter examines the bases and extent of linguistic diversity in the state. The bases of diversity have been explained by taking into account of several bases of linguistic diversity such as physical, socio-cultural, economic and political. Similarly, for the measurement of the extent of diversity, the index of diversity has been calculated with the help of a measure proposed by J.H Greenburg. The measure ranges from a value of 0 (complete homogeneity) to 1 (infinite diversity).

In the sixth chapter an attempt has been made to discuss the problems arising out of the complex pattern of distribution of languages in the state. As linguistic diversity, if not properly understood may create social tensions, economic exploitation and political unrest in the region.

The concluding chapter provides a brief summary of the findings of the study.

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**CHAPTER II**

**PHYSICAL SETTING OF NAGALAND**

## PHYSICAL SETTING OF NAGALAND

### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

Environmental setting influences and structures human responses to it. Attributes of the space and environmental have differentiated human responses at the early stages of human history if not later. Tribal societies, much more than their non-tribal counter-part, have lived in close interaction with the physical environment and sometimes in direct conformity with it. The variation in the nature of topography, climate, soil cover, vegetation etc. exercise powerful influences on the nature of man-environment relationship and its specificities. It is, therefore, imperative to get an insight into the environmental setting of Nagaland with reference to physical setting, climate, soil and vegetation etc. in order to understand the complexity of linguistic structure in this region.

### 2.2 TOPOGRAPHY

Nagaland is a mountainous state. Physical setting of the region is characterised by rugged topography, dissected ridges, spurs, deep gorges, narrow valleys, steep slopes etc. Important peaks of the region, Naga bom and Patkai Hills are the southward extension of the Himalayan young folded

mountain system. Barring a few hundred square kilometres of plains around Dimapur and Tizet, along the foot hills and river beds in the western part of the state, the entire state is mountainous. The altitude varies between 366 feet and 12673 feet above mean sea level.

On the basis of geographical division, the physiography of Nagaland can be divided into three distinct geographical region.<sup>1</sup> These are:

- 1) Foot Hill Zone
- 2) Zone of Intermediary Lower Ranges
- 3) Zone of Higher Ranges. (Figure 2.1)

### 2.21 Foot Hill Zone

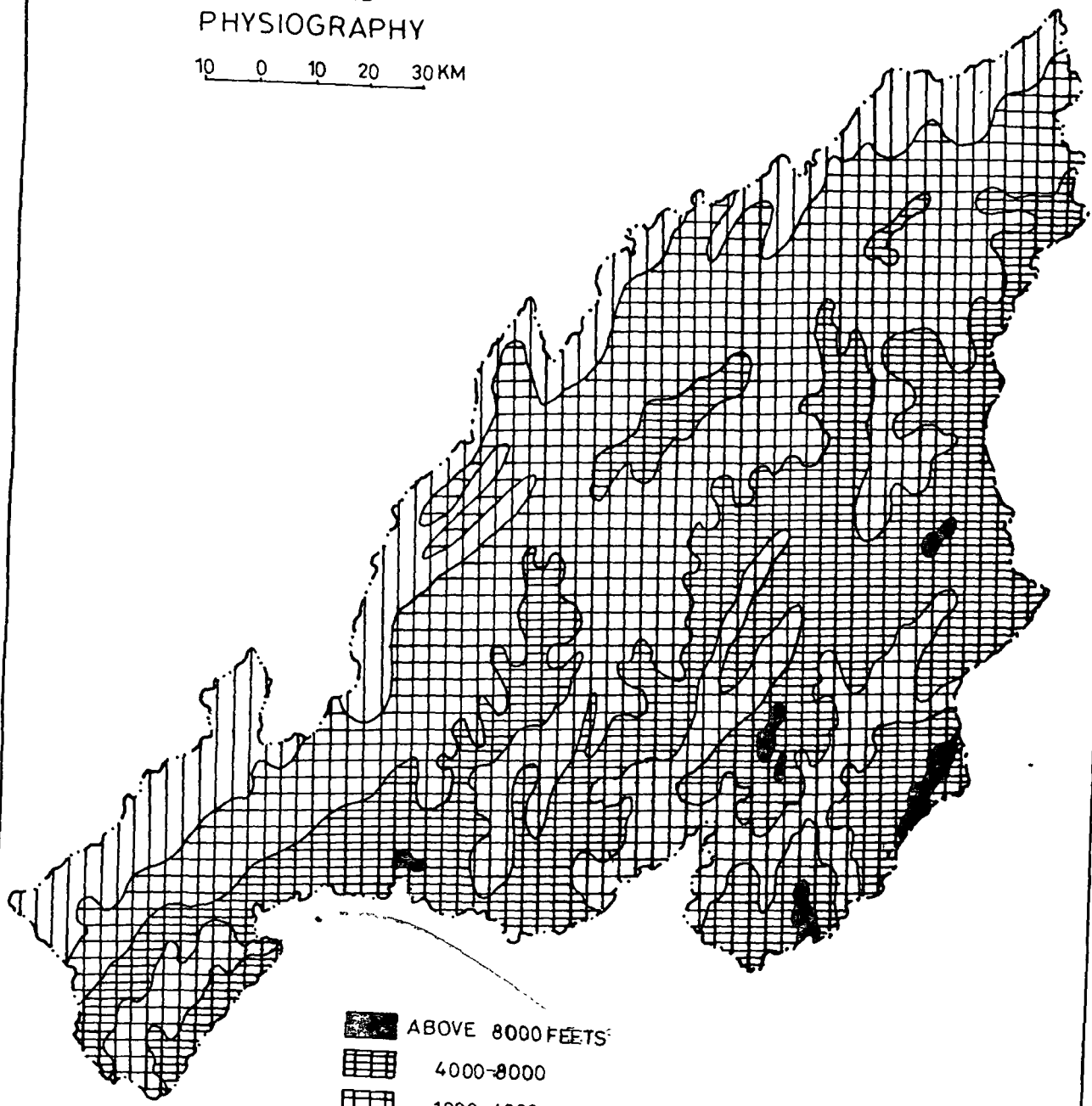
The foot hill areas lies between the Assam valley and the hill ranges and are the lowest elevation where the altitude ranges between 366 feet and 990 feet. These ranges are highest in the east and lowest in the west. The Barial ranges which face Assam are the lowest ranges forming the watershed. This Barial range enters Nagaland from North Cachar (Assam) and runs towards Wokha through the vicinity of Kohima. Japvo, to the south of Kohima is the highest peak of Barial range and attains a height of 10036 feet above mean sea level. This Barial range is met by the complex hilly prolonged from the Arakan-Yoma (the major mountain system of Burma) and from

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1. Directorate of Geology and Mining, (1978), Status of Geological Work and Inventory of Mineral Discoveries in Nagaland, Dimapur, PP. 1-2.

NAGALAND  
PHYSIOGRAPHY

10 0 10 20 30 KM



- ABOVE 8000 FEETS
- 4000-8000
- 1000-4000
- BELOW-1000

FIG-2.1

here, the main range runs in a north and north easterly direction.<sup>2</sup>

About 12 kilometres wide miniature type of Dun (valley) is formed in between the Barial and Samugating Hills and this was result due to the sudden rise of the Barial range on its northern face. The most important plains being the Dimapur plain where the town is located. It extends from Dimapur on the east to as far as Chumukedima in the west, roughly an area of about 150 square kilometres. Nagenimora plain in the mid west and Tizet plain in the northwest, have their surface area of about 58 square kilometres and 75 kilometres respectively.

In the western hilly tract between the longitudinal mountain ranges several plains and parallel valleys are located at an average altitude of 900 feet, running parallel to the mountain ranges. These valleys are the backbone and the only waysby means of which the Naga could practised permanent cultivation. The following plains are as follows: Ghaspani, Lakhuni, Tsurang, Bhandari and Merapani.

## 2.22 Zone of Intermediary Lower Ranges

To the east of the foot hills lies the intermediary

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2. M. Hussain, (1988), Nagaland, Habitat, Society and Shifting Cultivation, New Delhi , P.10.

zone. This zone occupying the central part of Nagaland, with an average elevation of 2970 feet. These hill ranges runs from northeast to southwest direction with almost maintaining uniform in height. As we go further east from the intermediary zone, the hill gradually rises in the high hill ranges with the altitude varying from 3960 feet to 7920 feet. Here a number of peaks with different names height are located. As the mountain ranges are young most of the valleys are 'V' shaped and only a few 'U' shaped valleys are found in a higher elevation.

### 2.23 Zone of Higher Ranges

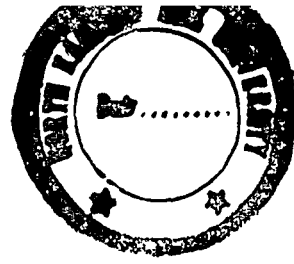
This is the eastern most part of the region, where the terrain is highly complex. Saramati with a height of 12672 feet situated in Tuensang district is the highest peak in the Patkai Range, is in this region. This Patkai range acts as demarcating line between Nagaland and Burma, as well as form a watershed zone between the rivers of India and Burma. Tizu is the only major river that flows across this Patkai range and finally plunged into the Chindwin river of Burma.

The Patkai range is connected with the Barial range with two small ranges. One of these connects Patkai with Barial in the vicinity of Kohima and Ukhrul (Manipur). The range runs about south-east and north-west direction upto Mao area

and then takes an eastward trend for about 35 kilometres until it turns in a southward direction. The other linking range also follows zig zag course. These two ranges meet at Mao and cross the Patkai range slightly east of Tuensang district. These ranges spread out ridges, spurs and many small sharp branches so as to add complication in the study of geology, topography, landform and geomorphic features of Nagaland. However, throughout the year those ranges are clothed with dense vegetation, do not appear otherwise as distinct relief features.

Topography and relief features have played an important role upon human habitation, location and development of settlement and population distribution in Nagaland. In fact, hot, damp low lying areas and valleys were not preferred at the time of inception of the settlement. As a result, almost all the settlement of the Nagas were located at the tops of hills, separated from others by valleys.

However, in the 13th century, with the penetration of the British exploration, expedition and exploitation started the diffusion of culture through easy means of transport and innovation, low lying areas assumed to be the most preferable for human habitation and settlements. Consequently, today, low lying areas and lesser hilly ranges in the west are densely populated than the higher rugged terrain in the east. The



general relief features shown in Figure 2.1 shows that there is a gradual increase in height as one moves from west towards east. In this chapter an attempt has been made to understand the relief features of Nagaland.

### 2.3 DRAINAGE

The drainage system of Nagaland has adjusted itself with the evolution of the landscape. In Nagaland the most commonly encountered drainage pattern are the dendritic pattern. The rivers are characterised by irregular branching of tributaries in many direction and at almost any angle, usually at most cases, less than a right angle. They develop upon rocks of uniform resistance and nearly horizontal sedimentary rocks and imply a notable lack of structural control.

Naga Hills are serrated ridges in nature that are separated from one another by deep gorge like valleys through which rivulets, streams and rivers make their way until it emptied into mighty Brahmaputra and Chindwin rivers. Those rivers discharge little water during the winter, however, in rainy season they suddenly assume roar and murmur as they glide down the green hills. The state does not have a big rivers suitable for navigation. The principal rivers are Doyang, Dhansiri, Dikhu and Milak (Jhanzi) (Figure 2.2). They almost flow parallel to each other from south to north and finally discharge in the Brahmaputra river. The Tizu and its tributaries



runs however, from north towards southward directions and join the Cindwin river in Burma.

The Dhansiri rises in the south western part of the state and flows west and north westwards and then northwardly course forming a natural boundary with North-Cachar Hills. The river then takes an eastwardly direction and flows through Rangabahar, Dimapur plains until it falls into the Brahmaputra. The Dhansiri receives its tributaries such as Intangki, Baramanglu and Diphupani.

The Doyang which is the longest river in the state drains into Brahmaputra and is navigable for a few kilometres within the state. Having been originated from the Japvo Hill near Mao in Manipur, it flows north-eastwards, it then turns suddenly northwest at right angle and traverses in a south west direction, forming a spectacular rectangular drainage pattern. Having flowing through the district of Kohima, Zunheboto, Wokha and joins the Dhansiri in Sibsagar district of Assam. Along with its main tributaries such as Nzhu, Chubi, Tsuet and Bhagti, the Doyang river system provides as a natural boundary for different tribal territories.

Rising in the Nuroto Hill, the Dikhu flows for 160 kilometres to join the Brahmaputra river in Assam. The drainage area is shared by the tribal territories of Ao, Phom and Konyak. Towards the main stream the Dikhu is joined by Yangyu and from the confluence, Dikhu flows further north. Flowing

northwards the Dikhu debouches from the hill near Nagenimora.

The Tizu river having originated from the central part of the state runs in a northeast directions for some kilometres and then assumes a southeasterly course, until it joins the Chindwin river system of Burma. The basin area of Tizu extends over the tribal territories of Sema, Kheinmungan and Chakesang. The Tizu is joined by the Zungki and Chaklalu.

The Milak which rises near Mokokchung town flows north-eastward for a distance of 100 kilometres to finally empty itself into the Brahmaputra. The lower course of the river is called Janji. Its principal tributaries includes Tsurang and Tsuong. They rises from the Wokha district and flowing through the villages of Changki, Yachang, Liremen and Molung. Besides these rivers, there are as many as 40 seasonal rainfed rivulets which together formed the drainage basin.

#### 2.4 CLIMATE

The climate of the state is bracing and healthy, excepting the low lying areas around Dimapur, Tsurang and Tizet, where the climate is unhealthy and uncomfortable due to high temperature and high relative humidity. The climate over the foot hills is warm sub-tropical and over the high hills is cool and temperate. The mid slopes and lower ranges of the western flank have a moderate submontane climate. High hill

ranges are generally cool and the summer and winter temperatures over the hills vary from 5°C to 25°C and over the foot hills have a range between 12°C and 32°C. Snow falls are very rare excepting to some areas over the hills.

The climate of Nagaland is characterised by a rhythm of seasons as in other parts of the country. The seasonal winds are caused by the south-west Monsoons and north-east winter winds. During the south-west Monsoon they are oceanic in origin which blow from south-west to north-east and most of the rainfall received are over recorded at 75 per cent of the total rainfall during the rainy season. However, the north-east Monsoon winds are of continental origin which blow from north-east to south-west and so do not received or scattered rain in few areas.

Winter season begins in November till the month of February. With the advent of winter there is a sharp falling in the temperature as well as rainfall. As a result, a strong high pressure belt prevails over the state. The prevailing wind direction is from north-east to south-west. January is the coldest month of the year with an average temperature varying between 10.48°C and 17.06°C. AS a result, there is often occurrence of snowfall, accompanied by mist and fog over large tracks of land, specially over the Saramati and other loftier peaks, however, in inhabited areas snowfall has never been recorded.

During March and April, the atmosphere gradually warms up and there is the advent of Spring. The Spring season is characterised by strong wind, often accompanied by thunder storms and the sky remains cleared throughout the day.

As the summer Monsoon approach the temperature as well as the rainfall begins to increase till it attains its climax in July. The hottest month of the year is July when the temperature rises upto 25°C. July and August are the rainest months of the year as they receive more than 70 per cent of the total annual rainfall. September and October is the period of retreating Monsoon and receives very little quantity of rain whenever there is occurrence of depression in the Bay of Bengal. These two months are considered as the most enjoyable months of the year as the sky remains cloudless and pleasant weather.

## 2.5 SOILS

Nagaland though small in size, the soil of the region varies from place to place. The variation in the nature of soils are mainly related to the rock formation, topography, pattern of slope, climate and natural vegetation.

Generally, major parts of the state are covered with thin layer of soil, excepting in the valleys and along

the foot hills. Due to torrential rain over the slope the soils are being washed out and layers of soils are deposited at the valley plains. The situation is further accentuated by the practised of jhuming cultivation, which allows the jungle to remain unclothed and vulnerable and easy victim at the time of heavy rainfall. As major Survey of soil had not been done, our soil classification is based on the nature of texture and colour.

The soils of Nagaland are derived from tertiary rocks belonging to the Barial and Disang series which are generally acidic, very rich in organic carbon but poor in available phosphate and potash content.<sup>3</sup> The Barial consist of alternating layers of sand stones and shales with carboniferous intrusion or even coal seams. Ultra-basic intrusions are also observed in the east and south eastern parts of the state. The underlying Disang series represent unfossiliferous shales, slates and phylites. Soils are normally fertile and responsive to the application of fertilizers. The P.H value may ranges between 4.80 and 6.50, while the organic carbon content is as high as 2.943 per cent. The average phosphate and potash contents are 20 kilograms/ha and 120 kilograms/ha respectively.<sup>4</sup>

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3. Directorate of Agriculture, (1985-86), Agriculture Census of Nagaland, Kohima, PP. 8-9.

4. Ibid., PP. 8-9.

Due to variation in topography and climate, though the state area is small, the following kinds of soils can be identified (Figure 2.3).

1) Alluvial Soils:

- (a) Recent alluvium (Entisol)
- (b) Old alluvium (Oxizols and Ultiso)
- (c) Mountain valley soil (Entiso)

2) Residual soils:

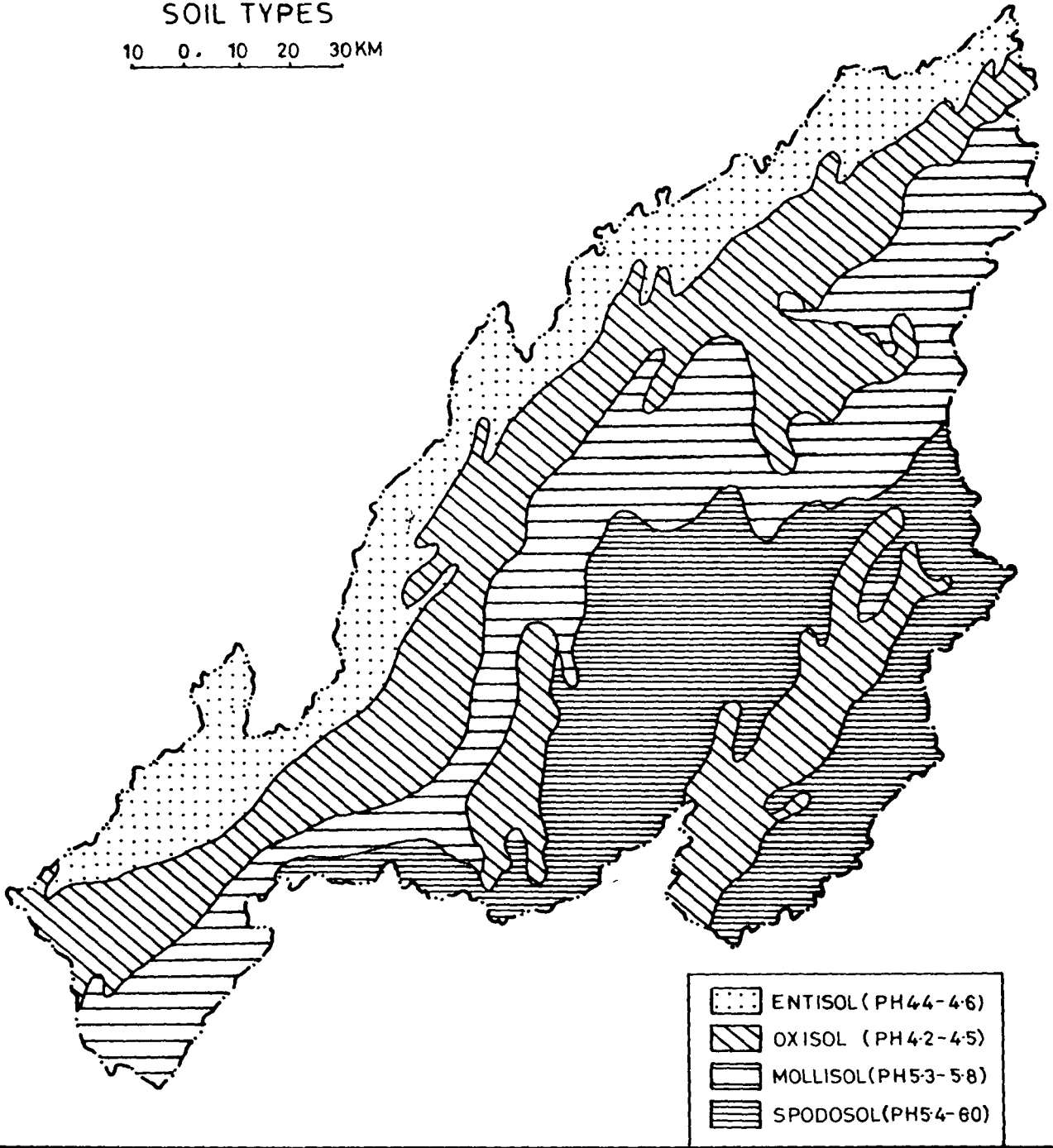
- (a) Lateritic soils (Oxizols and Ultiso)
- (b) Brown forest soils (Mollisols and Inceptisols)
- (c) Podzolic soils (Spodosols).

The alluvial soils whether recent or old are generally confined to river basins and are by far the most fertile. Recent alluvium (Entisol) is generally confined to the western and southern parts of the state, while old alluvium is mostly concentrated in the northwestern as well as in the south. Mountain valley soil which is of the same group included in Entisol occurs between the intermountain valleys in the central and eastern parts of the state.

Residual soils are generally porous having light texture and friable structure. It is further sub-groups into (a) Lateritic soils (Oxizol and Ultiso): the formation of laterite soil takes place under typical Monsoonal conditions.

NAGALAND  
SOIL TYPES

10 0 10 20 30KM



SOURCE - DEPTT OF SOIL CONSERVATION, NAGALAND

FIG-23

The alternation of wet and dry seasons leads to the leaching away of the rocks and the formation of laterite soils. The development of soil has been taken place in high land areas in between the Entisol and Mollisol as well as in the south eastern part. (b) Brown forest soil (Mollisol) occurs in the central highlands running north-east to south-west directions. (c) Podzolic soil which is also technically termed as Spodosol is generally confined to the high hill ranges of the most southeastern part of Tuensang district, parts of Mokokchung and Kohima.

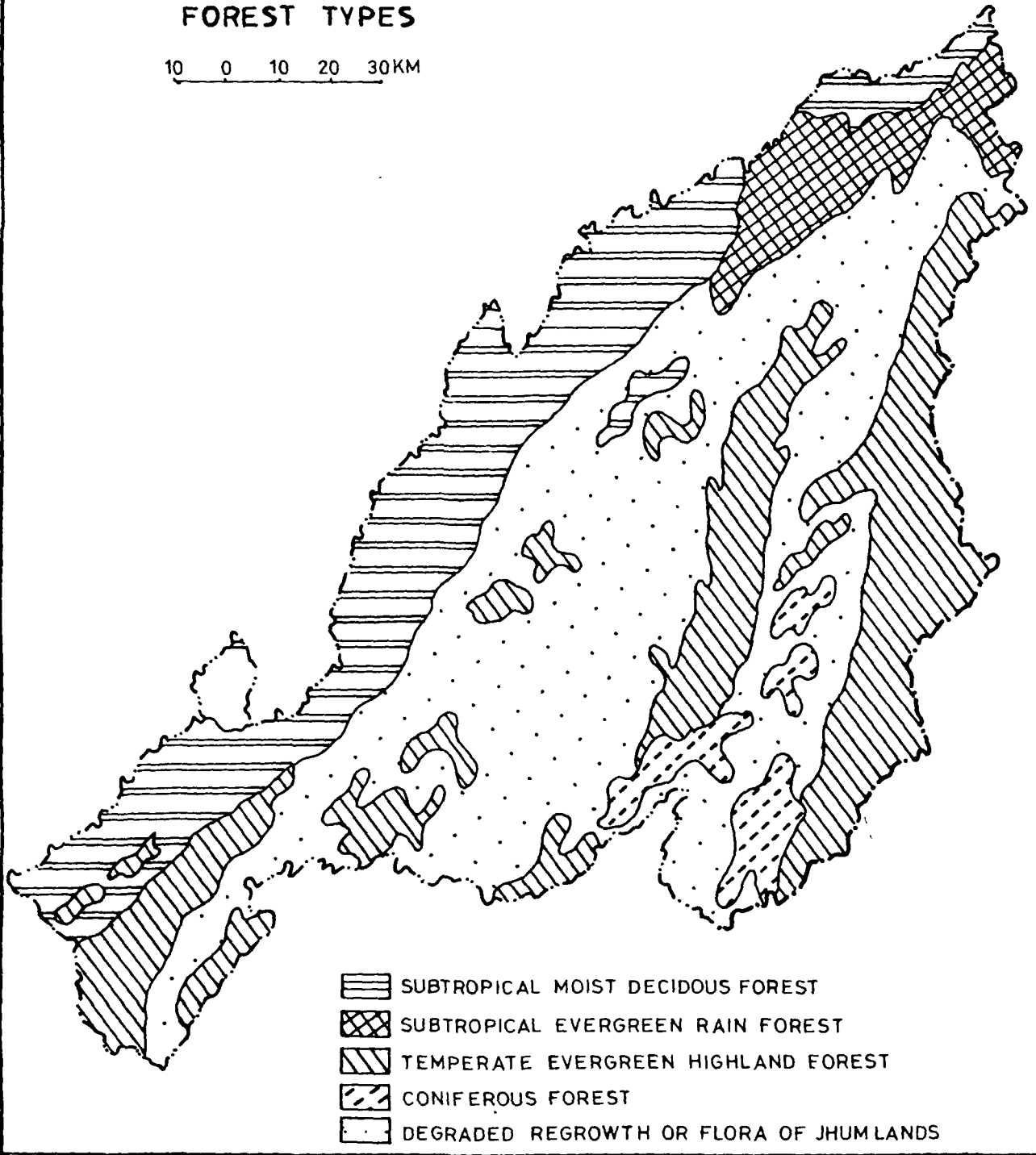
## 2.6 VEGETATION

The combined affects of relief and the elements of weather is seen in the pattern of natural vegetation of a region. The process of soil formation and its development is associated with the growth of vegetation. Vegetation consists of those plants species which live and grow together in mutual association under the influence of common climatic conditions, relief and supported by local soil types. Thus, on the basis of the above generalization the following types of forests can be identified (Figure 22.4).

- 1) Temperate evergreen
- 2) Sub-tropical evergreen rain forest
- 3) Sub-tropical coniferous

NAGALAND  
FOREST TYPES

10 0 10 20 30KM



SOURCE - DEPTT OF FORESTS, NAGALAND.

FIG-2.4

- 4) Sub-tropical moist deciduous and
- 5) Degraded growth or flora of jhum-lands.<sup>5</sup>

Low lying tracts in the west bordering Assam are covered with sub-tropical moist deciduous forest including bamboos. Abundant growth of this species where the rainfall is fairly high. The sub-tropical evergreen forest occurs only around Tizet in Mon district in the northwestern part of the state. Much of the temperate evergreen forest is concentrated over the eastern highlands running longitudinal extension. Locally, shrubs and herbs are found gliding down from the tops. They are also found in pockets in the interior and in the southwest. At the upper levels, in the southeast, much of the coniferous forest is found. The degraded forest forms nearly 40 per cent of the total land surface of the state.

According to the statistical record of the Chief Conservator of Forest, degraded forest covers 2,62,535 hectares (1986-87) of land in the state. Out of the total forest covered i.e., 8,62,532 hectares in the state, 27,432 are clothed with reserved forests, 13,023 hectares by protected forest, 472,107 hectares by private forests and 22,237 hectares is under the scheme of wild life sanctuary.

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5. Chief Conservator of Forest, (1971), Forest Statistical Book of Nagaland, Kohima, PP. 28-29.

On the basis of the above generalization the following conclusions can be drawn.

1) Physiographically, Nagaland is an extension of the young Himalayan mountain system. Its terrain is characterised by dissected ridges, spurs, deep gorges and steep slopes. There are only few stretches of plains in the entire state of Nagaland. Hills in the west, bordering Assam are low as compared to the mountain ranges of the east, facing Burmese ranges. Generally, hill ranges are running in the north-south direction and in between these ranges are narrow river valleys. Naga range passes through the centre of Nagaland, while Patkai range forms watershed between India and Burma.

2) Though the state is endowed with a good number of rivers, few are, however, navigable. The climate of the state is temperate excepting the low lying adjacent to the Brahmaputra valley, where the climate is relatively warmer. Rainfall is sufficient.

3) In the small state of Nagaland, various types of soils are found. However, these soils are generally thin, infertile excepting in the valleys and the foot hills. The state is rich in the growth of natural vegetation and generally sub-tropical evergreen forest are grown abundantly.

4) All the above factors gave rise to the economic

backwardness and socio-physical isolation. In the absence of fertile soil, agricultural development was never possible, with the primitive technology. Due to rugged topography and non-navigability of the streams, transport and communication has always been very difficult and posed serious problem of social and physical isolation.

**CHAPTER III**

**CULTURAL EVOLUTION AND DISTRIBUTION  
OF SOCIAL COMPONENT**

## CULTURAL EVOLUTION AND DISTRIBUTION OF SOCIAL COMPONENT

### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

In order to understand the structure of Naga society it is imperative to trace the process of their cultural evolution. The process of diffusion of Naga group in the region may provide vital clues regarding the present distribution of languages and the nature of linguistic diversity. In this chapter an attempt is made to trace the origin of the Nagas, the subsequent migration, cultural traits etc. The chapter is divided into two broad sections; historical background-origin and migration of Nagas; cultural traits and social compositions.

### 3.2 ORIGIN OF THE NAGAS

It is not easy to get adequate information on the origin of any tribal group and more so of the Nagas. Historical records on these are scarce. The only dependable sources are the legends and mythological stories- folk tales, folk lores etc. However, the authenticity of these sources is extremely limited.

Most of the Nagas believe Meikhel or its surrounding area as their place of origin. It is referred to as Mekhoromia by the Angamis meaning 'the place of departure! A tradition states quite definitely that they originated from a group of stones at Lungterok (six stones) located in the present Sangtam

village of Chungliyimti. In the same manner the legends of the Semas, the Rengmas, the Chakesangs, the Angamis and the Lothas tells of the Kezakenoma (located in the southern part of Nagaland) as the place of origin!<sup>1</sup> Some individual accounts points that the Angamis and the Rengmas considered Maq as the place of their origin. While Semas claimed to have come from Swemi village or Japvo hills and the Lothas say that once they occupied the country which is now occupied by the Angamis. Similarly, the legend of Konyaks points that their ancestor came out from stones along with the progenitor of other tribal groups.<sup>2</sup> These traditional stories, are no doubt based on superstitions and religious beliefs and hence, can be considered authentic. However, a deeper study of these scattered views reveals that the Nagas are not Autochthonous to Nagaland but probably have moved into the present habited from the east through Burma.

While the Nagas have common ethnic type, linguistically, they display enormous diversity. Apart from their concentration in Nagaland, the Nagas are also found in parts of Manipur Hills, Mikir Hills, Tirap district (NEFA) and parts of North Cachar Hills. The Naga ethnic territory also extends eastward into the Naga Hills in Burma, from where the tribes seems to have diffused into the present home at different time in the hoary past.

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1. M. Horam, (1978), Naga Polity, P.30.

2. J.J.H. Hutton, (1969), The Angami Nagas, Oxford University Press, Bombay, P.6.

### 3.21 The Word Naga

The term Naga has evoked different meanings. Some believe that the word is derived from the Bengali word 'Nangta' meaning 'lack of cloth'. Even the sanskrit word 'Nangna' meaning 'naked' is also ascribed to the word. However, this view is not entirely satisfactory for in sanskrit literature, the inhabitants in the north-eastern areas of India were known as 'kiratas'.<sup>3</sup> A different interpretation of the word 'Naga' relates its origin to the sanskrit word 'Nag' meaning 'snake'; this however, too is not reliable because the Naga have never been snake-worshippers. According to another version the word 'Naga' is a deformed expression of the Hindustani word 'Nanga' meaning 'nudity'. This view too is unsatisfactory as the evidence of the Hindustani speaking people having any contact with the Nagas in the olden days.<sup>4</sup> The Kachari word 'Naga' meaning 'ayoung man' or 'a warrior' is often associated with the word. Yet many support the idea that the word 'Naga' simply means 'people' the term occurs in the puranjee which is derived from the root 'Nog' meaning 'people' in the language of some eastern Naga tribes.<sup>5</sup> However, it may be pointed out that the word 'Naga' means

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3. S.K.Chatterji, (1950), Kirata-Jana-Kriti, Journal of Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, Vol 16, No.2, Calcutta, P.22.
  4. B.B.Ghosh, (1982), History of Nagaland, S. Chand and Company Ltd, Ram Nagar, New Delhi, P. 17.
  5. M.Horam, (1978), op.cit, PP.23-24.

people then, why is the term not applied to all the people living in the hills? According to Holcomb and Pearl, the term 'Naga' has its origin in the word 'Nok' which means 'Folk' and as the people used to live in groups, they came to be known as Naga later on. This view of Holcomb and Pearl appears to be logical and nearest to the truth. However, the most authentic theory about the origin of the word 'Naga' seems to be the one which has Burmese connections. Among the Burmese the word 'Naga' means people with 'pierced ears'. The word 'Naga' is said to be another form of 'Naka',<sup>6</sup> as according to the tradition the Nagas of the both sexes pierced their ears for the purpose of decoration. It seems likely that the Burmese must have told the British about the word 'Naka' people whose movement has already been taken place through Burma while drifting towards their present country. Since, then the word 'Naga' has been in used in all the anthropological books and official records.

### 3.22 Affinity with other Tribal Communities

Based on their affinities with the tribes of the South-East Asian countries, the scholars are of the opinion that the Nagas migrated from the South East Asia. Originally,

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6. T. Lanusosang, (1989), Nagaland a study in Social Geography, Directorate of School Education, Nagaland, Kohima PP. 57-58.

the Nagas came from Central Asia, where they were known as the non-Chinese Chinang tribes.<sup>7</sup> They first came to North west border of China many centuries before the christian era and later on, these tribes spread over to China, Indonesia, Philippines, Bhutan, Burma and Nagaland. Smith is of the view that the Naga belong to the same blood which is found in the people of Burma, Sikkim and other hilly areas of North-East India.<sup>8</sup> Further, he suggested that, the social, customs and culture of the Nagas bears similarity with some tribal groups such as Dyaks and Konyans of Borneo, the Battak of Sumatra, Certain groups of Formosa, the Igorot and the Ifugao and several other groups in the Philippines as typical examples.

There are many close parallel in the culture of the Nagas with those for instance of the hilly tracts of Indonesia and Philippine. The Nagas, the Dyaks are passionately found of headhunting. It is the Custom of all the tribes to chop the head of the victim in battle and carry them as trophies, where they form the objects of feasting and celebration. In common with the Nagas and other mainland tribes, the Dyaks build their houses on piles and post above twelve feet high. The Igorot bury the corpses

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7. W.A. Holcomb, (1964), Exploration Survey in the Naga Hills (London), P.4.

8. W.C. Smith, (1925), Ao Naga Tribes of Assam, (London), PP.153-60.

in hewn out coffins. After keeping the corpses for several days, it was followed by a big feast, which resembles the practice of the Ao Naga. Platform burial is practised by the Konyaks and the similar tradition have been retained by the Kachcha Naga, Rengma etc. In common with the Naga both the Igorot and the Dyaks have an institution of trial marriage. It means intercourse before marriage is allowed to ascertain that the marriage will be fruitful. The institution of bachelor house is another remarkable similarity, where grown up boys of all the unmarried men sleep. The Igorot have a sleeping place for all the unmarried girls, which is commonly practise among the Ao Nagas.

In the matter of political organisation the Igorot have a throughly democratic and the Dyaks more or less autocratic, where the authority of the chief depends more upon his personal influence than the actual power he possesses by virtue of his office. The former is almost identical with the Aos, where the political affairs of the villages are control by a selected groups of old men. While the later bear resemblance to the autocratic ruler of the Semas.

Some of the tribes of Indonesia live in the hills where they carry on a crude method of slash and burn type of cultivation. This method of cultivation is also practised by most Naga groups. The system of terrace cultivation among the

Angamis is almost identical with that of the Igorot. The log war-drums hewn out of a huge log used by the Nagas might have link with the dug out canoe, probably, used by the islanders of Indonesia and Philippines. Also the Naga dear use of a variety of marine shells as ornaments for decorative purposes points supports their earlier settlement near the sea.

### 3.3 MIGRATION OF THE NAGAS

The history of how the Naga came precisely to occupy the present territory remain rather obscure due to unavailability of written records. Infact, each tribal group claimed to have some indication of the place from where the migration took place and the course of migration. A close study of these legends and tradition reveals that there had been several waves of migration from different direction at different points of time (Figure 3.1). It is most probable that the Nagas with the allied tribes like Karen, Kachin, Singpho, Shan, Chin etc. came towards Burma from north western China. Leaving aside the allied tribes in Burma, different Naga tribes entered present day Nagaland from the south in different waves of migration.<sup>9</sup>

Probably, the first wave of immigrants was that of the Angamis, Semas, Chakesang, Lothas and Rengmas.<sup>10</sup> This

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9. T. Lanusosang, (1989), op.cit, P.60.

10. P.T. Philip, (1960), The Growth of Baptist Church in Nagaland, Christian Literature Centre, Guwahati, PP.36-37.

# NAGALAND MIGRATION OF NAGA TRIBES

10 0 10 20 30KM

- |             |         |
|-------------|---------|
| ANGAMI      | ---     |
| AO          | —       |
| YIMCHUNGER  | ~       |
| SEMA        | +> +>   |
| LOTHA       | .....   |
| KHEINMUNGAN | o o o o |
| CHANG       | —       |
| KONGYAK     | ~       |
| SANGTEM     | —+—     |
| ZELIANGRONG | + + +   |
| RENGMA      | o-o-o-o |
| PHOM        | ---     |

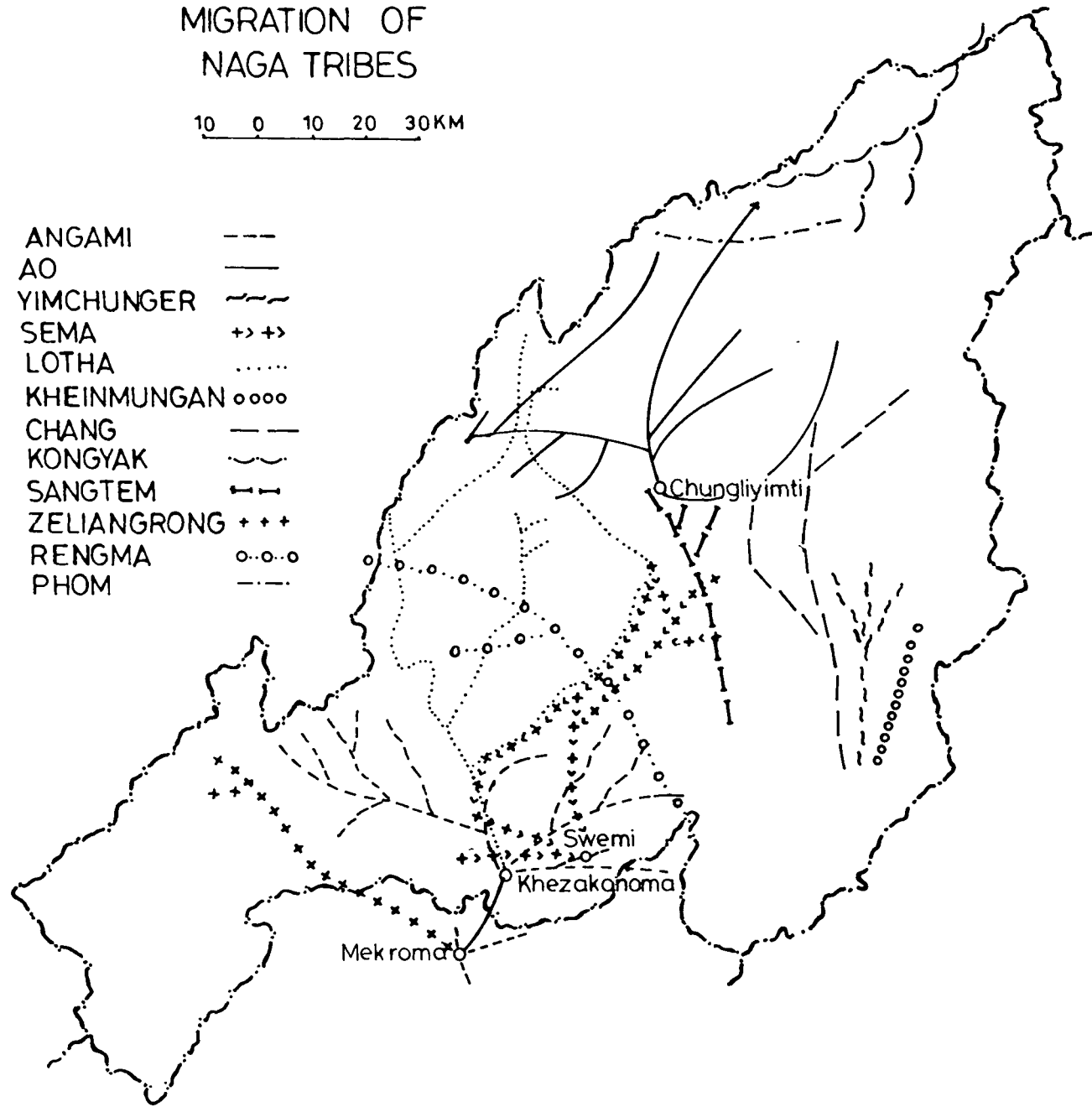


FIG-3.1

wave wandered through the plains of Manipur, came northward through Mao area and settled in Mekruma. From Mekruma then moved northward and reached Khezakenoma, where they stayed for quite long time. This is the place from where the centre for dispersion of the first wave of migration started. First, the Lothas proceeded northward and reached Kohima and thence, they went further northward until they reached Wokha.<sup>11</sup> From Khezakenoma the Angamis went northwest to settle in the present area, while another group of the same stock moved little northward and occupied the present Chakesang area. The Rengmas proceeded northward as far as Tseminyu and entered the present area through Angami territory, however, a group of Rengmas moved westward further to Kaliani river and became the western Rengmas in Mikir hills (Assam). The Zeliangs probably, to have come from the Japvo mountain before the occupation of the southwestern territory of the state. The Semas believed to have started from the Swemi village towards north, until finally entered the present area (Zunheboto). It is said that they had been hard pressed from several tribal groups during their stay at Swemi village. This could be one reason why they had to abandon the former place and had set out looking for a peaceful site.

The second wave of immigrants were the Aos, Sangtame Tangkhuls, Kheinmungans, Yimchungers and Changs. They probably,

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11. Alemchiba, (1970), A Brief Historical Account of Nagaland  
Naga Institute of Culture, P.20.

came through Thaugdut area in Burma.<sup>12</sup> The Aos entered from the south through the Tangkhuls inhabited area of Manipur and thence towards north through the outskirts of Chakesang area.<sup>12</sup> From there they entered the Sangtam area and reached Chungliyimti. From Chungliyimti to Soyem and then to Koridang and again turned back to Soyem. Soyem is of great significance as it was the place from which the Ao people dispersed north and north-west and finally populated the whole Ao area.

The Tangkhuls claimed to have originated from Thaugdut, near the river Chindwin in Burma. The Yimchungerṣ, the Sangtamṣ, the Changṣ, and the Kheinmungans in Tuensang district, entered Nagaland from Burma and thence spread northwards.<sup>13</sup> According to old tradition the Yimchungerṣ traced their origin at Moru, situated in the extreme east and thereby migrated to Jure village. Unlike the other tribal groups, the Konyakṣ and the Phomṣ, entered from the northeast and have settled in the extreme northwest part of the state.

The Zeliangrong came at a later wave of migration, constituted of Zemi, Liangmai and Rongmai allied to the Kabui Naga tribe. Who came by the Barial southwardly route, hordes of the first migrants are said to have traversed through the mountain region along the Barak in avoiding conflict with

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12. B.B. Ghosh, (1982), *op.cit.*, P.17.

13. Alemchiba, (1970), *op.cit.*, P.20.

other tribal groups, and made their settlement in the western mountain tracks. Probably, they came in search of brines. Only this tribe came alone, not having been joined the main stream of migration. Yet many powerful Zeliangrong villages are said to have an admixed Zeliangrong-Angami percentage. Even Rozep-hema is said to have Zeliangrong strain in its original background. These were known as 'Kacha' during the early British advent which in Angami 'Kista' means 'deep forest' hence 'Kacha' after 'Kista' the word used for the place.

#### 3.4 CULTURAL TRAITS OF THE NAGAS

The existing social system, political setup, cultural heritage and economic development in Nagaland are directly or indirectly related to physical personality of their habitat. The environmental controls continue to exercise powerful influences on the socio-economic organisation of the people. Local variation in the ecological milieu have factored diverse cultures among the Nagas.

It is interesting that unlike the pattern in the neighbouring areas, Naga villages are built in hill summits. Houses are constructed atop in longitudinal extension. Spreading of houses are controlled by the alignment of the mountain ranges. A number of factors including availability of fertile land for jhuming, nearness to water bodies and climatic cond-

itions greatly influence the location of Naga villages. Nonetheless, by far the most important factor is from the point of view of defence. This factor alone determines the selection of site on the basis of strategically important location in higher altitude and rugged terrain. Only a few newly setup settlements in the low lying areas do not conform to this rule. Hostility between different tribes and villages and the fear of other known or unknown enemy largely explains the peculiar situation of the Naga villages.

#### 3.41 Society

Although inhabited by many tribal groups, the Naga share many things in common. Nearly all Naga tribes live in villages of varying sizes ranging from a thousand to around fifteen houses.

The family is the fundamental units of the society in which the father is the head of the family. A son sets up a separate family after getting married, whereas daughter goes to another clan leaving her original clan on marriage. The clan comprises a group of consanguineous families descended from a common ancestor. The clan functions on the patrilineal and exogamic line. Then a number of clans combined together compose a well defined village occupying a definite permanent area with sovereignty and finally a tribe by a number of

villages of the same descendants.

Many villages have a dormitory for the young unmarried men called 'morung'. It is the house where strict discipline is maintained and is also a recreation centre. Morung is considered to be an important educational, political and social institution.<sup>14</sup>

Naga society is known for its practice of head-hunting in the past. The practice is however, mingled with superstition and social position that it ensures good harvest if the blood of an enemy head could be sprinkled over their fields. Indeed, it was predominantly this head-hunting war that had divided Nagas into a number of small disunited sovereign independent village states.

### 3.42 Political System

The political organisation of the Nagas differs from tribe to tribe. The village is the highest sovereign political institution which have been established under different forms of government.

The political institution among the Semas, Konyaks, Maos and Tangkhuls are hereditary chieftianships. All political and administrative organisation are under the control of the chiefs. The office of the chieftianship passes to the eldest son on the death of his father. If the chief died

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14. Asoso Yonuo, (1974), The Rising Nagas, (New Delhi), P.11.

without a male offspring the chieftianship goes to the nearest descendant.

Among the Semas, village has a council (Chochomi) to assist the chief in administration. But in some villages Chochomi can be regarded as runners for the office of the chieftianship. They are nominated by the chief from different clans. The Angamis and the Rengmas also have similar type of political institution.

The Aos have a more democratic form of village government in which a sizeable number of council members called 'Tatar' elected from different clans forms the council of ministers called 'Putu-menden'. The council of ministers controls the social and political administration of the village states. The Putu-menden has four sub-office: Tazungpur, Unger or Ungbo, Chinddengodeny or Senyim and Mapangsur. The members of Putu-menden vacate their office periodically, yielding place to new groups from time to time. Like other tribes the Aos also settle the disputes by oath.

### 3.43 Position of Woman

The status of a woman in the Naga society is high and secure as elsewhere in the tribal societies in India. Women enjoy freedom to attend any kind of social gathering without any intervention from the men folk. Both husband and wife

work together. However, majority of the domestic affairs is woman's exclusive responsibility. Hutton remarked that 'the wife assumes the rôle of hostess'.<sup>15</sup> To quote Mills 'generally a Naga lady always has her clan behind her and were a bad tempered husband to bully his wife he would soon have a swarm of angry in-laws buzzing round his ears and his wife may promptly leave him'. Most woman weave cloth for the entire family. They participate in the performance of religious rites, at feast of merit they do sing and dance.

#### 3.44 Marriage

Unlike the Kukis(Nagas of Manipur) marriage within the clans are strictly forbidden by the law of exogamy. Inter-marriages among the tribes had been there and also a few instances of non-Naga, however, are very rare.<sup>16</sup> Most marriages in the Naga society is love marriages. Free mixing of boys and girls is not socially restricted. Negotiation for marriage does take place but in seldom. Previously, the price paid for a wife was counted in terms of money value and the girl in return used to bring animals and ornaments which become the property of her husband. Sometimes before the marriage, the betrothal son-in-law sends occasional presents to girl's parents and also work for them to prove his worthiness for the

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15. M. Horam, (1978), op.cit,P.97.

16. Ibid. ,P.97.

girl. A girl is considered to be of marriageable age at 15, while the boy must be atleast 18 years of age. Among the Naga tribes so far only the Semas are learnt to have practised polygomy. This however, is permissible among the Tangkhuis but seldom practised. Cases of divorce are rare. Seperation however, may come through the mutual consent or by an appeal to the village council by a regular court. The advent of christianity and increasing contacts with the outside world had greatly changed the socio-cultural ethos. Increasing marriages are now-a-days solemnised in the church.

### 3.45 Inheritance

In Naga society, father is the head of the family. The society is patrilineal where only males inherit the property. Among the Aos, Changs, Lothas etc. the eldest son has the major share of the property who takes the burden of looking after the younger brothers and sisters. However, unlike those, the Angamis, Chakesang etc. much of the share goes to the youngest son. In case, there is no son to a father, the property goes to the nearest male relatives. In case no relation is found, then the kindred inherits, however, no kindred is found the clan ultimately inherits the property. Nonetheless, a widow is allowed to use her husband's property during her life time. But in case of remarrying she has no right to

inherit her first husband's property as these are belong to male heirs.

### 3.46 Food Habit

Rice is the stable food of the people. However, Yimchungers and Tikhirs etc. use millets and maize as their stable food. Taro is another form of food which is taken in times of scarcity of stable food. All sorts of meat is taken. Beef is the common meat, however, pork is more relished. Beef of mithun is used for big feasts and ceremonies. Apart from the domesticated ones, the people are found of eating wild animals meat such as elephant, bear, monkey, squirrel, birds etc. Aquatic products like fish, crabs etc. are also taken occasionally. Various vegetables including leaves are taken simply by boiling. Food is taken thrice a day, that is in the morning, noon and afternoon. Of late, the food habit and cooking process have changed with the introduction of spices and mustard oil. But the change is mostly confined to urban areas.

### 3.5 SOCIAL COMPOSITION

Nagaland displays a high degree of distinctiveness in its linguistic, religious and tribal composition. In

this section an attempt has been made to deal in brief with the aspects such as linguistic groups, religious and tribal composition.

### 3.51 Linguistic Composition

In Nagaland only about 7 per cent of the population spoke languages listed in the VIII th schedule in 1971. Out of the remaining 93 per cent of the population, speakers of generic Naga languages are about 86 per cent and only 6 per cent of the population speak other mother-tongues.

Among the different Naga linguistic groups, the speakers of Ao language tops the list (14.25 %) followed by Konyak (14 %), Angami (13.21 %), Sema (12.48 %), and Lotha (7.11 %). The remaining constitute less than 4 per cent each. Among the scheduled languages, the number of Hindi speaking people is the largest. It claims about 3.37 per cent of all speakers followed by Bengali (1.66) and Assamese (1.27). The speakers of Kannada, Gujarati, Kashmiri, Sindhi, Sanskrit, Telegu and Urdu are very few and together represent less than one per cent. Among the speakers of other mother-tongues, the Nepali speaking population is significant (3.39 %).

The pattern of linguistic exclusivity emerges sharply at the circle level. Predominance of a single linguistic group is quite conspicuous at this level. Most circle are

conspicuous by the absence of the speakers of scheduled and other mother-tongue languages. The only exception are, however, Dimapur sadar which contains the maximum number of speakers of different languages. Besides, there are a few circles such as Nagenimora, Tuensang sadar, Zunheboto, Mon etc. having sizeable population of different linguistic groups.

The percentage of Naga speakers is relatively insignificant in urban centres. For instance, the Konyaks constitutes 14.01 per cent of the total population of the state, out of which 14 per cent live in rural areas. However, the proportion of speakers of Sema, Ao, Angami, Lotha and Sangtam in urban centres is relatively more.

### 3.52 Religious Composition

Before the advent of the American Baptist Mission, Nagaland was a land of animism. In the late eighteen century, the American Baptist Missionaries converted the tribals from their old aged beliefs through propagation of christian religion. However, Nagas were slow in conversion to christianity from animistic because those missionaries tried to enforce strict observation in their standard of christian life. At present, most of the Nagas are christian by faith. However, even now a number of Nagas follow their traditional religion.

The year American Baptist stationed in upper Assam

marked the beginning of christianity in Nagaland. E.W Clerk was the first person to set up a base at Molung. Later C.D King opened a centre at Kohima in 1881 and subsequently, another at Wokha by W.E Witter in 1885. Between 1920 and 1930 there had been a phenomenal increase in the number of christian because the mission had been spread out into the Zeliangrongs, Semas and Chakesangs. The Konyaks, Changs, Phoms and Sangtams were lately exposed to christianity.

The following table provides information pertaining to the religious composition of Nagaland in the year 1981.

TABLE 3.1

Nagaland: Growth of Different Religious Groups, 1971-1981.

Sl. Religion No.	Persons		Percentage to Total Population	
	1971	1981	1971	1981
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
1. Christian	344,798	621,590	66.76	80.21
2. Hindus	59,031	111,266	11.43	14.36
3. Muslims	2,966	11,806	0.58	1.52
4. Jains	627	1,153	0.12	0.15
5. Sikhs	687	743	0.13	0.10
6. Buddhists	179	517	0.04	0.07
7. Other religion	108,159	27,852	20.94	3.59
8. Religions not stated	2	3	Nil	Nil

Source-Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Nagaland, 1987.

It is evident from the table 3.1 that christian constitute overwhelming majority (80.21%). Nagaland occupies the second position only next to Mizoram with 83.81 per cent, in so far as the percentage of christians in the North East Indian states are concerned. The Hindus with 14.36 per cent are the second largest religious group. The Muslims constitute only 1.52 per cent of the total population. The followers of Buddhism, Sikhism and Jainism are negligible in their proportion. The followers of other religions constitute 3.6 per cent of the total population.

It also reveals that the proportion of christian population rose from 66.76 per cent in 1971 to 80.21 per cent in 1981. Most of it is due to decline in the proportion classified under other religious groups indicating conversion to christianity. The relative share of the Hindus also registered an increase from 11.43 per cent in 1971 to 14.36 per cent in 1981.

At the district level Zunheboto has the largest proportion of christian population (95.41 %) table 3.2. Followed closely by Mokokchung (92.48 %). Kohima has the lowest christian proportion (59.68 %). While all the remaining districts have more than 80 per cent each.

Followers of Hinduism occupy the second position in the state with 14.36 per cent of the total population. Among

TABLE 3.2

Nagaland: District-wise Composition of Religious Groups, (1981).

Districts	Total Population	Christian	Hindus	Muslims	Jains	Buddhists	Sikhs	Other Religions
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Kohima	2,50,105	59.7	30.34	3.71	0.15	0.09	0.22	5.50
Mokokchung	1,04,193	92.48	6.25	0.80	-	0.12	0.08	0.27
Tuensang	1,52,332	89.62	7.11	0.32	-	0.02	0.03	2.90
Phek	70,618	89.9	6.35	0.33	-	0.02	0.05	3.40
Wokha	57,583	91.87	7.02	0.4	-	0.10	0.01	0.7
Zunheboto	61,161	95.40	4.14	0.33	-	0.20	0.10	0.1
Von	78,938	82.02	8.9	0.74	-	0.04	0.04	3.30
Nagaland	7,74,930	80.21	14.35	1.52	0.15	0.07	0.10	3.60

Source- Census of India, 1981, Nagaland, Series-15, Part 5.

the districts Kohima has the maximum number of the Hindu population with 30.34 per cent. This may be attributed to the fact that Kohima and Dimapur are two cosmopolitan towns located in district Kohima with large number of state and central Government offices and flourishing business activities.

The followers of Muslim account for 1.52 per cent of the state population. Among the districts only Kohima has a sizeable 3.71 per cent Muslim population, followed by Mokokchung with 0.8 per cent and Mon with 0.74 per cent. The followers of Jainism and Buddhism account for only 0.22 per cent of population of the state. Most of this segment is concentrated in Kohima and Dimapur towns alone. The Sikhs numbering only 538 in the state as a whole is almost exclusively confined to Kohima.

### 3.53 Tribal Composition

According to 1981 census the tribal segment was 83.99 per cent of the total population. Nagaland account for 1.26 per cent of the scheduled tribe population of the country. In terms of the share of tribal population in the total population it occupies the second position among all the states of the Indian union. The first place is claimed by Meghalaya with 93.55 per cent of the tribal population. The percentage of scheduled tribe population to total population in rural and urban areas of the state are 89.70 per cent and 52.91 per cent respectively. The numerical strength of different Naga tribes

to the total tribal population of the state according to 1981 census is given below.

TABLE 3.3

Nagaland: Tribe-wise Distribution of Population, 1981.

Sl. No.	Tribes	Population	Percentage to total S.T Population
	(1)	(2)	(3)
1.	Ao	104,578	16.06
2.	Sema	95,312	14.64
3.	Konyak	83,652	12.85
4.	Chakesang	68,736	10.56
5.	Angami	62,555	9.61
6.	Lotha	58,030	8.91
7.	Sangtam	29,016	4.45
8.	Phom	24,427	3.75
9.	Chang	22,375	3.43
10.	Yimchunger	22,054	3.38
11.	Zeliang	21,084	3.23
12.	Kheinmungan	18,080	2.77
13.	Rengma	15,313	2.35
14.	Tekhir	3,588	0.55
15.	Chirr	1,560	0.23
16.	Makwara	612	0.09
17.	Other tribes	19,912	3.00

Source- Census of India, 1981, Nagaland.

According to 1981 census, different Naga tribes constituted 96.95 per cent of the total tribal population. table 3.3. Other tribes namely Kuki, Mao, Kachari, Karbi etc. share accounted for 3.05 per cent. Only six major Naga tribes namely the Ao, the Konyak, the Sema, the Angami, the Lotha and the Chakesang contributed about 72.63 per cent of the total Naga tribal population. The remaining ten tribes constituted only 24.32 per cent of the total Naga tribal population.

TABLE 3.4

Nagaland: District-wise Distribution of Tribal Population, 1981

Sl.	State/ Districts	Total Population	S.T Population	Percentage of S.T population to total Population
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
1.	Kohima	2,50,105	1,63,905	65.53
2.	Mon	78,938	70,536	89.35
3.	Mokokchung	1,04,193	95,407	91.56
4.	Tuensang	1,52,332	1,42,376	93.46
5.	Phek	70,618	66,058	93.54
6.	Wokha	57,583	54,354	94.39
7.	Zunheboto	61,161	58,249	95.23
	Nagaland	7,74,930	6,50,885	84.00

Source: Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Nagaland, 1988.

At the district level, Kohima has the lowest percentage with 65.53 per cent of the tribal population table 3.4. This is perhaps due to the increasing influx of non-Scheduled tribe population to the capital city. It is a well known fact that the two biggest towns of the state viz Kohima and Dimapur are located in Kohima district. The tribal population in other districts exceeds 90 per cent with the exception of Mon district which has a little less than 90 per cent.

TABLE 3.5

Nagaland: Distribution of Tribal Population in Urbans, 1981.

Sl.	Urban Centres	Total Population	Tribal Population	Percentage of Tribal Population to total Population.
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
1.	Kohima	34,340	19,339	56.31
2.	Phek	-	-	-
3.	Wokha	8,180	6,387	78.08
4.	Dimapur	32,878	5,222	15.88
5.	Zunheboto	7,678	5,783	75.31
6.	Mokokchung	18,060	14,302	79.19
7.	Tuensang	12,200	8,267	67.76
8.	Mon	6,899	4,315	62.55
	Nagaland	1,20,235	63,615	52.90

Source- Census of India, 1981, Nagaland.

Out of the total population living in various towns of the state, nearly 53 per cent belong to scheduled tribes. Among the towns Mokokchung, Wokha and Zunheboto have a very high share of tribal segment i.e., more than 70 per cent table 3.5. The urban population in Dimapur is dominantly non-tribal. The tribes account for 15.88 per cent of the total population. The proximity of the town to the plains of Assam may be the reason for such a low percentage of tribal population in this town. Apart from road transport, the town is connected with other parts of the country through railway network as well as through airways which seems to have attracted a large number of immigrants of non-tribal origin.

On the basis of the above analysis the following conclusion emerges.

1) There are various legends about the origin of different Naga clans. These legends indicates that most of these clans have different hypothesis about their origin and always considered themselves different from other clans. Similarly, many of their socio-cultural traits differs from one another.

2) On the basis of affinity the Nagas have many close parallels with the people of the hilly tracts of Indonesia, Borneo, Sumatra, Formosa and Philippines. These similarity in affinity between the Nagas and the above mentioned communities

indicates that the Nagas might have migrated from South East Asia.

3) The pattern of settlement of Naga villages reveals that due to strategic and security reasons almost all the villages are located at the top of the hill ranges and not near the streams and valley bottoms.

4) In Naga society, patrilineal descent is followed where descent is from the male side. An analysis of the institution of marriage and position of woman reveal that marriage cannot take place between the persons of the same clan. Women are regarded highly and have freedom to enjoy in all other affairs except in the village administration.

5) The impact of christianity gave rise to various cultural changes in the society. The religious composition of the state reveal that 80.21 per cent of the total population is christian. Similarly, the concentration of tribal population is very high (83.99%). Out of the total tribal population the percentage of Naga tribal groups is 96.95 per cent.

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**CHAPTER IV**

**THE PATTERN OF DISTRIBUTION OF  
LANGUAGES IN NAGALAND**

## THE PATTERN OF DISTRIBUTION OF LANGUAGES IN NAGALAND

### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

Being a large country, with significant regional variation in the distribution of the socio-cultural phenomena, India has speakers of numerous languages. Number of languages spoken in North-Eastern Region of India is also very high. Similarly, the distribution of language in Nagaland is very complicated as there are numerous linguistic groups in this small state.

According to 1961 census there were as many as 187 languages in the country as a whole. Out of which 94 languages are spoken by less than 10,000 persons each, and 23 languages together account for 97 per cent of the total population of the country. The picture become more confusing in 1971, when the census report declared as many as 3,000 languages spoken by different communities.<sup>1</sup>

Speakers of scheduled languages in Nagaland have a very low percentage (7.32 %) as compared to North-Eastern Region (72.4 %) and India (95.3 %) according to 1971 census. The speakers of the scheduled Indo-Aryan languages in Nagaland

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1. Ali Ahmad, (1983), The Pattern of Distribution of Languages in North-Eastern Region- I, P.2.

constitute only 6.7 per cent, as compared to 72.42 per cent in India as a whole and 72.28 per cent in the North-Eastern Region. The percentage of Dravidian and Austro-Asiatic languages is negligible i.e., 0.60 per cent and 0.43 per cent respectively. However, the percentage of the speakers of the Sino-Tibetan languages in Nagaland is higher than 90 per cent as compared to North-Eastern region (about 29 %) and India (0.73 %), as all the Naga languages belong to Naga group of languages of Assam-Burmese branch of Sino-Tibetan linguistic family. Distribution of languages may be understood better if studied family-wise. For this languages spoken in Nagaland have been divided into three categories; Scheduled language, Naga language and other Mother-tongue.

#### 4.2 SCHEDULED LANGUAGE

Prior to 1963, the influx of non-Naga speakers was negligible because of political instability and social isolation. It was after December 1963, when the administrative unit formerly known as the Naga Hills and Tuensang Area (NHTA) became a full fledged state that the influx of people from other parts of the country showed an acceleration.

The linguistic composition of the population of Nagaland is somewhat peculiar. According to 1971 census, only 7.32 per cent of the total population of Nagaland spoke lang-

TABLE 4.1

Nagaland: District-wise Distribution of Scheduled Language 1971.  
(In Percentage).

Districts	Kohima	Mokokchung	Tuensang	Nagaland
Total No. of Speakers.	175,204	168,242	173,003	516,449
Total Speakers of Scheduled Language	24,338	8,325	4,730	37,393
Percentage	13.98	4.94	2.73	7.32
Assamese	2.45	.66	.66	1.26
Bengali	3.76	.54	.62	1.66
Hindi	6.14	2.88	1.04	3.37
Malayalam	.64	.46	.24	.45
Oriya	.24	.04	.02	.10
Punjabi	.33	.24	.09	.22
Tamil	.18	.06	.01	.09
Others	.11	.04	-	.05

Source- Census of India, 1971, Nagaland, District Census Handbook.

KOHIMA DISTRICT  
 DISTRIBUTION OF LINGUISTIC GROUPS

(CIRCLE WISE)  
 1971

6 0 6 KM

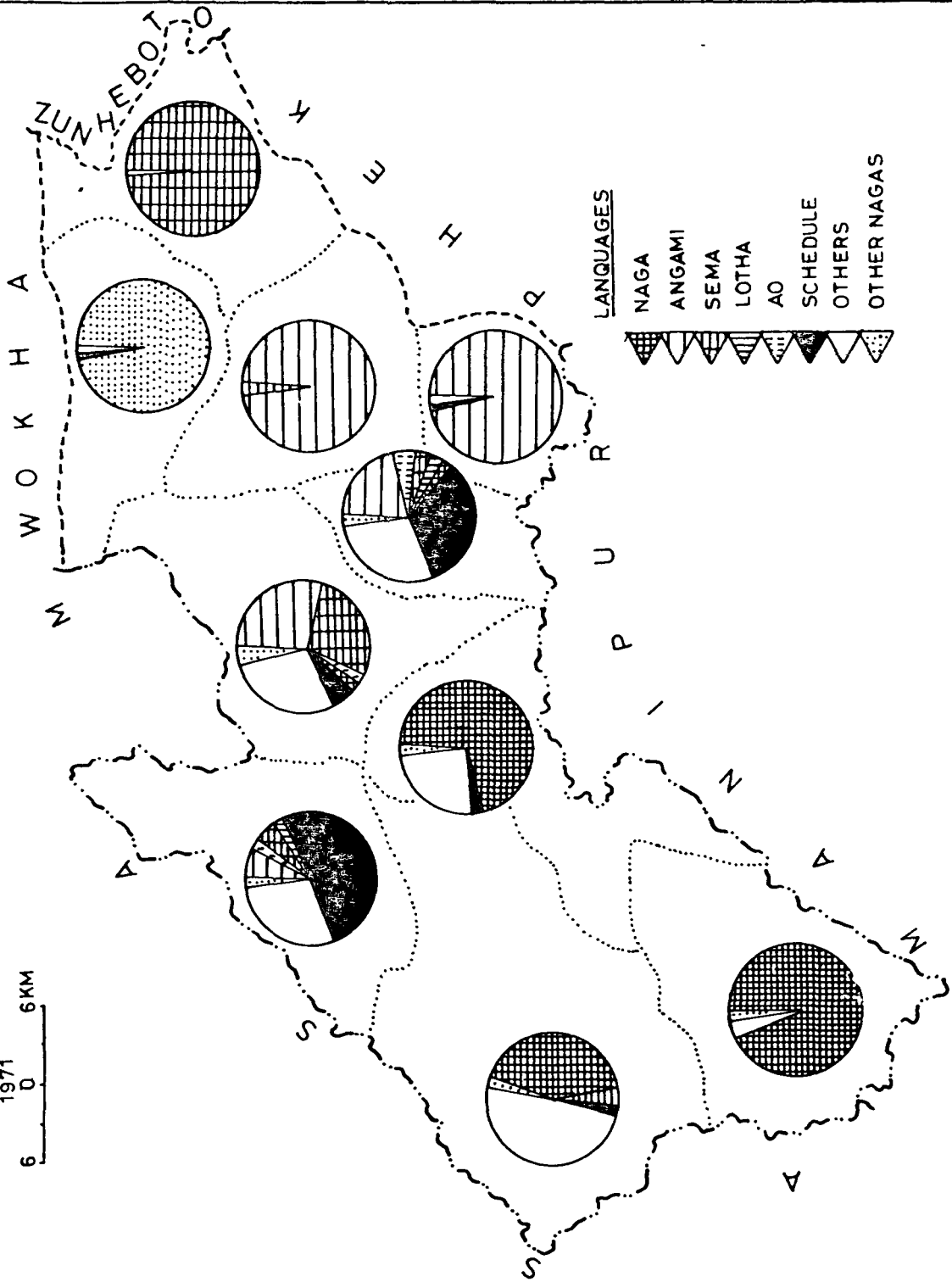


FIG-41

MOKOKCHUNG DISTRICT  
 DISTRIBUTION OF LINGUISTIC GROUPS

(CIRCLE WISE)

5 0 1971 5 10 KM

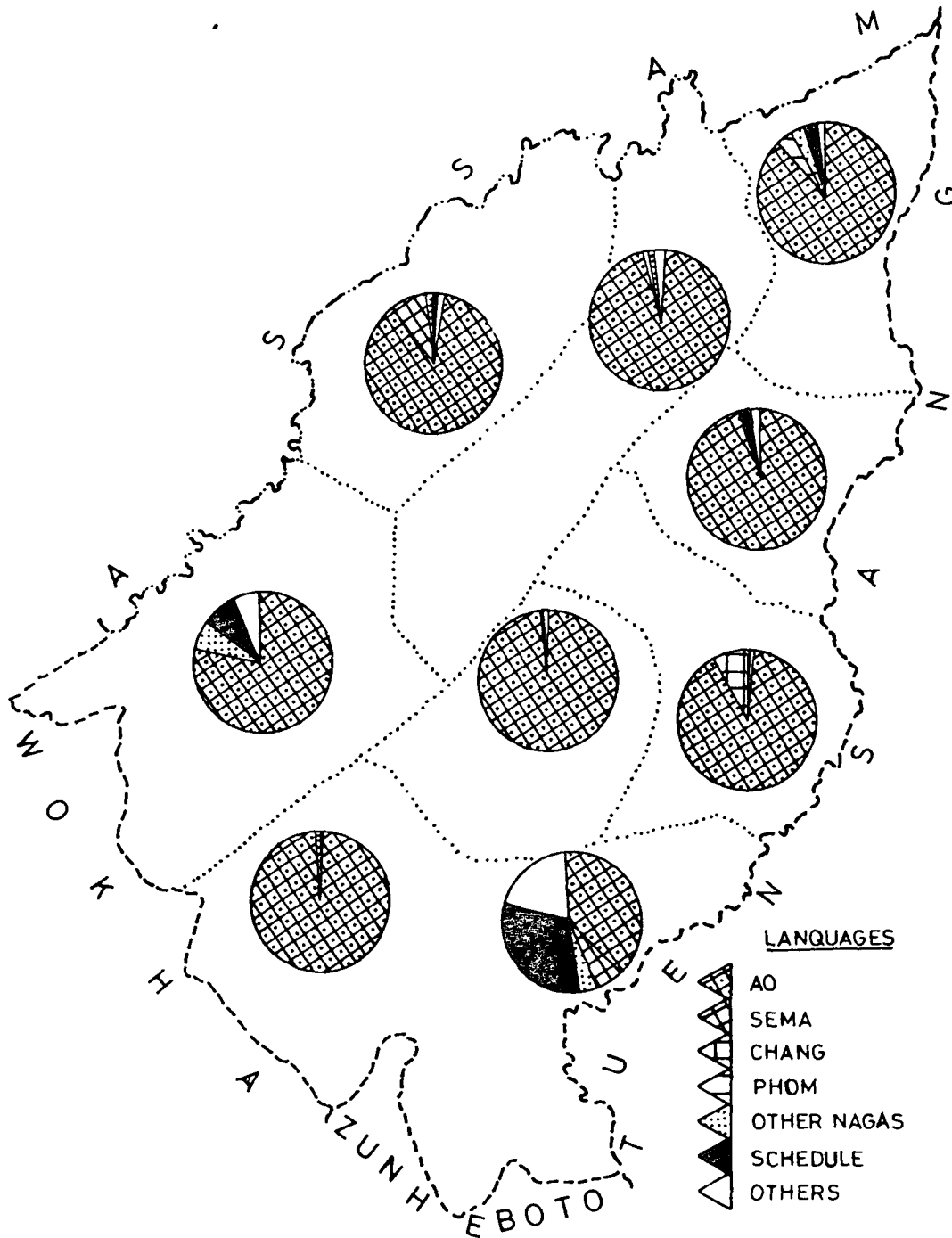


FIG-4.2

uages listed in VIIIth Schedule. The speakers of Hindi account for 3.37 per cent, closely followed by the Bengali and Assamese with 1.66 per cent and 1.27 per cent respectively table 4.1. The speakers of Malayalam, Punjabi, Oriya, Telegu, Tamil, Urdu, Gujarati, Kannada, Kashmire, Sindhi etc. are extremely few.

It is evident from the table 4.1, that Kohima district has the highest percentage of Scheduled language speakers which account for more than 13 per cent of the total speakers in the district. It is followed by Mokokchung and Tuensang with 4.94 per cent and 2.73 per cent respectively. The low percentage of the speakers of Scheduled language in Tuensang district may be attributed to the remoteness location of the area, which discourage the people from outside to venture into it.

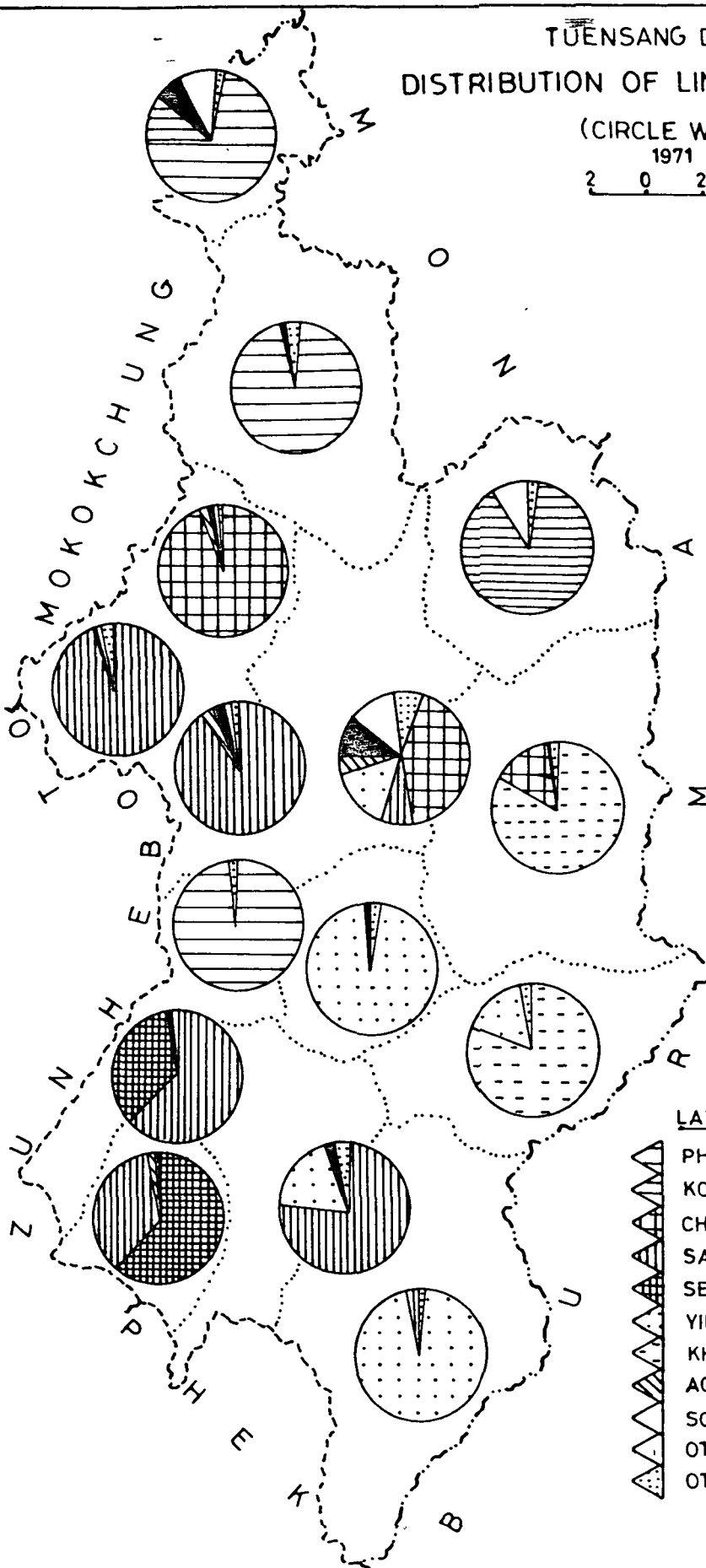
The pattern of distribution of Scheduled languages in Nagalang is more evenly distributed as compared to other Mother-tongue languages table 4.2. Although, their proportion to the total speakers in each of the circle is considerable less, the pattern of distribution of these languages shows that they are spatially more dispersed in the entire state (fig 4.51-4.57). However, it is to be noted that the above explanation is applicable to only four dominant Scheduled speakers namely Hindi, Bengali, Assamese and Malaya-

TUENSANG DISTRICT  
DISTRIBUTION OF LINGUISTIC GROUPS

(CIRCLE WISE)

1971

2 0 2 6 KM



LANGUAGES

- PHOM
- KONGYAK
- CHANG
- SANGTAM
- SEMA
- YIMCHUNGER
- KHEINMUNGAN
- AO
- SCHEDULE
- OTHERS
- OTHER NAGAS

FIG-2.3

ZUNHEBOTO DISTRICT  
 DISTRIBUTION OF LINGUISTIC GROUPS  
 (CIRCLE WISE)

1971  
 5 0 5 10KM

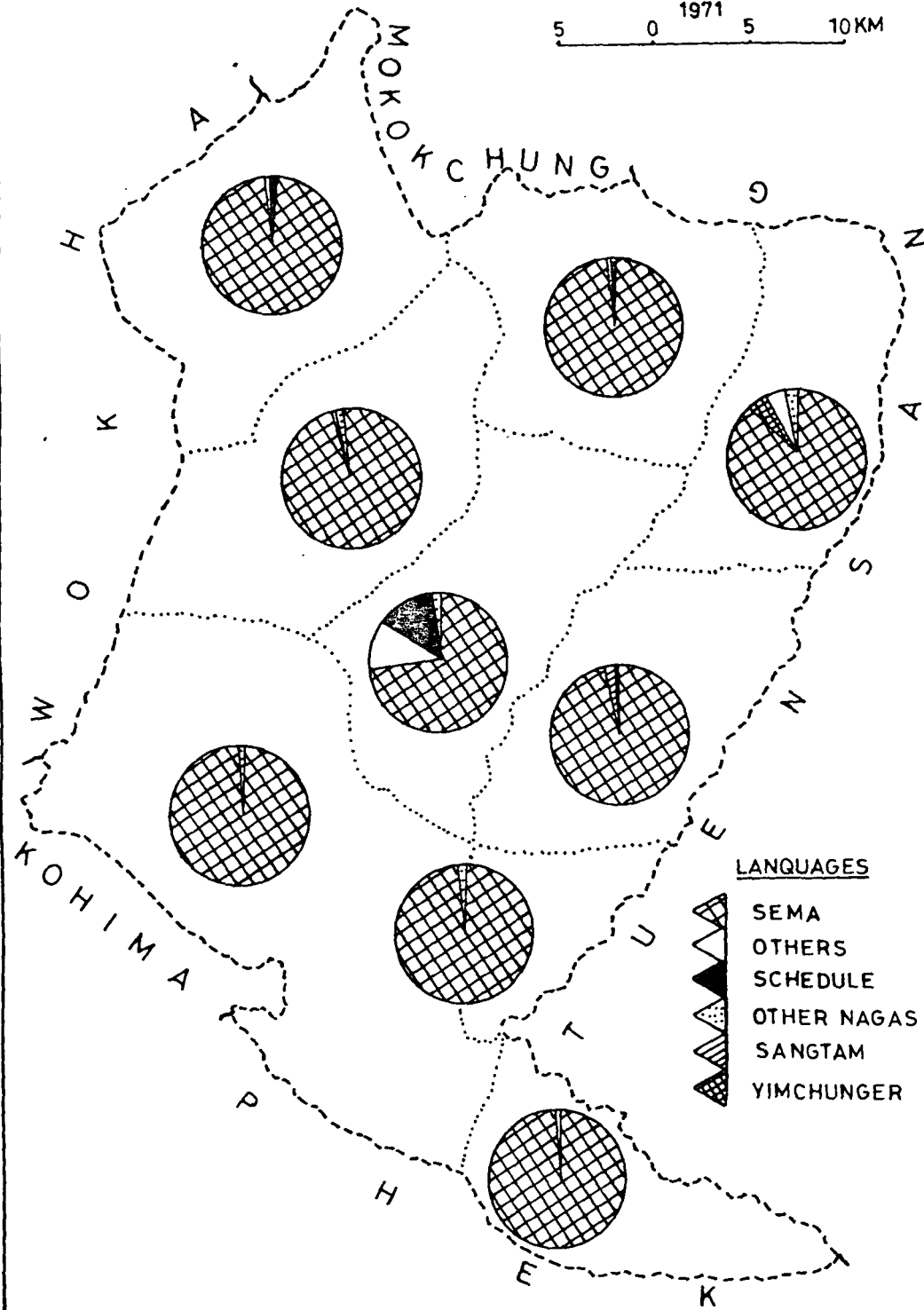


FIG - 4.4

TABLE 4.2

## Nagaland: Circle-wise Distribution of Scheduled Language (1971)

Percentage Category	Assamese (1)	Bengali (2)	Hindi (3)	Malayalam (4)	Others (5)
Above 15		1	3		
10 - 15	1				
5 - 10	1	1	2		
3 - 5	1	1	1	1	3
2 - 3	4	2	2	2	1
1 - 2	6	5	6	3	
.5 - 1	8	4	7	1	5
Less than .5	37	40	35	46	33
<b>N11</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>20</b>

Source: Census of India, 1971, Nagaland,

Note: The percentage figures are in respect of total speakers.

WOKHA DISTRICT  
 DISTRIBUTION OF LINGUISTIC GROUPS  
 (CIRCLE WISE)  
 (1971)

2 0 2 4 6 KM

LANGUAGES

- LOTHA
- SEMA
- AO
- SCHEDULE
- OTHERS
- OTHER NAGAS

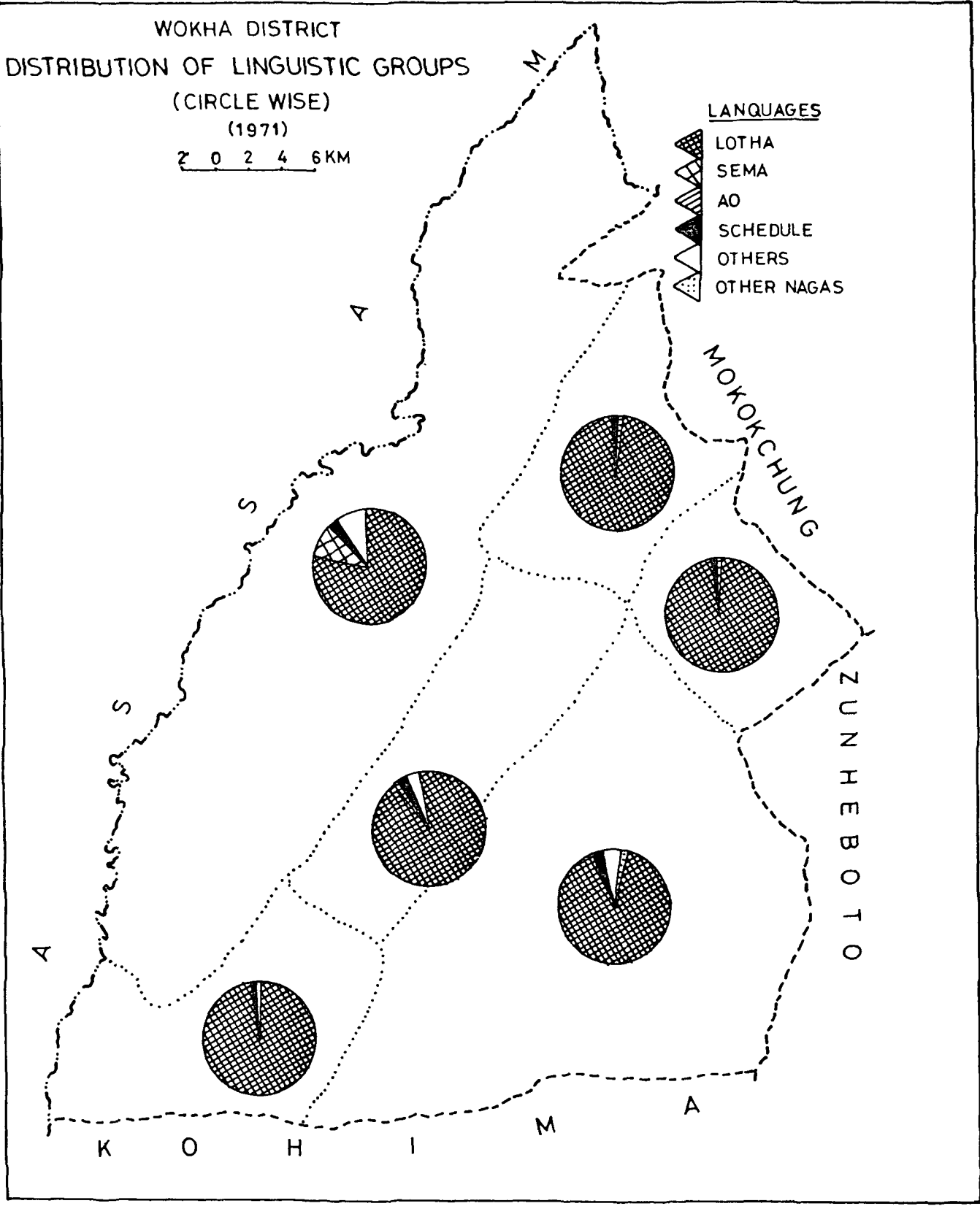


FIG-4.5

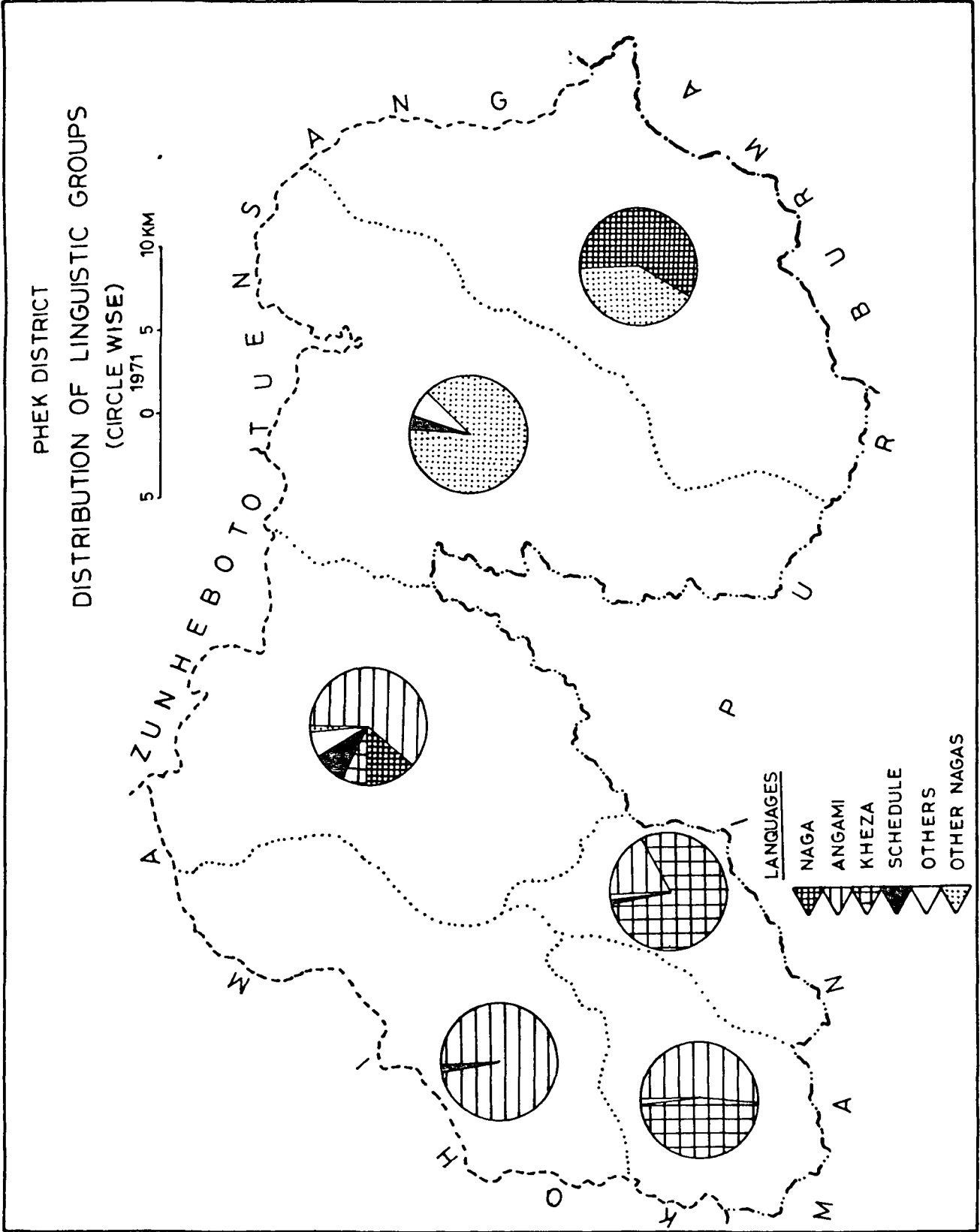


FIG-4.6

lam. Besides, these, there are speakers of Punjabi, Oriya and Tamil whose distribution shows more dispersed pattern than those of Telegu, Urdu, Marathi etc.

The speakers of Hindi, Bengali, Assamese and Malayalam are more widespread as evident from their presence in most of the circles. These groups are found in almost in all percent categories and only in a few of the circles in the state they are not found. Those circles where they are completely absent are 4,6,8 and 9 for Assamese, Hindi, Bengali and Malayalam respectively. The share of Hindi and Bengali speakers are more than 15 per cent in 3 and 1 circles respectively. There are atleast 13,11 and 9 circles for Assamese, Hindi and Bengali where the share is as high as 1 to 15 per cent. In 6 circles the percentage share of Malayalam speakers ranges between 1 and 5 per cent.

Most of the speakers of scheduled language are concentrated in those circles which have significant urban concentration (Fig. 4.1-14.77). Among the circles Dimapur sadar has the maximum number of speakers of scheduled languages. Besides Dimapur, circles which have fairly scheduled language speakers such as Kohima, Mokokchung, Tuensang, Zunheboto, Phek, Wokha, Mon, Nagenimora, Pherima, Mangkolemba, Tuli, Tizet etc.



### 4.3 NAGA LANGUAGES

Before discussing the distribution of Naga languages in Nagaland, it seems necessary to understand the position of Naga languages in the Sino-Tibetan Linguistic family, which is based on Grierson's Linguistic Survey of India.

The Sino-Tibetan in India spread over a vast area that stretches as far as Balistan in the west, to the North Eastern Frontier of the country—and further reaching upto the southern most portion of the North-Eastern Region.<sup>2</sup> The Sino-Tibetan Chinese language family has two main sub-groups (illustration table). The Siamese-Chinese sub-family and the Tibeto-Burman sub-family. The entire Mongolian population in India except one are speaking Tibeto-Burman languages. The Khamptis of Arunachal (NEFA) are the one speaking a language of the Siamese-Chinese sub-family.

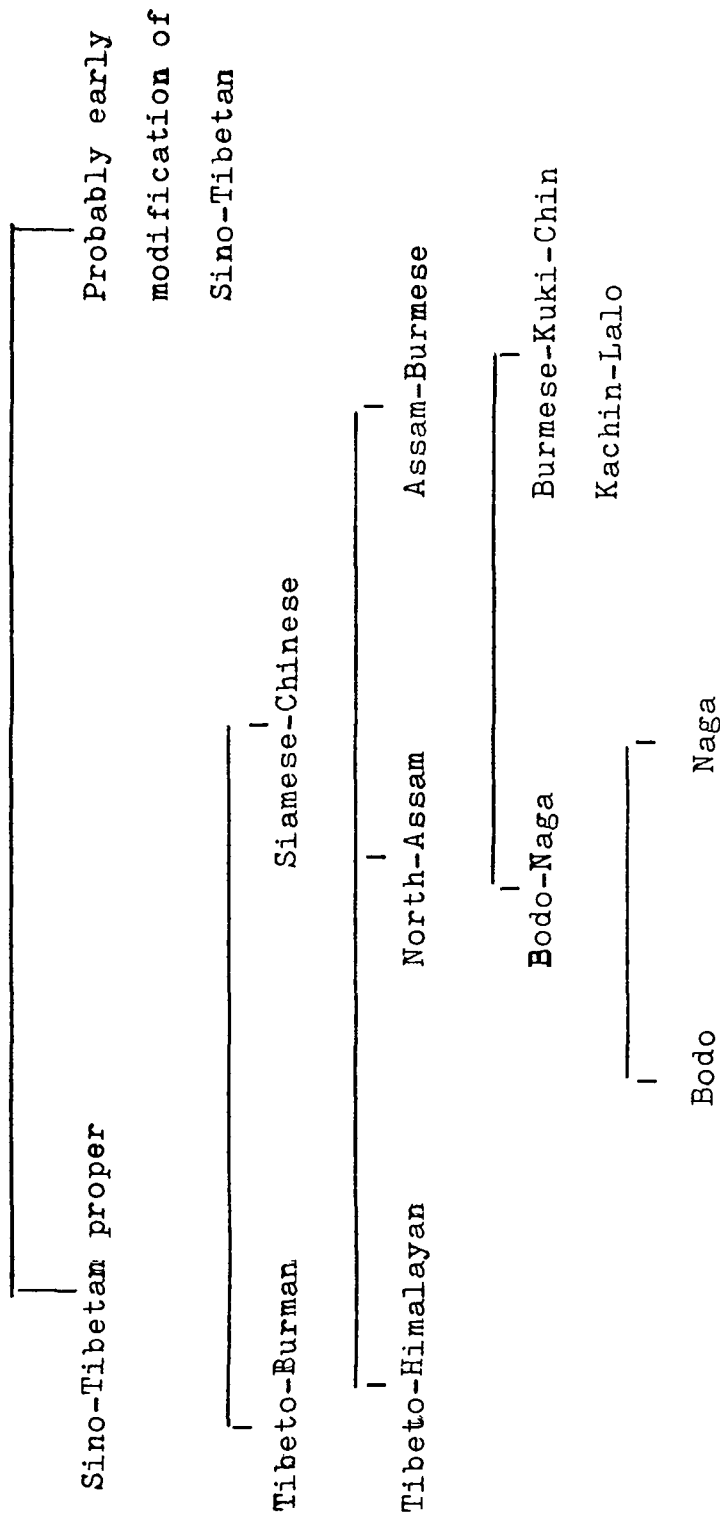
Of the Tibeto-Burman sub-family of languages there are further groups - Tibeto-Himalayan group, North-Assam group and Assam-Burmese group. The Assam-Burmese sub-family is further sub-grouped into the Bodo group, the Naga group and the Kuki-Chin group. Nearly all Naga languages come under the Assam-Burmese branch of languages. Numerically and culturally, it is the most important among the three branches of the Tibeto-Burman sub-family. It is consists of atleast three strong

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2. Ibid., P.5.

TABLE

The Sino-Tibetan Speech Family




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Source- B.K. Boruah, (1982), The Evolution of Nagamese, North Eastern Quarterly.

NAGALAND  
TERRITORIAL DISTRIBUTION OF  
MAJOR NAGA TRIBES

1981

10 0 10 20 30KM

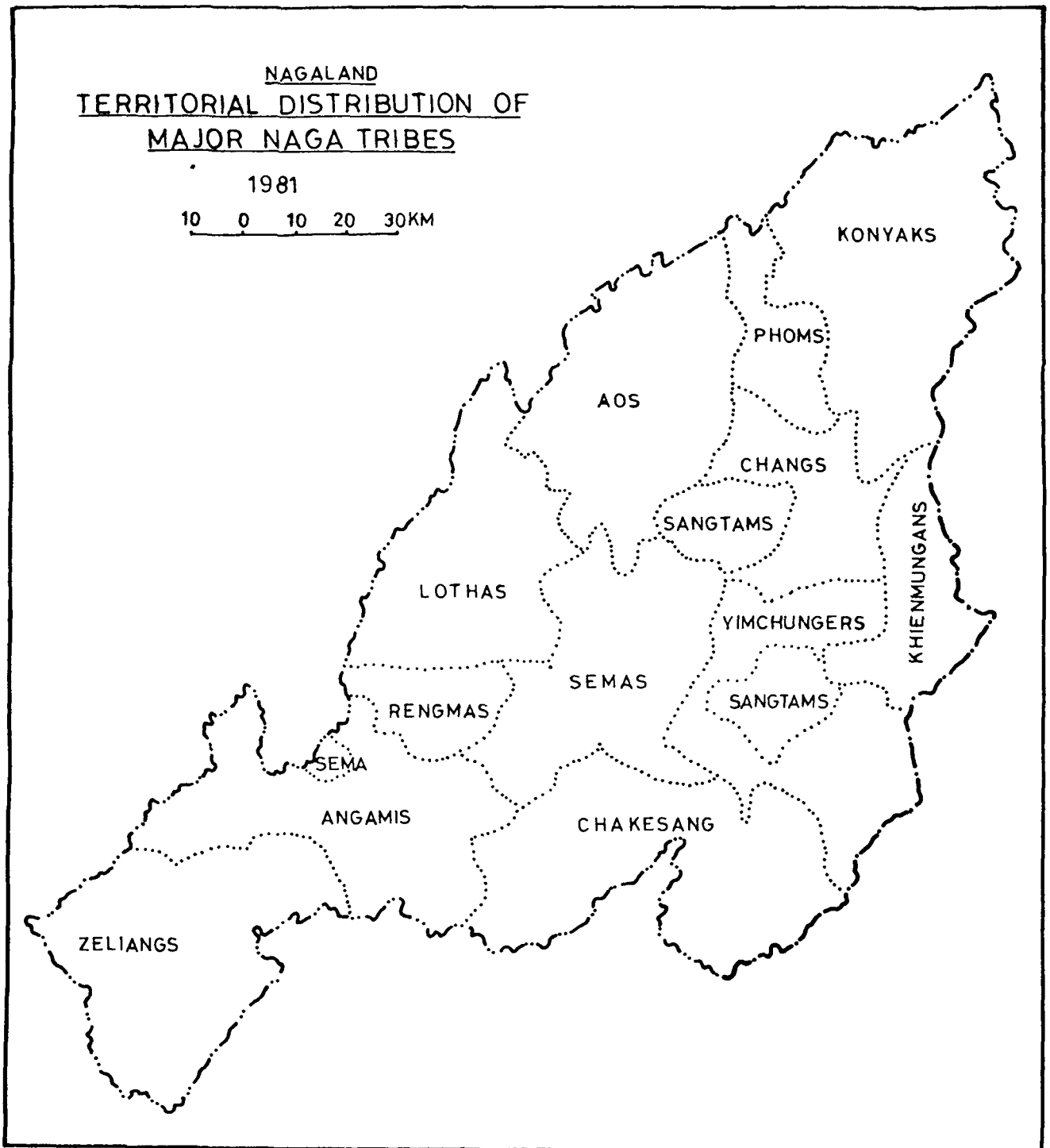


FIG-4-8

linguistic communities. They are Bodo, Naga and Kuki-chin. Each of these group consists of several speeches. Among them the Naga group display the highest diversity.

The speakers of Naga languages are spread over to several states- Nagaland, Manipur, Arunachal and Assam. Nagaland has the largest number of speakers. The Naga speaking group consist of the following communities namely, Ao, Sema, Lotha, Angami, Konyak, Chang, Yimchunger, Phom, Sangtam, Kabui, Chakru, Mao, Kheza, Kheinmungan, Rengma, Zemi, Leingmai, Khirr, Mawkara, Pochuri, Rongmai, Kuki, Wanchu, Nocte, Maring, Tangsa and Paomata. Speakers of last five Naga languages are not found in Nagaland.

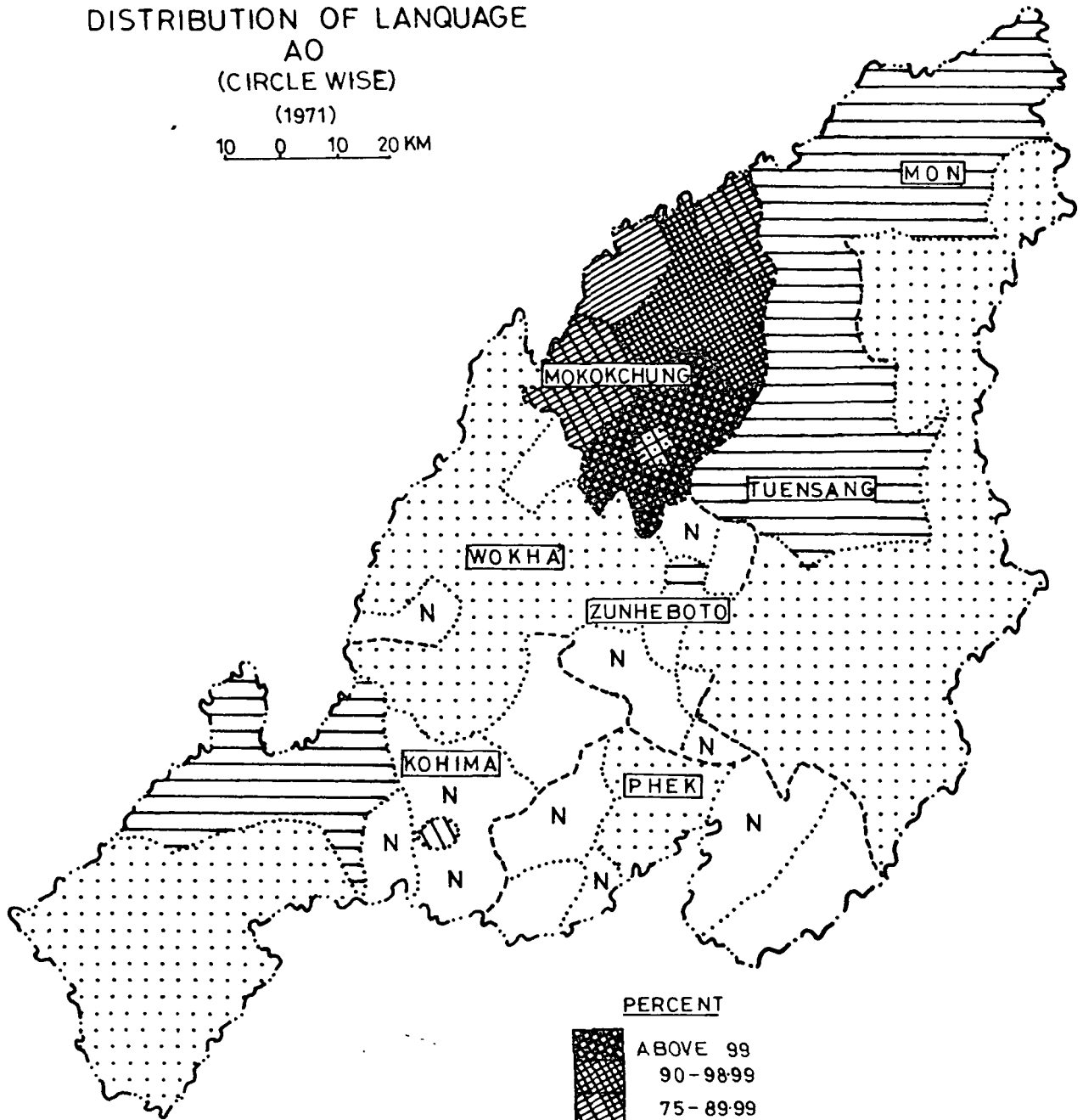
The Nagas have well demarcated boundaries and territories of their own. The region-wise distribution of these languages are as follows- Angamis, Zeliangrong and Rengmas are concentrated in the southwestern most part of the state (which coincides with Kohima district (Figure 4.8)). Angami language is spoken by the Angamis in Kohima district. This language has three dialects with slightly regional variation in the manner of speaking. They are Chakroma, Mozome and Khonoma.<sup>3</sup> The main body of the speakers of Rengma language are concentrated immediately to the north of the Angamis, however, a few of them are found in detached groups in the Mikir Hills and

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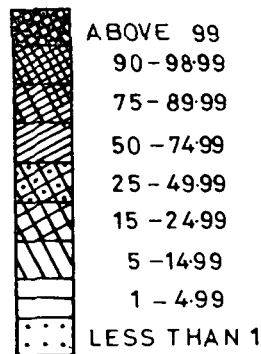
3. M.V. Sreedhar, (1974), A Socio-Linguistic Study of Inter-Lingual Communication in Nagaland, P.18.

NAGALAND  
 DISTRIBUTION OF LANGUAGE  
 AO  
 (CIRCLE WISE)  
 (1971)

10 0 10 20 KM



PERCENT



NIL  
 NEGLIGIBLE

FIG-4.9

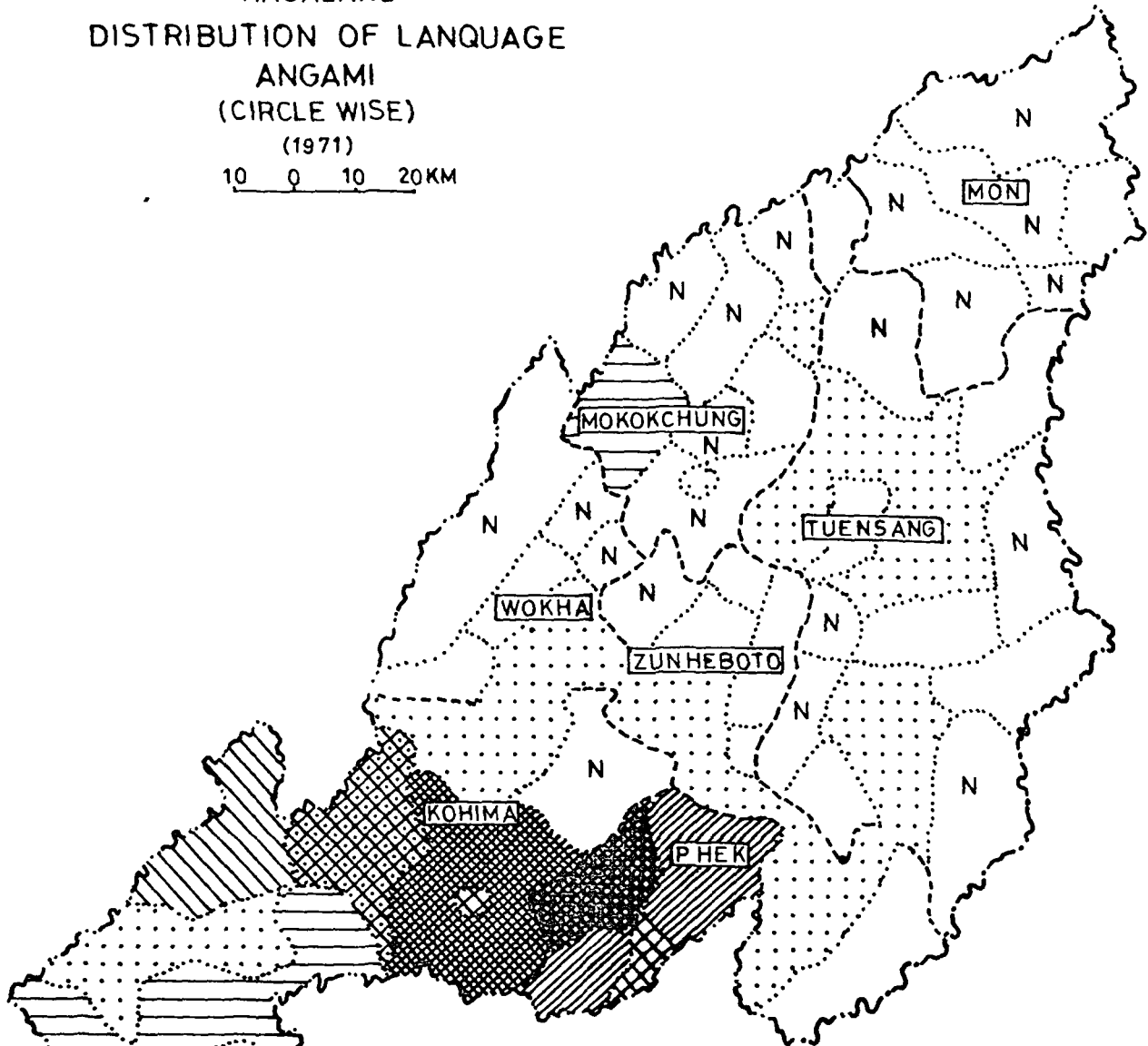
around Meluri. This scattered distribution of the tribe could be due to the pressure from the Angami and Sema moving northwards. This language has also three dialects. The Zeliangrong is a language as well as community that speaks the language. It is a combination of three sub-tribe languages - Zemi, Leingmai and Rongmai.

Phek district is peopled by the speakers of Chakesang language which is a combination of three sub-tribe languages (Chokri, Kheza and Pochuri Sangtam). Zunheboto district in the central part of the state is inhabited by the speakers of Sema language. A section of them are also found inhabiting in Pughoboto and Nihokhu circles in Kohima district. Unlike the konyaks, dialectal variation among the Semas is insignificant. Similarly, the speakers of the Lotha language in Wokha district do not have dialectal variation among them. The Aos inhabiting the midwestern part of the state in Mokokchung district, however, have three major dialects which are quite different one from the other. They are Chongli, Mongsen and Changki.

There are several speakers of Naga languages in Tuensang district. These are Chang, Kheinmungan, Mawkara, Khirr, Tikhir and Phom. All these speakers of different languages have shown no significant dialectal variations with the exception of the Yimchunger language which has four regional

NAGALAND  
 DISTRIBUTION OF LANGUAGE  
 ANGAMI  
 (CIRCLE WISE)  
 (1971)

10 0 10 20KM



△ NIL  
 N NEGLIGIBLE

PERCENT

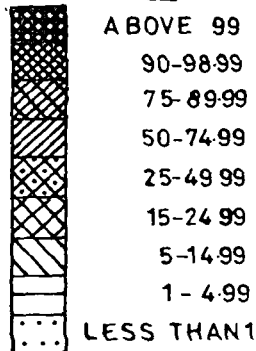
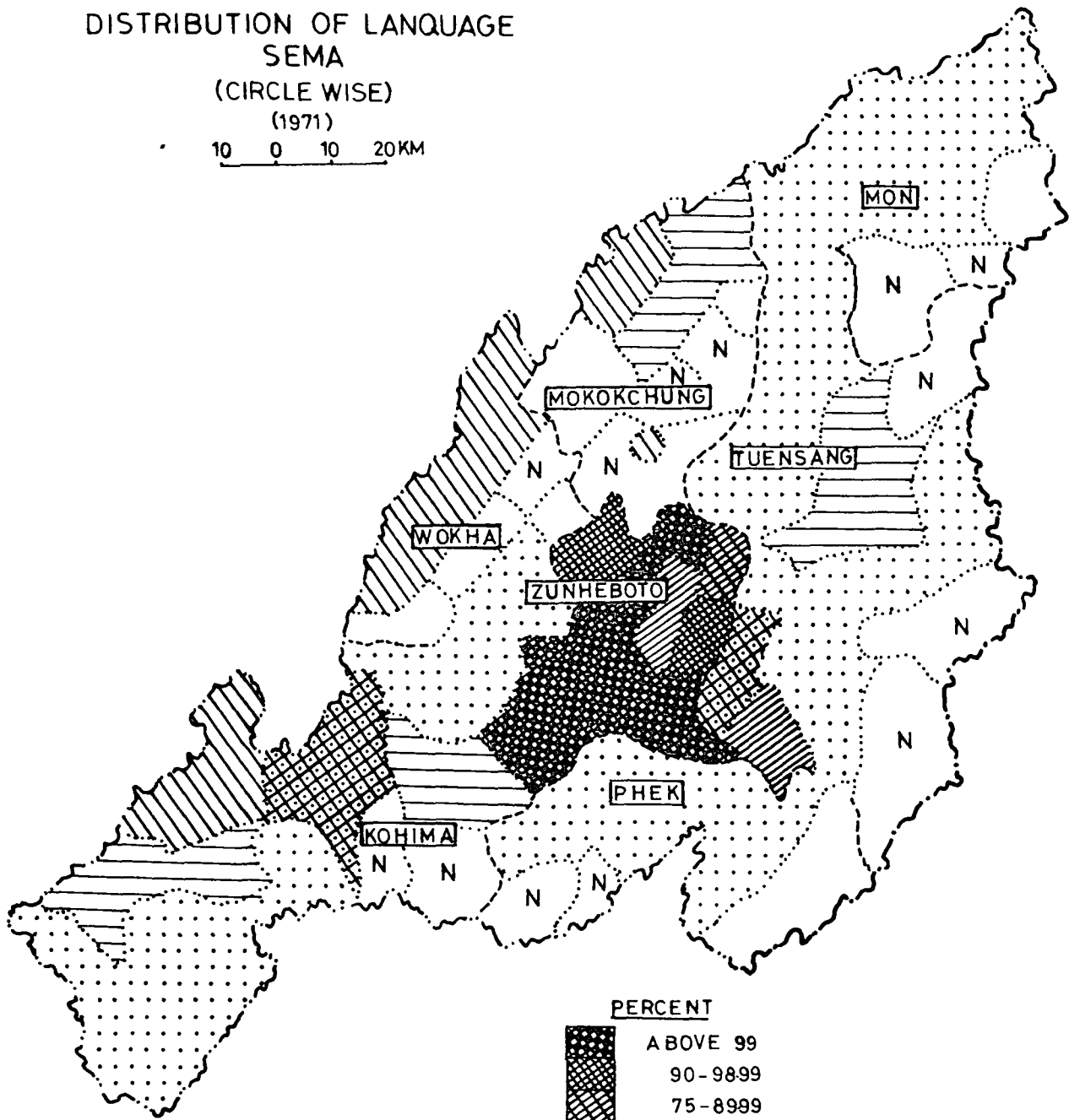


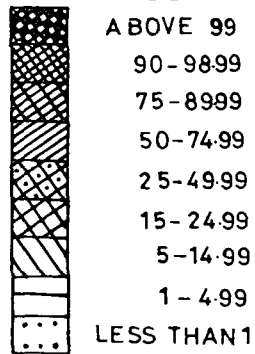
FIG-2.10

NAGALAND  
 DISTRIBUTION OF LANGUAGE  
 SEMA  
 (CIRCLE WISE)  
 (1971)

10 0 10 20KM



PERCENT



NIL  
 NEGLIGIBLE

FIG - 4.11

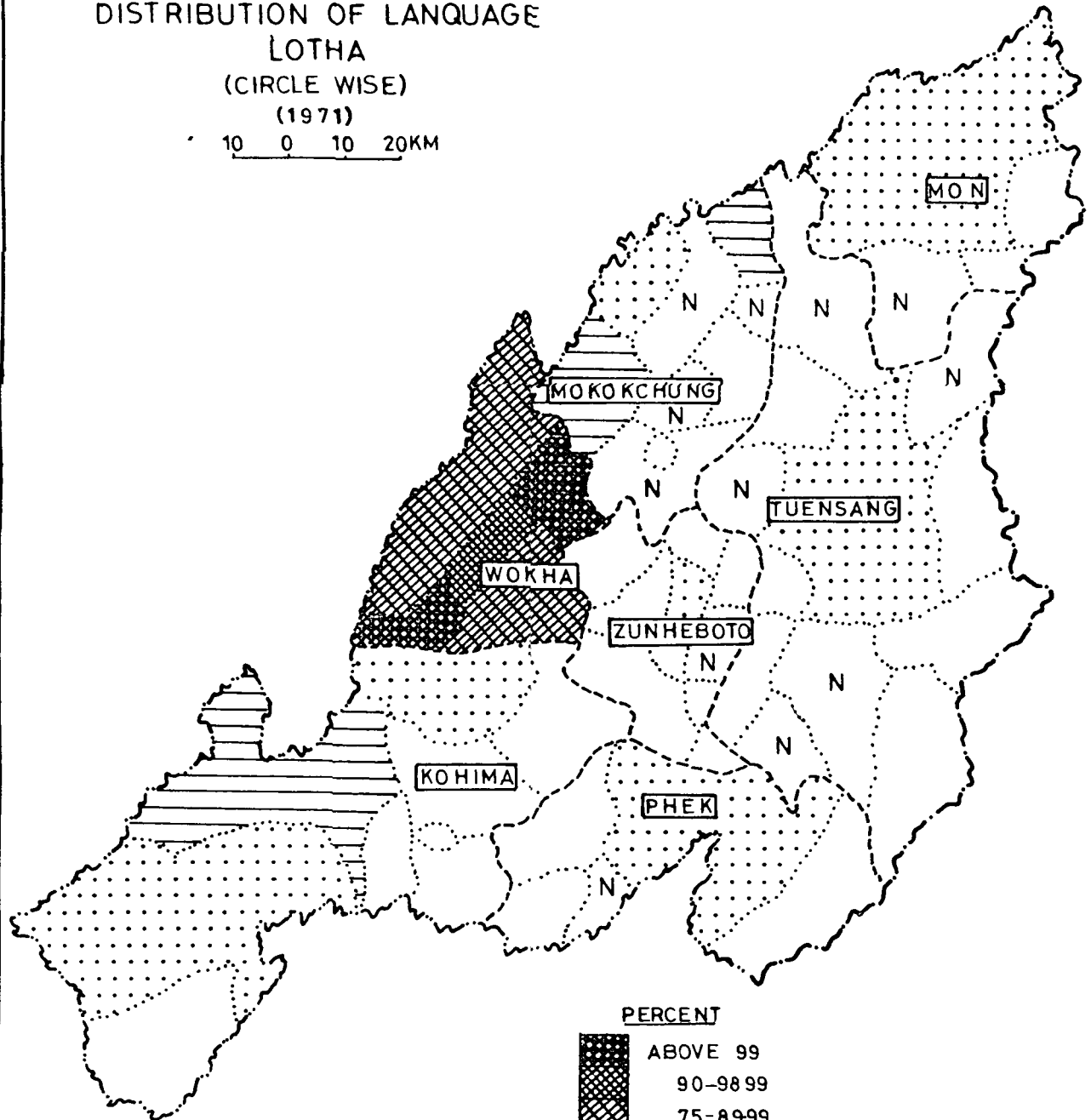
dialects - Minir, Pherrongre, Wai and Yimchunger. The northern most part of the district is occupied by the speakers of Phom while the central part of the district are peopled by the Changs, the Yimchungers and the Sangtams. The eastern and southern parts of the district are inhabited by the Kheinmungan; Mawkaras, Khirr and Tikhirs.

The Konyaks are centred around Mon district, in the north eastern part of the state. They have about 29 dialects, however, no distinguish feature in their dialect have been recorded. The dialect spoken in Wakching area is use as the standard form of language among the Konyaks. The Tangkhuls, the Maos and the Kukis have settled in Kohima district. However, their main concentration is in the northwestern part of Manipur state. The Kacharis in Nagaland have settled in and around Dimapur town and are beleived to have lost their original language.

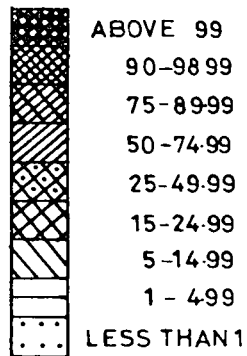
The study of the distribution of various Naga languages reveals the pattern of mutual exclusiveness of the territories of different speakers. Within a definite linguistic boundary the tendency of clustering over space is strongest at the centre and gradually reduces at the adjacent and as further move away from the core, it appears that the presence is negligible or nil.

NAGALAND  
 DISTRIBUTION OF LANGUAGE  
 LOTHA  
 (CIRCLE WISE)  
 (1971)

10 0 10 20KM



PERCENT

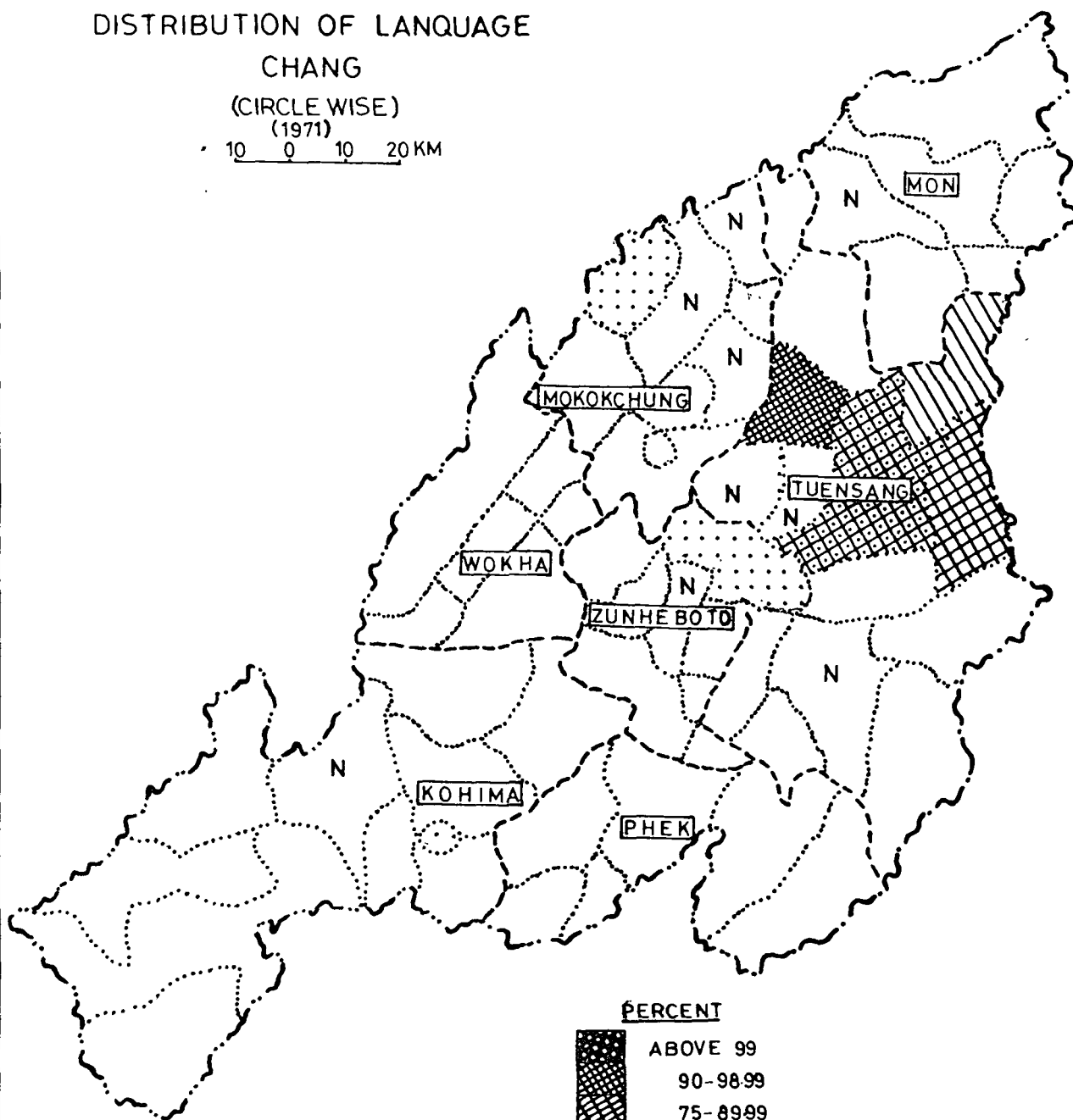


NIL  
 NEGLIGIBLE

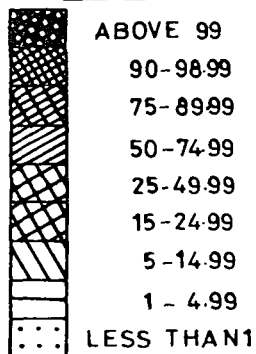
FIG-4.12

NAGALAND  
 DISTRIBUTION OF LANGUAGE  
 CHANG  
 (CIRCLE WISE)  
 (1971)

10 0 10 20 KM



PERCENT



NIL  
 NEGLIGIBLE

FIG-4.13

In Kohima district, Angami is the principal language. Its speakers comprises of 38.79 per cent of the total population. Naga speakers<sup>4</sup> form 15.10 per cent, followed by the Semas and the Khezas with 8.52 per cent and 6.5 per cent respectively. In Mokokchung district, Ao speaking population form 40.96 per cent, followed by Semas with 27.7 per cent and Lotha with 20.83 per cent. In Tuensang district the Konyaks with a total of 41.8 per cent occupied the first position. Sangtam and Yimchunger are holding the second and third position having 11.3 per cent and 11.02 per cent respectively. The speakers of Chang and Sangtam languages have, however, percentage less than 10 per cent.

An analysis of the spatial pattern of distribution of Naga languages at the circle level reveals the tendency of clustering over space (Fig 4.9-4.21). This nature of clustering over space in restricted territories is evident from the fact that the share of a linguistic group is close to 100 per cent in a few adjacent circles. In the remaining circles, however, the presence is negligible.

Significantly, the tendency to cluster is perhaps strongest in the case of the speakers of Kheza, Kheinmungan, Phom, Yimchunger, Naga, Sangtam, Chang and Others. The near

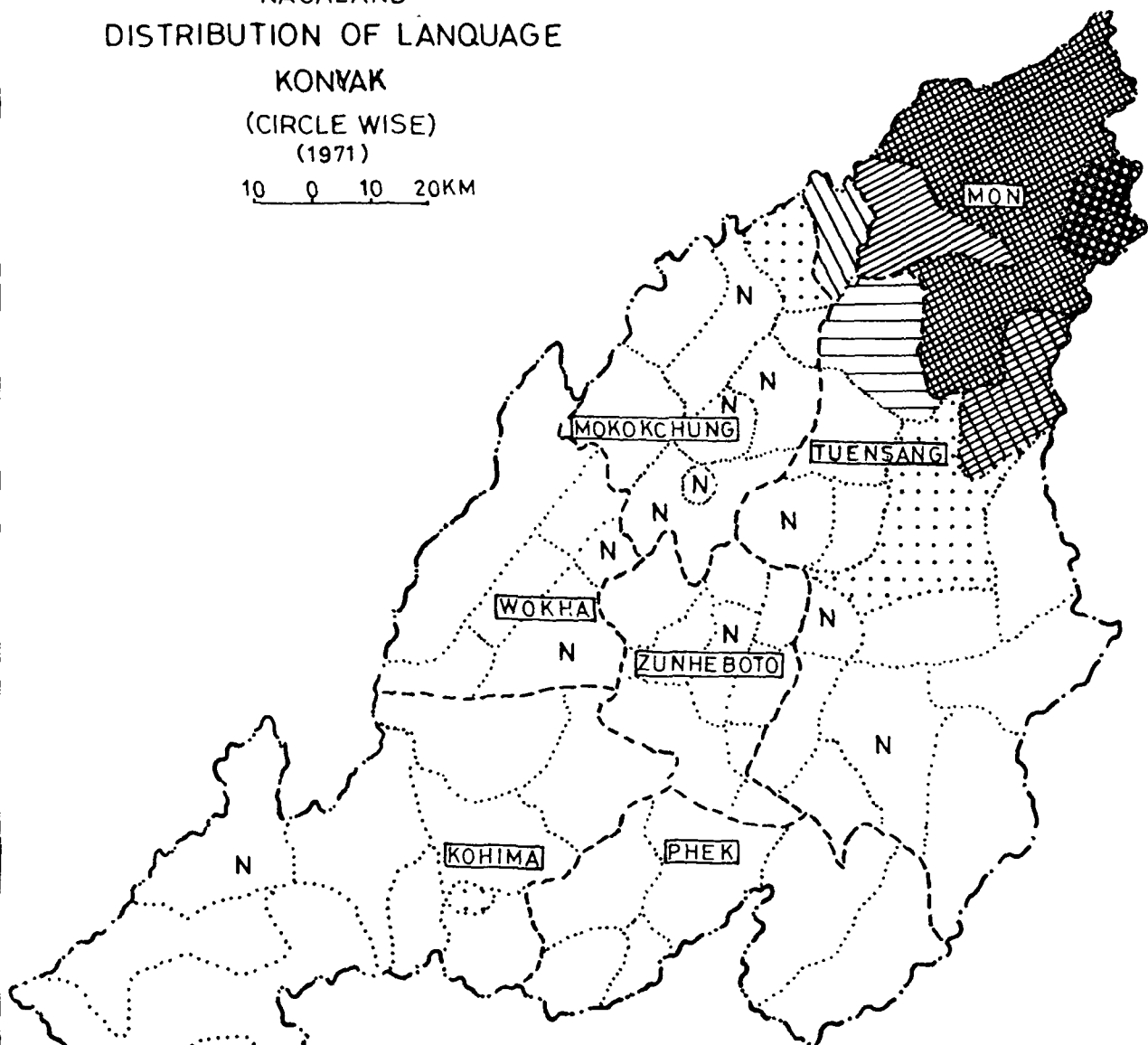
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4. The Naga language in 1971, included the speakers of Zeliangrong and Pochuri Sangtam languages. However, these languages got the status of separate language in census of India 1981.

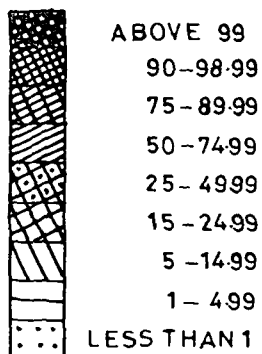
NAGALAND  
 DISTRIBUTION OF LANGUAGE  
 KONYAK

(CIRCLE WISE)  
 (1971)

10 0 10 20KM



PERCENT

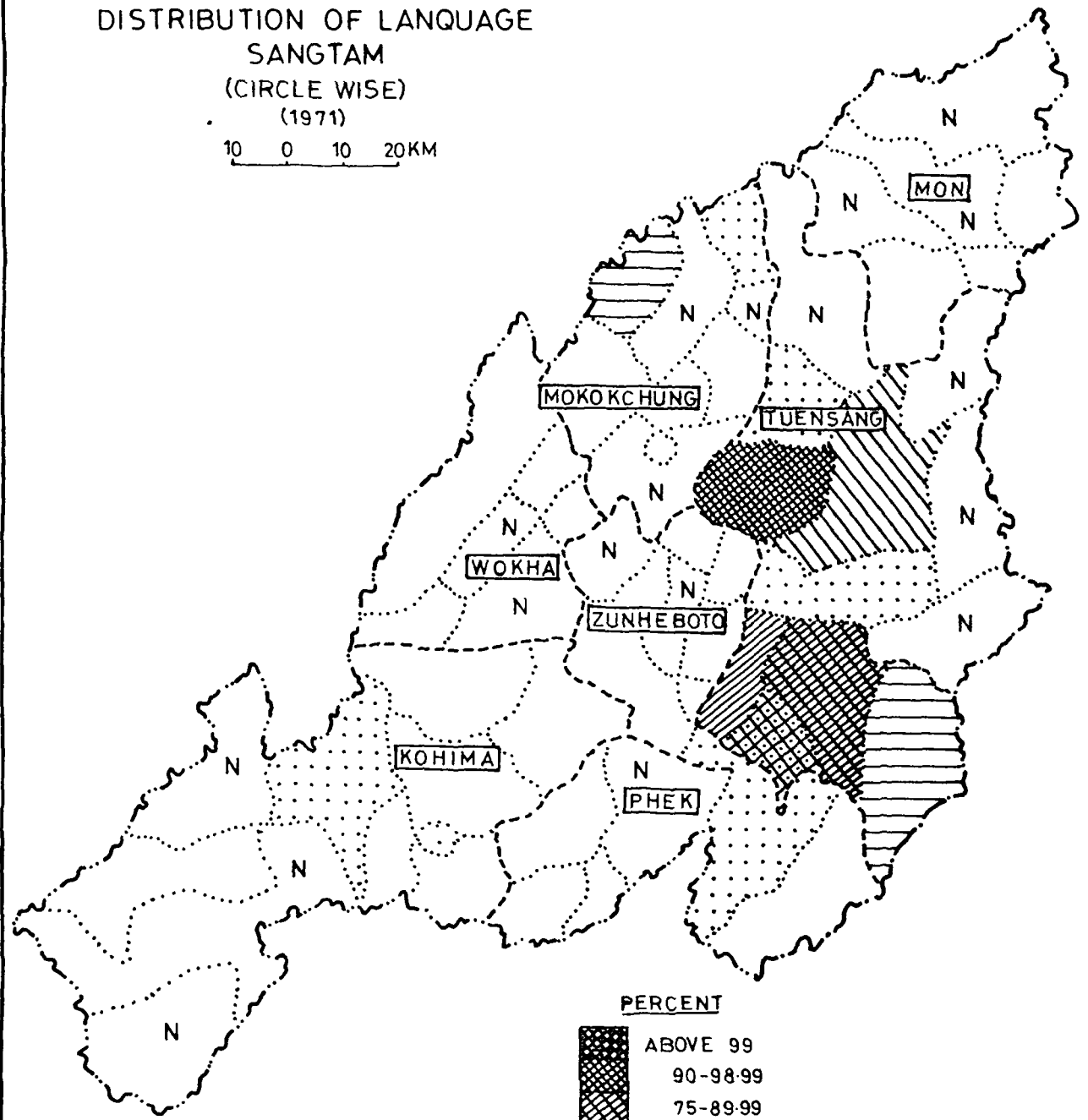


NIL  
 NEGLIGIBLE

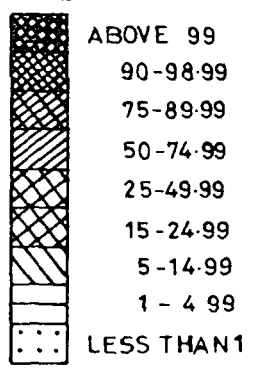
FIG-4:14

NAGALAND  
 DISTRIBUTION OF LANGUAGE  
 SANGTAM  
 (CIRCLE WISE)  
 (1971)

10 0 10 20KM



PERCENT



NIL  
 NEGLIGIBLE

FIG-415

TABLE 4.3

## Nagaland: Circle-wise Distribution of Naga Languages, (1971).

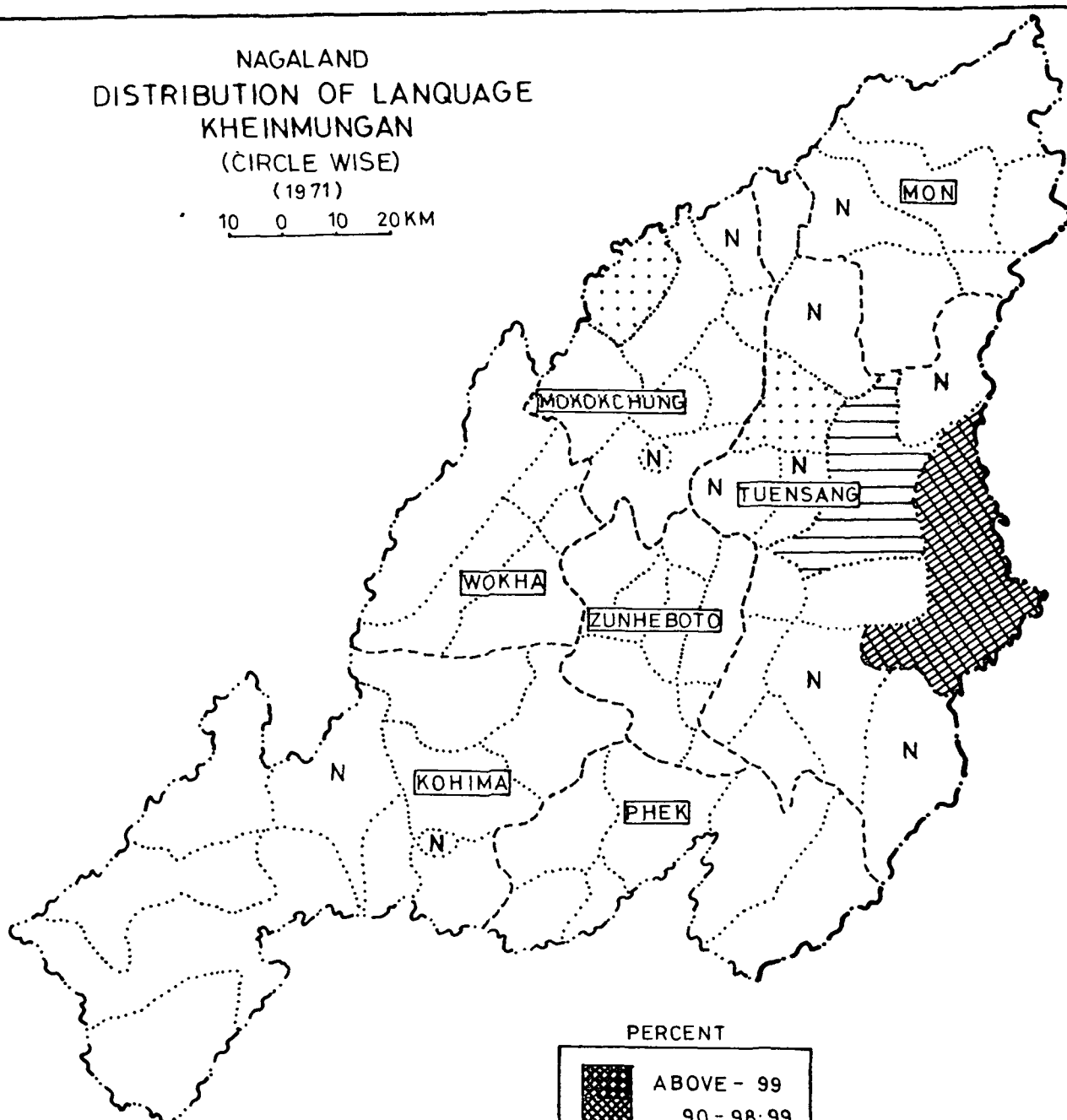
Percentage Category	AO	Angami	Sema	Lotha	Chang	Konyak	Sangtam	Kheim- ungan	Yimchunger	Phom	Kheza	Naga	Others
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)
Above 90	5	4	8	4	1	5	2		3	1	1	1	1
80 - 90	2	1	1	1	1	1		2			1		1
50 - 80	1	2	2	1		1	2			1		2	
20 - 50	1	2	2		1		1				1	1	1
5 - 20	1	2	4		3	1	1		4		1	1	
1 - 5	12	2	6	6		1	3	1	2	1		3	3
Less than 1	35	36	31	25	16	16	25	14	21	15	7	22	23
Nil	5	1-	8	25	41	37	28	45	32	44	52	32	33

Source- Census of India, 1971, Nagaland, District Census Handbook.

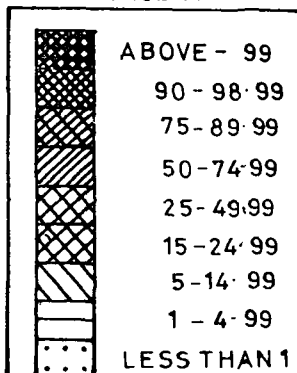
Note: The percentage figures are in respect of total speakers.

NAGALAND  
 DISTRIBUTION OF LANGUAGE  
 KHEINMUNGAN  
 (CIRCLE WISE)  
 (1971)

10 0 10 20 KM



PERCENT



NIL  
 NEGLIGIBLE

FIG-4.16

NAGALAND  
 DISTRIBUTION OF LANGUAGE  
 YIMCHUNGER  
 (CIRCLE WISE)

(1971)

10 0 10 20KM

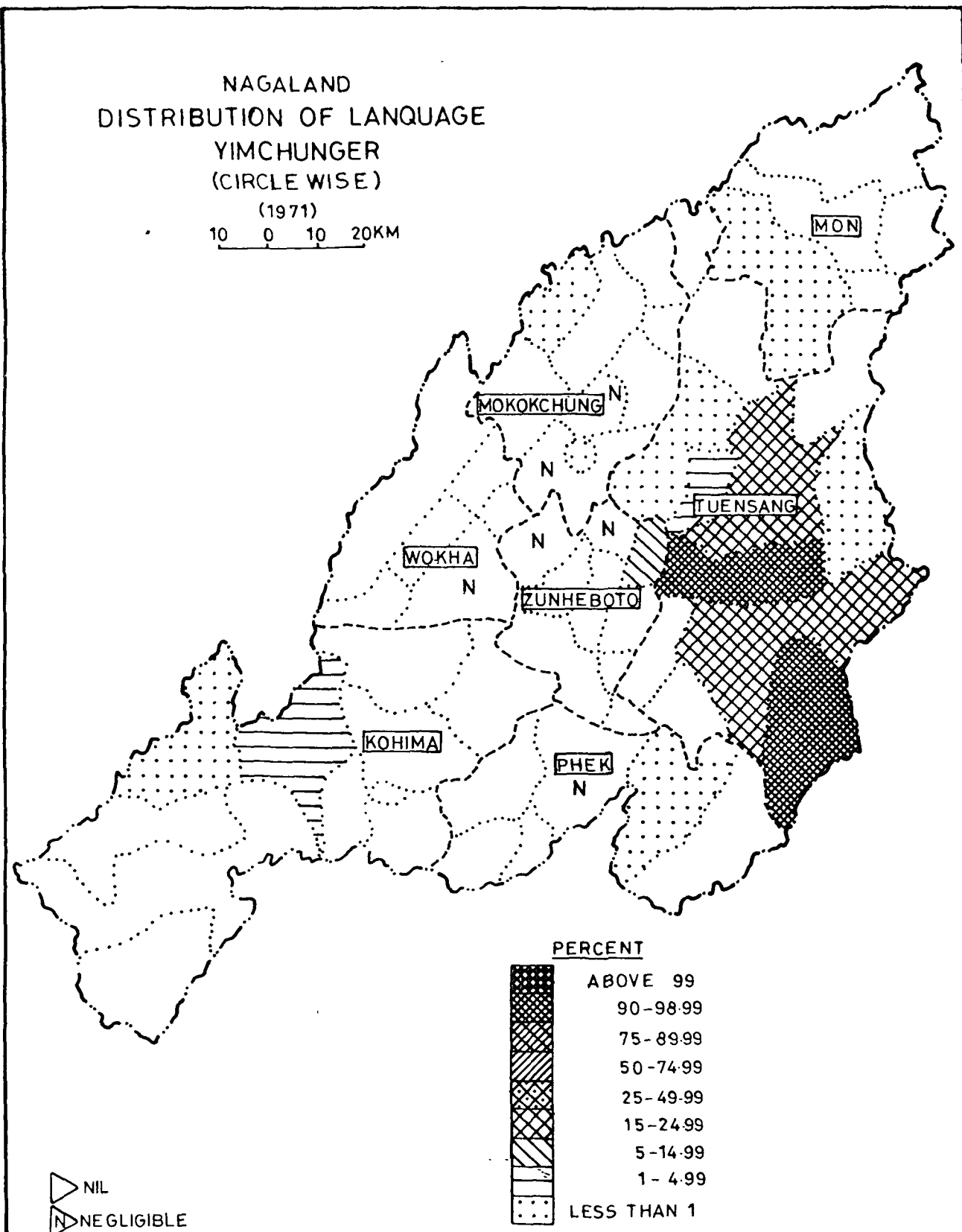


FIG-4.17

exclusiveness of these groups is evident from the table and the figures. In most of the circles, however, the presence is nil. These circles are Kheza 52, Kheinmungan 45, Phom 44, Chang 41, Konyak 37, Others<sup>5</sup>33<sub>0</sub> and Yimchunger 32<sub>0</sub> table 4.3.

On the other hand, the speakers of the Sema, the Ao, the Angami, the Lotha and the Sangtam are relatively more widespread over most circles in the state. Of them the speakers of Sema, Angami and Ao are far more widespread as evident from their presence in most circles. Table 4.3 reveals that these groups are found in almost in all percent categories. Only in a few circles they are totally absent. The number of such circles are 14, 8 and 5 for Angami, Sema and Ao respectively. They, however, have their own territories consisting of a few contiguous circles where they constitute an overwhelming proportion of the total speakers.

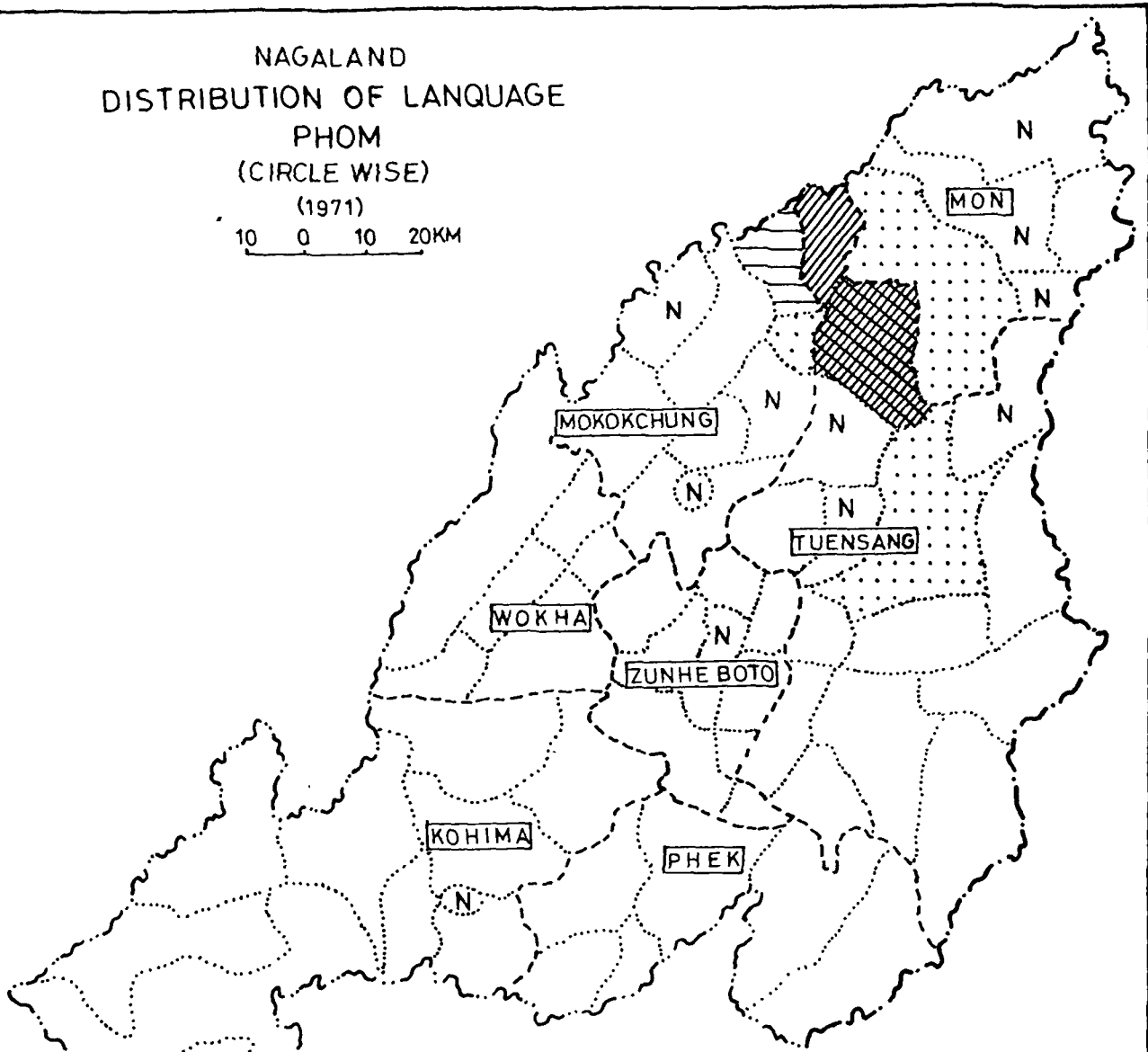
It is evident from the table that out of 62 circles, in 35 speakers of any one of the Naga languages are more than 90 per cent of the total population in the circle. The number of such circles are Sema 8, Ao 5, Konyak 5, Angami 4, Lotha 4, Yimchunger 3, Sangtam 2; Chang, Phom, Naga and Others constitute 1 each. Out of the remaining 27 circles, in 10 circles speakers of a single language are more than 80 per cent of the population. The number of these circles are as follows, 2 each

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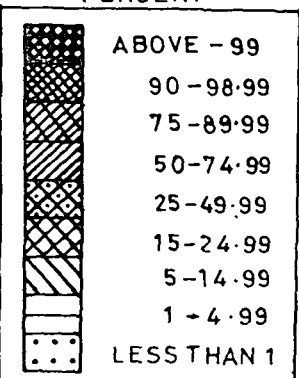
5. Others included mainly Rengma and Pochuri Sangtam.

NAGALAND  
 DISTRIBUTION OF LANGUAGE  
 PHOM  
 (CIRCLE WISE)  
 (1971)

10 0 10 20KM



PERCENT

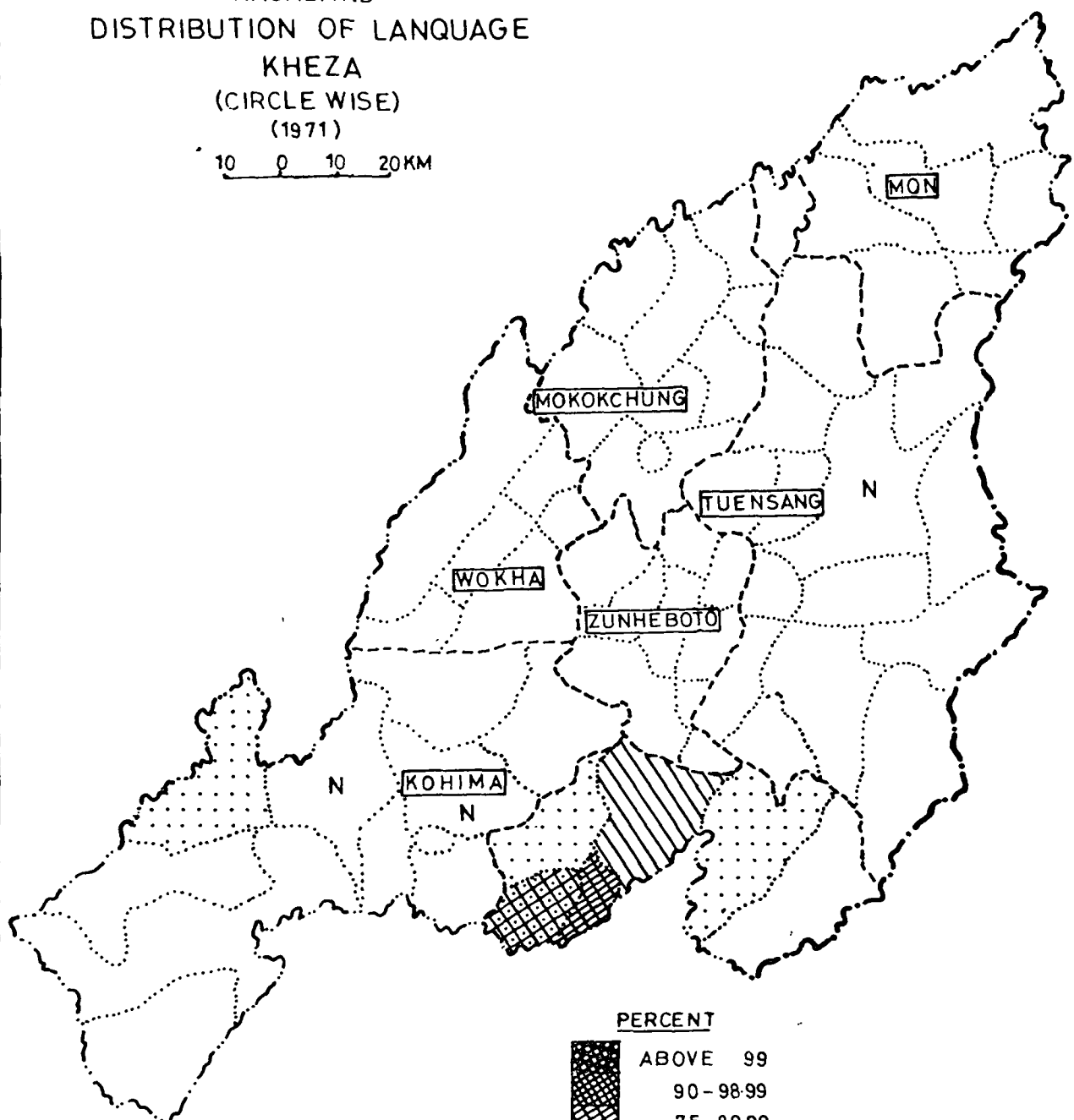


NIL  
 NEGLIGIBLE

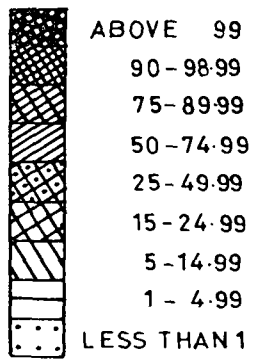
Fig-418

NAGALAND  
 DISTRIBUTION OF LANGUAGE  
 KHEZA  
 (CIRCLE WISE)  
 (1971)

10 0 10 20KM



PERCENT



▷ NIL  
 ▷ NEGLIGIBLE

FIG-4-19

for Ao and Kheinmungan; 1 each for Sema, Lotha, Chang, Konyak, Kheza and Others.

The speakers of Sema, Ao, Konyak, Lotha and Angami have larger areas of exclusiveness of the territories incorporating more circles which contain the share of speakers above 80 per cent. Out of the total of 45 circles, in 31 they are concentrated, where the share of speakers is above 80 per cent. The number of such circles are - Sema 9 (Hoshipu, Suruhoto, Sataka, Pughoboto, Satoi, Atoizo, Akuluto, Aghunato and Achikuchu); Ao 7 (Ongpangkong, Kobulong, Alongkima, Tuli, Changtongia, Chuchuyimlang and Longchem); Konyak 6 (Mon, Tizet Chin, Champang, Phomching and Tobu); Lotha 5 (Lotsu, Aitepyong, Sungro, Sanis and Wokha); Angami 4 (Chazouba, Jakhama, Cheiphobozou and Zubza). The remaining 14 circles are for Chang, Sangtam, Kheinmungan, Yimchunger, Phom, Kheza, Naga and Others.

Interestingly, it has been observed that the Semas slightly deviated from the generalised pattern of other linguistic groups. While other linguistic groups seem to have scattered in circles with some urban component, the Semas outside their territory are found in rural areas too.<sup>6</sup> Hist-

---

6. A close scrutiny of the figure 11, shows that, the Semas constitute significant proportion of the total population in those circles which are devoid of any urban segment. This is however, not true of Ao and Angami segment, whose concentration outside their core areas seem largely a response to urbanisation.

NAGALAND  
 DISTRIBUTION OF LANGUAGE  
 NAGA  
 (CIRCLE WISE)  
 (1971)

10 0 10 20KM

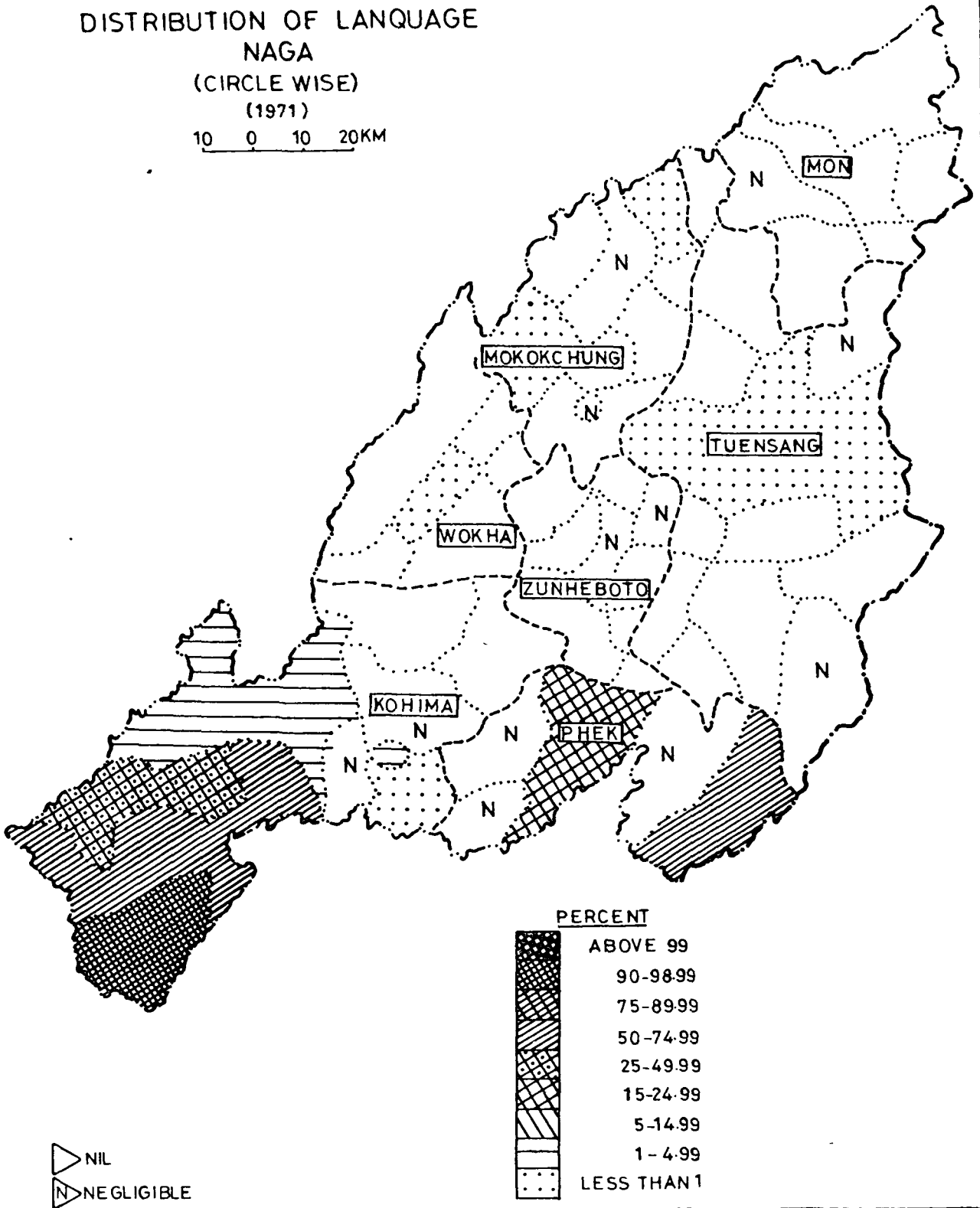


FIG-4-20

NAGALAND  
 DISTRIBUTION OF LANGUAGE  
 OTHERS

(CIRCLE WISE)

(1971)  
 10 0 10 20 KM

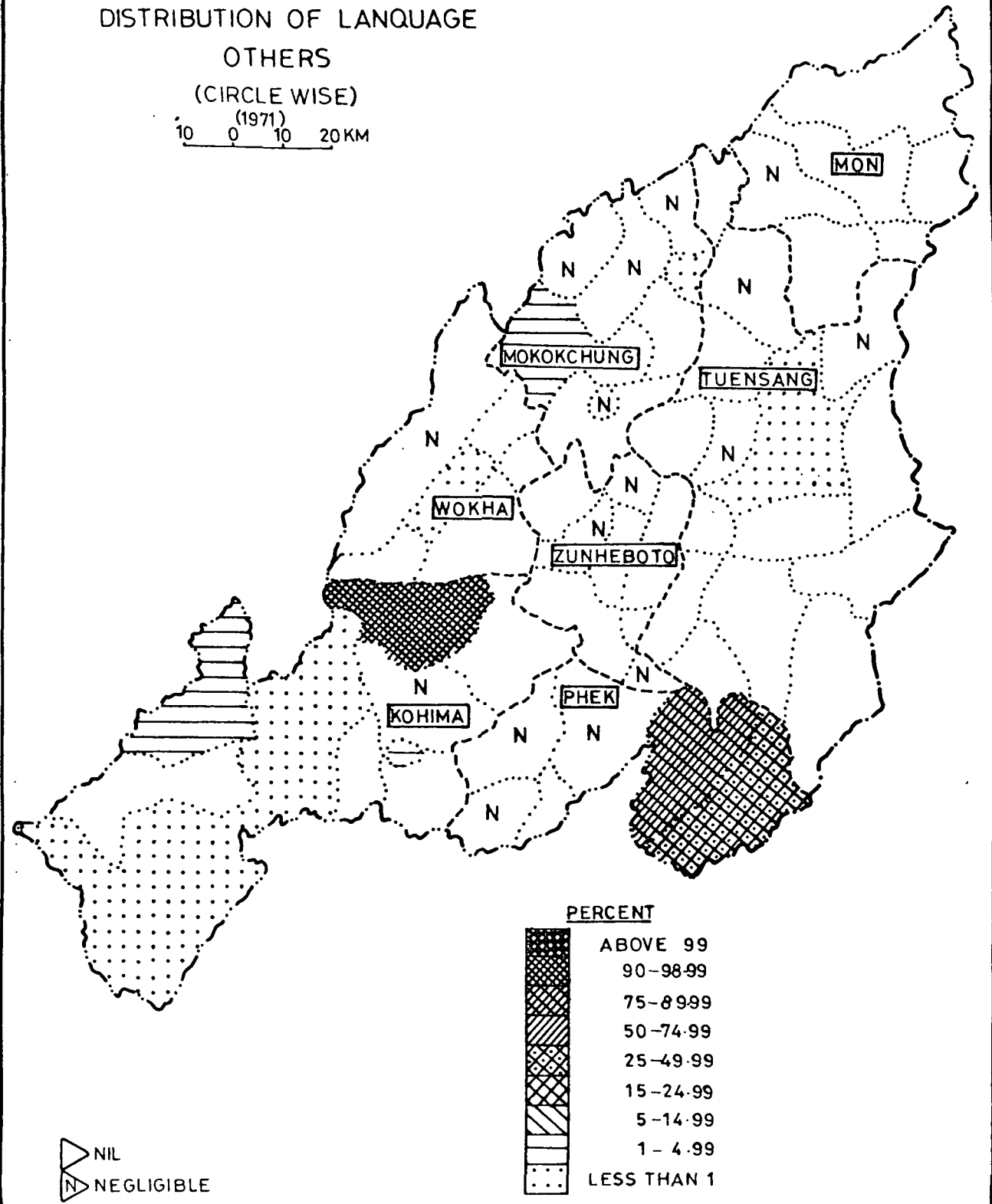


FIG-4-21

orically, the Semas are known to have formed new colonies and villages whenever they found suitable areas to settle down.

Circles which have considerable urban component of population are Dimapur sadar, Kohima, Mokokchung, Tuensang sadar, Phek, Wokha, Zunheboto and Mon. have no single linguistic group dominating. Amongst them, Dimapur sadar is the only circle where the speakers of scheduled language is significantly high. Among the Naga languages, the speakers of Angami language is the highest in this circle, however, the percentage is quite low (7 %) as compared to the speakers of Hindi (19.44 %), Bengali (17.20 %) and Assamese (10.75 %).

#### 4.4 OTHER MOTHER TONGUES

According to census of India 1971, there were speakers of more than 30 languages, which are non-Naga and non-schedule and are being referred to as other Mother-tongue language in this study. Speakers of these languages forms about 6.5 per cent of the total population of the state. Out of these only Nepali speaking population is significantly high, which is above 50 per cent of the total speakers of other Mother-tongues or 3.39 per cent of the total population of the state.

Among the districts Kohima with 12.6 per cent has the largest share of the speakers belonging to other Mother-

TABLE 4.4

Nagaland: District-wise Distribution of other Mother-tongue Languages (in percentage).

Districts	Kohima	Mokokchung	Tuensang	Nagaland
Total No.of Speakers	175,204	168,242	173,003	516,449
Total Speakers of Scheduled Language	22,049	7,092	4,563	33,704
Percentage	12.6	4.21	2.63	6.5
Gorkhali/ Nepali	5.12	2.73	2.3	3.39
Gar0	.37	.01	-	.13
Manipuri	.92	.15	.13	.40
Mao	.29	.02	.01	.11
Kuki	3.34	.03	.02	1.15
Tangkhul	.19	.03	.02	.09
Khasi	.10	.01	.02	.05
Santali	.05	.85	-	.29
Bodo	.76	-	-	.26
Mizo	.19	.07	.06	.11
Mikir	.05	.22	-	.09
Kabui	.64	.-	-	.22
Others	.50	.06	.03	.20

Source- Census of India, 1971, Nagaland, District Census Handbook.

tongue languages, and is quite distantly followed by Mokokchung with 4.21 per cent and Tuensang with 2.63 per cent table 4.4. Kohima, being the capital of the state, attracts people from other than Nagaland, resulting in a higher proportion of speakers belonging to other Mother-tongue languages.

As mentioned, the speakers of Nepali speaking population forms more than 50 per cent of the total other Mother-tongue languages in the state. However, the distribution of this language shows a significant regional variation even at the district level. Their percentage share in Kohima district was 5.12 per cent as compared to Mokokchung 2.73 per cent and Tuensang 2.3 per cent. Concentration of Nepali speaking population in Kohima district was mainly due to the presence of the capital town in the district. The speakers of Kuki and Manipuri have shown better distribution than those of the remaining speakers of other Mother-tongue languages. As evident from the table 4.4, they account for 1.15 per cent and 0.40 per cent of the total population of the state.

The spatial distribution of various other Mother-tongue languages at the circle level show that most of them are confined to only a few circles having urban segment of the population (Figure 14.7). However, Nepalis, Kukis and Manipuris are relatively more widespread and are distributed in more number of the circles table 4.5. Amongst them the speake-

TABLE 4.5

Nagaland: Circle-wise Distribution of other Mother-tongue Languages (1971).

Percentage Category	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)
	Nepali	Garos	Manipurs	Mao	Mizos	Tangkhus	Khasis	Kukis	Kabuls	Bodos	Mikirs	Santalis	Others
Above 20								2					
10 - 20	6							1					
5 - 10	3							1	1		1		
3 - 5	3	1	1					1		1			
2 - 3	1		2										
1 - 2	6		2	1	1				2				2
.5 - 1	7		3	1	3	3	1	2					1
less than .5	23	4	15	6	6	6	5	3	7	8	7	3	22
All	13	57	39	54	52	53	56	52	52	53	54	58	37

Source: Census of India, 1971, Nagaland, District Census Handbook.

Note: The percentage figures are in respect of total speakers.

rs of the Nepali display the most widespread distribution over most parts in the state. They are absent only in 13 out of 62 circles. Their share is as high as 5 to 20 per cent in 9 circles and ranges between 1 to 5 per cent in another 10 circles. The Kukis are found only in ten circles. In 5 such circles the percentage share of these speakers ranges between 3 and over 20 per cent. Unlike Nepalis, the Kukis are heavily concentrated in two circles namely Jaluke and Pedi. Speakers of Manipuri language are distributed in most of the circles, however, the number of speakers in each of the circle is less than 5 per cent. The percentage share of the speakers of Garo, Mao, Tangkhul, Khasi and Mizo are negligible and are confined to only a few of the circles in the state. Their percentage share in those circles is less than 2 per cent.

The Kabui, the Bodo, the Mikir and the Santali speaking population in the state, are not many and found in a few of the circles. The percentage share of these speakers is as low as .5 per cent in 7, 8, 7, and 3 for Kabui, Bodo, Mikir and Santali respectively. However, in 1 circle each, their share ranges between 3 and 10 per cent. Besides, there are several speakers namely Tibetan, Nissi/Dafla, Tripuri, Tulu, Konkani, Arabic, Kharia, Oran, Lahanda, Lepcha, Adi, Bötia, Hmar etc. combined together do not even represent 1 per cent of the total speakers of the state.

The analysis of the distribution of various languages at different levels of spatial aggregation leads to the following generalisations.

1) Most of the speakers of scheduled language with the exception of a few namely - Assamese, Hindi and Bengali, show a concentration only in a few areas having some form of urbanisation. Those circles having urban segment of the population are Dimapur sadar, Kohima, Mokokchung, Tuensang sadar, Nagenimora, Zunheboto, Mon, Wokha and Phek.

2) The Naga language speakers who constitute the bulk of the population, show a tendency to cluster and concentrate in small mutually exclusive territories with clear-cut boundaries of their core areas. Their distribution outside their core areas show a sharp reduction in their percentage.

3) The pattern of distribution of various Naga languages in the state reveals that in the south, southeastern part of the state, where the topography is extremely rugged, climate is extreme, there are speakers of many languages though, the number of these speakers of languages is quite less. On the other hand, western part bordering Assam and the central part of the state where hills are low and slopes are gentle have fewer linguistic groups, however, the number of speakers of these languages is relatively more. They are Angami, Ao, Sema, Lotha, Konyak etc.

4) Among the other Mother-tongue languages only the Nepali speaking people seems to have penetrated a large part of the state with significant presence in many circles. They have been able to settle in rural areas of the state and cut across linguistic diversity of the speakers of Naga languages in their respective territories.

**CHAPTER V**

**BASES AND EXTENT OF LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY**

## BASES AND EXTENT OF LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY

### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

Linguistic diversity in India as a whole is quite significant, however, it is more acute in Nagaland. This linguistic diversity is the outcome of various factors which might have influenced the cultural evolution of the region, as language is one of the most important social component and indicator of culture. There are various factors which influenced and in a way determined the process of cultural/linguistic evolution, diffusion and unification and resulted linguistic diversity. For a better understanding of linguistic diversity it seems necessary to study into two sub-heads; bases of linguistic diversity and extent of linguistic diversity.

### 5.2 BASES OF LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY

Linguistic diversity may be studied by taking into account Physical, Socio-Cultural, Economic and Politico-Administrative bases.

#### 5.21 Physical Bases

The impact of physical setting of the region, as mentioned earlier, on the process of cultural evolution, diffusion and unification has always been significant in the

past. Physical features had influenced the cultural developments both in positive and negative ways. Favourable physical conditions which helped in economic development, generally, provided opportunities for the development and growth of a more dynamic culture, with the possibility of greater cultural interaction within and without the region. However, negative physical conditions restricted the cultural interaction even within a small region as it hardly provide any possibility of economic development and cultural interaction.

The process of cultural diffusion and unification in Nagaland, had been largely hindered due to these unfavourable physical conditions. Rugged terrain, steep slopes, infertile soils etc. restricted the movement of people and remained cut off from the main stream of social interaction. This physical isolation posed by the negative physical conditions gave rise to the evolution of a variety of languages even within a small spatial extent.

#### 5.22 Socio-Cultural Bases

The evolution of culture is influenced by the physical setting of the region in many ways. In the areas where economic development is possible due to favourable physical setting, have a better chance of larger social

interaction and cultural diffusion. In the areas where soil is fertile and agriculture provide basis of economic development, have generally speaking gave rise to more socio-cultural interaction. Possibility of economic development and economic prosperity usually give rise to closer socio-cultural ties among various communities within as well as outside the region. Social stability and cultural synthesis further strengthen the diverse social groups by bringing them into close contact and subsequently emerge as a social group under a unified culture and language.

Conversely, Nagaland lies in the areas of isolation . Most of the areas are inaccessible and this inaccessibility gave rise to socio-physical isolation of these areas. Though, some of the urban areas such as Kohima, Dimapur and Mokokchung are developing through the input of modern technology from outside, yet the pace of development is rather slow, and as such, the whole region can still be regarded as the areas of isolation. As mentioned earlier due to physical isolation communities which have occupied these areas have their own distinct cultures, languages which are numerically insignificant. The resultant long historical isolation, lack of interaction, social instability, insecurity and suspicion among the various Naga tribes due to prevalence of head-hunting gave rise to linguistic diversity in Nagaland.

### 5.23 Economic Bases

The economic base of a region do play a significant role in the process of its cultural development. It is not difficult to observe the emergence of distinct cultures in the regions with distinctly different economic base. For instance, areas of attraction(perennial nuclear regions) which are suitable for economic development due to favourable physical conditions. In these areas it was possible for people to produce more than their own requirement. This enabled them to produce some surplus commodities which give rise to economic interaction within and without the region. This economic interaction obviously resulted in greater mobility and migration to these regions. On the other hand, the areas of isolation, with negative physical conditions remained economically backward with their subsistant economy. These regions remained socio-culturally isolated which resulted in linguistic diversity (based on distinct evolution of languages).

In case of Nagaland, with its subsistance economy, every village was a self-contained unit, having its own cultivable lands, forest and water sources. Whatever commodities, all the Naga groups were in need of were not locally available. For instance, salt and agricultural implements were used to get from the people of Assam by bartering with

their produce of ginger, yam, chilli, cotton, mustard seeds etc. Thus, it was not necessary for different Naga groups to have economic interaction with nearby villages.

#### 5.24 Political-Administrative Bases

Political factors play an important role in determining the interaction pattern between peoples and regions. For instance, in the absence of political unity central forces become weak and hampers the process of cultural diffusion and unification. The credit for socio-economic interaction between intra-regions and inter-regions is also an attribute of political circumstances. If political circumstances do not warrant it trade may not exist even among surplus regions. Thus, political stability and cordiality in political relations are a pre-requisite for the development of cultural diffusion and language unification.

It has been mentioned earlier that all Naga villages recognised themselves as independent and kept isolation from one another due to the prevalence of head-hunting which was accepted as social and prestigious practise. Thus, it was made necessary for every Naga village to have its own defence strategy against the intruders.

The diverse Naga tribes have never been united under one head. Probably, the village head had no inclination

towards dictatorial attitude towards the people. Each major and minor Naga tribe has its own head, who commands great respect from its people. Since the people were not under any paramount power, there was no law enforcing authority for the entire tribes. They were living under virtually village states and were engaged in inter-tribal and inter-village warfare. As a result, social environment was rather characterised by tension, fear, uncertainty, hostility and rivalry. In the midst of such prevailing situation, each village with full sovereignty tried to be self-sustaining itself, that the more isolation it remained the better it was.

Thus, from the preceding discussion it is found that, linguistic diversity in Nagaland had emerged mainly due to the evolution of small aboriginal languages within the socio-physical isolated pockets. These languages though, belong to Assam-Burmese sub-family of the Sino-Tibetan linguistic family have acquired languages significantly different from one another, through isolation, in due course of time. This could be attributed to Physical constraints, lack of social interaction, low level of economic opportunities available and to some extent political reason, when Nagaland was kept in total isolation to save guard the Nagas from the exploitation by the people coming from outside. The resultant lack of interaction and social assimilation gave rise to linguistic diversity in Nagaland.

### 5.3 EXTENT OF LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY

Linguistic diversity in Nagaland is so acute that, apart from twenty indigeneous Naga languages and many more dialects, there are more than 30 other languages belonging to Sino-Tibetan linguistic family as well as languages specified in the VIIIth schedule. However, excepting the Naga language groups and a few other, the rest of the linguistic groups are numerically insignificant.

Speaker of 18 languages have more than 1 per cent speakers, however, none of these linguistic group has more than 15 per cent speakers. The speaker of these 18 languages constitute 96.54 per cent of the total population of the state table 5.1. Apart from 14 Naga languages belonging to Naga group of languages. But these languages have been spoken by less than 1 per cent speakers. They are Chokri, Sangtam, Pochuri, Khirr, Tikhir, Mawkara, Zemei, Leingmai and Rongmai.

The index of linguistic diversity has been computed with the help of a measure proposed by Joseph, H.Greenburg. The formula is as follows:

$$D = 1 - \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n x_i^2}{n}$$

Where

D = the diversity index.

TABLE 5.1

Sl. No.	Name of language	Percentage to total speakers
	(1)	(2)
1.	Ao	14.25
2.	Konyak	14.00
3.	Angami	13.21
4.	Sema	12.48
5.	Lotha	7.11
6.	Sangtam	3.87
7.	Yimchunger	3.79
8.	Phom	3.48
9.	Nepali	3.39
10.	Hindi	3.37
11.	Chang	3.06
12.	Naga	3.01
13.	Kheinmungan	2.79
14.	Others	2.45
15.	Kheza	2.20
16.	Bengali	1.66
17.	Assamese	1.27
18.	Kuki	1.15
Total		96.54

Source- Census of India, 1971, Nagaland.

$X_i$  = the proportion of total population represented by those having a given language as mother tongue.

The measure ranges from a value of 0 (complete homogeneity) to 1 (infinite diversity).

TABLE 5.2

Nagaland : District-wise linguistic Diversity.

Sl. No.	Diversity index	No. of District	Percentage to total No. of District
(1)	(2)	(3)	
1.	Below .1	-	-
2.	.1 - .2	3	42.85
3.	.2 - .4	1	14.3
4.	.4 - .6	1	=
5.	.6 - .8	1	=
6.	Above .8	1	=

Source- Census of India, 1971, Nagaland.

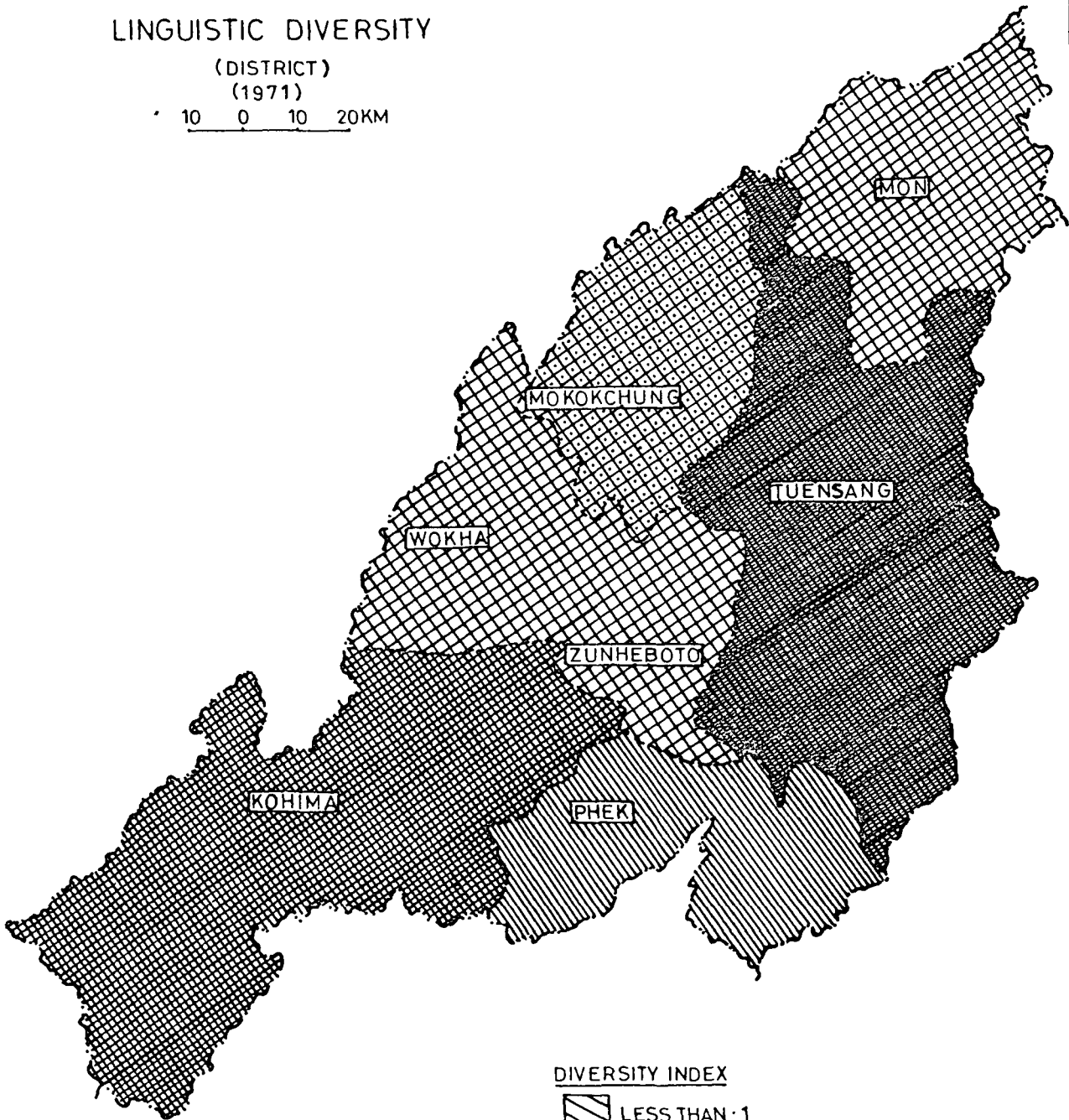
Note: Diversity index of Nagaland(.9).

The diversity index is as low as below .2 in three districts namely Zunheboto, Mon and Wokha table 5.2. The

J.H. Greenburg, (1956), "The Measurement of Linguistic Diversity" Language, Vol.33, PP. 109-115.

NAGALAND  
LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY  
(DISTRICT)  
(1971)

10 0 10 20KM



DIVERSITY INDEX

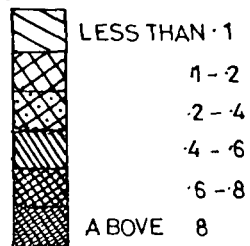


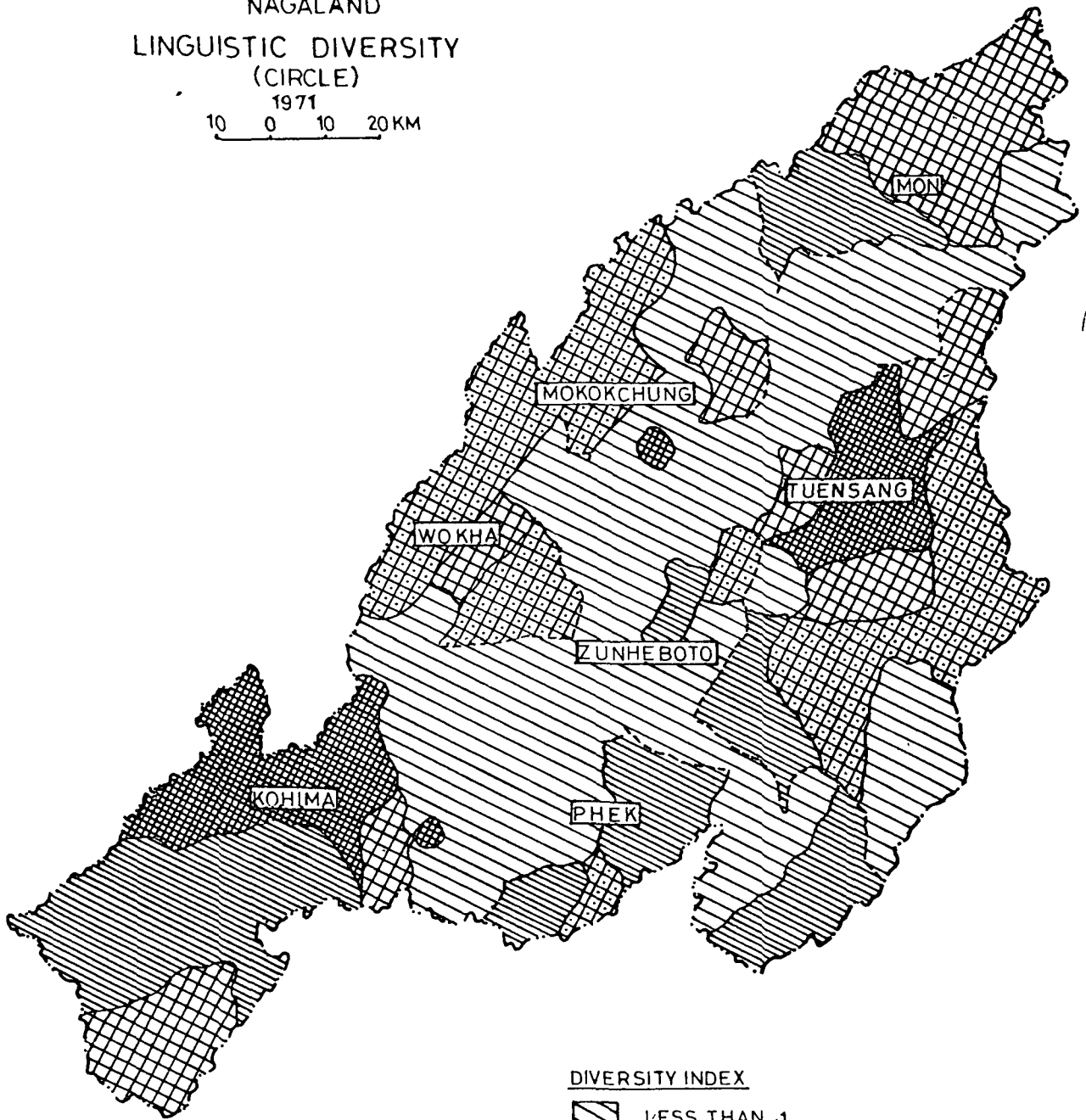
FIG-5.1

reason for low diversity in these districts could be due to the presence of only one major tribe in each of the district. There is atleast one district each in each of the diversity index that ranges from .2 to .4, .4 to .6 and .6 to .8. The name of these districts are Mokokchung, Phek and Kohima(Fig51). Speakers of only one language in these districts are 90 per cent, 60 per cent and 40 per cent respectively. Tuensang is the only district which shows its diversity index above .8, however, it is lower than the state average index. In this district the speakers of one language are less than 25 per cent. None of the above districts diversity index is higher than the state average diversity index which is .9. The diversity reduces from state to district level and further to circle level. At the circle level, the concentration of a single linguistic group became more significant.

As evident from the table 5.3, there are 29 circles having diversity index as low as .1, 15 of these lies in Mokokchung district, 8 in Tuensang district and the remaining 6 are in Kohima district (Fig52). Their percentage share account for 46.8 per cent of the total number of circles. In these circles speakers of a single language are more than 99 per cent of the total speakers in the circle. There are two circles namely Suruhoto and Hoshipu having (0) diversity index, indicating complete homogeneity.

NAGALAND  
LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY  
(CIRCLE)

1971  
10 0 10 20 KM



DIVERSITY INDEX

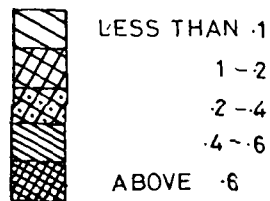


FIG-5.2

TABLE 5.3

Nagaland : Circle-wise Extent of Linguistic Diversity.

Sl. No.	Diversity index	No. of Circle	Percentage to total No. of Circle
	(1)	(2)	(3)
1.	Below .1	29	46.8
2.	.1 - .2	9	14.5
3.	.2 - .4	9	14.5
4.	.4 - .6	10	16.1
5.	Above .6	5	8.21

Source- Census of India, 1971, Nagaland.

There are as many as 9 circles in the diversity index that ranges between .1 and .2. Out of these 5 circles are in Tuensang district, 2 each in Kohima and Mokokchung districts. They account for 14.5 per cent of the total number of circles. Another 9 circles in the diversity index ranging between .2 and .4, 5 of these lies in Mokokchung district, 3 circles in Tuensang district, while there is only one circle in Kohima district.

As many as 10 circles are included in the diversity index ranging from .4 to .6 constituting 16.1 per cent of the

total number of circles. Of these, 5 circles are in Kohima district, 3 in Tuensang and 1 in Mokokchung. In the diversity index above .6 include Kohima (.75), Tuensang sadar (.75), Pherima (.74), Mokokchung (.70) and Dimapur sadar (.70). However, none of these circle has shown its diversity index higher than the state average index of .90.

It has been mentioned earlier that the state boundary of Nagaland has been demarcated on the basis of racial affinity and not based on the linguistic homogeneity as within this small area there are speakers of numerous languages. Nagas may be classified as Tibeto-Burman group of Mongoloid people, however, they are not a composite people as they differ widely among themselves in respect of physical features, language, socio-cultural traits etc. As such linguistic diversity is obviously very high at the state, however, the diversity became insignificant at the circle level. At this level the speakers of only one language became conspicuous.

On the basis of the above generalisations the following conclusions emerge.

1) While discussing the bases of linguistic diversity, it has been found that factors like physical, socio-cultural, political institution and economic have influenced and determined the process of cultural/linguistic, diffusion and unification.

2) On the basis of superimposition of the physical, socio-cultural, economic and politico-administration of the region, it has been found that the physical region directly or indirectly influenced the formation of cultural regions, economic regions and finally in the emergency of politico-administrative divisions.

3) Economic backwardness fostered by difficult terrain and environmental condition did not provide scope for development and failed to attract people from both within and outside. They lived in selfsufficient village economy. Since trade and exchange between tribes were extremely limited, inter-tribal contacts were also rare. The selfsufficient village economy was characterised by a strong community feeling and the chiefs or rulers of a particular community had a strong centralised administration. Inter-tribal warfares were very common. Thus, both physical and social isolation between the tribes provided excellent ground for the germination and fostering of multiple tongues within a small area.

4) Lack of interaction gave rise to the evolution of distinct cultures, languages and dialects. These factors are largely responsible for the lack of a common Naga language to develop and the absence of bilingualism or multi-lingualism in the state. The latter is a common feature in the plains where interaction between two linguistic groups inevitably result in bilingualism or pigeoning in the bordering areas.

4) Linguistic diversity is obviously very high at the state, however, the diversity became insignificant at the circle level. At this level the speakers of only one language became conspicuous. For instance, out of 62 circles in 36 the speaker of a single language are more than 90 per cent.

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CHAPTER VI

PROBLEMS OF LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY

## PROBLEMS OF LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY

Socio-cultural diversity in Nagaland, which is so significant has been observed. In any society with so much of cultural variation linguistic diversity do pose some serious problems, that calls for a correct solution in the interest of all the sections of the people. Without a language which can be understood by all members of the society, it seems very difficult to ensure the very existence of social production.

Language acts as not only a means of communication, but it also reflects the history of culture and the character of the people. Language is the collective historical product of the whole people embodying their collective experience gathered through many generations. Therefore, the role of language as a media of communication is not in serving one class but in serving all members of the society. However, it can also become a dividing factor in the event of the failure to pursue a correct solution to the problem. Because a multitude of languages exist side by side. They are at different stages of development, and are fast progressing. Yet, some are only spoken languages without any written literature or even a script of their own.

It has already been discussed that there are several Naga languages and traditionally no two groups understand the

other through their own languages. Even dialect variations among the Naga languages are of immense degree. Most of the Naga languages have a number of dialects each. There are so many languages, dialects and sub-dialects among the speakers of Naga languages that it is almost saying that every village has a dialect of its own. For instance, there are 29 dialects among the Konyaks, Ao more than 3 dialects and Angami about 3 dialects.

However, within a particular linguistic group normal communication is never affected by dialectal differences. For instance, when the Phoms of different villages meet, each speaks in his own dialect and they understand each other. Similarly, a Mongsen speaker of an Ao Naga can very well understand his counterpart from the Chongli village, just as an Angami of Khonoma village understands the Kohima villagers dialect. In other words, dialectal differences do not create much communication problem within the same linguistic group.

The bases of linguistic diversity has been discussed. Therefore, it is not difficult to understand that due to insignificant social and economic interaction, various languages developed in isolation in Nagaland. On the other hand, development of these various languages and dialects must have posed further problems of social interaction as it became difficult for people, living in isolation to follow the language of other group. It became like a vicious circle.

The coming of the British marked the breaking down of social isolation through the development of transport and communication. Towns which contain the urban segment of the population including different classes and professions gave rise to more social interaction. When both internal and external trade expanded substantially the needs of the new condition of life and of a developing culture that require unity and a full mutual understanding in the new society can no longer be provided by the earlier linguistic practises with their fragmented local dialects.

Rapid social intercourse necessiated by the need of a medium of intercourse among the various speakers of Naga languages. A media is indeed, needed during the consolidation and establishment of the state, and this can only be a common language. However, there is not a single language that can be understood by all the Nagas, it become a language problem.

However, the most pertinent language problem is the tendency in favour of linguistic exclusiveness or even seperatism that exist among some of the Naga minority groups. For instance, Chokris, who speaks Chokri dialect of the eastern Angami. Since majority of that area is being formed by Angami speaking population, the Angami language had been in used as a medium of intercourse. Not only that, it was

even taught in the schools. The Chokris took language a prestige issue and developed a tendency in favour of separatism. Because assimilation involves not only in the loss of language but a total loss of cultural identity of the group that is being assimilated and gradually its absorption into the dominant group. This generates fear in the mind of the linguistic minorities. Subsequently, motivated by the idea the Chokris together with the Khezas and the Sangtams declared themselves as a separate group and call themselves as Chakesang since 1946.

However, the claim of the minor linguistic groups as a separate status from the Angamis was not the solution to the language problem. Instead, it created a new language communication problem among the three minor tribes. Formerly, these three could communicate in Angami but when the Chokri dialect was introduced communications became a problem. Since the Sangtams and the Khezas cannot understand the Chokris dialect, the language problem continued to exist. Therefore, the demand for the right of secession was raised by the Sangtams to recognise as a separate group from the Chakesang. Subsequently, in 1990, they have been given the right to recognised themselves as a separate group.

From the foregoing discussion it is obvious, that the problem created one after the other and it seems there

is no ending and solution to the problems. Forming one group by combining two or more groups with the objective of minimizing the number of languages does not mean solution to it, instead, it adds another problem to the problem already in existence.

From their complex language and diverse cultural heritage, it seems that the Nagas do not originate from the same place. They neither have written literature nor even script of their own. They speak languages and dialects almost double the number of the tribes, which are undeveloped and unintelligible to each other. And this gives the Nagamese a chance to establish itself as the lingua-franca among the various Naga tribes. The inter-tribal communication problem is being solved to some extent with the help of Nagamese and English.

Nagamese a broken Assamese is by far the most effective lingua-franca of the state, specially among the less educated people. Although, this language is beleived to have been in used from the earliest time of Ahom-Naga contact in the 13th century, it had gained much headway from the 60's of this century. The Nagas had to learn Nagamese not only because it was taught in the schools of the then Naga Hills district, but all the trade relations of the Nagas were with the adjoining Assam markets. This language became so popular that it is even use in the Assembly as well as news bulletin

and talks are broadcast from the Kohima station of All India Radio.

English is the Official language of the state since 1964. It also served as a link language among the educated Nagas and the others alike. The students learn English alphabet from the inception of schooling because the tribal language are not only written in English script but it is also the medium of instruction. Hindi is taught in the schools and is gradually gaining its strength.

Besides Nagamese and English, among the tribal languages, Ao(chongli) and Angami are the most widely spoken in the state. The former is widely spread out in the eastern part while the later in the southwestern part of the state. Many people can speak Ao with ease. And this could be attributed through the influence of the Ao pastors and teachers on the people of Konyak, Chang, Kheinmungan and Phom. In the earlier stage of establishment most of the schools were named by the Aos, who received education first. Moreover, until 1960's there were few schools and hence, people from different parts of Nagaland had to come to Mokokchung and Impur (both in Ao area) for education. For all these reasons Ao language is most widely spoken in the state.

An analysis of the foregoing discussion revealed

that the main problem is begoted by linguistic exclusiveness generated from the minority groups, who by and large do not belong to any of the larger tribes. They have their own language, traditions and politico-economic setup. There is very little common among the tribes and sub-tribes except their profound distrust and antipathy against the people coming from outside their territory. Fear of assimilation by the dominant groups generates fear in the mind of the minorities and develop defence mechanism to defend their rights and protect their identities . Thus, it is a tremendous challenge to our wisdom and sagacity.

The claims of the different languages have to be satisfied and adjusted accordingly with the need of the national cohension. Here the basic question is what sort of attitude to be adopted towards different languages? Whether to allow full flowering of all languages or a few pre-dominant among them at the cost of the others. Thus, it calls for a correct solution among these different conflicting and contradictory attitudes.

Although, inter-tribal communication gap is apparent, to some extent this problem is being solved with the introduction of Nagamese and English. In as such, the Nagas, today, do not find much difficulty in communicating their day to day needs withen themselves as well as with these peo-

ple coming from outside as were faced during the consolidation period.

English has been adopted as the state language and as a result of this a wall has been raised between a few educated people who know English and the masses who do not know. Thus, the vast majority of the Nagas were denied of their effective participation in legislation and administration. Nagamese is by far the most effective media of communication which is more pervasive and popular with the common people. And it also alliviates the problem associated with the language to certain extent.

Although, English and Naganese languages helped in many ways, as a bond of unity among the different Naga communities, yet, the adverse impact on the cultural life of the Nagas is undeniable. For instance, Nagas as a whole do feel the non-existence of a common language of their own, yet they have not been able to have it because English and Nagamese have been established firmly. Moreover, low level of culture among the literate Nagas and deprivation of the right of effective participation in every affair are certainly undeniable.

On the basis of the above analysis the following conclusions emerge :

- 1) No Naga group understand the other, hence, there

is no Naga language that can be a lingua-franca in Nagaland. Though, inter-tribal communication gap is apparent, however, within a particular linguistic group normal communication is never affected by dialectal differences.

2) Nagamese is the most widely used media language through which the Nagas communicate themselves. English is the second media language, however, it is confined to the few educated people.

3) It has been found that the most pertinent problem in the state is, the tendency in favour of linguistic exclusiveness of the minority groups.

**CHAPTER VII**

**SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS**

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

In the present study, an attempt has been made to examine the pattern of distribution of various languages and the bases and extent of linguistic diversity in the state. The historical and environmental basis of this diversity and its geographic patterning have been discussed, with a view to examining its implication in the context of changing socio-economic profile of this state. The above analysis leads to the following generalisations.

1) Physiographically, Nagaland is an extension of the young Himalayan mountain system. Its terrain is characterised by dissected ridges, spurs, deep gorges and steep slopes. There are only few stretches of plains in the entire state of Nagaland. Hills in the west, bordering Assam are low as compared to the mountain ranges of the east, facing Burmese ranges. Generally, hill ranges are running in the north-south direction and in between these ranges are narrow river valleys. Naga range passes through the centre of Nagaland, while Patkai range forms watershed between India and Burma.

2) Though the state is endowed with a good number of rivers, few are however, navigable. The climate of the state is temperate excepting the low lying adjacent to the Brahmaputra valley, where the climate is relatively warmer.

Rainfall is sufficient.

3) In the small state of Nagaland, various types of soils are found. However, these soils are generally thin, infertile excepting in the valleys and the foot hills. The state is rich in the growth of natural vegetation and generally sub-tropical evergreen forest are grown abundantly.

4) All the above factors gave rise to the economic backwardness and socio-physical isolation. In the absence of fertile soil, agricultural development was never possible, with the primitive technology, Due to rugged topography and non-navigability of the streams, transport and communication has always been very difficult and posed serious problem of social and physical isolation.

5) There are various legends about the origin of different Naga clans. These legends indicates that most of these clans have different hypothesis about their origin and always considered themselves different from other clans. Similarly, many of their socio-cultural traits differs from one another.

6) On the basis of affinity the Nagas have many close parallels with the people of the hilly tracts of Indonesia, Borneo, Sumatra, Formosa and Philippines. These similarity in affinity between the Nagas and the above mentioned communities indicates that the Nagas might have migrated from South East Asia.

7) The pattern of settlement of Naga villages reveals that due to strategic and security reasons almost all the villages are located at the top of the hill ranges and not near the streams and valley bottoms.

8) In Naga society, patrilineal descent is followed where descent is from the male side. An analysis of the institution of marriage and position of woman reveal that marriage cannot take place between the persons of the same clan. Women are regarded highly and have freedom to enjoy in all other affairs except in the village administration.

9) The impact of christianity gave rise to various cultural changes in the society. The religious composition of the state reveal that 80.21 per cent of the total population is christian. Similarly, the concentration of tribal population is very high (83.99 %). Out of the total tribal population the percentage of Naga tribal groups is 96.95 per cent.

10) Most of the speakers of Scheduled language with the exception of a few namely - Assamese, Hindi and Bengali, show a concentration only in a few areas having some form of urbanisation. Those circles having urban segment of the population are Dimapur sadar, Kohima, Mokokchung, Tuensang sadar, Nagenimora, Zunheboto, Mon, Wokha and Phek.



11) The percentage of Sino-Tibetan languages in Nagaland is over 90 per cent and this is because all the Naga languages belong to Naga group of languages of Tibeto-Burman branch of the Sino-Tibetan linguistic family. The multiplicity of language of the Nagas is due to difference of time and place of their migration and even if they were quite similar, they became different in due course of time.

12) The Naga language speakers who constitute the bulk of the population, show a tendency to cluster and concentrate in small mutually exclusive territories with clear-cut boundaries of their core areas. Their distribution outside their core areas show a sharp reduction in their percentage.

13) The pattern of distribution of various Naga languages in the state reveals that in the south, southeastern part of the state, where the topography is extremely rugged, climate is extreme, there are speakers of many languages though, the number of these speakers of languages is quite less. On the other hand, western part bordering Assam and central part of the state where hills are low and slopes are gentle have fewer linguistic groups, however, the number of speakers of these languages is relatively more. They are Angami, Sema, Ao, Lotha, Konyak etc.

14) Among the other Mother-tongue languages only the Nepali speaking people seems to have penetrated a large part of the state with significant presence in many circles.

They have been able to settle in rural areas of the state and cut across linguistic diversity of the speakers of Naga languages in their respective territories.

15) While discussing the bases of linguistic diversity, it has been found that factors like physical, socio-cultural, political institution and economic have influenced and determined the process of cultural/linguistic, diffusion and unification.

16) On the basis of superimposition of the physical, socio-cultural, economic and politico-administration of the region, it has been found that the physical region directly or indirectly influenced the formation of cultural regions, economic regions and finally in the emergency of politico-administrative divisions.

17) Economic backwardness fostered by difficult terrain and environmental condition did not provide scope for development and failed to attract people from both within and outside. They lived in self-sufficient village economy. Since trade and exchange between tribes were extremely limited, inter-tribal contacts were also rare. The self-sufficient village economy was characterised by a strong community feeling and the chiefs or rulers of a particular community had a strong centralised administration. Inter-tribal warfares

were very common. Thus, both physical and social isolation between the tribes provided excellent ground for the germination and fostering of multiple tongues within a small area.

18) Lack of interaction gave rise to the evolution of distinct cultures, languages and dialects. These factors are largely responsible for the lack of a common Naga language to develop and the absence of bilingualism or multilingualism in the state. The latter is a common feature in the plains where interaction between two linguistic groups inevitably result in bilingualism or pigeonizing in the bordering areas.

19) Linguistic diversity is obviously very high at the state, however, the diversity became insignificant at the circle level. At this level the speakers of only one language became conspicuous. For instance, out of 62 circles in 36 the speakers of a single language are more than 90 per cent.

20) No Naga group understand the other, hence, there is no Naga language that can be a lingua-franca in Nagaland. Though, inter-tribal communication gap is apparent, however, within a particular linguistic group normal communication is never affected by dialectal differences.

21) Nagamese is the most widely used media language through which the Nagas communicate themselves. English is the

second media language, however, it is confined to the few educated people. It has been observed that the most pertinent problem in the state, is the tendency in favour of linguistic exclusiveness of the minority groups.

The physical setting of the region not only determined the level of economic development but have influenced cultural evolution and linguistic diversity in the region. Economic backwardness fostered by difficult terrain and environmental condition did not provide scope for development and failed to attract people from both within and outside.

They lived in self-sufficient village economy. Since trade and exchange between tribes were extremely limited, inter-tribal contacts were also rare. The self-sufficient village economy was characterised by a strong community feeling and the chiefs of a particular community had a centralised administration. Inter-tribal and inter-village warfares were very common. As a result, the social environment was characterised by tension, suspicion and insecurity.

Lack of interaction and social assimilation gave rise to the evolution of distinct socio-cultural traits, languages and dialects. These factors are largely responsible for the lack of a common Naga language to develop and the absence of bilingualism or multilingualism in the state.

Thus, both physical and social isolation between the tribes provided excellent ground for the germination and fostering of multiple tongues within a small area.

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