

**SOCIO-POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS OF THE ANGAMI
NAGAS: A STUDY OF CONTINUITY AND CHANGE.**

ABSTRACT

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Introduction

Socio-political institutions existed in all societies representing as the force of authority and legitimacy. These institutions largely remain a conservative force to the aspirations of the people. Nevertheless, they did play a unifying role in the society by providing leadership and ensuring group solidarity. The study of socio-political institutions have attracted the attention of policy makers, researchers and social scientists due to increasing interests in and support for decentralization. In different parts of Northeast India, there has been unexpected return to prominence due to the re-invention and resurgence of traditional socio-political institutions. Additionally, many communities in Northeast India have been demanding for constitutional recognition of their traditional institutions.

Predominantly settled in Kohima district, the Angami tribe is one of the major tribes of Nagaland constituting approximately 7.2 percent of the total population of the state according to 2001 census. The Angamis had well established socio-political institutions to run the affairs of their society. Indeed, the socio-political institutions of the Angamis often linked to religious, political, judicial and economic functions were the principal component of their society. In less than a century, the Angami society has changed from head-hunting to soul saving, from barter system to monetized economy and from traditional tribal political ethos to representative democracy. Nevertheless, their traditional socio-political institutions continue to operate along with modern democratic institutions even after more than forty years of Nagaland's statehood. The existence of different authorities competing for control over resources and power

resulting into confusion and confrontation at different levels is a reflection of the crisis of governance. While some sees the traditional socio-political institutions as backward instruments of social oppression, exclusion, domination and a historic burden on the road to modernity, others see them as representing the indigenous system of governance with local legitimacy. Therefore, it is important to examine not only the changes that have taken place but also to analyse what has not changed in the socio-political institutions of the Angamis of Nagaland. The present study examines the working, continuity and change of the traditional socio-political institutions Angami Nagas.

Survey of literature

The initial studies of the Angamis were undertaken mainly by the British administrators, Surveyors, Defence Personnel, Christian missionaries and travelers based on their personal visit to the area, their notes on specific points, dairy and acquaintance with the people. However, some scholarly studies were carried out before and after India's independence. J. H. Hutton's *The Angami Nagas* (1969) Reprint, considered by many as the most comprehensive work on the Angamis mainly dealt with the Western Angami, neglecting other three groups of the Angamis. In addition, his description of Angami administration as a pure form of democracy was far from truth as the traditional Angami administration excluded women from meetings and other forms of political participation. *The Angami Nagas and the British: 1832-1947* (1999) by Atola Changkiri, gives an account of the geographical, ethnological and historical background of the Angami Nagas and their relations with the British. *The Angami Nagas* by Renu Suri (2006) is perhaps the first in-depth study on the Angami Nagas from the physical anthropological point of view. However, the book deals with more on the ethnic position of the Angamis by comparing their physical traits with those of the other Naga tribes of

Nagaland and other major tribes of Northeast India namely, Khasis, Mishings, Kacharis, Adi Mishings, and others.

Thus, most of the existing works on Angamis have been based on British official sources and writings of ethnographers. Whatever has been written on the socio-political institutions of the Angamis have been descriptive. The existing works have not examined the changes brought about by the British rule with the emergence of Christianity, education, Angami elites, Village Council, Village Development Boards and the values of democratic politics on socio-political institutions of the Angamis of Nagaland. A study of this kind is expected to provide us with a clearer picture of the nature, continuity and change of the Angami traditional socio-political institutions.

Objectives

The objectives are;

- 1) To study the working of the socio-political institutions of the Angamis
- 2) To examine the changes brought about by Colonial rule, Village Council and Village Development Boards on socio-political institutions of the Angamis.
- 3) To analyse and examine the changes brought about by socio-economic factors on socio-political institutions of the Angamis
- 4) To study the relationship between the values of democratic politics and the socio-political institutions.

Universe

The Angamis are divided into four groups namely Western Angami region, Northern Angami region, Southern Angami region and Chakhro Angami region. Since it is impractical to take up for study all the villages of the four groups, one of the biggest

villages from each of the four Angami regions had been chosen as the universe of the study. Thus, four villages namely Jotsoma from Western Angami region, Chiechama from Northern Angami region, Viswema from Southern Angami region and Medziphema from Chakhro Angami region had been selected to see the working, continuity and change of the socio-political institutions of the Angami Nagas. Jotsoma village, one of the biggest village in the Western Angami region, 8 kms away from Kohima has 794 households. Chiechama village consists of 882 households, 29 kms away from the state capital of Nagaland. Viswema village, which is one of the biggest villages in the Southern area of Kohima district, consists of 1150 households. The distance from the capital to Viswema village is about 22 kms. Medziphema village with 270 households situated under Chakhroma area of the Angamis is 44 kms away from the state capital. All the population figures are according to 2001 census of Nagaland.

Data and Methodology

This research work has made use of primary and secondary sources. The primary data includes data generated through interview, government documents and publications, relevant records of Village Councils and Churches, Youth and Women organizations. Secondary sources has been drawn from dissertations, theses, seminar papers, relevant articles appearing in newspapers, journals, memoirs, books and commentaries on the socio-political institutions of the Angamis.

An attempt was made to identify and examine the working of Angami traditional socio-political institutions and values associated with them through an analysis of information available in the existing literatures. To supplement this, unstructured interviews were conducted with 40 persons consisting of *Krina* (non-Christians).

Phichü-u, (Head Priest) *Kemevo* (Religious Priest), *Tsiakrü-u* (First Sower), *Phichü kehou* (Informal Council of Elders), *Themumia* (Shaman) and Women. Out of the 40 persons identified for each village, 10 persons, which includes 3 women for each village had been selected based on the maximum preferences provided by the villagers. The main reason for including women was to get their views on specific issues concerning women's position in the traditional Angami society. Despite disparity in the number of households in the selected villages, uniform number of interviewees was maintained, as the main objective for conducting unstructured interviews was to obtain information relating to the working of the traditional Angami socio-political institutions and values associated with them.

An attempt was also made to find out the continuity and change of the Angami socio-political institutions and persistence or otherwise of the values associated with these institutions from the existing literatures. In order to verify information collected from the secondary sources, the relevant records of Village Councils, Churches, Youth and Women organisations of the four selected villages and relevant Government documents and publications were examined. This was further supplemented by information elicited from the available leaders of Village Councils, Churches, Youth, Students and Women organizations of the selected villages through indepth interviews. No predetermined questions have been prepared but an interview guide was prepared where issues concerning continuity and change, gender, authority of age, group solidarity and persistence or otherwise of the traditional values etc. were asked. The two value structures of democratic politics and the Angami socio-political institutions are then compared to see their compatibility or variance.

Chapterisation

The study is divided into six chapters.

Chapter: I

Introduction

Chapter: II

Socio-political institutions of the Angami Nagas

Chapter: III

Changes brought about by Colonial rule, Village Council and Village Development Boards on socio-political institutions of the Angami Nagas.

Chapter: IV

Changes brought about by socio-economic factors on socio-political institutions of the Angami Nagas.

Chapter: V

Values of democratic politics and socio-political institutions of the Angami Nagas.

Chapter: VI

Conclusion

The **First Chapter** deals with a brief account of the Angamis of Nagaland, review of literature, objectives, methodology and chapterisation. The major concepts such as continuity and change, democratic politics, traditional institutions or institutions that have often been used in the present study have been defined in this chapter.

The term Angamis, for the purpose of our study would mean the Angamis who are at present divided into four groups namely Chakhroma, Northern, Southern and Western Angami. As modern society is a society oriented towards change and having to deal with continuous change, change in the present study means the changes brought about by Colonial rule, Village Councils, Village Development Boards, Christianity, education, changing economic activities, emergence of Angami elites and the values of democratic politics on socio-political institutions of the Angamis. Similarly, continuity is inherent in a tribal society involving beliefs and values. Therefore, continuity for the purpose of our study would mean the socio-political institutions of the Angamis that have survived to the present in spite of the introduction of Colonial rule, Village Councils, Christianity, education, changing economic activities, emergence of Angami elites and the values of democratic politics.

The meanings and uses of tradition as a passive analytic construct and as an active indigenous force have been examined. Scholars associated with tradition as a passive analytic construct saw tradition as a force in preventing change, growth, creativity, irrational, emotional response and the agent of promoting internal solidarity. The conservative Burkean perception of society views tradition as the accumulated wisdom of the past, and Andrew Heywood maintains that tradition stands for absence of change. The underlying fears in all these tendencies is the assumption that traditions or traditional institutions are static, frozen in time, and cannot be modified. On the other hand, Malinowski(1922), Tardits (1958), Dube (1958), Savage (1964), Gulliver (1969), Brode (1970), Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (1995), among others have challenged tradition as a passive and argued that tradition can be both dynamic as well as static. To them, the adherents of traditions often questioned and modified it over time

to make it dynamic. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger argued that traditions could be constructed and that what sometimes has been considered being very ancient traditions are in fact of quite recent origin. Thus, traditions or traditional institutions need not be very old and exist from time immemorial but handed down from father to son and require only two generations to become traditions. What is implicit within these directions is the assumption that tradition has a storage function with respect to selected traits only and not to a plethora of antique behaviors.

Institutions are structures and mechanisms of social order and enforcing of rules governing cooperative human behavior. Mac Iver and Page used the term 'Institution' as an established form or conditions of procedure characteristic of group activity. According to them, whenever associations are created in the society, certain rules and procedures also must be created for the regulation of members to one another and such forms can be called institutions. Institutions provide structure, guidelines for behavior and shape human interaction. Political Institutions can be defined as systems of formal rules or informal understandings that coordinate the actions of individuals in the society. A social institution is a custom that for a long time has been an important feature of some group or society. It refers to a group of social positions, connected by social relations, performing a social role. It is a major sphere of social life organized to meet some human needs. Thus, socio-political institutions for the purpose of this study are defined as customs and traditions invented or created at any historical time and modified, accepted and preserved by successive generations.

Since many writers claim the traditional institutions of the Angamis as democratic and as the relationship between the values of democratic politics and socio-political institutions is examined in fifth chapter, discussing values of democratic

politics becomes important. Democratic politics is a means by which all people are included in determining how a society makes choices. In other words, it is about how people live together, how competing interests are accommodated and how available resources are allocated. The values of democratic politics aim at the widest distribution of power among the citizenry. Elected representatives, free and fair elections, freedom of expression, free media and freedom of association and inclusive citizenship where no one is discriminated nor excluded, characterize democratic politics. Thus, the values of democratic politics for the purpose of this study is defined as much more than just having a vote but characterized by a set of principles such as the rule of law, accountability, fair representation and effective participation and voice, and a set of values that recognize individual and collective human rights and freedom.

The **Second Chapter** examines the working of the socio-political institutions of the Angami Nagas through the existing literature and interviews. The traditional socio-political institutions of the Angamis that have been identified and examined in this chapter are *Phichü kehou* (Informal Council of Elders), *Kikru* (Family), *Chienuo*, (Clan) *Thepfü* (Khel), *Rüna* (Village), *Thethsü* (Age-set system), *Kekinyi* (Diplomatic feast or Friendship feast), *Kichüki* (Dormitory), *Kiya* (Marriage), *Zatho* (Feast of Merit), *Terhümiavi* (Warriors), *Kemevo* (Religious priest), *Thehouba* (Sitting place), *Tsiakrü-u* (First Sower), *Tekhusekhrü* (First Planter) and *Liedepfü* (First Reaper of the village). The institution of *Liedepfü* was the only institution exclusively reserved for women. *Phichü-u/Zievo* (Head Priest) was the oldest man of the village and the oldest man in the *thepfüs*.

The study reveals that the socio-political institutions of the Angamis, which often linked to spiritual, religious, political, judicial, and economic functions in the past, covered almost all the conceivable needs of a person from birth to death. The study also

reveals that these socio-political institutions, which had a long history, determined the daily lives of the Angamis representing the force of authority and legitimacy. These institutions lay anchored primarily in customs, traditions, and the incumbents acted as the legitimate upholders and interpreters of the scope and contents of the tradition. The study also reveals that unlike other Nagas, free and formal discussions formed the very backbone of the Angami society. This has led many writers to consider the traditional Angami system of administration as democratic. However, it would be incorrect to call it as democratic in that the traditional Angami society never experienced an established government in modern sense, nor was inclusive in that, the titles and functions of traditional leaders were by inheritance passed on to male successors of one clan thereby excluding the members of other clans. Additionally, access by women to traditional leadership was limited because they could not inherit titles. The legitimacy for the traditional authorities of the community under study was rooted in customs, traditions history and culture, often combined with religious/divine reference. Traditional leaders claimed special legitimacy in the eyes of their people because these institutions were seen as embodying their people's history, culture, laws, values and religion. Since, many of the traditional leaders held their positions inherently for life, the possibilities of sanctions were restricted. The study also reveals that values of the traditional socio-political institutions of the Angamis were characterized by rule of the male elders, respect for seniority of age, physical strength, group solidarity, patriarchy and gender inequality in terms of division of labour, property ownership and decision-making.

The **Third Chapter** examines the changes brought about by the Colonial rule through the institutions of *Gaonburas*, *Dobashis* and District level administration on traditional socio-political institutions of the Angamis. This chapter also examines the

changes brought about by Village Council and Village Development Boards on traditional socio-political institutions of the Angamis. The study reveals that the office of *Gaonbura* introduced by the British virtually acted as village headmen. The customary hold of the Angami elders over the village began to decline as the appointment of *Gaonburas* for life not only brought in an element of extra village authority but also infused the cult of chiefship, which was unknown in the Angami society. Similarly, the office of *Dobashis* introduced in 1869-70 began to settle heinous cases like murder, while the *Phichü Kehou* or informal council of elders settled only the petty disputes. Thus, the powers of the *Phichü Kehou*, which covered executive, legislative and judicial before the advent of the British were affected. The third office adopted by the Colonial administration was the District level administration. The study reveals that the Europeans exclusively held these offices and as a result, a non-Naga began to involve in their village administration for the first time. This was a new development historically as there had been no District level Council in the traditional Angami society. The introduction of District level administration restructured the traditional political institutions of the Angamis, as the village elders who enjoyed supreme authority without any interference was demolished. The traditional Angami institution of *Phichü Kehou* largely lost their customary meaning as the officials of the British government gained direct control over the people in several aspects.

A study of the evolution of Village Councils(VCs) in Nagaland have shown that, the Nagaland Village and Area Council (Second amendment) Act, 1990 abolished the Area Councils and introduced a single tier local system known as the VC on the pattern of traditional village administration. The VC is the highest statutory decision-making body in village administration. Significantly, the method of choosing the members of the

VCs continues to be in accordance with the prevailing customary practices and usages. However, one significant change has been that unlike the council of elders in the traditional Angami society, the members of the Village Councils are elected for a five-year term. The study of Village Development Boards (VDBs) has shown that one-third of the total members of VDBs are reserved for women. Further, there is a provision for reservation of 25% of the total grant to the village for women's welfare programmes. This is a major change in that, the traditional institutions had shunted women to domestic arena rather than involving them in the decision-making process. In addition, the functioning of VDBs is more transparent than the traditional village administration because it is mandatory for all VDBs to hold monthly public meetings for review and monitoring of ongoing projects. However, the VDBs revived the colonial pattern of administration as it involves the Deputy Commissioner (DC) or Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) of the District as the ex-officio Chairman. The study reveals that the establishments of VCs and VDBs have not only replaced the limited functions of the traditional village hierarchy but also shifted to wider and modern trend of 'development administration.' In contrast with the traditional socio-political institutions of the Angamis, the VCs and the VDBs has enlarged the scope of community participation in development and welfare programmes. The main qualifications for a member in both the bodies are no longer based on age, gender and lineage as it was in the traditional society but on having knowledge of the administration of the village and government offices.

The study reveals that while the VC is part of the traditional milieu of Angami society, the VDB is an effort at dovetailing the former into a development framework. VC and VDBs are structurally strong, although functionally there is a dichotomy between them. The VC has strong recognition rooted in tradition and is able to exercise

influence on traditional spheres of land and family disputes, social and cultural sanctions, etc, but it has not been so successful in appropriating the VDB structure to take control over developmental resources and activities. Thus, there is a dichotomy at the village level itself wherein the strong traditional structure is unable to benefit from its advantage when it comes to the development processes offered by the state. In case of transgression in the social sphere, the VC was able to pass strong sanctions, but in the development arena, they have not demonstrated any such sway to bring to book the offenders.

The concept of Communitisation of which the Secretary of the VDB is also a member has enlarged the scope of community participation in development and welfare programmes. It has affected the role of the traditional leaders, as it did not even co-opt them and instead make the Secretary of the VDB, the head teacher of the Government Primary schools, a representative from women, a representative each from all the churches and few educationists as its members.

In the **Fourth Chapter**, the changes brought by Christianity, education, Angami elites and changing economic activities on the socio-political institutions of the Angamis has been examined. The study reveals that the effects of Christianity were more on social and religious institutions rather than political institutions as it aimed at transforming the socio-cultural and religious lives of the people. The institution of *Kichüki*, which was an important youth organisation, began to decline as the Christian missionaries forbade boys to attend *Kichüki* since they regarded everything done in connection with the tribal ceremonies and festivals as an act against Christianity. Since Christianity put an end to the practice of head-hunting, role of *Themumias* lost their importance, as there was no question of consulting them in matters of head-hunting. The

authority of the *Phichü-u /Zievo and Kemevo* lost its importance with the coming of Christianity as the convert Christians began to defy their orders since they gave primary importance of membership of the Church. The disappearance of certain institutions and festivals because of Christianity also undermined their position largely, as many Christian youth organizations are operating with the village pastors as their leader. Unlike in the past, the present day Christian leaders are not in favour of discarding the customs and traditions of the tribe. To such leaders, Christianity being above all cultures should have a place in every culture.

Education has led to the growth of elites who were responsible for forming both secular and religious organizations beyond village levels. This was in contrast with the socio-political institutions of the Angamis, which were limited to *chienuo* and *rüna* level. Although the traditional leaders are sometimes consulted on issues relating to customary laws and practices, they are no longer the sole authority to decide the affairs of the village but are dominated by other members who are more educated (modern education) and enlightened than the traditional *Phichü kehou*(informal council of elders). The pre-colonial trade, which was mainly based on barter system gradually changed to cash medium during the colonial period. Today, Naga men and women work in large number as government employees and in other professions. A large number of Angamis run business, importing huge quantities of foreign articles from neighbouring states and countries. Thus, changing economic activities in many ways affected the traditional youth institutions such as *Peli, Age-system* that were the backbone of social and economic development in their traditional society. The role of *Tsiakrü-u, Tekhusekhrü and Liedepfü* in performing ceremonies in agricultural fields also ceased.



The emergence and growth of elites in the Angami society have been attributed to Christianity, changing economy and education. The Angami elites primarily constituted of the salaried bureaucracy, businessperson ranging from affluent government contractors to big shopkeepers and persons belonging to the various professions such as medicine and teaching. Among these sections, the bureaucracy is the most important. The Angami elites became instrumental in bringing political consciousness beyond the village levels as they along with other Naga elites spearheaded the formation of Naga Club, Tribal Council and the Naga National Council. The traditional elders had very little mobility and each village had to fend for itself. They were conscious of family, clan, kinship and attached great significance to traditional rituals. Today, almost every family has an educated person who influences their parents, villagers and the members of statutory bodies and the traditional leaders. The elites because of their education and monetary power are brain behind many of its socio-economic-political activities, although the elites in many cases became exploiters of the masses. The formation of the Angami Gazette Officers' Union is one such example of elites replacing the physically brave men. Since the elites are economically powerful, they are more respected than the traditional leaders.

The **Fifth Chapter** examines the relationships between the values of democratic politics and values of socio-political institutions of the Angamis. The study reveals that elected representatives, free and fair elections, freedom of expression, free media and freedom of association and inclusive citizenship, among others characterize the values of democratic politics. On the other hand, the values of the traditional socio-political institutions of the Angami was characterized by rule of the male elders, respect for seniority of age, physical strength, patriarchy and gender inequality in terms of division

of labour, property ownership and decision-making. Thus, the study has shown that the values upheld by the traditional institutions are not compatible with the values of democratic politics of the Indian constitution. In spite of all these variances, the study reveals that the conflict between traditional leaders adopting a revivalist stand, and those deviating from it does not arise. The issues concerning decentralization and devolution of power and responsibilities to traditional institutions have not generated debates and controversies. The study reveals that the relationship between the two values has not generated any political problem because the Angami elites are able to generate economic, political and social capital and have access to positions of authority in democratic governance. Yet, a sense of ownership of modern system is still missing in many parts of the state, including the areas of our study. This is evident from the study that some clans still accept the traditional authority for settling land disputes, religious or social matters at *khel* levels in spite of the existence of statutory bodies at the village levels. The study also reveals that, although the relationship between the values of democratic politics and traditional socio-political institutions have not led to political problem, the traditional values that profess group assertion, kin-protection, gender inequality and collective efforts continue to influence the working of constitutional and community-based bodies as community in many cases acquires precedence over individuals. Thus, while the statutory bodies and community-based organisations are modern and constitutional in form, their behavioural content is traditional.

The **Last Chapter** discusses the summary and conclusions based on the study. The socio-political institutions of the Angamis were structurally patriarchal in that, politics was based on two principles: only the male elders referred to as the 'wise men' should rule and other male elders of *Putsano* within the *chienuo* should participate in

ruling. The Angamis had the institutions neither of a formal council nor of a chief but had an informal council locally called *Phichü Kehou*, as the supreme authority of the village administration. The introduction of *Dobashis* and *Gaonburas* affected the powers of the Angami *Phichü Kehou* as the former began to settle heinous crimes including murders, although the latter continued to settled land disputes, religious or social matters at *khel* levels. The government of Nagaland has retained the offices of *Dobashis* and *Gaonburas*. The customary law of inheritance by the youngest son still exists in Angami society. Marriage within *putsa* and between two closely related kindred on the females' side, which was forbidden in the past, is now practiced. Other socio-political institutions of the Angamis have also undergone changes.

The VC established on the pattern of traditional village administration is the highest authority in the village. Unlike in the past, its members including chairperson are elected for a five-year term. Many have considered the VDBs as the beginning of women participation in the decision-making body for the first time as one-third of the total members of VDBs is women. Further, there is a provision for reservation of 25% of the total grant to the village for women's programs. This is a major change in that the traditional institutions had shunted women to domestic arena rather than involving them in the decision-making process. The functioning of VDBs is more transparent than the traditional village administration because it is mandatory for all VDBs to hold monthly public meetings for review and monitoring of ongoing projects. The study reveals that the establishments of VCs and VDBs have not only replaced the limited functions of the traditional village hierarchy but also shifted to wider and modern trend of 'development administration and enlarged the scope of community participation in development and welfare programmes. The main qualifications for a member in both the bodies are no

longer based on age, gender and lineage as it was in the traditional society but on having knowledge of the administration of the village and government offices.

The modern democratic principles have penetrated to the Angami society to a certain extent, as they are interested in sustaining democratic system of choosing representatives and democratic method of taking decisions through majority votes. However, participation alone does not ensure a democratic society. For the smooth functioning of the democratic institutions, the democratic values have to be deeply entrenched in the society. The developing trends in Angami society seems to be far from such ideals, although many scholars described their traditional society as practicing a pure form of democratic government. There has also been a great imbalance in the representation in terms of gender. The traditional value of gender inequality as a political norm in the present society seems to have adversely affected the participation of women in politics and in important bodies of decision-making in the society.

The persistence of the traditional value of respect for elders also seems to have prevented the young educated and vibrant people from taking active part in important decision-making bodies. The establishment of the new democratic institutions has not brought about a corresponding change in the attitude and values of the people. On the contrary, it is found that people still cling to their traditional ideas and values. This inclination often renders the rule of law meaningless and group interest often stand in the way of individual freedom and rights. The community has precedence over the individuals in the Angami society as the Angami traditional political values such as group assertion, kin-protection and collective effort contradict the principles of democratic politics, which include among others, the rule of law, individual liberty and competitive politics.

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**SOCIO-POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS OF THE ANGAMI
NAGAS: A STUDY OF CONTINUITY AND CHANGE.**

BY

Ms. KONEI NAKHRO

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

SUBMITTED

**IN FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT OF THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES,
NORTH EASTERN HILL UNIVERSITY,**

SHILLONG.

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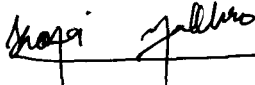
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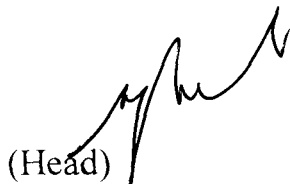
DECLARATION



I, Ms. **Konei Nakhro**, hereby declare that the subject matter of this thesis is the record of work done by me, that the contents of this thesis did not form basis of the award of any previous degree to me or to the best of my knowledge to anybody else, and that the thesis has not been submitted by me for any research degree in any other University/Institute.

This is being submitted to North-Eastern Hill University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science.


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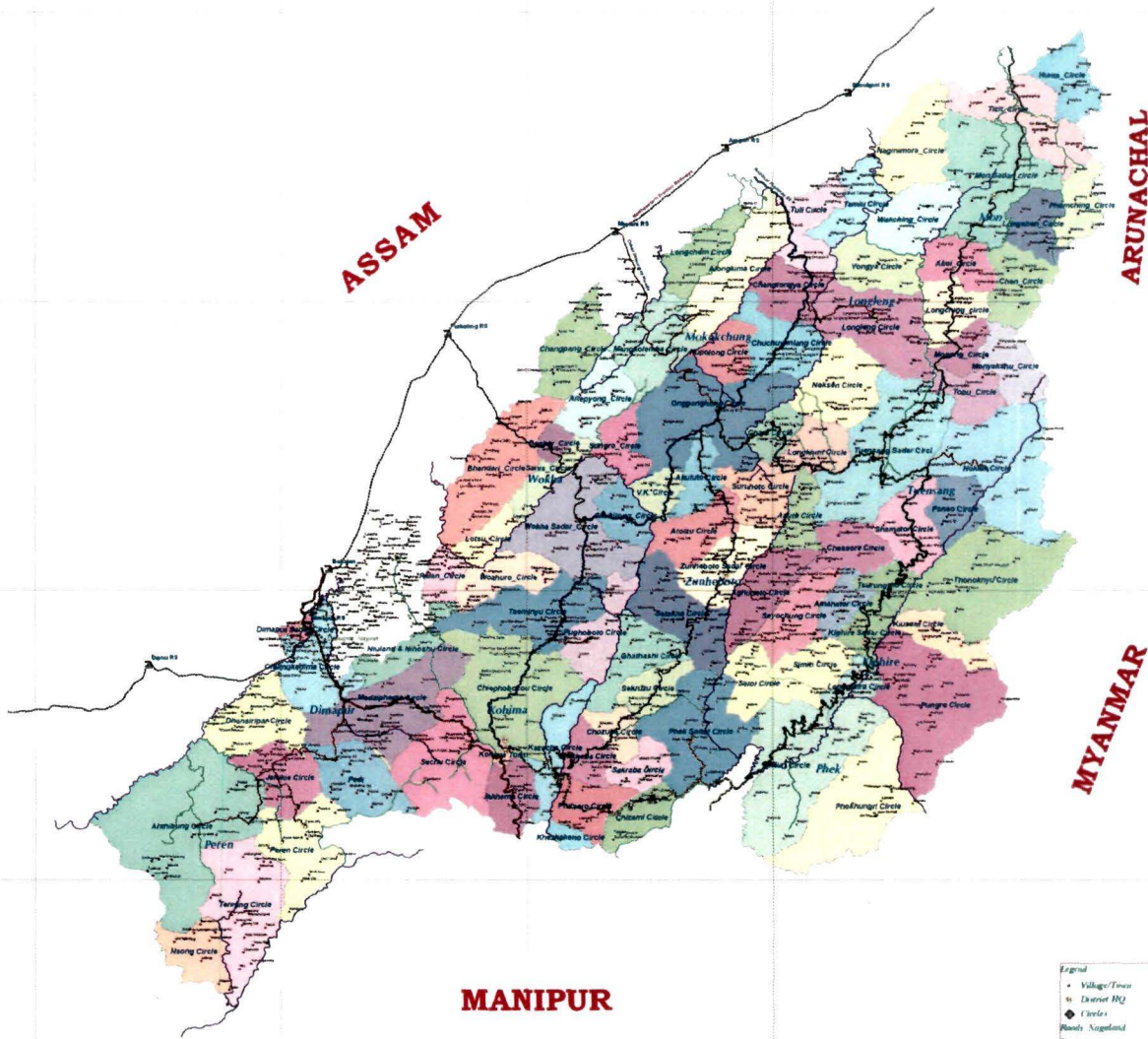
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Konei Nakhro.
Ms. Konei Nakhro.

GIS BASED DISTRICT, CIRCLE, VILLAGE MAP



MANIPUR

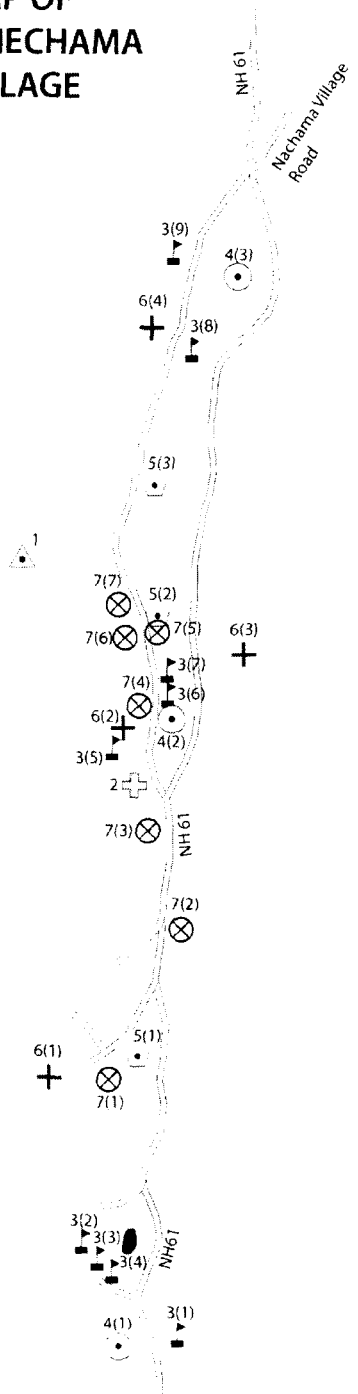
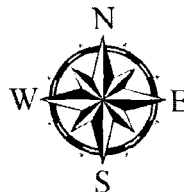
Legend

- Village/Town
- ◐ District HQ
- ◑ Circle
- ◒ Roads
- ◓ National
- ◔ State
- ◕ Other Important
- ◖ Rivers/Nagaland
- ◗ River/Type
- ◘ Major
- ◙ Minor
- ◚ Railway Line
- ◛ Railway Station
- ◜ Airport



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MAP OF CHIECHAMA VILLAGE

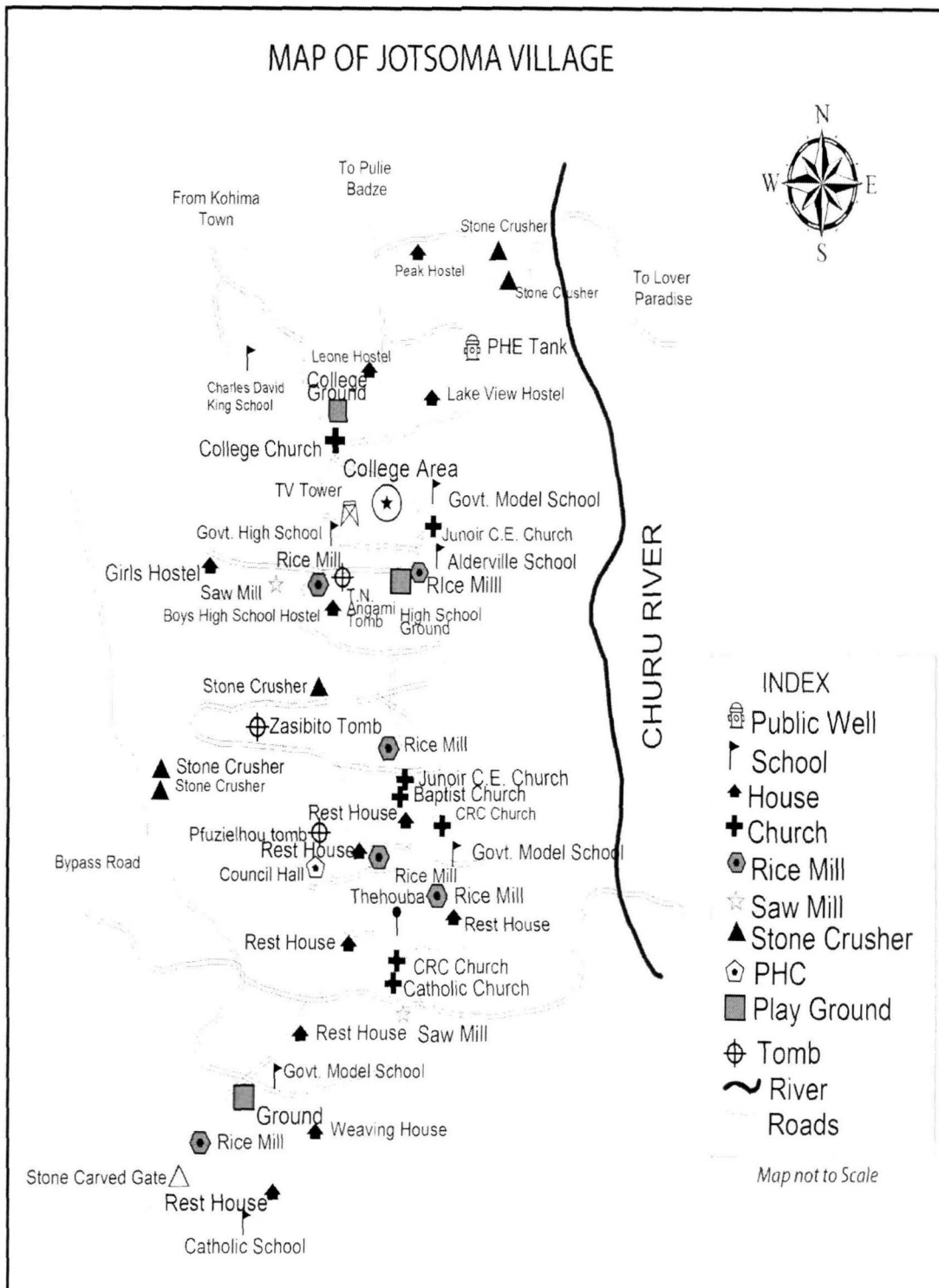


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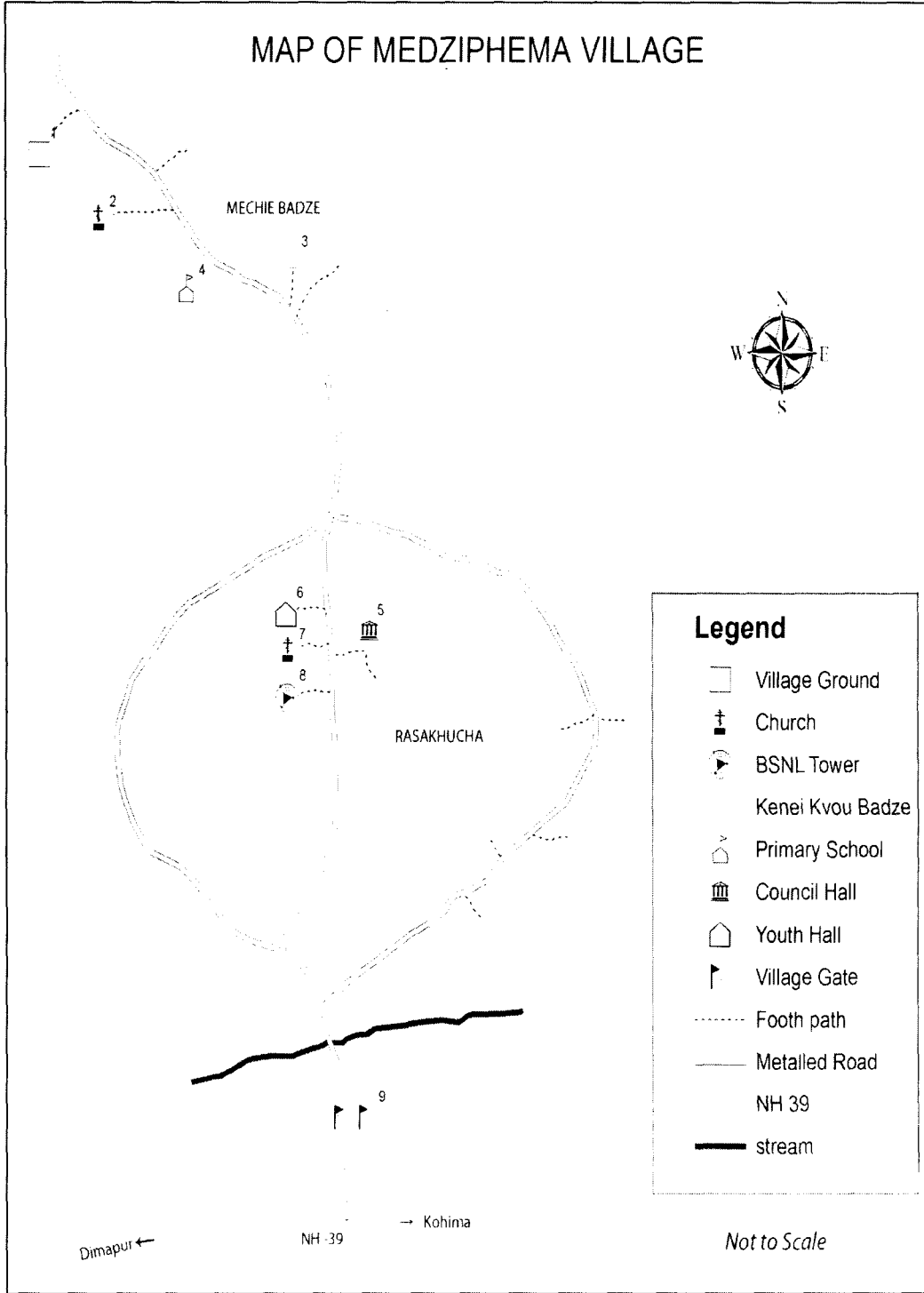
- 1, Rupfuzou
- ⊕ 2, Govt. Healthcare Centre
- ▣ 3 (1), DIET Chiechama
- ▣ 3 (2), Sharon School Chiechama
- ▣ 3 (3), Govt. Primary School Basa
- ▣ 3 (4), Govt. High School Chiechama
- ▣ 3 (5), Govt. Primary School
- ▣ 3 (6), Student Library Hall
- ▣ 3 (7), Village Council Hall
- ▣ 3 (8), Govt. Primary School Pheaszou
- ▣ 3 (9), Bethel School Chiechama
- ⊙ 4 (1), Govt. High School Playground
- ⊙ 4 (2), Play Ground
- ⊙ 4 (3), Chiechama Local Ground
- 5 (1), Rupfuzou Colony Morung
- 5 (2), Rio-Khel Morung
- 5 (3), Rupreo-Khel Morung
- ⊕ 6 (1), Basa Baptist Church
- ⊕ 6 (2), Chiechama Catholic Church
- ⊕ 6 (3), Chiechama Christian Revival church
- ⊕ 6 (4), Chiechama BAWE Baptist Church
- ⊗ 7 (1), Chiechama Name Derivation Memorial Stone
- ⊗ 7 (2), Basa Baptist Diamond Jubilee Stone
- ⊗ 7 (3), C.S.U Silver Golden Stone
- ⊗ 7 (4), C.S.U Silver Jubilee Stone
- ⊗ 7 (5), Chiechama-Nerhema Friendship Stone
- ⊗ 7 (6), Sogotsu Warrior Stone
- ⊗ 7 (7), Thevovihou-Rupfuo-u Stone
- Roads
- Pond

Map Not to Scale

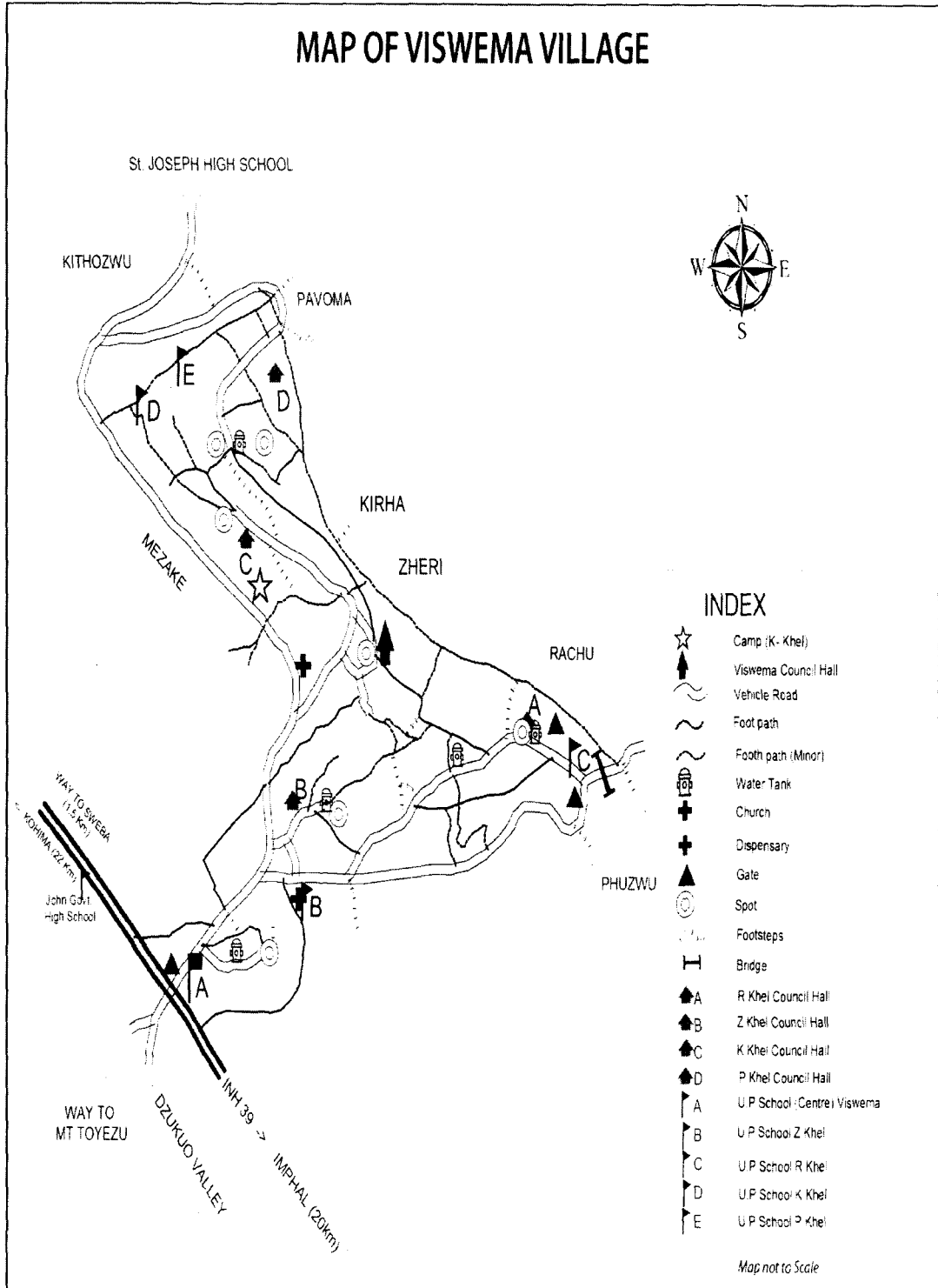
MAP OF JOTSOMA VILLAGE



MAP OF MEDZIPHEMA VILLAGE



MAP OF VISWEMA VILLAGE



INDEX

- ☆ Camp (K- Khei)
- ▲ Viswema Council Hall
- Vehicle Road
- ~ Foot path
- ~ Foot path (Minor)
- ⊞ Water Tank
- ⊕ Church
- ⊕ Dispensary
- ▲ Gate
- ⊙ Spot
- Footsteps
- Bridge
- ▲A R Khei Council Hall
- ▲B Z Khei Council Hall
- ▲C K Khei Council Hall
- ▲D P Khei Council Hall
- ▲A U.P School (Centre) Viswema
- ▲B U.P School Z Khei
- ▲C U.P School R Khei
- ▲D U.P School K Khei
- ▲E U.P School P Khei

Map not to Scale

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Chapter I

Introduction

Nagaland, which became the sixteenth State of the Indian Union in 1963, has special constitutional protection provided under Article 371(A) of the Indian Constitution. It provides that no Act of Parliament in respect of religious or social practices of the Nagas, their customary laws and procedure, administration of civil and criminal justice involving decisions according to Naga customary laws and ownership and transfer of land and its resources would apply to the state, without approval from the Legislative Assembly of Nagaland. Nagaland with an area of 16, 579 sq. km is at present divided into eleven administrative districts, each district having predominant concentration of one of the tribes of the state, displaying both unity and diversity in their customs, traditions, attires, and socio-political institutions. The population of Nagaland as per the 2001 census is 19, 88,636 which recorded the highest growth rate of population over the last decade in the country. The major tribes are Angami, Ao, Chakesang, Chang, Khamniungam, Lotha, Konyak, Phom, Rengma, Sumi (Sema), Sangtam, Yimchunger, Zeliang, Kuki and Pochury,¹ although there are a number of sub-

¹ A. M. Toshi Jamir., *General Knowledge- Naga Hills to Nagaland*, Novelty Press, Kohima, 2001. p. 27.

tribes. However, each tribe is distinct in character from the others in terms of customs, language, and attire. Indeed, their colourful and intricately designed costumes, ornaments and their traditional socio-political institutions could easily distinguish each of the tribes.

Predominantly settled in Kohima district,² the Angamis are one of the major tribes of Nagaland constituting approximately 7.2 percent of the total population of Nagaland according to 2001 census. The Angami socio-political institutions often linked to religious, political, judicial and economic functions remain highly significant in their society. In less than a century, the Angami society has changed from head-hunting to soul saving, from barter system to monetized economy and from traditional tribal political ethos to representative democracy. Nevertheless, their traditional socio-political institutions continue to operate along with modern democratic institutions even after more than forty years of Nagaland's statehood. The present research work examines the working, continuity and change of the socio-political institutions of the Angami Nagas.

Origin and migration

How this group of people came to be known as *Angami* is not known exactly. In the early days, they were known as *Tenyimia*, meaning persons living

² *Basic fact 1994 Nagaland*. Directorate of Information and Public Relations, Kohima, 1994, p. 3.

in *Tobumai* village who migrated to Kohima District. Captain R. Boillan Pemberton stated that the term 'Angami' was utterly unknown and the more widely used term was *Tenyimah*,³ pronounced as *Tenyimia*. The term *Tenyimah* came from the word *Tanyümo*, meaning people who did not want to go further. This is based on their tradition, which says that they came from Burma (Myanmar) and gathered together at *Khezakenoma*, and from there came to Kohima and North of it, but refused to go further. However, the word *Tenyimia*, which was used widely before the British, also covered several other tribes like Chakesang, Mao, Rengma, and Zeliang as well. Another view is that the word Angami was derived from the word *Ngamai* meaning 'perfect'. The Mao people living in Manipur used to call them *Ngamai*.⁴ It is assumed that some people other than the Angamis themselves gave the name 'Angami'. Nevertheless, the people who identified themselves with the term 'Angami' accepted not only the nomenclature, but are known by the same name to others. They were the first among the Naga tribes to encounter the British India and the last one to resist the British colonial expansion for a considerable long time.⁵

³ *Report on the Eastern Frontier of British India*, Published by the Government of Assam in the Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies, Guwahati, Assam, 1966, p. 84.

⁴ Shürhözelié Liezietsu (ed..). *Ura dze*. Ura Academy, Kohima, 1972, p. 5.

⁵ L. Atola Changkiri.. *The Angami Nagas and the British (1832-1947)*. Spectrum Publication, Delhi, 1999, p. 53.

Belonging to the Mongoloid stock,⁶ the Nagas were believed to have their own scroll, which was devoured by a dog. The villagers of *Khezakenoma* have an account of the ancestors of the Nagas who had three sons. One day, they found a big flat stone inhabited by a spirit. Every day, they spread paddy to dry upon that great flat stone. At dusk, a basket of paddy dried on this stone yields two baskets. One day, his sons picked up a quarrel over their turn of drying paddy on that stone. The father seeing this anticipated that this quarrel might lead to a threat of taking each other's life. Therefore, he broke an egg over the stone, covered it with brushwood (twig), and set fire on it. The stone burst with a crack like thunder. The spirit went up to heaven with a cloud like smoke and the virtue of that stone departed, after this, the three sons separated and became the ancestors of the tribes of Angamis, Lothas and Semas.⁷

According to Shürhozelie, the original home of the Angamis based on their story called *Hedzümia* was somewhere in or near Siberia, a Russian country.⁸ In course of time, they moved to South East and settled near the seashore possibly somewhere towards Borneo or Java from where they spread to South East countries and finally came to the present site of Nagaland through Manipur.⁹

⁶ Asoso Yonuo., *The Rising Nagas*, Manas Publication, Delhi, 1974, p.7 ; M. Alemchiba., *A brief Historical Account of Nagaland*, Naga Institute of Culture, Kohima, 1970, p.1; R. R. Shimray., *Origin and Culture of Nagas*, Published by Pamleiphi Shimray, New Delhi, 1970, p.12.

⁷ L. Suokhrie., *An Outline History of Angami Naga*, K. Suokhrie, John Institute Viswema, 1937, pp. 2-3; J. H. Hutton., *Angami Nagas*, Oxford University Press, London, 1969(Reprint), p.19.

⁸ Shürhozelie Liezietsu., *Journey of our forefathers*, Ura Academy Publication, Kohima, 1982, p. 1.

⁹ Ibid. pp. 2-12.

After wandering through the plains of Manipur, they came Northward through Mao area and settled in *Micheal or Makhel* (the Angami call *Mekhrora*), the present Mao village. Thence they moved North, North Eastward to *Khezakenoma*, and North West to settle in what is now known as Kohima district.¹⁰ A tradition in vague amongst the Angami, the Rengma, the Lotha and the Sema is that, their ancestors migrated in one wave and reached their present abode via Manipur from Burma. The Lothas first entered Nagaland via Mao, followed by the Semas, who came by the southern route. Rengma and Angami were the last.¹¹ There is a consensus that, the Angami Nagas had migrated and entered into their present homeland through the present Mao areas of Manipur.¹² According to Sir Grierson, Angami Naga is of the Tibeto-Chinese family, Tibeto-Burman sub-family.¹³ It is also interesting to note that the Angamis have certain affinities with the Igorots in the Philippines with regard to the terrace-cultivation, burial customs, ornamentation, games and crafts.¹⁴

Whatever may be origin of the term Angami and story of their migration, the people who identified themselves as 'Angami' not only accepted it as their nomenclature, but are also known by the same name to others. Thus, the Angamis,

¹⁰ M. Alemchiba, Op. cit, p. 20.

¹¹ P. Daisy Sorhie., "History of the Angamis as reflected in the festivals." M. Phil Dissertation submitted to NEHU, Shillong, 1984, p.11.

¹² H. Barih., *Nagaland District Gazetteers Kohima*. Sree Saraswaty Press Ltd, Calcutta, 1970, p.15.

¹³ P. Daisy Sorhie., Op. cit. p. 11.

¹⁴ Julian Jacob, "The Naga Disc". Subhadra Mitra Channa(ed.), *Nagaland: A Contemporary Ethnography*, Cosmo Publication, New Delhi, 1992, p. 297; L. W. Shakespear., *History of the Assam Rifles*, Firma KLM Pvt. Ltd. Calcutta, 1929, p. 14.

for the purpose of our study would mean the Angamis who are at present divided into four groups namely Chakhroma, Northern, Southern and Western Angami.¹⁵

Statement of the problem

The socio-political institutions have attracted the attention of policy makers, researchers and social scientists due to increasing interests in and support for decentralization. Significantly, some African countries have made various efforts to accord constitutional recognition to traditional institutions. In different parts of Northeast India, there has been unexpected return to prominence, the re-invention and resurgence of traditional institutions. Additionally, many communities in Northeast India have been demanding for constitutional recognition of their traditional institutions. While some sees the traditional socio-political institutions as backward instruments of social oppression, exclusion, domination and a historic burden on the road to modernity, others see them as representing the indigenous system of governance with local legitimacy. The existence of different authorities,¹⁶ competing for control over resources and power resulting into confusion and confrontation at different levels is a reflection of the crisis of governance. The study of continuity and change of the traditional

¹⁵ Punyü Khonyü., "Oral tradition of the Angami Nagas," Ph. D. Thesis submitted to NEHU, Shillong, 1995, p.7.

¹⁶T. T. Haokip., "Kuki Chiefship and its Changing Dimensions," Ph. D. Thesis submitted to NEHU, Shillong, 1995, p. 41.

socio-political institutions in Northeast India in general and the Angami Nagas in particular therefore assumes importance, given the existence of two or more contesting authorities and assertion of ethnic identity based on traditional political values.

The Angamis, like other Naga tribes had evolved in course of centuries, their own distinctive socio-political institutions to run the affairs of their society. Indeed, socio-political institutions were the principal component of the Angami society. The existence of free and formal discussions, respect for individual views, collective work, tolerant behaviour in the Angami society etc. have led many to conclude that, the Angami system of administration was close to the modern concept of democracy. Even after more than forty years of Nagaland's statehood, the Angami socio-political institutions remain highly significant in their society. However, the working of these socio-political institutions and values associated with them has not been examined so far. The Angami society has undergone changes with the introduction of colonial administration, Christianity, education, changing economic activities and democratic governance. However, the changes brought about by the colonial rule, Village Council, Village Development Boards, socio-economic factors and values of democratic politics on Angami socio-political institutions and whether these changes lead to conflicts and confrontations have not been analysed. Therefore, it is important to examine not

only the changes that have taken place but also to analyse what has not changed in the socio-political institutions of the Angamis of Nagaland. The present study examines the working, continuity and changes brought about by colonial rule, Village Council, Village Development Boards, socio-economic factors, and the values of democratic politics on these socio-political institutions of the Angami Nagas.

Survey of literature

The initial studies of the Angamis were undertaken mainly by the British administrators, Surveyors, Defence Personnel, Christian missionaries and travelers based on their personal visit to the area, their notes on specific points, diary and acquaintance with the people. However, some scholarly studies were carried out before and after India's independence. J. H. Hutton's *The Angami Nagas*, first published in 1921 and reprinted in 1969 begins with a general description of the habitat of the Angamis, their domestic life, houses, hunting, fishing, agriculture, food, games, and customary laws in an exogamous social system and the position of women. This is followed by an investigation of the religious beliefs and observances, birth, naming, marriage and mortuary ceremonies, concluding with magic and witchcraft, omens, divination and dreams. Part V is devoted to Folklore. The tales and traditions are arranged in three groups centred in village

feuds, tribal history and its dispersal. Typical sentimental songs in their dialects, legends concerning the origin of the clans and their ancestors, the universe and the relation of man to particular animals are recorded. Finally, in Part VI, the Angami language is examined and discussed. Hutton makes it clear that he depended upon Sir George Grierson's Linguistic Survey of India (vol. iii. pt. 2) and Mc. Cabe's *Outline Grammar of Angami Naga* in which several dialects were detected, peculiarly rich in intonation. The book considered by many as the most comprehensive work on the Angamis mainly dealt with the Western Angami region, neglecting other three groups of the Angamis namely the Northern Angami, Southern Angami and Chakhro Angami. In addition, his description of Angami system of administration as pure form of democracy was far from truth as the traditional Angami administration excluded women from meetings and other forms of political participation.

Subhadra Mitra Channa in his edited book, *Nagaland: A contemporary Ethnography* (1992) discusses the formation of Angami village, inter-*khel* relations, social structures, religious ethos and the role of socio-religious institutions of the Angami Nagas. However, the study is mostly based on Jotsoma village. *Kinship Politics and law in Naga society* (1993) by N. K. Das elucidates the analytic relationship between descent and territory, family and genealogy. It also examines the political system of Zounuo-Keyhonuo people. This study is

based on Viswema village of Southern area of the Angami Nagas. *The Angami Nagas and the British: 1832-1947* (1999) by Atola Changkiri, gives an account of the geographical, ethnological and historical background of the Angami Nagas, and their relations with the British from 1832-1947. The book examines the transition of British policies from non-intervention to intervention and from forward policy to consolidation of the British rule. V. Leno Peseyie Maase, in her book, *From Head Hunter to Soul winner* (2005), examines some social institutions of the Angamis of Jotsoma village. The author also narrates how Christianity was brought to Jotsoma village. *The Angami Nagas* by Renu Suri (2006) is perhaps the first in-depth study on the Angami Nagas from the physical anthropological point of view. However, the book deals with more on the ethnic position of the Angamis by comparing their physical traits with those of the other Naga tribes of Nagaland and other major tribes of North-East India namely, Khasis, Mishings, Kacharis, Adi Mishings, and others.

Some research works have also been undertaken on different aspects of the Angamis. "Profile of an Angami village" (1988) carried out by Pat Keyhie in his unpublished Ph. D. Thesis, submitted to the Department of History, NEHU, discusses the formation of Angami village of Rüzaphema. The study also examines some of the village specific institutions including clan organisation. "Traditional Political Institutions: A case study of the Kohima village"(1990), by

Ngunuo Suokhrie in her unpublished M. Phil Dissertation submitted to the Department of Political Science, North-Eastern Hill University narrates the historical background of the Angami Nagas and examines the different festivals prevailed in Kohima village. She has also examined some of the Angami traditional political institutions such as *Phichü-u*, *Khel* system and functions of *Pehümia*. She has also examined the effects of the British administration on these institutions. However, as the title of the dissertation shows, the study was on traditional political institutions of the Angamis of Kohima village, which falls within Northern Angami region. The scholar has examined neither all the traditional political institutions nor the social institutions of the Angamis. She has not examined the changes brought about by the Colonial rule, socio-economic factors, values of democratic politics and constitutional bodies such as Village Council and Village Development Boards on the traditional socio-political institutions of the Angamis. Another research work by Khonyü Punyü in his unpublished Ph. D Thesis, "Oral history of the Angami Nagas" (1995), submitted to the Department of History, NEHU, examines the different institutions that prevailed in the traditional society based on oral history of the Angamis.

As far as the Nagas are concerned, C.V. Haimendorf's *The Naked Nagas* (1939), and *Return to the Naked Nagas* (1976, Reprint), describes the lives of the pre-literate Naga tribes and festivals. Verrier Elwings's book *Nagaland* (1961)

discusses about the varied forms of administration, decline of their traditional culture due to the influence of outsiders. Asoso Yonuo's book, *The Rising Nagas* (1974) examines the different forms of the Naga polity such as hereditary monarchy, republic form of government and the existence of the informal council of elders. *Naga Polity* (1975) written by M. Horam focuses on the Tangkhuls of Ukhrul district in Manipur and some other tribes of Nagaland. *British impact and administration in Nagaland* (1985) by Piketo Sema examines the different facets of colonial policy and administration in the Naga Hills. *Emergence of Nagaland: Socio-Economic and Political transformation and the future* (1986) by Hokishe Sema trace the origin of the Nagas, their contact with the British and Christian missionaries in general. *A History of Nagas and Nagaland: Dynamics of Oral history in village formation* (1996) by Visier Sanyü, gives a picture of village formation, the sovereign village polity and socio-economic backgrounds, which have survived through oral traditions. N. Venuh's edited book, *Naga society: Continuity and Change* (2005) focuses on the scenario of social and cultural change that is taking place in the Naga society.

Some studies that have been carried on the socio-political institutions of the North East India mostly covered the colonial period, although some works have dealt with changes that occurred after independence. One of the important works is *Social and Political Institutions of the Hill people of North East India* (1990)

edited by Sarkar and Datta Ray. The book discusses the traditional socio-political institutions and changes that have occurred after independence. However, the book is more of descriptive account of socio-political institutions. Other existing works on traditional institutions of the region include V. V. Rao's, *A Century of Tribal Politics in North East India (1874-1974)* and L. S Gassah's *Traditional Institutions of Meghalaya: A study of Dolois and his Administration* (1998) among others. While V.V. Rao mostly based on the narratives of administrative changes, L.S Gassah discusses the powers and functions of *Dolois* and the effects of British administration on the functions of *Dolois* and other traditional authorities. None of them has examined how the modernizing forces have affected traditional institutions and practices.

At the global level, the African societies that had strong tribal traditions have often been studied by a number of scholars to understand not only the authority structures in pre-colonial African societies but also the enormous problems created by traditions for democratization process. One such scholar is V .G. Simiyu who in his article "The Democratic Myth in the African Traditional Societies," in Walter Oyugi *et.al* (eds.), *Democratic Theory and Practices in Africa* (1988), pointed out that there was a mixture of democratic practices on the one hand and aristocratic, autocratic and militaristic practices on the other. In *African Political System* (1940), M. Fortes & E. E. Evans-Pritchard pointed out

that the Zulu King exercised not only administrative, judicial and legislative authority over his subjects but also performed religious ceremonies besides owning the land. Thus, in many African societies, land and divinity were the main source of authority and power, similar to many tribal societies of Northeast India. Other important works on traditional institutions of African societies include Christian Keulder, *Traditional Leaders and Local Government in Africa: Lessons for South Africa*, (1998), B. N. George's *Indigenous African Institutions* (1991). Oomen Barbara, *Tradition on the Move: Chiefs, Democracy and Change in Rural South Africa* (2000).

Thus, most of the existing works on Angamis have been based on British official sources and writings of ethnographers. Whatever has been written on the socio-political institutions of the Angamis have been descriptive. The existing works have not examined the changes brought about by the British rule, Christianity, Education, Angami elites, Village Council, Village Development Boards and the values of democratic politics on socio-political institutions of the Angamis of Nagaland. A study of this kind is expected to provide us with a clearer picture of the nature, continuity and change of the Angami traditional socio-political institutions.

Objectives

- 1) To study the working of socio-political institutions of the Angamis
- 2) To examine the changes brought about by Colonial rule, Village Council and Village Development Boards on socio-political institutions of the Angamis.
- 3) To analyse and examine the changes brought about by socio-economic factors on socio-political institutions of the Angamis
- 4) To study the relationship between the values of democratic politics and the values of socio-political institutions.



Universe

The Angamis are divided into four groups namely Western Angami region, Northern Angami region, Southern Angami region and Chakhro Angami region. Since it is impractical to take up for study all the villages of the four groups, one of the biggest villages from each of the four Angami regions had been chosen as the universe of the study. Thus, four villages namely Jotsoma from Western Angami region, Chiechama from Northern Angami region, Viswema from Southern Angami region and Medziphema from Chakhro Angami region had been selected to see the working, continuity and change of the socio-political

institutions of the Angami Nagas. Jotsoma village, one of the biggest village in the Western Angami region, 8 kms away from Kohima has 794 households. Chiechama village consists of 882 households, 29 kms away from the state capital of Nagaland. Viswema village, which is one of the biggest villages in the Southern area of Kohima district, consists of 1150 households. The distance from the capital to Viswema village is about 22 kms. Medziphema village with 270 households situated under Chakhroma area of the Angamis is 44 kms away from the state capital. All the population figures are according to 2001 census of Nagaland.

Data and Methodology

This research work has made use of primary and secondary sources. The primary data includes data generated through interview, government documents and publications, relevant records of Village Councils and Churches, Youth and Women organizations. Secondary sources has been drawn from dissertations, theses, seminar papers, relevant articles appearing in newspapers, journals, memoirs, books and commentaries on the socio-political institutions of the Angamis.

An attempt was made to identify and examine the working of Angami traditional socio-political institutions and values associated with them through an

analysis of information available in the existing literatures. To supplement this, unstructured interviews were conducted with 40 persons consisting of *Krüna* (non-Christians), *Phichü-u*, (Head Priest) *Kemevo* (Religious Priest), *Tsiakrü-u* (First Sower), *Phichü kehou* (Informal Council of Elders), *Phichümia* (Elders), *Themumia* (Shaman) and Women. Out of the 40 persons identified for each village, 10 persons, which includes 3 women for each village had been selected based on the maximum preferences provided by the villagers. The main reason for including Women was to get their views on specific issues concerning women's position in the traditional Angami society. Despite disparity in the number of households in the selected villages, uniform number of interviewees was maintained, as the main objective for conducting unstructured interviews was to obtain information relating to the working of the traditional Angami socio-political institutions and values associated with them.

An attempt was also made to find out continuity and change of Angami socio-political institutions and persistence or otherwise of the values associated with these institutions from the existing literatures. In order to verify information collected from the secondary sources, the relevant records of Village Councils, Churches, Youth and Women organizations of the four selected villages and relevant Government documents and publications were examined. This was further supplemented by information elicited from the available leaders of Village

Councils, Churches, Youth, Students and Women organizations of the selected villages through in-depth interviews. The number of persons with whom in-depth interviews were conducted for each village was Jotsoma village 25, Viswema village 20, Chiechama village 18, and Medziphema village 14. No predetermined questions have been prepared but an interview guide was prepared where issues concerning continuity and change, gender, authority of age, group solidarity and persistence or otherwise of the traditional values etc. was asked. The two value structures of democratic politics and Angami socio-political institutions are then compared to see their compatibility or variance.

Chapterisation

Chapter I: Introduction

The first chapter deals with a brief account of the Angamis of Nagaland, review of literature, objectives, methodology and chapterisation. The major concepts such as continuity and change, democratic politics, traditional institutions or institutions that have often been used in the present study have been defined in this chapter.

Chapter II: Socio-political institutions of the Angami Nagas

In this chapter, the working of the traditional socio-political institutions of the Angami Nagas has been examined which is important for analysing not only the changes that have taken place but also what have not changed in the spite of the onslaught of modernizing forces.

Chapter III: Changes brought about by Colonial rule, Village Council and Village Development Boards on socio-political institutions of the Angami Nagas.

This chapter examines the changes brought about by Colonial rule, Village Council and Village Development Boards on socio-political institutions of the Angamis.

Chapter IV: Changes brought about by socio-economic factors on socio-political institutions of the Angami Nagas

This chapter deals with the changes brought by Christianity, Education, Angami elites and changing economic activities on the socio-political institutions of the Angamis.

Chapter V: Values of democratic politics and socio-political institutions of the Angami Nagas.

This chapter deals with the relationship between the values of democratic politics and the values of socio-political institutions of the Angamis. The values of democratic politics and traditional institutions are compared to see their compatibility or variance.

Chapter VI: Conclusion

This chapter discusses the summary and major conclusions based on the study.

Major concepts

The major concepts that have often been used in the present study have been defined.

Traditions and traditional institutions

While it is easy to identify traditions and traditional institutions in tribal societies of Northeast India and elsewhere, it is extremely difficult to define them

and locate their historical origin. It is also difficult to categorise them into social, cultural, political and economic institutions precisely because tradition in any given society exists as a composite whole. Additionally, tribal societies have changed throughout pre-colonial and post-colonial times and it is extremely difficult in many cases to determine what remains from the pre-colonial era. It is therefore difficult to extricate their traditional content from the supposedly modern one since many of them are as modern as they are traditional. Thus, it is possible to have a society that has changed over time to a very modern industrialized society, while still having traditional leaders that execute power or perform a major function in the lives of the people. The opposite is also possible where a society maintains its basic form of tradition and traditional institutions but traditional leaders have lost their importance or have disappeared.

Most of the tribal societies of the Northeast India, are today at serious socio-political crossroads. The three sets of authority- traditional, colonial and modern have interacted with each other in different ways at different junctures.¹⁷ While some sees the traditional institutions as backward instruments of social oppression, exclusion and domination, others see them as representing the indigenous system of governance with local legitimacy. Of late, the traditional institutions have attracted the attention of policy makers, researchers and social

¹⁷ T. T. Haokip., Op. cit. p. 41.

scientists due to increasing interests in and support for decentralization. Significantly, efforts have been made in some countries to accord constitutional recognition to traditional institutions. In India, there has been a new concern about the traditional institutions in the 1990s mainly because of the advent of globalization,¹⁸ which among others focus on a more multi-centred governance. This has been further compounded by what the early political modernization theorists would call, 'crisis of institutionalization'. Consequently, there has been a new concern for reviving the traditional institutions. The term 'tradition' however, carries unspecified assumptions because of the tendency to use it as a residual term. The term has been used so often and in so many contexts that, as Shils¹⁹ suggests, it may not have any meaning at all. It is important and necessary to examine the meanings and uses of tradition as a passive analytic construct and as an active indigenous force.

Traditions as passive

Williams was one of the early theorists who point to a split in definitions between tradition as a passive and tradition as an active process.²⁰ The use of tradition as passive or ideal type construct was established early in the social

¹⁸ Samir Kumar Das, "Democracy in India's Northeast: Traditional and Modern: A poser": *Journal of North-East India for Social Science Research*. Vol.29, No.1, April 2005, p. 20.

¹⁹ See, E. Shils., *Tradition: Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 1971.

²⁰ R. Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*: Oxford University Press, New York, 1976, pp. 268-69.

science literature through the writings of Durkheim, Marx, Redfield and Tonnies, among others. A "tradition" in the Anthropological literature often means time-honoured custom, respected beliefs, seen as an ideal type construct, stultifying force that engendered and enforced cultural homogeneity. Marx considered tradition as a stultifying device for enslaving people, although he was also aware of the ideological uses of tradition.²¹ He predicted that traditional ideas would be dissolved once modernization was complete. Tonnies considered tradition as part of 'natural will' and believed it to be an unthinking emotional reaction.²² Durkheim emphasized that tradition was given its force by the old people who transmitted it and acted as the intermediary between the present and the past because of their prestige and authority.²³ He predicted that tradition would decline as rationalism grew in modern and urban settings but did not share the view that it would erase the evils of the past. Redfield use of tradition as homogeneity, irrationality, and respect for age-old custom at the folk end of the continuum²⁴ repeats the assumptions of the early theorists. In short, tradition was seen as a force in preventing change, growth, creativity; and tradition as irrational, emotional response and the agent of promoting internal solidarity. The conservative Burkean perception of society views tradition as the accumulated

²¹ Karl Marx and Frederick Engels., *Selected Works*. International Publishers, New York. 1972, p. 104.

²² F. Tonnies., *Community and Society*. Harper and Row Torchbooks, New York 1963. pp. 3-5.

²³ E. Durkheim., *The Division of Labor in Society*. Free Press, New York, 1964, p. 29.

²⁴ R. Redfield., 'The Folk Society,' *Readings in Anthropology*, Vol. 2, Thomas Y. Crowell, New York. 1968. pp. 501-05.

wisdom of the past,²⁵ and Andrew Heywood maintains that tradition stands for absence of change.²⁶ The underlying fears in all these tendencies is the assumption that traditions or traditional institutions are static, frozen in time, and cannot be modified.

Tradition as an active

Malinowski (1922), Tardits (1958), Dube (1958), Savage (1964), Gulliver (1969), Brode (1970), among others have challenged tradition as a passive. To Malinowski (1922), myths and traditions serve as sociological "charters". In other words, traditions and myths were recited as social sanctions, to induce conformity or serve as charters for social action. The view that tradition is irrational and emotional is mostly in the context of economics. Of late, ecologists have also shown that some traditions are quite rational. On tradition as a device for promoting internal solidarity, Leach (1965) concluded that traditions could promote either internal equilibrium or disequilibrium, depending on whose version of the tradition gained prominence. Indigenous versions of tradition are used both to sustain internal solidarity and to promote internal dissension. Similarly, the view that tradition would disappear in urban environments have been proved wrong as the rise of ethnic groups depended heavily on a shared

²⁵ See, Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition*. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge. 1995.

²⁶ See, Andrew Heywood., *Key Concepts in Politics*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. 2000.

"traditional" past. As pointed out by Barnes (1951) traditional legends were modified in conformity with modern values to evaluate their present circumstances. Another use of tradition is made in the law courts. This is also true of the majority tribal societies of the Northeastern region where customary laws are recognised. As a storage device, tradition serves not merely to store antique behavior; it also serves to align the past and present and to set new precedents for behavior. Instead of being an irrational, emotional response, traditions are employed to promote rational innovation. In addition, tradition is used as a divisive tool to further individual and group ambitions. Instead of disappearing in urban environments, traditions have been reformulated to serve as a basis for claims to political and economic power and privilege.

Traditions as invented

Sociological theories raised the issue that tradition can be both dynamic as well as static. In fact, the adherents of tradition often questioned and modified it over time to make it dynamic. In line with this view, tradition is defined as any cultural product that was created or pursued, in whole or in part, by past generations and that, having been accepted and preserved, in whole or in part, by successive generations, has been maintained to the present. Other social scientists such as Eric Hobsbawm, Ramila Thapar, and Terence Ranger have argued that it is not only important and necessary but also possible to locate the historical origin

of traditions. For instance, Hobsbawm and Ranger argued that traditions could be constructed and that what sometimes has been considered being very ancient traditions are in fact of quite recent origin if the history of the tradition is traced.²⁷ Thus, traditions or traditional institutions need not be very old and exist from time immemorial but handed down from father to son and require only two generations to become traditions. Indeed, people created or invented traditions or traditional institutions at a particular time to suit their interests, although the importance of traditions is not uniform in all societies. What is implicit within these directions is the assumption that tradition has a storage function with respect to selected traits only and not to a plethora of antique behaviours. These traits need not be very old or even indigenous. Thus, one can argue that many of the traditional institutions operative in Northeast India have their origins in the very act of invention. Barth indicated that the revival of traditional cultural traits and the establishment of historical traditions to justify and glorify the identity of ethnic groups is one of the most fascinating subjects of modern field research. Internally, tradition is used as a storage device to preserve the "distinctive culture" of the group and externally, tradition is used to sanctify ethnic identity as a group. Stevens believes that the selective alteration of traditions over time has enabled the threatened societies to assert their equality to, if not superiority over, the threatening power; justify their successful maintenance of independence in spite of this threat; and thus re-

²⁷ E. Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, Op. cit. p.1.

establish a basis for societal unity. Tradition as an active force for change can be used in many ways including the role of tradition in the formation and maintenance of ethnic groups. As Cohen pointed out, tradition is emphasized for political purposes, “As the symbols of traditional culture are used as mechanisms for the articulation of political alignments.”²⁸ This has more relevance in the context of Northeast India where traditions are used to support claims to economic and political rights and privileges. Thus, traditions need not be necessarily very old but can also be invented or created according to the exigencies of the situation. Social institutions are the established norms and procedure, accepted by the society through which society organize and directs the social activities in order to fulfill their need. Political institutions are the established norms and procedure accepted by the people through which society organize and directs the political activities to get decision-making power. These definitions formed the parameter on which the socio-political institutions of the Angami Naga are identified in this study.

Continuity and Change

Change is inherent in the nature of society and no society can remain at a particular equilibrium point for all time to come. Indeed, individuals may be

²⁸ A. Cohen., *Two Dimensional Man*, University of California Press, Berkley, 1976. p. 97.

forced to change or may be forced to continue in certain ways. Therefore, it is necessary not only to explain change but also to explain why change does not occur.²⁹ The concept of 'harmonic system'³⁰ as being a model of a closed society cannot be applied to the Angamis. Among the factors that resist change are inertia, fear of the new, ignorance, tradition, ethnocentrism, and stakes and so on.³¹ Psychologically, it is the individual's sense of danger to his identity and security, which resists change. In many of the tribal societies of Northeast India, identity aspirations have become uppermost considerations and they seem to be unprepared for a radical change. Change may result in either a change in the organizational life of the people or a change in the social structure itself.³² In other words, there may be a manifest change in ways of doing things rather than change in the character of the social system. Thus, organizational change may bring about some degree of structural change, for example, a decrease in the organizational importance of a lineage system or of a chief-subject relationship.³³ As modern society is a society oriented towards change and having to deal with continuous change, change in the present study means the changes brought about by colonial rule, legislations, Christianity, education, changing economic activities, emergence of Angami elites and democratic politics. Similarly, continuity is

²⁹ A. P. Barnabas., *Social Change in a North Indian Village*, IIPA, New Delhi, 1969, pp. 137-38.

³⁰ Andre Betteille., *Inequality among Men*, Oxford University Press, London, 1977, pp. 149-51.

³¹ Jacob John Kattakayam., *Social Structure & Change among the Tribals*, D. K. Publications, Delhi, 1983, p. 25.

³² Firth made use of the distinction between these two in his analysis of social change: R. Firth., *Economics of the New Zealand Maori*, Wellington, 1961, pp. 85-88.

³³ Jacob John Kattakayam., *Op. cit.* p. 16.

inherent in a tribal society involving beliefs and values. Therefore, continuity for the purpose of our study would mean these customs and traditions that have survived to the present in spite of the introduction of colonial rule, legislations, Christianity, education, changing economic activities, emergence of Angami elites and democratic politics.

Democratic politics

There is no single theory of democracy but only theories.³⁴ Yet these theories reject the rule of one person or a few over others and hold the view that every one being equal deserves a voice in governance. Public offices are not the property of incumbents but theoretically belong to the citizens who can reclaim it in an orderly, peaceful way. The logic of the democratic model, therefore assumes that public officials are responsible for their conduct and accountable to citizens. Some democrats will want to move beyond this minimalist conception. The critics of minimalist democracy want to make democracy more inclusive, not only by drawing more people into decision- making processes but also by expanding the sites of democratic control to new spheres of social experience. Still other democrats want to extend the scope of citizenship beyond conventional participation, such as voting to previously non-political areas of life. One of the

³⁴ Robert Dahl., *Preface to Democratic Theory*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago. 1965. p.1.

primary if not, the primary characteristics of democracy is power. In this context, democratic politics aims at the widest distribution of power among the citizenry. Yet, disputes among democratic theorists about what power means and how it can enable or disable full and equal citizenship are legion. Power is not confined to institutional sites, public or private, but circulates throughout the society: in family and race relations, in schools and the media, in the workplace, and even within the seemingly neutral spheres of knowledge, the sciences and technology. Working with this understanding, they move beyond earlier conception of the state as the center of contestations and extend their democratic impulse to other spheres of activity, many of which have traditionally been considered to operate below the threshold of democratic politics. These critics find that interests corrupt political language and make agreement about a common good difficult, if not impossible. For their part, supporters of interest in democratic politics find that interests are inescapable and necessary part of political life, and efforts to silence or thwart already enjoy a preponderance of power. In spite of their many differences, however, they share a common dedication to the idea that a democratic politics, for all of its variability and problems, must be the politics of any good governance. Good governance enables all people to realize what Amartya Sen calls the freedoms to make one's views heard, choose people to represent their views, associate freely with others, join a political party or a trade

union and worship and practice your own religion. Democratic politics is a means by which all people are included in determining how a society makes choices.

Democratic politics requires a system where government decisions over policy are vested in elected representatives; free, fair and frequent election of these representatives; freedom of expression; where citizens have rights to express their voice; access to alternative sources of information; a free media and freedom of association; where citizens have right to form and join independent associations for participation in organizing and influencing state policy and practice and inclusive citizenship where no one is excluded or discriminated against. Democratic politics is therefore about much more than just having a vote, and is not determined by any specific set of institutions. Rather, it is characterized by agreed rules within society that govern rules within society that govern a set of principles such as the rule of law, accountability, fair representation and effective participation and voice and a set of values that recognize individual and collective human rights and freedom. It offers a peaceful way for societies to determine how people live together, how competing interest are accommodated and how available resources are allocated. Politics is the business of public decision-making, and the process by which we arrive at these decisions and encase them in policy in bargaining. Thus, in its essence, politics is bargaining: different interests meet and disagree, solutions are proposed, concessions are made, favors

exchanged, and losers repressed through force or consoled with the promise of future opportunity for change.

The traditional definition of democracy is simply a society ruled by the people. In modern sense, it means that representatives are selected by the people and accountable to the people. However, the implication of this concept is more complex in that the sovereignty of the people must be ensured through political and civil rights, which are protected through democratic procedures and institutions. Many tribal societies including the Angamis are new to Western liberal democracy adopted by India. In the process, there seems to be a tussle between the traditional institutions and the democratic institutions for power and control over resources leading to crisis in governance. An attempt is made in the relevant chapters to analyse the interface of values of democratic politics with the values of traditional socio-political institutions of the Angamis.

Chapter II

Socio-political institutions of the Angami Nagas

The study of traditional socio-political institutions has attracted the attention of social scientists. In the global context, many scholars have studied the socio-political institutions among various groups of people in the pre-colonial period. Indeed, the socio-political institutions had been a common traditional feature in all societies in different parts of the world, representing the force of authority and legitimacy. Mostly, these institutions remained a conservative force in all tribal societies, jealously guarding powers and privileges of the communities. The emergence of socio-political institutions had been generally attributed to the collective needs of group life, which characterized tribal living in India as well as in other parts of the world. In different settings, these institutions lay anchored primarily in customs, traditions, and the incumbents acted as the legitimate upholders and interpreters of the scope, contents of the tradition and it will be inappropriate to assume that institutions had always been responsive to the aspirations of the people at different settings. The Angamis like many other tribal societies had traditional socio-political institutions out of dire necessity and

compulsion by their environment and political forces. The present chapter examines some of the traditional socio-political institutions of the Angamis.

Kikru (family)

Kikru, the institution of Angami family was the smallest social unit³⁵, consisting of husband, wife, and their children. The Angami *kikru* was characterized by both nuclear and extended type of family. The nuclear type consisted of a father, mother and their unmarried children. The extended type occupied a part of the house, a separate space being fenced off and a separate hearth provided. This usually happened when a newly married son was unable to build his house.³⁶ The custom to have a separate *miphu*³⁷ was to make the newly married couple become responsible and know the hardships faced in having a family. It was only then that they began to learn, appreciate and experience the intricacies as well as the beauty of a *kikru* life. The Angami society being patriarchal, the father was the head of the *kikru* and had certain powers and duties. It was his responsibility to look after and maintain his family and represented his family at clan meetings, acted as the family priest, and performed the customary rites during festivals and ceremonies. It was the duty of the father to educate his

³⁵ Ngunuo Suokhrie., "Traditional Political institutions of the Angami Nagas: A case study of Kohima village." M. Phil. Dissertation submitted to NEHU, Shillong, 1990. p.46.

³⁶ Zhanuo Thakro., "Culture change among the Angami Naga," Ph. D. Thesis submitted to NEHU, Shillong, 2002. p. 83.

³⁷ *Miphu* refers to hearth.

children about the demarcation of land or boundaries and handed down the oral tradition to his children. He also distributed his properties to the sons equally as far as possible.³⁸ In some cases, the father also portioned out his lands between his children and kept provisions for his wife in the event of his death. In contrast with sons, daughters were given moveable properties as gifts to them. In some cases, when there was no male heir, the daughters used to act as caretaker of the family property and reverted to the male line subsequently.³⁹ If the parents were childless, the property used to go back to the father's own lineage. In the absence of the father, it was the mother or the eldest son of the family who shouldered the responsibilities of looking after the family, although the youngest son inherited parental house. Though the father was the head of the family, the mothers performed most of the domestic works, taught these works to their children, and influence the father on major decisions.⁴⁰ Women in the traditional Angami society were denied family property, although they played important roles in family affairs.⁴¹ The joint family system was rare except in cases of infirmity and poverty. In normal situations, the sons used to set up houses of their own after marriage. Thus, with every marriage a new family came into existence in that part of the village, which his ancestors occupied.

³⁸Jayanta Sarkar and B. Datta Ray (eds.). *Socio-political institutions of the Hill people of North East India*. Anthropological Survey of India, Calcutta. 1990. p.113.

³⁹ Gazetteer of India. *Nagaland*, Kohima District, Kohima. 1970, p. 76.

⁴⁰ Interview with Mr. Krozel Kikhi, age 100, Head *Gaonbura*, Viswema village on 2 January 2009.

Chienuo (clan)

Next to family was the *chienuo*, consisting of several groups of agnatic kin.⁴² The family being a small unit was considered ineffective in case of wars, raids, and head-hunting. As a result, several families united to organize a *chienuo* to present an effective front to all external aggressions. The meaning of ‘clan’ in Oxford dictionary is, “group of families with common ancestor.” The origin of the Angami *chienuo* was traced back to a single family in the past from which numerous families emerged but managed to stay connected. The *chienuo* or *thino* was a continuation of the family unit on the paternal side, which maintained a separate entity of their own under the leadership of a member of elders known as *Phichümia*.⁴³ The *chienuo* comprised of a group of consanguineous families descended from common ancestor occupying a definite and permanent area.⁴⁴ The multiplication of a family into a number of family units, in course of time led to the formation of *putsano* (first cousins). The emergence of a more closely knitted kinship among various *putsano* led to the formation of *chienuo/thino* /clan. Thus, the *chienuo* in its earliest stage was the combination of the families of the sons

⁴¹ Punyü Khonyü., “Oral history of the Angami Nagas.” Ph. D. Thesis submitted to NEHU, Shillong, 1995, pp. 28-30

⁴² Th. R. Tiba., “American Baptist Mission in Manipur (1894-1950).” M. Phil Dissertation submitted to NEHU, Shillong, 1993, p. 9.

⁴³ Ngunuo Suokhrie., Op.cit. p. 36.

⁴⁴ Asoso Yonuo., Op. cit. p. 11.

of one household joined by the families of the male cousins from the father's side⁴⁵.

Clans belonging to the same tribe used to spread over several villages occupying a definite area in the villages.⁴⁶ Unlike the Aos and Tangkhuls, who had clan heads, the Angamis did not have any clan head. On the contrary, the head of the clan was the same as the head of the original family whose sons and paternal cousins joined to form the clan. Thus, the head of the clan, which settled first in a village automatically, become the first head of the village.⁴⁷ No clan enjoyed a special position in the Angami social structure. Commenting on the paramount importance of a *chienuo* in Angami society, J. H. Hutton says, "The real unit of the social side is the clan. So distinct is the clan from the village that it forms almost a village in itself".⁴⁸ However, clan loyalty and unit was so strong that there was frequent interference of one's clan by another unfriendly clan among the Angamis. Indeed, the antagonism and rivalry within the clan in the village sometimes led to jealousy and suspicion.⁴⁹

Thepfü(Khel)

Thepfü was an administrative unit within the village in which various

⁴⁵ M. Horam .. *Socio-cultural life of Nagas*. B.R Publishing Corporation, Delhi, 1977, p. 62.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ M. Horam .., Op. cit, 1975. pp. 50-51.

⁴⁸ J. H. Hutton., *The Angami Nagas*. Oxford University Press, London, 1969(Reprint), p.109.

⁴⁹ Ibid. p. 256.

chienuo lived. Each village was divided into different *thepfü*, which marked the division of *chienuo*. The number of *thepfü* differed from village to village. Venkata Rao has suggested that *khels* in Naga villages are administrative units with a definite area of their own.⁵⁰ In most of the Angami villages, one still finds the village divided into several *thepfü*, each *thepfü* occupying a particular territory. Inter *thepfü* and inter village formed a part of the Angami life in olden days. The history of *thepfü* and village had been depicted in the stone tablets erected in every village. Every stone tablet covered the first settlers and their descendants till the foundation of clans.⁵¹ Each *thepfü* maintained a distinct social unit with its own boundary well fortified within the village. However, due to increase in population, a strict division could not be maintained anymore. The people living in other *thepfü*, however, come back to their respective *thepfü* for active participation in decision-making and welfare of the *thepfü*.⁵²

Rüna (Village)

Rüna was organized along *thepfü* with each *thepfü* consisting of a number of *chienuo*. The inter *thepfü* feuds and head hunting raids posed serious problem of security and the *thepfüs* were not strong enough to defend themselves against any external aggressions. This quest for security ultimately prompted them to live

⁵⁰ V.V. Rao., *Hundreds years of local government in Assam*, S. Chand and Company, New Delhi. 1975. pp. 24-25.

⁵¹ Interview with Mr. Lhouzelie Metha, age 90, *Phichümia* Chiechama village on 20 February 2009.

⁵² Interview with Mr. Kidese Kikhi, age 35, *Viswema* Village on 13 February 2009.

in large villages. This was the reason why the Angamis had the largest villages among all the Nagas.⁵³ Kohima village (Bara basti) inhabited by the Angamis is one of the biggest and most populous villages in Asia.⁵⁴ The inter-village feuds being frequent, the villages were built on the top of the hills and were well fortified for defense against enemy attack. Thus, a village was primarily formed for security reasons, although eventually it emerged, as the largest political organization. Citizenship within the *rüna* (village) was determined by patriarchal consanguinity. The Angami *rüna* was an independent political entity with elaborate administrative structure and effective defense machinery.⁵⁵ For the Angami Nagas, the ancestral *rüna* was something to be preserved, hence shifting from one *rüna* to *rüna* was very rare case, and their attachment to their native village is still considerable. In fact, for the Angamis their village means everything- their country, their tribe, indeed their whole world. The Angami villages had internal cohesion, and in case of disputes, the whole village gathered and arrived at conclusion.⁵⁶

Kiya (Marriage)

The Angamis were exogamous and monogamous. They considered *kiya* as a

⁵³ Jayanta Sarkar and B. Datta Ray., Op. cit, 1990, pp. 98- 99.

⁵⁴ Angelina Lotsüro., *The Nagas: A Missionary Challenge*. Vendrame Institute Publication. Shillong 2000. p. 10.

⁵⁵ Ibid. p. 104.

⁵⁶ B. B. Kumar., *Indigenous Political institutions of the tribal communities of North Eastern India*, Highlander IV, no.1, 2, p. 8.

sacred institution and marriage within the same clan was forbidden.⁵⁷ The blood relationship was not recognized through the female line, and no inter-marriage was allowed between two closely related kindred. Marriage between the children of two sisters was a *kenyü* (taboo). One could marry his wife's sister or husband's brother in the event of the death of the wife or the husband. Prolonged celibacy or unmarried person was considered incomplete in the society. It was a *kenyü* for a woman to keep her hair long until she was married. As a result, when all her other batch mates were married, an unmarried woman went to the extent of marrying the *kharu*⁵⁸ in order to grow her hair long. This was done by placing a shawl on the *kharu* to signify that she married to that *kharu*.⁵⁹ Women preferred a man who had proved to be brave, courageous, and skillful in warfare, as well as in handicraft as their partners. Similarly, men preferred good moral, healthy, hard working women as their wives.⁶⁰

There were two forms of marriages, namely, a ceremonial marriage, which was very formal, and an informal marriage.⁶¹ Nevertheless, both forms of marriage were equally binding and the informal marriage meant no social stigma or disability to the wife or her children. Angami marriage normally lasted for five days.⁶² A widower or divorcee could remarry, but the ceremony on such cases was very simple. *Thema* and

⁵⁷ Asoso Yonuo., Op. cit, pp.11-12.

⁵⁸ *Kharu* refers to village or *khel* gates.

⁵⁹ Interview with Mr. Neinguto Naprantsu, age 74, Jotsoma village on 13 April 2009.

⁶⁰ Interview with Mr. Vinitha Nakhro, age 68, Assistant Pastor Christian Revival Church, on 3 January 2006.

⁶¹ J. H. Hutton., *The Angami Nagas*, Oxford University Press. London. 1921, pp. 219-220.

⁶² H. Bareth., Op. cit, p.79.

Thesa were two different terms for marriage price. *Thema* used to denote bride price which was not a dowry but a gesture of uniting the two families. The groom gave this in the form of animals to the bride's family. *Thema* generally consisted of a spear, two pigs and fifteen or sixteen fowls⁶³, which may or may not be demanded by the bride's family. *Thesa* on the other hand was a kind of gift in cash and kind (a cock) usually given to the girl's *Thethsü*, who in return, blessed the newly wedded couple and entertained the crowd through songs, jokes and variety shows. *Thesa* was not expected much if the groom was from the same community. In contrast, *Thesa* was expected more, in case, the groom was from other community,⁶⁴ *Thema* and *Thesa* existed in all the villages of the study area, except Viswema village. *Thema* and *Thesa* differed from village to village.

Hutton has elaborately narrated an Angami *kiya* in the following, "Young men of the girl's family and of her own age go on the day fixed to the bridegrooms house and carry off, as though by force the spear and the pigs and the chickens, which they kill and ate at the bride's house, and all the girl's kindred go and eat and drink there and take their places in a procession. One basket is filled with small pieces of flesh one leg of pork is set aside. At dusk two men took this meat and drink and take their places in a procession, which goes to the bridegroom's house. This procession is thus:

⁶³ J. H. Hutton., Op. cit. pp. 219-220.

⁶⁴ Interview with Mr. Thinokholie Nakhro, age 40, Ex Chairman, *Kenei Krou*, Medziphema village on 7 January 2009.

composed: First, the bride, next one boy and three girls from among her companions then the two men carrying meat and drink and finally a number of the bride's kindred and clan singing."⁶⁵ However, the data collected from the fieldwork has an interesting story to say:

When the time for the bride to leave her parents house came, she carried *zu*⁶⁶ in a *mekho*,⁶⁷ and took a walking stick, which was given to her by her male admirer along to clear her path if anything obstructed it. The walking stick signified that nothing should block the path of the bride in her journey of life.⁶⁸ The bride would gift the groom a shawl. A young girl would accompany her to the house of the groom. The next day, the bride and the groom would go to the field of the groom and work just for a short time. This was called *tsukhrü*. On the fifth day, they would again go out of the village (to denote a journey) which was called *rüvekhriü*. When people asked them where they going or where are they coming from, they would say the name of a good village. Example, the Jotsoma people would say, they were going or had gone to *Viswema* village, meaning good people.⁶⁹ After the couple settled in the house for few days, the *Phichü-u* was

⁶⁵ J. H. Hutton., Op. cit, pp. 220-221.

⁶⁶ *Zu* refers to rice beer.

⁶⁷ *Mekho* refers to a Naga basket.

⁶⁸ Interview with Mrs. Zhaziekhono, age 68, Jotsoma village on 18 May 2006.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

invited to give them *theja*⁷⁰ by the *Ukepenuopfü*⁷¹ to have good health, prosperity, long life and to procreate.

Kichüki/Morong (Bachelor's dormitory)

The *Kichüki* had been an important socio-cultural institution of the Angamis, although similar institutions with different nomenclatures were found all over the world. In India, we find this institution among a large number of tribes such as Ghotul⁷² of Murias, Dhumkuria of Oroan, Nodrong⁷³ of Dimasa Kacharis, Mare or Terang of Mikirs etc. *Kichüki* functioned as a formal school. Once the boys and girls reached the stage of *Darhe/Tsürhe* and *Rü-ü* respectively, they were inducted in their respective *kichüki* until they get married.⁷⁴ While a separate house was given for the boys, there was no such separate house for the girls but somebody who had a bigger house and could act as the supervisor of the girls' *kichüki* accommodated them. In the *Kichüki*, regardless of the family background, no favoritism or partiality was permitted,⁷⁵ except that the boys were allowed to visit the girls' *kichüki*, but the girls were not allowed to visit the boys' *kichüki*. This was where the courting of marriage was done. The number of *kichüki* varied

⁷⁰ *Theja* refers to blessing.

⁷¹ *Ukepenuopfü* refers to their supreme being.

⁷² Elwin Verrier., *The kingdom of the young: A bridge from the Muria and their Ghotul*, Oxford University Press, London, 1968, p. 23.

⁷³ C. Dipali Danda., *Among the Dimasa of Assam: An Ethnographic study*, Sterling Publishers, New Delhi, 1978, p. 28.

⁷⁴ Interview with Mr. Neinguto Naprantsu, age 74, Jotsoma village on 13 April 2009.

⁷⁵ V. Leno Peseyie Maase., *From head hunting to soul winner*, Kandid Litho Co, Covina CA, USA, 2005, p. 17

from one village to the other. In every *thepfü*, there was a *kichüki* where the bachelors of the village sleep during night and lounge during the day.

The members of *kichüki* were taught traditional values to shape their character and make them responsible citizens in the society. The primary aim of *kichüki* was to bring unity and goodwill, which was considered essential for a community.⁷⁶ It was in the *kichüki* that the boys get all the useful lessons. In the *Kichüki*, the boys were taught several things like traditional arts, songs, oral tradition, and handicrafts, trained them in various activities like hunting, war tactics, and were made to participate in religious activities. As village raids and war were frequent, the members in the *kichüki* acted as village guards keeping alert round the clock especially when they sense eminent danger of attack from the foes.⁷⁷ The *kichüki* served as a community centre and played an important role in the socialization of the young boys. It prepared the younger generation for the post of *Phichü Kehou*. In the girls' *kichüki*, they were also given training ranging from moral codes, handicrafts, art of singing and their role for the welfare of the village.

The *kichüki* not only acted as a hostel, club, public school, and military training centre but the focal point of all social, cultural, political, and military deliberations. Therefore, it became an indispensable feature in the Angami villages. The well-being and security of the village revolved entirely around this

⁷⁶ V. K. Anand., *Nagaland in Transition*. Associated Publishing House. New Delhi, 1976, p.86.

⁷⁷ R. Vashum .. *Nagas Rights to self determination*, Mittal Publications. New Delhi 2000, pp. 58-59.

unique fulcrum. The *kichüki* served as the community centre and every member had certain duties towards the clan, including defense, depending on his age group and fitness. The young men of the village shared the responsibility of defending the village in a democratic manner and with the unique spirit of loyalty and patriotism.⁷⁸ All the four villages except Medziphema village under study were found to have *kichüki* in the olden days. The *kichüki* was not a rival or parallel administrative unit of the village administration. A *kichüki* may very aptly be called a microsm of the village. It had its own council on the pattern of the village administrative machinery.⁷⁹

Thethsü (Age- set system)

The institution of *Thethsü* in the traditional Angami society was the organization of the various *thekhrie*⁸⁰ in the village. *Thethsü* membership forms the basis of a man's' identity and social standing. In addition to this, to be recognized as a bonafide citizen of the village with civil rights and duties, one must enter *Thethsü*. This was the traditional base of societal bonding and leadership training. Similarly, the traditional village council among the Choctes based on the age-set system has been reasonably smooth and harmonious⁸¹ N. K. Das has rightly said that, the whole population of the village is organized

⁷⁸ Jayanta, Sarkar and B. Datta Ray., Op. cit, 1990, pp. 103-104.

⁷⁹ M. Horam., Op. cit, p.69.

⁸⁰ *Thekhrie* refers to a batch or a generation.

⁸¹ Manish Kumar Raha and Alope Kumar Ghosh., *North East in the Human interface*, Gyan Publishing House, New Delhi, 1998, p. 342.

predominantly on an age set basis.⁸² According to Lonyü Medoze and Neinguto Naprantsu, the population of the village was divided into the following categories.⁸³ *Nocienoma*-Infants(from birth to 6 months), *Thepa Thedzüno*-Children from 6 months to 1 year, *Thekhono*-Children between 1-3 years, *Kibanoma*-Children from 4-6 years, (who can stay at home when the parents are out of the house), *Tsüdzie*- (referring to male), from 10-15 years of age whose hair was cut short, *Darhe/Tsürhe*(referring to male), from 15-20 years of age, (who had to keep their hair in front and shaved off the back of the head, *Rü-ü*(referring to female)- at a marriageable age(No hair style for female because they had to shave off their head until they are married), *Dashie*-Young fathers from 20-40 years of age, who were permitted to push their hair up, *Phichümia*-usually who were above 60 years of age considered as elders of the village, and *Ketsamia*-old aged. The dynamism of community life and activities were frequently manifested through the age-set system, which is seen mostly as a youth group. A function of the *Thethsü* is to accompany and help the bride and the groom during their marriage. When a girl member from the same *Thethsü* got married, the *Thethsü* used to accompany her by singing songs and cracking jokes. In return, the groom used to give a gift to the *Thethsü* called *Thesa*. Every girl anticipated more member of the *Thethsü* to be present on her wedding day. It was because of this

⁸² N. K. Das., *Kinship politics and law in Naga society*. Anthropological Survey of India Calcutta, Bose printing House, Calcutta, 1993, p. 92.

⁸³ Interview with Mr. Lonyü Medoze, age 78, Jotsoma Village on 27 February 2009; Interview with Mr. Neinguto Naprantsu, age 74, Jotsoma village on 14 April 2009.

reason that it was almost mandatory for a girl to take active role in *Thethsü* activities. In Medziphema village, there is a huge competition among the *Thethsü*, which they called *Kikra Peli*. They even take up big issues like hosting of Christmas for the whole village, gift all the mothers in the village, to the sick and needy etc.⁸⁴ A *Kikra Peli* in Medziphema village has even constructed a marketing shed in the town for which, revenue is collected. This is one example, which shows the spirit of the *Thethsü* even today. This is how *Thethsü* served to weave the social fabric of the community.

Peli (communal labour)

The traditional system of communal labour was called *Peli* where a group of people works in each other's field in rotation. This was an example of self-help and community spirit in Angami society. Voluntary labour without any force or outside pressure was a matter of pride for the Angamis. In the olden days, most of the people were engaged in agricultural activities and each *Thethsü* organized themselves in *Peli*. The young people learnt different skills and teamwork. The guiding principle of *pel*i was that it was a *kenyü* to eat without working.⁸⁵ While working in the field, the boys and girls sang in the form of *kehu*⁸⁶, which

⁸⁴ Interview with Mr. Kecalhuto, age 45, Medziphema village on 26 February 2006.

⁸⁵ Interview with Mr. Pfüricha Rüpreeo, age 61, Chiechama Village on 6 February 2009.

⁸⁶ *Kehu* is a form of singing.

encouraged them to work in rhythm with the *kehu*. When they returned from the field, the boys repaired their tools such as spades, daos etc, for the next day. This was how every boy in the village learns smithy for self-use.⁸⁷ The *Peli* was an example of self-help and community spirit in Angami society. This helped young people to socialize and learn the skills revolving around agriculture, political, social, religious and customary practices.

Zatho (Feast of merit)

People who had the capacity to feed the whole village performed *Zatho*. It fulfilled an extremely important socio-economic and religious function. It was concerned with the redistribution of wealth with the people. The enhancement of social prestige also depended upon hosting a series of feast defined by custom in every detail and spending huge quantities of zu, rice and meat.⁸⁸ It was also performed to be blessed by *Ukepenuopfü* because they believed that *Ukepenuopfü* was a liberator, merciful and loving God and that he would bless those who cared for the poor, but withheld his blessings from those who neglected them. Only a married man could hold a *Zatho* because the wife plays an important and honourable role throughout the ceremonies. The actual ceremonies lasted for six

⁸⁷ Interview with Mr. Krurovi Peseyie, age 73, Jotsoma village on 3 August 2006.

⁸⁸ Interview with Mr. Vipi Rhetso, age 82, *Phichümia*, Viswema village on 2 January 2009.

days.⁸⁹ Large quantity of rice was pounded for making *zu*. Therefore, all the adult males and females of the feast giver's clan come together and prepare the drinks.⁹⁰ A person who was able to perform *Zatho* and feed his villagers for another consecutive three years was given the permission to erect a stone and decorated his house with planks in the form of crossed horns in the front of his house.⁹¹

Kekinyi (Diplomatic feast)

Kekinyi was a diplomatic or friendship feast performed between the same *chienuo* as well as between feuding or warring villages in order to sheath the sword and maintain friendly relations.⁹² *Kekinyi* was generally performed during the *Sekrenyi* festival. It played a significant role among the *rüna* of the Angami Nagas during war, peace or difficult times. Any *chienuo* of a *rüna* could initiate for a *kekinyi* with the same *chienuo* of another village. In order to help each other and to show solidarity within the same *chienuo* of different villages, friendships were renewed. *Kekinyi* was also performed by a *chienuo* to strengthen its clan ties and re-assert its relation with relatives of another village and to give opportunity to the new generations to acquaint themselves with their relatives and to know about their ancestors living in other *rüna*. The village elders also maintained friendship through *kekinyi* with many villages for protection. Before performing

⁸⁹ V. Leno Peseyie Maase., Op. cit, p. 24.

⁹⁰ Asoso Yonuo., Op. cit, p. 33.

⁹¹ Interview with Mr. Sanyü Nakhro, age 92, Jotsoma village on 27 February 2009.

⁹² Asoso Yonuo., Op.cit, p. 33.

and celebrating the *kekinyi* between warring *rünas*, the elders of the warring *rünas* come to an agreement to reconcile their differences. When the agreement was made, the male elders along with male members of a *rüna* (who were able to walk to the other village) went to the host *rüna* for *kekinyi*. When the male members of a *chienuo* reached the host *rüna*, the male adults of the host *rüna* invited a man from the guest *rüna* to his house and served him the best *Zu*, the best meat and food, he was able to offer. Each host treated his guest with great hospitality and honor. In the course of *kekinyi*, they also discussed the importance of maintaining peace and good relationship with one another and agree to assist one another in times of need. The two warring *rüna* then exchange spears as a sign of a peace treaty.⁹³ On the day of departure, every household prepared the best meat for their departing guests. In addition, meat was also wrapped in banana leaf for the members of the guests' family. The guests were given shawls to be kept as remembrance of their acquaintance and friendship. The departing guests leave the village in a procession, in one or two lines amidst chanting and singing. No man or animals were allowed to cross their path once the procession started.⁹⁴ The last *Kekinyi*, which was performed among the four selected villages, was Chiechama village with Nerhema village in the year 1998 over a long-standing dispute between them. The oath taken between them reads; "As long as the sun and moon

⁹³ Interview with Mr. Lhouzelie Metha, age 90, Chiechama Village on 20 February 2009.

⁹⁴ J. S. Thong., *Head Hunters' Culture: Historic Culture of the Nagas*. Khinyi Woch. Tseminyu, 1997, p.79.

lives, our friendship will continue. If there is any bloodshed, let your streams flow with more blood than water.”⁹⁵

Kemevo (Religious priest)

Kemevo was the most important figure among the Angamis before the evolution of the institution of Angami *Phichü kehou* (informal council of elders) at the village level. *Kemevo* acted as the mediator between his people and *Ukepenuopfü*. Thus, his role was mostly pleasing deities through sacrifices and announced *penie* and *kenyü*. The animistic superstition strengthened this institution. He did not enjoy any privileges but cultivated his land like any other villagers. He was however entitled to a larger share of meat and *zu* during festivals and feast of merit.⁹⁶ The declaration of *Penie* and *kenyü* implied avoidance of communication with outsiders and strangers.

The office of *Kemevo* post was hereditary and for life. The succeeding *Kemevo* was usually his son but if he had no son, his clan used to decide the next *Kemevo*. In Viswema village, the *Kemevo* was always from the *Pavoma Khel*. Similarly, in Jotsoma village the *Kemevo* was always from the Medoze clan of Tsieyama Khel. In contrast, in Chiechama village the office of *Kemevo* was combined to the office *Phichü-u* and *Kemevo* called *Phichü-mevo* and were

⁹⁵ Interview with Mr. Lhouzelie Metha, age 90, Chiechama Village on 20 February 2009.

⁹⁶ Interview with Mr. Thukhu Valeo, age 63, *Kemevo*, Viswema village on 14 February 2009.

always from *Rüpreo* or *Zumvü khel* who were the original settlers of the village. The role of *Kemevo* differed from village to village. In Jotsoma village, the role of the *Kemevo* was to clean the *Kemevo tsie* (*Kemevo* stone), performed ritual once in a year and declares one-day *penie*. The significance of the *Kemevo tsie* was that, when a villager killed an enemy or a person, certain parts of the body such as fingers, ear, head etc, were brought back to the village as proof and kept on the *Kemevo tsie*.⁹⁷ The role of the *Kemevo* in Viswema and *Phichü-mevo* in Chiechama village were similar. His role was to ask for prosperity of the village and good health of the people. The ritual for these issues was taken up on the twelfth day of the third month of each year and *penie* was announced. He was also the initiator to please the God of rain and storm, please the God of epidemics and natural calamities. The *Kemevo tsie* in Viswema village functioned as an altar where the *Kemevo* and his assistant (the second eldest in their clan) performed a ritual that says: “we are worshipping *Ukepenuopfü*, we are doing errand for the ones who have gone before us.” This ritual was performed for the village to receive blessings from *Ukepenuopfü*. The course of the ritual was as follows:

“Thirty leaves of the right side of the banana leaves are cut and layered together and the *Zu* was kept on the layered leaves. They then keep the

⁹⁷ Interview with Mr. Lonyü Medoze, age 78, Jotsoma Village on 27 February 2009.

layered leaves and the *Zu* upon the *Kemevo tsie*. This was a sign of offering to their God.”⁹⁸

Thehouba/Badze

Thehouba and *Badze* were interchangeably used, although they had slightly different meanings. *Thehouba* was usually stone structures constructed within the village in a circular shape where people gathered to sit and discuss village affairs. It was bigger than the size of a *Badze*. *Badze* was usually made out of a graveyard of a famous personality where people used to sit and discuss too. *Thehouba* was used as a ‘look out place’ for the approaching enemies. Each *thepfü* had a *thehouba* and in case of any dispute between two individual, *chienuo*, *thepfü* or *rüna*, the two parties were summoned at the *thehouba* or *badze* for disposal of cases. It was also found that the traditional village customs and practices were continuously discussed in such gatherings. For an Angami, the current affairs of the village and the knowledge of the history were very important to them. Thus, the need for such knowledge had enabled them to come together to a particular place known as *Thehouba*.⁹⁹ Khrishnakali Majumdar narrates the activities of *Thehouba* in Jotsoma village in the following words:

⁹⁸ Interview with Mr. Thukhu Valeo, age 63, *Kemevo*, Viswema village on 14 February 2009.

⁹⁹ Ngunuo Suokhrie., Op. cit. p. 43.

“Towards evening, villagers return home from work. Then one sees group of men chat and drink around fire on *Tehuba* [sic] while women and children enter the kitchen to prepare the evening meal. After an early meal, young and old men gather again and sit around the fire, chatting, joking or listening to one another’s story. Women, however never join them, as it was unethical for them to sit on *Tehuba* [sic] when men are engrossed in one discussion or the other. These gossip sessions, involving a constant intermingling of the villagers give them a sense of unity and solidarity. The young and old men mingle freely. This friendly and co-operative spirit reinforces the idea of Angami Democracy.”¹⁰⁰

Thehouba was also the place, where the *Peyumia*¹⁰¹ and *Krütamia*¹⁰² used to influence the whole community and trained them the war tactics.¹⁰³ The implications and applications of all the traditions were discussed for preserving the cultural heritage of the community.¹⁰⁴ The *Thehouba* was a political arena where decisions were taken, and where community activities and feasts were held. It acted as the village court where all disputes were settled and the sacred place for the community religious rites.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁰ Khrishnakali Majumdar., Op. cit, p. 55.

¹⁰¹ *Peyumia* are wise men.

¹⁰² *Krütamia* are leaders.

¹⁰³ Punyü Khonyü., Op. cit, p.71.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid. 1995, pp.79-80.

¹⁰⁵ K. Linyü., *The Angami Church since 1950*, Khedi Printing Press, Kohima, 1983, p.4

The institution of *Thehouba* in Viswema, Jotsoma and Chiechama village are still in existence. Its functions have diminished but it still plays an important role in that, it is still used for settlement of disputes between two individuals, theft, robbery, and issues pertaining to the welfare of the respective *thepfü*. *Thehoubas* in these villages have been renovated and used for the above purposes. Ever since Medziphema village shifted from the original site to the present site, *Thehouba* has not been built.¹⁰⁶ Therefore, *Thehouba* was not found Medziphema village.

Themumia (Shaman)

Themumia occupied a central place in the traditional medical system as they were presumed to be well versed with herbal medicines and received calling from a divine power. *Themumia* earned respect because of their healing powers and the power to advice the people. Both male and female could become a *Themumia*. Female *themumia* were called *themumiapfü*. There were three categories of *Themumia* namely; one who could directly communicated with the spirit, second category acted as intermediary between the individual and the spirit and the third category was, one who did not have any connection with the spirits at all. The first category was found in Jotsoma village. Mrs. Sorhino (*Themumiapfü*) had the power to communicate with the soul of dead people and acted as a messenger

¹⁰⁶ Interview with Mr. Pelhusievi Nakhro, age 87, Medziphema Village on 30 December 2006.

between the deceased and his family. The second category was also found in Jotsoma village. Mr. Pezau Seyietsu (*Themumia*) had the power to communicate with the spirits.¹⁰⁷ Both of them had the healing power.¹⁰⁸ The *Terhomia*¹⁰⁹ selected them. Sicknesses were largely considered to be caused by the spirits. Hence, the power to appease the spirits and heal the person was given to *Themumia*. The third category was found in Medziphema village. Mr. Megoyazo (*Themumia*) could give advice to the people through *Thophi*. When a person performed *Thophi*, a piece of stick was toppled on the ground and the position of the stick was taken into account. Accordingly, advice to perform certain ritual was given to appease the spirit causing illness. In case of theft or a robbery, he was consulted.¹¹⁰

The role of *Themumia* differed from one another. Some had the power to stay without food for days; others could communicate with the soul of the dead and acted as messenger between the deceased and his family. Some also could cure diseases as well as disorders through massaging. These powers descended on a person because of supernatural grace. The *Terhomia* used to select *Themumia*. The anxiety of an unusual dream also directed the Angamis to consult the *Themumia* in search of its interpretation and measures of averting a forth-coming

¹⁰⁷ Interview with Mr. Pezau Seyietsu (who was a *Themumia*), age 70, Jotsoma village on 17 April 2008.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ *Terhomia* refers to a supernatural being, a ghost.

¹¹⁰ Interview with Mr. Megoyazo (who was a *Themumia*), age 72, Medziphema village on 23 February 2009.

eventuality. The *Themumias* were also consulted before waging a war with another village or before going out on a journey. The same process of *Thophi* was performed and according to the advice of the *Themumia*, the people performed ritual, move ahead with their plans, or cancel their plans. This was how they gained political power in decision making especially in times of war.

Tsiakrü-u (First Sower)

The life of the Angamis revolved around agriculture, which was dependent on the forces of nature and belief that spirits influenced the forces of nature. Therefore, *Tsiakrü-u* was assigned the duty of the first sower to ask *theja* from *Ukepenuopfü*. The office of *Tsiakrü-u* was not hereditary nor for life but should be old enough to take up the responsibility. The villagers unanimously selected him. Many people did not want to become *Tsiakrü-u* because he had to refrain himself from taking certain food such as, chicken, beef, meat of wild animals, dry leaves or anything dried.¹¹¹ During the *Ngonyi* (seed festival), the *Tsiakrü-u* performed the *Ngonyi* rituals for the whole village to mark the commencement of the sowing season. The date for the *nanyü*¹¹² was decided by the *Tsiakrü-u* along with the *Phichü-u(s)*.¹¹³ To perform the *nanyü*, he would observe *penie* for thirty days and would confined himself in his house for five days, forbidden to mix with

¹¹¹ Interview with Mr. Lhouzelie Metha, age 90, Chiechama Village on 20 February 2009.

¹¹² *Nanyü* refers to religion and the practices of rituals associated with it.

¹¹³ Interview with Mr. Vikhwel Rhetso, age 93, *Phichü-u*, Viswema village on 4 March 2006.

his family and pray to *Ukepenuopfü* to bless them abundantly. To mark the sowing season, he collects all types of crop seeds including rice and went to his field along with a boy who was pure and innocent. He would then clear a small part of his field and began the *nanyü* by asking *theja* from *Ukepenuopfü* in the form of many *kehu*¹¹⁴ asking that, neither pesticides nor natural calamities spoil the crops. Then he would keep *Zu* in a banana leaf in the field for *Ukepenuopfü*. He carried out the *nanyü* very carefully because the credit of a good crop or the blame of a failed crop would be put on him.¹¹⁵ He then observed *penie* for five days and went to his field to water the seeds sown. It was only after he performed the *nanyü* and observed the *penie*, that the villagers began the sowing of their crops. During harvest, the villagers gave him certain amount of paddy.

Tekhusekhrü (First planter)

A functionary called *Tekhusekhrü* performed the ceremonial transplanting of rice seedlings during the festival of *Thekranyi* (transplanting festival). He would also observe *penie* for thirty days before the performance of the *nanyü*. In Jotsoma and Chiechama villages, *Tekhusekhrü* performed *nanyü* to bless the villagers for success in the process of transplantation. He wears a coat of leaves and grass known as *khrunyho* for the following five days. He observes a *kenyü* on

¹¹⁴ *Kehu* is a form of singing.

¹¹⁵ Interview with Mr. Kesovito Taphino, age 85, *Tsiakru-u*, Jotsoma village on 12 March 2009.

eating meat of wild animals.¹¹⁶ In Jotsoma village, *Tekhusekhrü* can only be from *Khwüma Khel*.¹¹⁷ In Viswema village, *Tekhusekhrü* consisted of village *Phichü-u*, *Tsiakrü-u*, *Liedepfü*, *Kemevo* and all the *Khel Phichü-u(s)*. The village *Phichü-u* would announce the date for transplanting the seedlings and *penie* for one day would be observed. All the members would go to their respective fields and perform a *nanyü*. The *nanyü* was as follows: Pairs of *Tsamho*¹¹⁸ *zü*,¹¹⁹ pairs of *sapa papu*,¹²⁰ which no one had cut or destroyed and pairs of rice seedlings would be taken to the field, and plant it in their own field. Then the villagers can begin their transplanting of seedlings.

Liedepfü (First reaper)

The institution of *Liedepfü* was the only institution exclusively reserved for women. She was the first reaper of the village. *Khupfhünyi* (a festival for harvest) and a festival for female, which was observed, accompanied harvesting. During this festival, for each animal killed, a piece of meat was given to her, who, in return cooked the meat without chilly and offered it to her household.¹²¹ *Liedeh*

¹¹⁶ Interview with Mr. Keyielhuzo, age 66, *Krüna*, Jotsoma village on 2 February 2006.

¹¹⁷ Interview with Mr. Thekruvizo, age 70, *Zievo*, Jotsoma village on 27 February, 2006

¹¹⁸ *Tsamho* refers to a tree.

¹¹⁹ *Zü* refers to the top part of the tree.

¹²⁰ A plant.

¹²¹ Interview with Mr. Lhouzelie Metha, age 90, Chiechama village on 20 February 2009.

was the day of ceremonial harvest, which was performed by the *Liedepfü* in her own field. On reaching her field, she kept the *Zu* and rice in a banana leaf and placed it under the paddy. She would then choose a part of her paddy field and cut a few heads of paddy, marking the commencement of harvesting season. After the *nanyü* was performed, she refrained herself from all activities including weaving¹²² for five days. Nobody was allowed to harvest unless the *Liedepfü* performed the ceremony to mark the harvest season. When the villagers went to their field for harvesting, they would select and bind together a small part of paddy and placed the *Zu* and rice in a banana leaf under the paddy, which was bounded. Then they began to harvest.¹²³ After harvest, the villagers gave certain amount of paddy to her.

Phichü-u/Zievo (Head Priest)

The words *Phichü-u/Zievo* were interchangeably used in the Angami villages. Every *thepfü* also has a *thepfü Phichü-u*. While the term *Zievo* was used with reference to *Phichü-u* in Jotsoma village, the term *Phichü-mevo* was used in Chiechama village. Their functions were the same except that in Chiechama village, the institution of *Phichü-u* and *Kemevo* were combined into the institution

¹²² Nita Mathur., *Op. cit.*, p.132.

¹²³ Interview with Mrs. Zhaziekhono, age 65, Jotsoma village on 18 May 2006.

of *Phichü-mevo*. The oldest man among the followers of *Krüna*¹²⁴, by virtue of his maturity is accepted as the village *Phichü-u* in Viswema village.¹²⁵ In Jotsoma village, the village *Phichü-u* was always the eldest from *Thevo*¹²⁶. In Chiechama village, the *Phichü-mevo* was the eldest from the *Rüpreo* or *Zumvü* clan (the original settlers of the village). The office of the village *Phichü-u* was for lifetime or till his health permits. In case the village *Phichü-u* chooses to convert to another religion or faith or for health reasons, he gives up his responsibility to the people who are fit to hold the office. To take up the responsibility of the *Phichü-u*, he has to perform a ritual. For this, a chicken was brought and strangulated. If the chicken dies with its legs crossed and passed urine, the ritual was considered successful. However, if the chicken dies with its legs open or does not pass urine, the ritual was considered unsuccessful. Therefore, he has to perform again until the ritual was successful. He would then pull out an intestine of the chicken and hang it in front of his house.¹²⁷ After performing the *nanyü*, the first work that was assigned to him was to bless the people, which were called *Phichü ja*. *Penie* was announced for three days during which he would cook a cock (which can crow)

¹²⁴ *Krüna* refers to the religion and practices of Animism predominantly practiced by the non-Christians of the Angami Nagas.

¹²⁵ Interview with Mr. Kidese Kikhi, age 37. Viswema village on 14 February 2009.

¹²⁶ *Thevo* the elder brother of *Thepa* referred to as two *kelhu* of the Angamis by Hutton.

¹²⁷ Interview with Mr. Lhouzelie Metha, age 90, Chiechama village on 20 February 2009.

and eat. He would get up early in the morning in the belief that the villagers would do the same every morning.

The Angami animistic faith emphasized upon a number of *penie and kenyü*,¹²⁸ during which the *Phichü-u* played the most prominent role in asking *theja* to *Ukepenuopfü*. The *Phichü-u* played the most prominent parts in all ceremonies connected with birth, sickness, death, marriage, war etc. He used to declare *penie* and *kenyü* for the village on the following issues: when there is rain and storm that could spoil the crop, he would declare one day *Penie* to appease the God of rain and storm; when accidental burning of a house occurred in the village, he would declare one day *penie* to appease the God of fire; when there is hailstorm, he would declare one day *penie* to appease the God of hailstorm; when there is an earthquake, he would declare one day *penie* to appease the God of earthquake; when a person who has been able to perform the *Zatho* dies, he would declare two days *penie*; when there is an un-natural death of a villager, he would declare *kenyü* until the dead body was brought back to the village; when anybody changes a graveyard(collect the skeletons) in the village, one day *penie* was observed.¹²⁹

¹²⁸There were many taboos characterized by two words *Penie and Kenyü*. *Penie* refers to taboo days where nobody was allowed to work in the field; *Kenyü* simply means a prohibition to do certain things.

¹²⁹ Interview with Mr. Vikhwel Rhetso, age 99, *thepfü Phichü-u*, Viswema village on 29 January 2006; Mr. Lhouzelie Metha, age 90, Cheichama village on 20 February 2009.

As the first man in the village, villagers consulted the *Phichü-u* on important public activities. He, along with the *Phichü kehou*, had the power to conclude peace treaties by performing *kekinyi* with the feuding or warring villages. The *Phichü-u/Zievo* symbolizes unity when social and political life was threatened by feuds. When a theft is committed by someone and remained undetected, he would perform certain rituals. He, in consultation with the *Phichü kehou* fixed the date of the festivals.¹³⁰

Phichü kehou (Informal Council of Elders)

Phichü kehou was the informal council of elders consisting of *Phichümia*, *Peyumia* and *Pehümia*. The term *Phichümia*, *Peyumia* and *Pehümia* were interchangeably used, although they had different meanings. The skill in diplomacy, power of oratory, knowledge of oral history of the village and knowing the art of dealing with people¹³¹, honesty, wisdom, and leadership quality were referred to as *Peyu*. People having these qualities were known as *Peyumia*. *Phichümia* were those who attained the age of above 60 years having grand children.¹³² Those *Phichümia* having the qualities of a *Peyu* and were older in age among the *Phichümia* were referred to as *Pehümia*. To the Angamis, advanced in

¹³⁰ Interview with Mr. Tsalhu, age 71, *Phichü-u*, Jotsoma village on 27 February 2006.

¹³¹ Interview with Mr. Khezhü Vitsu, age 96, *Phichü-u*. Viswema village on 2 February 2009.

¹³² Interview with Mr. V. Sale Chüsi, age 74, *Gaonbura*. Medziphema village on 23 February 2009.

age was a sign of maturity.¹³³ *Phichü kehou* neither were from a hereditary lineage nor were they the result of a search for the election of a leader. They were those who emerged naturally as respected and recognized leaders based on their qualities of *Peyu*, honesty, maturity etc. There was no specific quorum for the *Phichü kehou* or a fixed tenure of office. The number of its members varied from generation to generation depending on the number of elders at a given generation. It functions as and when the need arises. Disputes were settled by the informal council of elders through discussion with one another, the parties and the public at great length, until some sort of agreement was arrived at.¹³⁴ Any issue or dispute like theft, robbery, murder, adultery etc pertaining to individuals were tried by the *Phichü kehou*. Punishments were given according to the customary law and no partial treatment was ever given to any of the disputing parties. For example, theft was punished by recovering seven times worth the price of the thing stolen. In case of murder, one has to be exiled for seven years. For settlement of disputes between *chienuo*, *thepfü* and *issues* relating to the village, the *Phichü kehou* met and an eloquent person was selected to lead them. On such occasions, his role was that of a presiding officer for that meeting. Everybody had the right to participate in the discussion and express their opinion, and suggestions given by individuals in the meetings were always taken into account. No voting system existed but

¹³³ Interview with Mr. K. N. Pusha, age 78, *Gaonbura*, *Viswema* village on 1 February, 2009

¹³⁴ J. H. Hutton., *Op. cit.*, p.143.

decisions were taken according to the unwritten customary laws of the Angamis, which was final and binding. The *Phichü kehou* was also instrumental in solving long-standing disputes between villages. An example in Viswema village is given here. Many years ago, a *Sopfüma* (a neighbouring village) killed a Viswema warrior for which Viswema village continued to take revenge by killing *Sopfüma* on different occasions. With the initiation of the *Phichümia* (*Phichü kehou*) in Viswema village, the issue was solved and peace was maintained. As a sign of peace, the Viswema and *Sopfüma* arranged a feast in the year 2001 in which a Dao and a Spear was exchanged between them.¹³⁵

The *Phichü kehou* also assist the warriors in matters of defense of the village. They guide and instruct the young boys of the village to defend the village. Military training was given to them and was put to test not only in physical strength but also in their intelligence by sounding mock alarm or peculiar noise, which would indicate the direction from where the enemies were coming.¹³⁶ Whenever war broke out with other villages, it was their duty to inform the whole village to prepare themselves for the war.¹³⁷

¹³⁵ Interview with Mr. Kidese, age 37, Ex- President, Youth Organization, Viswema village on 14 February 2009.

¹³⁶ R. R. Shimray., Op. cit. p. 195.

¹³⁷ Interview with Mr. Neikho Dolie, age 85, *Phichümia* Medziphema village on 5 March 2006.

Terhümiavi (Warriors)

The title of *Terhümiavi* was given to a person only if he killed a number of persons in a war, face to face with people. He was highly respected for his bravery. However, there was no guarantee that he would be chosen as the leader in a war again. He did not have any decision making power in the village except in matters pertaining to war. The number of people he had been able to kill in a war was his pride in festivals because he was able to wear a necklace in the form of skulls representing the number of people he had killed. This form of necklace was worn in front of the chest. In contrast, a person who killed others through secret plot was not called a *Terhümiavi* and they were not allowed to wear the necklace in the form of skulls in the front but had to wear at the back.¹³⁸ As war and village raids were frequent, every male who were able to go to the war would be tested with different methods.¹³⁹

¹³⁸ Interview with Mr. Vinitha Nakhro, age 74, Assistant Pastor, Christian Revival Church, Jotsoma village on 3 January 2006.

¹³⁹ Interview with Mr. Lonyü Medoze, age 78, Jotsoma village on 27 February 2009.

The study reveals that, the socio-political institutions of the Angami Nagas often linked to spiritual, religious, political, judicial, and economic functions in the past covered almost all the conceivable needs of a person from birth to death. The study also reveals that, these socio-political institutions, which had a long history, determined the daily lives of the Angamis representing the force of authority and legitimacy. These institutions lay anchored primarily in customs, traditions, and the incumbents acted as the legitimate upholders and interpreters of the scope and contents of the tradition. The study also reveals that, unlike other Nagas, free and formal discussions formed the very backbone of the Angami society. This has led many writers including J. P. Mills to consider the traditional Angami system of administration as democratic or very close to the modern concept of democracy. However, it would be incorrect to call it as democratic in that the traditional Angami society never experienced an established government in the modern sense, nor was inclusive in that the titles and functions of traditional leaders were by inheritance passed on to male successors of one clan thereby, excluding the members of other clans. Additionally, access by women to traditional leadership was limited because they could not inherit titles. The legitimacy for the traditional authorities of the community under study was rooted in customs, traditions history and culture, often combined with religious/divine reference. Traditional leaders claimed special legitimacy in the eyes of their

people because these institutions were seen as embodying their people's history, culture, laws, values and religion. Since, many of the traditional leaders held their positions inherently for life, the possibilities of sanctions were restricted.



Fig 1: Viswema village.



Fig 2: Jotsoma village.



Fig 3: Way to Medziphema village.

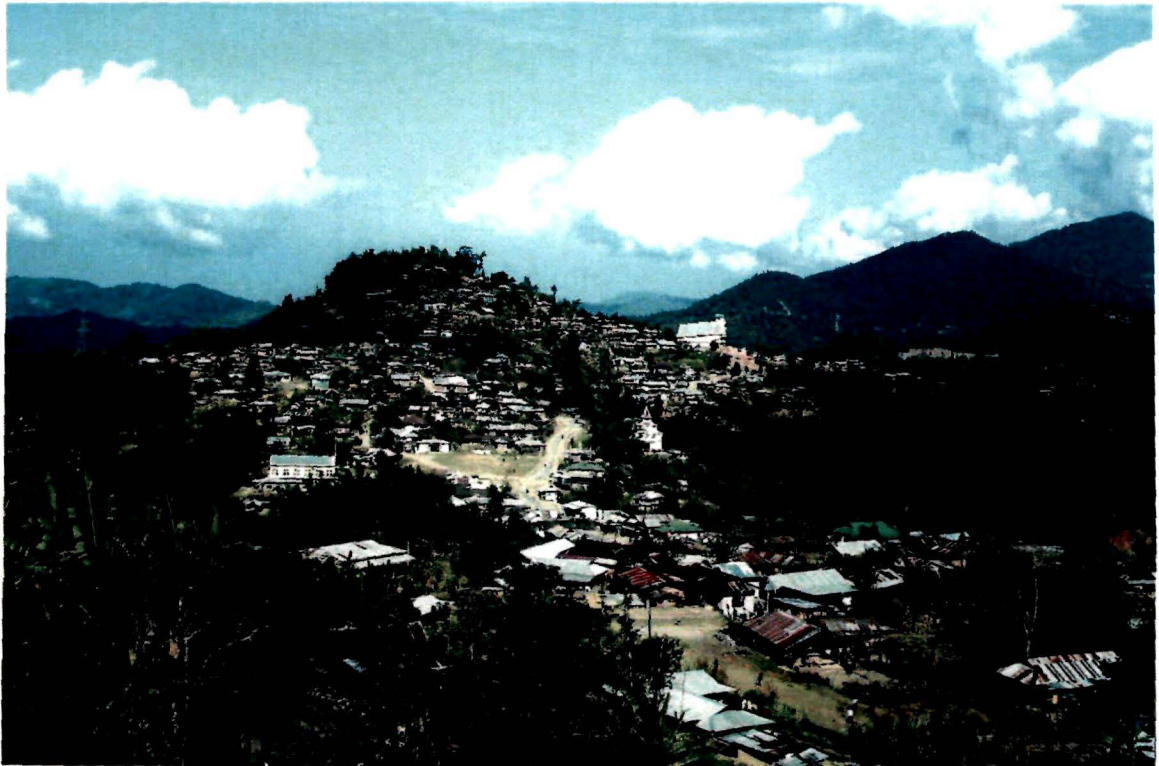


Fig 4: Chiechama village.



Fig 5: Kemevo Tsie(Kemevo stone), Jotsoma.



Fig 6: Stone Gate(Ketsie kharu), Jotsoma



Fig 7: Thehouba(Jotsoma).



Fig 8: Thehouba(Jotsoma).

Chapter III

Changes brought about by Colonial rule, Village Councils and Village Development Boards on socio-political institutions of the Angami Nagas

The socio-political institutions in different parts of the world had certain similarities in their origin, development and functioning. However, Colonial rule and constitutional bodies in the post-colonial period brought about a number of changes on socio-political institutions in different parts of the world. The Angami Nagas of Nagaland are no exception. The Angamis were isolated from the outside world but found no difficulty in governing their villages because of the traditional socio-political institutions, which existed in their society. The British broke their isolation from the outside world. They were the first among the Naga tribes who encountered the British,¹⁴⁰ on 18 January 1832.¹⁴¹ They initially resisted the entry of the British, but the British were able to establish themselves in the Angami territory mainly because of their superior fighting weapons.¹⁴² The administrative policy of the

¹⁴⁰ Visier Sanyü., *A History of Nagas and Nagaland (Dynamics of Oral Tradition in Village Formation)*, Commonwealth Publishers, New Delhi, 1996, p. 61.

¹⁴¹ A. J. Moffat Mills., *Report on the province of Assam 1854*, pp. CXIV-CXII, Political Proceedings, 5 March 1832, India Office Library, London, pp. 67-71.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

British was to secure the allegiance of the hill tribes to maintain law and order in the hill areas. They had nothing to gain much economically from the Naga Hills but they had to control the Angamis and other Naga tribes to protect their own economic interests in the valley of Assam from where the Nagas carried out regular raids. The British policy was not to interfere with the traditional way of life of the tribals, their customs, practices and their traditional institutions. Instead, the British evolved a method known as the system of 'internal management'.¹⁴³ Under this system, the traditional chiefs and traditional institutions were allowed to rule their people under the supervision of the British Political officer. With the expansion of the loose British administration over the various Naga tribes, and the establishment of the Naga Hills District in 1866, the British government brought the different Naga tribes under one administration either directly or indirectly. Thus, the introduction of the British administration first brought the different Naga villages under one rule.¹⁴⁴

Changes brought about by British Rule

Gaonburas

The Angamis, unlike other Naga tribes had no recognized chiefship, but *Phichü kehou* (informal council of elders) who had limited authority over the

¹⁴³ The system of internal Management had its origin at Bhagalpur Hills in Bihar introduced by Augustine Cleveland as early as in 1789. The system was experimented in Northeast India with some modifications by David Scott in Garo Hills.

¹⁴⁴ Asielie Pusa., "The emergence of the Naga consciousness." M.Phil Dissertation submitted to NEHU, Shillong. 1987. p.76.

villagers. The role of the elders was mere advisory and as a result, the younger generations who acted as village force sometimes played important roles particularly on matters relating to tribal warfare. The immediate task before the Political Officer was therefore to select one or two *Gaonburas* from each village. It was felt that without a chief for each village, the work of administration would be immensely difficult. Earlier in 1847, Captain Butler, had appointed one *Sezwal*,¹⁴⁵ who had authority over all Angami tribe. The main duty of the *Sezwal* was to supervise the activities of all the Angamis. At the beginning of 1882, the British appointed *Gaonburas* to assist the colonial administration in carrying out their respective village administration. The intention was to make them loyal agents of the colonial administration at the village levels. Thus, the institution of *Gaonbura* brought into being a semi-official functionary in every village to act as their agent, tax collector and liaison officer between the colonial administration and the traditional village councils. The Angamis had no tradition of paying house tax, but under the British rule, it became compulsory for them.¹⁴⁶ Initially the house tax was Rs. 2/-per household but was further increased to Rs. 20/-per household.¹⁴⁷ Though they did not get a monthly salary, a red blanket was issued to them once in three years. Further, they were exempted from house tax and a rebate of 5 percent commission was given

¹⁴⁵ An officer employed for collection of revenue.

¹⁴⁶ Interview with Mr. Rügolie Nakhro. age 72, Head *Gaonbura*. Jotsoma village on 4 August 2006.

¹⁴⁷ Interview with Mr. Visalhou Rüpreo. age 73, *Gaonbura*. Chiechama village on 7 February 2006.

to them from the revenue collected.¹⁴⁸ Though they were unpaid, *Gaonburas* came to wield considerable influence, power, and prestige and virtually acted as the village headmen.¹⁴⁹ With increasing reliance on the office of *Gaonburas*, the customary hold of the Angami elders over the village began to decline as the appointment of *Gaonburas* for life not only brought in an element of extra village authority but also infused the cult of chiefship, which was unknown in the Angami society.

Initially, there was no resistance for such exogamous institutions like *Gaonbura* and *Dobashis* because they had rather helped the “traditional” administration to work smoothly.¹⁵⁰ The indigenous or pre-British Angami polity was a loose democracy and their social structure was egalitarian in character. The values of their social and political institutions had enabled them to survive the stress and strength of time and circumstances. Initially, the imposition of the British rule did not change the village administration much as the *Gaonburas* did not enjoy more powers than the former *Pehümia* (*Phichü kehou*). However, the appointment of *Gaonburas* for life infused the cult of chieftaincy or even bureaucracy and brought in the element of extra village authority in village affairs. Justice and police administration ultimately passed over to the colonial administration. In the administration of civil justice, the *Gaonbura* and the village authorities along with the village elders in the council were empowered to try cases but with certain

¹⁴⁸ Interview with Mr. K. N. Pusha, age 78. *Gaonbura*, Viswema village on 1 February, 2009

¹⁴⁹ V. K. Anand., *Nagaland in Transition*. Associated Publishing House, New Delhi, 1976. p.45.

¹⁵⁰ Jayanta Sarkar and B. Datta Ray., *Op. cit.* p. 100.

reservations. Firstly, they were not allowed to try suits in which a native of the plains or native of another village was a party. Secondly, all suits were decided in open durbar, in the presence of the parties and at least three witnesses.

Dobashis

The difficulty of communications and judicial administration influenced the British to introduce the institutions of *Dobashis* in 1869-70,¹⁵¹ when they were officially called “Residentary Delegates.” As the term implies, either they were able to communicate with the government officials in Assamese or broken English and conveyed government standing orders to their fellow tribesmen. They were interpreters who enjoyed certain powers and privileges and gradually became custodian of customary laws. Thus, *Dobashis* were appointed to act as intermediaries between the British administrators and the villagers or the tribal people in general. Similarly, they conveyed the problems, views and ideas of the villagers to the government officials.¹⁵² Consequently, the British sought their help while giving judgments on matters relating to village disputes. Thus, they were paid and employed not only to interpret different dialects but also customary law, leading to decision of cases in the courts.¹⁵³ The *Dobashis* (DBs) were allowed to go out on tour to various areas of the villages and settled cases regularly. They also

¹⁵¹ L. Atola Changkiri., Op. cit. p. 133.

¹⁵² Pat Keyhie., “Profile of an Angami Village.” Ph. D. Thesis submitted to NEHU, Shillong, 1988. p. 885.

¹⁵³ V. K. Anand., Op. cit. p. 45.

accompanied the British administrators who visited their areas of administration once a year and assisted them in deciding cases. As the *Dobashis* could hold clear-cut adjudication powers, the post of *Dobashis* was much sought after not because the pay was high, but the prestige was great. However, at the village level, all kinds of disputes except heinous cases like murder continued to be settled and adjudicated *Phichü kehou* in the case of the Angamis. The *Dobashis* were the most useful tools used by the British officers to act as intermediaries and to look after their respective villages according to the wishes of the British.¹⁵⁴

District Administration

The third institution adopted by the colonial administration was the District Officer who supervised the overall administration of the district. The district officers, who did not directly interfere in the internal matters of the Nagas, in fact, framed all policies and directions were given to the *Dobashis* and *Gaonburas*. Further, since the Europeans exclusively held these offices, a non-Naga began to involve in their village administration for the first time. Another new development was that historically, there had been no district level council in the traditional Naga society. In contrast, each Naga tribe occupied its own specific territory independent from other tribes with village administration as the highest form of organization. With the introduction of district administration, every Naga village had adopted a common

¹⁵⁴ Interview with Mr. Visalhou, age 73. *Gaonbura*. Chiechama village on 7 February 2006.

system under the direction and supervision of the district officers. The district officers travelled throughout the district, visiting one village after the other, met village *Gaonburas*, public, built relations with them and settled disputes brought to them during the course of their journey.¹⁵⁵ Apart from the maintenance of law and order, the Deputy Commissioner was involved in all the activities of the district ranging from the supervision of constructing link roads, collection of house tax, giving guidance for the improvement of agriculture, supply of medicine to the dispensaries inspection of school etc. In his judicial functions, the district head possessed the powers of a session judge and exercised the power of life and death subject to confirmation by the Chief Commissioner. However, the whole administration of the district was under the general supervision of the Governor of Assam, who administered the Excluded Areas as the agent of the Governor General of India. According to Nari Rastomji, “the district head was a jack of all trades; there was no field of activity that did not come within his purview.”¹⁵⁶

Thus, the British government transformed the polity of the Angami Nagas into three-layer system not directly but indirectly to suit the convenience of the government to maintain good relations with the Nagas. They adopted certain customs and tradition in selecting *Gaonburas* and *Dobashis*. No doubt, before the British colonized the Naga Hills, each village was independent, and the traditional

¹⁵⁵ Piketo Sema., *British policy administration in Nagaland 1881-1947*. Scholar Publication House, New Delhi, 1991, p. 36.

¹⁵⁶ Bengal Judicial Proceedings, August 1892, No. 77.

Phichü kehou was the sole authority to frame policy and maintain law and order of the village. Nevertheless, there was no common policy among the tribes. The British colonization introduced a system, which every village had adopted as a common system and administered under the direction of the District Officer. During the pre-colonial period, the *Phichü kehou* covered executive, legislative and judicial powers but the appointment of the *Gaonburas* by the colonial government made them responsible in all matters relating to the village like a village chief. Similarly, the *Dobashis* also appointed by the colonial government enjoyed a higher level as he had to acquaint the British officers with the customary laws and practices. It was also his duty to inform the District Officers about the response of the Nagas to the colonial rule. It was definitely a far-sighted policy of the colonial government to introduce the institutions of *Gaonburas* and *Dobashis* for consolidating their control over the Nagas. The introduction of District administration restructured the traditional Angami polity into a completely different direction in that the chiefs and village elders who enjoyed supreme authority without any interference was demolished.

Evolution of Village Councils

Nagaland, which became the Sixteenth State of the Indian Union in 1963, has special constitutional protection provided under Article 371(A). It provided that no Act of Parliament in respect of religious or social practices of the Nagas, their

customary laws and procedure, administration of civil and criminal justice involving decisions according to Naga customary laws and ownership and transfer of land and its resources would apply to the state without approval from the Legislative Assembly of Nagaland. It is in this context that the role of the Village Council assumes significance. The Village Council is the overall authority for the administration of justice within the village. The State of Nagaland has been exempted from the purview of 73rd Amendment of the Constitution, due to the existence of local self Government activities through Village Council and Village Development Boards.

The Nagaland Village Council Act 1964 was the first legislation enacted by the Nagaland government to administer the affairs of the village, to impart justice to all the members of the village, to promote harmony and cordial relationship between the *thepfü* or *chienuo* in the village and to enforce the directives given by the government. Thus, the main functions are to act as an instrument of the government and try all civil and criminal cases within the jurisdiction. A Chairman assisted by the Vice-Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, village members, Gaonbura, and Area Council member heads the Village Council for a period of three years. The Nagaland Tribe, Area, Range and Village Councils Act of 1966 provided for the creation of a Tribal Council for each tribe and an Area Council for Kohima and Dimapur, which was repealed by the Nagaland Village, Area and Regional Council Act of 1970.

This Act of 1970 established Village Councils in every village having a population of not less than one hundred. In 1978, a new act was passed which did away with the Regional Councils, while the duties and powers of the Village Councils were more elaborately defined including that of constituting a Village Development Board. In 1980, statutory rules were promulgated to cover the latter also. The Nagaland Village Council Act 1990 abolished the Area Council.

Village Council

Under the Nagaland Village Council Act, 1990, every recognized village in Nagaland, established according to the usage and customary practices of the population of the area is required to have a Village Council, with a five-year term unless otherwise dissolved by the state government. The state government may extend the term of the Village Council by a notification in the gazette for a period not exceeding one year at a time. The Act also provides that hereditary village chiefs, *Gaonburas* and *Angs* should be Ex-officio members of the Council with voting rights. The Village Council chooses a member as Chairman and can select or appoint a Secretary of the Village Council who may or may not be a member of the Village Council. If the Secretary is not a member of the Council, he does not have voting rights. Thus, Nagaland evolved from a three level system to a single tier local system known as the Village Council.

Powers and Duties

The powers and duties of the Village Council as per the Act is to formulate development schemes, to supervise water supply, roads, forest, education and other welfare activities. The Village Council also has the power to borrow money from various sources. It has the power to administer justice within the village in accordance with customary laws and practices. It is given full power to deal with internal administration of the village. The village council shall have the following powers and duties:

- i) To formulate village development schemes; ii) To help various government agencies in carrying out development works in the village;
- iii) To borrow money from the government, banks or financial institutions for development and welfare work;
- iv) To take development works on its own initiative or on request by the government;
- v) To apply for and receive grant-in-aid, donations, subsidies from the government or any agencies;

- vi) To provide security for due repayment of loan received by any permanent resident of the villages from the government, bank or financial institution;
- vii) To lend money from its funds to deserving permanent residents of the village and to obtain repayment thereof with or without interest;
- viii) To forfeit the security of the individual borrower on his default in repayment of loan advanced to him or on his commission of a breach of any of the terms of loan agreement entered into by him with the council and to dispose of such security by public auction or by private sale;
- ix) To enter into any loan agreement with the government bank and financial institutions or a permanent resident of the village;
- x) To realize registration fees for each litigation within its jurisdiction; to raise fund for utility service within the village by passing a resolution subject to the approval of the state government; Provided that all monetary transactions shall be conducted through a scheduled Bank or the Nagaland State co-operative Bank;
- xii) To constitute Village Development Board and to initiate preventive measures in the event of an epidemic.

The Village Council is empowered to administer justice within the village in accordance with Naga customary law and usages. In case of disputes between villages falling in different areas or districts, two or more Village Councils may

settle a dispute in a joint session. The village Council is the auxiliary to the administration having full powers to deal with internal administration of the village. No transfer of immovable property could be affected without the consent of the Village Council. The Village Council is subject to the Central Superintendence of the State Government/Deputy Commissioner/Additional Deputy Commissioner or Sub-Divisional Officer (Civil) in-charge of the Sub-Division, Extra Assistant Commissioner or Circle Officer.

Changes brought about by Village Council

The Nagaland Village Council Act, 1990, which established the Village Council for every recognized village, revived a single tier local system on the pattern of traditional village administration. The role of the traditional leaders (*Phichü Kehou*) has been sidelined in that they are recognized as Ex-officio members of the Village Council. However, the method of choosing the members of the Village Councils as per this Act continues to be in accordance with the prevailing customary practices and usages. The villagers choose the members of the Village Council for a five-year term, which was not the practice in their traditional society. The members of the Council of Elders in the Angami traditional society held positions for life. The choosing of the Village Council Chairman by its members is not democratic in the

real sense of the term, although the practice of choosing and selection of leaders was unknown to the Angamis. Another significant change is the introduction of the post of Secretary in the Village Council through selection.

In the olden days, the *Phichü kehou* settled all-important matters pertaining to the village without any outside interference. In contrast, the list of the Village Council members is sent to the government through the Extra Assistant Commissioner/ Sub-Divisional Officer (Civil) for approval. Further, the state government can dissolve the Village Council before the expiry of its term or can extend its term by one year. The Village Council is subject to the Central Superintendent of the State Government. While in the past, seniority in age was the main criteria for holding positions, the prescribed age for becoming a member of the Village Council is 25 years as per the Nagaland Village Council Act 1990. Unlike in the past, most of the members of the Village Council are from the younger generation. The villagers generally choose educated persons as representatives of their *chienuos* and *thepfüs* to the Village council. The Village Council is made the highest authority in the village administration.

When there is any issue between individuals pertaining to theft or robbery or petty cases, elders of the *chienuo* settle the disputes. However, matters of complicated cases are referred to the Village Council, which facilitate and set the date for the dispute to be heard. The Judiciary Board of the Village Council and the

Gaonburas would settle the matter. When there is dispute between and among *chienuos* in a *rüna*, the elders of the other *chienuo* along with *Gaonburas* and the Judiciary Board settle the dispute. In case, the parties to the conflict do not accept the decision, they go to the Area Public Organization such as Western Angami Public Organization (WAPO), Southern Angami Public Organization (SAPO), Northern Angami Public Organization (NAPO), Chakhro Angami Public Organization (CAPO) or the *Dobashi* court. When there are disputes among different *thepfü* (khel) the Chairman and Secretary of each *thepfü* (khel) along with *Gaonburas* and the Judiciary Board settles the dispute. However, if the parties are not satisfied with the verdict, the matter is referred to the *Dobashi* Court or their respective Area Public Organizations. The Area Public Organisation or the *Dobashi* Court decides disputes between the *rünas*. Overall, the Village Council has largely taken over the role of the *Phichü kehou*. The Village Council functions as the highest court in the *rüna* and function as the custodian and manager of village common property. However, the Village Council, like the traditional *Phichü kehou* in the Angami society comprises of male members of each family in the village.

Village Development Boards

The Village Development Board is a statutory body functioning under the Village Council. Declared as “Financial Intermediaries” or “Non-Banking Financial Intermediaries,”¹⁵⁷ Village Development Boards are synonymous with the concept of decentralized grass root level planning. It was first conceived in 1976 by A. M. Gokhale, the then Deputy Commissioner of Phek District at Ketsapomi village in Phek district of Nagaland. On seeing the success of the *Ketsapomi* Village Development Board, an intensive interaction was initiated with village elders, Council members and public leaders during the period from 1981 to 1982. Based on overwhelmingly positive response, the concept of Village Development Board was accepted. Accordingly, a general conference of all Village Council Chairman and Village Development Board Secretaries was convened at Kohima from 20 to 22 May 1980, where mass scale adoption of Village Development Boards in the state was taken up. The Nagaland State Assembly passed the Village Development Boards in 1980 under clause 12 of Section 12 of the Nagaland Village and Areas Council Act 1978, which was amended in 1994. The concept institutionalized with the enactment of Village Development Board Model Rules, 1980. The concept, which was initially

¹⁵⁷ In Nagaland, 21 out of 52 blocks are unbanked covering 421 villages. Thus, VDBs have declared as “Financial Intermediaries” or “Non-Banking Financial Intermediaries” to integrate credit mechanism for faster economic development in rural areas.

extended to all the existing 918 recognized villages in 1980-81, is at present extended to all the 1083 Village Development Boards of the State.¹⁵⁸

Salient Features

The salient features of the Village Development Boards are:

All the permanent residents of the villages constitute the central body of the Village Development Board;

i) There shall be a Management Committee to manage the affairs of the Village Development Boards for a period of three years. A quorum of not less than 51% of the Management Committee is required to pass resolutions.

ii) The Village Council concerned chooses the members of the Management Committee of the Village Development Board. The members of the Management Committee (MC) may include members of the Village Council and women members would constitute 25 % of the total members.

iii) The Deputy Commissioner of the District is the ex-officio Chairman of all the Village Development Boards under his jurisdiction. All funds received by the Village either as grant-in-aid and matching cash grants are operated by the Village Development Board but only with the sanction of the Village Council.

¹⁵⁸Government of Nagaland., VDB *Nagaland Souvenir (1980-2005): Commemorating 25 years of Village Development Boards*, Published by the Department of Rural Development, Government of Nagaland, 2005, p. 9.

- iv) The chairman and the secretary of the Management Committee shall jointly operate all cash accounts maintained by the Village Development Board. Thus, all funds/ cash transactions need to be cleared by the Ex-officio Chairman (Dy. Commissioner) before the Village Development Board can draw the same for various developmental purposes.
- v) All funds/accounts are operated jointly by the Chairman/DC and the Secretary of the Village Development Boards;
- vi) Village Development Boards are to maintain their Fixed Deposit Accounts as this forms the main basis for the existence of the Village Development Board;
- vii) Funds received and program/scheme selection are taken up during the monthly meeting. A panel of auditors approved by the Chairman audits the Village Development Boards accounts annually.

Basic objectives

The basic objectives of Village Development Boards are;

- i) To make each of the 1083 VDBs as vibrant, with powers to take decisions and implementation of schemes within the guidelines both for State and Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS);
- ii) To enable themselves to mobilize its internal resources for investment in various income generating and economically productive activities;

- iii) To check migration of educated unemployed rural youth to towns by ensuring self-employed opportunities through their involvement in taking up income generating and economically productive activities in the rural areas;
- iv) To gradually transform the rural areas into the standards of semi-urban areas in so far as availability of the basic common facilities is concerned and
- v) To facilitate acting as financial intermediaries to manage their own rural credit and loan activities

Grant-in-aid

Grant-in-aid to the VDBs is a state sponsored scheme introduced during 1980-81 for the creation of minimum infrastructure and special employment programme in every recognized village in Nagaland. The Grant-in-aid is allotted each year to the VDBs based on the taxpaying households. The initial allocation was Rs. 100 per households during 1980-81. At present, it increased to Rs. 800 per households,¹⁵⁹ to ensure that each citizen of the State is equally involved and provided for in all rural development activities. This is the only assured fund provided for taking up development activities best suited to their requirements for the villagers. This program ensures participation of women by earmarking 25% of the Grant-in-aid allotted to each VDB for their development programs. Another 20% and 55% of the

¹⁵⁹ Ibid. pp. 2-3.

fund is also meant for the youth and general welfare in all the villages. To ensure that the benefits under the programs are not deprived to small villages, a minimum cut off ceiling @ 66 household for all small villages has been fixed. It has been well established that a number of Developmental Programs which have resulted in the creation of durable assets including infrastructure have been made possible mainly through this unique program

Implementation

It is entrusted with assisting the village in formulating and implementation of development schemes on an annual basis. The funds released are being collectively pooled for implementation of the schemes for the benefit of the entire community. Unless unavoidable, all work under the VDB is executed by the entire community. The entire process of development in the village is transparent. The Deputy Commissioner (DC) is the Chairman of all VDBs in the district. Every VDB has a bank account in which the DC and the VDB Secretary are joint signatories. The profits are either shared equally or kept in the village account. The Deputy Commissioner (DC) is the Chairman of all VDBs in the District. Every VDB has a bank account in which the DC and the VDB Secretary are joint signatories. Through the involvement of VDBs, several major schemes have been successfully implemented. Some of the schemes implemented by the Rural Department through VDB are, Grants-In-Aid (GAI), Matching Cash Grants

(MCG), Additional Grants in aid, National Saving Certificate Post Office Time Deposit (POTD), Indira Awas Yojana (IAY), Pradhan Mantri Gramodaya Yojana (PMGY-GA), Sampurna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY), Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY) which are Centrally sponsored as well as State plan sponsored schemes. This has been made possible by way of contribution of free community labour organized by VDBs to ensure that schemes are completed.

Changes brought about by VDBs

Many have considered the Village Development Boards (VDBs) as the beginning of women participation in the decision-making body for the first time as one-third of the total members of VDBs is women. Further, there is a provision for reservation of 25% of the total grant to the village for women's programs. This is a major change in that the traditional institutions had shunted women to domestic arena rather than involving them in the decision-making process. In addition, the functioning of VDBs is more transparent than the traditional village administration because it is mandatory for all VDBs to hold monthly public meetings for review and monitoring of ongoing projects. However, the VDBs revived the colonial pattern of administration in that it makes the Deputy Commissioner (DC) or Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) of the district as the ex-officio Chairman. The study reveals that the establishments of Village Councils and Village Development Boards

have not only replaced the limited functions of the traditional village hierarchy but also shifted to wider and modern trend of 'development administration.' In contrast with the traditional socio-political institutions of the Angamis, the Village Councils and the Village Development Boards has enlarged the scope of community participation in development and welfare programmes. The Secretary of the Village Development Board is also made as the members of the Communitisation programmes. The main qualifications for a member in both the bodies are no longer based on age, gender and lineage as it was in the traditional society but on having knowledge of the administration of the village and government offices. The establishments of Village Councils and Village Development Boards have not only replaced the limited functions of the traditional village hierarchy but also shifted to wider and modern trend of 'development administration.' Many have considered the Village Development Boards (VDBs) as the beginning of women participation in the decision-making body for the first time as one-third of the total members of VDBs is women. The induction of women in this institution is a departure from the traditional Angami socio-political institutions, which had shunted them to domestic arena rather than involving them in the decision-making process. Further, provision for reservation of 25% of the total grant for women's programs and welfare is a major change in that the traditional institutions not only limited the role of women but also ignored their welfare and development. The funds have helped the women folk in

setting up weaving centers, piggery, and rice mill, etc. which are income generating and give opportunity for employment of women.¹⁶⁰

The functioning of VDBs as compared to traditional socio-political institutions is more transparent in that it is mandatory for all VDBs to hold monthly public meetings for review and monitoring of ongoing projects. The announcement of yearly allocation, names of beneficiary of schemes in a general public meeting, and recording of meeting resolutions, make the VDBs transparent and accountable. This was in complete contrast with the traditional socio-political institutions. The minutes of such meetings are submitted to the DC regularly. This entire procedure provides an ideal platform for unusual interfacing between the financial institutions, the government, and the villagers. Any withdrawal is authorized by the Village council in the form of resolutions signed by all the VCs and VDB members.

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¹⁶⁰ Interview with Ms. M. Nakhro, age 43, Secretary, Women Organization, Jotsoma, on 4 March 2008.

the members of the Communitisation programs. The main qualifications for a member in both the bodies are no longer based on age, gender and lineage as it was in the traditional society but on having knowledge of the administration of the village and government offices.

Since its inception, the VDB has established itself within the firmament of the Naga village set-up. One can discern the reason why its strength lies in its simplicity and logic, easily acceptable to the Naga ethos and psyche. This aided the transition to practical application of the theories of micro-level planning and de-centralization. Although initially set up to execute work under the department of rural development, today the VDBs have become the indirect instruments for most field level departments, covering the entire gamut from Public Health Services to Roads and Bridges to essential Public Services like Power, Water Supply etc. within the village. While the Village Council is part of the traditional milieu Angami Naga society, the VDB is an effort at dovetailing the former into a development framework. VC and VDB are structurally strong, although functionally there is a dichotomy between them. The VC has strong recognition rooted in tradition and is able to exercise influence on traditional spheres of land and family disputes, social and cultural sanctions, etc, but it has not been so successful in appropriating the VDB structure to take control over development resources and activities. Thus, there is a dichotomy at the village level itself

wherein the strong traditional structure is unable to benefit from its advantage when it comes to the development processes offered by the state. In case of transgression in the social sphere, the NC was able to pass strong sanctions, but in the development arena, they have not demonstrated any such sway to bring to book the offenders. The consequence of this is that development suffers.

Communitisation

Nagaland, since its creation, has witnessed many changes brought about by societal action and official policy interventions. The latest initiative taken by the state government is the unique concept of Communitisation in order to build partnership between Government and the people through delegation of management responsibilities. Indeed, moving on from traditional institutions of governance, Nagaland is in the midst of a very innovative experience in democratic governance. The Nagaland Communitisation of Public Institutions and Services Act, 2002 has enlarged the scope of community participation in development and welfare programs in areas such as education, health, power, rural power supply, rural tourism, roads, forest, sanitation, rural childcare. The concept of Communitisation came about with the initiation of the government, but the responsibility was given to the villagers. The State with its unique concept of Communitisation wanted to build a partnership between the government and the people through delegation of management responsibilities to the community so that the performance of the public utilities is

improved. The salient features of the Communitisation processes are that a representative committee of the community to own and manage the communitised institutions; the community responsibilities include checking attendance of staff, repair and maintenance works, purchase of books, medicines, receiving funds from government for salaries of the staff and disbursing the same after operating the principle of 'No work, No pay.' However, the transition to democratic institutions has brought about changes in the functioning of traditional institutions. The system of Communitisation firstly experimented in the field of education. This program started in the year 2002 with a vision that, when the villagers are given responsibility to administer themselves, they would do better. Some villagers responded early and some later. Medziphema village responded in the year 2002¹⁶¹, Viswema in 2002¹⁶² and Chiechama village in the year 2003.¹⁶³ Jotsoma village embraced this system in the year 2004.¹⁶⁴ However, it is found that of all the four villages under our study, Jotsoma village has responded well to this program. Under this program, a Village Education Committee (VEC) is formed. The total number of the committee differs from village to village, but, in all the villages, the compulsory members are the

¹⁶¹ Interview with Kepelhubei Chakrüno, age 43, Chairman, Village Education Committee, Medziphema on 30 December 2006.

¹⁶² Interview with Mr. Ketobu Vitsu, age 30, Khel Games & Sports Secretary, Students' Union Viswema village on 2 January 2006.

¹⁶³ Interview with Mr. Vibilie Metha, age 50, Chairman Village Education Committee, Chiechama village on 22 December 2006.

¹⁶⁴ Interview with Mr. Kepelhuto Nakhro, age 36, Former Students' Union President, Jotsoma village on 4 August 2006.

Secretary of the Village Development Board, the head teacher of the Government Primary schools, a representative from women, a representative each from all the churches and few educationists. The chairperson of the VEC is elected from amongst its members who have the knowledge of the administration of the village as well as the administration of the Government offices. Their term of office is for three years. The VEC is also given the power to introduce any vocational subject in the schools like music, language etc. The concept of Communitisation in contrast with the traditional institutions has enlarged the scope of community participation in development and welfare programmes. It has affected the role of the traditional leaders, as it did not even co-opt them and instead make the Secretary of the Village Development Board, the head teacher of the Government Primary schools, a representative from women, a representative each from all the churches and few educationists as its members. The main qualifications for a chairperson is based on having knowledge of the administration of the village and government offices and not on age, gender and lineage as it was in the traditional society.

Chapter IV

Changes brought about by socio-economic factors on socio-political institutions of the Angami Nagas

Like other tribal communities, the Angamis were closely-knitted and self-contained social units and their comparative isolation tended to foster their insular outlook and made them prisoners of customs and traditions. Nevertheless, it would be wrong to consider the Angami society as closed society. Indeed, change is inherent in the nature of society and no society can remain at a particular equilibrium point for all time to come. The role of socio-economic factors in affecting changes and modifications in tribal communities is well recognized. This chapter analyses the changes brought about by Christianity, education, Angami elites and changing economic activities on the socio-political institutions of the Angamis.

Christianity

Colonialism and Christian mission activities are two distinct entities that often move alongside to any new venture but opposed to each other fundamentally in their objectives and approaches.¹⁶⁵ While the primary objective of the former

¹⁶⁵ Lal Dena, *Christian Missions and Colonialism: A study of Missionary Movement in North East India with particular reference to Manipur and Lushai Hills 1894-1947*, Vendrame Institute, Shillong, 1988, p.12.

was predominantly economic, the latter aimed at transforming the socio-cultural and religious lives of the people. Nevertheless, both had one thing in common: they were often not welcomed in a strange land where they encountered opposition from the local traditions. As recent studies aptly stated “Missionaries followed hard on the heels of soldiers and administrators,”¹⁶⁶ and in most cases “if the missions did not precede the colonial movement, they did follow in the heels of colonial powers.”¹⁶⁷ The mission to the Nagas became a subject of discussion and a matter of urgency soon after the arrival of American Baptist missionaries to Assam in 1836. Major Jenkins, the then Commissioner of Assam, promised to give the missionaries all possible personal help and official assistance. Both Christianity and tribal society in general had distinct and clearly defined identities and cultural contours. Thus, their encounter, interactions and resultant shapes taken by them are bound to be interesting for various reasons.

Christianity was introduced into Northeast India over a century and a half ago. Though the tribals of Northeast India differed among themselves linguistically, ethnically and culturally, they also have in common many structural and cultural characteristics.¹⁶⁸ For centuries, they lived in isolation from the

¹⁶⁶ Mark R. Woodward, “Gift for the Sky People: Animal Sacrifice, Head-hunting and Power among the Naga of Burma and Assam,” Graham Harvey (ed.), *Indigenous Religions: A Companion*, Continuum, London, 2000, quoted in Terence Ranger, “Christianity and Indigenous Peoples: A personal Overview”, *Journal of Religious History*, Vol. 27, No. 3, October 2003, p. 264.

¹⁶⁷ Lal Dena, Op.cit, p.13.

¹⁶⁸ S. Fuchs, “The Races of North-East India,” *Indian Missiological Review*, Vol. 12 1990, pp.

outside world and as a result had little contact with other communities. However, with the coming of Christianity, the tribal society in this region had undergone immense changes in its worldview, languages, cultures, social habits and economic activities. The process of interaction and change is still very much alive. While some customs and traditions relating to traditional faith and practices have become obsolete following the spread of Christianity, those relating to social structure have survived.

Christianity first came to the Nagas in the year 1839 and subsequently in the Angami area in 1878. Thus, began the work of the Baptist mission in the Naga Hills.¹⁶⁹ Rev. C. D. King was the first Christian missionary among the Angami Nagas and Mr. Sieliezhü Sorhie as the first Angami converted to Christianity in 1885. The attitudes of the Angamis towards the early missionaries were very hostile in the beginning. The early converts also underwent untold persecution for embracing the new faith. The Village elders drove Christian missionaries, pastors and evangelists away from their villages and even those villagers who remained in the villages were denied many facilities as pressure tactics on them not to embrace and preach Christianity. The earliest Naga converts had to face tortures and oppositions from the villagers.¹⁷⁰ *Sanyü* observes that those who converted to

160-172.

¹⁶⁹ Milada Ganguly., *A Pilgrimage to the Nagas*, Oxford and IBH publications, New Delhi, 1984.

p.15.

¹⁷³ Hokishe Sema., *Emergence of Nagaland: Socio-economic and political transformation and the*

Christianity had been persecuted or excommunicated by their Angami brethren. However, when the Nagas realized that Christian missionaries had no motive other than to render service to them in the name of God, they voluntarily offered themselves as converts to the new faith.¹⁷¹ Since the Nagas were fond of music and singing, the missionaries popularized Christian songs and music, which often paved the way for them to have easy access to the youngsters.¹⁷² One wonders why and how the Nagas gave up their fascinating and delightful old religion and embraced Christianity. In spite of their initial opposition, the Nagas of today are indebted to the pioneering missionaries for their work in the field of education, medical services, and humanitarian work. The propitiation of fearful spirits was very costly and beyond the means of many people. They believed that lack of such an appeasement always invited vengeance and calamities from the wild spirits. On the backdrop of such a socially obligatory and economically expensive religious beliefs and practices came Christianity. The Christian message of freedom from fear, superstitions and above all from wild spirits did appeal strongly to the Angamis. The most effective way of attracting the simple villagers to Christianity was by telling them about Hell-Fire. The central message was that all persons who were not Christians would be burnt alive forever in an undying fire after their death. As a result, many felt that it was safer to become a Christian

future, Vikas Publishing House, New Delhi, 1986, p.50.

¹⁷¹ Visier Sanyü, Op. cit, 1996, p. 116.

¹⁷² Angelina Lotsüro., Op. cit, p. 75.

in order to secure oneself from the dangers of Hell-Fire. The new Angami converts did away with much of the old religious traditions, some of which were now superfluous, but some of which are now seen to be irreplaceable loss. The British officials often complained against the missionaries for destroying the culture of the Nagas by restricting their participation in festivals, dances and drinking of *Zu*. Christianity for the new converts was a religion from uncertainty to certainty, from darkness to light; from death to eternal life; damnation to salvation.¹⁷³ The success of Christianity not only depended on the superimposition of Western religion on the Naga religion, but also the condemnation of the Naga way of life.¹⁷⁴ Consequently, Christianity has become one of the greatest factors, which brought about changes among the Angamis, touching every aspect of their socio-economic and religious life.¹⁷⁵

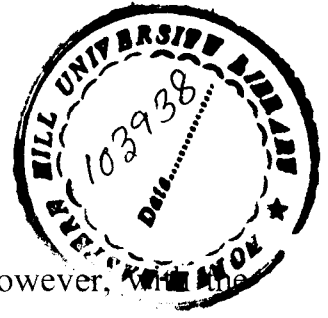
Before the advent of Christianity, animism was the religion of the Nagas, which dominated substantially the temper and texture of social, economic, political and cultural life of the Nagas. The Angamis believed that there was an unseen divine power behind the creation, the course of events and destiny of man. A.W. Davis wrote, "The Angamis have practically no religion".¹⁷⁶ In contrast, the

¹⁷³ Hokishe Sema. Op.cit. pp. 55.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid. p. 32.

¹⁷⁵ Ameu Sekhose., "Impact of Modernization on the Traditional customs of the Angami community of Kohima." M. Phil. Dissertation submitted to NEHU, Shillong, 1981. p.53.

¹⁷⁶ For details, See. A.W. Davis. A Report on census of India 1891. Vol-I.



Angamis recognized a supreme creator called *Terhuopfü*.¹⁷⁷ However, coming of Christianity, their whole concept of religion underwent a great change. Gradually, the wave of Christianity reached all the Angami villages including the four villages under study. Mr. Vithse Nakhro was the first convert from Jotsoma village in the year 1905.¹⁷⁸ Mr. Lhourüvi of Chiechama village and Mr. Viriho Kikhi of Viswema converted in 1910¹⁷⁹ and 1928 respectively.¹⁸⁰ Although Christianity in Medziphema came late, Mr. Vineizo became the first convert in the village in the year 1942.¹⁸¹

With the successful spread of the gospel, a shift in the socio-economic, cultural and religious institutions of the Angamis was inevitable. The effects of Christianity were more on socio-economic, cultural and religious institutions rather than political institutions. According to N. K. Bose, conversion to Christianity is the main factor for change in the tribal culture both in terms of economic and socio-cultural life of the people.¹⁸² P. T. Phillip also said that Christianity is responsible for bringing about changes in the Naga society.¹⁸³ The advent of Christian missionaries on the Angami society brought about a great change in the outlook of the people because the missionaries were completely

¹⁷⁷ *Terhuopfü* refers to a female God.

¹⁷⁸ Baptist Church Jotsoma. *Centennial 1905- 2005. Souvenir*. Jotsoma, 2005, p. 21.

¹⁷⁹ Interview with Mr. Yaselie Rüpreo, age 64, Assistant Pastor Christian Revival Church Chiechama village on 5 February 2006.

¹⁸⁰ Baptist Church Viswema, *Platinum Jubilee 1928-2003. Souvenir*, Viswema, 2003. p. 23.

¹⁸¹ Interview with Mr. Megovoto Nyiseno, age 56, Pastor Baptist Church, Medziphema village on 6 January 2006.

¹⁸² N. K. Bose., "Changes in Tribal Cultures before and after Independence". *Man in India*, 1964 p. 44.

¹⁸³ See. P.T. Philip., *The growth of Baptist Church in Nagaland*. Christian Literature, Guwahati, 1993.

against some of the Angami customs and traditions, which they considered were against Christianity and not healthy for the people to practice or follow. As a result, most of the socio-political institutions of the Angamis, which helped the functioning of the village, had undergone changes.

The institution of *Kichüki*, which was considered one of the most important institutions of the youths, began to decline as the Christian missionaries forbade young boys to attend *kichüki*. In the words of H. D'Souza, the biggest change brought about by the Christian missionaries in the Naga village life is that they forbade the converts to live in their Morung ¹⁸⁴(*kichüki*). The reason often given against the institution of *Kichüki* was that it fostered sexual promiscuity.¹⁸⁵ Haimendorf quotes a Baptist pastor questioning as to how a Christian boy could sleep in these houses of the heathen (*kichüki*) as this was against Christianity.¹⁸⁶ M. Alemchiba is also of the opinion that, the function of the *Kichüki* declined with the ban on head-hunting, because the necessity of *Kichüki* as a guardhouse, was no longer there.¹⁸⁷ The art of singing and dancing taught in the *Kichüki*, which coloured the social lives of the Angamis suffered a setback because the Christian missionaries regarded everything done in connection with the tribal ceremonies

¹⁸⁴ H. D'Souza., "Aggression, Strategy for Survival: A macro to Micro Level Study of Nagas of North East India with special Reference to the Angami Nagas", Ph.D. Thesis submitted to University of Delhi, Delhi. 1988, p. 129.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ C. V. Furer-Haimendorf, *Return to Naked Nagas: An Anthropologist's View of Nagaland 1936-1970*, John Murry, London, 1976, p.46.

¹⁸⁷ M. Alemchiba., "Problems of Re-adjustment to a New Situation (with special reference to the Naga tribes)," K. S. Singh (ed.), *Tribal Situation in India*. Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Simla. 1972. p. 483.

and festivals as an act against Christianity. Christian hymns in Western style began to take the place of old songs and many dances, which celebrated head-hunting raids. The handicraft for both boys and girls taught in the *Kichüki* has now become indispensable. The abolition of the *Kichüki* therefore destroyed a valuable disciplinary agency. It also affected the grooming of young people for future *Phichü kehou*, as *Kichüki* was a training ground for the young boys in the socio-political, economic, as well as religious and customary practices in the society. The role of *Kichüki* had largely been taken over by the schools, colleges, churches and village organizations.

Christianity also not only led to the disappearance of some social and communal institutions but also led to the emergence of the spirit of new individualism leading to the erosion of family (*kikru*) and clannish ties (*chienuo*). Christians began to defy the rigid orders of the village authority and broke away from both the old religion and fellow villagers, which helped in the process of village disintegration.¹⁸⁸ The stress on personal salvation introduced a new individualism in place of the former community spirit.

Zatho, which was an important socio-economic and religious function for enhancing the social prestige of the people, was abolished. The missionaries objected it presumably because the animals consumed during *Zatho* were not just

¹⁸⁸ M. Horam., Op. cit, 1975. p. 121.

slaughtered but sacrificed to appropriate invocations from the spirits.¹⁸⁹ Nevertheless, for the Angamis, spending the accumulated wealth for redistribution to the poor was a pride as well as for receiving *theja* from *Ukepenuopfü*. Further, feasts or festivals were always accompanied by large quantity of *zu*, providing of which was considered a sign of hospitality. In contrast, the missionaries enforced a strict ban on the drinking of rice beer. Giving up of rice beer was considered as a sign of commitment to the new faith.¹⁹⁰ However, many people found it difficult to abstain from drinking wine as Haimendorf said; “Although the spirit is willing, the flesh is often too weak. And not all converts find it easy to remain true to their resolution; many drink secretly.”¹⁹¹

Kekinyi, which had been an important diplomatic feast between *chienuo* of different villages and between different warring villages have been modified with the coming of Christianity. While the warring villages exchanged spears as a sign of peace, Christians now exchanged the Bible as a sign of peace. The Christian Angamis have not been able to lay off their belief in the spirits and many of them still participate in the *penie*. They fraternize with non-Christians during feasting, hunting and observe *penie* and honour the days of commencing sowing, transplanting and harvesting paddy.¹⁹² This is partly true in reference to Viswema

¹⁸⁹ C. V. Fürer- Haimendorf., Op. cit. p. 48.

¹⁹⁰ F. S. Downs., *Christianity in the North East India: Historical perspective*, ISPK, Delhi, 1983, p. 149.

¹⁹¹ C. V. Fürer- Haimendorf., Op. cit. p. 48.

¹⁹² Nita Mathur., Op.cit, p.142.

village. In certain *penie* days such as storm, severe hailstorm, accidental deaths etc, the villagers still observe *penie* with the non-Christians.¹⁹³

The authority of village *Phichü-u* was directly affected as the newly convert Christians began to defy the orders of his authority since they gave primary importance of membership to the Church over clan and village affiliation. *Theja* that was considered most appropriate to be given by the *Phichü-u* by the virtue of his post and age declined with the introduction of the Church pastors. Thus, the village *Phichü-u* and the *thepfü Phichü-u(s)* also lost their authority to the missionaries in matters of some customary practices. Christianity had direct impact on the institution of the *Phichü-u* and *Kemevo* who interceded with *Ukepenuopfü* for blessings to the villagers. Before the coming of Christianity, *Phichü-u* and *Kemevo* appeased the spirits who were believed to have caused destructions, epidemics or natural calamities by performing certain *nanyü*. The Baptist Christian faith professed no mediator between the individual and God. Thus, the role of pastors undermined the role of *Phichü-u* and the *Kemevo*. Christians refused to pay customary contribution of meat to their village elders who had not turned Christian. Ultimately, the government intervened and passed an order for payment of customary meat as usual.¹⁹⁴ *Phichü-u* and *Kemevo* announced a number of *penie* and *kenyü*, which controlled the life cycle of the

¹⁹³ Interview with Mr. Kidese, age 37, Viswema village on 14 February 2009.

¹⁹⁴ D. C.'s standing order No. 8, D. R. O, Kohima, March 1938.

Angamis in the past. Any violation of these *penie* and *kenyü* had to face severe consequences. However, with the non-observance of *penie* and *kenyü*, their roles had declined. Neikha is also of the opinion that not all *kenyü* that their ancestors observed were negative. In fact, *kenyü* that were observed by them coincides with the Bible. It was a *kenyü* to tell lies, to steal, to show disrespect to the elders, not to help others in times of need etc. In the olden days, nobody used lock and key but there was no fear of anybody stealing or robbing their houses because everybody adhered to the *kenyü* strictly. Today, the Christians therefore need to learn and imbibe the good values, which their ancestors have taught them.¹⁹⁵ According to H. D'Souza, *genna* was not a mere taboo (*kenyü*) with only a negative meaning, but had positive aspects too. In the positive sense, it meant the celebration of life, of re-building one's energies, one's life; in short it was a day to rejuvenate as Christian on Sunday fulfils the same function of rest and rejuvenation physically and spiritually.¹⁹⁶ Thus, all rituals connected to an individual from birth to death and even the concept of life after death underwent a great change

Old customs of *kiya* ceremony was also replaced by Christian traditions, like getting married in the church solemnized by the Pastors, wearing the gown and veil by the bride, etc. *Kiya* is also instituted for life by a covenant before man

¹⁹⁵ Interview with Mr. Puthavil Neikha, age 48, Rev. Pastor Viswema Baptist Church on 2 January 2006.

¹⁹⁶ Angelina Lotsüro., Op. cit. p. 210.

and God. The advisory function of the *Themumia* also lost its role in the decision making of the village authority because the converted Christians considered such practices of seeking the help of *Terhomia* as evil and sin. Mr. Megoyazo Keyhie, a *Themumia* himself converted to Christianity because he strongly believed that these are all against the ethos of Christianity.¹⁹⁷ Mr. Pezau Seyietsu of Jotsoma village, though not converted to Christianity does not practice *themu*¹⁹⁸, anymore because of the influence of Christianity. Even the non-Christians rarely consulted him.¹⁹⁹ *Terhümiavi* were accorded higher status in the village because of their bravery. As a sign of their bravery and achievements, certain attires were assigned to them. However, their importance declined after putting an end to head hunting because of Christianity. Smith states how the Angami men complained; “The younger men complained bitterly that the British, by stopping their raids and so preventing them gaining works of distinction, have made it impossible for them to get wives.”²⁰⁰ Such complaints were not surprising as women always preferred to get married with warriors. To the Angamis, the greatest work of the Christian missionaries was that the constant feuds and head hunting of the people were put to an

¹⁹⁷ Interview with Mr. Megoyazo Keyhie (who was a *Themumia*), age 72, Medziphema village on 23 February 2009.

¹⁹⁸ *Themu* refers to the practice of *Themumia*.

¹⁹⁹ Interview with Mr. Pezau Seyietsu (who was a *Themumia*), age 70 on 17 April 2008.

²⁰⁰ W. C. Smith., *The Ao Naga Tribe of Assam*, Macmillan & Co. London, 1925, p. 220.

end and replaced it with the new doctrine based on love, peace and goodwill.²⁰¹

Christianity also came with medicine, a stronger remedy for their sickness and diseases. According to the traditional belief, illness was due to the displeasure of the spirit. The offended spirit had to be identified propitiated by observance of *kenyü* and the offering of sacrifices by the *Phichü-u* or Head priest. However, with the coming of the missionary doctors, the treatment offered was not only much cheaper than the traditional sacrifices but also more effective. This was interpreted to mean that the religious power of the missionary doctor was greater than that of the traditional Priest. Thus, with radical Christianization of the people, the religious powers and functions of the *Phichü-u* has not only lost its importance but also shifted to the pastors and the other church leaders.

As Westerners who shared the colonial notions of cultural superiority, the missionaries and the native assistants they recruited played a major role in undermining tribal traditions, some of which could have been retained without compromising essential Christian values. Protestant missionaries condemned the brewing and consumption of *zu*, animal sacrifices, tribal dances and music. Christian sexual mores were enforced and tribal dresses associated or signs of

²⁰¹ Interview with Mr. Puthavil Neikha, age 48, Rev. Pastor Viswema Baptist Church on 2 January 2006; Interview with Mr. Megovotso Kuotsu, age 55, Pastor, Baptist Church Medziphema village on 26 February 2006; Interview with Mr. Vinitha Nakhro, age 68, Assistant Pastor Christian Revival Church, Jotsoma village on 3 January, 2006.

sexual activities or head hunting.²⁰² Thus, conflict arose between the Christian converts and those who sought to live by old ways, while the traditional leaders lost their authority to the missionaries in the matters of customary practices. The religious powers and functions of the indigenous institutions were shifted to Church and Church leaders, who began to enjoy considerable social authority.

Education

Social transformation among different tribal societies of Nagaland was indeed very rapid. What accelerated this process was primarily the spread of education. By 1904, Rivenburg, the father of the Angami alphabet, had produced the Gospel of John, the Acts, an Angami Primer, an Arithmetic book and a book of 100 hymns in Angami dialect.²⁰³ In addition, from 1913 to 1914, the Baptist Mission was running 14 schools. Thus, education began to open up the minds of the Angamis into a new world, new ideas and change. The spread of education in Angami society gradually changed its complexion as well as character. The colonial education not only revolutionized their cultural ethos but also led them to a new dimension of valued system of life. With the progressive dissemination of modern education, the outlook of the people, which formerly remained narrow significantly, developed and along with it, the people began to appreciate modern

²⁰² Interview with Mr. Yieselie Rüpreo. age 64. Assistant Pastor Christian Revival Church. Cheichama village on 5 February 2006.

²⁰³ P.T. Phillip., Op. cit. 1970. p. 83.

education. This has led to an increase of enrollment in the educational institutions. The development of broader and healthier outlook of the people enabled them to accept the new trend of change in their society. Because of the modern growth of education, the Angami society witnessed gradual tendency for social cohesion, the characteristic of which was conspicuously lacking among them in pre-colonial period.

Prior to the colonial administration, the Angamis depended exclusively on oral traditions and the concept of any written script was unknown to them. The elders who interpreted the history, culture and tradition of the Angamis administered the village administration. Thus, the villagers respected seniority in age and bravery. Today, educated persons are given more respect, although the village elders are consulted on issues relating to customary laws. The *Phichü kehou*, which played the most important role in the village are recognized as the Ex-officio members of various constitutional bodies such as the Village Council. They are no longer the sole authority to decide the affairs of the village but other members who have modern education dominate them. Since the State Government of Nagaland has given pressure to the village authorities that all records of the village administration, utilization of funds, orders etc be written in black and white for transparency and future reference, villagers prefer to send

people having modern education and communication skills in English as their representatives.

In addition, a more organized administrative framework has replaced the old traditional political institutions, which confined only to the village level. The disadvantages of living in independent and isolated villages dawned upon the Angamis and the feeling of tribal unity surfaced, primarily through those who had the benefit of missionary school education. This feeling and idea of unity found expression in the shape of student's conferences and Christian associations. Education has also enabled them to remove ignorance and superstition, which kept them narrow and isolated, and led them to a broader worldview thereby, rendering the traditional system of administration more and more irrelevant since it was limited to *chienuo*, *thepfü* and *rüna* levels.

Every household was in itself an educational institution, educating the children in the way they should grow up to be good and successful homemakers and warriors. Home schooling was mostly supplemented by their dormitory experience where both boys and girls learnt social customs of their own.²⁰⁴ The introduction of colonial education, however, disrupted the indigenous system of

²⁰⁴ B. B. Ghosh., *Gazetteer of Nagaland. Mokokchung District*, pp.72- 209. In the dormitories, the girls learned cotton spinning, spindling, folk songs and dances. The boys on their part learned making of bamboo baskets and various other handicrafts, folk songs and dances, martial art both for defensive and offensive purposes etc.

learning at Morung.²⁰⁵ Education also affected their religious beliefs, behavior, customs and habits. Consequently, the educated Angamis, who were converted to Christianity, were largely responsible to the native conversion for they acted as pastors, teachers and native evangelists.²⁰⁶ As a result, the role of *Phichü-u* and *Kemevo* in performing religious functions began to decline as more and people that are more educated converted to Christianity. The spread of modern education have tended to demolish traditional barriers and isolations and are facilitating the growth of modern outlook based upon rationalism, liberty, equality and fraternity.²⁰⁷

Changing economic activities

Land and forest were primary economic resources of the Angamis. The use of land was not only to produce food but also to produce surplus food. The laden of social prestige by individuals was only by accumulating sufficient surplus produce to afford the lavish sacrifices and feasts. In other words, it is not the economy of selfish and greedy accumulation of wealth but accumulation with the idea of sharing. This was an indication that the private property had a strong social dimension among the Angami Nagas. The people were largely engaged in

²⁰⁵ V. K. Anand., Op. cit. p. 93.

²⁰⁶ Piketo Sema., Op. cit. p. 62.

²⁰⁷ Hokishe Sema., Op. cit. p. 164.

agriculture.²⁰⁸ The methods of cultivation practiced among them were jhuming, also known as the 'slash and burn' or 'shifting' cultivation.²⁰⁹ However, the methods of terraced cultivation were also found among the Angamis, besides the Tangkhuls, the Maos, the Chakesangs, the Rengmas and the Zemis.²¹⁰ Other forms of economic activities were rearing of domestic animals such as cows and pigs, dogs and chickens. The village society was so organized that the basic requirements of food, clothing and shelter were guaranteed to all its members. Thus, generally speaking, the Angamis were self-sustaining and provided themselves well for their basic needs. Thus, agriculture and animal husbandry were their basic occupation. The pre-colonial pattern of the Angami village economy that the British encountered was in the main primitive economic units with a system of subsistence agriculture, which provided them with barely enough for their needs. The economic condition of the people that prevailed during the early decades of British rule provides an insight into the pre-administrative economy. Most of the Nagas have sufficiency of food and clothing, but there was little accumulated capital, and some villagers had difficulties in raising the very moderate revenue imposed on them.

²⁰⁸ According to 1901 census, 93.8 percent of the district population was returned as agriculturalist.

²⁰⁹ M. Horam., *North East India: A profile*, Cosmo publication, New Delhi, 1990, p. 165.

²¹⁰ John Jacobs Kattayam., et al., *The Nagas: Hill People of North East India, Society and culture and the Colonial Encounter*. Thames and Hudson, London, 1990, p. 37.

The means of production were decentralized and therefore the relations of dependence were not created within the system of production. Their household economy was self-contained and the food grains produced were largely consumed at home. However, the productivity in the agrarian sector was low and production was not sufficient to stock, and thus the economy remained fragile.²¹¹ Save for occasional exchanges, the tendency was to produce for the direct consumption of the producers. Surpluses were exchanged between groups or members of groups. The producers themselves exercised control of the means of production and labour. Everyone worked for an immediate need. Thus, the pre-colonial economy had not progressed much but was just sufficient for each family. Although, agriculture was their principle occupation, these farmers were also part time artisans. There was no separate artisan class. Therefore everybody made their own necessary articles such as *Mekho*(basket), *Zoprie*(mat), *Mekhu*(wooden plate), *Theba*(bench), *Thezü*(bed), *Zharü*(husking plate), *Li*(earthen pot) and all the household needs were produced according to their domestic requirement which they learn from *Kichüki*.²¹² Regarding their dress, women folk used cotton; spun them into threads and cloth was woven for family needs.²¹³ Making of handicrafts, weaving of clothes and their processing as household industries were done when primary agricultural work permitted.

²¹¹ W. Robinson., *A descriptive account of Assam*, Calcutta, 1841, p. 390.

²¹² Interview with Mr. Pfünyü Nakhro, age 80, *Phichümia*, Medziphema village on 26 February 2006.

²¹³ Ibid.

The use of money as a medium of exchange was introduced only by the colonial administration and hence, there was no significant monetized system of trade in the pre-British period.²¹⁴ Thus, they engaged primarily on agricultural activities as their main stay economy. The colonial administration which resulted in the introduction of “law and order” in the district accelerated the progress of agriculture and had an encouraging impact on its economy relatively. Earlier, it was the practice for all able-bodied men to guard the villages and fields for security reasons.²¹⁵ Another notable impact on the agricultural economy was the promotion of the more scientific method of terraced cultivation. Although this method of cultivation was indigenous for the Angami Nagas, the government as a measure to check jhum cultivation encouraged this method. As a result, terraces cultivation became popular.²¹⁶

Trade and commerce, which were insignificant during the pre-colonial period, received impetus with the introduction of British administration. The pre-colonial trade was mainly based on barter system. However, it gradually changed to cash medium during the colonial period.²¹⁷ Even costumes were also bartered for land and animals. One such example was *Keno*, a kind of belt and a necklace

²¹⁴ W.W. Hunter., *A Statistical Account of Assam*, Vol-II. Spectrum Publications(reprinted), Guwahati, 1998, p. 152

²¹⁵ W. Robinson., *A Descriptive account of Assam*. Calcutta, 1841, p-389. (Anarchical social condition compelled the tribes to be always ready for assault or self-defence and accordingly, it was the custom that the women should cultivate the field and the men prepare for battle).

²¹⁶ Piketo Sema., *Op. cit.* pp. 196-197.

²¹⁷ Assam administration Report, 1882-1883, Part I-B. p. 10. In this year alone, the Angamis and the Lotha Nagas imported goods worth Rs. 35.612.

made by seashells. It was valued so much because it was not easily found. Since *Keno* could be brought only from Calcutta, the rich could only afford it. It was bartered with bigger animals like cows or lands because of its high value. The introduction of money in Angami area was clearly narrated by Mr. Pfürhicha in the following,

“The British introduced money in 1825. Since the people did not know the value of money, the British take the villagers into their custody for few days. While releasing them, they would tie a red cloth on their arms and gave them money in terms of one paisa to eight. The British would tell them that they would be able to buy anything with the money given to them. However, since they did not know money earlier, they could not quickly follow the language of the white people and could not follow their instructions. Therefore, the British again used to take them into their custody and repeated the same process. Later, some of the people who traveled to Calcutta were able to buy the *Keno* with the money given to them by the British. They were excited and came back home with those goods. This had influenced the villagers and slowly money was popularized.”²¹⁸

The villagers were given contract works, although the villagers refused to take up such works. The people who took up contract works early were being able to accumulate their wealth and became known not only in their villages but also to

²¹⁸ Interview with Mr. Pfürhicha, age 61, *Phichümia*, Chiechama village on 6 February 2009.

the other parts of the Angami area.²¹⁹ The improvement and the extension of the means of communication had significant repercussions of the economic life of the people. People of different parts became increasingly inter-dependent in their economic needs. With the development of the adequate communication facilities, they were no longer the sole consumers of their own produce. However, earlier their trade had been conducted in small local markets with the prices subject to variation from place and from time to time.²²⁰ The introduction of monetization had far-reaching effects. According to Imchayanger, the outcomes are “the political turmoil, economic instability, social disintegration and loss of identity”.²²¹

The opening of communications, schools dispensaries and the introduction of money as a medium of exchange changed the economic life of the Nagas. Hitherto, wealth was assessed in terms of land and the number of Mithuns (*Bos Frontalis*) owned by a person. Although, trade and commerce was not encouraged in proportion to the pace of the administrative expansion, the establishment of an orderly administration helped in fostering trade and commerce in the Naga Hills. The integration of Naga Hills with the British Indian Empire and the subsequent development of roads and towns pushed the markets in the hill areas. As a result, the border markets did not remain as the only trading stations. The barter economy

²¹⁹ Interview with Mr. Mazielhuto Nakhro, age 72, Contractor Jotsoma village on 20 April 2008.

²²⁰ Piketo Sema., *Op. cit.* p. 135.

²²¹ Imchayanger., *The Ao Naga Religion*, M. Phil. Dissertation submitted to NEHU, Shillong, 1981, pp-100-101.

was replaced by money economy and the merchants' community penetrated in the Naga Hills. The entire trade at Kohima was in the hands of a small number of merchants. There were altogether eighteen shops in Kohima, out of which, the Marwari merchants kept thirteen shops during the year 1904.²²² Foreign goods and finished products began to appear in the markets. Indigenous goods were differentiated and people began to develop a fancy for foreign goods. Currency was made available to the local people. Payments for labour, salary, commercial transactions etc, were now made through medium of cash. The payment of land revenue and house tax in cash revolutionized the complete socio-economic system of the state. Women, as well as men undertook trade. Naga men and women work in large number as government employees. A very interesting scene of present Naga economy is women's engagement in business. A large number of Naga women including the Angami women run business, importing huge quantities of foreign articles from neighboring countries.

In the *Kichiki*, youths learnt black smithy, weaving, basketry and other necessary articles such as earthen pots, wooden plates, bamboo cups, spoons, earthen jars etc. Now these articles have been replaced with modern articles like aluminum, steel glass, plastic and foreign products. The present generation is not interested in learning the traditional crafts anymore because the readymade goods

²²² Atola Changkiri., Op. cit. 172.

imported from near and far are cheaper and better in qualities. Therefore, the need to learn the traditional crafts in the *kichüki* declined with the changing economy in the Angami society. *Peli*, which formed the backbone of economic development also declined as modern methods such as tractors are used. Animals like cows and buffalos are tamed to plough the fields, which also contributed to the economic life of the people.

The new economy has also brought in new occupations requiring specific skills, knowledge and training. As a result, a shift from agrarian occupation to other occupations becomes necessary. Hence, a large number of Angami youth are employed in the government institutions. Women, who were mostly confined to their domestic works and fields, have now widened their horizon to other occupations. Thus, changing economic activities in many ways affected the institution of *thethsü. Kiya*, which was a simple affair, gave fewer burdens to the groom for managing the marriage feast. With new occupation and the introduction of money, the marriage feasts have become more elaborate, involving a lot of money and slaughtering of a large number of animals for feasting. *Thema* and *thesa* are still accepted in double and triple amount, of what, were given in the past. The leisure time spent at the *thehouba* to sit and chat has become a thing of luxury for the people who are in service as well as in business. The institutions of *Tsiakrü-u*, *Tekhusekhrü* and *Liedepfü* in performing

ceremonies in agricultural fields also declined with the declined of agricultural occupation. *Penie* and *kenyü*, which were strictly followed in their traditional society, are now considered as a hindrance to the economy of the people.

Emergence and role of Angami elites

The concept of middle class is a modern concept and peculiar to the capitalist mode of production and property relations. Middle class is a heterogeneous social order, which contains different functional and occupational groups. Although diverse in their callings, they possess similar social values, attitudes and behavior pattern.²²³ The emergence of middle class in India was a natural consequence of the colonial rule. We can trace the following broad categories of middle class. In the first category, falls that class which the colonials themselves patronized. It was realized by the colonials that external forces could never operate in a society unless the internal forces is not receptive of the same. The elite class, picked up from the native aristocracy and patronized by the British, served as the receptive agents. The latter become instrumental in two major colonial motives; in preparing a social base for colonial expansion and in containing any reaction that might well arise against the colonials. In the second category falls, the industrial middle class, this side by side with industrial

²²³ K. Alam., "The Emergence of Industrial Class in Assam." in Seminar on *Emergence and Role of Middle Class in North East India*. Shillong, 4-5 December, 1979, p. 1.

entrepreneurship also took part in the political machinery. In the third category, fall the nationalists who pleaded non-violence for national liberation. In the fourth category fall, the middle class revolutionaries pleading the path of violence as the only path for the emancipation of the masses.²²⁴

The attempts at conceptualizing the middle class in Indian politics have often led to diverse and contradictory viewpoints. As such, it is but natural that in trying to trace the origin and growth of such a class in tribal society, one is bound to encounter diverse problems. The absence of caste as a factor in tribal social life and the more or less egalitarian build up of tribal society are, but a few points, which tend to make the issue more complicated. In fact, the tribal society was in many ways an egalitarian society due to various reasons such as abundance of land, common possession and use of cultivable and pasture land, absence of inter-tribal trade in general, minimum complexities of social life. The emergence of the middle class from the tribal society under study can neither be traced in the above categories, nor does it have much deep-rooted historical tradition. While the activities of the above categories of middle classes centered on a cleavage, mainly economic in character, the activities of the middle class in a tribal society cannot be immediately explained in terms of any conflict having an economic content. The reason is obvious. They felt the impact of colonial rule at a much later period

²²⁴ A. K. Ray., *Authority and Legitimacy: A Study of the Thadou Kukis in Manipur*, Mittal Publications, New Delhi 1990, p. 111.

and that also indirectly. The British policy towards them was one of least interference.

The emergence and growth of elites in the Angami society have been attributed to Christianity, advanced form of economy and education. Because of Christianity and education, many Angamis received vocational, medical and legal education. The Angami elites primarily constituted of the bureaucracy, businessperson ranging from affluent government contractors to big shopkeepers, and persons belonging to various professions such as medicine and teaching. Among these sections, the bureaucracy is the most important. The small elites that finally emerged in Angami social life had its roots neither in the landed aristocracy as was common in other parts of the sub-continent nor did it evolve through commercial development. It was linked with the spread of western education primarily at the initiative of Christian missionaries and the rise of professions. The growth of Angami elites was slow as the British did not encourage and finance for higher education for the masses. Moreover, the plight of business and enterprise in the hills was much worse, although there is some evidence of accumulation of wealth by some hill men in the British period. The only avenues open to this elites were service and professions. It is only recently

that some educated men are turning to business, and even, mechanized agriculture.²²⁵ This holds true in the case of the Angamis of Nagaland.

The Angami elites became instrumental in bringing political consciousness beyond the village levels as they along with other Naga elites spearheaded the formation of the Naga Club, Tribal Council and the Naga National council.²²⁶ Due to education, they became the most innovative, creative and articulate in their society. They became the leaders in the development of language and literature, infusing new ideas in religion and became instrumental in bringing about political and revivalist movements. The Angami society is not an exception. Elites are not only influential, but also a dominating group,²²⁷ and the interest of the elites depends on what ideology they wish to represent or to promote.

Angami elites have replaced the *Phichü kehou* who had very little mobility, were conscious only of their *kikru*, *chienuo*, kinship, and attached great significance to traditional *nanyü*. The elites are the most influential because of their economic, political and social status. Today, almost every family has an educated person who influences their parents, *rüna* and the *Phichü kehou*. The elites because of their education and monetary power are brain behind many of its

²²⁵ S. K. Chaube., "The Middle Class in the North East Indian Hills: Retrospects and Prospects," in Seminar on the *Emergence and Role of Middle Class in North-East India*, Shillong, 4-5 December 1979, p. 9.

²²⁶The formation of Naga club in 1918, the Tribal Council in 1945 and the Naga National Council are all indications of their integrating aspect.

²²⁷ A. K. Baruah., "Assamese National Question", *North East Quarterly*, Vol. 1, February- May, 1983. no. 3-4, p. 90.

socio-economic-political activities, although the elites in many cases became exploiters of the ignorant masses. The formation of the Angami Gazette Officers Union is one example of elites replacing the physically brave men, and the formation of Angami Women Organization is one such organization, which represent the Women elites in the society. Since the elites are economically powerful, they are more respected than the traditional leaders.

Chapter V

Values of democratic politics and socio-political institutions of the Angami Nagas

Democracy evolved by the Greeks in the 4th Century B.C, has come to acquire the most widespread ideological legitimacy in the world as a form of government by the end of twentieth century. Democracy came to be applied to a system of representative government after the American and French revolutions. Since then, the main appeal of democracy has been that human affairs should be guided by reason and that the principles of liberty and equality should be integral parts of governance. It is committed to the promotion of individual rights, rule of law and independence of judiciary to ensure the rights and liberties of the individual, and accountability. In spite of its worldwide appeals, the democratizing countries are increasingly facing a crisis in governance. While democracy in most of the developing countries comes as ‘imported ideas,’ countries where democracy is successful are often associated with “prior formation of a nation state, a homogeneous population, an industrial economy, a strong middle class, and shared traditions of civic culture. Democracy remains a contentious term in many countries in spite of an upsurge in the ‘process of democratisation’ in the second half of the twentieth century.²²⁸ Democracy once

²²⁸See, Geraint Parry & Moran Michael (ed.), *Democracy and Democratisation*, Rutledge, London and New York, 1994.

established is never static but continuous to evolve. Indeed, sustaining democracy is often as difficult a task as establishing it. This is reflected in the fact that not all democracies introduced in Asia in the past have survived but have had different experiences.

Democratization is the process that leads to democracy. While India have had stable democratic governments since its independence, Myanmar and Pakistan have had repeated authoritarian regimes. Some African societies with strong tribal traditions have also responded differently to the process of democratization.²²⁹ These studies have shown that while some countries such as Tanzania and Zanzibar are making little progress in consolidating democracy, other countries including Madagascar, Mali and Ghana are showing vitality in their democratic institutions. Interestingly, a tendency to revive traditional institutions and values remained strong in most of the African societies, despite the inroads of western values throughout the colonial intervention. Most of the African students who were exposed to western education are taking pride in African traditional values.²³⁰ Thus, seniority in age and other traditional values were the main source of authority in most of the African tribal societies. Therefore, it is natural that the

²²⁹Richard Sanbrook., *Closing the Circle: Democratisation and Development in Africa*, Zed Books London and New York, 2001, pp. 23-70; E. Conteh-Mogan, *Democratisation in Africa: the Theory and Dynamics of Political Transition*, Westport, 1977, Ch. 6; Walter Oyugi *et.al* (eds.), *Democratic Theory and Practice in Africa*, James Currey, London, 1988, pp.49-70.

²³⁰Kenneth Ingham., *Politics in Modern Africa: The Uneven Tribal Dimension*, Rutledge, London and New York, 1990, p.4.

imposition of any variety of liberal democracy to these societies has led to tensions and conflicts. This is not a phenomenon limited to African societies. Indeed, different societies including many western countries have experienced almost similar conflicts, though at a different level and in a different context.

There has been an unexpected return to prominence, the re-invention and resurgence of traditional institutions and values associated with them in different parts of the world. Many communities in the Northeastern region of India, who are new to the system of democratic governance, have been demanding constitutional recognition of their traditional institutions. Thus, the prevalence of traditional values and conflict with values of liberal democracy becomes evident. In most of these tribal societies, the traditional institutions continue to operate at different levels alongside the democratic governance. Therefore, in spite of the introduction of democratic constitutionalism, there are many obstacles for consolidating, sustaining and making democracy stronger and viable in Northeast India. As stated by A.K. Baruah, conflicts will be sharper in these societies where traditional institutions acquire both political and legal recognition under the new system of governance. He also states that legal recognition of traditional organisations, institutions, norms and practices in turn, affects traditional values,

thus creating a political reality of a unique nature.²³¹ Introduction of democratic values could also ignite conflict among communities where there is no proper demarcation of power or equalization of opportunities. Some ethnic groups may intervene to either resist democratization to protect traditional values or support democratization in order to reverse its marginalization or exclusion from power. In such situations, ethnicity and religion become tools deployed for the acquisition of power.²³² Further, in most cases the state lack the ability to provide economic and socio-political goods to the mass of the people irrespective of ethnic origins or religious inclinations. This often resulted in giving loyalty to social formations such as the community, or ethnic groups. Significantly, such forms of governance not only have survived the coming of democratic governance but they are also being re-invented in all sorts of hybrid forms in an effort at asserting their identities for political strategies at different levels. The traditional leaders are resisting the attempts to assign them to the archives of the past.

Most of the ethnic identities of the Northeast India are defining their socio-cultural boundaries in opposition to other identities in much more narrower terms than in the past. The distancing of one group from the other has set in motion such unseen dynamics that building modern socio-political institutions on these soils is

²³¹ A.K. Baruah., "Tribal Traditions and Crises of Governance in North East India." with special reference to Meghalaya. *Crisis States programme*, Working papers series no.1, 2003. p.6.

²³² Rotchchild. D., "Ethnic Bargaining and State Breakdown in Africa". *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, 1995, p.58.

a hazardous task.²³³ Today, there appears to be a complex relation of competition as well as cooperation and accommodation. Therefore, the question that is often posed is whether there is any possible way of reconciling these re-invented or modernized traditions with the values and goals of liberal democracy adopted by India in 1950. The changing political values of the society remain one of the important factors, which continuously influence the political structures and processes. It is therefore imperative to find out the political values of democracy and the values of the society in which the democratic politics and accompanying institutions are established. In the backdrop of this, an attempt is made in this chapter to analyze the interface of values of democratic politics with Angami traditional institutions and values associated with them in order to find out whether the values of traditional institutions interfere with the democratic system of governance, which profess individual liberty, and the rule of law. The study of values, particularly of the interface of traditional values with modern democratic values will at least partially facilitate the understanding of the process of governance in Nagaland. Values are considered by many to be crucial for understanding cultures and thus, political behavior. By values or the normative principles it is taken here to mean informal rule that circumscribe appropriate behavior in a particular context. Democracy has assumed different meaning

²³³ G. Haragopal., “ Democratic politics and Traditional Institutions: Some Reflections”. presented at an International Workshop on *Community, Conflicts and Crisis of Democratic Governance: An Analysis of the Societies of North-East India*, at North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong from 18-19 September, 2002.

through its evolution in certain periods, and assumed different meanings under different social, economic and political contexts. The present study concentrates on the values of liberal democracy as adopted and professed in the Constitution of India.

Values of Democratic politics

Democratic politics, for all of its variability and problems, is the politics of any good governance. In this context, democratic politics aims at the widest distribution of power among the citizenry. Democratic politics is a means by which all people are included in determining how a society makes choices. The values of democratic politics, which are identified through a review of literature,²³⁴ include elected representatives, free and fair elections, freedom of expression, free media and freedom of association and inclusive citizenship, among others. The Indian democracy is based on the principle of popular sovereignty or popular power and the basis of legitimacy of the government is the consent of the people. Competition for political power marks the essential element of democracy in India. Indian democracy tries to ensure participation of people in the political process by providing basic rights and freedoms to the individual. The

²³⁴ Anthony Arblaster., *Democracy*, Sachin Rostogi for Bookland Publishing, Delhi, 1997(Second Edition); Makhok Balraj, *Murder of Democracy*, S.Chand and Co. Pvt. Ltd. New Delhi, 1973; M. V. Pylee., *India's Constitution*, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1962; Austin. Granville, *The Indian Constitution: Cornerstone of a Nation*, Oxford University Press, Bombay, 1972; R. Frankle. Francine(eds.),*Transforming India: social and Political Dynamics of democracy*, Oxford university Press, New Delhi, 2000.

principle that the Indian democracy proclaimed underline the necessity of public discussion, which assume the existence of different opinion and tolerance towards the same in the society. It has a firm belief in the principles of liberty, equality and pluralism. The Indian democracy professes individualism and provides for certain basic rights and freedoms of the individual. It is also committed to social welfare, rule of law and independence of judiciary. In the early days of post-independent period, the most viable political space in India was occupied by forces, which were friendly to the dominant values of democratic politics, although traditional political values were very strong in large parts of the country, including Northeast India.

The values of democratic politics reject the rule of one person or a few over others and hold the view that every one being equal deserves a voice in governance. Public offices are not the property of incumbents but theoretically belong to the citizens who can reclaim it in an orderly and peaceful way. The logic of the democratic model, therefore assumes that public officials are responsible for their conduct and accountable to citizens. The critics of minimalist democracy want to make democracy more inclusive, not only by drawing more people into decision- making processes but also by expanding the sites of democratic control to new spheres of social experience. In brief, the values of democratic politics include elected representatives, free, fair and frequent elections of these

representatives; freedom of expression, where citizens have rights to express their voice; access to alternative sources of information; a free media and freedom of association; where citizens have right to form and join independent associations for participation in organizing and influencing state policy and practice and inclusive citizenship where no one is excluded or discriminated against. Values of democratic politics is therefore about much more than just having a vote, and is not determined by any specific set of institutions. Rather, it is characterized by agreed rules within society that govern a set of principles such as the rule of law, accountability, fair representation and effective participation and voice and a set of values that recognize individual and collective human rights and freedom. It offers a peaceful way for societies to determine how people live together, how competing interest are accommodated and how available resources are allocated.

Values of Angami socio-political institutions

The traditional values associated with the Angami socio-political institutions are identified through an analysis of information available in existing literatures,²³⁵ and unstructured interviews conducted with elders, Youth leaders, Christian and women organisations. The values of the traditional socio-political

²³⁵ Angelina Lotsüro., *The Nagas: A missionary Challenge*. Vendrame Institute Publication, Shillong, 2000, pp. 29-36; B.B. Kumar(ed.), *Modernisation in Naga Society*, Omsons Publications, New Delhi, 1993; M.C. Goswami and M. Litt (eds.), *Customary Laws and Practices of the Angami Nagas of Nagaland*, Prepared Under the Law research Institute, Eastern region, Guwahati High Court, NEC Council, Shillong, 1995; Niu Whiso Kuotsu., "The challenges facing the Angamis today: A historical perspective", unpublished paper, 28 November, 2007. pp. 2-3; Unstructured interviews conducted with 40 Angami elders and leaders.

institutions of the Angami was characterized by rule of the male elders, respect for seniority of age, physical strength, patriarchy and gender inequality in terms of division of labour, property ownership and decision-making. Before the advent of the British, *Phichü kehou* (Informal Council of Elders) ruled the Angami society according to their customs and practices. The concept of the rule of law was alien to them. Authority of age and physical strength was greatly respected in their traditional society. In addition to the *Phichü kehou*, there were different village officials, which show that a crude form of social stratification based on the division of labour existed in the traditional society. Since the Angamis lived within “clan boundaries” where their ancestors lived, they were related to one another by agnatic descent. The clans never lost their political functions. Relationships within the clan were determined by exogamy, ownership of clan-land, ward-settlement, labor organization, clan courts and councils, etc. Thus, the traditional Angami society was a close knit one with strong bond of kinship. Jhuming and constant fight between villages, which involved collective defense group efforts fostered group solidarity in the Angami society. The new system of democratic governance professing individual rights, the rule of law, equality before the law and other democratic values introduced and adopted by the Indian Constitution in 1950 was foreign to the Angamis who were organized under their own traditional leaders since the pre-colonial period.

Compatibility or Variance

Patriarchy

The traditional Angami society was socially or gender inclusive in that titles and functions of traditional leaders were by inheritance passed on to male successors. The traditional institutions shunted women to domestic arena rather than involving them in the decision-making process at the family, village and societal forums. This custom has spilled over to the modern system of democratic form of government as men view any demand of women as a threat to their prerogative rights to acquire and retain political power. Similarly, decision-makers and planners view development only in terms of economic growth and infrastructure building thereby ignoring social and cultural aspects. According to Monalisa Changkija,²³⁶ the system as it exists today is biased, discriminatory, obsolete, and inimical to the welfare, development and progress of Naga women. The State administrative apparatus and the financial institutions catalyses a transition from an egalitarian society to class formation and from a relatively high status of women to growing patriarchy as they give loans only to individual land owning heads of families usually interpreted as men. Thus, the male elites, who took control of all decision-making, interpreted the customary laws in their

²³⁶ Monalisa Changkija.. "Right to Choose One's Destiny." Telegraph. 19 March 2004. p. 16.

favour, which strengthened patriarchy.²³⁷ Discrimination against women is visible particularly in the ownership and in the legally enforceable right to benefit from, control or alienate one's assets. Inheritance or the right to own, use and control property is basic to it.²³⁸ Tribal tradition is one of male control over community resources and society. Even though, the Nagas have the right to follow their customary laws, they have not brought in reforms to introduce gender equity. Instead, the State supports individual property and deals only with the head of the family, usually a male. Additionally, since leadership was reserved for a particular group or clan, other members of the society were excluded from traditional rule. In some cases, leadership was not inherited but was selected by the elders in a society, or the male members themselves could chose or influence the selection of traditional leaders.

In contrast, roles are built on professions and what counts is the individual skill in the modern democratic governance. In principle, all professions are open to both men and women. Individuals are identified as citizens who are presumed to have equal rights and certain duties. Electing governments, obeying laws and paying taxes are not the only aspects of a citizen's role. Instead, civic culture conceives citizens as individuals that are capable of distinguishing between the

²³⁷ Fernandes Walter and Sanjay Barbora., *Modernisation and Women's Status in North Eastern India: A Comparative Study of Six Tribes*. North Eastern Social Research Centre, Guwahati. 2002. p.109.

²³⁸ Interview with Ms. Suokhrieno Nagi. age 68. Jotsoma village on 22 June 2008.

private sphere and the realm of the public goods, opinion and decision-making. Leadership in Angami society was and is male- dominated at all levels. In modern democratic states, including India, inclusiveness is guaranteed through universal suffrage, where both the adult male and female populations have the right to vote and stand for office. The main criticism levelled against the traditional leaders is the exclusion of members belonging to other clans or communities living in the same space. This indeed clashes with the basic values of constitutional democracy.

Seniority in Age

To the Angamis, advanced in age was a sign of maturity. *Phichü kehou* (Informal council of elders) was consisted of *Phichümia*, *Peyümia* and *Pehümia*. *Phichümia* were those who attained above 60 years of age having grand children. *Peyümia* were those who had skill in diplomacy, knowledge of oral history, honesty, wisdom, and leadership quality. *Pehümia* were usually above 75yrs of age. They were respected and considered as the ‘wise men’ of the village, which in turn influence their politics. In age roles, the young had to reach a certain age in order to be considered a “wise man”. In addition, the youths or younger generations had limited access to traditional institutions. Roles were also determined by lineage, which assigned specific rights and duties to certain

families, individuals and particular social groups. Thus, the social construction of the roles of individual was defined by age, gender and lineage, which pre-determined a person's status in the society. The persistence of the traditional value of respect for elders in the society have prevented the young educated and vibrant people from taking active part in important decision-making bodies at different levels. The traditional 'men only' institutions have continued in new forms without completely giving way to democratic practices.

Kin protection and group solidarity

The Angami traditional society was governed by a structure of values that privileged the community defined often in terms of the clan or the tribe. Such society resemble semi-organic units whose members are held together by semi-biological ties like kinship, living together, common dangers, common joys and common distresses. Such society considers tribe or clan as everything and individual as nothing. The Angamis politics is influenced by the traditional values of kin protection and group solidarity. They raise the issues of identity, identify values and interests for their own community, and very often adopted an exclusivist and discriminatory politics against other communities who in their view are likely to pose immediate threats to their values and interests. In order to remain distinct from other communities and as political strategies, they revive their traditions and

traditional institutions, which are not democratic in the real sense of the term. Community politics seemed to have positively affected democratic politics as far as the question of participation is concerned. Some of the important community based organizations in the context of Nagaland include the Naga Students' Federation (NSF), Naga Mothers Association (NMA), and Naga People's Movement for Human Rights (NPMHR), among others. These community based movements and organizations have been on many occasions able to draw a large number of people to active politics. These organizations at one level have strengthened democracy, as they have been able to garner public support against the state governments and even against the insurgent groups. However, community politics play a negative role as far as civil and political liberties such as freedom of thought and expression, individual rights, association etc are concerned. Community in many cases acquires precedence over individuals in pursuit of its own goals and values. Thus, it is not always possible for a non-Naga or a non-tribal to participate freely in political activities, as the elites from the dominant community are intolerant towards other communities. In the name of maintaining group solidarity, the people are led to adopt an unfavorable view towards the outsiders. The treatment meted out to some non-Naga labourers in Nagaland by the Naga Students Federation is one example of suppressing the rights of a non-Naga individual member.²³⁹ Similarly, the Naga People's

²³⁹ A.K. Baruah., "Communities and Democracy: A Northeast Indian Perspective." *North East India Studies*.

Movement for Human Rights has not condemned the killings of hundreds of innocent Kukis in Nagaland because of the Kuki Naga Conflict in Manipur, although it has not failed to condemn the violations of human rights by the security forces against the Nagas. Thus, the traditional values of kin protection and group solidarity that still remains an important characteristics of contemporary Naga society undermines the values of democratic politics such as rule of law, equality before law, freedom of thought and expression. This stress on group solidarity runs counter to the democratic spirit of competition.

Responsiveness and Accountability

Responsiveness means that all forms of authority should act in the interests of the people considering their priorities and needs. In other words, since the decision makers make decisions on behalf of the people, the decision should respect the will of those people. Accountability requires that there should be mechanisms in place to penalize the decision-makers for their poor performance. Brinkerhoff makes a distinction between accountability within government and outside accountability, which have different sanction capacities.²⁴⁰ While the former includes courts, parliaments and legislative committees, the latter includes elections and the media. Thus, the basic concept of a democracy with elected

Vol.1.No.1. June 2005. p.29.

²⁴⁰See W. Derrick Brinkerhoff., *Taking Account of Accountability: A Conceptual Overview and Strategic options*. U.S Agency for International Development Centre for Democracy and Governance, Washington D.C, 2001.

representatives is that elections guarantee responsiveness and accountability to the authorities. Since, the traditional leaders held their positions inherently for life, the possibilities of sanctions were restricted. They were not accountable to the village as a whole.²⁴¹ It is hard to determine whether the traditional leaders were responsive or not because of their functional limitations and biasness in many cases. Nevertheless, one may argue that the Angami's system of village level deliberation based upon community consensus as compared to chiefship in other societies as democratic. This argument stands in sharp contrast to conventional approaches to democracy, which would suggest that traditional leadership is an anachronism of lesser developed countries, and stands in contrast to western democratic norms and values.

Legitimacy

The leaders of democratic country derived their legitimacy from electoral processes, rule of law, constitutional and legal systems that structures decision-making processes. In contrast, the legitimacy for the traditional authorities of the Angami was rooted in customs, traditions history and culture, often combined with religious/divine reference.²⁴² Traditional leaders claimed special legitimacy in the eyes of their people because these institutions were seen as embodying their

²⁴¹ Ms Kerihovile Kikhi, age 64, Chairperson, Women Organisation. Viswema village on 1 February 2009.

²⁴² Interviews with village elders; i) Mr. Pelhusievi Nakhro, age 87. Medziphema village on 6 January, 2006; ii) Mr. Solahie Sogotsu, age 72. Chiechama village on 5 February 2006;iii) Mr.Pudel Kikhi, age 80, Viswema village on 2 January, 2006; iv) Mr. Neinguto Naprantsu, age 74 , Jotsoma village on 14 April 2006.

people's history, culture, laws, values and religion.²⁴³ Since, many of the traditional leaders held their positions inherently for life, the possibilities of sanctions were restricted. Thus, while legitimacy is closely linked to democracy, it is rather a foreign concept to the Angamis and other communities of the region. It is therefore, not surprising that the legitimacy of traditional authorities is greater than the legitimacy of the democratic structures in many tribal societies of the region.

Conflicts between the two values

In almost all the tribal communities of the region, some elites are demanding for recognition of their traditional institutions, while another section seems to be accepting the constitutional form of governance more seriously.²⁴⁴ A. Lanunungsang Ao argues that the introduction of traditional institutions is the only answer for the Nagas, because the present alien political system, which is an imposed one, can never bring solution to meet the needs of the Nagas.²⁴⁵ Similarly, B.N. Lanong, the Deputy Chief Executive Member, Khasi Hills Autonomous District Council states that the Autonomous District Councils, which

²⁴³ Interview with Mr. Puhozo Vitsu, age 39, Ex-President. Youth Organisation, Viswema on 2 January 2006.

²⁴⁴ A. K. Baruah., "Democratic politics and Traditional Institutions: Some Reflections", presented at an International Workshop on *Community, Conflicts and Crisis of Democratic Governance: An Analysis of the Societies of North-East India*, at North-Eastern Hill University, 18-19 September. Shillong, 2002.

²⁴⁵ A. Lanunungsang Ao. "A study of Traditional self-governing Institutions among the Hill Tribal population groups of Nagaland". presented at a seminar on *Traditional Self-governing Institutions among hill tribal populations in North-East India*. 29-31 August. Guwahati, 1994.

aims at uplifting and protecting the minority tribals, their cultures, traditions, customs, dialects and faith was the product of the prolonged debates of the Constituent Assembly.²⁴⁶ Other argues that the traditional institutions, which were not inclusive of women and ethnic minorities, have become instruments for privatization of community resources of land, water and forests. The issues of women's role, representation of minorities, and public scrutiny of functionaries and auditing of accounts of traditional institutions need a critical analysis before giving them constitutional recognition. Thus, there are democratic governance with elected representatives, rule of law, equality and other legal systems on the one hand and traditional structures with long-standing historic norms, often linked to spiritual, religious, political, judicial and economic functions on the other interacting at different levels of governance.

However, there is a significant variation among the tribal communities of Northeast India regarding the extent of their attachment to the traditional values or to the democratic values in their daily lives, as well as, the degree of influence of one or the other form of authority. Nevertheless, it is clear that traditional values were, and continue to be the source of political authority in most of the tribal societies including the Angamis of Nagaland. Therefore, the tendency to revive traditional institutions for various reasons remains strong in many tribal societies

²⁴⁶ B. N. Lanong, "Democratic politics and Traditional Institutions: Some Reflections", presented at an International Workshop on *Community, Conflicts and Crisis of Democratic Governance: An Analysis of the Societies of North-East India*. at North-Eastern Hill University, 18-19 September, Shillong, 2002.

of the region despite the introduction of liberal democracy by India in 1950. Both the Centre and the State governments neither are under pressure, as can they neither abdicate their constitutional responsibility of protecting life, liberty and property nor are in a position to invigorate institutional capabilities for orderly governance. Thus, the issue of recognition and revival of the traditional institutions of the tribal communities therefore is a major political problem generated by conflicting political aspirations and complex political realities of tribal areas, particularly in the northeastern hill states. The question is whether and how the gap between these governing systems can be bridged. Most of the tribal societies of the Northeast India, are today at serious socio-political crossroads. The three sets of authority- traditional, colonial and post-colonial have interacted with each other in different ways at different junctures. This has resulted in further confusion on the part of traditional leaders and the policy makers leading to crisis in governance.

In the context of the Angami Nagas, the values upheld by their traditional socio-political institutions are not compatible with the democratic values adopted by the Indian constitution. In spite of all these variances, the conflict between traditional leaders adopting a revivalist stand, and those deviating from it does not arise in the case of the Angamis since the Indian constitution under Article 371A accommodated and amalgamated the traditional political institutions of Nagaland.

The issues concerning decentralization and devolution of power and responsibilities, has not generated the form of debate as seen in other states, particularly Meghalaya. Yet, a sense of ownership of the system is still missing in many parts of the state.²⁴⁷ This is evident from the study that *chienuos* still accept the traditional authority for settling land disputes, religious or social matters at *thepfü* levels in spite of the existence of statutory bodies at the village levels. Nevertheless, there has been an attempt to discuss the possibilities of restructuring these traditional institutions on the model of Naga Hoho amongst Naga scholars, political thinkers and planners. The issue in question is to adhere to traditional values and practices to preserve their identity even if, they contradict with modern democratic principles.

Further, although the values of democratic politics and traditional socio-political institutions have not led to political problem, the traditional values that profess group assertion, kin-protection and collective efforts continue to influence the working of constitutional and community-based bodies as community in many cases acquires precedence over individuals. The modern democratic system of choosing representatives through votes is not only confined to the organs of government but is adopted by other organizations such as the Church, Angami Students Association, Angami Public Organisation as well as other Naga

²⁴⁷ National Commission to Review the working of the Constitution, Empowering and strengthening of the Panchayati Raj Institutions/Autonomous District Councils/traditional Tribal governing Institutions in North East India. New Delhi, 2001.

organisations. Thus, the Angamis are largely supportive of the modern democratic practice of choosing representatives through voting as against the traditional way of gaining positions of authority through might or through heredity. Thus, while the statutory bodies and community-based organisations are modern and constitutional in form, their behavioural content is traditional. So long as the Angami middle class and the educated are able to generate economic, political and social capital and have access to positions of authority in democratic governance, conflicts between the two values are not likely to generate political problems. However, as long as seniority of age, traditional wisdom and kinship, group solidarity and clan takes precedence over individual liberty and rule of law, the values of democratic politics cannot be firmly established. Since, community receives precedents over individuals in many societies, traditional values that profess group assertion, kin-protection and collective effort come in conflict with democratic governance, which profess individual liberty, rule of law and other democratic values. While many Nagas view the traditional institutions, which were functionally required to meet the needs of an isolated society, as no longer relevant in meeting the modern needs of rapidly developed Angami society, others maintain that, retention of traditional institutions is necessary for preserving their distinct identity.

The party based politics of the Indian democratic system of governance, which was unknown to the Angamis has brought along with it political factionalism and fragmentation along tribal and even clan lines. Although political parties did issue manifestos, still, tribal affiliations and not party affiliation determine the outcome of the elections. The candidates have confined their campaign activities mostly at grassroots level institutions like Village Councils, *Gaonburas*, Youth and women organisations. The villagers without comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the democratic set up are caught into emotional support of one candidate against another. This emotional support has led to conflict and violence amongst themselves seriously affecting social life and social solidarity. Nevertheless, the recent elections saw an increased fervour among the electorate for participation in the state's electoral process.

The modern democratic principles have penetrated to the Angami society to a certain extent. The penetration of modern democratic principle of grassroot participation in decision-making is evident in the function of the Village Development Boards and Village Councils in calling public meetings. The participation of people from all walks of life in such meetings have shown that they are interested in sustaining democratic system of choosing representatives and democratic method of taking decisions through majority votes. However, participation alone does not ensure a democratic society. For the smooth

functioning of the democratic institutions, the democratic values have to be deeply entrenched in the society. The developing trends in Angami society seems to be far from such ideals, although many scholars described their traditional society as practicing a pure form of government.

There has also been a great imbalance in the representation in terms of gender. The traditional value of gender inequality as a political norm in the present society seems to have adversely affected the participation of women in politics and in important bodies of decision-making in the society. In Angami society, women and politics are more often seen as an antithesis. In the electoral history of Nagaland, women never held positions in the state legislature. The most important factor that precludes women from elected office is the socio-cultural prescriptions, among others. The traditional values, which did not, recognized the rights of women as primary decision-makers influence even the political parties as both the national and regional parties consider women as good voters and not as good candidates. Men appear to control all institutions of the society. The male elites who controls and interprets their customary laws reinforce this process. The persistence of the traditional value of respect for elders also seems to have prevented the young educated and vibrant people from taking active part in important decision-making bodies. The establishment of the new democratic institutions has not brought about a corresponding change in the attitude and

values of the people. The people do not seem to have internalized the democratic values, although they are interested in sustaining modern elected government. On the contrary, it is found that people still cling to their traditional ideas and values. This inclination often renders the rule of law meaningless and group interest often stands in the way of individual freedom and rights.

Chapter VI

Conclusion

This chapter discusses the summary and major conclusions based on the study. The Angamis had well established socio-political institutions often linked to religious, political, judicial and economic functions to run the affairs of their society. Indeed, the socio-political institutions were the principal component of the Angami society. The study of the working of Angami socio-political institutions reveals that they covered almost all the conceivable needs of a person from birth to death, representing the force of authority and legitimacy. These institutions lay anchored primarily in customs and traditions, and the incumbents acted as the legitimate upholders and interpreters of the scope and contents of the tradition. The *Phichü Kehou* (Informal Council of Elders) carried out the administration of the village according to customs and practices. The concept of rule of law was thus a concept alien to the people, although free and formal discussions formed the very backbone of the Angami society. This has led many writers to consider the traditional Angami system of administration as democratic or very close to the modern concept of democracy. However, it would be incorrect to call it as democratic in that the traditional Angami society never experienced an

established government in the modern sense, nor was inclusive in that the titles and functions of traditional leaders were by inheritance passed on to male successors of one clan thereby excluding the other members of the clans. The Angami socio-political institutions was marked by strong patriarchal values where there was gender inequality not only in decision-making but also with regard to the division of labour, ownership of property and even with regard to religion. Additionally, access by women to traditional leadership was limited because they could not inherit titles. The legitimacy of the traditional authorities of the community under study was rooted in customs, traditions history and culture, often combined with religious/divine reference. Traditional leaders claimed special legitimacy in the eyes of their people because these institutions were seen as embodying their people's history, culture, laws, values and religion. Since many of the traditional leaders held their positions inherently for life, the possibilities of sanctions were restricted. Authority of age was also greatly respected. Moreover, the brave warriors and hunters were also held in high esteem in the village. The Angami society was a close knit one with strong bond of kinship. Clan was an important unit of the village in the traditional society. There was a strong emphasis on cooperation and harmony. Their identity as a group was always more important than their identity as an individual. The traditional values continue to persist under the new democratic setting.

The Colonial rule brought about a number of changes on the socio-political institutions of the Angamis through the institutions of Gaonburas, Dobashis and District level administration. The office of *Gaonbura* introduced by the British to assist the Colonial administration virtually acted as the village headman. The customary hold of the Angami elders over the village began to decline as the appointment of *Gaonburas* for life not only brought in an element of extra village authority but also infused the concept of chiefship, which was unknown in the Angami society. Similarly, the office of the *Dobashis*, which was introduced as a native team of intermediaries between the government and local people in 1869-70 were at the same time employed as judge in the village to settle heinous crimes including murder. They also advised the British officers in the settlement of cases according to the customary laws of the local people. This had affected the powers of the *Phichü Kehou* or Informal Council of Elders, which covered executive, legislative and judicial before the advent of the British. The British government determined the powers and functions of the *Dobashis*. The *Dobashis* served both as an instrument of pacification on the Angamis and as a native team of intermediaries between the rulers and the ruled. The third office adopted by the colonial administration was the District level administration. The study reveals that the Europeans exclusively held these offices and as a result, a non-Naga began to involve in their village administration for the first time. In addition, this

was a new development in that historically there had been no district level council in the traditional Angami society. The introduction of district level administration restructured the traditional political institutions of the Angami in that the village elders who enjoyed supreme authority without any interference was demolished. The traditional Angami institution of *Phichü Kehou* largely lost their customary meaning as the officials of the British government gained direct control over the people in several aspects.

The Nagaland Village and Area Council (Second amendment) Act, 1990 established a single tier local system known as the Village Council on the pattern of traditional village administration. Significantly, the method of choosing the members of the Village Councils continues to be in accordance with the prevailing customary practices and usages. However, one significant change has been that unlike the Council of Elders in the traditional Angami society, the members of the Village Councils are chosen for a five-year term. The reservation of one-third of the total members of VDBs for women and the provision for utilisation of twenty-five percent of the total grant to the village for women's programmes is a major change in that the traditional institutions had shunted women to domestic arena rather than involving them in the decision-making process. In addition, the functioning of Village Development Boards is more transparent than the traditional village administration because it is mandatory for all Village

Development Boards to hold monthly public meetings for review and monitoring of ongoing projects. However, the Village Development Boards revived the colonial pattern of administration in that it makes the Deputy Commissioner (DC) or Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) of the district as the Ex-officio Chairman.

The study reveals that the establishments of Village Councils and Village Development Boards have not only replaced the limited functions of the traditional village hierarchy but also shifted to wider and modern trend of 'development administration.' While the Village Council is part of the traditional milieu of the Angami society, the Village Development Board is an effort at dovetailing the former into a development framework. In contrast with the traditional socio-political institutions of the Angamis, the Village Councils and the Village Development Boards has enlarged the scope of community participation in development and welfare programmes. The Secretary of the Village Development Board is also made the members of the Communitisation programmes. The main qualifications for a member in both the bodies are no longer based on age, gender and lineage as it was in the traditional society but on having knowledge of the administration of the village and government offices.

The study reveals that The Village Council and Village Development Board are structurally strong, although functionally, there is a dichotomy between them.

The Village Council has strong recognition rooted in tradition and is able to exercise influence on traditional spheres of land and family disputes, social and cultural sanctions, etc, but it has not been so successful in appropriating the Village Development Board structure to take control over development resources and activities. Thus, there is a dichotomy at the village level itself wherein the strong traditional structure is unable to benefit from its advantage when it comes to the development processes offered by the state. In case of transgression in the social sphere, the Village Council was able to pass strong sanctions, but in the development arena, they have not demonstrated any such sway to bring to book the offenders.

The changes brought by Christianity, education, Angami elites and changing economic activities on the socio-political institutions of the Angamis is another important aspect of the present study. The study reveals that the effects of Christianity were more on social and religious institutions rather than political institutions as it aimed at transforming the socio-cultural and religious lives of the people. The institution of *Kichüki*, which was an important youth organisation, began to decline as the Christian missionaries forbade boys to attend *Kichüki* since they regarded everything done in connection with the tribal ceremonies and festivals as an act against Christianity. The most significant contribution of Christianity was putting an end to the practice of head hunting. As a result, the

role of *Themumias* lost their importance, as the question of consulting them in matters of head hunting does not arise. The authority of the *Phichü-u/Zievo and Kemevo* lost its importance with the coming of Christianity as the convert Christians began to defy their orders since they gave primary importance to membership of the Church. The disappearance of certain institutions and festivals because of Christianity also undermined their position largely, as many Christian youth organizations are operating with the village pastors as their leader. Unlike in the past, the present day Christian leaders are not in favour of discarding the customs and traditions of the tribe. To such leaders, Christianity being above all cultures should have a place in every culture.

Education has led to the growth of educated persons who were responsible for forming both secular and religious organizations beyond village levels. This was in contrast with the socio-political institutions of the Angamis, which were limited to clan and village. Although the traditional leaders are sometimes consulted on issues relating to customary laws and practices, they are no longer the sole authority to decide the affairs of the village but are dominated by other members who are more educated (modern education) and enlightened than the traditional council of elders. The pre-colonial trade, which was mainly based on barter system gradually changed to cash medium during the colonial period. Today, Naga men and women work in large number as government employees

and in other professions. A large number of Angamis run business, importing huge quantities of foreign articles from neighbouring states and countries. Thus, changing economic activities in many ways affected the traditional youth institutions such as *Peli* and *Age-system* that were the backbone of social and economic development in their traditional society. The role of *Tsiakrü-u*, *Tekhusekhrü* and *Liedepfü* in performing ceremonies in agricultural fields also ceased.

The emergence and growth of elites in the Angami society have been attributed to Christianity, changing economy and education. The Angami elites primarily constituted of the salaried bureaucracy, businessperson ranging from affluent government contractors to big shopkeepers and persons belonging to the various professions such as medicine and teaching. Among these sections, the bureaucracy is the most important. The Angami elites became instrumental in bringing political consciousness beyond the village levels as they along with other Naga elites spearheaded the formation of Naga Club, Tribal Council and the Naga National Council. The traditional elders had very little mobility and each village had to fend for itself. They were conscious of family, clan, kinship and attached great significance to traditional rituals. Today, almost every family has an educated person who influences their parents, villagers and the members of statutory bodies and the traditional leaders. The elites are the driving force of the

socio-economic-political activities because of their education and monetary power. However, the elites in many cases become exploiters of the masses. The formation of the Angami Gazetted Officers Union is one such example of elites replacing the physically brave men. Since the elites are economically powerful, they are respected than the traditional leaders.

The last aspect of the study relates to the relationships between the values of democratic politics and values of socio-political institutions of the Angamis. The study reveals that elected representatives, free and fair elections, freedom of expression, free media and freedom of association and inclusive citizenship, among others characterize the values of democratic politics. On the other hand, the values of the traditional socio-political institutions of the Angami was characterized by the rule of male elders, respect for seniority of age, group solidarity, physical strength, patriarchy and gender inequality in terms of division of labour, property ownership and decision-making. Thus, the study has shown that the values upheld by the traditional institutions are not compatible with the values of democratic politics. In spite of all these variances, the study reveals that the conflict between traditional leaders adopting a revivalist stand, and those deviating from it does not arise. The issues concerning decentralization and devolution of power and responsibilities to traditional institutions have not generated debates and controversies. The study reveals that the relationship

between the two values has not generated any political problem because the Angami elites are able to generate economic, political and social capital and have access to positions of authority in democratic governance. Yet, a sense of ownership of modern system is still missing in many parts of the state, including the areas of our study. This is evident from the study that some clans still accept the traditional authority for settling land disputes, religious or social matters at *khel* levels in spite of the existence of statutory bodies at the village levels. The study also reveals that the traditional values that profess group assertion, kin-protection and collective efforts continue to influence the working of constitutional and community-based bodies as community in many cases acquires precedence over individuals. Thus, while the statutory bodies and community-based organisations are modern and constitutional in form, their behavioural content is traditional.

The major findings of the study are;

1. As shown in chapter II, the traditional socio-political institutions of the Angamis were structurally patriarchal in that politics was based on two principles: only the male elders referred to as the 'wise men' should rule and other male elders of *Putsano* within the *chienuo* should participate in ruling. The Angamis had neither a formal council nor of a chief but had an informal council locally called *Phichü Kehou*, as the supreme authority of the village administration. The Angami system

of administration was more democratic than any other Nagas as all the male elders of the village had the right to participate and express freely on any matter relating to the village.

2. As shown in chapter III, the powers of the Angami *Phichü Kehou* declined with the introduction of *Dobashis* and *Gaonburas*, as the latter began to settle heinous crimes including murders, although the former continued to settle land disputes, religious or social matters at *khel* levels. The introduction of district administration was a new development in that, historically, there had been no district level council in the traditional Angami society. The district administration restructured the traditional Angami polity, as the village elders who enjoyed supreme authority without any interference had been demolished. The offices of *Gaonburas*, *Dobashis* and district administration introduced by the Colonial rule for consolidating their position continue to the present.
3. As shown in chapter III, the Village Council revives the traditional pattern of village administration. However, unlike in the past, its members including the chairperson are chosen for a five-year term, subject to dissolution by the state government. Further, the method of choosing the members of the Village Councils continues to be in accordance with the prevailing customary practices and usages. The traditional leaders are recognised only as the Ex-officio members of the Village Council. The Village Development Boards, which provides for one-third

of members to women, is a major change in that the traditional institutions had shunted women to domestic arena rather than involving them in the decision-making process. The functioning of VDBs is more transparent than the traditional village administration because it is mandatory for all VDBs to hold monthly public meetings for review and monitoring of ongoing projects. The concept of Communitisation programme has excluded the traditional leaders, although it has representatives from various Churches, Women, VDBs, educationists and head of Primary schools as its compulsory members. The main qualifications for a member in VC, VDBs and Communitisation Programme is based on having knowledge of the administration of the village and government offices and not on seniority of age, gender and lineage as it was in the traditional society.

4. As shown in chapter IV, the customary laws and practices that are considered in consonant with Christian ethos still exist. The customary law of inheritance by the youngest son still exists. *Peli*, (Community labour) though still practiced has declined because of the changing economic activities. *Kekinyi*/Diplomatic Feast or Feast of Friendship, which was an important social institution for renewing and sustaining strong and better relations and unity within the *chienuo* or between different *rūnas* continue to the present. However, contrary to the earlier practice of exchanging spears, Bibles are exchanged now. *Themumia*'s advice and leadership in matters of waging wars, head hunting, hunting, journeys etc. ceased to exist

with the advent of Christianity. The socio-religious role of *Phichü-u* or *Zievo* and *Kemevo* has now been taken over by the Pastors and other Church leaders. Marriage (*Kiya*) within *pfütsano* and between two closely related kindred on the females' side, which was forbidden, is now found in the Angami society. The *Thema* (marriage price) ceased to continue, although *Thesa*, (a gift in cash and kind) to the girl's *Thethsü* (age-set system), still exists. Seniority of age is still considered an important factor in the village affairs.

5. As shown in chapter V, the modern democratic system of choosing representatives through majority votes is adopted by Angami Students Unions, Angami Public Organisation and Angami Women Organisation. This has shown that the Angamis are largely supportive of the modern democratic practice of choosing representatives through voting as against the traditional way of gaining positions of authority through might or through heredity. However, the traditional values of socio-political institutions that profess group assertion, kin-protection and collective efforts continue to influence the working of constitutional and community-based bodies as community in many cases acquires precedence over individuals. Thus, although the statutory bodies and community-based organisations are modern and constitutional in form, their behavioural content is traditional.

6. There has also been a great imbalance in the representation in terms of gender. The traditional values of gender inequality in terms of division of labour, property ownership and decision-making undermine the equality of sexes, which the values of democratic politics seek to promote. The persistence of the traditional value of respect for elders also seems to have prevented the young educated and vibrant people from taking active part in important decision-making bodies. The establishment of the new democratic institutions has not brought about a corresponding change in the attitude and values of the people. The people do not seem to have internalized the values of democratic politics. The Angamis still cling to their traditional ideas and values, which often render the rule of law meaningless as group interests often stand in the way of individual freedom and rights.

Glossary

Chienuo: Clan.

Dobashis: An Assamese word referred to people who can speak two dialects.

Gaonburas: An Assamese word referred to Village elders.

Kemevo: Religious priest.

Kekinyi : Diplomatic feast or Friendship feast.

Kenyü/Gennas: Taboos

Krütamia: Leaders.

Khrunyho : A coat made of leaves and grass.

Kichüki: Dormitory.

Kikru: Family.

Kenyü:taboo

Kiya: Marriage.

Khezhano: House-tax.

Krüna: Refers to the religion & practices of Animism predominantly practiced by the non Christians of the Angami Nagas.

Liedepfü: First reaper.

Nanyü: Refers to religion and the practices of rituals associated with it.

Putsano : First cousins.

Penie: A holiday or prohibition of work.

Peli: The system of communal labour was based on an organized level called *Peli*.

Phichü-u or Zievo: Head Priest.

Phichü Kehou(Informal Council of Elders): For the purpose of this study, *Phichü*

Kehou is used to refer to *Phichümia*, *Peyumia* and *Pehümia*.

Peyu: The skill in diplomacy, power of oratory, knowledge of oral history of the village and knowing the art of dealing with people, honesty, wisdom, and leadership quality are referred to as *Peyu*.

Peyumia: People having the skill in diplomacy, power of oratory, knowledge of oral history of the village and knowing the art of dealing with people, honesty, wisdom, and leadership quality are referred to as *Peyumia*. They are also known as wise men.

Phichümia: Village elders.

Pehümia: People who have the quality of *Peyu* and are older in age.

Rüna: Village.

Thethsü : Age- set system.

Thekhrie : A batch or a generation.

Theja: Blessing

Thehouba/Badze/Dahou: Sitting place.

Terhoma or Terhomia: Refers to spirits.

Themumia: Shaman.

Tekhusekhrü: First transplanter.

Tsiakrü-u: First Sower.

Terhümiavi: Warriors.

Ukepenuopfü: The Angamis believe that there is an eternal unseen God who is the creator, sustainer and destructor

Pehümia: the elders in the village who are usually above 75yrs of age.

Zatho: Feast of merit.

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List of persons with whom unstructured interviews were conducted.

Medziphema village.

1. Mr. Pelhusievi Nakhro, age 87, Phichümia, on 6 January 2006.
2. Mr. Vineizo Chakrúno, age 80, Phichü *kehóu* on 6 January 2006.
3. Mr. Megovoto Nyiseno, age 56, Pastor Baptist Church on 6 January 2006.
4. Mr. Medozhasa, age 25, President, Students' Union Medziphema village on 6 January 2006.
5. Mr. Rokovitso, age 47, on 6 January 2006.
6. Mr. Dosau Nyiseno, age 48, on 6 January 2006.
7. Mrs. Visevono Nakhro, age 36, on 7 January 2006.
8. Mrs. V. N. Terhüja, age 70, on 7 January 2006.
9. Mr. Rokovor Kuotsu, age 50, Chairman, Village Council, Medziphema village on 23 February 2006.
10. Mrs. V. L. Dolie, age 63, on 23 February 2006.
11. Mr. Megonisie Terhüja, age 46, Chairman Village Development Board, Medziphema village on 26 February 2006.
12. Mr. Kecalhuto, age 45 on 26 February 2006.
13. Mr. Vicolato Kuotsu, age 70, *Gonbura*, Medziphema village on 26 February 2006.
14. Mr. Thehielie Nakhro, age 65, *Gaonbura*, Medziphema village on 26 February 2006.
15. Mr. Pfüninyü Nakhro, age 80, *Phichümia*, on 26 February 2006.
16. Mr. Megovotso Kuotsu, age 55, Pastor, Baptist Church Medziphema village, on 26 February 2006.
17. Mr. Larovi Siam, age 65, Pastor, Christian Revival Church, Medziphema village, on 27 February 2006.
18. Mrs. D. N. Nakhro, age 58, on 27 February 2006.
19. Mr. Neikho Dolie, age 85, Phichümia, on 5 March 2006.
20. Mrs. A. M. Kuotsu, age 62, on 5 March 2006.

21. Mr. Thinokholie Nakhro, age 40, Ex Chairman, Kenei *Krou*, Medziphema village on 7 January 2009.
22. Mr. V. Sale Chüsi, age 74, *Gaonbura*, Medziphema village on 23 February 2009.
23. Mr. Neichülie Naga, age 45, President Sports Association, Medziphema village on 26 February 2009.
24. Mr. Kepelhubi Seyie, age 38, Chairman, Village Education Committee, Medziphema village on 27 February 2009.

Chiechama Village

1. Mr. Solahie Sogotsu, age 72, Chairman, Village Council, Chiechama village on 5 February 2006.
2. Mr. Yaselie Rüpreo, age 64, Assistant Pastor, Christian Revival Church, Chiechama village on 5 February 2006.
3. Mr. Keviyabi, age 28, Secretary, Students Union Chiechama village, on 5 February 2006.
4. Mr. Keduovilie Metha, age 40, on 5 February 2006.
5. Mr. Ketu Putsüre, age 45, on 5 March 2006.
6. Mr. Visalhou Rüpreo, age 73, *Gaonbura*, Chiechama village on 7 February 2006.
7. Mr. Chüthose Metha, age 82, Head *Gaonbura*, Chiechama village on 8 February 2006.
8. Mr. Zakie-o Metha, age 64, Ex-President, Angami Public Organization, Chiechama village on 7 August 2006.
9. Mr. B. Metha, age 69, on 5 August 2006.
10. Mr. Golhulie Rüpreo, age 52, on 5 February 2008.
11. Mr. Pfünisa Rüpreo, age 48, on 5 February 2008.
12. Ms. Chaliengu-u Rüpreo, age 48, on 7 February 2008.
13. Mr. Cükuo, age 70, *Phichümia*, on 7 February 2008.
14. Mrs. V. R. Mere, age 61, on 7 February 2008.
15. Mr. Kedo-u Rüpreo, age 45, Advisor, *Chienuo Krotho*, Chiechama village on 5 February 2009.

- 16.Mr. Kevisilie Rúpree, age 73, Chairman, Village Council, Chiechama village on 5 February 2009.
- 17.Ms. Kikruseno Putsüre, age 40, on 5 February 2009.
- 18.Ms. Lily Putsüre, age 50, on 6 February 2009.
- 19.Mr. Pfüricha, age 61, *Phichümia*, on 6 February 2009.
- 20.Mrs. H. Metha, age 70, on 6 February 2009
- 21.Mr. Lhoukhrie Mere, age 68, on 5 February 2009.
- 22.Mr. Nguselie Metha, age 50, on 5 February 2009.
- 23.Mr. Vibilie Metha, age 40, Chairman, Village Education Committee, Chiechama village on 5 February 2009.
- 24.Mr. Khriesangulie Rúpree, age 45, President, Youth organization, Chiechama on 5 February 2009.
- 25.Mr. Fury Putsüre, age 54, President, Chiechama Dzevi Krou, and Chiechama on 5 February 2009.
- 26.Mr. Philie Metha, age 67, Secretary, Village Development Board, Chiechama, on 5 February 2009.
- 27.Mr. Lhouzelie Metha, age 90, *Phichümia*, on 20 February 2009.
- 28.Mrs. V. Rúpree, age 64, on 20 February 2009.

Viswema Village

1. Mr.Pudel Kikhi, age 80, Phichümia, Viswema village on 2 January 2006.
2. Mr. Kehokhul, age 72, Ex-Village Chairman, Village Council, Viswema village on 2 January 2006.
3. Mr.Puthavil Neikha, age 48, Rev. Pastor Baptist Church, Viswema village on 2 January, 2006
4. Mr. Puhozo Vitsu, age 39, Ex-President, Youth Organization, Viswema on 2 January 2006.
5. Mr. Daniel Kikhi, age 72, Ex- Chairman, Village Council, Viswema village on 2 January, 2006.
6. Mr. Vizeho Kikhi, age 65, Deacon, Viswema Baptist Church, Viswema on 2 January 2006.
7. Mr. Ketobu Vitsu, age 30, Games &Sports secretary, Students' Union, Viswema on 2 January 2006.

8. Mr. Vikhwel Rhetso, age 99, *Khel- Phichü-u*, Viswema village on 29 January 2006.
9. Mr. Pungon Kikhi, age 73, Krüna, Viswema village on 12 February 2009.
10. Ms. Vizolie Kikhi, age 53, Krüna, Viswema village on 2 January 2009.
11. Mr. Thukhu Valeo, age 60, *Kemevo*, Viswema village on 2 February 2009.
12. Mr. Kidese Kikhi, age 37, Ex- President, Youth Organization, Viswema village on 2 February 2009.
13. Mr. Vipi Rhetso, age 82, Phichümia, on 2 January 2009.
14. Mr. Zashevol Vitsu, age 66, Chairman, Kirha Panchayat, Viswema village on 2 January 2009.
15. Mr. Krozel Kikhi, age 100, Head Gaonbura, Viswema village on 2 January 2009.
16. Mr. Nihovi Toso, age 45, Secretary, Village Development Board, Viswema on 8 February 2009.
17. Mr. Kruvil Kikhi, age 58, on 29 January, 2009.
18. Mr. Savil Kikhi, age 68, Pastor, Christian Revival Church, on 29 January 2009.
19. Mr. Krovil Kirha, age 62, on 29 January, 2009.
20. Mr. Vileho Pavo, age 73, *Gaonbura*, Viswema village on 29 January 2009.
21. Mr. Yotoho Rhetso, age 42, Secretary, Kirha *Khel*, Viswema village on 29 January 2009.
22. Mr. Vinothul Kikhi, age 43, Chairman, Youth Organization, Viswema village on 1 February, 2009.
23. Ms. Kerihovile Kikhi, age 64, Chairperson, Women Organisation, Viswema village, on 1 February 2009.
24. Mr. Vimethal Naleo, age 56, Chairman, *Khel* Panchayat on 1 February 2009.
25. Mr. Seto Koso, age 46, on 1 February, 2009.
26. Mr. K.N. Pusha, age 78, *Gaonbura*, Viswema village on 1 February 2009.
27. Mr. Homesul Kin, age 56, Chairman, *Khel* Panchayat on 2 February 2009.
28. Mr. Tosovi Pusa, age 50, Secretary Panchayat, on 2 February, 2009
29. Mr. Zakihol Sothu, age 82, *Khel-Rachü*, *Gaonbura*, on 2 February, 2009
30. Mr. Khezhü Vitsu, age 96, *Khel Phichü-u*, on 2 February, 2009

Jotsoma Village

1. Mr. Neinguto Naprantsu age 74, *Phichümia*, on 14 April 2006.
2. Mr. Krurovi Peseyie, age 73, Former, Angami Public Organisation President, Jotsoma village on 3 August 2006.
3. Mr. Vithato Nakhro, age 52, Ex – Secretary, Village Develop Board, Jotsoma village on 4 August 2006.
4. Mr. Rügolie Nakhro, age 72, Head *Gaonbura*, Jotsoma village on 4 August 2006.
5. Mr. Neitsizo Peseyie, age 38, President, Youth Organization, Jotsoma village on 4 August 2006.
6. Mr. Kepelhuto Nakhro, age 36, Former President, Students' union, Jotsoma village on 4 August 2006.
7. Mr. Keyielhuzo, age 66, Krüna, Jotsoma village on 2 February 2006.
8. Mr. Kesovito, age 85, *Tsiakrü-u*, Jotsoma village on 27 February 2006.
9. Mr. Tsalhu, age 71, *Phichü-u*, Jotsoma village on 27 February 2006.
10. Mr. Thekruvizo, age 70, Zievo, Jotsoma village on 27 February 2006.
11. Mr. Kekoyato, age 40, Secretary, Village Development Board, Jotsoma village on 27 February, 2008.
12. Mr. Kereisalie Nakhro, age 33, President, Students' Union on 18 March 2007.
13. Mr. Kikruselie Nakhro, age 33, Ex- president, Student Union on 8 August 2007.
14. Mrs. M. Nakhro, age 43, Secretary, Women Organization, Jotsoma, on 4 March 2008.
15. Mr. Thepfüzokho Nakhro, age 35, Chairrman, Christian Youth Endeavour, CRC, Jotsoma village on 4 April 2008.
16. Mr. Rokosielie Nakhro, age 39, President, *Tholoma Khel*, Jotsoma village on 4 April 2008.
17. Mr. Vinita Nakhro, age 74, Assistant Pastor, CRC, Jotsoma village on 3 January 2006.

- 18.Mr. N. Peseyie, age 50, Treasure, Village Council, Jotsoma village on 4 January 2009.
- 19.Mr. Dr. Khrielhukho Naprantsu, age 45, on 24 April 2008.
- 20.Mr. Pezau Seyietsu, age 70, *Themumia*, Jotsoma village on 17 April 2008.
- 21.Mr. Dilhou, age 74, *Phichümia* on 4 January 2009.
- 22.Mr. Vilhubilie Peseyie, age 33, on 23 December 2008.
- 23.Mr. Mazielhuto Nakhro, age 72, Deacon, CRC, Interviewed on 20 April 2008.
- 24.Mr. Luonyü Medoze, age 78, *Phichü kehou* on 27 February 2009.
- 25.Mr. Vilasieto, age 45, 27 February 2009.
- 26.Ms. Zhaziekhono Nakhro, age 68, Khel- Tholoma, interviewed on 18 May 2006.
- 27.Mr. Sanyü Nakhro, age 89, *Phichümia*, Interviewed on 27 February 2006.
- 28.Mr. K. N. Nakhro, age 40, on 7 February 2006.
- 29.Mr. Ketulhusienyü Peseyie, age 68, Pastor-CRC, on 2 February 2006.
- 30.Ms. Suokhrieno Nagi, age 68, on 22 June 2008.
- 31.Ms. Neizono Peseyie, age 82, on 22 June 2008.
- 32.Mr. Pezhalhulie Peseyie, age 75, *Phichümia* on 27 February, 2009
- 33.Mr. P. Suokhrie, age 38, Secretary ,Village council, Ion 27 February, 2009
- 34.Mr. Visezo Nagi, age 56, Chairman, Village council, Jotsoma on 24 February, 2009
- 35.Mr. Neinguto Naprantsu, age 74, *Pehümia* Jotsoma village interviewed on 13 April 2009.

Appendix 1

Treatise between Political Officer, Captain Williamson and the Angami Chiefs.

JOTSOMA – NO. 5

The conditions upon which peace is concluded between the Political Officer, Naga Hills, (Captain Williamson pro tem.) and the village of Jotsoma comprising the three *khels* of Tolloma,[sic] Khonoma,[sic] and Choyama,[sic] are as follows :-

- (a) That all firearms belonging to the village are surrendered.
- (b) That the village pay annual revenue of one maund of rice and one rupee per house commencing from the year 1880-81.
- (c) That labour be given whenever demanded by the Political Officer, or by any one of his behalf.
- (d) That certain men of the village, against whom proof exists of their having murdered our sepoy and constables on their retreat from khonoma on 14th October 1879, be produced and surrendered.
- (e) That a headmen be elected for the whole village who will be responsible to the Government for the good behaviour of the village.

Condition appertaining of *khels* of Tolloma[sic] and Khoma[sic] only:-

- (a) That a fine of 400 (four hundred) maunds of rice be paid when the next crops ripens.
- (b) That 1,000 (one thousand) coolies be given for conveyance of stores from Piphema of elsewhere to Kohima; these to be free of cost of Government.
- (c) That 15 (fifteen) days' labour pay annum from each male adult be given free of cost to the Government for repairs to be roads.
- (d) That as these *khels* submitted first, and have given assistance during the expedition, they be permitted to rebuild on the old site of the village.

Condition appertaining of *khel* of Choyama[sic]:-

- (a) that a fine of 300 maunds of rice be paid when the next season's crop ripens.
- (b) That 600 coolies be given for conveyance of stores for Piphema or elsewhere to Kohima: these to be free of cost to the Government.
- (c) That this *khel* shall not be permitted to rebuild on the old site of their village, but on a site below and to the north east of it near the Zubza river.
- (d) That 15 (fifteen) days labour per annum from each male adult be given free of cost to the Government.

The above terms read over and explained to Juvalah on behalf of Tolloma and Khoma, and to Chulhule and Tatsakre, on behalf of Choyama khels, and agreed to and duly signed.

(His Mark) Juvalesh.

(His Mark) Chulhule.

(His Mark) Tatsakre.

KOHIMA

Witness, H. Maxwell

The 4th March 1880

Asst. Political Officer.

Appendix II

VISWEMA – NO. 14

The conditions upon which peace is concluded between the Chief Political Officer of the Naga Hills (Captain Williamson, pro tem.) and Theo, Echa, Neecha, and Neerel, *Gaonburahs* of the village of Viswema, Naga Hills are as follows:-

1. That the village, for the offence of taking part in attacking three hundreds maunds received, the Kohima stockade during the month of October 1879, supply 1, 200 coolies for transport purposes, and pay a fine of 600 maunds of rice, and also other labour, whenever demanded.
2. All firearms belonging to the village are surrendered.
3. The villagers pay revenue at the rate of Rupee one and one maund of rice per house commencing from the year 1880, of headmen, & c., as all other villagers.

Sd/- W. J. Williamson, Cap.,

Chief Political Officer,

Naga Hills.

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BIO-DATA:

Name: Ms. Konei Nakhro

Date of birth: 24. 10. 1976.

Father's name: Mr. Vinitha Nakhro

Address: Below T. V. Tower
Phezhu,
Jotsoma village

Religion: Christianity

Education Qualification: M. A (Political Science)
Pune University

Occupation: Lecturer,
Kohima College, Kohima
(since June, 2004).