

NAGA NATIONALISM AND FREEDOM

Struggle : Problems and Prospects



Thesis
Submitted
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in the faculty of social sciences
(Political / Science)
Nagaland University

2004



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CONTENTS

Page

Chapter One Introduction CERTIFICATE 1-10

Chapter Two Social, Political and Cultural Life of

This is to certify that Miss T. Amongla has worked for the requisite number of terms under my supervision and guidance. Her thesis "Naga Nationalism and Freedom Struggle: Problems and Prospects" embodies the result of her own work to the best of my knowledge.

Struggle for Independence

It is further certified that by habit and character Miss T. Amongla is a fit and proper lady for the award of the degree of Ph. D. in the department of Political Science of Nagaland University, Headquarters Lumami.

Chapter Three Naga Issue on the Table Talks and Application of Cease-fire

Chapter Six Resurgence of Freedom Movement Page Talks

Chapter Eight Conclusion

Bibliography



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CONTENTS

	Page
Chapter- One : Introduction	1-10
Chapter-Two : Social, Political and Cultural Life of Ancient Nagas	11-29
Chapter-Three : Integration of Naga Tribes and sharpening of Naga Political Consciousness	30-47
Chapter-Four : Emergence of Political Platform and Demand for Independence	48-63
Chapter-Five : Beginning of Naga National Movement and Creation of Nagaland State under the Indian Union	64-86
Chapter-Six : Naga Issue on the Table Talks and Application of Cease-fire	87-106
Chapter-Seven : Resurgence of Freedom Movement and Peace Talks	107-136
Chapter-Eight : Conclusion	137-156
Bibliography	157-166

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

A Ph. D. research programme needs supervision, guidance, collection of facts and materials and compilation. For the completion of my work I have passed through such a process, in the course of which I got in contact with different scholars, authorities, leaders and persons. My topic 'Naga Nationalism and Freedom Struggle: Problems and Prospects' is, in fact, a challenging task which compelled me to establish contact with different political leaders as well as the leaders of the Naga freedom movement. While meeting and interacting with these people I obtained a lot of valuable help and cooperation and also encouragement from them. I also visited different libraries and institutions to collect materials and facts. I feel that it is my moral obligation to acknowledge some of these people and express my thankfulness to them.

First of all I would like to express my warm respect and deep obligation to Dr Chandrika Singh, Reader and Head department of Political Science, Nagaland University, Headquarters Lumami, who happened to be my supervisor. Without his sincere care and affectionate guidance this work perhaps would have never been completed. This thesis, in fact, is a tribute to his great scholarship and kind supervision. I shall ever remain obliged to him for his supervision and guidance. Thereafter, I acknowledge my obligation to Prof G.D. Sharma, the Vice-chancellor of the Nagaland University, and other authorities of the University who accorded me kind permission to work for the Ph. D. programme for the degree of Ph.D.

Here I would like to mention with honour the name of some of the renowned Professors and teachers of the Nagaland University, Lumami

from whom I have received valuable suggestions and cooperation to complete my work. Firstly, I extend my gratefulness to Professor A. Lanu, Professor of sociology who spared his valuable time and sat with me for valuable discussions to improve the quality of my work. Secondly, I express my obligation to Professor Arun Kumar Singh, the Professor and Dean of Social Science, Nagaland University, for his moral support and valuable comments to upgrade the standard of my thesis. Thirdly, I am thankful to Dr H. John Sema , the Reader in Political Science, who always remained approachable to me and sharpened my viewpoints in this regard. I also like to express my heart-felt obligation to Professor S. Jamir, the Professor In charge of Nagaland University, headquarters Lumami, who always remained kind and cooperative to me for completion of my work.

For perusing intellectual and academic work one is required to have encouragement from family members and also financial assistance from them to carry on research programme. In this course my parents, Shri T. Lemdor and Smt. S. Alila, not only encouraged me to go ahead with the programme and complete it but also bore entire expenditure from the beginning to the end. I am very much obliged to my parents for their sympathetic cooperation and their constant prayer to Almighty for early completion of my work. Even my younger brother, Mr. T. Moa Lemdor, did not remain behind to help me in this regard. I thank him a lot for his kind cooperation and help.

How can I forget to thank one of my senior colleagues Mrs. Nirmala Singh, Head department of Political Science Loyem Memorial College, Tuensang? It is Mrs. Nirmala Singh who persuaded me to come up for Ph. D. programme and introduced me with her father Dr Chandrika Singh

who became my supervisor. I am, indeed, very much thankful to Mrs. Nirmala Singh for all these helps and cooperation.

I am again thankful and obliged to Mr. Rongsen Jamir, the Principal of People's College, Mokokchung who allowed me to utilize his college library to collect materials.

In course of my research programme, I visited different libraries and institutions to collect materials and data. I am thankful to all those authorities who cooperated me while attending their libraries and institutions to collect materials. However, my special thanks go to Shri Temsu Ao, the Assistant Librarian and Miss Amenla, semi provisional Assistant Librarian of the Nagaland University, Headquarters Lumami. I also would like to thank the Librarians and staff of the State Library Kohima, Fazl Ali College Library Mokokchung and Sao Chang college library Tuensang.

Lastly, but not the least, I shall be failing on my part if I do not express my thankfulness and obligations to some of the renowned leaders of the Naga freedom movement who provided me the relevant and useful documents and freely and frankly expressed their viewpoints regarding Naga nationalism and National struggle. I one more express my obligation to all those who names have not been mentioned here, but they have remained cooperative and sympathetic to me for completion of my work.


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Nationalism, a political doctrine, has been defined by the French philosopher of the 19th century as the feeling of attachment to one's country, which leads to the desire for its independence and political unity. The idea that today is known as nationalism, however, is a much broader concept. It is a feeling of attachment to one's nation, which is defined as a group of people who share a common language, culture, and history. Nationalism is a feeling of pride in one's nation and a desire to see it flourish. It is a feeling of loyalty to one's nation and a willingness to sacrifice for it. Nationalism is a feeling of unity and solidarity among the people of a nation. It is a feeling of pride in one's nation and a desire to see it flourish. Nationalism is a feeling of loyalty to one's nation and a willingness to sacrifice for it. Nationalism is a feeling of unity and solidarity among the people of a nation.

CHAPTER ONE- INTRODUCTION

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CHAPTER - ONE

INTRODUCTION

Nationalism, a global political term, which is directly related to the heart and mind of a people, has inspired and encouraged various nationalities of the world to have their own separate, sovereign and independent political status among the international community. The idea and feeling of nationalism is rooted in 'pagan-tribalism' and in the name of nationalism "not only some of the greatest act of heroism has been committed, but also "cruelty and fanaticism" have been practiced. It was the feeling of nationalism, which broke up great Roman Empire and ruined the feudal system of Europe. Various communities of Europe like Polls, Czechs, Franks, Dens , Dutches, Portages etc. formed their nation-state on the basis of racial unity. The habit and feeling of patriotism made these peoples proud of their race and enabled them to form their own nation-states. The feeling of nationalism kept them united and provided extraordinary courage and strength to fight successfully for political independence. It was feeling of racial superiority and love for racial feeling, which paved the way for growth of national feeling under the influence of the movements of Renaissance and Reformation. The nation-state was defined as a politically independent sovereign territory occupied by a people belonging to common race, faith, thoughts, behaviours and sharing common pains and pleasures. The French Revolution (1789) strongly pleaded that the people who are one, are free to chose their own form of Government and manage their affairs according to their own will. It was this idea, which spread all over the world by the 19th century encouraging the communities to come ahead with the demand of home rule or independence. Peoples who were under the yoke of Imperial forces began national or freedom movement applying various methods to achieve the goal, which ultimately ruined different Empires of the world.

Naga nationalism, which came in fore front soon after India's independence, is an issue that has remained in controversy causing direct-armed tussle between the Government of India and the Underground Naga Government. The advocates of Naga nationalism have been pleading that the territories occupied by the Nagas had never been the part of India.

These territories were independent and unadministered before the British forcibly occupied the Naga areas.

The feeling of Naga nationalism may be traced out in the patriotic behaviour and attitude of the Nagas towards their community life and their devotion to respective tribe from the time immemorial. The Nagas are tribal and one of the basic features of the tribal people has been to live independently without any outside interference in their life. Different Naga tribes, though living side by side, did hardly come together for centuries only because they preferred the life, social, cultural, economic and political which each of the Tribe had developed differently and independently. Though their world was small and limited, they had established the things, which are genuinely required for a nation. They had customary laws, social norms, cultural values and political set up. They knew how to rule and to be ruled. They experienced aristocratic, republican and democratic governments. What they lacked, in fact, was a will and determination to form a nation comprising of all the Naga tribes living nearby and following common culture, behaviours and faiths. That is why in the ancient Greco- sense each Naga village was a tiny sovereign state in itself. They lacked Machiavellian approach of the modern-nation state, no doubt, but their devotion and commitment to their tribal village national government cannot be doubted. It was such desire and feeling of the ancient Nagas towards their independent and uninterfered life, which developed in a broad national feeling under the influence of the British rule and Christian education, which not only integrated various disintegrated Naga tribes but also sharpened their mental horizon and national feeling. Though they accepted the British rule under compulsion, they never allowed themselves to merge their identity at any cost with any superior force or civilization.

The Naga intellectuals by submitting various petitions and memorandums did all to appraise the British authorities that the Nagas had never been under any foreign powers except the British. The memorandums and petitions placed before the British authorities by the Naga leaders reveals the truth that they did not like to be incorporated with the Indian people or to be left on "the mercy of the people who could have neither conquered us themselves and to whom we never subjugated, but to leave us alone to determine for ourselves". Hence they have all the rights to follow the course of their independence,

which they had, If the British left India, the Nagas must obtain their earlier status. It is unfortunate that the British provided them with special autonomies, but did not grant the Nagas the right to self-determination before they left India handing over power to the Indian political leaders. This made the Naga intellectuals disappointed and disparate.

After India's independence they continued the practice of submitting of petitions and memorandums to the Indian political rulers and having interviews with them with a request to grant the Naga people independent status, but their efforts remained futile. The Indian political leaders argued that it had assumed the responsibility to rule over the Naga people as a legacy of the British rule. The Indian rulers under the impression that the Nagas had neither the quality to maintain an independent state nor their existing poor and shabby economic condition was fit for having an independent and sovereign state, incorporated the Naga people in the Indian constitution against their will. Moreover, the Indian leaders were also under the impression that the Naga leaders who were raising the voice for an independent Nagaland were nothing, but stooge and misguided people. It is the point from where the Naga freedom movement took its birth. The Naga leaders decided to struggle for independence. In the beginning, the movement remained confined to peaceful methods such as boycott of Indian constitutional procedures for the Nagas, non-cooperation and unilateral plebiscite. When such methods failed to cut much ice, they resorted the course of violent method forming a constitution of their own declaring Nagaland as an Independent state. Unfurling Naga national flag and installing the Naga army etc. They also established link with foreign powers to obtain morale and material support. On the other hand, the Government of India left nothing to curb down the Naga rebellion and suppress the followers of the freedom fighting by promulgating different draconian Acts and deploying huge number of military, paramilitary and police forces into the Naga territories. Thus a battle line was drawn between the Naga freedom fighters and the Indian armed forces, which created a new Naga history full of blood, tears and sufferings of the Naga people.

The Naga National Council (NNC), a politically organised platform of the Naga people, became instrumental in creating the feeling of Naga nationalism on one hand, and to organise the Naga people to struggle for freedom, on the other. It is true that a little before

India's independence the Naga leaders had not clear vision about Nagas' future political status. Some of the leaders still like to maintain relations with India keeping in view their economic and political backwardness while some of them preferred sovereign status for the Nagas. The problem was unification of the various Naga tribes and strengthening of the feeling of nationalism. However, with the emergence of A.Z. Phizo, the charismatic Naga political leader and champion of Naga freedom, the whole political scenario of Nagaland changed. He and his followers made it ample clear that the Nagas would accept nothing less than an independent political state. Thereafter, the dynamics of Naga freedom movement which got pace under the charismatic leadership of Mr. Phizo, changed the whole political scenario of Nagaland.

The most unfortunate thing, which has remained as a big hurdle before the Naga leaders, is division of their opinions and views regarding future political status of Nagaland from the beginning. The elements that still prefer integration of Nagaland with India are of the view that the Nagas "neither have a definite and unified political structure" nor did they "exist as a nation." According to them a nation needs a definite political structure, demarcated areas of land inhabited by the people having close contacts with each other and a Government having its uniformal command over all. But reality is that the Naga people before the arrival of the British in their land had none of them. What people had at that time were 'mutual suspicion and distrust,' 'insular and isolated life' and 'internecine warfare.' The Naga nationalism, according to them, appeared soon after India's independence only. When the movement for freedom began, the freedom fighters did all to exterminate the opponents by force, fear and terror. They "began to hunt, torture and kill fellow Nagas." Thousands of the Nagas have lost their lives without any fault of their own in the hands of their own people besides loss of lives and properties as well as heart-breaking torture and harassment by the personnel of Indian security forces. Under such anarchic situation the peace loving Naga leaders made a deal with the Government of India and opted for the state of Nagaland. They still believe that in the present advanced world no nation can survive with dignity and viability without sound economic base and technical knowledge. On the other hand, the forces that are still determined to have an independent Nagaland advance the logic that what these leaders did was 'a sell-out of Nagas' right to Self-Determination.

The Naga freedom movement has passed into different phases right from its beginning till today. Under the prolonged fighting of freedom the Naga people have witnessed the unpleasant and discouraging scenario where disunity among the Naga political leaders, division among the leaders of the freedom fighters and the bloody factional fighting among the divided groups of the underground set up have not only undermined the Naga freedom movement but also maligned the prestige and honour of the freedom fighters among the general Naga people.

The politics of militancy and negotiations for peace are twins in Nagaland because the Naga leaders have been divided from the beginning of their freedom struggle. The extremist group maintains that "The Nagas were a nation, completely free from beginning of time" and "the Naga people have as much right for Self-Determination as any other people." To achieve the goal they followed the militant path. The moderate group being worried about their poor economic conditions, preferred peace and solve the problem through peaceful negotiation only. Both the groups followed their own respective course with the result that militancy and peaceful negotiation continued together. It is true that freedom movement in Nagaland never ceased except casual pause for some times, the rift and division among the leaders of the extremists could never stop. As the years rolled down, the rift among the leaders of the freedom fighters took such a direction where the goal of independence became secondary and the feeling of tribalism, personality clashes, indulgence in money making affairs and factional fighting's became primary. All the efforts hitherto applied by the public leaders, leaders of the Churches, authorities of various Non-Governmental organisations of Nagaland to unite the different groups and leaders of the freedom fighting have remained fruitless. Mass rally, demonstrations, fasting of common and public prayers against the factional fighting's and in favour of peace has not yet yielded any expected result. However, it is *interesting* to note that cease-fire between the NSCN-IM and the Government of India is going on and the process of peace-talks has resumed, but the factional fighting between the rival groups is still on. It has provided the people some relief and created hope in their mind.

THE STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Naga nationalism and freedom movement have involved not only the Naga people but also the Government of India. Peace of the state and prosperity of the people are also involved here. The freedom movement is continued for more than half of the century where a number of people have lost their lives without any of their faults. Naga peace has received many injuries and its wounds are still bleeding. The Nagas by nature are simple, peace loving and carefree, but their peace and prosperity have suffered a lot. They have been living under the constant reign of fear and terror. Their political future is uncertain and their economic front has been jeopardised. Corruption among the political leaders, bureaucrats, Government servants, contractors etc. is rampant. The society has been divided into two halves- the haves and the haves-not. The affluent class, who have selfishly managed to accumulate wealth and property on large scale, hardly has concern to the poor and deprived sections of people. Growing interest in material prosperity and emerging lust for consumerist attitude have not spared even the freedom fighters. All these factors have badly influenced the freedom movement and commitment of the people to their long cherished goal.

A question which has been irritating every reasonable Naga mind is how to regain a wholesome permanent peace in the state of Nagaland and how to set the state in motion of progress and prosperity where every Naga may avail the fullest opportunity to enjoy the life and upgrade their personality. The problem of Naga peace is grave and complex. All the efforts hitherto applied to solve the Naga issue peacefully have failed. The leaders of the Naga freedom fighters, though they are divided, are not ready at all to give up the claim of independent Nagaland while the government of India does not agree to grant the Naga people an independent status. The state is suffering from backwardness, mass corruption, disunity, feeling of tribalism and factional fighting. To achieve the goal much blood has been shed so far, but neither goal has been achieved nor goal is at sight. A number of factors are involved

Today, keeping in view the factors mentioned above, it appears that all idealism seems to have been lost and the goals for which thousands suffered and sacrifices their lives appears to have been completely forgotten. The movement, today, has "degenerated into

sheer terrorism with killing of innocents, extortion, looting, intimidation and treats ... "Gun culture has been mounting and people are afraid to speak the truth. No doubt, every one is the victim of such anarchic and vulgar circumstance, but hardly one has the dare to oppose it openly. The freedom movement is on, no doubt, but it has lost its earlier strength and vigour. Under emerging new trends in Naga politics and changing nature of the Naga freedom struggle today, the problem of Naga nationalism and freedom movement need close observation, verification and scientific analysis to find out the real present work has been taken to investigate into the Naga issue and the factors involved therein and to present a critical and analytical account of the Naga freedom movement. Uniqueness of the Naga politics demands special inquiry and deep and thorough investigation in the events which have taken place in Nagaland related to Naga freedom movement.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To trace out patriotic feeling and national devotion of the Nagas from ancient time.
2. To study the Nagas' struggle against the British penetration into the Naga territories.
3. To study and analyse the emergence Nagas' political platform and sharpening Nagas political consciousness.
4. To discuss and analyse the beginning of Naga freedom movement and its consequences.
5. To analyse the factors responsible for advent of cease- fire and peace talks.
6. To examine and investigate the factors responsible for disunity among various freedom fighting organisations and its impact upon the people.
7. To verify the achievements of Naga freedom movement and examine the prospects of the Naga's right to Self-determination.

HYPOTHESIS OF THE WORK

The feeling of Naga nationalism and the desire of the Naga people to have an independent Nagaland state are rooted in the mind and hearts of every Naga, no doubt. To achieve the goal the Naga intellectuals have been applying their hard efforts even before India's independence. They set the struggle for freedom in motion whereby they did not hesitate to resort even armed struggle against the Government of India sacrificing thousands of lives of the Nagas in the name of freedom movement. The greatest hurdle,

which has badly affected the Naga freedom movement, has been the disunity and division among the leaders of the freedom struggle on various accounts. Some of the leaders who are known as moderate never preferred violent methods to achieve the goal rather they liked slow, steady and peaceful method while the extremists wanted to use all available forces against the enemies to achieve the goal as early as possible. The former accepted the offer of statehood given by the Government of India, but the latter continued their freedom struggle despite all the troubles and miseries, which came on their way. Freedom struggle continued, no doubt, but division among the Naga leaders, factional killings between rival groups of the underground set up and involvement of the freedom fighters into money making affairs have definitely undermined the Naga freedom movement on the one hand, and maligned the prestige of Naga freedom fighters, on the other.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The study is based on empirical and scientific method. Qualitative research methodology has been given more preference whereby the facts and data collected from various sources (primary and secondary) have been classified, observed, examined and analysed. After through investigation and analysis of facts and figures related to the study, facts have been presented in the documental form. Sampling method under the quantities research methodology has also been applied whereby one hundred people belonging to the Tribes such as Ao, Angami, Sema, Lotha, Rengma, Chang and Sangtam have been consulted to obtain their viewpoints regarding the Naga nationalism and freedom fighting.

TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES TO COLLECT MATERIALS AND DATA

The following tools and techniques have been applied to collect relevant materials, facts and data:

- i) Self-constructed questionnaires,
- ii) Interview schedule to interview public leaders, Government officials and leaders of the freedom struggle.
- iii) Survey of the records and documents, which have been published.
- iv) Visits of libraries and other institutions to collect authentic relevant books, journals, magazines and newspapers.

CHAPTERIZATION

The work contains altogether ten chapters including introduction, conclusion and bibliography. Chapter one termed as Introduction talks of the meaning of nationalism and its rise and growth in general on the world level. Thereafter, it presents a short historical aspect of the Nagas patriotic feelings towards their respective tribes and their feeling *for* independence. Chapter two- Social, Political and Cultural life of the ancient Nagas- investigates into the Nagas' ancient life and their social, political and cultural behaviours. This chapter presents the analytical account of the political system, which the ancient Naga people had and maintained. It also talks of the Naga's ancient social, cultural and moral values which they possessed from time immemorial and carried down from generation to generation.

The British integrated the various Naga tribes who were living *an* isolated life without having any integration with one another. The integration of Naga tribes and their close association with the British authorities sharpened their political consciousness and made them aware of their future political status. All these facts have been discussed in third chapter, namely, Integration of Naga tribes and Sharpening of Naga Political Consciousness. Chapter four termed as Emergence of Political Platform and Demand for Independence, presents a systematic as well as analytical account of appearance of Naga political platform such as the Naga Club and the Naga National Council which played notable role in uniting the Naga people and consolidating political viewpoints of the Naga intellectuals. Chapter five called as Beginning of Naga National Movement and Creation of Nagaland State critically deals with formation of Underground Naga government, declaration of their freedom, formation of Naga army and conduct of unilateral plebiscite to record the Nagas' opinion about Nagas' independence. This chapter also presents the story of armed tussle between the Indian armed forces and the Naga freedom fighters and advent of the state of Nagaland under the Indian Union. Creation of Nagaland state was the historical event, which brought a new turn in Naga politics giving hard blow to the Naga national movement. The Peace Mission applied the efforts to protect the Naga peace and solve the Naga issue through *table* talks. Chapter six investigates in all these political events and presents a critical account of the results of ceasefire and peace talks.

After signing the Shillong Accord (1975), it appeared that Naga insurgency had disappeared forever, but it proved nothing more than an illusion. Freedom movement and militancy once more appeared with greater might from 1980s challenging both the Indian Government and Government of Nagaland. Resurgence of freedom movement disturbed the whole peace of the state creating fear and terror among the people on the one hand and made the demand of independent Nagaland more popular on the other. Chapter seven discusses, verifies and analyses all these recent political happenings and talks of on going peace talks between the underground Nagaleaders and the Government of India. The Last chapter^{is} in the form of Conclusion, summarising the whole account of Naga freedom movement and its results and consequences concludes that the prolonged Naga fighting with the government of India for Naga's freedom has not achieved the desired and prescribed goal due to emerging trends of tribalism, factionalism, groupism, and factional fighting among the freedom fighters despite a persistent request and appeal of the people to stop such unpleasant and harmful activities in greater interest of the Nagas.

Thus the hypothesis of the work that growing division, rivalries and fighting among the Naga freedom fighters and their inclinations towards wealth and prosperity relying upon terrorist methods have badly affected the Naga freedom movement. The work opens new dimension for new research in below mentioned areas:

1. Nagas' right to Self-determination in present confused and defused Naga opinion.
2. Causes and factors involved in disunity and division among the leaders of the Naga freedom fighters.
3. Nagas' freedom and economic reality.
4. Prospectus of Naga freedom movement.
5. Naga freedom movement and relevant issues like integration of the Naga tribes living in other states of India, Naga border issue with Assam Myanmar and Arunachal Pradesh, Naga peace etc.

CHAPTER TWO SOCIAL, POLITICAL AND CULTURAL LIFE OF ANCIENT NAGAS

The Naga society belongs to the oldest tribal societies of the world and various tribes and sub-tribes who originally belong to Indo-Aryan and people have a profound knowledge of their own history and the background of their origin, migration, confrontation, interaction, ancient political, social and religious concepts. The various territories the territories previously occupied by them from the time of the scattered, isolated and tribal life of each other in the past. The Naga tribes who migrated to the northeast were not of one race occupying different hills. They had a very rich and diverse culture and polity comprising of many different tribes. Each tribe had its own practices, traditions, customs, and social norms.

CHAPTER TWO—SOCIAL, POLITICAL AND CULTURAL LIFE OF ANCIENT NAGAS

The Naga society has been carrying out its life in a very organized and social, cultural and political manner. The various tribes and sub-tribes of the Naga tribes, like other tribal societies, have gone through the process of barter, feudalism and civilization. The society is divided into numerous tribes, sub-tribes, and clans, and each of them maintained their different customary laws, possessed a common feeling and common political aspirations and a strong desire for a better life. It was the Naga's common traditional culture, culture, and political aspirations that have remained the centre of attraction for the researchers. There are various questions raised in the Naga people which have been answered satisfactorily and objectively. Some of the questions are, why

Why are they called Nagas? Are the indigenous Indian tribes or have they migrated to this part? What cultural and social values do they possess? This chapter discusses the Naga's ancient life of modern Naga people.

CHAPTER - TWO

SOCIAL POLITICAL AND CULTURAL LIFE OF ANCIENT NAGAS

The Naga society is one of the oldest tribal societies of the world and it comprises of various tribes and sub-tribes who originally belong to Indo-Mongoloid race. The Naga people have a prolonged chequered history of their own which presents the historical background of their origin, migration, confrontation, internecine war-fare and also their ancient political, social and religious accounts. The various Naga tribes who migrated to the territories presently occupied by them from the Central Asia in B.C., remained scattered, inimical and untouched to each other till the arrival of the British in their land. The Naga tribes who migrated to the northeastern part of India and settled permanently occupying different hills ridges hardly tried to form unity among them and organise a polity comprising all those Naga people. Rather they remained inimical to each other and practiced 'head-hunting wars' with the result that the enmity and bitterness among various Naga tribes continued till the British occupied Naga Hills. Moreover, such behaviours kept them confined to the place which they occupied initially and developed the attitude of isolation and separation.

The Naga society has been carrying out notable sets of traditional customary practices and social, cultural and political moorings from time immemorial despite the disintegration of the Naga tribes. Like other tribal societies it has passed through different phases of barbarism, semi-civilization and civilization. The ancient Naga people though divided into numerous tribes, sub-tribes, and clans, and speaking different tongues, they maintained their different customary laws, possessed a common history, have common feeling and common political aspirations and also a strong desire for independent and free life style. It was the Naga's common traditional culture, cultural and social values and political aspirations that have remained the centre of attraction for the scholars and researchers. There are various questions related to the Naga people which have not yet been answered satisfactorily and objectively. Some of the questions are; who are the Nagas?

Why are they called Nagas? Are they indigenous Indian tribes or have they ^{been} migrated to this part? What cultural and social values the ancient Nagas possessed? This chapter discusses the Naga's ancient social, religious and political cultural values and their relevance in the life of modern Naga people.

It is universally accepted fact that the Naga people had been simple, friendly and hard working. They are self-respecting fellows and egoistic by their nature. The Naga society before the Arrival of the British and English culture, was classless and casteless. The ancient Nagas did not make any distinction among themselves on the basis of class and birth. They preferred equality. They maintained good physique and remained always cheerful and smart. By faith they all were animist before the spread of Christianity among them. Unfortunately there is no written history about the ancient Naga people. However a number of Palaeolithic tools recently discovered in Nagaland and Manipur throw some light on the early Naga history, their culture, religion and socio-political life. Moreover, the folklores and myths carried out by the Nagas generation to generation also help one to ascertain the ancient Naga's cultural values and social-political behaviours. But such things do not present a clear and coherent picture about the ancient life of the Nagas.

Before the arrival of the British in Naga Hills and subjugation of various Naga tribes and establishment of the British administration, various Naga tribes had their social and political base. Each tribe maintained some sort of political organisation like republican democratic and monarchic. The customary laws and practices served as the base for the code of conducts and adjudication. Due to lack of proper communication they failed to establish contact with other peoples.¹ Barbarism has remained the part of the uncivilized community. A barbaric people are uncultured, cruel and short sighted. They lack the vision. The practice of headhunting wars by the ancient Nagas raises the question whether the ancient Nagas were barbaric. The answer is not easy. Though the cruel practice of headhunting, which was very much frequent among the ancient Naga people, compels one to adopt the view that the ancient Nagas were barbaric and uncivilized., but, at the same time, the social organisation of the Naga tribes and their longing for democratic style

¹ M. Horam, Social & Cultural Life of the Nagas, Low-Priced Publications New Delhi, 1992, p88.

of life that they practiced revert the former opinion about the ancient Naga people. A study of the Nagas' past life, their social habitation and habits, practice of republican and aristocratic and democratic forms of village state government bring the fact to the light that the Naga people possessed characteristic features of civilized society, so far as their internal life and behaviours were concerned. The practice of headhunting wars, no doubt, is dark spot on the ancient Naga history, but such practice had some special causes.

The headhunting war among the ancient Nagas was a customary practice which objective was to prove the warrior ship of the Naga male and also of a Naga tribe. The custom permitted the members of the tribe to take human heads either by regular warfare, raids or causal surprise. The practice of headhunting among the Naga tribes reflects the truth that the Naga people could hardly reconcile their rivals whosoever might be. It is often supposed that the raids and murders are due to revenge, disputes or blood feuds and that there is always more or less of a personal element in the affairs. There were some vital causes behind headhunting wars. According to Peal it was customary that the "the Nagas to obtain having tattoo on body and to obtain this certificate of manhood, must present their Raja with a human head... belonging to tribe not related."¹ To do this act "a party of youths arrange the way lay a pool where the people of another tribe are certain soon to fish... They watch their opportunity and rush out, securing perhaps, three or four heads, though perhaps loosing one."² Peal further writes that the common cause for headhunting was not personal rivalry or any type of dispute or quarrelling. During the raid or attack mission was not to take the heads of the noted persons, but to take, as many heads as possible without paying any heed whose heads were taken.³ Stating the cause of the headhunting wars among various Naga tribes Horam maintains that "It was one spice of life and that was mere, almost the only way to recognition... He (Naga) could wish for nothing mere in life than to have his success first recognised, then praised, and finally rewarded by the group." He further says that the young group of the Nagas belonging to a particular tribe used "to take a head, bring it home in triumph, to be feted as a warrior, to

¹. S.F. Peal, "The Nagas and Neighbouring Tribes", The Asiatic Society, Vol. III, (Calcutta, 1874) pp. 474-76.

². Ibid.

³. Ibid.

gain the privilege of wearing the coveted warrior's ornaments and having at last proved his worth and manhood, acquire a pride"⁴ According to Smith headhunting so long as it was in practice, it never allowed peace to be settled. Rather it "drove them, and their village to greater isolation" and compelled the tribes to fortify the villages for safety and security. The village that used to take maximum number of heads was deemed the most powerful. War among the villages used to take place frequently over disputes, which could not be settled amicably. Among the disputes the major clause was land disputes. The headhunting war thus was the day-to-day practice of ancient Naga tribes. The warriors were highly respected by the villagers. Though it may be called as a barbaric practice, it had certain rules to be followed by the warriors. For instance, no pregnant women would be killed and no children could be murdered. Headhunting among the ancient Nagas was a fashion, in fact, to establish the superiority over other tribes and prove the bravery of the Naga warriors. It was such practice, which made the Nagas bold enough to fight bravely with their enemies.

Traditions, customs, superstitions and conventions have remained the founding stone of the tribal community all over the world. The Naga community is not an exception. The customary rules of the Nagas have remained the bedrock of their social and political behaviours in absence of advanced political organisation. It was the customary practices or customary laws written in the heart of every Naga, which enabled him to maintain internal peace and unity and keep the order in community. The customary laws provided the ancient Nagas to maintain social relations, preserve cultural values and resolve internecine feuds and disputes. Customs and conventions, in real sense, are more powerful than codified laws because the former are written not on the paper or in a constitution but on each heart of the member of the community. Customs are universally accepted social norms that cannot be defied unless the whole of the community or society rejects them. Moreover, a custom is a collective wisdom of the community, which is beneficial to every one. That is another fact that, sometimes, some established customs or customary practices are harmful to the individual and the community both due to blind rigidity. But in general customs devoid of superstitions carry with themselves social values that are useful to all. In

⁴ . M. Horam, Social and Cultural Life of the Nagas, New Delhi, 1992, p. 88.

case of the Nagas. The customary laws were so much dear to the Naga people that no one could dare to defy a custom. These were nicely maintained and protected by the early Nagas.

The whole fabric of the Naga society is woven in social, religious and political customs. The impact of such customs may easily be observed even today in the Naga society. For instance, the marriage system among the various Naga tribes has been modified today, the system modified still contains the relics of old practices. The marriage is mostly conducted within the near relatives or within the tribe. Relationship between wife and husband is sacred. The wife follows the domiciles of the husband soon after marriage and the husband is bound to maintain his wife according to his capacity and earnings. This is the old practice that no Naga can marry another woman until divorce is accepted. This practice of monogamy is still honoured by the Naga people in general. Among the Ao Nagas custom does not allow one to marry a girl from his own clan. If it happened, the marriage is declared void. According to Tajenyuba "it is a problem for young boys and girls of a predominant clan to get suitable partners. And it is a fact that many of them spoil their life career".¹ The crimes of adultery and seduction are still treated with the utmost severity. The offenders are brought before the assembly of the people to investigate the offence, and the punishment is prescribed after full verification of the crime. If they found guilty, he or she is given severe punishment, which is exemplary. The girls have the freedom to choose the husbands of their choice. There is enough scope for love marriage. Dowry system hardly exists in the Naga society. However, according to the customs the bridegroom's parents (specially among the Aos) give valuable presents to the bride's parents. After marriage the new couple begins their own independent life living separately from their parents. Divorce is permissible, no doubt, but it must be based on reasonable ground where consent of both the wife and husband is a must. The customary court used to grant divorce. A divorced woman has the right to claim her maintenance.

Customary funeral practices among the Nagas are based on recon and religious faith. The Nagas from the beginning believe in survival of souls even after death. That is why the

¹ Tajenyuba, *Ao Nagas Customary Laws*, Guwahati, 1957, pp. 74-75.

dead body of a person is buried with honour and dignity. The dead body is firstly washed by his son and then covered with white cloth. Thereafter the side of the dead body places some baskets full of food grains along with garlic. Before disposing off the body, a funeral feast is arranged where pigs and cows are slaughtered. All the relatives, friends and villagers participate in funeral feast to consol the soul of the dead person. The dead body is put into a coffin and buried in the burial place where family members, relatives and villagers are present. The process of death ceremony among the Naga people is lengthy and expensive both.

ANCIENT POLITICAL SYSTEM

The basis of the ancient political system of the Naga people was the sovereign village state with different forms of governments. The Semas, Konyaks and Maos had hereditary monarchy. Among the Konyaks the king (Angs) possessed greater arbitrary power whose words were treated as laws. The Sema monarch had absolute power over his people. A council of elders who were elected by the clans from amongst the most respected experienced and influential persons assisted the king or chieftain. The Angamis, Lothas, Rengmas etc. practiced a peculiar type of democracy with little variation in the nature of composition of political system. In the words Asoso Yonuo "They are nominally governed by the two kings or chieftains of their respective villages, chosen for their bravery in war, skilful diplomacy, richness in the farm of cattle and land or power of oratory in contrast to the hereditary system in which the office of king passes to the eldest son on the death of his father."¹

The Ao people practiced purely democratic form of the political organisation because their faith in democratic life was unshakable. A study of ancient political organisations of the Naga people reveals the *fact* that among other Naga tribes the political system of the Ao people was more advanced and systematic. It was all due to their advanced political consciousness, which they maintained from the beginning. The Ao people believed in equality, liberty and fraternity. Hence they incorporated all these democratic principles in

¹ Asoso Yonuo, The Rising Nagas, Vivek Publishing, New Delhi, 1974, p.15.

their political life. The ancient Ao villages were symbol of the republic. The council of Tatars of the village, which was responsible for village administration, consisted of the village elders who were generally the most experienced and noble persons. The Council comprised in itself the legislative, executive and judicial powers to make new rules and annul old one. In the words of Tajenyuba the Council was vested with "legislative power to make new rules of customary laws, to revile or to suspend the rules then in force."¹ However, exercise of such power was subject to public welfare in general. The Tatars were collectively responsible to the village people for the proper use of their power. There was prescribed time to meet for deliberations. The court of the Tatars tried all cases civil and criminal. With the imposition of the British rule on the Naga people and appointment of the Gaonbuhras in the village the powers of the Council of Tatars was reduced. Today, the Government business is conducted by the Gaonburhas in the villages. The Tatars are not responsible for Government's notices and works in the villages. However, the Government's orders concerning the village welfare are brought to the notice of the Tatars for consideration, but their suggestions are obligatory.

Entire social and political system of the Ao people were structured under the system of Putumenden (Village State Republic). The system was so sound, democratic and attractive that various British administrators and authors have highly appreciated it. For instance, E. Elwin, the popular English author, appreciating the democratic spirit and political system of the Ao Nagas, wrote that "Each village amongst the Aos is a small republic, and each man is as good as his neighbours, indeed it would be hard to find anywhere else more thoroughly democratic communities. Head men, Tatars, so exist but their authority is very small."² Hutton while appreciating such system wrote, "The least that can be said of the Naga is that in general he has mental outlooks and mental processes for more consistent with those of the Europeans than has the ordinary native of India..."³

The political system either of republican democratic or of aristocratic monarchic maintained by the ancient Nagas was not based on the written constitution. It was

¹ Tajenyuba, Ao Nagas Customary Laws, op. cit., pp.339-40.

² V.Elwin, Nagas in the Ninetieth Century, Oxford University Press, 1969, p.324.

³ Hutton, The Angami Nagas with some Notes on Neighbouring Tribes, London, p.33,

customary laws, which served as the constitutional base. There was no defiance of the authority. Rather people were loyal and obedient to the rule and the ruler. This was all because the ancient Nagas possessed political spirit like the people of the ancient Greece. The customs that had collective wisdom of the people used to keep the people in discipline. A king or a chieftain was treated as the repository of God's favour. They maintained special status and enjoyed special privileges, no doubt, but their behaviours and treatments towards general mass were sound and reasonable.¹ The ruler acted "as the sagacious agent of the people. This all was possible due to 'age-honoured customs', which served as " a great measure of order, peace and stability to the Nagas."² Asoso Yonuo has rightly observed that "these customs that make them sane and became sometimes stronger than laws, for customs originate out of the conscience of the people ordained by God and are considered natural; selection of those modes of action with justice"³ The ancient Nagas knew that to violate the customs meant to breach the religion which consequently meant "incurring wrath of the Almighty and His ultimate punishment. It was the customary laws which bonded the Naga family, clan, the village and the tribe."⁴ In the words of Panger Imchen "The custom is unwritten law established by usage that has been transcended from time immemorial... Ao customary law and ethical value systems were universal which has become common law for the Ao community" even today. ⁵To the Ao people custom is yet anchor for his little ship of state, and trivial breaches of custom often cause turmoil, seemingly out of all proportion to its importance.

It is true that the Nagas before coming in close contact with the western Christian missionaries and adopting Christianity as their religion were animist. But it does not mean that they were anti-religious. Animism itself is a kind of religion. The word 'animism' has been derived from the Latin word 'anima' that means 'breath'. So it carries the idea of soul or spirit. Soul is the fundamental concept of tribal religion. It is a belief that all objects have their soul. The concept of soul is based on polytheism. Tribal religion is based on myths which generally teach people how the supreme being works and reveals her/his

¹ Asoso Yonuo, *The Rising Nagas*, op. cit., p.174.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Panger Imchen, *Ancient Ao Religion and culture*, New Delhi, 1993, p.105

mysteries through creation, the place of the animal kingdom in this universe and so on. So far the case of the ancient Nagas is concerned, they were animist having strong faith in supreme or natural forces being the fundamental cause of creation and maintenance of creation. The early Nagas carried various religious myths that served as their religious scriptures and creed in absence of any prescribed religion. The religious myths helped them not only to understand the environment and universe but also to shape their social and cultural life.

Tribal religion is basically a community religion where individual life and community life are inseparable. Belief and action could not be separated in early period. There was intimate relationship between worship and action. In ^{the} absence of prescribed religious scriptures the religious faiths, which the early Nagas maintained, made them religious and kept them in order. Religious ethos contained in people's hearts, minds created oral history and adopted old rituals enabled them to be social and move towards a civilized life. Tribal religion lacks founder, but unflinching faith in religious practices served strong bond to maintain and protect religion. Absolute faith in unseen power of the Nagas ~~shaped~~ shaped their social, cultural and even political behaviours. According to M.M. Thoms in the tribal world view "There is the sense of spiritual continuum within which the dead and the living natural objects, spirits and gods, the individual, the clan, the tribe, animals, plants, minerals and man form an unbroken hierarchical unity of spiritual fore. The self of man is not an individual self, but an extended universal self present and actively participating in all the part of totality."¹ In a tribal world view one cannot make a clear cut division between the sacred and the secular, between religious and non-religious, between spiritual and the material areas of life. All cultural components are loosely related.

The community of the Nagas passing through the phase of animism believed in a power superior to allow and capable of doing anything for both good and bad. They believed in spirit and its reflection through various agencies and means. They realised the nearness of such power and adopted some forms of worship to please such force for blessing and avoiding curse or unhappiness of the power. Such faith and action of the early Nagas moulded them towards life of decency ^{and} discipline on the one hand, and set up religious

¹ M.M. Thoms "Modernization of society and Struggle for new Cultural Ethos", in Ecumenical Review, Vol. XVIII, No.4, October 1966, p.429

rituals and social practices on the other. It compelled them to develop disciplined habits suppressing their wild emotions and instincts. In fact, their faith in unseen power and also the fear of displeasure of such power served the ancient Naga people the cause of their cultural and social behaviour. It forbids them from doing harms and ills to other at least within the community or the tribe, which they belonged. It also led them towards establishing social customs and rituals relating to worship gods, ancestral souls, natural objects and celebrating festivals. Religion though animistic, opened the way for ethnic culture and projected the Naga behaviours towards new ethics upgrading their moral conduct. It brought them new values such as honesty, sincerity, simplicity, truthfulness, obedience and more commitment to fellow life.

According to Robinson the faith of the Nagas in superior natural force brought for the Nagas "more just and adequate conceptions of the power that presides the nature." The Nagas began to feel that "There must be some universal cause to whom all things are indebted for their being. They appear also to acknowledge a divine power to be the maker of the world and the disposer of all events."¹ The human mind even when least improved and invigorated by culture, shrinks from the thought of annihilation and looks forward with hope and expectation to a state of future existence.² In the words of Robinson "This sentiment of soothing consolation, resulting from a sacred consciousness of its own dignity, from an instinctive longing after immortality, is universal, and may be deemed natural." The Naga thought in the early period had no established form of worship and they had no temples erected in honour of their deities and no ministers to their services." They have the knowledge, however, of several superstitious ceremonies and practices handed down to them, by tradition; and to these they have recourse with a childish credulity, when roused by any emergence from their usual insensibility, and excited knowledge the power and to implore the protection of superior beings."³

¹ W. Robinson, "A Descriptive Account of Assam", cited in, V.Elwin's *The Nagas in the Nineteenth Century*, op. cit., p.502.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

According to the note of John Butler the Angamis believed that if they had led good and worthy lives upon this earth, and abstained from all coarse food, and specially had abstained from eating flesh, after death their spirits would fly away into the realms above, and there became stars.”¹ It means the Angamis possessed the faith in continuation of the circle of life and such faith made them honest and pious. Though the ancient Angamis had no idea of a supreme God, they believed in the existence of evil spirits, which live inside the rocks, trees, and pools of water. To avoid the wrath of such spirits they adopted some forms of worshipping and religious rituals that are still in practice among the Angamis and other Naga tribes.

Religious customs or religious superstitions established in a community of the ancient Naga people had no place for individuality. It was a common faith, common practice and common celebration. That is why whenever a religious ceremony was celebrated, participation in it was a must for every Naga. While performing such acts they all used to sing and dance together. The faith in natural power either evil or good paved the way for emergence of various ceremonies among the Naga people where common dining, singing and dancing became the integral parts of ceremonies either religious or social. This developed unity and integrity among the members of a Naga tribe and his absolute belonging to the community or tribe. Horam has rightly remarked “Dancing, singing, eating and drinking ~~are~~ the main highlights of all Tankhul festivals.”² Such practice is still visible among the Nagas today because they inherited such things from their ancestors.

Customs and traditions of a society either traditional or modern never disappear in toto. In fact the whole fabric of the society is woven with social, religious and political customs. Specially among the tribal society customs play a vital role in providing the society a suitable base ^{and} even the society becomes modern. The Naga society, which claims itself modern today, has not separated itself totally from its ancient norms and practices. The impact of early customs may easily be marked in the entire social, religious and political behaviours of the modern Nagas. This is another fact that today the binding of social norms and values, which were practiced by their forefathers, are declining.

¹ John Butler, “Rough Notes on the Angami Nagas”, Journal of Asiatic Society, Vol. XLIV, No.4, Calcutta, 1875, PP.504-05.

² Horam, Social and Cultural Life of Nagas, Low Price Publications, Delhi, 1992, p. 58

The system of marriage among the Nagas has been modified today, no doubt, but it still contains the relics of old practices. Marriage is a religious pious act of the Naga people. During the British period Naga's marriage was mostly conducted within the near relatives such as cousins in preference to other women. This is celebration where all the relatives and friends are invited. Relationship between ^{wife} and husband was made sacred in the eye of the people and they were supposed to be one soul after marriage. The wife followed the domiciles of the husband soon after marriage. The husband was bound to maintain his wife according to his capacity and earnings. On the other hand, the wife was supposed to cooperate ^{with} the husband even at the time of distress and calamity. According to an established custom "a man can remarry his deceased wife's real sister provided there is no other impediment for marriage. A brother can also marry his deceased brother's wife because the brothers are in the same degree and the wife is from a rightful clan for marriage. A widow having no children cannot marry a stranger, but must marry her late husband's brother. Such customs cannot be overlooked even today. There is practice of monogamy among the Nagas from the early period, but no Naga can marry more than one girl at a time. Among the Aos marriage with the girl of the same clan is prohibited. It happens sometimes, such marriage is declared void and severe penalty is inflicted upon the persons violating such custom. Due to practice of exogamy among the Aos "It is a problem for young boys and girls of a predominant clan to get suitable partners, and it is a fact that many of them spoil their life career."¹ However, such binding has put a check upon the growth of polygamy and polyandry system of marriage in Nagaland.

The crime of adultery and seduction were treated with the utmost severity. The offenders were brought before the assembly of the people to investigate the offence. The punishment was given after full verification of the crime. Generally the offender was "tied with cane cords to a tree and there crucified." In some clan it was the practice "to deprive both the seducer and seduced of their lives." Somewhere the seducer was "placed in a basket, his hands and feet tied together, and he is rolled many times from the summit of a hill until life be extinct."²

¹ Tajenyuba Ao, *Ao Nag Customary Laws* (Gopal Printing Works, Guwahati, 1957), pp. 74-75.

² John Butler, *A Sketch of Assam*, op. cit., 524.

Worshipping and prayer before starting a thing among the Naga people is still common because they inherited such practice from their ancestors. Before performing any project such as putting seeds, going on hunting or fish excursions or to enter upon any war expedition, the people used to assemble and some sort of consultation laws held between the chief ruler and the elders of the village in order to avoid unpleasant happenings.

In the Naga society the girls have the freedom to choose the husband of her choice. There is no real dowry system among the Nagas. However, according to the custom the bridegroom, parents (specially among the Aos) generally give valuable presents to the bride, parents. The usual custom is that engagement continues for three years before marriage is solemnised and during the engagement the bride and bridegroom remain faithful to each other. After marriage the new couple begin their own independent life living separately from the parents. Divorce is permissible in the Naga society according to the custom, no doubt, but it must be based on reasonable ground and having the consent of both the wife and the husband.

Customary funeral practices among the Naga people are based on reason and religious faith. The Nagas from the beginning believe in survival of souls even after death. That is why the dead body of a person is buried with honour and dignity. According to established practice the dead body of a man is washed by his son and then covered with white clothe. The side of the dead body places thereafter so me baskets full of food grains along with garlic. Before disposing off the dead body a funeral feast is arranged generally after noon. The dead body is put into the coffin along with some weapons like dao and spear. The coffin is carried to the burial place followed by the family members, relatives, friends and villagers. Besides these, many rituals followed which are participated by relatives and friends.² The process of death ceremony among the Nagas is lengthy and expensive both.

The cultural values, which are the common properties of the Naga people even today, are their ancestral gifts. In the words of Horam to the ancient Nagas "ethics were not different from religion... Every person was subject to law of tradition. To obey was piety; to destroy was impious and the rule of obedience was enforced upon each individual by the

will of the community to which he belonged.”¹ The commitment to the community for the Nagas was based on the idea that a community is custodian of individual's security and safety. The community belonged to the individual and the individual belonged to the community. Everyone had full freedom to express his/her will, but at the same time everyone was bound to obey the decision of the community which was taken after full deliberations amide the presence of adult villagers.² According to Puthenpurkal “Every Naga knew that all discussions should lead to some conclusions. And once a decision is arrived at, a Naga is ready to obey it. He had great respect for his village elders and tribal chieftains.³ Such was the democratic spirit and discipline of the ancient Nagas. Dalle Namu has rightly remarked “Democracy is a way of life for Nagas. It is a part of our existence. If the Greek had city-states, in Nagaland every village is a small republic.”⁴

The ancient Naga people though lacked the Machiavellian skill and spirit of politics, they had the wisdom to rule themselves organising police force (warrior ship) , judicial court, legislature and prison. According to Asoso Yonuo the system which the old Nagas adopted and practiced was “perfectly a government which indicates not to , in fact, the right of his fellows but to respect them for the return of the same kind of respect as to have a peaceful community where all human beings work to be equal in respect of the rights , opportunities , notwithstanding the inequality and ability, to a good, just and free life.”⁵

The most attractive feature of each Naga village has been the Morung, a common place of assemblage of the village youths and a sort of village educational institution to impart social, cultural and educational values to the coming generation. The Morung bears several names. In the southern group of western Rengmas it is called Rensi, in the northern group it is termed as Azughu and in the language of eastern Rengma it is known as Awikhu. The Morung has remained the “centre of traditional social life and fulfils a number of purposes.” The Morung is, in fact, a learning place for the younger generation where their elders tell them the legends. They also learn the significance of life and various types of social and cultural values, which are passed on from one generation to another.

¹ M. Horam, “Naga Religion: A Case Study”, in Religion and Society of North east India, op. cit., p.15

² Joseph Puthenpurkal, Baptist Mission in Nagaland, Shillong, 1984, p.15.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Dalle Namu, The Prisoner from Nagaland, Labon Press, Tuli, 1978,pp. 17-18.

⁵ Asoso Yonuo, The Rising Nagas, op. cit., pp. 18-19

For the women folk the Morung are taboo, but during festivals they may come with their children to the open ground in front of the Morung and watch dancing and other happenings. Today the significance of the Morung has declined, but during the early days it served multi-purposes of the Naga villagers. In olden days when there was neither any school nor any educational institutions the Morung was the place of common sitting and learning as well as meeting of the youngsters. It was a sanctuary where the new youth generation used to receive good sermons from their elders. The elders used to supply them not only happenings of the past but also some moral and ethical values for decent life. The Morung maintained sanctity. That is why even enemies were not harmed in the Morung. Abusive words were not allowed to be used in the complex of the Morung. It was treated like a temple where any kind of violent acts or ill will were not permitted. It was the place of piety and purity of thought and behaviour both. Strangers were treated politely in the Morung and they were given night shelter. Describing the significance of a Morung as a place of cultural values, Asoso Yonuo says that the Morung as a house is "an important educational, political and social institution" where the youngsters of the village "learn manners, discipline, art, stories, songs, war tactics, diplomacy, religious and customary rites and ceremonies living in it." ¹ It has been a school for the young "to learn the art of livelihood, responsibility and cooperation before the Nagas came in contact with the modern education and life."²

The Naga community has been the rural based where cultivation and animal husbandry have been the basic occupation of the people. Since the climate is favourable and there is enough rain during monsoon period, the farmers do not face the problem of irrigation specially in the early age. The system of cultivation was collective farming. Barter system was rarely found. The Naga of the olden age worshipped work and everyone used to work in the field without any hesitation or reservation. So far the land ownership was concerned, in some of the tribes there was the system of private ownership, no doubt, but most of the uncultivated or wasteland belonged to clans of the village in common. The land was

¹ Asoso Yonuo, *The Rising Nagas*, op. cit., p. 11.

² Ibid.

believed as a gift of Almighty. Due to rise and growth of more villages and increasing population the common land property was occupied by different villages and in due course of time those villagers who established their hold over the land and forests claimed their private ownership. Thus the Naga economy "began with a measure of family communism and separated with a measure of rude capitalism." Among Chang, Sema, Kuki etc the land belonged to the Chiefs of the villages.

Private ownership of land emerged in Nagaland "when men cultivating plots of land obtained perspective rights for ownership of cultivable plots of neutral land. Some of the common clan-lands were divided among the families of the clans enabling each family to have some plots of land.¹ Some village lands are transferred to the individual when he establishes his ownership over that land by making it fit for cultivation. Such individuals land is his private property and he can sell it as per his need or willingness. He may also mortgage his land with the consent of his family members to return or pay the debt.

Emergence of private ownership in Nagaland has paved the way for growth of inequality. The landless people got compulsion to work in the field of the rich farmers. On the death of the father his children are entitled to inherit the father's properties equally. But this right is prohibited to widows and daughters. The notable point is that despite the emergence of private ownership among the Naga people, there was no scope for "big landlords, no extreme paupers, no millionaires, no slums and no beggars."² It is all because of non-existence of bourgeois nature of the property system and lack of industrialisation. The ancient Naga's wants were limited and they were self-satisfied with what they used to earn by using manual labour. The concepts like exploitation, social dignity at the cost of other etc. were not known to the early people. They all were treated like brothers and they all were dedicated to assist each other. There was no feeling of master and slave. There were no slavery system, robbery, theft, stealing etc. All these qualities in the Naga society began to decline with the appearance of new civilization.

The close association of the Naga people with the British administration and teaching of Christianity in various newly set up Churches by the third decade of the eighteenth century caused a major shift in the traditional faith and living of the Naga people and led

¹ Tajenyuba, Customary Laws, op. cit., p.59.

² Bendangnagshi, Glimpses of Naga History, Saraighat, Guwahati, 1993, pp.18-19.

them to deviate from old cultural and social life. The traditional outlook of the Nagas and conventional practices began to lose their impact on the people, but slowly. The social, political, religious and economic concepts of the people began to change with the arrival of new western education and civilization. Their faith in their own customary laws, traditional social values and culture began to decline. The people slowly became apt, quick and smart in adopting and following new civilization and culture in the name of modernity. The modern Nagas "turned from the thrill of headhunting and fighting to the more useful thought." With the arrival of foreigners in their land, new ideas, new philosophies and new style of thinking and life appeared in the Naga society, which dazzled the mind of conscious Nagas. The Naga society entered in the phase of social transformation. With the introduction of education in Nagaland by the Christian Missionary the Naga youths came in the light of new ideas and new knowledge which were totally unknown to. Education served as a tool of transformation of the Naga society. Modern education made the Nagas educated and taught them new way of life, no doubt, but at the cost of their traditional social and cultural values. The new religion (Christianity) asked the Naga believers to part with all their old culture and follow the new European or American culture in almost all respect of life. The Missionaries "condemned our (Naga's) old culture as most sinful, Godless and useless."¹

Once the Naga society moved towards modernization, it hardly looked back to its past cultural moorings. The Naga society, which was traditional, became modern in various aspects. Young Naga generation become more and more prone to new life and new style based on western pattern of civilization. However, it is notable that the wave of modernization in Nagaland has not yet destroyed the old cultural pattern of the Nagas. It is all because modernization in Nagaland is not the product of its soil. Rather it is adoption by the new education generation. The result of transformation of the Naga society is that the society once was classless and casteless has turned into class division. The highly conscious Naga citizens availed the opportunity to become rich overnight coming near to the power or the power holders. Concept of the people changed. Individualism substituted collectivism in the Naga society. Lust for material life increased and people began to apply all the means fair or unfair to enrich themselves as early as possible.

¹ Ibid.

❑ Social transformation of the Naga society made the average Naga people materialist in approach of the life and copyist in their behaviour. The current of 'westoxication' in Naga society "determined the psycho-historical factors governing basic principles." The external forces, which entered into the Naga Hills, broke up prolonged isolation of the Naga people. The external forces have consistently shaped the historical accounts of the Naga people. The rise of secularism and materialism in Naga society has given severe blow to the philosophy of religion and moralism. . In ancient Naga society there was no scope for "big landlordism, no extreme paupers, no millionaires, no slums and no beggars."¹ Every Naga was self-sufficient. Their wants were limited and their conducts were honest and sincere .The concept like exploitation, high social dignity etc. did not exist at all. They were God-fearing people. In the transformed society old values began to disappear paving the way for growth of a number of modern social evils. However, the spread of Christianity and modern education among the Nagas taught them a number of good things also.² In the words of Elwin, "The activities of the Baptist Mission among the Nagas have demoralised the people, destroyed tribal solidarity and forbidden the joys and feasting , the decoration and romance of communal life" because of sharpening of the Naga's consciousness towards new life style.³

Christian Missionaries who provided a new set of education and way of life played great role in changing the old pattern of Naga society and shaping a new society where enough scope was left for growth of modernity, The new order ushered in a period of tremendous change. The main agent of change was the Government itself. Christianity provided the means whereby the people of the region were able to accommodate themselves to the new world brought in by the British.. According to Tarhuja "If one responsible dynamic factor was to be singled out for an overall changes in the society of the Nagas, it would undoubtedly be the introduction of Christianity among them." The Christianity "ushered in a transformation from animistic tradition based on superstitious practices to a more orderly society where the guiding principle was no longer that of natural human urges but based rather on the laws of God and love for one's fellow man." Horam is also of the view that

¹ Asoso Yonuo, *the Rising Nagas*, op. cit., p22.

² W.C. Smith, "Missionaries Activities and Acculturati0on of Backward People", In the *Journal of Applied Sociology* March-April, 1923, p. 185.

³ V.Elwin, "The Aborigines", published in the Oxford Pamphlets on Indian affairs, Mumbai, 1944,p. 14.

Christianity while giving the Naga people new things damaged the old image and cultural values of the Naga people. Though spread of modernity among the Nagas, today, has damaged the values of Christianity, no doubt, but Christianity is still a dominant factor in the Naga society. There may not be two opinions about the fact that it was the British rule and the teaching of Missionaries, which caused basic change in the traditional, set up of the Nagas. These changes destroyed some of the cultural values, no doubt, but, at the same time, provided the Naga people with a new light and vision which ultimately enabled them to join the rank of civilized people.

According to Panger the arrival of Christianity destroyed Naga's religious and cultural values threatening family norms, social ethics and cultural-religious meanings in the name of modernisation. His view in this regard is very much correct. But one should ^{not} forget at the same time that the Christianity broadened the parochial Naga's view and shaped a new society that became far better than the traditional society. Spread of Christianity opened the dynamics of Naga society, which flourished in various directions as the years rolled down.

CHAPTER - THREE

INTEGRATION OF NAGA TRIBES AND SHARPENING OF NAGA'S POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Various Naga tribes, who originated from the central Asia race family, settled in the areas of the northeastern frontier of India in B.C., remained confined to their own lands which they occupied without having any relations and apprehensions with the world for centuries. It was only in the thirteenth century that some tribes of the Naga people established some sort of relations with the Naga tribes living in the vicinity of the Ahom kingdom. There is no documentary proof about the relations of the Naga tribes with the Ahom rulers to provide a detailed chronological sequence of their history. However, according to the accounts as narrated by the Ahom rulers, it is believed that some of the Naga tribes had come in contact with the Ahom rulers in the

CHAPTER- THREE- INTEGRATION OF NAGA TRIBES AND SHARPENING OF NAGA'S POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

point in the Naga's political history. The Ahom rulers, who were the first to bring the Naga tribes and integration under their rule, were the first to bring the Naga tribes under their rule. The close association of the Naga people with the Ahom rulers, who were the first to bring the Naga people under their rule, followed a new era in the history of the Naga people. The arrival of the British and Christian missionaries in the nineteenth century was a turning point in the Naga's integration and growth in their political history. Subjugation of various isolated Naga tribes and incorporation of them under British rule resulted in unification of the disintegrated Naga tribes, which sharpened their political consciousness on the other. The British, who were the first to bring the Naga tribes under their rule, tried all their efforts to bring the Naga tribes under their rule. Historic move of the British towards the frontier of India in the nineteenth century is a chapter in political history of entire Northeastern Frontier of India. The British indoctrinated the Naga people with a new type of rule, which was based on the Naga's concepts. The confinement of the Naga tribes to their lands and work was the

CHAPTER – THREE

INTEGRATION OF NAGA TRIBES AND SHARPENING OF NAGA'S POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Various Naga tribes, who migrated from the central Asia and finally settled in the hill areas of the northeastern frontier of India in B.C., remained confined to the territories, which they occupied without having any relations and rapprochements with other peoples for centuries. It was only in the thirteenth century that some powerful Ahom rulers established some sort of relations with the Naga tribes living nearby the border of the Ahom kingdom. There is no documentary proof other than the Ahom Buranji (an account of the Ahom rules) to present a detail account of relations of the Nagas with the Ahoms. However, according to the accounts maintained by the Ahom rulers it becomes oblivious that some of the Naga tribes had come in close contact with the Ahom people and used to go to Assam for commercial purposes. It was the British rulers who, in fact, by penetrating into the frontier of Assam had subjugated the war-like hill tribes settled in the northeastern frontier. The arrivals of the British in the land of the Nagas, in 1834, marked a turning point in the Naga's political, socio-economic, cultural and religious life. Subjugation of the Nagas and integration of their territories to the British rule not only broke up the prolonged Naga's isolation but also resulted in unification of the various disintegrated Naga tribes. The close association of the Naga people with the foreigners enabled them to learn a new culture, follow a new civilization and opt for new political organisations.

Arrival of the British and Christian Missionaries in the Naga Hills marked, in fact, a turning point in the Naga's integration and growth in their political consciousness. Subjugation of various scattered Naga tribes and integration of their territories to the British rule resulted in unification of the disintegrated Naga tribes on the one hand, and sharpened their political consciousness on the other. The British rulers established in the Naga Hills uniform type of administration and forced all these tribes to live under a single pattern of rule. Historic move of the British towards the frontier of Assam opened a new chapter in political history of entire Northeastern frontier of India. The British rulers indoctrinated the Naga people with a new type of rule, which was beyond the existing Naga's concept. The confinement of the Nagas to their limited small world and their

prolonged isolation from the rest of the world was first time fully broken by the British rulers who ventured to break through the hitherto forbidden land of war-like Naga tribes. No doubt, the Naga warriors applied their full physic with dauntless courage to resist the British advance in their land, but their conventional weapons and traditional strategy of warship could not face the mounting British force with the result that the entire Naga territories soon fell within the British control. Thereafter, the western *Baptist* Christian Missionaries having the support of the British Government entered into the rough and rigid mountains of the Naga Hills with the marked objective to indoctrinate the animist Nagas with a new religion that was Christianity. The mild and friendly approach and tolerable behaviours of the Missionaries and their helpful and sympathetic attitudes towards the semi-civilized Naga people paved favourable circumstance for the growth of Christianity among the Nagas. The entire inimical attitude of the Nagas towards their own people began to reduce with the spread of new religion and religious education. Thus the close contact of the Nagas with the British rulers and the Christian Missionaries changed the whole matrix of the traditional Naga concept and their socio-religious fabric. Their political consciousness, which was parochial and limited before the arrival of the British, began to expand.

Since it ~~was~~ the British rulers who sharpened the political consciousness of the Naga people and it was the British rule which integrated various Naga tribes, it would be convenient to have a cursory views of relations of the Nagas with the British. After taking over Assam the British Indian Government had decided in principle to consolidate the British authority all over the plains of Assam and to befriend the hill peoples so long as they did not create troubles to the British interests. While annexing Cachar to the British rule in 1832 and in 1839, the Government had realised the significance of the frontier areas in the interest of the British at least for protection of the British Empire in India. Though the Government's standing policy was not to interfere in the internal affairs of the Nagas, the existing situations compelled the Government to penetrate into the areas of the Nagas and subjugate them. According to Mackenzie, the British were "brought into contact with Angamis... by the acquisition of Cachar with its hill territory running up between the

1 A. Mackenzie, A History of Relations of Government with Hill Tribes of North-east India, 2nd ed. New Delhi, 1964, pp.

Aangami hills and the Khashi Hills... the very confines of Nowgong.”¹ The British wanted a safe and secured frontier on India’s northeastern border. They also wanted to have influence and control over the Himalayan territories from Tibet to Myanmar. The snowy Himalayas was itself a strong barrier against the invaders, no doubt, but logistics and stratify demanded that the territory south of the Himalayan watershed should be in the control of the British because they had already spread their foot in Assam. The Government was aware of such reality. Since the Naga hills were on the southern side of the Himalayan watershed, it lied in the logic of circumstances that the British Indian Government had to have control over this area. Again, the frequent raids on the plains people of Assam by the Nagas also compelled the British Government to establish their control over the Naga Hills. The Government tried to befriend the Naga chiefs in the beginning but such move did not yield desired fruits. So they adopted the policy of sending military expeditions to subdue the Nagas. That is why the Government despatched at least ten military expeditions to the territories occupied by the Naga people between 1839 and 1850. Moreover, the Government also wanted to have topographical knowledge of the areas. Hence the team to measure the areas was also despatched along with the military troops.

One of the most pertinent factors, which compelled the Government to occupy the Naga territories, was a need of a direct route from Assam to Manipur for developing commercial relations with the Manipuris and for protecting their commercial interests in Upper Cachar, North Assam and Myanmar also. It was not possible until the Nagas would have been subjugated. This is evident from the statement of Mackenzie, which inter alia said, “The importance of opening up a direct communication between Assam and Manipur was at that time much insisted upon, and it was in the course of exploration directed to this end that we first came into contact with the Nagas of these hills.”¹ To fulfil this task Captain Jenkins and Pemberton along with seven hundred Manipuri soldiers and eight hundred collies were sent from Manipur to Assam in January, 1832. Another factor, which compelled the British Government to occupy the Naga territories, was to protect the king of Manipur from establishing his hold over the Naga people. Substantiating this fact

¹ A. Mackenzie, A History of Relation of Government with Hill Tribes of North-east Frontier of Bengal, Calcutta, 1884, pp.

Mackenzie writes "Facts came to the light which made it clear that the object which Gambhir Singh (king of Manipur) had in his view was the permanent conquest of the Naga Hills... and the Government began to feel uncomfortable in prospect of Gambhir Singh's operation."¹ As a result the British troops were sent to the Naga territories with the purpose to subjugate the Nagas.

THE BRITISH EXPEDITIONARY FORCES IN NAGA TERRITORY

After the annexation of North Cachar to the British district of Nowgong in January 1839, the Government directed E. T. Grange, the Sub-Assistant to the Sub-Commissioner of Nowgong, to make an investigation into the causes of the Angami raids and to punish the chiefs of the two war-like Naga villages Khonoma and Mozema. Consequently, Grange marched to the Naga area with an expeditionary force and succeeded in persuading the Naga chiefs to stop raids and plunder of Assam. He opened a new way from Chumukedima to Dimapur. It was discovered that the main cause of the Naga's raids was a trade in slavery which was done to the inducement given by the Bengali traders. Grange, thereafter, recommended for setting up a military post at Chumukedima. However, the Government did not accept the recommendation of Grange. Captain Jenkins, the Commissioner of Nowgong, was also in favour of annexing the Angami territory to the British rule.² But the proposal of Jenkins was also rejected. However the Government permitted to set up a new post in the area of the Angamis. A study of correspondence between the local British officials and the Government reveals the truth that the former were insisting that the Naga areas adjacent to the borders of Assam should be brought under the British control while the former had no intention to interfere in the affairs of the hill peoples. But keeping in view the consistent pressure of the local authorities, the Government, however, permitted Grange to select a suitable place in the Angami area to set up the military post. Thereafter, the British officials was permitted" to enter the hills and make leisurely and, if possible, friendly progress from village to village conciliating the chiefs by personal inter-courses."³

¹ *Ibid*

² V. Elwin, *Nagas in the Nineteenth Century*, op. cit., p.152

³ A. Mackenzie, *History of Relation of Government with Hill Tribes of North East Frontier of Bengal*, op. cit., pp.106-07

The objective behind friendly relations with the Nagas was the "advancement of the commerce of the frontier " and to settle "any obstruction to a trade that the agents of Marwari may bring" to the notice of the Government.¹ Conforming the truth H.K.Barpujari stated that "To serve the interests which were extension of revenues and police jurisdiction and the speculation of European speculators beyond the border areas, peace mission followed one after another to conciliate the tribes." The result was heartening because "even the valiant Angami chiefs entered into agreement acknowledging the authority of the Government, agreeing to pay tributes and assuring to abstain from internecine feuds."² According to the agreement the river Dhansiri was recognised as the boundary line between the British district of Assam and the Angami Naga tract. A salt depot was established at Dimapur at the request of the Angamis. Thereafter the process of sending expeditions into the Naga territories to map up the areas continued. The relations of the British with the Nagas improved. The Nagas "promised not to molest their neighbours in future... to abstain from plundering, excursions and cutting heads of the Nagas of other clans, to refer all disputes to the British authorities...to pay annual tribute as a token of allegiance to the British Government."³

The agreement was good and meaningful to the British but the Angamis hardly honoured it. They resumed their old activities and dared to kill the British security personnel posted to their areas. They also assassinated several civilians coming down from the hills. As a result, the British Government on the recommendations of its officials posted to Assam decided to send punitive expeditions to teach the Angamis a *lesson*. Thereafter, the British forces began to enter into the Naga territories with a mind to subjugate the Nagas. Though the Nagas produced tough resistance to the British advance, they could not face the British forces for long.

THE POLICY OF NON-INTERFERENCE

The Kikerima battle fought between the Naga warriors and the British security force where heavy loss was incurred on the British side, the Government thought to withdraw its activities from the Naga Hills. Though the local officials wanted to nib the trouble in bud

¹ H.K.Barpujari, Problem of the Hill Tribes of North West Frontier-1842-1872, Guwahati, 1976, Preface p. 1.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

by occupying the Naga territories, the Governor-General, Lords Dollhouse, noted on 20 February 1850:

“ I dissent entirely from the policy of taking possession of their hills and establishing of our sovereignty over savage inhabitants. Our possessing could bring no profit to us; and would be costly as it would be unproductive.”¹

Thereafter, the Government abandoned the policy of interference and withdrew the troops posted and deployed in the Naga areas. This policy, in fact, emboldened the morale and courage of the Nagas. A question may be raised here as to whether the decision of the Government to abandon the policy of interference in the Naga affairs was good. The answer is that the step of the Government in this regard was not based on the farsightedness as the coming years proved the futility of the policy of non-interference. The policy resulted in the loss of the British prestige on the one hand, and emboldened the Nagas to resume their unlawful activities on the other. The Naga's raids on the plain areas increased, and they committed not less than 22 raids on the British subjects after adoption of such policy. Nearly two dozens of the people were killed and more than hundred were taken captive by the Naga raiders. From 1854 to 1865 there were nineteen incidents of raids and plunder by the Angamis where numerous British subjects were killed. Thus during the phase of non-interference the whole British territories adjoin to the Naga hills became disturbed areas so long as the Government maintained the policy of non-interference.

Keeping in view the deteriorating situation day after day, the British local authorities began to pressurise the Government once more to be tough towards the Nagas and abandon the policy of non-interference. Lieutenant Gregory, the Officer-in -Charge of North Kachar reported the Government that “ unless he was allowed to adopt more vigorous measures than were permitted to his predecessors, he could not guarantee the safety to his sub-division”² Sir Cecil Beadon, the newly appointed Lieutenant Governor in 1866, who believed in active forward policy was of the view that “in the course of a few years Assam would be divided amongst the Bhutias, Abors, Nagas, Garos, Mishmis and other wild tribes” in absence of the British interference. He further reported, “If petty outrages were

¹ Cited in A. Alemchiba's A Historical Account of Nagaland, Kohima, 1972, p.58

² V. Elwin, The Nagas in the Nineteenth Century, op. cit., p. 166.

allowed by withdrawal of the British from the frontier, they (British) would soon find themselves driven out of the Province.”¹ Apprising the Government of the exciting anarchic situation near border of Assam due to frequent Naga’s raids and interventions, sir Cecil recommended the Government “to reassert our authority over them, and bring them under a system of administration suited to their circumstances and gradually to reclaim them from the habit of lawlessness to those of order and civilization.” But the Government was not yet ready to abandon the policy of non-interference. However, the concerned officials were allowed to provide protection to the British subjects from the Naga’s raids and intervention.

POLICY OF GRADUAL EXTENSION OF THE BRITISH AUTHORITY IN NAGA HILLS

Despite the unwillingness of the Government to extend its authority towards the frontier areas, the pressure exerted by the local authorities compelled the government to rethink its stand regarding the hill peoples of North East. The Governor-General sought permission of the secretary of state of India to shift the British headquarters from Chumukedima to Kohima..² Lastly the Government became ready to change its policy and a new administrative zone was created in 1866 at Chumukedima comprising of the entire Angami areas and the areas lying west of the river Dhansiri.³ John Gregory was made the Deputy Commissioner of his zone. Thereafter, Manipur Government was asked not to send any expedition to the Naga Hills in future. With a view to having topographical surveys of the Naga Hills the Government despatched several survey parties along with military expeditions despite the Naga’s hard resistance. On the other hand, the Nagas observing the British new policy of interference increased their hostile activities against the British. Since the Government was fully determined this time to occupy the land of the Nagas at any cost, the Secretary of state for India , considering the demand of the governor-General of India, allowed to shift the British headquarters from Chumukedima to Kohima. Thus Kohima became the British headquarters in March 1879.

The establishment of the British headquarters at Kohima in 1879 irritated not only the Angamis but other Naga tribes also who were very much vigilant about the British advance

¹ Ibid.

² Foreign Political Proceedings, April, 1877, No. 80

³ Ibid.

into the frontier of Assam. The Government with a view to extending its influence directed the troops to move towards Wokha, the land of the Lothas. The Angamis who were fully determined not to surrender to the British, went ^{on} preparing a war.

They smuggled a large number of firearms and collected weapons like spears, darts, bows and arrows in large quantity. When this news reached to the British officials, the Deputy Commissioner, Damant himself went to the area to investigate the matter. When he was to enter in the fortified Naga village, a Naga sentry cut him down into pieces and the escorting party of the Deputy Commissioner, being afraid, fled away. There after the Naga warriors soon attacked the British armed post at Kohima. Thousands of the Naga warriors took part in the attack. It is said that the Naga warriors would have got control over the Kohima post by killing all soldiers there, but luckily the reinforcement which arrived from Manipur at the nick of time saved the lives of the British soldiers and others who were living at the post.¹ Now the question, which began to irritate the British mind, was how to deal with the Angamis. It was not only the question of the British prestige but also the British security. Hence Brigadier General Nation, who was an expert in dealing with the hill peoples, was entrusted with the task to teach the Naga rebels a bitter *lesson*. General Nation along with his big-armed party reached Khonoma on November, 17, 1879 where the Nagas were expecting the punitive party. This time also the *Naga* warriors faced the British troops with great courage and bravery, no doubt, but it was impossible for them to defeat the mighty British force. Johnston who had physically taken part in the Khonoma battle, appreciating the courage and valour of the Naga warriors, wrote, "The Nagas met us with heavy fire showers of spears and stones. One of the spears struck Forbes and Redge was badly wounded in the left shoulder by a fire and shot at ten places."² The Naga warriors left the battlefield, no doubt, but causing great harm and loss to the British party. They killed three British officers and forty-four rank and file were either killed or badly wounded.³

The victory of the British at Khonoma marked the end of serious trouble and hostility in the Naga Hills. The Government, thereafter, set up some more military posts and formed the Naga Hills District comprising the areas from Burail on the south to Nowgong on the

¹ J. Johnston, My Experience in Manipur and Naga Hills, London, 1896, p. 172.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

north. The formation of the Naga Hills district was a remarkable landmark in the political history of Nagaland. A boundary line for the new district was drawn, but in the words of Sir Robert Reid "It was impossible to draw a line as the boundary of our area of control and to say that we should be blind and deaf to all that went on across that line. Trans-frontier Nagas raided our administered villages. The latter are involved in dispute with the former, headhunting and massacres go on just across the border and under the very nose of our officers. In such conditions local officers inevitably, and with reason, clamoured for a forward policy."¹

The Government's policy of armed twisting created fear in the mind of the Nagas and at the same time the policy of friendly gesture towards the Naga villages by visiting the people sobered down the wrath of the Nagas. Moreover, the efforts of the committed western Christian Missionaries who had entered into the hills with a zeal to spread Christianity among the Nagas, also helped a lot in befriending the Naga people and making them cooperative towards the British authorities.²

The areas of Mokokchung and Tuensang were still out of the newly formed Naga Hills district. The tribes living in these areas were not yet under the control of the British. Hence the Government applied its strength to bring those parts under its control. To achieve the purpose the Government despatched several military expeditions and survey parties to these areas. The Naga tribes like the Ao, Chang, Sangtam, Yimchunger, Phom, Konayak etc. living in these parts had been maintaining their separate sovereign village states. Though they disliked the British interference, due to their limited strength and disintegration they could hardly oppose the British penetration into their land for long. As a result the British Government established its suzerainty over these peoples without much resistance and fight. Firstly, Mokokchung was made as a separate Sub-divisional headquarters, and by 1908, the entire hills areas between the Dikhu and Sarai rivers comprising Borjan, Wackchung, Wanchang and Liankha was annexed and put under the Mokokchung Sub-division.³ Thereafter, the efforts were applied to subjugate the tribes living in the Tuensang area. Since Tuensang area, which lay in extreme northeast touching the boundary line of Myanmar, it was essential for the Government to bring this area and

¹ Robert Reid, *History of Frontier Areas Bordering on Assam (1843-1872)*, Shillong, 1942, pp. 100-02.

² *Accounts of Province of Assam*, Shillong, 1903, p.77.

³ Robert Reid, *History of Frontier Areas Bordering On Assam*, op. cit., pp.130-33.

the people of the area under the British control. Hence vigorous efforts were applied for subjugation of these people. Thus by 1922, the process of integration of the British rule in the Naga Hills was completed when whole of the Tuensang area was included in the British rule.

ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE NAGA HILLS

The British Government had occupied the Northeastern frontier not for the people who were living there, but for the safe and secured frontier in the interest of the British Empire. After the subjugation the problem was to divide the areas into administrative units for the convenience of their administration. When the Government found the Naga tribes responsive to the British rule, the Government, keeping in view their nature and habits, passed the Inner Line Regulation in 1873 which empowered the Lieutenant Governor of Assam to establish Inner Line according to which no British subjects could go beyond a certain frontier that was drawn along the foot hills of the North-eastern and south-eastern border of the Brahmaputra valley. The hill tribes inhabited the area beyond the Inner Line where the Government did not want to apply complicated civil rules. The territories, which came under the Inner Line, were treated as the territories of out line. Thus the Inner Line separated the hill tracts of North East India from the district administration of Assam awarding the hill peoples special status. This Regulation empowered the Government to make summary legalisation and also the power to frame rules for the tribal peoples according to the need and circumstance.¹

The district of Naga Hills was already constituted in 1861 but it was made over to the charge of the newly appointed Chief Commissioner of Assam in 1874 only. In the beginning, the Government wanted to bring only strategic area of the Naga Hills under its control, but keeping in view the reports of the officers posted in the Naga Hills, the Government brought the entire territory of the Naga Hills under the British rule. Even after creation of the Naga Hills district, there were some more villages, which were out of the British control and influence. The local British officers had been putting constant pressure upon the Government to annex such villages falling in the Sema area and in the trans-Dikhu area to the British administration. It is evident from the writing of the Chief

¹ A. Mackenzie, A History of Relation of Government with Hills Tribes of North-East Frontier of Assam, op. cit., p.209

Commissioner of Assam who wrote to the Government "We shall have no real peace until we have absorbed the whole hill areas between this and the Chindwin. This can be done gradually and economically. As it is the huge area of uncontrolled hill country between Assam and Burma, is an anomaly."¹ Thereafter the letter was sent to the Secretary for State stating that "The Naga Hills district was in frontier area and the officers of this state control the tribes just across the frontier, the line of control should be extended." Thereafter, permission was granted to include all these areas of the Naga Hills which were yet beyond the British control.²

Once the British occupation was consolidated completely in the Naga Hills by bringing all the tribes under the British influence, the question of administrative management for the hills people was discussed at Kolkata by the higher British authorities. The pattern of administration what the government decided for the Naga Hills was quite different to that of the plains districts of Assam. Keeping in view the nature and history of the Naga tribes, introduced minimum administration. The Government thought of doing little interference in the internal affairs of the hill tribes. In the beginning the government did not want to disturb the village organisation and their customary laws and practices. To protect the hill tribes of North East the Government had already established Inner Line that prohibited free entrance into the hill areas. In due course of time the Government set up some sub-divisional headquarters beside the district headquarters and appointed more officials to administer the Naga people. The district headquarters comprised of the Deputy Commissioner besides a number of other officials to assist the Deputy Commissioner. There was a time when the Nagas opposed the British authority by tooth and nail. Such behaviour of the people soon changed due to cooperative and sympathetic attitude of the Government servants who were posted to the Naga Hills areas. They all were asked to be friendly to the Nagas. As a result the Naga people came close to the British rule and authorities. Stating the changed behaviour of the Nagas, Field Marshal William Slim stated, "These were the gallant Nagas whose loyalty, even in the most depressing times of the invasion (Japanese invasion during the second World War) had never faltered... They guided our columns, collected information, ambushed enemy patrols, carried our supplies

¹ History of the Frontier Areas Bordering on Assam, op. cit., pp.130-33.

² Assam Secretariat, Political A, 1908, Nos. 322-34.

and brought our wounded under the heaviest fire and thus, being the gentlemen they were often refused all payments.”¹

Prior to the passing of the Assam Scheduled District Act, 1874, the administration of the Naga Hills was under the jurisdiction of Lt. Governor of Bengal who was the agent of the Governor-General of India. He used to govern the Naga Hills through the Chief Commissioner of Assam and his Assistants. After the passing of the Assam Scheduled District Act, 1874, the Chief Commissioner of Assam assumed full responsibility to rule over the Naga Hills.² The objective of the Act was to provide for the administration of the ‘underdeveloped tracts’. Thereafter, the Assam Frontier Tract regulation, 1880 and 1884 enabled the Government to administer the Nagas in a simple and more personal manner by virtue of enactment relating to elaborate codes of law, the code of criminal procedure and the civil procedure. The Government of India Act, 1919, further categorised the Naga areas within the Naga Hills district as ‘Backward Tract’ and the Governor of Assam was authorised to rule this tract as the Agent of the Governor-General with the responsibility of bringing the inhabitants of the said tract under the close administrative control. Thereafter the Act 1935 of the Government of India classified the Naga Hills district along with the Lushai Hills and North Frontier Agency as ‘Excluded areas’ of the Government of Assam. As an Excluded area the Naga Hills district came under the direct charge of the Governor who administered the district through his deputy Commissioner sitting at Kohima.

Thus it is very much obvious that the British succeeded in integrating the Naga tribes and bringing them under the direct British rule despite hard opposition of the Nagas. After the completion the process of integration and establishment of settled district headquarters and sub-divisional headquarters in the Naga Hills, the Government soon adopted the policy of “friendly intercourse with the Chiefs with a purpose to win over their support and to heal up the wounds of the Nagas. The Government asked its officials to establish friendly relations with the Nagas by visiting their villages and giving them “good advice for the peaceful settlement of any disputes that might have come up, and sometimes

¹ Cited in Piketo Sema’s *British Policy and Administration in Nagaland (1881-1947)*, New Delhi, 1992, p.51.

² Home Department. Political A, February 1874, Nos. 379-80.

distributing presents, just to keep the Nagas in good spirit." In this pursuit the Government appointed Gaonburahs and Dubashis by prescribing certain monthly salaries for them.

The Gaonburahs, Dubashis, teachers, small rank Government servants and educated Naga people were the first who came in close contact with the British Government. The pastors of the Churches also got the opportunity to obtain direct favour of the Government. They all received maximum sympathy and favour of the government. Their wrath against the British began to recede and they became the true supporters of the Government. They all began to appreciate the British rule. Thus the Nagas soon forgot the bitterness and enmity against the British Government in due course of time

The education, which was introduced in the Naga Hills by the Government and Christian Missionaries in the beginning, had the marked objective "to use educated class as a link between the ruler and the ruled".¹ A survey of the growth of Christianity and Christian education in the Naga Hills reveals the truth that the Missionary people faced not only topographical troubles and inconveniences in spreading new faith in Nagaland but also encountered with tough resistance of the indigenous people who were not ready to abandon the religious faith what they had been carrying from time immemorial. They opposed new religion because they were persistently asked to part with all their old culture and follow the new European culture. According to Ganguli with the permission of the Government the Christian Missionaries under the leadership of Dr Clarke, a devoted Missionary took exceptional trouble despite hard opposition "to spread the teaching of the Christian religion among the Naga people" and to "bring them to the enlightenment of knowledge through education."¹ Dr Clarke knew how to pacify the people and win over their support. It was he who introduced Christian literature in Nagaland. With the advance of the British rule in the interior of the Naga Hills the number of Churches in the villages increased. The revival services became an effective means to attract more and more people to new faith and new way of life. Troup conversions multiplied the number of the Churches and followers. The Ao people were the first to adopt the new faith and take active part in Church services.³ By 1947, the membership of the Churches in Nagaland

¹ Asoso Yonuo, *The Rising Nagas*, op. cit., p.110.

¹ Milad Ganguli, *A Pilgrimage to the Nagas*, Oxford and IBH Publishers, New Delhi, 1984, p.7.

³ F.S. Down, *The Mighty Works of God: A Brief History of the Council of the Baptist Churches of North-East*

rose to 15734, and in 1949, it became 20593. During sixties of the last century a strong mass awakening was started to cover all Naga tribes. This move increased the number of Churches and their followers in Nagaland enormously.¹

According to Mar Ponger "One of the main reasons for the growth of Church in India was not the conversion of the few people here and there... but mass movements towards Christianity."² The Naga Hills, which came under the British control became a verging place for the Missionaries. The arrival of the British in the land of the Nagas and annexation of the Naga territories to the British rule broke up the prolonged isolation of the Nagas on the one hand, and spread of Christianity and baptism of the Nagas to the new faith ended most of the blind, injurious and harmful superstitious faiths and practices of the Naga people on the other. The Christianity appeared among the Naga people as a new light that showed the Naga people the life of civilization and moulded them towards the road of humanism.

Change is a constant process. Naga society changed where old things were replaced with new one. New faith and new philosophy ended "evil practices by teaching the Nagas how to live together in peace, love and tolerance with one another as good neighbours... Christianity served as inward machinery which brought modernization, western ways of life, education, the renaissance of Nagaism and unity among the Nagas."³ Education in Nagaland began with the efforts of Missionaries. They played greater role in modernizing and upgrading the view-points of the Naga people by setting up modern educational system. According to Visier Sangyu "Among the various operative forces which penetrated the North-East region with the British entrance, ecclesiology has played a very important role in the entire process of the modernization of the Angamis."⁴ The Nagas boys and girls availed the opportunity to attend schools and learn new things. Through various Biblical conferences, prayer services and annual conferences the Christian Missionaries taught the Naga people to look into the advance of the world in science, technology, education etc. and asked them to overcome traditional prejudices. They also

¹ V.K. Nuh, Nagaland Church and Politics, Vision Press, Kohima, 1986, p.63.

² Mar Ponger, Key Issues in the History of Christianity in India, Barkatki and Co. Jorhat, 2000, pp.32-33.

³ Asoso Yonuo, The Rising Nagas, op. cit., p.120.

⁴ V. Sangyu, A History of Nagas and Nagaland: Dynamics of Oral Tradition in Village Formation, Op. cit., p.115.

made them to understand the futility and meaninglessness of the wild faith and wild behaviours. They introduced them with the vast world and encouraged them to join the advanced people for their better future both in this world and in the world of almighty.

Thus Christianisation of the Nagas was a process that created everlasting impact on the Nagas as a whole and their traditional and vogue animistic beliefs and wild behaviours began to disappear. Christianity in Nagaland ushered in a more orderly life, reasonable faith and broadened future. The educational institutions began to produce several educated Nagas who began to differentiate their past and future and choose to advance their career in various branches of learning.¹ Technical education opened up new opportunities for the Nagas. Education and religion liquidated all the outdated taboos in the Naga society and trained them in the new path of progress. With the help of education realisation came *that* full devotion to education was the only way of development and such educational facilities were possible only with association of the² Missionaries. It was new institutionalised educational system and close association of the Naga people with the western people, which opened a new chapter in the History of the Nagas. Education and their contact with the Europeans sharpened their parochial attitude and broadened their way of thinking. The world with which the Nagas were introduced was far greater than the world in which they had been living. The educated people took the lead to mould the Naga society towards universal pattern getting inspirations from the Europeans. The education increased the mobility of the conscious Nagas and brought them in close contact with the Indians and the Europeans both. Their conceptual outlook developed to a great extent. Education provided the Nagas the vision with which they could shape a civilized society of their own. The rule and administration provided by the British Government brought various Naga tribes under a single administrative patterns where they learnt how to live together forgetting their past differences and enmity. They were no more barbarous or semi-civilized. They learnt civilization. Their philosophical concept had changed and their social behaviours had improved. They had understood the futility of superstitions.

Teaching of Christian Missionaries and of educational institutions provided the Naga people vision with which they could shape a modern civilised society of their own. Their

¹ Joseph Puthenpurkal, Baptist Mission in Nagaland, Shillong, 1984, p.121.

² Ibid.

close association with the British rulers and adoption of the British rule that was imposed upon them, in fact, brought various Naga tribes under a single set of rule. Their new understanding, which they obtained due to adoption of Christianity and western philosophy of life, made them more alert and conscious about their future life. They began to think more seriously about their identity and search the ways and means to protect their cultural, social and economic interests. Their political consciousness developed. Political socialisation began even at the village level. All these happenings marked basic changes in political attitude and behaviour of the Naga people. These all resulted in unification of the Naga tribes, formation of political platform and calling of meetings and conferences to debate various issues including political one. More Nagas were incorporated in the services of the British Government. In the words of Philip "The people began to appreciate the existence of peace. Inter-village raids were considerably reduced and people began to settle down their differences peacefully. They could go to the field without fear of losing their heads. The trades between villages and the plains improved."¹

It is true that the Christians Missionaries and British rulers played vital roles in changing the traditional set up of the Naga society and removing various evils that prevailed among the early Nagas. The British rulers unified the scattered Naga tribes by putting them under the single pattern of administration, no doubt, but by introducing new way of life mostly based on materialistic concept made the Naga people individualistic and selfish. Conversations of the Nagas into new faith also brought various Naga tribes together in the name of Christianity and Lord Jesus Christ, but at the cost of destruction of their age-old social and cultural values. Panger Imchen has rightly remarked, "Things began to change with mass conversions resulting in confusion, divisions and disunity." Things began to move towards the light of the Gospel "which resulted in both a positive as well as a destructive effect on their old cultural heredity." Describing the effect of new changes in Naga society Alemchiba noted, "Irrespective of the different political systems, levels of technology and economy, religious and cultural affiliation, we find today a general relentless taking place among the hill people... They are passing through a period of transition of their history, and in the process they are faced with a problem of readjustment to the new situation." To quote Alemchiba once more," The tendency (of the

¹ P.T. Philip, *The Growth of Baptist Churches in Nagaland*, op. cit., p.166.

Missionaries and the British rulers) was to abolish abruptly the old things and substitute individualism for the strong community feeling... The result was a conflict not necessarily conflict of arms, but of culture.”¹

In the eyes of the Gospel any culture or society, both modern and ancient, are seen as under darkness or under the devil's government and any unchristianised country is termed unsaved, unreached and devoid of the knowledge of the truth. The tendency of the Christian Missionaries has been to establish supremacy of Christianity over other religion, culture and civilization. They view other religions and culture as inferior and undeveloped. Any one who does not accept Christianity is regarded as living under darkness. They think that the real life is in Christianity and real way is to follow the teaching of Christ. The Christian Missionaries took the Naga people as savage and found them living under acute darkness. But it is not the real truth. The Nagas, though they had no any institutionalised religion, they had the religious vision. They had the values also. P.T. Philip has rightly observed that it were the British rulers seating in Assam who encouraged the Missionaries to enter into the interior of Assam and prepare fertile ground for moulding the Nagas towards western life and faith.

An over all analysis of the impact of the British rule and teaching of Christian Missionaries on the Naga mind reveals the truth that They brought tremendous changes in every aspects of the Naga's life. They set up schools, prepare curriculum and produced local teachers by giving them training. Their minds were transformed to a newer and richer life. Once the Naga people caught the new way of life and thinking they never liked to return back to their old set up. This indicates that the Nagas, though opposed the spread of Christianity in their land, in the beginning, they happily accepted it after realising that their old living style and thinking were far inferior to that of the present. Iralu while appreciating the role of the Missionaries in Nagaland said, "If Christianity had not come to Nagaland, things would be entirely different. Life, individually and collectively, would be different." People got a new consciousness where fear of raids, mass killings, distrusts and constant restlessness faded and a new humanity was established where significance of

¹ M. Alemchiba, "Problem of Readjustment to New situation", The Highlander, Vol. IV, No.1, March-April, 1976, pp.1-3.

brotherhood was recognised. The Missionaries taught the Nagas not only the Gospels but also hygiene, temperance from heavy drink and chewing beetle nut. This brought a more clean life, a more meaningful and longevity to life. They brought medicines with themselves and helped the suffering persons. The new teaching offered the Nagas enough knowledge to understand the life from close angle and shape a bright future .The moral values and standards of the Naga people developed. Education sharpened their mental attitude

CHAPTER FOUR- EMERGENCE OF POLITICAL AWARENESS
AND DEMAND FOR INDEPENDENCE

CHAPTER FOUR
EMERGENCE OF POLITICAL PLATFORM
AND DEMAND FOR INDEPENDENCE

The close association of the Naga individuals with the British and the education and integration of various Naga tribes in the single nation of the people conscious and aware of their future political destiny and their cultural values. By the beginning of the twentieth century, they received higher education. Participation of the Naga students on behalf of the British and the administration of India, a large number of Naga people and officers they participated in the war about the world that was in the process of being transformed. Their attitude had begun to change towards the British and the Indian movement of India which was a by-product of the British made the Naga people aware of their own political and social Movement of 1947 and the political and social changes that were long. The Naga people were not satisfied with the British promotion of independence. They were not satisfied with the and discussion about the political and social changes that comprised of Naga people and officers that were aware of their own consciousness. Therefore, the Naga people were not satisfied with the

**CHAPTER FOUR- EMERGENCE OF POLITICAL PLATFORM
AND DEMAND FOR INDEPENDENCE**

instrumental in providing the Naga people with a political platform before both the British and the Indian Government. When the Indian Government overtook the administration of the Naga freedom fighters under the banner of the Naga National Front movement, which opened a new chapter in the political and social traces out the role and growth of Naga political movements in regard to sharpening the Naga's political consciousness and the Naga fighters in the freedom struggle.

¹ Cited in P. K. Sengupta, British Policy and Administration in Nagaland, 1814-1947, p. 100.

CHAPTER- FOUR

EMERGENCE OF POLITICAL PLATFORM

AND DEMAND FOR INDEPENDENCE

The close association of the Naga intellectuals with the British authorities, spread of education and integration of various Naga tribes in the single pattern of rule made the Naga people conscious and aware of their future political identity and protection of social and cultural values. By the beginning of the twentieth century, several of the Nagas had received higher education. Participation of the Naga youths in the First World War on behalf of the British and their deployment in outside of India had enabled them to meet foreign people and observe their political systems from close angle. They had learnt more about the world that was yet unknown and unseen to them. Their parochial and shortsighted attitude had begun to disappear paving the way for broader vision of life. The freedom movement of India, which was going against the British Government on full wing, also made the Nagas more conscious about their future political status. The Quiet India Movement of 1942 had made it ample clear that the British's days in India were not for long. The Naga Club, which was formed in 1918, had begun to play vital role "by promotion of understanding, development of fraternal feeling and unity among the Nagas" and discussion about "important affairs of the Naga society."¹ It was this Club, which comprised of Naga intellectuals and played notable role in sharpening the Nagas political consciousness. Thereafter, the Naga National Council (NNC), which emerged in 1946 with a patronage of the British Government officials working in the Naga Hills, became instrumental in pleading the case of Naga's independence and representing the Naga's case before both the British Indian Government and the Government of Independent India. When the Indian Government overlooked the demand of the Nagas for independence, the Naga freedom fighters under the banner of the NNC became active and initiated freedom movement, which opened a new chapter in the political history of Nagaland. This chapter traces out the rise and growth of Nagas political platform and examine its activities in regard to sharpening the Naga's political consciousness and involving the Naga freedom fighters in the freedom struggle.

¹ Cited in Piketo Sema', British Policy and Administration in Nagaland,(1881-1947), New Delhi,1992,p.51.

FORMATION OF NAGA CLUB

As stated above the Naga Club is regarded as the first social and political association of the Naga people. The middle class intellectuals comprising the Headmen, Dobhashi, teachers and Government servants formed it in 1918¹. The club set up two branches- one at Mokokchung and another at Kohima. The objective of the Club was primarily to look after the welfare of the Nagas. In the words of Picketo "It was a common platform for the Nagas to discuss the important affairs of the Naga society"² As the years rolled down, the attention of the Club shifted towards the issue of the Naga' identity. Thus its formation "provided the needed social and political foundation to the Nagas and was symbolic of the emerging or rather incipient sense of solidarity among the Nagas."³ The basic aim of the Club was to develop close contact with the British officials and bringing the administrative problems to the notice of the Government. However, it assumed the responsibility to protect social and political interests of the Nagas by submitting memorandums and pleading the case of the Naga people before the High British authorities. This is evident from the memorandum, which it placed before the Simon Commission on January, 1929 representing the case of the Nagas when the authorities of the Commission visited the Naga Hills.

In fact, the Simon Commission had arrived in India to study the situation for future policy and recommend new constitutional provisions in India. The members of the Naga Club availing the opportunity to meet the members of the Commission, placed before it a long listed and well drafted memorandum claiming that the Assamese had never conquered the Nagas nor the Nagas were ever subjected to their rule. The memorandum further stated, "Our languages are quite different from those of the plains, and we have no social affinity with either Hindus or Muslims. We are looked down upon by the one for our 'beef' and by the other for our 'pork' and by both for our want of education which is not due to

¹ P. N. Luthra, Nagaland From a District to State, Guwahati, 1974, p.2.

² Picketo Sema, British Policy and Administration in Nagaland, op. cit., p.142.

³ Ibid..

any fault of ours.”¹ It also expressed the desire that Nagas be permitted to determine their political future in case the British left India. The memorandum stated, ‘

“If the British Government, however, wants to through us away, we pray that we should not be thrust to the mercy of the people who could never have conquered us themselves, and to whom we were never subjected; but to leave us alone to determine for ourselves as in ancient times.”²

The analysis of the memorandum presented before the Simon Commission by the Naga Club brings the fact to the light that the Nagas were much conscious and alert of their future political status on the one hand, and worried of their political fate after departure of the British from India. That is why the Naga intellectuals emphatically pointed out the obvious desire for the restoration of their independence that had forcibly been snatched by the British. This is another fact that the British Indian Government, considering the viewpoints of the Nagas suggested to exclude the hill people of the North East India from the mainstream of administration and bring them under the Excluded Areas. That is why entire Naga territory was placed under the Excluded Areas when the Government of India Act, 1935 came into being. Such arrangements excluded the Nagas from the direct legislative rule and encouraged them more to come ahead with the demand of independence when the issue of British departure from India was being discussed. Thus the Naga Club served as the base of cementing the Naga unity as well as preparing the Naga leaders to think about Nagas’ political future seriously and actively to ensure the future political status before India could achieve independence.

NAGA NATIONAL COUNCIL

The initiative taken by the Naga Club to unify the Naga people and sharpen their political consciousness ultimately resulted in formation of a new political platform, namely the Naga National Council (NNC). In the words of Piketo, “The invasion and development of the new political ideas and their diffusion fostered the nascent spirit of nationalism as a unifying factor among the Naga tribes.”³ The magnificent works of the Nagas to help the British during the Second World War had not only brought the Nagas very near to the Government but also pleased the British authorities. It were the British

¹ The Naga Nation, April, 1947, Vol. 1 to 9.

² Ibid.

³ Piketon Sema, British Policy and Administration in Nagaland, op. cit., p.55.

nationalism as a unifying factor among the Naga tribes.”¹ The magnificent works of the Nagas to help the British during the Second World War had not only brought the Nagas very near to the Government but also pleased the British authorities. It were the British officials who had got close acquaintance with the Naga leaders and encouraged the Nagas to think of their own political identity. Sir Charles Paswey, the then Deputy Commissioner of the Naga Hills District, took much more interest to unite the Naga intelligentsia and sharpen their political mind. At Kohima, the officials Bungalow of Paswey had become a meeting place for the Naga leaders where they regularly discussed their common political aspirations. C.R. Paswey coming close to the Naga leaders commanded their loyal respect and a deep love for them, and with this background the NNC came into being in 1946, a little before the departure of the British from India.² Sir Paswey did it all to give the Naga people an award in lieu of their services, which they did during the Second World War, and also to earn reputation among the Nagas. In April 1945, under the initiative of Paswey the Naga Hills District Tribal Council was formed. It was this Council which was termed as the Naga National Council in a meeting of the Naga representatives belonging to different Naga tribes held at Wokha in February, 1946. Initially the Council consisted of 29 members, representing various tribes on the basis of proportional representation, and from among whom the office bearers were elected. It also published a monthly newspaper, namely, the *Naga Nation*.

The NNC had a constitution of its own. It put much emphasis on Naga unity and political objectives. According to the constitution of the NNC, its authority covered over all the Naga tribes represented in the Council. All Naga tribes were eligible for membership in the NNC through application and willing to abide by the rules and regulations of the Council. Speaking about the objectives of the NNC, its first Secretary, T. Aliba Imti, said in a public meeting at Kohima on 6th December, 1946:

“The Naga National Council stands for the unification of all the Naga tribes and their freedom ... and cannot accept anything dishonourable for our people at the time of deliberation for our country. ... We must take initiative and make a history of our

¹ Picketon Sema, *British Policy and Administration in Nagaland*, op. cit., p.55.

² Asoso Yonuo, *The Rising Nagas*, op. cit., pp. 159-62.

own choice. ...Our country is connected with India, connected in many ways. We should continue that connection. . We must also develop according to our genius and taste. Hence protection becomes inevitable... We must fight for it; we must get it; keep on watching.”¹

The aforesaid memorandum clearly indicates that what the Naga leaders lacked during the time of the departure of the British from India was their unanimous and clear view about their future political identity. The conscious Nagas wanted to have a separate status or home rule, no doubt, but there were people who were not in position to go for an independent status or even for home rule. Perhaps they thought that the disconnection of the Nagas from India would not be good. That is why Mr Imti, the secretary of the NNC, while persuading his people to go for home rule, suggested them to have connection with independent India. During the time of the British departure the hill tribes of the Northeast region were impatient. None of them had clear vision about their future political status. It was not easy for them to decide to sever complete relations from India and to form their own independent nations, though most of them were aspirants of having their own independent political identity. Yonuo has rightly observed that “Realising the difficulties of its aim and the pell-mell political conditions of the region, the tribes began to cut their own separate political interests ...The Naga leaders felt that the people of the other tribes were not prepared fully for the self-rule which the Nagas had unshakably committed to themselves...”² Though there was no unanimity on this issue among the Naga leaders, the call for unity and home-rule was given. However, most of the Naga leaders were in favour of having the home-rule for the Naga people. This is evident from the resolution of the NNC, which it passed at Wokha on June 19,1946.The resolution stated:

“1. The Naga National Council stands for the solidarity of all the Naga tribes including those of the unadministered areas;

2. This Council strongly protest against the grouping of Assam with Bengal; and

¹ Cited in Asoso Yonuo's *The Rising Nagas*, op. cit., pp. 164-65.

² *Ibid.* p.165.

3. The Naga Hills should be continuously included in an autonomous Assam in a free India, with local autonomy and due safeguards for the interests of the Nagas and the Naga tribes should have a separate electorate.”¹

The resolution stated above was sent to Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, the President of the Indian National Congress, who appreciating the viewpoint of the Naga leaders accepted the Naga's demand of local autonomy.² Thus it is very much obvious that the original political objective of the NNC was to achieve local autonomy for the Naga people within the Province of Assam having maximum autonomies and to train the Nagas for self-government.³ The leaders of the NNC, in the beginning had no mind to go for a sovereign independent Nagaland. They liked to have connection with independent India in respect of broader issues such as development, defence, finance, and foreign relations and in whatever might be necessary for the benefit of the Nagas. However, the idea to have an independent sovereign Nagaland was emerging, though with slow voice. It was this idea which soon got prominence leading the people towards national freedom movement.

That is why NNC which had equivocally expressed the opinion to go for home-rule having connection with India on broader issues, soon changed its stand when the country was to take over the power from the British. The Naga leaders soon realised the necessity to spell out their political aspirations in unequivocal terms, and it made obvious that what the Naga people wanted was full independence. Mr A.Z. Phizo and T. Sakhrie in an interview with special correspondence of the Azad stated that the Nagas stood for a separate independent state of their own.⁴ Despite the efforts of Jawaharlal Nehru to make the Naga leaders understand the futility of such demand, the leaders of the NNC continued to stick to its demand for an independent Nagaland.⁵ The wise advice of Pt Nehru,

¹ Asoso Yonuo, *The Rising Nagas*, op. cit., pp. 161-62.

² *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, Published by the Government of India, Publication Division, New Delhi, Vol. XI, pp.278-80.

³ Sardar Patel 's Correspondence, Vol. 8,p.518.

⁴ See, Peketo Sema, *British Policy and Administration in Nagaland*, op. cit., p.153.

Also see, *Legislative assembly Debates, Assam*, Vol. III, 1947, p.2133.

⁵ Pt. Nehru, the President of the Indian National Congress wrote to the Naga leaders that the Naga territory "is too small to stand by itself politically or economically...it consists of backward people who required considerable help when India is independent. They (Nagas) would be isolated there between India and China.... The Naga territory must form part of India and of Assam with which it has developed such close association..."

however, did not change the determination of the Naga leaders, and they went on repeating their demand.

On 29 March, 1947, the NNC with a view to highlighting its demand sent its memorandum for self-determination to the British Prime Minister, Clement Attlee, and to Lord Simon and Mr Churchill. Mr Phizo personally met Lord Mountbatten, the then Governor General of India, with the suggestion that the new Indian Government should act as the guardian power for a period of ten years after which the Nagas would be free to determine their political future.¹

On 20 February, 1947, the leaders of the NNC had submitted to His Majesty's Government and Government of India a memorandum in which they had reminded the British authorities how the Nagas had assisted the British forces during the First and Second World Wars putting their lives in direct risk. Lastly, the memorandum requested the Government to "do the just and proper thing and grant them (Nagas) their just demand for setting up an Interim Government of Naga people." The memorandum further stated that taking into account "the isolated geographical position of Nagaland, and ... the unique characteristics of the Naga polity... this memorandum is placed with the authorities for setting up an interim government of the people with financial provisions for a period of ten years, at the end of which the Naga people will be left to choose any form of government under which they themselves choose to live."² This is another fact that the British authorities did not consider such appeal. The Government regarded the Naga territory as the part of the British India. According to Asoson Yonuo, "The Labour Government probably did not want to open another ponderous issue at the critical juncture of their withdrawal from the Indian sub-continent while the Nagas clung on to their demand of nothing short of complete independence ..."³

Thus the leaders of the NNC were trying their best to make the Naga Hills independent or to have an interim Government with maximum power. On 21 May, 1947 the Naga leaders again issued a statement stating that "The Nagas who were determined not to allow themselves to be involved in a divided and chaotic India are prepared to declare their own

¹ All India Congress Committee File No.G-3 (K.W-1), 1947.

² Cited in Yonuo's *The Rising Nagas*, op. cit., p.166-68.

³ *Ibid.* p. 169.

independence and can only think of entering into a ten-year treaty with an independent Assam”¹ In pursuit of achieving independent Nagaland the Naga leaders specially Phizo and Sakharie met Mohammad Ali Jinnah, the Muslim League Leader, Jaipal Singh, the Adivasi Leader of Bihar, and Mahatma Gandhi in July, 1947. Jinnah who was busy with settling the issue of India’s division, did not take much interest in the Naga issue while. Jaipal Singh suggested the Naga leaders not to take any hasty decision. Mahatma Gandhi, observing the mind of the Naga delegation leaders led by Phizo said that you wanted to declare independence as early as possible. “Why not now? Why wait for August 15? and if you have non-violence in common with me, no one can deprive you of independence.”² It was this statement of Mahatma Gandhi that was taken as a positive reply, and the NNC, thereafter, declared Naga sovereign independence on 14th August 1947 to indicate that the Nagas were independent even before India obtained freedom.

An analytical study of the memorandums and petitions presented by the Naga leaders to the British authorities and the Indian leader still early 1947 indicates that what the Naga leaders wanted was an autonomous Assam in a free India. Their desire to have a separate electorate also shows that they had a mind to form simply a separate administrative body comprising all the Naga tribes under the Indian Union provided the local autonomy and the social, cultural, economic and religious interests of the Nagas were properly safeguarded. However, the stand of the Leaders of the NNC suddenly changed at the eve of India’s independence and they started clamouring for an independent status for the Naga Hills area. Here a question may be raised as to why did the Naga leaders suddenly change their viewpoints and began to insist upon the demand of sovereign status. The answer is given below.

Firstly, the leaders of the NNC were not unanimous on the issue whether the Naga people should go for an independent Nagaland or should they have some sort of relations with independent India till the Naga leaders were fully matured to handle an independent Nagaland. There were some Naga leaders who thought that it would be impossible for the Nagas to run an independent country without having sufficient economic base and political

¹ The Statesman, Delhi, July 20, 1947, p.4.

² Cited in Piketo Sema’s British Policy and Administration In Nagaland 1881-1947, op. cit., p. 156.

experience. But another section of the NNC led by the leaders who were rigid in their approach thought that if the Nagas were not granted full independence at the occasion of transfer of power from the British to India, the Nagas would never avail the opportunity to be independent after India's independence. That is why they began to demand a sovereign independent Nagaland. It was these two convergent views among the Naga leaders from the beginning that kept the Naga leaders divided on the issue regarding Naga's independence and Naga's relations with India.

Secondly, in the beginning of 1947, political issue of India was taking fast turn due to conflict between Hindus and Muslims. After massacre of both the Hindus and Muslims for India's division, it was decided that India must be bifurcated into two dominions- Hindustan and Pakistan. The Naga leaders had been closely watching and observing the communal riots in India. The Nagas were mostly Christians. The idea crept into their mind that they Christian Nagas who were in minority would hardly be protected and avail the opportunity to enjoy and prosper their age-old traditions, customs and culture. Propaganda and rumours about Hinduism, Buddhism and Islamism had created a misunderstanding among the Nagas against the plains people of India. Rumours also prevailed that both the Hindus and the Muslims of the plains had hatred for the Nagas. The Hindus hated them because they ate beef and the Muslim because they ate pork. "So the Nagas", in the words of Chandrika Singh, "gradually came to understand that they would not be comfortable and well received in independent India."¹

Thirdly, The leaders of the NNC who were strict to the demand of independent Nagaland had knowingly been misguided ^{by} some of the British officials posted in the Naga Hills. It were these officials who had developed a sinister design to misguide them and prepare their mind for independent Nagaland. For instance, It was Sir Robert Reid ,the Governor of Assam, who had developed a sinister design of 'Crown Colony, or 'Trust Territory' comprising all the hills peoples of Northeast India and put it under the control of the British Government. He had written in his confidential report that "We have no right to allow this great body of non-Indian animists and Christians to be drawn into the struggle

¹ Chandrika Singh, Political Evolution of Nagaland, Lancers Publishers, New Delhi, 1981., p. 35.

between Hindus and Muslims, which is now and will be in the future, with ever-increasing intensity, the dominating feature of politics in India proper... They cannot be left to Indian political leaders with neither knowledge, interest nor feeling for the areas."¹ This is another fact that both the general Naga people and the Government rejected such design, but it encouraged the leaders to come ahead with the demand for a separate and independent Nagaland

Lastly but not the least, Non-exposure of the Nagas to the rest of India was also a vital cause to be doubtful and suspicious about the Indians. The establishment of the Inner Line Regulation 1873, which prohibited the free entry into the hill areas, served as a great barrier between the Nagas and the plains people. What the Naga people were told about the Indians either right or wrong, they took it truer than: *the truth*

Despite the hard efforts of the Naga leaders to persuade the British Government for granting the Nagas an independent political status before they could leave India, no desired result could be achieved. The Governor, Sir Andrew Clew, made it clear to the Naga leaders that the issue of Naga Hills should be decided with the Indian Government. Moreover, he made it clear that the Naga Hills having limited population and poor economy could not survive as a viable nation. The Deputy Commissioner Pawsay also lost "all interest for the Naga nation as he found that the conditions were not working in his favour and the Nagas also were obstinate and working feverishly only for sovereign Nagaland."² On the other hand the leaders of the Naga people declared, "The Nagas who were determined not to allow themselves to be involved in a divided and chaotic India are prepared to declare their own independence, and can only think of entering into a 10-year treaty with an independent Assam"³

The Naga people observed their independence day on 14th August 1947 from their own side. However, the Government of India could not take it seriously. Rather the Indian leaders thought of sending good-will mission to Naga Hills with a purpose to convince the Naga leaders that their future and identity would remain safe and secured under India and their economy would develop being the integral part of the country. In August 1947, Pt

¹ Cited in Yonuo's *The Rising Nagas*, op. cit., p.139.

² Ibid.p.170.

³ Ibid. p.171.

Jawaharlal Nehru, the President of the Indian National Congress, wrote to the Secretary of the NNC, T. Sakharié that "our policy that tribal areas should have as much freedom and autonomy as possible so that they can live according to their own customs and desires." He suggested the Naga leaders to include the Naga Hills in the Indian federal system for better future.¹ Pt. Nehru also hinted for opening of a special department both at the Centre and in the State, which would look after the welfare, and the interests of the tribal people. The efforts of Pt Nehru to convince the Naga leaders could not usher desired result.

HYDARY AGREEMENT

Before India's independence, Sir Akbar Hydari, the Governor of Assam, had met the Naga leaders in June 1947 with a purpose to conclude an agreement with the Nagas regarding the political status of the Naga Hills. While welcoming the Governor, Sakharié made it ample clear that the Naga Hills should be restored to the Nagas and it should be inalienable. No attempt should be made to transfer any portion of the Naga Hills to non-Nagas.² He asserted that the Nagas had the right to self-determination, and he demanded setting up an interim Government for ten years so as to enable the Nagas to make a responsible choice at the end of the ten years. Entire efforts of the Governor to convince the Naga leaders that their identity and culture would remain safe under Indian Union could not bring the Naga leaders to the point because ^{they} were fully determined for an independent Nagaland. However, an agreement, namely the Hydari agreement could be resolved between the Governor and the Naga leaders which brought the Naga leaders to the point that they would enter into a treaty with India whereby the Naga Hills would be governed by the Government of India related to major issues for a period of ten years, and the Naga people would have all the autonomies in their local affairs without any hindrance from outside. The Agreement had nine-point and the last point, which became controversial and served as the cause of failure of the Hydari agreement stated that "The Governor of Assam as the Agent of the Government of Indian Union will have a special responsibility for a period of ten years to ensure the due observance of this agreement; at the end of the period the Naga Council will be asked whether they require the above

¹ See Alemchiba, A Brief Historical Account of Nagaland, op. cit. 167-68.

² The Naga Nation, June 19347, Vol.1, No. 11, pp. 7-12.

agreement to be extended for a further period or a new agreement regarding the future of the Naga people would be arrived at.”¹

Unanimity over these points was almost reached but when the question of interpreting the ninth point came up, the Naga leaders presumed that after the expiry of the period of ten years the Nagas would be free to decide their future course even going out of India's mainstream. On the other hand, Pt Nehru and Sir Akbar Hydari were of the view that after expiry of the said period the Nagas would be free to decide their future course not beyond the Indian Union, but within it. The controversy regarding the ninth point reached to such an extent that it could hardly be implemented.

Failure of the Hydari Agreement made it clear that neither the Indian leaders were ready to secede the Naga Hills from India nor the Naga leaders were ready to accept any thing other than independent Nagaland. The issue was very crucial which required patience and wisdom. But neither the Indian leaders had wisdom to resolve the issue nor the Naga leaders had the patience to wait. There were some Naga leaders who liked to solve the problem amicably even without reserving the right of secession, no doubt, but those Naga leaders who were determined even to start freedom struggle and wage war against the Government of India to achieve the goal suppressed their voice could not wait. This is evident from the statement of Sakharie, the secretary of the NNC who persuading other leaders said, “Let the spirit of differences, if there be any, be taken away from your hearts. Come forward with a unified spirit. Let us build a new Nagaland based on the spirit of goodwill and understanding. Let us remember, ‘Rome was not built in a day’, and let us remember, united we stand and divided we fall.”² Such appeal could not convince the hard core Naga leaders.

On the other hand, the Constituent Assembly with a task to frame a new constitution for independent India was busy with the affairs. The Sub-Committee under the chairmanship of G. Bardoloi, the then Chief Minister of Assam, met the leaders of the NNC to record their viewpoints and recommend their case to the Constituent Assembly. The Naga leaders once more vehemently opposed inclusion of the Naga Hills in the Union Republic of India. The Bardoloi Sub-Committee despite the opposition of the Naga leaders recommended that

¹ The Text of the Nine-Point Agreement, cited in D.R. Mankekar's *On Slippery Slope in Nagaland*, Appendix IV, pp. 195-96..

² Quoted in Asoso Yonuo's *The Rising Nagas*, op. cit., p.175.

the¹ areas of the North east which were placed under the Excluded Area by the British ruler "must therefore, be treated separately from the rest."¹ On the basis of the recommendations of the Bardoloi sub-committee the *leaders* of the Indian constitution placed all the tribal areas including the Naga Hills under Article 244 of the constitution, which ultimately provided for the Fifth and the sixth Schedules. It is the sixth Schedule that made provisions for constitution of Autonomous District Council and Autonomous Regional Council for the Hills Districts of Assam giving the Councils maximum autonomies in respect of local affairs. The provisions for the District Council and the Regional Council protected the hill tribes of Assam from any undue interference in their local affairs from Assam legislature on the one hand, and enabled the tribal people to involve politically in the local affairs on the other.² Provisional also made to entrust the Governor with the power to declare any act of the Autonomous District Council null and void if that was against the interest of the Nation.

It is surprising to note that some of the members of Constituent assembly were very much against the provisions for local autonomies given to the tribal people of the North East region. They opposed the formation of the Autonomous District Council and autonomous Region on the ground that "To vest wide political powers into the hands of tribal is the surest method of inviting chaos, anarchy and disorder through out the length and breadth of the country."³ The members who opposed the provisions for local autonomies for the tribal people had forgotten the truth that the nature of the tribal people of the Northeast India was different. The demand for independence was on fore front in the Naga Hills. Even the British Government had never denied these tribal people internal autonomies keeping in view the nature of the tribal s of Assam and their socio-cultural base. It appears that the members who opposed such move in the Constituent Assembly were either ignorant of the life of the tribal people or non-concerned to the problem of the people who had little idea and knowledge about India. Had they not been provided with even such minimum facilities, the problem of India's integration would have become

¹ Constituent Assembly Debates, Vo.II, No.1, Appendix-C, Report of the Sub-committee on North-Eastern Frontier (Assam), Tribal and Excluded areas, Part I and Part II,

Also see, the Constituent Assembly Debates, The summary of the recommendations of Assam Sub-Committee, New Delhi, 1948, pp.122-26.

² Constituent Assembly Debates, Vol. II, No.1, Appendix 'C', op. cit., pp.132-33.

³ *Ibid.*

graver. Dr Ambedkar, the Chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Constituent Assembly, was well known to the nature of the tribal and situation of the hill areas of Assam. He knew that the tribal people of Northeast were suspicious about the plains people of India. Hence to use force against these people or to disregard their internal managements meant to provoke their sentiment and feeling. That is why he strongly pleaded the case of the tribal people in the assembly and supported the provisions for Autonomous District Council and Regional Council.

After a great deal of discussions the members of the Assembly lastly approved the provisions with that the democratic processes in the Naga Hills with maximum local autonomies were laid down. It made very much obvious that the Government of India had no mind at all to grant the Naga people sovereign status. The Naga leaders also got the realisation that the Naga nationalism had no meaning to the Indian leaders. On November 3, 1949, a representative of the Indian leaders bluntly told a three-man NNC delegation that "there was no agreement made with the Nagas. The Naga leaders were yet hopeful about the Hydari agreement. Their hope came to an end when G. Bardoloi himself admitted that the Hydari Agreement was no longer considered to exist by the Indian Government. The Constituent Assembly, too, refused to approve the Agreement. This was enough for the Naga leaders. They became desperate observing the behaviour of the Indian leaders. The gulf between the Nagas and the Indians widened. The Naga people had already observed their independence day on 14th August 1947. Now they decided to begin their national movement against the Government of India. When the constitution of India came into being on 26th January 1950, the Naga leaders decided to throw out all the constitutional provisions related to the Naga Hills District. The Governor of Assam, Bishnuram Medhi, was told, "the freedom loving Nagas had... nothing to do with Indians..."¹ The NNC changed its strategy soon. A.Z. Phizo Angami, the most dominant Naga leader and champion of Naga freedom, was elected as the President of the NNC December 1950. With the appearance of Phizo on the summit of the Naga politics, the Naga politics took a different turn. The Naga national movement that began under the leadership of Phizo in the coming years strengthened the feeling of Naga nationalism on the one hand, and created

¹ The Assam Tribune (Guwahati), 7th and 9th December, 1950.

more hatred in the mind of the Naga people against the Indians and the Indian Government on the other.

A general survey of the rise and growth of political platform of the Naga people and a critical study of its activities till 1950 reveal the truth that the Naga club which came into being in 1918 served as the means to unite different Naga tribes and keep them together so that they could think collectively about their better future. The Naga Club, having the official patronage of the British authorities, did all to sharpen the political consciousness of the Nagas as a whole and enabled them to come out of their traditional and parochial outlook. The Club brought the Naga intellectuals very much near to the British officers serving in the Naga Hills District and such closeness made them farsighted and enabled them to think about the Naga interests on large scale. This was the Naga forum that served as the spring board to create and exalt the common Naga feeling about their future social, religious, cultural and political shape. It also prepared fertile ground for appearance of the Naga national Council, which assumed greater responsibility soon after its appearance. Like the Indian National Congress which appeared in 1885 with the marked objectives to look after the interests of the Indian people and unite them together, the NNC, too, came into being with the purpose to create the feeling of oneness among the Naga people and act collectively for better achievements. The role, which the NNC played in uniting the Naga people and creating a strong feeling of nationalism in each heart and mind of the Nagas, is historic. Though it failed to persuade the British Government to allow the Nagas to achieve historic status of the Naga people and also to pressurise the Indian Government to grant the Nagas a separate and sovereign political status, it apprised the general Naga mass a meaning of nationalism on the one hand, and prepared them to make sacrifices demanded for the achievement of the political goal that is ^{an} independent Nagaland. It asked the people to be ready to pay the cost that was a must for greater and better Nagaland. The NNC also attracted the Naga intellectuals from different tribes and served as the school to train Naga politicians. Almost all the Naga leaders who appeared on the scene of Naga politics and established their reputation as the leaders of the freedom fighters or the Naga politicians were the products of the NNC. It were these leaders who became frontal and instrumental to give effect to the Naga National Movement bearing all the troubles,

miseries and inconveniences during the phase of Naga national movement. The NNC had taught them to remain sincere to the cause of the Nagas and be bold and fearless while fighting for the cause of the Naga people. Till the Government of India applied the policy of appeasement and also divide and rule in Nagaland, the leaders of the NNC, though had some sort of differences in their approach and thinking, they all remained committed to the cause^{of} the Nagas. Their voice was one and their goal was the same. They all wanted Naga's independence. The NNC compelled the Nagas to forget their past differences whatsoever they had during their old days and work hard for creation of common feeling, common aspiration, common culture, common religion and common political institution. All these teachings of the NNC served as the strong base of Naga nationalism.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER - FIVE

BEGINNING OF NAGA NATIONAL MOVEMENT

AND CREATION OF NAGALAND STATE UNDER THE

INDIAN UNION

The Hyderabad agreement brought a great relief to the Naga masses. It was the first time the new flag, and raised a variety of the history of the Naga people as the order. It was the secret point of the who were to be... avoid direct... peace of... history... dependence of the...

CHAPTER FIVE- BEGINNING OF NAGA NATIONAL MOVEMENT AND CREATION OF NAGALAND STATE UNDER THE INDIAN UNION

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Asian Young, the Young People, West Publishing House, New Delhi, 1974, p.251

CHAPTER – FIVE
BEGINNING OF NAGA NATIONAL MOVEMENT
AND CREATION OF NAGALAND STATE UNDER THE
INDIAN UNION

Non-implementation of the Hydari agreement brought a great set back to the moderate Naga leaders of the NNC on the one hand, and caused a notable turning in the political history of the Naga people on the other. It were the liberal political leaders of the Nagas who were frontal and instrumental in conducting a political deal with the Indian leaders to avoid direct conflicts and armed confrontation with the Indian government and disturb the peace of Nagaland. Had the Hydari agreement been implemented, the Naga political history would have got a different turn quite opposite to that which followed soon after suspension of the Agreement by the Government of India. It brought disappointment to the general Naga people and made the extremist Naga leaders rigid and obstinate. Mr A.Z. Phizo did not delay at all to seize the opportunity, gain the confidence of the leaders of the NNC in general, and support of the people in particular. Phizo was a personality who had learnt not to bow down to enemy. He was a man of determination and hard core action. He preferred violent struggle to achieve the goal to peaceful and non-violent method. That is why he had withdrawn from the NNC whose aim at the time "was circumscribed by constitutional and democratic methods." He had the capacity to organise the people and win their confidence. His People's Independent League stood for sovereign Nagaland state comprising the Naga Hills, the Tuensang Frontier Division and contiguous Naga areas in Assam, Manipur and Burma (Myanmar). So long as the moderate leaders dominated the NNC, he was not virulent, dynamic and purposive. After the failure of the Hydari Agreement the influence of the moderates declined rapidly paving the way for dominance of the extremists over the control of the NNC. In the words of Yonuo "out of the failure of the Hydari Agreement the moderate received growing distrust of the people and their stand became deemed void and of no validity or account...The extremist forces dominated the scene."¹ Under that very circumstance Phizo was unanimously elected as the President of the NNC in 1949. He, thereafter, lost no time to put "the house of the NNC in order and

¹ Asoso Yonuo, *The Rising Nagas*, Vivek Publishing House, New Delhi, 1974, p.201.

filled its executive with his own chosen men from the People's Independent League, purged all his opponents ... and strove to make it a militant political organisation pledged to fight for the sovereignty of Nagaland."¹ The ideological dispute between the extremists and the moderate regarding adoption of the means to achieve the goal enabled Phizo to convince the general people that Naga freedom demanded sacrifices.

The logic what the leaders of the Naga freedom struggle have been advancing is that the Nagas were independent from the beginning and the British forcibly occupied their land and integrated the Naga territories into the British rule without the consent of the Naga people. When the British Government left India forever, the Naga people must resume their past historic position, but the Government of India stepped in the British's shoes and occupied the Naga territories despite unwillingness of the people. That is why the Naga leaders have consistently been asking the Indian Government to vacate the land of the Nagas. In the words of Charles Chasie "As for the Naga position is concerned, they are not asking the Government of India for a gift. They only want the Government of India and its military forces to withdraw and leave them alone."² On the other hand, the Indian political leaders are of the view that the Government of India has the right to inherit whatever the British Indian Government controlled and administered at the time of its departure. This claim is based on the Indian Independence Act and the Extra-Provincial Jurisdiction Act passed by the British parliament empowering the new Indian government to continue its administration. Thus these two convergent viewpoints that appeared a little before India's independence are still the bone of contention between the Government of India and the leaders of the Naga freedom movement.

Phizo, the President of the NNC, championing the cause of the Naga freedom, began the national movement by conducting unilateral plebiscite as the first step in 1951. Phizo personally visited different Naga villages even in the remote areas. The people were asked whether they wanted to remain in India or to become a separate independent state. The members of the Naga Youth Movement and the Naga Women Society were employed all over the Naga Hills to collect thumb impression from all adult Nagas along with the

¹ Ibid.

² Charles Chasie, *The Naga Imbroglia*, Standard Printers and Publishers Kohima, 2000, p.144

administration of oath that they (Nagas) would "put in their last breath to struggle for Naga independence." Surprisingly enough the Government of Assam remained silent spectator to all these happenings, perhaps, the Government did not take it seriously. The result of the unilateral plebiscite was claimed to be ninety nine per cent of the people voted for Nagaland freedom. Thereafter, the plebiscite forms and people's thumb impressions were sent to Delhi for the information and action of the Central Government. The Government of India, too, did not pay much attention to the course followed by Phizo and his men. Phizo met the Indian Prime Minister, Pt. Nehru in December 1951 when he came to Assam. The delegation led by Phizo expressed its viewpoint to Pt Nehru that independence was the birth right to the Nagas and the Naga people by taking part in plebiscite had explicitly expressed the view that they liked freedom. Pt. Nehru replied, "In the present context of affairs both in India and the world, it is impossible to consider, even for a moment, such an absurd demand for impendence of the Nagas. It is doubtful whether the Nagas realise the consequences of what they are asking for. For their present demand would lead them to ruin."¹

Such reply of Pt Nehru made it ample clear that the Government of India was not in a mood to grant the Nagas the right to self-determination. Thereafter the leaders of the NNC under the leadership of Phizo decided the course of their action where first step was taken to boycott all the elections for composition of the District autonomous Council and the representatives for the Nagas in the Assam legislature and in the Indian parliament. The election was scheduled in early 1952 and all the electioneering processes had been completed in the Naga Hills district. No Naga turned up to file nomination papers or came to the polling booths for casting their votes with the result that neither the Autonomous district council was constituted nor the Naga representatives were elected for Assam Legislative Assembly and the Indian parliament.

A question may be raised here as to why did the Naga people boycotted the general election of 1952 .The answer is very simple. The Indian political leaders had not taken the Naga issue seriously, and they were of the view that the creation of the autonomous District Council "would give the Nagas a sense of participation in the administration and

¹ Cited in Asoso Yonuo,s *The Rising Nagas*, op. cit., p.203. 1975, p.676

that they would gradually come down within the mainstream of India.”¹ But this understanding was not based on right footing. The Indian leaders had overlooked the fact that the Nagas were tribal and they had been too much worried about their future social and political identity. They had no assimilation with the Indians. The British officers had already poised their mind to go for their own impendent identity. The Simon Commission in its report had reflected that the Mizos and the Nagas were not Indians in any sense.² The view of the Assam Government that “There is no sympathy on either side (Indians and Nagas) and any union is an artificial one resented by both the parties” had encouraged the Nagas to go for their separate political identity.³ All such misgivings had created the feeling of apathy in the mind of the Nagas towards India and a sense of insecurity. That is why they began to put much emphasis on a separate political identity of the Nagas. When the Naga issue came, the Indian leaders were badly engaged in solving the problems related to Jammu and Kashmir. They had little time to solve the Naga issue. N. Kunjru, the veteran Member of the Indian parliament, rightly remarked that the Indian leaders could not look other problems as long as they have Kashmir on their hand.⁴

The government of India took up various steps to provide protection and security to the Naga's interests in the Indian constitution, no doubt, but due to lack of proper publicity most of the Nagas living in the village remained totally unknown about what the Government of India was planning for their future. The Naga leaders who wanted to have a separate Naga Hills from Assam felt themselves neglected when they were tagged on Assam. Such feeling of the Naga leaders and the Naga people ultimately made them disappointed and forced them to begin freedom struggle whereby they boycotted the elections of 1952 to register their feeling.

Pt Nehru's Government adopted double yardstick policy in the case of tribal people of India. He expressed his feeling in the Parliament that India did not want to incorporate any territory of India “against their will and with the help of armed forces... This great republic

¹ Sajal Naga, “Construction of Nationhood: Ethnic, Scessionism and Legitimation in North East India” in Girin Phukon (ed), Political Dynamics of North East India, New Delhi, 2000, p.32

² J.H.Hutton, Note on Indian statutory Commission Report, vol. XVI, London, 1030. pp. 111-17.

³ Sajal Nag, “Construction of Nationhood, Ethnic, scessionism and Legitimation in North East India, op. cit., p.29.

⁴ Y.D.. Gundevia, War and Peace in Nagaland, New Delhi, 1975, p.676.

of India is a free, voluntary, friendly and affectionate union of the states of India” On the other hand, when ever the Naga delegation met him and asked for independent state , he refuted such demand stating that the demand was ‘absurd’. A Naga delegation met him at New Delhi in March 1952 with the same demand, which irritated Nehru, and he totally denied considering for the Nagas the right to self-determination. Again, the Naga delegation met Pt Nehru in 1952 when he was on visit to Manipur. Pt Nehru rejecting the Naga delegation’s demand categorically stated that the Government was not prepared to discuss with the Nagas on the issue of the Naga sovereignty anymore. Such reply of the Indian Prime Minister made the Nagas to understand that the Government of India could not consider their demand. Hence the NNC declared, in August 1952, not to have any truck with the Indian administration. Phizo tried to establish contact with alien powers to help the Nagas in achieving freedom.

In March 1953, the Naga leaders once more tried to meet Pt Nehru when he along with the Burmese Premier, Thakin U Nu, was at Kohima. The Naga leaders were not allowed to meet the Indian Prime Minister by the Indian bureaucrats including the Assamese Deputy Commissioner, Barkataki. The Naga leaders at the denial of their meeting with the Indian Prime Minister which brought too much shock to Pt Nehru made too much hue and cry. This was a point from where more and more bitterness arose between the Indian leaders and the Naga leaders. ¹ The leaders of the NNC who had lost all faith in the Indian leaders, resorted the method of non-cooperation asking the Nagas not to cooperate with the Indian government to paralyse it. Phizo asked the Naga to give up Government jobs and to boycott all public institutions. He also forbade them to pay taxes and harass all those who sided with the government of India.

At this very juncture the government of India adopted two policies, one was the policy of arm-twisting and, on the other, the policy of persuasion. It is evident from the Government’s decision to send armed forces in the Naga Hills and declaration of Pt. Nehru in the Indian Parliament that “the force had been sent to the Naga Hills with a view to protecting the life and properties of the people and not to harass and kill them.”²

¹ Robert Trumbull, As I see India, New York, 1956, pp.136-37.

² Speeches of Jawaharlal Nehru, Vol. III, Delhi, 1958, p. 451.

The Government of India asked the Government of Assam to be tough and stern towards the Naga leaders. The list of suspected leaders was prepared. Thereafter, the police raided the house of T. Sakharie, the General Secretary of the NNC. The monthly newspaper of NNC, the 'Naga Nation' was banned. Such acts of the Government of India forced the extremists to go underground. Several of the Naga villages were targeted and raided to search out the rebels. The Government deployed more police personnel and opened more police posts to control the situation and suppress the revolt of the Nagas. On the other hand, the Naga leaders also increased their anti-Indian activities even from the underground. They set up the underground Naga Government terming it as '*Khunak Kautang Ngeukhum*', which meant 'People Sovereign Republic of Free Nagaland'. Mr Honking, a trusted lieutenant of Phizo, was made the head of the state with fifteen Kilonsers (ministers). Thongdi Chang, an ex-military officer of India, was appointed as the Commander-in-Chief.

Phizo and his associates getting support from China and Pakistan had organised the militant organisations all over the Naga Hills. They had gone underground and continued their freedom struggle. At such juncture the Naga militants continued their struggle against the Government's security forces and government; civil officials. Thereafter kidnapping, murder, plunder, ambushing of convoys of the armed forces etc. became the order of the day all over the Naga Hills. The government of India issued a warrant in the name of Phizo and banned the NNC. Phizo who had escaped to Myanmar was arrested there. The Chief Minister of Assam, Bishnuram Medhi, while issuing a statement, made it clear that the demand for an independent sovereign Nagaland raised by the handful of Nagas could not be entertained.¹ In early 1954, Medhi again declared, "The people of the Naga Hills want jobs, schools, dispensaries, new roads and as a matter of fact we have taken schemes for affording better medical and other facilities... The Nagas in Burma have accepted the Burmese constitution, the Nagas in Mikir Hills, North Kachar Hills etc. do not want independence. Why do this handful of persons want independent Nagaland? The Nagas as I have stated, are in the Indian Republic."² Thus this was sufficient hint to the Nagas who

¹ M.Alemchiba, A Brief Historical Account of Nagaland, op. cit., pp. 175-76

² Ibid

wanted independent Nagaland that the Government of India was not going to pay any heed to their demand and the Government was ready to handle the affairs firmly and strongly.

As a policy to befriend the Nagas a number of goodwill missions were sent to the Naga Hills. . For instance, Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, the Health Minister of India, made an extensive tour of the North-eastern region and held talks with a number of Naga leaders in November 1953. She tried to impress upon the Naga people that their demand was untenable. While making an appeal to the rebel Naga leaders, she requested them to join the mainstream of India. Bimla Prasad Chaliha, the President of Assam Pradesh Congress, also visited the Naga Hills twice in 1953 with the intention to convince the Nagas that their future was safe and secured in India. He also made it clear that the Government of India, keeping in view strategic significance of the Naga territories, would not allow them to go for an independent state. Prime Minister Pt Nehru himself visited the Naga Hills on November 30, 1953 along with the Burmese Premier, Thakin U Nu to seek cooperation of the Nagas. G. B. Mavalankar, the Speaker of the Lok Sabha, too, visited the Naga Hills to develop a mutual understanding and cordial relations with other people of India. But all these visits and efforts to persuade the Nagas to accept India as their nation could not convince the mind of the Naga people because of the 'magic spell' of Phizo which had enchanted every Naga in the name of Naga's independence. On the other hand, the activities of the Naga warriors increased and they set up an underground Naga Government in the Tuensang area in September, 1953 which has already been discussed.

Several armed gangs were installed in Tuensang area with the marked objective to create troubles for the Government of India. The arms that the freedom fighters used consisted of arms captured in raids on police stations and outposts of Indian security forces, arms seized from private citizens etc. They also collected arms and ammunitions from Pakistan and China. With such arms the Naga militants with a full determination to harass the government officials, the Naga supporters of the Indian Government and to pressurise the Government to accept the Nagas' demand, indulged in rebel activities all over the hills of Nagaland. On the other hand, the Government of India was not to be cowed down by such terror tactics. The patience of the Government was going to be exhausted. Hence the Government of Assam was soon instructed to deal with the situation with strong hands with the result that the Assam Government ordered the abolition of the Tribal

Councils and clamped section 144 in Kohima banning assembly of more than five members. An additional force of police was also posted at Longkhum village of Mokokchung area to maintain law and order. The Battalions of Assam Rifles were deployed all over the Hills to retaliate the rebel Nagas by burning their strongholds in the areas which were declared disturbed areas on July 20, 1955.¹

The Government of India resorted all the suppressing measures to curb down the Naga rebellion. The Indian armed troops carried on numerous operations against the hideouts of the underground Nagas. The Naga freedom fighters faced the Indian jawans with courage and valour. They ambushed the army convoys where many jawans lost their lives. They applied the tactics of guerrilla warfare against the Indian troops who had been posted to different places of the Naga Hills. The Indian jawans being irritated began to harass even the innocent Naga villagers in doubt and suspicion. The Indians armed personnel burnt down their granaries, houses and destroyed properties. Several of the Naga ladies who had no hand in rebel activities were molested, beaten and raped even before their family members and relatives. In fact a battle line was drawn between the Naga militants and the Indian armed forces. The people who were the worst sufferers in the battle were the Naga villagers. They were baldly harassed and tortured by both the parties. The troops of the Indian armed forces while dealing with the villagers tortured the Nagas and forced them to disclose whereabouts of the Naga militants. In that pursuit they were badly beaten, captured and their women were insulted and molested. Some of the were even raped. Despite the instruction from the Government of India not to harass the innocent Naga people, the Indian jawans hardly cared for such instructions.²

At this juncture Mr Phizo left the Naga Hills and managed to reach London. From 1952 to 1956, the Naga people could not witness peace and progress due to armed struggle between the Naga militants and the Indian security forces. The situation somewhat took different turn after exist of Phizo from the Naga Hills. When the battle reached on the peak and the Naga people suffered a lot, the realisation came to the Naga militants that the Naga's independence could not be achieved through battle against the Indian Government. Rather it would bring more troubles and miseries to the Naga people. The members of the

¹ Asian Recorder. September 17-22, 1955. P.421.

² Ibid., April 7-18, 1956, pp.772-73.

NNC being aware of such anarchic situation began to realise the futility of armed struggle and they thought of peaceful solution to the Naga issue.

Lawlessness and Violence were rampant in all parts of the Naga Hills including the Tuensang area of NEFA. Several good-will missions arrived in the Naga Hills with a purpose to convince the Nagas that violent movement was not the proper way to achieve the goal and the Naga's future would be safe in India, but no positive response came out from the Naga people. Even the suppressive method of the Government did not curb down the Naga rebellion.

Atrocities and highhandedness committed by the Indian soldiers while dealing with the Naga various draconian Acts, which were promulgated to control anarchic situation of the Naga Hills, made the Naga people more and more anti-Indian. Charles Chasie has rightly observed that sympathy and active support of the Nagas to the Government of India began to decline because of "over and above the atrocities of the Indian Army, taking place all the time, such ill considered statements (of the Indian leaders), made the Nagas in general feel that, perhaps, there could be no proper understanding and future for the Nagas with Indian Union"¹ However, the Government of India could hardly prohibit the Indian *Jawans* from committing such inhuman acts with the result that such inhuman and inimical attitude of the Nagas has "constituted the greatest hurdle to any negotiated settlement till now."² Mr Chasie is correct in his observation.

With the active support of the Naga people the NNC under the leadership Phizo, set up Federal Government of Nagaland and hoisted its flag bearing the red, green and white colours with three stars at Phesinyu(a Rengma Village) on March 22, 1956 .. The NNC also issued a constitution of the Federal Government that declared Nagaland as a people's sovereign republic. The constitution provided for 100 Tatars (members) for the Naga parliament. Provision was made for an elected President of the Federal Republic and a Cabinet consisting of 15 Kilonsers (ministers.) The whole Nagaland was divided into four states each headed by a governor (*Angah*). There was also provision for a Supreme Court to "decide all the important constitutional, civil and criminal cases referred to it by the subordinate courts." The Naga Army was set up with a Commander-in-Chief (General), a

¹ Charles Chasie, *The Naga Imbroglia*, Standard Printers and Publishers, Kohima, 2000, p.74.

² Ibid.

Major General for each tribe commanding a division of 500 men Brigadiers and other officer ranks to an ordinary soldier. Besides this, magistrates, Deputy Commissioners and other officials were also appointed for various tribal areas. The Naga Federal Government also has set up the Naga Home Guards and the Naga Safe Guards. Later on these two wings were designated as the Naga army. The strength of the Naga Army, which laws 5,000 in the beginning, rose up to 15,000 by 1956.¹ Thus the Naga National Council having its own government, a national flag, a constitution and Army set up, continued its struggle against the Indian Government to achieve the decided goal. On the other hand, the Government of India had already declared the Naga Hills as the 'disturbed area' on January 31,1956. The Naga Hills disturbed Area Ordinance and Assam Maintenance of Public Order promulgated by the Government were in action which had empowered even the small ranks of the Indian armed forces to take punitive actions against the Naga who were found indulged in anti-national activities. Under such power the Indian jawans committed a number of inhuman acts and badly harassed even the innocent Nagas.

¹ Alemcvhiba, A Brief Historical Account of Nagaland, op. cit., p.184.

DISSENSION IN NNC

As stated above an arrest warrant was issued against the leader of the NNC, Mr Phizo, but he managed to escape away from the Naga Hills and reached England from where he continued his freedom struggle. But the arrest of Phizo from India marked a notable turning point in the freedom movement causing dissension among its leaders. With his arrest the dominance of the extremists over the NNC soon declined and the moderates who were still viewing to solve the Naga issue avoiding violence became assertive. Too much bloodshed, measures, troubles and inconveniences of the Naga people due to direct armed clashes between the Naga freedom fighters and the Indian armed personnel had made the people upset. Despite heavy resistance and fight there was no sign of achieving Naga independence. Rather the struggle had brought more uncertainty and troubles to the Naga people. The moderates, who had been against the use of violent force from the beginning, realised that the Nagas had to change the method to achieve the goal. Hence they became vocal about peaceful method avoiding the path of insurgency and armed conflicts, though the hard-core extremists were yet determined to fight against the Government till the goal was obtained. But they had to fight on two fronts, The Indian government and its troops and the moderates. In the words of Yonuo, "the open fighting broke out near Kohima between the rival factions of the NNC i.e., one who favoured Phizoism and those who opposed it." Meanwhile, on September 15, 1956 six Naga delegation visited New Delhi and had discussions with Pt. Nehru to stop military operation and initiate peace talks. Pt Nehru sympathetically talked to the Naga delegation. The talks between the Naga delegation and Pt Nehru resulted in giving a dynamic turn to the Naga politics.

The Government of India, though late, had fully realised that it was not possible to uproot the Naga's spirit of nationalism and to curb down their fight for freedom. Hence Pt Nehru while receiving the Naga delegation at New Delhi had prepared his mind to give sympathetic hearing to the Nagas' problem. He received the Naga delegation happily and assured them that the Indian Government was ready to give the Naga people maximum

autonomy within the Indian Union provided peace was restored in the Naga Hills. He also hinted that the Nagas would be given a separate administrative unit of their own. With this assurance the Naga delegation returned back to their home and began to work actively to bring normalcy in Nagaland by persuading the Naga freedom fighters to give up the path of militancy and accept the negotiated settlement of the Naga problem within the Indian federal system. At this very juncture Mr Shakharié was mercilessly assassinated. The murder of Shakharié was done with the intention to create mass terror among the Nagas and warn the Moderate Naga leaders not to take initiative for peace negotiation. By the beginning of 1957, the moderate Naga leaders of the NNC dissociated themselves from the path of militancy and formed a new group, namely, the Reforming Committee. Thus it became obvious that the NNC was a divided house. The Reforming Committee proclaimed, "The majority demand of the Nagas is for a separate administrative unit keeping with the Naga tradition within the framework of the Indian Union."¹ Thereafter, the Committee sent another delegation to Pt Nehru to discuss the Naga issue and decide the future course of Naga political ^{status}. Pt. Nehru was expecting the Naga delegation at New Delhi. Hence he warmly received the Naga delegation and assured the members that his Government would grant the Nagas maximum autonomies under special political unit provided peace and normalcy were allowed to exist in the Naga Hills as soon as possible. Thus the stage was set for constitutional and administrative changes in the Naga Hills, which ultimately resulted in creation of the state of Nagaland in December 1963.²

The dissension in the NNC was a great set back to the movement of national freedom. No doubt, the fight against the government continued by the extremists, but with weaker strength and slow voice. The murder of Sakharié, one of the most veteran and foresighted leaders of the NNC could not be digested by the peace loving Naga leaders. The murder was committed with a view to dampening the courage of those Nagas who dared to go against the viewpoints of the Phizoistes, no doubt, but such policy of the extremists boomeranged. The loss of Sakharié was soon compensated by other dashing peace loving Naga leadership openly came ahead to take up the issue with the Government of India for

¹ Asian Recorder, February 16-22, 1957. p. 11307.

² Ibid. Septemeber 17-22, 1957. p.421.

peaceful solution. These leaders formed a Reforming Committee of the NNC, which declared that it was opposed to violent, military method and committed to restore peace, order and security for the Nagas as a whole. T.N. Aangami, the President of the Reforming committee took the trouble to call the first People's *Convention* on 22nd August 1957. Thousands of delegations and people appeared to participate and witness the historic event. Imkongliba Ao and Jasokie Angami were made the Chairman and Secretary of the Convention respectively. The Convention adopted the following resolutions:

1. "We maintain that the only answer to the Naga question is a satisfactory Political settlement.
2. In as much as a large number of our people are still underground and there is no freedom of movement and speech under the present condition in the Naga hills districts, we feel no discussion can be held among the people preliminary to negotiation.
3. In order to create the condition necessary for a political settlement the following immediate change as an interim measure is essential. The Present Naga hill districts of Assam and Tuensang Frontier Division of NEFA along with the reserved forests, transferred out of the Naga Hills district under the reforms of 1921, should be constituted into a single administrative unit under the External Affairs Ministry of the Government of India though the Governor of Assam acting in his discretion as the Agent of the President of India, so as to ensure with our active help, a genuine general amnesty, speedy end of hostility and relief to sufferings.
4. We strongly urge the Government to implement the above proposal immediately as we, on our part, pledge ourselves to actively work together to end hostilities that the army and police can be withdrawn and the villages degrouped, and to try by all means in our power to heal old feuds so that all of us, both those now underground and those over ground, may work together for the good of our land and the free development of our people according to our own traditions.
5. We appeal to our countrymen in arms to give up the cult of violence.
6. The Convention asks for the prayers of all men goodwill, both underground and

over ground and the Government services for the achievement of lasting and honourable peace.”¹

The resolutions adopted by the first Naga People's convention made it clear that the NNC was then a divided house. Naga nationalism was bifurcated in the name of means and methods to achieve Naga freedom. Though the extremists refused to call the moderates as nationalists, and branded them the pets of the Indian political leaders and followers of the Indian style of politics mortgaging the Naga national interests. On the other hand the moderates were of the view that the extremists were playing with the lives and properties of the Naga people to their rigid and obstinate attitude. A question may be raised here as to whether the Naga nationalism as old as the Naga's history or did they obtain the concept of nationalism from the western people who came in their close contact. . Nationalism is a feeling of heart and mind where every member of the community is sentimentally attached to patriotism. The people are ready to pay any cost demanded by nationalism. People share common feeling, common belief, common language, common history and common sufferings. In case of the Nagas it is very much difficult to ensure whether the Nagas had national feeling from the very beginning. It is true that each ancient Naga village was a tiny sovereign state where each member was committed to the cause his or her community. Their patriotism cannot be doubted, but at the same time one cannot overlook the fact that the Naga tribes were not united nor they had any common feeling for a nation comprising all the Naga tribes here and there. Udayon Misra is of the view that the basic strength of the Naga movement has been the support it got from traditional Naga leadership at the village level, the most basic foundation of Naga Nationhood.” At the same time he maintains that the Christianity and Western education brought a section of Naga youths into contact with the liberal ideas of the West, and in the process, helped the growth of the nationalistic forces by reducing to a great extent the rivalry among the various tribes.²

Misra is very much correct in his observation in regard to the Naga nationalism. There may not be two opinions about the fact that the ancient Naga had patriotic feeling for their community but their approach and attitude was parochial. Instead of calling them

¹ Keessing Contemporary Achieves, Vol. XI, September 28- October 5, 1957, p. 15868.

² Ydayon Misra, “The Naga National Question”, Economic and Political weekly, April 8, 1978.

nationalist, it would be better to call them chauvinistic. It was the educated Naga leaders who came out of the veil of chauvinism and began to talk for Naga nationalism. But unfortunately these leaders differed in approach how to achieve national goal from the beginning of the formation of the NNC. After indulging in battles with the Indian security forces the issue whether the Naga could achieve independence by defeating the mighty Indian forces became more prominent. To the extremists there was no any other alternative to achieve Naga's freedom other than using force while the moderates were of the view that the time was not opportune to indulge in direct fight with the Indian Government because it were the Nagas who had to suffer more. When these two divergent viewpoints could be resolved amicably, the moderates separated themselves from the extremists and followed a course of their own whereby they established close contacts with the Government of India and placed the demand for greater and autonomous Nagaland.

It is said that the rift appeared in the Naga unity due to India's policy of divide and rule. It was the Indian political leaders who have been playing key role to keep the Naga leaders in rival groups by providing patronage to the loyal Naga leaders. The point whether there is any hand of the Government of India or the Indian political leaders to divide the Nagas is a debatable matter, which would be discussed, in the succeeding chapters. Here it is enough to say that the Naga leaders are not less responsible for creating rift in their unity and breakage in their strength. Expressing the same fact Charles Chasie says, "Some Nagas would like to point out finger of blame at the Government of India, but the Nagas, and specially the undergrounds cannot shirk the responsibility for the initial rift among the Naga leaders which finally resulted in the signing of 16-point Agreement."¹ The Government of India availed the opportunity to come close to the moderates and undermine the Naga nationalism by creating a separate political unit termed the Naga Hills Tuensang Area (NHTA) in 1957. When the recommendation of the Governor of Assam, Fazl Ali, that "to accept the demands of the Naga people for a change in the present administrative set up of the Naga Hills District" reached to Pt Nehru, he agreed soon for "political settlement within the Indian Union."² He also agreed to grant amnesty to the rebels. Thereafter, the Ministry of external Affairs issue the statement on 26th September,

¹ Charles Chasie, *The Naga Ibroglio*, op. cit., p.68.

² Keesing Contemporary Archives, Vol.XI, September 28- October 5, 1957, p.15864.

1957 stating that "The Naga Hills district and the Tuensang Frontier Division would be constituted into one administrative unit within the Indian Union directly under the President of India. This Unit will be administered by the Governor of Assam on behalf of the President under the Ministry of External Affairs."¹ The Indian parliament, thereafter, lost no time to pass the Naga Hills Tuensang area Act despite the hard opposition from some of the opposition members of the House who were not in favour of granting the Nagas such a political status.

The new political unit, NHTA, came into being on first December, 1957, separating Naga Hills from Assam. The moderate Naga leaders considered it as the first positive step in the direction of the eventual triumph, and assured the Indian Government that "All sorts of violence, dacoit, theft, intimidation, false impersonation, false propaganda imposition of fines and closing down of schools in certain areas must be stopped." On the other hand, the extremists leaders took the creation of NHTA as a policy of the Indian government to divide and rule and strengthen the Government's position in the Naga Hills by installing political agents from the Naga society.

Before the creation of NHTA the government of India considered the Naga issue simply the problem of law and order. The government "paid little attention to the distant border areas in the North-East of India." and "entrusted the Assam Government so much so far the responsibility of administering the hill tribes of Assam without keeping much in mind their poignant historical relations. The carrot and stick policy of the Assam Government ...met with irritation and decisive revolt." It was "realised at last hour about the futility of this policy and he (Pt Nehru) withdrew, gave up banking upon Assam..."² The creation of NHTA was the realisation of the futility of such policy of the Government of India.

Tuensang Division occupied by the Naga tribes was the part of the North Eastern Frontier Area (NEFA). Now it was transferred to the Naga Hills adding the strength of the Naga people. The Act NHTA provided a number of new provisions for the Naga people empowering the Governor to administer NHTA as the agent of the Indian

¹ Asian Recorder, September 21-27, 1957, p.1650.

² Asoso Yonuo, The Rising Nagas, op. cit., p.220.

President.¹ Creation of NHTA eased the tense situation in Naga Hills to some extent, no doubt, but it could not end the agitation carried out by the extremists. Rather they became more determined to carry on their movement. However the step taken by the Central Government to grant the Naga people a separate administrative unit received a[appreciation from various sections. For instance, the New York Times of 28 September 1957, appreciating the move of the Government wrote that "It was a realistic approach" and the step was "a wise one."² The Manchester Guardian remarked that the Prime Minister's offer to the Nagas was "a statesman like offer."³

There is no denying the fact that the formation of the NHTA ushered in a new era in the Naga Hills. About three thousands rebels came out over ground voluntarily. Major General Kocher, the General Officer Commanding of Assam, while giving a detail report in November, 1957 about the capture and surrender of the Naga rebels said, "From January, 1957 onwards, however, increasing number of the rebels surrendered. Phizo's sons and daughters gave themselves up on 25 April, 1957 stating that they were unable to bear the hardship of life in jungles; and his brother was arrested in August while attempting to escape to Burma."⁴ A general amnesty was granted and all underground prisoners detained for offences were released from jails. The law and order situation improved, no doubt, but it does mean that trouble was over forever. The other side picture was that there were numerous Naga freedom fighters that had not yet surrendered and they were yet determined to fight for Naga's freedom. Hence the agitation against the Government continued.

CREATION OF NAGALAND STATE

Once the democratic process was allowed to take place in Nagaland under the Indian constitution, it continued till the creation of Nagaland state under the Union of Indian Republic. The second People's Convention held in May 1958 expressing its satisfaction over creation of NHTA under the External Affairs Ministry constituted two bodies- the Select Committee and a Liaison Committee comprising eminent Naga leaders to serve the purpose. The Select Committee further constituted a Drafting Committee, which prepared

¹ For detail study of the new provisions for new political unit see the Naga Hills Tuensang Area Act, 1957, published in the Gazette of India, Extraordinary, Part II, Section I, No.37, dated 30th November, 1957.

² Cited in Prakash Singh, Nagaland, Delhi, 1974, p. 106

³ Ibid.

⁴ Keessing Contemporary Archives, Vol. XI, September 28, October 5, 1957, p. 15964.

the Sixteen Point Proposal. The Sixteen-Point Proposal contained certain important demands from the Government of India including the creation of Interim Government for the Naga people till the creation of a full-fledged Nagaland state under the Indian Union. It also demanded from the government of India to integrate the Nagas living in contiguous areas in Manipur, Myanmar and Assam with the Nagaland state and fix a permanent boundary line for the Naga people. It was the Sixteen Point Proposal which became the basis for the formation of Nagaland state. On the other hand, the members of the Liaison Committee took the initiative to meet the underground Naga leaders with a purpose to "mollify their feelings against the extreme stand and to explore the possibility of finding a peaceful solution of the conflicting issue."¹ The underground Naga leaders flatly replied to the members of the Liaison Committee that they had to do nothing with the Indian Government, and asked them to inform the Indian Government to confirm recognition of the Naga federal Government before initiating any peace talks.²

Without paying any heed to the attitude and viewpoint of the underground Naga leaders, the moderates called the third People's Convention in October 1958 and put the sixteen Point Proposal before the Convention for its approval, which was unanimously adopted. A careful study of the sixteen Point Proposal and the special resolution passed by the third Naga People's Convention condemning all sorts of violent and anti-national activities, reveals the truth that the Naga people in general had disliked the violent method to achieve the goal on the one hand, and preferred peaceful solution to the Naga issue.

Since Pt Nehru, the Indian Prime Minister decided to grant the Nagas a separate state under the Indian Union, his government accepted the Sixteen Point Proposal with some modifications.³ To give effect to the Sixteen Point Proposal the Government of India formulated the Nagaland (Transitional) Regulation, 1961 for the "regulation of Nagaland state under the Indian Union." It was this Regulation that provided for formation of an Interim Body consisting of forty-two members chosen by election from the tribes of Nagaland. Provisions were also made for an Executive Body to assist and advise the Governor of Assam on the exercise of public order as may be specified by the governor in this behalf. The Interim Body was assigned "the right to discuss and make

¹ Asoso Yonuo, *The Rising Nagas*, op. cit., p.229

² *Ibid.*

³ *The Lok Sabha Debates*, (2nd series) Vol. L, No.7, New Delhi, 1961, p.130.

recommendations to the Executive council on matters of administration involving general policy and schemes of development and other matters referred to it by the executive Council.”¹

The Interim Body was soon constituted, which represented all major and minor tribes of Nagaland. The members of the Interim Body were none, but the important Naga leaders who had been *playing* the role to solve the Naga issue peacefully. The Governor of Nagaland, General Shrinagesh, inaugurated the Interim Body at Kohima on February 18, 1961. Imkongliba Ao, the veteran moderate Naga leader who had been frontal in bringing both the Naga leaders and the Indian Government near to each other, was elected as the Chairman of the Interim Body. He, inviting the undergrounds to join the mainstream of the nation assured the people that the members of the Interim Body would leave no stone unturned to bring peace, prosperity and general happiness to the Naga people as a whole.²

Formation of the Interim Body and the Executive Council, which served as the de-facto Naga Legislature and Executive respectively, was a historic turn in the Naga political history. The formation resented the underground section to a great extent because it had given a decisive blow to the Naga national movement continued by the underground people. In the words of Yonuo the “acceptance of the Central Government to the moderate demand of the moderate political sentiment among the Nagas proved to be great political and physical instrument to isolate and put down those hostile elements who were still at large fighting a guerrilla campaign for the cause of their sovereignty”³ Hence they soon intensified their underground activities creating more troubles and inconveniences to both the Naga Interim government and the Government of India. To register their resentment and warn the moderates, the extremists assassinated Imkongliba Ao, the chairman of the Interim Body, at Mokokchung when he was coming back from his dispensary on August 22, 1961.

The murder of Imkongliba Ao, which was a direct challenge to the government of India and the moderate Naga leaders, did not dampen the courage of the Moderates. T. N.

¹ Nagaland (Transitional) Provisions regulation, 1961, Section 2 (2) quoted in P.N. Luthra's From a District to State, Shillong, 1978, pp. 9296.

² Asian Recorder, Vol. VII, No.8, February 19-28, 1961, P. 36308

³ Asoso Yonuo, The Rising Nagas, op. cit., p.239.

Angami, another veteran Naga leader, accepting the challenge took over the responsibility as the chairman of the Interim Body, asked the government of India to declare the Executive Council as the Cabinet and Interim Body as the provincial legislature of the Naga people. The Government of India soon accepted the demand and increased the power and status of these interim bodies declaring them de-facto legislature and executive. Thereafter political events in Nagaland began to take fast turning. Mr Shilu Ao, the leader of the de-facto Naga cabinet, during the transitional period became active to persuade the Indian leaders to grant the Naga people a full-fledged statehood. On the other hand, the militants remained firm to their demand of a separate and sovereign Nagaland, and continued their activities.

The government of India prepared two Bills, namely, the constitution amendment Bill and the Nagaland Bill in 1962, which prepared the ground for creation of Nagaland state. Since the Government of India was determined to create Nagaland state, both the Bills were passed by the Indian parliament despite heated discussions and opposition from the members who did not like to grant the Nagas such a status. Blame was levelled against the Indian government the move that the government took up in regard to the Naga issue was due to the fact that the Government was not able "to administer " the territory "because of violence that was practiced there."¹ Pt Jawaharlal Nehru was accused of leading the country towards disintegration and sowing the seed of disparity. P.C. Baruah, a representative from Assam in the Indian Parliament said that he would accept the Bill for creation of Nagaland state with "sorrow and pain" for two reasons, "the new state was being created cutting the limb of Assam and secondly, when all efforts were being made to put an end to the "fissiparous and disruptionist" tendencies in the country."² Some one accused Pt Nehru of pursuing a policy of "appeasement in respect of the Nagas."³ The Indian Parliament passed the Bill in September 1962, and getting the assent of the President of India ¹ on 4th September 1962, the Nagaland state got its birth.

The question whether the creation of Nagaland state was a right direction towards national integration or not, needs close verification and analysis. It is true that the

¹ Lok Sabha Debates, 2nd series, Vol. VII, No.11,1962, colms. 3177-73 and 4507.

² Ibid. Colms 4507, pp. 4526 and 4530-31.

³ Ibid.

Nagaland state was *created* at the time when several tribal peoples in North East India had become the aspirants of having their separate political status. To grant the Naga people a state of their own meant to invite the separatist forces following their divergent traditional, ethical, cultural, social and religious mode of lives, to come ahead with the same demand at the cost of Assam. But one should also remember that the tribal people of Northeast region special in the Naga Hills had been in prolonged isolation. No efforts were applied from the Indian side to bring them under the current of Indian nationalism. The British while living with them had also rooted separatist tendency in their mind. Moreover, the Assamese elites had established their strong hold over political and economic affairs where the tribal people who had been tagged on Assam against their will, remained the subject of negligence and exploitation. The imposition of Assamese language over these people created apathy against the Assamese' chauvinism and their "big brotherly attitude."¹ Such step motherly treatment of the Assamese elites made the tribal leaders aware of having their own separate political institutions. According to Sajal Naga at this very juncture "No other assurances and alternative suggestions could satisfy them and ultimately the political map of North-East had to be reorganised by forming separate hill states of Meghalaya, Mizoram and Nagaland."²

Thus the creation of Nagaland state may not be considered as a wrong step of the Government of India. The politics of insurgency banking upon the moral and material support of China and Pakistan in the Naga Hills was active. The Government of India had the strength to crush down the Naga rebellion, no doubt, but such policy would have boomeranged because the question was not to suppress the Nagas, but to win them over. The members of the Indian parliament who opposed the creation of Nagaland state were either ignorant of real situation of the Northeast or were prejudicial to their approach. Refuting such prejudicial approach of the Lok Sabha members Mr S.C. Jamir, the Naga representative of the Lok Sabha, rightly said, "The creation of the Nagaland state within the Indian Union is a matter of pride for India because we have in the Nagas a brave, honest and hard-working set of people. I feel that Nagas have got a right to claim a place in

¹ H. Shrikanth, "Limits of National Identities: A Study of Identity Problem in North-East India" Grin Phukon (ed), Political Dynamics of North-East India, New Delhi, 2000, p.66.

² Sajal Nag, "Multiplications of Nations and Political Economy of Sub-nationalism in India", Economics and Political Weekly, Vol. 28, No. 29-30, July 17-24, 1993.

the Union of India.”¹ Hem Baruah an Assamese member of the House also agreed that “This political settlement arrived by the Government of India with the Naga People’s Convention led by Imkongliba Ao is an act of sagacity.”² Pt Nehru, justifying the stand of his Government in this regard said that the creation of Nagaland state would not encourage fissiparous and disruptionist tendencies, it would rather help in bringing the Naga people in the mainstream of India.³

Pt Nehru was very much right in his approach. The years and political events, which took place in Nagaland after creation of the Nagaland state, proved that the Naga people except the extremists who were now in minority, began to incline more and more towards democratic processes which were set in the state and take much interest in party politics. The creation of Nagaland state provided the Naga people their own legislature, executive and bureaucracy. Article 371 (A) granted them special status by protecting their social, cultural, religious and political interests. They were given a common High Court for Assam and Nagaland. However, the expectation of the government of India that creation of Nagaland state as a positive direction to finish up the Naga insurgency could not be realised. No doubt, the creation of Nagaland state was a definite hard blow to the leaders of the freedom struggle because the leaders who had been fighting together for the same cause (Naga freedom) were sharply divided. The Naga freedom movement continued, no doubt, but the strength of the movement had weakened to a great extent. The majority of the Naga leaders giving up the path of militancy joined different rank and file of the Government that were created soon after inauguration of the new state of Nagaland on 1st December, 1963. Creation of Nagaland state opened the floodgate of progress and prosperity of the Naga people. It also opened the way for free play of party politics in Nagaland involving numerous Naga politicians and political workers on one hand, increased the wrath of those Naga leaders who were yet beyond the political involvement of the state on the other. They, while intensifying their hostile activities against the Governments of India and Nagaland both, began to blame the Naga moderate leaders as ‘puppets’ in the hands of the Indian politicians. The creation of Nagaland state, in fact weakened the strength of the leaders of the freedom fighters, but it hardly discouraged

¹ Lok Sabha Debates, Vol. VII, No. 11, Colms 4507, 4520-22 and 4530-31.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid. Colms. 4573-75.

them. Their loyalty towards Naga freedom and their activities to achieve it could not be finished up. The rebel leaders became more busy with their affairs and established close contact with the alien governments with a view to obtaining armed trainings for their soldiers, getting arms and ammunitions and internationalising the Naga issue in the coming years. Despite all these, efforts were applied to reconcile the underground Nagas and bring normalcy in the state. The process of cease-fire and peace talks began with the underground set up under such process.

CHAPTER SIX- NAGA ISSUE ON THE TALBLE TALKS AND
APPLICATION OF CEASE-FIRE

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**CHAPTER SIX- NAGA ISSUE ON THE TALBLE TALKS AND
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CHAPTER SIX

NAGA ISSUE ON THE TABALE TALKS AND APPLICATION OF CEASE-FIRE

Creation of Nagaland state fulfilled the desire of the moderate Nagas, no doubt, but at the cost of resentment of the freedom loving Nagas. They took the step of the Government of India as a policy to divide and rule and considered the moderate Naga leaders as 'puppets' in the hand of the Indian political leaders. Hence they intensified their activities to paralyse the Naga Government on the one hand, and to harass the Indian Government on the other. Though the first general election was held in the state of Nagaland and Legislative Assembly was also formed in 1964, the problem, which irritated the moderate Naga leaders, was how to bring normalcy in the state. Unless the peace was stabilised, there was no chance to work for progress and prosperity of the Naga people. The underground Naga leaders were not ready at all to drop their demand and accept the solution of the problem negotiated by the moderates with the Indian Government. They had already established close link with the Governments of China and Pakistan. After Sino-Indian war of 1962, several batches of the Naga militants had reached China and East Pakistan (Bangladesh) by crossing the international boundary line. Phizo in England was applying his best efforts to internationalise the Naga issue. The Naga army was equipped with modern sophisticated weapons like, machine-guns, sten-guns, medium machine-guns, rifles, short-range missiles, rocket launchers etc. in large quantity. They had also received military training.¹ Thus equipped with modern arms and ammunitions and banking upon moral and material support of foreign powers the underground Naga set up continued their militant activities against both the Governments- India and Nagaland. The purpose was to let the Government of India and moderate Naga leaders know that real solution of the Naga issue was not the creation of Nagaland state under the Indian Union, but granting the Nagas sovereign independent status. Such activities of the undergrounds disrupted the communication system and totally paralysed the economic development of the state. On the other hand, The Indian security forces that had been deployed all over Nagaland on large scale became tough and stern with a view to suppressing the Naga rebellion. Under such intention the Indian Jawans began to raid upon not only the hideouts of the

¹ Lok Sabha Debates, 3rd series, Vol.XLI, No. 8, 1964, pp. 1306-7.

underground Nagas but also the Naga villages in doubt and suspicion. The daily life of the common people was, thus, totally disturbed and people became fed up with the existing anarchic situation. Hence there was an immediate need to control the worsening situation and restore peace and order in Nagaland.

At this very critical juncture the Baptist Church leaders of Nagaland came ahead to deal with the situation. They called a convention at Wokha from 31 January to 2 February 1964 where a resolution was adopted requesting both the Indian Government and the Government of the undergrounds to devise ways and means for the restoration of peace, normalcy and order in the strife-torn state.¹ The Church leaders were non-political men. Moreover, they were sympathetic to the undergrounds. These leaders selected some leading and honest public leaders to act as the mediators to contact the underground Naga leaders and mediate peace-talks. Jaya Praakash Narayan, a veteran Indian freedom fighter and renowned Survodaya leader, was one who was included in the body of the Peace Mission. J.P. Narayan was a bitter critic of Pt. Nehru's policy of handling Indo-Pak affairs.² He was also heard talking on the issues related to Tibet and Nagaland. He had advised the Government to give a patient hearing to the viewpoints of the leaders of the freedom fighters with a view to solving the issue peacefully and amicably.³ Being a non-political man and a critic of the ruling party of India, J.P. Narayan was liked by the underground Nagas who called him "a God-damned pacifist".⁴ Another non-political man who was included in the Peace Mission was Shankar Rao Deo. He, too, was a Survodaya leader. B.P. Chaliha, the then Chief Minister of Assam who was known for his pleasing manners and balanced judgment, was also included in the body of Peace Mission. Michael Scott, a British citizen who had been very much close to Phizo in London commanded the belief of the underground Naga leaders. Michael Scott was, in fact, the real representative of the Naga Federal Government because he had been championing the cause of the Naga freedom fighters.⁵

¹ Efforts for Peace in Nagaland, a pamphlet issued by the Directorate of Information, Publicity and Tourism, Government of Nagaland, Kohima, 1965.

² Y.D.Gundevia, War and Peace in Nagaland, New Delhi, 1974. pp. 110-11.

³ *Bid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Lok Sabha Debates, Vol. VII. 1, No.10, 1962, pp. 1278-79.

The efforts of the Baptist Church leaders to organise a Peace Mission for the solution of the Naga problem and for the restoration of peace and normalcy in Nagaland were widely welcomed by all sections of Naga people. At that time there were two political parties in the state, namely, the Naga Nationalist Organisation and the Democratic Party. Both the parties welcomed the formation of the Peace Mission and the Government of Nagaland to provide a legal garment to the Peace Mission and passed a resolution in the Assembly.¹ The inter alias of the resolution said;

“That efforts be made to open every possible avenue to negotiate peace talks giving full opportunities to all sections of the public of Nagaland in mobilising public opinion to prepare the spade work to make the proposed talks a success with the sole object of restoration of lasting peace in Nagaland...that the underground people should take the peace talks seriously and respond readily to the call of the people to put all their efforts to create a healthy atmosphere necessary conditions for peace talks.”²

When the matter came to the Indian parliament regarding formation of Peace Mission, the controversy arose on the issue of inclusion of Michael Scott as a member of the Mission. Hem Baruah, a member of the Lok Sabha, expressed his concern at the inclusion of Scott in the Peace Mission because that British national had all along supported Phizo's demand of an independent Nagaland.³ While removing the doubt of Hem Baruah, Lal Bahadur Shastri, a Minister without portfolio, said in the Lok Sabha that the Government had accepted the inclusion of Scott in the Peace Mission because he had agreed to the settlement of the Naga problem within the framework of the Indian constitution.⁴ It was Pt. Nehru who made it clear that the Government had agreed to include Scott in the Peace Mission at the instance of the Government of Nagaland.⁵ Thus it appears that the Nagaland Government agreed to accept Scott's inclusion in the Peace Mission only because denial of his inclusion would have resulted in failure of the formation of the Peace Mission. Michael Scott, in fact, was the indispensable choice of the underground Naga leaders.

All the members of the Peace Mission except Shankar Deo, who was sick at the time, reached Kohima in the last week of March 1964. Michael Scott and B.P.Chaliha were the

¹ Efforts for Peace In Nagaland, op. cit., p.3.

² Ibid. p.4

³ Asian Recorder, Vol.X, No. 21, May 20-26, 1964, pp. 56-58.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

first to reach while J.P.Narayan took some more time to arrive. In the absence of Narayan both Scott and Chaliha took part in a public meeting, which was organised by the Church leaders to prepare fertile ground for peace talks. The Government of Nagaland took the responsibility to arrange accommodation for the members of the Peace Mission at Kohima. The members were provided with all possible facilities. The Government was to bear all the expenditure of the Peace Mission. The Mission was provided with ten white jeeps, which came to be known as 'peaceful transport vehicles'. The underground Naga leaders were allowed to travel freely and meet the members. Mr Chaliha as the Chief Minister of Assam had little time to spare for working of peace in Nagaland and he had to shuttle from Shillong to Kohima as often as was necessary. Scott, however, availed the full opportunity to be among the underground Naga leaders and have frequent talks with them. At the invitation of Mr Scato Swu, the President of the underground Government, Scott went to the jungle hideouts and held prolonged discussions with him.¹ Scott made a hectic tour of 3,000 miles in Nagaland within a few weeks and held heart to heart conversations with the rebel leaders. Sometimes, he also took part in the celebration and ceremonial parades of the underground Naga soldiers. On most occasions he was found in the jungle hideouts meeting the underground Naga leaders in the absence of Chaliha and Narayan. However, he used to inform the Chief Minister of Nagaland and other members of the Mission about his visit to the underground Naga leaders. But it was difficult to ascertain whether Scott gave a correct report. Any way, discussions with the underground Naga leaders continued.

Under the realisation that for progress of peace talks cessation of armed conflicts was a must, the members of the Peace Mission drafted an agreement in this regard after consultation with the underground leaders. The draft agreement proposed to suspend all forms hostilities such as sniping, ambushing, imposition of fines, kidnapping, forcible recruitment, sabotage activities and firing and raiding at security posts, towns and administrative buildings. On the other hand the Indian security forces were to suspend jungle operations, raiding of the Federal Army and their administrative camps, patrolling beyond 1000 yards of the Indian security posts, searching villages, aerial action, arrests

¹ Y.D. Gundevia, War and Peace in Nagaland, op. cit., pp. 1122-16.

imposition of political fines and forced labour. The underground Naga Government was also asked not to import arms from abroad during the period of peace talks and would not raise the demand for the presence of a team of international observers during the period of peace talks. The draft agreement signed by five underground representatives was referred to the Tatar Hoho (the parliament of the rebel Nagas) for final ratification. The Tatar Hoho soon ratified it. The Government of India raised objection that it would not recognise the Federal Government and demanded that the Naga Government should also be included in the proposed peace talks. Another objection from the Indian Government was regarding the term 'cease-fire'. It suggested to substitute the term 'cease-fire with 'stoppage of operations' and the term 'forced labour' and 'political fines' should be deleted.¹ The underground leaders were not ready at all to substitute the term 'cease-fire' and objected inclusion of Nagaland Government in peace talks. Thus the conflicting viewpoints of both the parties did not allow the draft agreement to take its final shape. However, it became obvious that the underground Naga leaders wanted to have peace talks at equal level with the government of India to show that the Federal Government was a sovereign government. That is why they put emphasis on the term 'cease-fire' which generally takes place between two sovereign powers. On the other hand, the Government of India considered it an *offence* to national dignity and a blow to the territorial integrity of India.

The worsening situation of Nagaland demanded immediate solution. There were only two ways to defuse the explosive situation- either to go for a military solution or to seek a political settlement. In the past military solution had miserably failed to achieve the desired result. So the only alternative was to go in for a political solution that had to be done on the basis of give and take. Hence the Government of India preferred the acceptance of the proposals with certain modifications. A section of the underground Naga leaders also thought that both sides should refrain from-laying preconditions for starting peace talks. Peace had to be achieved first and other formalities would be looked into later on.² Something had to be done to restore peace and normalcy. Hence the Government of India was ready even to sacrifice the inclusion of the representative of the Nagaland Government in peace talks.

¹ M. Alemchiba, A Brief Historical Account of Nagaland, op. cit., p.204.

² Keessing Contemporary Achieves, Vol. XVI October 10-17, 1964, p.20346.

When the conciliatory approach of the rebel Nagas came to be known, the members of the Peace Mission held further talks with the rebel leaders. At a meeting with them on July 7, 1964, Chaliha proposed that the peace talks would be held at Kohima on 20th July, 1964, and the Naga Federal Government should send four representatives who would be supplied with safe conduct passes by the Government of Nagaland. Since the underground Naga leaders were not yet ready to recognise the Nagaland Government, the offer of safe conduct passes to be given by the Nagaland Government was rejected straight way. However, they agreed to take part in the proposed peace talks on two conditions. Firstly, Shilu Ao should not be described as the Chief Minister of Nagaland, and secondly, the General Officer Commander of the Indian forces in Nagaland would issue the safe conduct passed. Thereafter, the rebel leaders agreed to sign a modified ceasefire agreement and to take part in a peace conference at Kohima. The Government of India soon seized the opportunity and instructed the Governor of Nagaland to prepare the terms of the final agreement in the light of discussions held so far and on the basis of the terms accepted by the rebel Naga leaders through the Peace Mission.¹ Thereupon, the final agreement regarding ceasefire appeared in the forms mentioned below:

1. The Government of India welcome the steps intended to bring about peace in Nagaland and with this object in view, as already stated, they will depute Representatives who will be associated with the representative of the Government of Nagaland to take part in talks with leaders of the underground. To facilitate these talks and taking note of the letter of 10th August 1964 Referred to above, it has been ordered that with effect from 6th September, 1964, and from a period thereafter of one month at present, the security forces Will not undertake:

- (a) Jungle operations;
- (b) Raiding of camps of the underground;
- (c) Searching of villages;
- (d) Patrolling beyond 1000 yards of security posts;
- (e) Aerial action;
- (f) Arrests; and
- (g) Imposition of labour by way of punishment.

¹ Y. D.Gundevia, War and Peace in Nagaland, op. cit., 121.

2. Operations will be suspended as above on the understanding that the underground Nagas had accepted that during this period they would refrain from:

- (1) Sniping and ambushing;
- (2) Imposition of Fines;
- (3) Kidnapping and recruiting;
- (4) Sabotage activities;
- (5) Raiding and firing on security posts, towns and administrative Centres; and
- (6) Moving with arms or in uniforms in towns, villages and Administrative centres, wherever there are security posts and Approaching within one thousand yards of security posts.

The ceasefire agreement that brought about the cessation of armed struggle with effect from 6th September 1964 was a commendable effort. It ceased the explosive situation and brought peace and happiness everywhere in Nagaland. People heaved a sigh of relief. Night curfew was relaxed and the underground Nagas came over ground first time. They started moving freely and obtained an opportunity to meet their friends, relatives and family members. The people were found rushing to the Churches and ringing the bells. They all prayed Almighty for everlasting peace in their land. Many people were in tears because normalcy had returned to Nagaland. Gundevia who was a witness to all these, wrote, "The signing of the hymns in that little Church in Kohima, by our Naga boys and girls in their choir, was superb; it was beautiful and brought tears to many eyes. Oh, God, our help in ages past... That September afternoon, sung by so many with uncontrolled tears running down their cheeks, was an unforgettable experience... There was streetlight in Kohima, first time in seven years. Kohima, Mokokchung and all the little towns had been under dust to dawn curfew, year after year, almost continuously. This meant that the children who were nine and ten years old did not know that electric bulbs on the street lamp-posts were meant to glow."¹

The first round of peace talks began at *Kheersa* Village in Mokokchung district on September 23, 1964 when the ceasefire became effective from the midnight of September 6, 1964. On behalf of the Government of India Y.D. Gundevia, the Secretary to the

¹ Y.D. Gundevia, War and Peace in Nagaland, op. cit., p.121.

Ministry of External Affairs, Shilu Ao, the Chief Minister of Nagaland, N.C. Santok, the Deputy Secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs and U.N. Sharma, the Chief secretary to the Nagaland Government participated in the peace talks while the underground Naga Government was represented by Zashie Huire, Thinsussillie and Issac Swu. After formal talks the underground representatives objected the presence of Shilu Ao, no doubt, but his presence was lastly admitted not as the Chief Minister of Nagaland, but as a member of the Indian Government. The Naga representatives reiterated the old demand that Nagaland should be made an independent nation and the Indian armed forces must withdraw from Nagaland, which was totally rejected by the Indian representatives with the result, that a deadlock took place in the progress of peace talks.

The Peace Mission brought forward a plan of disarmament wherein the rebel Naga Army was to be disarmed and the security forces of India withdrawn from Nagaland. Had the plan of disarmament been implemented, it would have brought everlasting peace in Nagaland, but unfortunately when the plan was referred to the Tatar Hoho, it was outrightly rejected by it. The Tatar Hoho passed the resolution, which said that the Naga Army would not surrender their arms and that a political settlement based on a sovereign Nagaland state was acceptable to the Naga Federal Government. The underground Naga leaders did not like to lay down their arms and deposit them in an armoury under the supervision of the Peace Mission. The arms and ammunitions had been collected from foreign countries and they did not like to let down their supporters. It also became obvious that the underground representative in the peace talks could not take any decisive step without the consent of their superior leaders. Moreover, whenever the talks began the Naga representatives reiterated the same demand of sovereign independent Nagaland. They were not ready at all to budge in single inch from their stand.

Several rounds of talks were held between the Indian delegation and the underground representatives at Chedema since 23rd September 1964, but the solution of the problem was not in the sight. It had become obvious that no settlement of Naga issue could be possible under such circumstance. The Peace Mission to break up the stalemate worked out along worded 16-Point Proposal, which talked the old history of the Naga people and their relations with the British. The plan appreciated the courage and tenacity displayed by the Naga people ~~the~~ in their endeavour to achieve their goal of independence. It also

mentioned that "All subject people have the right to self-determination and that no group of people is competent to rule over another."¹ The 16-Point Proposal wanted "some appropriate meeting point " where "the aims and ideals of the Naga Federal Government can be achieved... making it possible for the Government of India to accept (the demand) within the framework of the political settlement to be mutually agreed upon" At the end the proposal stated that it was unto the Naga Federal Government to decide whether it would "be a participant in the Union of India and would mutually settle the terms and conditions for the purpose."²

The emphatic assertion of the right to self-determination in the 16-Point Proposal boosted the morale of the rebel Naga leaders and supported their viewpoints. The right to self-determination is, in fact, a noble principle which every one who champions the cause of liberty and democracy cherishes, but such right cannot be given to such group of people who lack supporting background for having an independent status. The Peace Mission having the consent of B.P.Chaliha and J.P. Narayan had included the term right to self-determination to the Naga people. But when the Indian parliament heard such voice, many members raised question related to the Naga's right to self-determination. Smt Lokshmi Menon, the Minister of State for External Affairs, while welcoming the opinion of the Peace Mission to find a peaceful solution to the Naga issue, asserted that the solution had to be found within the framework of the Indian Union³. Hem Baruah, participating in the debate of the Lok Sabha on the issue also said that the Naga's right to self-determination referred two vital points. Firstly, the Proposal equated the underground Government with the Indian Government and secondly, it gave to the NFG the right to decide the question of the accession of Nagaland to the Indian Union.⁴ Swarn Singh the Foreign Minister told the members of the Lok Sabha "We have made the position clear that a solution of the Naga problem had to be thought within the Indian Union and that is the only thing that we can think of."⁵

The Government of India in its reply to the letter of the Peace Mission explicitly stated that it did not accept the "line of reasoning and the series of postulates on which the Peace

¹ Lok Sabha Debates, 3rd series, Vol. XXXVIII, No.3, 1964, pp.636-7

² Ibid.

³ Ibid. pp. 622-24.

⁴ Ibid.p.637.

⁵ Ibid. pp.636-37.

Mission's Sixteen Point Proposal were based,"¹ Thus it became very much obvious that the government of India was ready to consider autonomy of the state of Nagaland, but within the Indian constitution. On the other hand the NFG was not ready to accept any thing other than a sovereign state of Nagaland. Since both the parties adopted different viewpoints regarding the Sixteen Point Proposal, no meeting could be arranged.

Another round of peace talks began at *Khensa* village on 24th February 1965 where the question of right to self-determination once more came on fore front. The underground representatives also raised the issue of holding plebiscite. However, the Peace Mission members rejected both the demands of the underground leaders and suggested them to join the Indian Union voluntarily and discuss the terms of mutual relationship. But Zashei Huire expressed his inability to do so without the consent of the Tatar Hoho with the result that first round talks at Khensa ended without any progress. Next day when the question was raised related to violation of cease-fire from both sides, the members of the Peace Mission suggested for forming a body of neutral observers to ensure the effective implementation of ceasefire. The body was constituted under the chairmanship of Dr A.Aram, a survodaya worker from Coimbatore to serve the purpose. After the failure of Khensa talks the members of the Peace Mission personally participated in the *meeting* of the Tatar Hoho to persuade the members, but they could not succeed in changing their mind.

The facts came to the light that the NFG had agreed to begin peace talks with two objectives. Firstly, the rebel leaders wanted to strengthen their military position by sending their men for military training in the neighbouring countries and also by importing arms and ammunitions from various sources. Secondly, they intended to equate themselves with the government of India. Their purpose was served because the term 'cease fire' was accepted and the right to self-determination came on the table of negotiation.

The Naga Federal Government expressed the view through Michael Scott to upgrade the peace talks at the level of Prime Ministers. The Indian Prime Minister, Lal Bahadur Shastri, accepted the request, but meeting could not be arranged due to his sudden demise at Tashkent. The successor of late Shastri, Mrs Indira Gandhi agreed to meet the

¹ Ibid.pp.622-24.

underground Naga delegation. Hence a five-man Naga delegation under the leadership of Kughato Sukhai, the Prime Minister of the underground Federal Government, arrived at New Delhi on 16th February 1986. Surprisingly enough, the same day the Assam Mail was derailed near Dimapur and a time bomb had been fitted in the toilet of a third class compartment which caused derailment. There was heavy loss of lives and properties. Though the underground Nagas denied their hand behind the incident, there was no denying the fact that the rebels Nagas were behind such incident. This was confirmed later on when enquires were held. The purpose of these incidents was to put pressure upon the Government of India. However, such tactics did not hamper the meeting of the Indian Prime Minister with the underground Naga delegation. Consequently, the first round of talks between Smt. Indira Gandhi and the Naga delegation were held on 17th January 1966 in the presence of Michael Scott and B.P.Chaliha. At the very outset Mrs Gandhi drew the attention of the Naga representatives towards the unpleasant and violent activities in Nagaland and in some Naga inhabited areas of Manipur. Mr Shukhai, the leader of the Undergrounds, denied their hand in these acts of violence. Thereupon, B.P.Chaliha and Scott suggested having an inquiry by a joint committee consisting of two representatives one from the Peace Mission and another from the underground Naga Government.

During the first phase of peace talks nothing more important issue were discussed. In the opinion of the underground representatives it was nothing more than a courtesy call on the new Prime Minister of India. While going back to Nagaland, Isak Swu, a member of the underground delegation and the Foreign Minister of the Naga Federal Government, said at *Calcutta* airport in a press conference that, "Nothing *Sort* of a sovereign Nagaland would be acceptable to the Nagas. We have always been independent and want to remain so."¹ He further said that the Nagas would seek unknown destiny if the Government did not grant them independence. When he was asked to explain the term 'unknown destiny', Isak Swu replied, "I cannot spell out unknown destiny beyond saying that the repercussions would be very bad... We may also be forced to seek the assistance of foreign countries to achieve our objectives."² On the other hand, while giving an account of her talks with the underground Naga representatives, Indira Gandhi said in the Lok Sabha on 21 February

¹ Asian Recorder, Vol. XII, No.12, March 19-25, 1966, p,6983.

² The Hindustan Times, New Delhi, February 20, 1966.

1966, "The objective of our talks was the importance of preserving peace and stopping many ugly incidents which still take place... The Government was making real efforts to change the underground rebel's attitude on the independence question. But this needs great patience and time."¹ When her attention was drawn towards the statement of Isak which he delivered at ~~Laitumtha~~ Laitumtha airport, she told the House that that was a demand which they had been consistently repeating for several years and it was not brought to her direct notice at the last meeting by the underground delegation. Speaking in the Rajaya Sabha, Mrs Gandhi said that goodwill, patience and tact were required to solve the Naga problem.

It is true that Mrs Gandhi was still hopeful of solving the Naga problem tactfully, but the underground Naga leaders were impatient. They became more active and they enhanced their militant activities. From February 1966 onwards, a series of bomb explosions took place on the northeastern frontier railways. A time bomb exploded in a train at Farkating killing 37 persons and causing injuries to more than fifty passengers. On April 20, 1966, the explosion of the time bomb in a railway coach at Lumding station killed 56 people and injured at least 127 passengers. A standing train at Diphu station was also blown up and many persons were killed. Even the Naga villages that were siding with the Nagaland Government were also attacked specially in the Ukhrul sub-division of Manipur. Thus the commencement of hostile activities of the undergrounds disturbed J.P. Narayan so much that he dissociated himself from the peace talks. J.P. Narayan, in fact, had lost the faith of the rebel Nagas. Even the Government of India was dissatisfied with the statement of Mr Narayan where he had suggested that the Naga state could have its own flag and constitution while the centre would have kept for itself such subjects as Defence, Finance and Communication. Thus in a way he lost the confidence of both sides, and he thought it wise to resign from the membership of the Peace Mission. While stating the cause of his resignation, he informed the press media on 25th February 1966, "There was no use of my continuing as a member of Peace Mission when I did not enjoy the confidence of both sides, nor do I think it would have been honourable to do so."

By 1967, it had become obvious that the NFG leaders would not accept any thing less than Naga's complete independence that was quite untenable to the Indian leaders. Mrs Indira Gandhi, the Prime Minister, decided not to have any more negotiations with the

¹ Ibid, February 22, 1966

underground representatives. Hence the underground representatives who were staying at New Delhi were asked to vacate the building. They all left New Delhi on the morning of 7th October 1967. One of the members of the underground representatives while leaving Delhi, made it clear that the NFG would accept nothing less than a sovereign Nagaland "It is for India to treat us as friends or throw us to the other side." ¹ The statement clearly indicated that the NFG would incline towards foreign countries for assistance.

The end of 1967, all hopes for a peaceful solution of the Naga issue was dashed to the ground. The four years of parleys between the Government of India and the underground representatives resulted in complete failure. Who should be blamed for the failure? The question is difficult to answer. It was well understood by both the parties that there could be no solution because both were predetermined to remain strictly strict to their viewpoints. The talks continued only because to understand the stands of each other about the Naga issue. The underground representatives wanted to popularise the case of the Nagas and they, somewhat, succeeded too. Under the shield of Michael Scott who was much more sympathetic to the cause of the underground Nagas, the underground leaders let the world know that the Nagas are a nation and they have all the rights to follow their own political course. When the activities of Michael Scott were doubted and exposed, the Government of India expelled him out from India. Informing the member of the Parliament Dinesh Singh, the Minister of state for External Affairs, said that Mr Scott instead of bringing about an understanding "indulged in prejudicial activities. In spite of the Government's warning and regret expressed by himself, he had continued to adopt partisan attitude. In view of this, his presence was no longer considered helpful in the current talks with the underground Nagas."² The Activities of Michael Scott had remained doubtful from the beginning. It was he who had written Mrs Indira Gandhi in February 1966 to constitute an expert committee to ascertain whether India had exercised any authority over the Nagas. Again, at the request of the FGN it was he who had sent a letter to U Thant, the Secretary general; of the United Nations asking him for the inclusion of more foreign observers in the peace talks. He had also written a letter to the Chairman of the Revolutionary Council of Burma (Myanmar), General Ne Win protesting against his

¹ The Times of India, New Delhi, October 9, 1967

² Asian Recorder, Vol. XII, No. 24, June 11-17, 1966, .7126.

decision to check the movement of rebel Nagas from Nagaland to East Pakistan (Bangladesh) through Burmese territories. In the words of Asoso Yonuo "These letters probably stepped up Rev. Scott to the first basic error and aroused a wave of indignation throughout India for it was blaring attempt to internationalise the Naga issue which was a purely domestic affair from the Indian point of view."¹ Thereafter, the talks continued, no doubt, but result was negative. During the peace talks the underground set up had enough time to strengthen its position, which they did. The underground leaders were of the view that the Government of India, perhaps, under the pressure tactics would consider their demand.

The policy of the government of India towards the Nagas in general and the underground Naga leaders in particular had been to appease the people by offering what they demanded except sovereignty. Till the Naga leaders were non-violent the Government hardly pay any attention to their real problem. When they took arms against the government and applied freedom movement, the government became more and more sympathetic to the Naga's problem and awarded them statehood with maximum autonomies by amending the constitution. Moreover, the Central Government flooded huge amount of money in Nagaland to please the moderate Naga leaders in the name of economic development. Such easy money not only spoiled the habit of the hard working Nagas but also paved the way for mass corruption among the political leaders and bureaucrats. Such politicians began to incline towards Delhi politicians with the result that the undergrounds lost their all faith in them. The Government of India applied the same policy of appeasement towards the rebel Naga leaders. That is why the Government easily agreed to accept the term 'ceasefire' and allowed the underground leaders to initiate the peace talks at the level of Prime Minister, which boosted the morale of the undergrounds. In the words of B.K. Neru, the Governor of Nagaland, "Delhi had, from the very beginning, adopted an attitude of appeasement towards the Naga insurgents, trying to give them every thing they wanted., irrespective of the national interests, in an effort to get them to give up their insurgency."² It was this policy of the Government which encouraged some Naga leaders who had been sympathetic to the cause of the undergrounds to form new political parties such as the United Front and

¹ Asoso Yonuo, *The Rising Nagas*, op. cit., p258.

² B.K. Neru, "Mediators of Naga Issue were pro-extremists", in *North-East Sun* 1970. p. 2.

United Democratic Front which began to plead the case of the underground on the floor of the Naga Legislative Assembly developing close link with the underground leaders. Such policy of the Indian Government proved harmful. It encouraged the rebel leaders to remain strict to their viewpoints on the one hand and discouraged the moderate Naga leaders, maligned their image and damaged their morale and spirit on the other. Hokishe Sema, the then Finance Minister of Nagaland Government, rightly remarked that the Prime Minister's talks with the underground leaders yielded contrary result. In his own words "a section of the underground is flaring with China and flying to obtain arms and other assistance from that country as well as from Pakistan."¹ Agreeing to the same view T. N. Angami, while talking to the Nagaland Governor, expressed his views that his authority was undermined by the Central Government of India because the real attention of the Government was towards the underground Naga leaders and efforts were being applied to please them even at the cost of displeasure of the democratically installed Government of Nagaland.²

The government of India participated in the parleys even at the Prime Minister level to let the Naga people know that the Government wanted a solution, but it could not be achieved due to rigid and obstinate attitude of the undergrounds. A legally constituted and elected Government was already functioning in Nagaland giving full support to the Government of India. The underground Nagas had already lost their majority. The moderate Naga leaders who had assumed the responsibility to rule and administer Nagaland did not like at all to allow the extremists to establish their hold on Naga politics. Thus disunity among the Naga leaders could hardly allow a peaceful solution to the Naga issue or emergence of a sovereign Nagaland state. Peace talks discontinued, but ceasefire was still effective, but on paper only. Replying the question related to the fate of the ceasefire, Mrs Indira Gandhi in the Lok Sabha said that only the course of events would decide the issue. Thereafter the Naga freedom fighters once more resumed their freedom struggle at full length overlooking the provisions of the ceasefires. The ceasefire came to an end officially on 1st September 1972 and the Government of India asked its *security* personnel to control the activities of the undergrounds with the result that Naga people

¹ Proceedings of Nagaland Legislative Assembly, March, 1968. p.38.

² B.K.Nehru, "Mediators of Naga Issue were Pro-extremists", op. cit., p.2.

who had got a temporary relief, again found themselves submerged in the pool of bloodshed and ocean of measures.

SHILLONG ACCORD

With growing political consciousness and interest of the Naga people in politics and unchecked growth of high political ambition of the Naga politicians brought about a dynamic turn in the Naga politics from 1975 onwards. Politics had become a profession and also a means to earn money and prestige. Politics of defection took place which ultimately put the state of Nagaland under the President rule on March 22, 1975.

During the period of emergency the Shillong Accord between the Government of India and the underground Naga Federal Government was signed, which ended the Naga insurgency for ever at least on the paper. The failure of peace talks had resulted in the resumption of anti-national activities of the rebel Nagas. This caused fighting between the Naga militants and the Indian armed forces. Kughato Sukhai who had failed to achieve the desired goal for the underground Nagas through peace talks, was blamed for having a secret deal with the Government of India.. At this very time Kaito Sema, a rebel Naga General and brother of Kughato, revolted against the Angami's hegemony over the Naga Federal Government. With the help of his close associates he ransacked the underground Naga army headquarters at Gaziphema and looted the arms, ammunitions and money that were kept there. Such unexpected incident undermined the authority of Kughato Sukhai as he was accused of assisting his fiery brother, Kaito. This forced Kughato Sukhai to resign from the Prime Minister ship of the Federal Government enabling Mhiaseui, a close associate of Phizo, to occupy the supreme position of the underground Federal Government. All these activities set the stage free for internal feuds and conflicts among the undergrounds. The unity of the underground Nagas was further put to strain when another section of the undergrounds in Tuensang area came out with a resolution that the solution of the Naga problem had to be found "within the framework of the Indian Union."¹

¹ Y.D. Gundevia, War and Peace in Nagaland, op. cit., p. 193.

Kaito Sema who deserted from the Federal Government became a constant threat to the Phizoists. Under such circumstance he was murdered in the main market of Kohima on 3rd August 1968. Since the murders could not be arrested, two possibilities behind his murder were developed. It was said that he was murdered either by the men of Mahiaseiu or by the personnel of the Indian army. However, both the parties denied their hands behind the murder of General Kaito. Thereafter, the acts of revenge appeared and both sections of the undergrounds led by the men of Kaito and Mahiaseiu were face to face which ultimately resulted in abduction, fighting, and assassination dividing the underground Naga Government.. Anti-Phizo groups combined together under the leadership of Semas and formed the Revolutionary Government in November 1968. A political wing known as the Council of Naga People was also created. These bodies were parallel to the Federal Government. Thus the underground Nagas were splintered into three rival groups by 1968, which weakened the strength of the rebels to fight against the Government of India.

Weakness of the underground Nagas, thus, enabled the Indian armed troops to control the activities of the Naga militants. The Indian Jawans captured a number of underground Nagas along with Chinese made arms and ammunitions.¹ Veteran underground leader, Mowu Aangami, the Commander-in-Chief of the rebels, was arrested which caused a severe blow to the freedom movement of Nagaland. His arrest along with his other associates was a definite blow to the Phizoists who were struggling not only against the Government of India but also against the men of Kughato Sukhai. Thereafter, the process of surrendering of the underground Nagas started. The surrender of some of the prominent underground leaders encouraged others to follow the process. For instance, Saniba Ao, the Major General in the Federal Naga Government, along with Mepyangdang, the Vice President of the Naga National Council, and his Secretary, Tajen Ao, surrendered in the middle of 1975.² Saniba Ao not only surrendered himself but also induced his associates to do the same. He issued a statement that said, "I have been watching the situation in Nagaland and have reached the conclusion that at no stage our movement had any hope of achieving useful results. Actually things have been going from bad to worse. All that we have

¹ Assam Tribune, Guwahati, March 13, 1969.

² Naga News, Published by the Directorate of Information, Publicity and Tourism, Government of Nagaland, September, 1975

achieved over the years of our struggle in Nagaland is untold miseries for our own kith and kin.”¹

Giving the account of surrendered Nagas, L. P. Singh, the Governor, informed the people on 15th August 1975, that “during the last four or five months there has been a marked improvement. About a thousand of persons who were underground have either been arrested, captured or voluntarily coming out or they are being captured by the security forces.”² The Government of India adopted the policy to rehabilitate those who surrendered voluntarily with the objective to induce other to come under the mainstream of the nation.³

The large scale of surrender of the undergrounds in 1975, though weakened the strength of the underground organisations, but it does not mean that the state was free from such elements. There were still hard-core militants who were yet determined to fight for Naga's independence, which caused worry in the mind of the Indian Government. These elements still continued their struggle. This is evident from the fact that in 1975 only there were nearly 83 incidents of shootings by the undergrounds.⁴ There were some cases of ambush of army convoys. That is another fact that the Naga militants suffered a lot due to strict patrolling of the security forces and they became the victims of disunity among themselves. Due to strict vigilance of the army and also due to surrender on large scale most of the areas of Nagaland except Kohima and Phek areas, were cleared of the underground activities.⁵

Declining strength of the freedom fighters and increasing interest of the Naga people towards democratic processes enabled the Government of India to conduct a final deal for solution of the Naga issue. Longri Ao, the chairman of the Peace Council, became instrumental in contacting the underground leaders and brings them to the table of negotiation. Mr Yallay, the brother of Phizo, who was given the safe conduct served as a link between the underground Naga leaders and the recently constituted Liaison

¹ Ibid.

² The Warrior, Vol. V, No. 12, March 1976, Published by the Government of Nagaland. Department of Publicity, p.2.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid., Vol. V, No. 6, September, 1975, pp. 29-30.

⁵ Ibid.

Committee.¹ Zashei Huire, the underground President, selected Kevy Yallay, Z. Ramyo, Sanyi Darhu, Temjenba and Veniyi to represent the case of the Nagas and conduct a deal with the government of India. P. Singh, the then Governor of Nagaland took initiative to talk with the leaders of the underground Government on behalf of the Indian government. Temjenba, on behalf of the underground Government assured that "we are competent authority to take decisions and whatever decisions we take will be honoured by the Federal Government"² Meetings with the Governor of Nagaland and the representatives of the NFG were held at Shillong on 10th and 11th November, 1975. Since both the parties were predetermined to have some sort of solution, a three-point agreement was concluded which came to be known as the Shillong accord and these points are mentioned below:

1. The representatives of the underground organisations conveyed their decisions of their own volition, to accept without condition, the Constitution of India.
2. It was agreed that the arms, now underground, would be brought out and deposited at appointed places. Details for giving effect to this agreement will be worked out between the representatives of the government, the security forces and members of the Liaison Committee
3. It was agreed that the representatives of the underground organisations should have reasonable time to formulate other issues for discussions for the final agreement.³

The Shillong Accord, which was accepted by the underground organisations on 5 December 1975, was a historical event, as it opened a new chapter in the political history of Nagaland. It ushered an era of understanding, peace and tranquillity in this strife-torn state. The constitutional issue of the basic political problem and the insurgency were brought to an end by this agreement. The underground organisations and their movements thereafter ceased to exist, as all had agreed to be peaceful citizens of India and to function in accordance with the Indian constitution. The general mass heaved a sigh of relief

¹ Dawn of Peace in Nagaland, a booklet published by the Directorate of Information, Publicity and Tourism, Govt. of Nagaland, Kohima, 1975, p.1

² The Letter of Temjenba addressed to Longri Ao, quoted in the Dawn of Peace in Nagaland, op. cit., p.2.

³ Dawn of Peace in Nagaland, op. cit. p.3.

because the prolonged struggle and armed conflicts had come to an end.¹ The Government assured the undergrounds of their rehabilitation after their surrender. The Accord also provided the opportunity to those undergrounds that were across the border to come back to their land and to join the rest of their colleagues.

Thereafter, the five-point supplementary agreement was made for collection of arms and ammunitions deposited by the men of the FGN. Arms deposited were kept under the safe custody provided by the Peace Council. With the completion of such process the Naga freedom fighters were first time disarmed. The Governor of Assam suspended all operations and actions under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967² Thus the surrender of arms and ammunitions of the Naga freedom fighters and suspension of operations against them by the Government of India, in fact, created cordial atmosphere in Nagaland. The Governor, L. P. Singh, on the Republic Day of 1976 at Kohima declared that he would release all persons who had accepted the Shillong Accord and would refund to the villagers all collective fines imposed after September, 1972.³ Sentences of those who had already been convicted were remitted. The cases against the under trial prisoners were withdrawn and cases pending in investigation were closed.

It is true that advent of the Shillong Accord eased the tense situation in Nagaland to a great extent. It is also a fact that the Accord ended the armed conflicts between the Indian security forces and the Naga freedom fighters. People got relief. But it does not mean that the Naga issue had been solved forever. A good number of Naga armed soldiers surrendered with arms, no doubt, but there were still many of them who had neither accepted the Shillong Accord nor they had any intention to surrender. They were yet in foreign countries. The appeal of the Indian Home Ministers to those people to accept the Shillong Accord and accept the Indian citizenship made no effect upon them. These elements who were still committed to the cause of Naga nationalism, though remained inactive for a certain period of time, they became active by 1980, reviving freedom movement.

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid. pp. 4-

³ Speech of L.P. Singh, the Governor of Nagaland, delivered on 26th January 1976.

CHAPTER - SEVEN
RESURGENCE OF FREEDOM MOVEMENT
AND PEACE TALKS

The expectation that the freedom fighters who had not yet accepted the Accord would gradually fall in the main stream of the Indian national movement and the understanding of the nature of Naga nationalism by the Government in the ensuing years were not true. In fact, the peace, which was supposed to be nothing, but it has behind the scenes. Some are rightly apprehensive of getting ready for a resurgence of freedom at any time. These apprehensions were not unfounded. A group of the Naga freedom fighters, headed by T. S. Singh, had been rejecting the Shillong Accord and formed a new party, namely the Council of Nagaland (C.N.) in January 1, 1981. All these were

**CHAPTER SEVEN- RESSURGENCE OF FREEDOM MOVEMENT
AND PEACE TALKS**

Government got a shock in the form of the resurgence of the freedom movement in Nagaland. The Shillong Accord, 1975, which ended the Indian armed struggle in Nagaland, had been a political emergency had come to an end. The people of India the political emergency had come to an end because the majority of the freedom fighters had accepted the Accord as their own volition. The resurgence of the freedom movement in Nagaland was a political leaders was the resurgence of the undergrounds who were very active in the past. The resurgence of the Indian nationalism. Mr. P. V. Rao did not consider it as a resurgence of the freedom movement, but other prominent leaders of the NNC like Mr. T. S. Singh, President and Thakur Singh Marak, the General Secretary, had denounced it as a complete violation of the Naga's right to self-determination. The understanding of the Indian and the Nagaland governments that peace in Nagaland with the signing of the Shillong accord, thus, proved to be a failure. It had passed after signing of the Accord that freedom movement had been more appeared causing great problem of law and order on the one hand and total peace in Nagaland on the other.

It is interesting to note that P. V. Rao was the President of the NNC, and P. V. Rao provided that the NNC, as declared under the constitution of the Federal Government

CHAPTER – SEVEN
RESURGENCE OF FREEDOM MOVEMENT
AND PEACE TAKLS

The expectation that the freedom fighters who had not yet accepted the Shillong Accord would gradually fall in the main stream of the Indian nationalism was the underestimation of the nature of Naga nationalism by the Government of India. The ensuing years were to prove that, in fact, the peace, which was provided in Nagaland, was nothing, but a lull before the storm. Some one rightly apprehended that Nagaland was getting ready for a volcanic eruption at any time. Their apprehension became true when a group of the Naga freedom fighters. Headed by T. Muivah, Isak Swu and Khaplang, rejecting the Shillong Accord, formed a new party, namely, the Nationalist Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN) on January 1, 1980. All these three leaders were trusted lieutenants of Phizo at earlier time. They broke up their relations with the Naga Federal Government and formed a new Government of their own.

The Shillong Accord (1975) had created the feeling among both the Naga people and the people of India that the problem of insurgency had come to an end in Nagaland for ever because the majority of the freedom fighters had accepted the Indian citizenship “on their own volition”. The sore which was pinching in the mind of the Indian as well as Naga political leaders was the non-implementation of Clause three of the Accord because the undergrounds who were overseas had refused to endorse the Shillong Accord and to accept the Indian citizenship. Mr Phizo, though did not condemn the Accord, refused to acknowledge it, but other dominant leaders of the NNC like Isak Chishi Swu, the Vice President and Thuingaleng Muivah, the General Secretary, condemned the Accord and denounced it as a complete sell-out of the Naga’s right to self-determination. The understanding of the Indian and the Nagaland governments that peace had dawned in Nagaland with the signing of the Shillong accord, thus, proved wrong. Hardly five years had passed after signing of the Accord that freedom movement based on militancy once more appeared causing great problem of law and order on the one hand, and destabilising total peace in Nagaland on the other.

It is interesting to note that Phizo was the President of the NNC and its constitution provided that “the NNC, as declared under the constitution of the Federal Government of

Nagaland, is the only legitimate political party to seek the mandate of the Naga people after a final settlement of the Naga issue is reached with the Central Government of India.”¹ When the underground Naga representatives and the Governor of Nagaland were signing the Shillong Accord, Phizo was the President and Muivah was the General secretary of the NNC. Logically, Phizo should have been present to be a party of the Shillong agreement which was deciding the final settlement of the Naga issue, but the NNC has already passed information through Vizol, the leader of the Unaided Democratic Front, that in the event of any settlement between the Shillong Accord signatories and the Government of India, the NNC would not consider itself bound by the Accord. Since Phizo was away from India and Muivah was not a signatory, the Shillong accord was not binding for them.

Again, an examination of the Shillong Accord brings two facts to the light. Firstly, by clause I the underground representatives “conveyed their decision on their own volition to accept without condition the constitution of India”, which means that what they accepted was their own desire, and their desire was to live within India as per the constitutional provisions. In one way there was no issue left regarding the sovereign status of Nagaland. Secondly, Clause III mentions, “The representatives of the underground organisations should have reasonable time to formulate other issues for discussions for the final agreement.” Here a question may be raised as to what the other issues are. And also what is the meaning of ‘reasonable time’ to formulate such issues? Since they had agreed to accept the constitution of India, sovereign status of Nagaland could not be an issue. Hence ‘other issues’ may be some other problems of the Nagas, like unification of the Nagas living in other Indian states, border disputes between Assam And Nagaland etc. But there are some who interpret the ‘other issues’ in the sense that the Naga sovereignty would be discussed later or sooner when reasonable time comes. Thus the Naga issue remained hanging giving clue to those who were yet aspirants of a sovereign Nagaland.

T. Muivah and Isak Swu were the most dominant leaders of the NNC. The former is a Tangkhul Naga while the latter belongs to Sema tribe. They had tried to influence Phizo by sending a seven-man delegation to London to condemn the Shillong Accord “unreserved

¹ M. Horam, *Insurgency in Nagaland* op. cit., pp.188-89.

and without delay. But no positive response was received from Phizo.¹ Muivah and Isak had also requested Phizo to come Nagaland and guide the eastern sector of the Naga army. But Phizo maintained silence over the issue.² Though there is no reason known about Phizo's indifference towards direct indulgence in the Naga freedom movement, it appears that he was dissatisfied with the behaviours of the colleagues who had signed the Shillong accord. It may also be the reason that at such advance age he did not like to take active part in the Naga freedom movement, which had received big set back due to signing of the Shillong Accord. Any way, reluctance of Phizo to take active part in freedom struggle after signing of the Shillong Accord disappointed both Muivah and Isak. But these two leaders did not loose their vision and courage. They along with their supporters remained firm to fight for the cause the Naga people. Their commitment to the Naga's freedom even without Phizo continued. They treated the Shillong accord as a political trick of the Government of India, finish the Naga freedom movement forever. Moreover, they denounced the leadership of Phizo on the ground that "a particular leadership staying in a foreign land has sustained the existence of Nagaland thus far and that he alone will bring the final victory, too, needs immediate correction."³ As a first step to revive the Naga freedom movement Muivah and Isak decided to abandon the old organisation, the NNC and give birth to a new organisation, namely, the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN). This organisation came into being on January 31, 1980 under the strong leadership of Muivah as the General Secretary and Isak Swu as the Chairman. S.S. Khaplong, a Burmese Naga, was made as the Vice President of the newly emerged NSCN. These NSCN also set up the Government of People's Republic of Nagaland (GPRN) replacing the old Federal Government of Nagaland. The NSCN soon declared that it came into being for Naga sovereignty and to constitute Nagaland into a Christian socialism. Thus the NSCN having its own Government and expressing its hard determination to fight for the cause of the Naga people revived the Naga freedom movement from 1980 onwards, which opened a new chapter in the history of Naga freedom struggle.

¹ Tanjenba Ao, British Occupation of Naga Country, Mokokchung, 1993, p.299.

² The Region, June 1998, p.4.

³ M. Horam, Insurgency in Nagaland, New Delhi,

The concept of 'Christian socialism', in the words of Vashum, "is a combination of the age-old traditional socio-cultural and economic system of the Nagas with a tinge of Marxism, Leninism and Maoism... They (leaders of the NSCN) believed in combination of 'dictatorship' and 'democracy/intra democracy', and struggle through arms to achieve their cherished goal."¹ Muivah had been opposing the leadership of Phizo and the policy of the NNC from 1976². The vital issue among the leaders of the NNC was the policy of socialism in Nagaland initiated and supported by Muivah. There were many who viewed that once socialism was adopted, the NNC would face partition and "the blood of the Nagas will flow like river."³ But Muivah was determined to go for socialism.

The leaders of the Nagaland Government under the guidance of the Indian political leaders had succeeded in giving trial to the democratic processes in Nagaland, no doubt, but the trend of the government was towards setting up a capitalist society ~~in~~^{under} the guise of socialist, which was borrowed from the Indian political system. The leaders of the NSCN were quite alive to this fact and they had also observed that the established traditional Naga social, cultural and economic systems had badly been influenced by Indian political system. Muivah and Iask who has spent much time in China were under the influence of the political philosophy of Marxism-Leninism and Maoism. The model of the Naga society, which they had in, their mind was neither pure socialist on the line of Marxist nor related to democratic socialism practiced in India. They wanted a new society, which structure should have been socialist, no doubt, but based on religious and moral principles: Muivah knew it well that the emerging Naga society under the leadership "has developed elements of a class-society; its upper echelons has been swept by consumerism" at the cost of the erosion of "community value". Muivah was much inclined towards Chinese society, not towards the western countries. In his opinion the "West would only give some assurances, just to ensure that the Nagas did not go over to the Chinese totally." He had been in china from 1966 to 1971 as the representative of the NNC, and while living in China , he was very much influenced by the Chinese revolution and also the philosophies of Mao Ze Dang. He not only appreciated the views of Chinese leaders like Moa and Cou-

¹ R.Vashum, Nagas' Right to Self-determination, Mittal Publications, 2000, p.95.

² Nagaland Post, January 3, 1997. p.5.

³ P. Pashen, Khamniugan "Partition in Eastern Nagaland", in Nagaland Post, January 3, 1997. p.5.

en Lie, but also liked to follow their footprints in Nagaland. It is ^{evident} from the statement of Muivah, which inter alias, said, "They (Chinese leaders) were great leaders, who changed the lives of millions of their countrymen. They were people who saw much beyond time, who gave their country a great place in the world... They were committed revolutionaries." Muivah did not like to give any place of tribalism in his organisation and in the society that he dreamt of. He liked an egalitarian society without any reservation to tribalism, which "has split our movement before." Thus it is very much obvious that the leaders of the NSCN, specially Muivah and Isak were highly impressed by the Chinese leaders and they set up the NSCN with a view to not only achieving Naga's sovereignty but also to constituted a socialist Naga society based on the Chinese line. The only thing, which he did not like to give up, was the principles of Christianity. Muivah knew that teaching of Bible was the only viable means, which could protect the Naga people from falling into the lust of materialism and consumerism. So far the method of fighting with the Indian armed personnel was concerned, the warriors of the GPRN applied the old style of guerrilla warfare.

Phizo remained silent and inactive to the call of Muivah for joining the new movement for Naga's freedom. It was this fact, which created misunderstanding between these two giant leaders of the Naga freedom struggle Phizo did not entertain the call of Muivah, perhaps, he disliked to make Nagaland a socialist country based on Chinese pattern where religion has a little role while Nagaland is a Christian state.

As strategy to make the Naga people aware of their right to self-determination and create a favourable circumstance the leaders of the NSCN, Muivah and Isak adopted the propaganda policy reiterating the old stand that Nagaland had never been a part of India and that the Nagas had forcibly been occupied by the "Indian occupations forces". They made appeals to the general Naga people to support the NSCN and participate in the Naga freedom movement. They also claimed that the NSCN was the only authentic body of the Naga people to fight for the cause of the Naga's sovereignty. The NSCN through its various documents spread the view that "All castes and communities had different history of their own. The Naga history is for safety and happiness. The Nagas had never made friendship with Indians. Hence there can never be peace between the Nagas and the

Indians.”¹ According to the documents seized from the men of Muivah the aim of the NSCN Government was “to drive out Buddhism and Hinduism from Nagaland and Nagaland will stand for Christ.”² To exert the influence of the NSCN and also to obtain support from other extremist organisations of the North-eastern India, Muivah And his men established link with the Bodo Security Force, the National Liberation Front of Tripura, the People’s Liberation Army of Manipur and some other militant groups of Meghalaya, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh. In 1994, the Government of the NSCN along with some like-minded revolutionary groups launched a Front, namely, the Self Defence United Front of the South-East Himalayan Region (SDUF). The basic objectives of the Front are “solidarity and better coordination among the Front members on one hand, and on the other, to resist against Indian expansionism and India state terrorism, forced Indian occupation, Indian domination, assimilation and suppression.”³ The new Front pledged to support the just struggle of Jammu and Kashmir people and the Jharkhandis, the Uttranchal movement, the Ghurkhas and all other who are weakened to awaken to save themselves from the centuries of Indian exploitation and suppression. ⁴

It is very much obvious that the groups attached to the SDUF share common view that they had natural; right to have their sovereign and the Indian government has forcibly subjugated independent states and them. They all joined their hands together to have collective stand and force the Indian Government to liberate them so that they should have the Government and political systems of their choice suited to their people. They are also under the impression that if they fight together, it would be quite impossible for the Government of India to suppress their rebellion because the Indian Government is not strong enough to rule over the people by suppressing national feelings of the peoples of North-East India.

Government of India got convinced that insurgency in Nagaland had erupted with greater force, when the activities of the NSCN against India and the Government of Nagaland became rampant. About three hundred Khamnugan Nagas from North Myanmar had taken

¹ Nagaland Times, Vol.XI, No.1, July16, 1980. P.4.

² Ibid.

³ Fransis Kikon, “NSCN and Allies from SDUF” in the North-East Update, Vol. 1, No. 6., Dimapure, February, 1995, p.8.

⁴ Ibid.

shelter in various parts of Tuensang district to protect themselves from the wrath of the men of Muiah. It was also learnt that nearly two hundred Kiamnungans in Myanmar had been exterminated and hundreds of villages were either burnt down or badly damaged. It was the incident, which caused serious problem of refugees in Tuensang in 1980, soon after emergence of the NSCN. This created fear-psychosis and mass panic among the Khamnungns settled in the district of Tuensang. On September 3,1980, a group of 150 underground Nagas belonging to the NSCN (I-M) attacked Pang village of Tuensang district along the border of Myanmar. During the four hours of carnage in the village four children, one old man and one village guard were killed. Some houses were also burnt down.¹ According to Rev. Imti, the Field Director of the Khamnungan areas of the Nagaland Baptist Church Council, the Naga militants killed about one unhindered Khamnugans including eight Church leaders in September 1980.² An alarming incident occurred in the district of Tuensang when Nuklu Konyak, a Congress (I) MLA from the Tuensang area, was killed along with two other persons in an ambush on April 27,1991 by some unknown assailants.³ This was the first major incident of politically motivated violence in Nagaland after signing of the Shillong Accord. Noklu was first elected unconnectedly to the Naga Legislative Assembly in 1974 from Tobu constituency. He was re-elected from the same constituency in 1977 on the erstwhile UDF ticket, but later on he had joined the Congress (I). Though the real culprits could not be arrested, the murder of Nuklu created fear in the mind of the Naga politicians. All the sections of the people widely condemned the violence.

During 1990s, the anti-Indian and anti-Nagaland government activities of the underground Nagas increased to a great extent. The Naga freedom fighters began to attack and ambush the Indian security forces openly. The superintendent of Police of Mokokchung district was shot dead in the broad day light in the main market. Thereafter, the Deputy Commissioner of Kohima was killed by a group of the underground Nagas when he was going to attend his office.

¹ Assam Tribune, (Guwahati),September 3, 1980.

² Nagaland Times(Dimapur), Vol. XI, No. 9, September 3, 1980.

³ The Platform. V,No. 3, (Kohima), May 7,1981.

The Government of India being alert of the activities of the NSCN deployed once more security forces where the presence of the Naga militants was reported. Armed conflicts once more began where battles began causing too much troubles and inconvenience to the Naga people. The Government again promulgated the Disturbed Areas Act with a view to controlling the situation and checking up the unlawful activities of the Naga militants. The promulgation of Disturbed area Act and Maintenance of Law And Order Act empowered the Indian security personnel to raid every house hold of the Nagas at any time to search the rebels and arrest them. Such military operations disturbed total peace of the state. The public began to demand the immediate withdrawal of such draconian Acts. Moreover, numerous people lost their lives and properties during the armed conflicts between these two forces. The peace of the state was once more totally shattered. The people of Nagaland and the Government of India, too, accepted the truth that Shillong accord had lost its significance on the one hand, and insurgency in Nagaland had returned back with greater force, on the other. As the years rolled down people witnessed a number of incidents where many of the Nagas were either killed or tortured. The peace of Nagaland once more began to bleed.

DIVISION IN THE NSCN

In June 1988, Mr Khaplang and Dalley Mongro parting their way with one-time close associates, Muivah and Isak, formed a new group, namely the NSCN (K), Khaplang assumed the responsibility of the group as the Chairman while Dalley Mongro became the General Secretary of newly formed splintered group of the erstwhile NSCN. On the other hand, Muivah and Isak termed his group as the NSCN (IM). Thus the group, which had taken a vow to fight for the cause of the Naga's independence till the last drop of their blood, got splintered even less than a decade causing utter surprise and disappointment among the Naga people who were aspirants of Naga independence. The big shock and troubles which came to the Naga people was not the division among the freedom fighter, but appearance of bitter enmity between these two splintered parts because of the enmity which pushed back the major issue like Naga freedom and struggle against the Government of India, on the one hand, and brought forward unbridled factional fighting among the Nagas on the other.

Asoso Yonuo is of the view that the political unity of the Naga politicians is on the raw stage. This is "because of the fact that the Nagas are still on the way to political maturity from centuries of backwardness," They have not come out "altogether from the clutches of the traditional feuds, headhunting and tribalism deleterious to unity, and it is the fratricidal conflict among themselves into which they had been politically divided."¹ Confirming the same view Charles Chasie says, "The fabric of Naga unity and society... are being torn.. Every issue is seen through the prism of personality clashes"² Mr Chasie is very much correct in ^{his} observation of the cause of unity among the Naga people whether underground or over ground. Personality clash is one of the most dangerous factors among the Naga leaders, which has hardly allowed them to stand, united and work collectively. Tribaalism has been another ruinous factor among the Naga people to jeopardise their unity. During the period of ceasefire (1967) considerable amount of efforts were applied to settle peace, but it had all failed causing a serious set back on the part of the underground organisation. This had resulted in inner fighting among them and weakening of the strength of the undergrounds .It was division among the underground Naga leaders, which had enabled the Government of India to control the situation and ultimately signing of the Shillong Accord in 1975. Muivah and Isak once more revived the Naga freedom movement, no doubt, but the NSCN could not remain united for long. Personality clash soon began between Muivah and Khaplang who had willingly joined their hands to fight for the cause of the Nagas. The clash ultimately resulted in the division of the NSCN in 1988, Thereafter, both the factions became bitter enemies to each other and both engaged in two fighting fronts- one against the Government of India and another against their own fellow friends who had been together till yesterday.

An analytical study and observation of the rise and growth of Naga freedom movement reveals the truth that it has always remained the victim of personality clashes among the leaders. The personality clashes among the underground Naga leaders never allowed the freedom movement to be viable. Moreover, tribalism has remained another vital issue among various Naga leaders, which has created rift among them at the cost of their mission and objectives. To quote Vashum once more," The Nagas have been badly divided on

¹ Asoso Yonuo, *The Rising Nagas*, Vivek Publishing House, New Delhi, 1974, p.383.

² Charles Chasie, *The Naga Imbroglio*, Standard Publishers, Kohima, 1999. pp. 137-18.

factional political parties cutting across tribal solidarities and allegiances... Today every Naga tribe big or small is observed to have divided as to their loyalty and affiliation to one underground political group or the other. Domination of one political group/faction with their counter-parts among the tribes is also prominent.”¹

There was a time when the Naga freedom movement was under the hegemony of the Semas, but soon after the failure of the Delhi Peace talks in 1967, the leadership of the underground organisation shifted to the Agamis. After the assassination of the underground Naga General, Kaito Sema, the C-in-C of the Federal Naga Government's army, Mao Angami was appointed as the Federal Army General. It was this change, which became “a sore point with the Sema group”. The Presidentship of the Federal Government also passed into the hands of the Angamis. It was Muivah who was made the executive head. In the words of Horam, “The Sema hegemony in Naga politics (underground) was destroyed and power passed on to the Angami tribes. After that, the Naga militancy turned towards tribalism. The Angami rebels were under the impression that Kaito had sold out to the Indians and had accepted the huge sum of money from the Government of India.” On the other hand, the Sema group doubted Angamis' hands in the murder of Kaito. Thus the Sema rebels kidnapped Mehiasiu Angami and kept him under captivity for several months. By 1968, the Semas and the Angamis were far away from each other having their own respective Governments. It is, thus, evident that feeling of tribalism and loyalty of the people to their respective tribes have remained great hurdles to the Naga's unity, either underground or over ground.

Another cause of disunity among the Naga freedom fighters has remained the unlimited aspiration of the underground Naga leaders. Generally the Naga leaders are power monger. Rivalry and quarrelling among the militant Naga leaders began for powers from the beginning of their organisation. Charles Chasie has rightly remarked that, “Naga history has only too frequently been reduced to personality clash of the leaders, whether the underground or over ground. This often eluded the thing borderline between the subject and the object of the ultimate goal. And in the name of the people, the leaders frequently expected, even demanded, that the people (should) follow wherever they lead, right or

¹ R. Vashum, Nagas' Right to self-determination. Op. Cit., p.139.

wrong. The only alternative they are given is in terms of 'if you are not with me, you are against me.'¹

The basic reason of the rift in NSCN, in April 1988, was the personality clash between Muivah and Khaplang. None of them was ready to compromise at the cost of their personal superiority. In the view of Muivah and Isak, Khaplang "desired to be pumped with special power and position." On the initiative of Khaplang "he was given second in command and his men were accommodated in several high positions."² According to Muivah Khaplang belonged to such a community where there was no place for democratic elements. He also viewed that Khaplang suffered from "superiority complex" and he preferred "power and status".³ In the words of Muivah "he (Khaplang) did not hesitate to stop any thing when it came to the point of his self-gratification. He was never guided by scruples. Most of the time, he abused with power and placed himself above the organisation, nay, he was a law unto himself... He was averse to democratic practices."⁴ On the other hand, Khaplang was of the view that Muivah, being a Tankhul Naga, was very much against the Burmese Naga tribes to which Khaplang belongs. That is why Muivah committed heinous crime against the Konayks and the Burmese Nagas. In the opinion of Khaplang Muivah did not allow other to supersede him. Thus it is evident that both the leaders had personal cause related to their ego that ultimately divided the NSCN and made the divided factions bitter enemies to each other.

The majority of the rank and file of the undivided NSCN was from the Konyak tribe where the Tankhul dominated the Command structure. It was this factor, which "created discontent among the Konyaks. There was also apprehensions among the Konyaks and the Myanmaris Nagas that the Tankhuls were about to strike a deal with the Central Government". Thus this factor "resulted in split in the NSCN in 1988. The Konyaks formed a breakaway faction under the leadership of Khole Konyak and S.S.Khaplang." which came to be known as the NSCN (K).⁵ Thereafter, severe inter-factional clashes began in which hundreds of the activists of the rival groups have been killed. The faction of Khaplang attacked Col. Ashino Chaomai, the Deputy Chief of the Naga Army, in April

¹ Daily Review, No. 4, Dimapur, November 4, 1997, p.3.

² The Joint Statement of Muivah and Isak, published in the Hill Express, February 6, 1990.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ South Asia Terrorism Portal, Nagaland Backgrounder, January 9, 2001.

1988, who belonged to the faction of NSCN (I-M). The Col. Was killed in the attack along with his two sons. In the words of Muivah and Isak "On 6th May 1988, the Myanmaris troops attacked us while waiting for ration at Lasa village. The attack was one of the worst in that everyone got scattered into jungles where many got killed in the hands of the chasing Khaplang's mad dogs."¹ Thus the enmity between these two factions of the undergrounds who were fighting shoulder to shoulder at a time has not allowed them to come near. Rather they are dead enemies to each other.

The vital question is not which faction of the NSCN is more or less responsible for disunity of the freedom fighters. The issue, which is more pertinent, is that their factional fighting is continued which has badly undermined the issue of Naga freedom. In the words of Timothy "The underground factions totally ignored the voice of people by killing their own brothers and sisters in the state. Naga Hoho, Naga Association of Mothers, Naga Students' Federation and other NGOs appealed to the undergrounds not to kill each other, but no avail. Random killing in public places without caring the innocent people,, even not sparing the students and children" is on.² In the words of S .S. Jamir, the Ex-chief Minister of Nagaland, "They (Naga freedom fighters) are fighting for the same cause, but they are killing each other... The main objective has taken the back seat where as ego problems and personal issues are dominating the present action,"³

Once the enmity took place between both the factions of the NSCN, it went on without any pause. Both began to claim the real heir of Nagaland, number of Nagas lost their lives due to factional fighting and people faced a lot of problems. Both the factions of the NSCN claim to be real heir of Nagaland. Their aim and objective are the same, but they are at constant bloody rivalry and clashes that has created mass terror and fear among the general people. Factional fighting and anti-national activities provoked the Indian government to declare the whole of Nagaland as a disturbed area and to reinforce the Disturbed Area Act enabling the personnel of the Indian security forces to raid every Naga house at any time and take every Naga in custody simply on the pretext of suspicion and doubt. All these

¹ The Hill Express, February 6, 1990, p.4.

² Daily Review, Vol.XII, No. 153, October 24, 1998, p.2.

³ S.C. Jamir, Realities of Naga Political Problem, a Booklet issued by Press Secretary to Chief Minister, Government of Nagaland, Kohima, p.5.

events harassed the general people on the one hand, and badly disrupted the peace and progress of the state, on the other.

Muivah and Isak believe that the group led by Khaplang is nothing but a 'puppet' of the Nagaland Government led by .C. Jamir while Khaplang called the Muivah's faction as 'blood sucker' of the Nagas. Muivah is a Tangkhul. Khaplang maintains that the Tangkhuls are not Nagas. "The Nagas did not know about the Tangkhuls because they never participated in the Nagas' struggle against the Indian armed forces right from 1954 to 1964."¹ The group led by Khaplang does not like to see the Tangkhuls in Nagaland because "There has been no place in the Naga soil where the Tangkhuls have not killed, murdered an innocent Naga."²

Thus allegations and counter allegations levelled by both the groups against each other has created more confusion among the general people. It has also brought tribalism on fore front. The Tangkhuls who are mostly living in some districts of Manipur are more advanced. Since 1970, the Tangkhuls increased their influence in the underground activities and come near to the over ground activities also. This is one of the vital reasons, which does not allow unity among the two dominant groups. One more reason of their disunity has been, in the words of Vashum, "some feelings of discontentment and jealousy among others, are sometimes manipulated by some politicians / leaders of respective tribes for vested interests to create confusion among the Naga masses... These crises have been a great stumbling blocks for the Naga National movement as they are divisive in Nature."³

It is also said that Khaplang has no intension at all to the incorporation of 'Nagaland for Christ' in the manifesto of the NSCN. According to Muivah and Isak he had objected the ethical codes of the NSCN such as abstaining from smoking tobacco, taking narcotic stimulants, drinking alcohol, stealing, misappropriation and defection of Government

¹ The Threat, a Booklet Published by Information and Publicity affairs, Government of the People's Republic of Nagaland. P.5.

² Ibid. p.13.

³ R. Vashum, Naga's right to Self-determination, op. cit., p.140.

funds, immorality in sex etc. ¹It is also said that Khaplang prefers autocratic type of rule, not democratic or socialistic. However, the group of Muivah has mostly mooted this opinion about Khapalang and his group. Hence reality about these allegations is yet to be established. Refuting all these allegations Khaplang says that it is Muivah and his men who have accepted money from the government of India to hatch plot against Khaplang and his supporters.² Thus these are allegations and counter allegations, which have been spread among the people to malign the image of each other. There is also a rumour that the Intelligence Branch of the Government of India is behind the mess between these two rival groups.

Whether the Government of India is getting undue benefit of the split of the Naga freedom movement or not cannot be confirmed. However, it is crystal clear that their disunity and internecine feuds and armed clashes have enabled the Government to fish in the troubled water of the Naga issue. High handedness of the Indian security forces into the personal life of the Nagas cannot be denied. The army and paramilitary forces have been in the North East region of India for four decades and over these years their continued presence has undermined the civil and legislative authority. Their interference in the affairs of the Nagas has brought a high degree of uncertainty and insecurity to the lives of the general people. The promulgation of extraordinary draconian laws by the Central Government in the pretext to maintain peace and order by declaring Nagaland as a disturbed area has brought about more troubles to the Naga people. It cannot be denied that the Indian armed personnel while dealing with the Naga people have committed various crimes. There are various such incidents committed by the Indian jawans which prove the reality that their treatment with the Naga people have been inhuman and merciless. For instance, the report of the DM Sen Commission, which was set up in April 1995, with the Justice DM Sen to probe into incidents of shooting, arson and rape by various paramilitary forces in Akhuloto, Kohima and Mokokchung occurring between December 1994 and March 1995, reveals the truth that the Indian jawans in Nagaland have remained more indiscipline, indiscriminate and inhuman while dealing with the Nagas. On March 5, 1995, the Jawans of Rastriya Rifles while coming to Dimapur from Manipur opened

¹ Ibid. Pp.99-100.

² Ibid. P.97.

discriminate firing on the civilians at Kohima killing seven of them. Justice Sen ascertained the fact that the RR personnel including officers "acted in a most irresponsible manner" and the firing was accompanied by cold-blooded murder of innocent civilians, some within their residential houses." ¹ Another incident of indiscriminate activities of the 15th Assam Rifles occurred January 23, 1995 when the security personnel in pursuit of insurgents raided some house in the village of Akhuloto. Just in the name of suspicion they burned their houses, beat the villagers. Ascertaining the fact Justice Sen noted that the arson was "unjustified" and killing of Hozheto Sema was "cold-blooded murder" He further noted that it was "a sheer act of criminality"²

Thus it is very much clear that whenever the tussles and conflicts began between the Naga freedom fighters and the Indian security personnel, the worst sufferers have been the innocent villagers. The villagers are suspected that they are sympathetic to the Naga militants and they provide them support and shelter. If it is true also, the villagers do not do it willingly. Reality is that if they fail to obey the militants, they have to pay heavy price.

On the other hand, both the factions separating their way from each other became busy with increasing their influence among the people and proving their bonafide for the cause of the Naga's freedom. Both began to condemn the Government of India calling it 'occupationist', 'emperialist' and enemy of the Naga people. Moreover, both the factions adopted various means to popularise the Naga case in abroad. For instance, the NSCN (I-M) arranged admission of Nagaland a member of the unrepresentative Nations and Peoples Organisation (UNPO). This organisation was founded in 1991 by the representatives of the occupied nations, indigenous peoples, minorities and other disenfranchised people with the marked objective to raise a voice for the oppressed, ignored and suppressed peoples. It also established its cells in several foreign countries. Efforts have also been applied to raise Naga voice in the various sessions of the United Nations. Voice has also been raised condemning the violence of human rights in Nagaland. The leaders of the NSCN (I-M) along with some like-minded revolutionary groups launched affront in November 1994

¹ Economic and Political Weekly, August 24-31, 1996, p.2285.

² Ibid.

calling it 'Self-Defence United Front of the south-East Himalayan Region (SDUF with the following objectives:

- (1) For solidarity and better coordination among the Front members; and
- (2) To resist against Indian expansionism and Indian state terrorism, forced Indian occupation, Indian domination, assimilation and suppression.¹

In the meanwhile, the breakaway faction, the NSCN., floated a Front called as the 'Indo-Burma Revolutionary Front (IBRF) for liberation of the peoples/nationalities situated in the Indo-Burma frontiers The United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA), joined hands with IBRF. Thus it is obvious that both the rival groups followed the different paths, but for single cause, that is the liberation of Nagaland from India.

SPLIT IN NAGA NATIONAL COUNCIL

It has already been narrated that the NNC is the oldest and first Naga organisation which under the leadership of A.Z. Phizo who had assumed the responsibility for liberation of Nagaland from India's occupation. So long as Phizo was active, the NNC remained dominant. After exit of Phizo from India, this organisation was divided into moderate and extremist Nagas. The moderate group which tried to persuade the Government of India for creation of Nagaland state while the group of extremists continued struggle against the Indian Government for achievement of Naga's freedom. After signing of the Shillong Accord in 1975 and appearance of the NSCN, the voice of the NNC weakened and its strength declined. Phizo died in England on April 30, 1990. His death caused a severe blow to the strength of the NNC. In 1990, the NNC was divided because a controversy took place about the leadership of the organisation to succeed late Phizo, who was the President of the NNC. The issue to appoint a new President caused split in the NNC. There were two factions of the NNC- one led by Adeno, the daughter of Phizo, and another led by Khodao Yanthan, the Vice President of the NNC till the split occurred. These two leaders did not come to the point of unity with the result that the oldest Naga organisation was bifurcated into two groups- NNC (A) and NNC (K) in 1995. The NNC

¹ Francis Kikon, "NSCN and Allies Form SDUF", in the North- East update, Vol. 1, No. 6, op. cit., February, 1995, p.8.

led by Khodao merged with the NSCN (I-M). Meanwhile Zashei Hurie, the President of the Federal Government, an organ of the NNC (A), condemned the Shillong Accord first time in 1996. It may be noted that it was Phizo, the President of the undivided NNC who had not yet condemned the Shillong Accord. Now after twenty years of the Accord, which was condemned by the President of the FGN, failed to regain the lost image of the Federal Government and the NNC. Gradually the NNC lost its voice among the people, though it is still in existence.

It has already been stated that both the groups of the NSCN adopted militancy as a means to achieve the end. Militancy is a discontent of a group, which uses violence to achieve its goal. It is born out of some committed ideologies of a particular group. A militant group is always ready to use force when its target and aims are opposed. It sets rebellion against the ruling Government with a view to throwing it over by using force. In the words of K. Anand, militancy generally aims at creating mass consciousness among the people to convince them the cause of militancy and obtain their support. It also ventures to project itself that it is imbued with an ideal and common goodness of people.¹ The followers of militancy form their own Government, parallel to the ruling government, establish army, recruit youths and provide military training to them and establish contact with foreign Governments to obtain arms and ammunitions. They apply all efforts to internationalise the issue to obtain international support. They generally adopt guerrilla warfare. They target Government buildings, offices, properties, police and army posts etc. They create terror and fear in general. Militancy gives rise to terrorism, jingoism and despotism.

In its early stage the ideals set by the militant group are related to national feeling, brotherhood among their supporters and public welfare also. When no head is paid to their demand, they become adamant, turn rude and even violent. Thus mass terror and violence are the later advancement of militancy. When the militants become hopeless and irritated, they adopt the means of violence and spread fear-psychosis among the concerned authorities and people. Here militancy moves towards terrorism, which effects are more injurious to the people. To run the Government and maintain the armed forces militants

¹ D. K. Anand, *Insurgency and Counter-Insurgency, A Study of Modern warfare*, New Delhi, 1996, pp. 45-46.

need huge amount of money, and the main source of earning money is imposition of taxes on the people. To meet this need first they contact big business houses and industrial enterprises. Thereafter they tax Government officials, private and public firms, shopkeepers, contractors and lastly the general public. Showing terror and giving threat to pay money militants force these people. At denial they are punished and harassed. It is interesting to note that the habit of extorting money from the people aggravates their thirst for money and money, ultimately, becomes their object.¹

So far the case of Naga militancy is concerned, it has remained a viable method to pressurise the government of India to consider the Naga's demand of self-determination. To support their organisations and continue freedom struggle they need money. That is why they adopted the device to collect money by imposing taxes and asking the people for volunteer donation. In the beginning, the drive of money collection from the people was not harsh and forceful, but as the years rolled down and their interest in money developed more, the method of collection money became rough and painful causing "untold miseries" for the Naga people.² Their extortion drive for money from the Government servants, shopkeepers, contractors, businessmen, each household etc. created panic all over the state. In the words of Timothy "People were taxed by undergrounds left and right. They taxed businessmen and in return the businessmen recovered the taxed paid to the undergrounds from public by increasing the prices in the markets. Taxes were imposed on vehicles, goods or essential commodities and all items in the state."³ Gradually, the extortion money from the public has become an established profession of the freedom fighters. The attachment of the Naga freedom fighters to money collection drive has not only affected the freedom movement but also created troubles and disappointment among the general Naga mass. The Naga national movement" has turned to something like the welfare of the underground activities... Their accountability to the people is very much lacking... the money they collect is too heavy for the public. Moreover, the collection is usually harsh

Naga freedom struggle and the unpleasant behaviours of the Naga freedom

D. Inlu, a popular Naga author, said:

¹ Archana Goel, *Terrorism: Causes and Consequences*, New Delhi, 1997, pp.75-80.

² *The Naga News* (a weekly report) published by the Directorate of Information and Publicity and Tourism, Government of Nagaland, Kohima, September, 1975.

³ *The Daily Review*, Vol.XII, No. 153, Dimapur, October 24, 1998. p.2.

and there is nothing like 'voluntary payment' now- a -days. Every thing is compulsory or one has to risk his life."¹

Freedom movement demands sacrifices, but most of the leaders of the freedom fighters have become greedy and power-mongers. They have inclined towards material prosperity. Cease-fire has enabled them to move freely in the towns and markets and live luxurious life. They have been found applying terrorist tactics to terrorise shopkeepers, Government servants, contractors, teachers, engineers and other to collect money. They have also adopted the policy of kidnapping for money. At denial of money demanded by them the people are , tortured, harassed, beaten and even killed. Such terrorist activities of the Naga freedom fighters have not only maligned the prestige of the freedom fighters but also created doubt about their sanctity of the mission in the mind of the general people. The beginning of Naga freedom struggle was fair and without any factionalism. Freedom was the cry of every Naga mouth. People were ready to sacrifice every thing voluntarily in the name of freedom. Money was collected, no doubt, but not by using force. But scenario has totally changed today. Extortion of money from the general public even without the permission of the high command of the underground authorities have become a perpetual *features* of the Naga freedom fighters.

One may raise the question how and why the Naga freedom struggle has become so fearful, terrible, destructive and complex. Kezhalesa, a University student of Nagaland while answering such questions says" The Naga nation is torn by internal dissection into several factions, anti-social elements, angry factional killings, undue demands, formidable extortion, illegal taxes, rapacious intimidations tribalism, heartless corruption and plaguing economy of outland."² He asks, "Are there the signs of struggling for sovereignty and do Nagas believe that through these means we can achieve our goal?"³ Commenting on the Naga freedom struggle and the unpleasant behaviours of the Naga freedom fighters, Kaka D Iralu, a popular Naga author, said:

¹ Quoted in R. Vashum, Naga's Right to self - Determination, op. cit., p.142.

² Kezhalesa, "The Naga Struggle Today: Incredible", in annual Magazine published by the Nagaland University Students Union, Headquarters, Lumami, 2001, p.26.

³ Ibid.

“The Naga political struggle has reached a stage where it appears that the Naga right to live or death now lied in the hands of some political leaders...There law is the law of gun. Have we Nagas surrendered our life to these leaders and to their law of gun? Is the Naga army uniform a licence for its bearers to abduct us, extort us, terrorise us and even beat us to death or shoot us to death?”¹ Expressing the same view about high handedness of the freedom fighters in Nagaland and their unpleasant behaviours with the Naga citizens another Naga scholar says:

“The national workers and fighters fighting in the name of liberty and sovereignty have made Nagaland a battle field with their arms conflicts and terrorist tactics. They cannot be given the name of terrorist group with their threats, intimidations, violence, kidnapping and factional cashes, (but) and they can be rightly termed as terrorist group.”² Charles Chasie, the eminent Naga writer, says, “In the name of people, the leaders frequently expected, even demanded that the people (should) follow wherever they lead, right or wrong. The only alternative they are giving is in terms of ‘if you are not for me, you are against me’”³

Since India’s independence the Naga freedom fighters have been talking a lot about Naga’s freedom and freedom movement. Huge amount of blood has been shed in the name of freedom fighting, but freedom is not in the sight. Rather the people have suffered a lot. Who is responsible? What wrong has taken place in the freedom movement? A common feeling is emerging among the general people that “national work” has become a “money-making industry” a kind of mafia, specific to our situation.” Nationalism is a common feeling and national movement is a common activity. It cannot be the monopoly of a select few. In ⁴the words of Chasie, in the name of nationalism in Nagaland “much blood has been shed which only resulted in factional positions becoming more entrenched and difficult to give up.”⁵ Factional fighting, which has taken deep root among different factions of the underground Nagas, harms more the general people. They are more disturbed because “the spate of violence is now taking place in the busiest and crowded areas, exposing the entire innocent civilian population to became human shields”⁶ According to Naga Mothers’

¹ Eastern Mirror, Vol. I, No.111, Dimapur, November 28,2002, p.4.

² Ibid.p.4.

³ Daily Review, Kohima, November 4, 1997, p.3.

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⁵ Charles Chasie, The Naga Imbroglia, United Publishers, Guwahati,2000,p.149.

⁶ Daily Review, September 7, 1998.

Association the factional fighting has forced the Naga mothers to mourn deeply on “the deaths of our children regardless of their faults or innocence... Bloodshed cannot solve any problems rather it will only create more troubles.”

The answers recorded in the table mentioned below which have been received from various respondents of different people through questionnaire regarding the major causes of rift in the rank and file of the leaders of the freedom fighters are self-explanatory.

TABLE – ONE
REASONS OF RIFT IN THE UNDERGROUND SET UP

S/I No.	Respondents and their designation	Opinion/views of respondents
(1)	(2)	(3)
1.	An Ex-Chief Minister of Nagaland	Prolonged struggle without achievement of any sort to reach the goal, personality clash propounded by greed for power, no vision, no discipline, no direction and most of the national workers are recruited from drop-outs who do not fit into society.
2.	An Ex-Underground leader	Ideological differences, NNC stands for Nagaism and individualism, NSCN stands for socialism where there is no scope for individual property.
3.	A Writer and Politician	Some over ground political leaders are responsible to divide freedom fighters.
4.	A lecturer	Naga state political leaders for their selfish end adopted the policy of divide and rule patronising certain factions and used them.
5.	A Principal of a Govt. College (Nagaland)	Leadership crisis was one of the major factors.
6.	A University Teacher	Factional fighting among the freedom fighters
7.	A Principal of a Govt. College	Politicians and the Indian leaders misuse the UG leaders.
8.	An Advocate	Crazy for leadership and loss of vision.

(1)	(2)	
9.	A Lecturer of the Govt college	Leaders of freedom fighters are handiwork of over ground politicians who stand to meet their political end.
10.	A famous Naga author	(a) Tribal leadership jealousy (b) Tribal factions and loss of vision and (c) Lack of dislocated leaders.
11.	A devoted Naga citizen	Want of leadership
12.	A Vice Principal of a College	Tribalism and differences in political ideologies among freedom fighters.
13.	A Head master of a Govt. High School	A lust to become the ownership of freedom movement without understanding the reality.
14.	A Post Graduate Teacher	Device of Indian leaders to divide Naga leaders and rule over them.
15.	A Naga leader and social worker	The Indians are the main players for causing division among the freedom fighters.

The answers recorded in Table one clearly indicate that the rift among the underground organisations is the established fact and the most notable factor of the rift is disunity among the leaders of the freedom fighters. They have fallen victim of the tricks applied by the Indian political leaders and also the Naga political leaders who are much more inclined towards the Government of India. There are also ideological differences among them. It is also a fact that the Naga freedom fighters lack true commitment to their decided goal and their vision for future politics is not clear.

Today the Naga freedom movement has taken the tribal character that has complicated the issue more. No less than four factions are in being. The veil of fear and terror is such that no one dares to speak the truth and express feeling. No one is sure about who stands where. The undergrounds cannot abandon their over ground political leaders. People want peace and economic development and they are fed up with the extortion and high handed ways of various underground factions. Since the Naga freedom fighters always talk of Naga nationalism and assure people of bringing it to them, they want to take all undue benefits from the people. Chasie has rightly remarked that Naga nationalism has become a licence

¹ Charles Chasie, *The Naga Insurgency*, op. cit. p. 124.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Rukvo Hah, "Thirteen on the Peace Process", *The Naga Post*, October 11, 2002, p. 7.

“to do almost whatever you wanted because you were “bringing” independence.”¹ To quote Chasie once more” The Naga national workers seem to think that, by virtue of their having joined an underground faction, they have climbed a peg above the rest of the populace and have the right to impose themselves on the people for whose welfare... they are fighting.”² Not only the National workers, even those who are directly or indirectly related to them ,also pose not less than them . Having some sort of relations with the undergrounds such elements think that they can also inflict any harm to their opponents with the help of the undergrounds. All such trends, which are emerging in Nagaland under the shadow of freedom movement, are resulting in “political suicide for the advocate of Naga sovereignty.”³ All these activities have weakened the strength of freedom movement on the one hand, and badly maligned the image of freedom fighters, on the other. The main issue, Naga freedom movement has been put on sidetrack and personality clashes among the leaders of the freedom fighters and the issue of tribalism have come on fore front in Nagaland. Under such very confusing and alarming situation “if independent Nagaland is attained without unification of factions, it would rather create an embarrassing history ...”⁴

There was a time when freedom movement either violent or non-violent had mass public support in Nagaland. Every Naga preferred freedom from the alien rule. Today scenario has totally changed. Freedom is still the desire of the people, no doubt, but their faith in the method , specially militancy, used by the freedom fighters *is* losing its ground because the faith of the people in violent method is declining. Moreover, observing the highhandedness of the freedom fighters, their undisciplined behaviours, selfish attitude, their inclination towards money-making affairs, the common Naga mass are not only critical to the activities of the freedom fighters but also suspicious to the goal for which they stand. This is evident from the answers collected through the questioners from various respondents. Table two presents the clear picture in this regard.

¹ Charles Chasie, *The Naga Imbroglia*, op. cit., p.124.

² Ibid..

³ Ibid.

⁴ Rukuzo Hoshi, “Unification and Reconciliation”, in *Nagaland Post*, October 11,2002, p. 5.

TABLE - TWO

**FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR DECLINATION OF FAITH
IN FREEDOM MOVEMENT**

S/L No.	Respondents	Answers of respondents
1.	A Lecturer	Number of NGOs has come up as a platform to solve the Naga problem through peaceful means.
2.	A Public leader and social worker	The word insurgency is not applicable in the Naga freedom movement.
3.	An Ex- C.M.	They are the most hated groups. People are tired, fade up and angry at the undergrounds. They do not talk about politics but money and money etc. Threats, intimidation and kidnapping are their <i>mode of operandi</i>
4.	A lecturer	Factionalism and harassment of of general public through extortion of money
5.	A DIET Teacher	Their fighting with their own flesh and blood, fellow, brothers and sisters in the name of freedom fighting against the alien force.
6.	A teacher of Govt. college	Tricks applied by the state politicians to divide them.
7.	A Lecturer	Lack of the spirit of patriotism
8.	An assistant Teacher	Factionalism among freedom fighters and non-hearing to the voice of the general public
9.	A Lady Lecturer	Factionalism has entered into fight for eco survival and not socio-political freedom.
10.	A Famous Naga author	Infighting, poor economic position and strength without clear vision.
11.	A Post graduate Teacher	Naga public have no faith in freedom fighters because they are selfish.
12.	An assistant government Teacher	Extortion, fear to speak truth and lust for power.
13.	A Lecturer	People's interest in economic development and freedom struggle has been replaced by terrorism.
14.	A social Worker	People have lost faith in them due to personality cult, dirty fighting, killing, extortion, theft, random demand, intoxication etc.
15.	A teacher	Freedom struggle is now not directed towards the occupationist forces but towards our Naga brothers and sisters.

The Table placed above presents clear indication that the Naga freedom movement is loosing its ground and strength at faster rate due to highhandedness of the freedom fighters

and their rapid fall in money extortion drive, their apathy towards the cause of the general Naga people, their internal factional fighting, etc. The freedom movement needs sacrifices, courage to tolerate troubles and inconveniences, not luxuries and comforts. Again, freedom movement must be directed towards the goal avoiding the diversions, which take place on the way of the movement. It is sad to note that the Naga freedom movement has been diverted from its real path due to the factors mentioned above. Economic development of the state and indulgence of the Naga people in economic activities for their better and prosperous future has also diverted the attention of the general Naga mass from the freedom fighting.

During 1990s the situation in Nagaland had become too much alarming due to two factors. Firstly, the direct armed tussle between the Indian security personnel and the Naga militants had resulted in promulgation of disturbed areas and Maintenance of Law and Order acts creating more inconvenience and troubles to the people as a whole. Secondly the bloody conflicts among the rival factions of the underground people had created the circumstance of fear psychosis in the mind of the people and paralysed the whole process of peace in Nagaland. Peace was the only cry of the Naga people. At this very juncture S.C. Jamir, the Chief Minister of Nagaland, declared the year, 1997, as the year of 'Peace Offensive' making an appeal to every one including the underground outfits to observe the year as the year of peace by stopping factional fights and anti-Government as well as anti-social activities. On the other hand, the Indian Prime Minister, Narasimha Rao, while making a tour to the Northeastern region, offered peace-talks with the Naga militants without any condition. Since he was replaced from his post, his successor, H.D. Deve Gowda, personally met Muivah and Isak Swu in Switzerland in February, 1996. It was I.K. Gujral, the successor of Deve Gowda, who favoured peace talks with the underground Naga leaders without any preconditions and declared in the Indian parliament that contact had already been established with these two Naga leaders who had agreed to have peaceful negotiations to solve the Naga issue forever.¹

¹ The Telegraph, (Kolkata), July, 31, 1997.

The Naga tribal Hohos in Kohima had already declared a cease-fire on April 25, 1997 among all factions and planned to mark the occasion with a "mass rally processions and prayer". April 26, 1995 was declared as a holiday in order to enable Government servants to participate in the proposed public rally in all districts of Naga state. The state Government offered all supports to make the proposed peace rally a success. The Chief Minister, S.C. Jamir issue the statement which said "Unless factions unite, there is a grave threat to the well being of the Naga society which would possibly witness a civil war among factions and which could pit one tribal group against other."¹ The movement was successful. A number of people participated in the rally and prayed God for everlasting peace in Nagaland.

The Indian Prime Minister in the parliament stating that made an announcement:

"In the recent talks with the Isak Muivah group of NSCN, it has now been mutual agreed to the ceasefire for three months with effect from first August, 1997 and to initial discussion at political level."

The terms of ceasefire between the Government of India and the NSCN (I-M) are as under:

"For securing peaceful political solution, discussion has been held between the Government of India and the NSCN leadership. It has been mutually decided to ceasefire for a period of three months with effective from 1st August 1997 and embark upon political level discussions."² It was also decided that:

1. The talks shall be unconditional for both sides;
2. The talks shall be at the highest level, that is, at the Prime Minister level; and
3. The venue of the talks shall be anywhere in the world, outside India.

Thereafter, the terms and conditions for the ceasefire were decided on December 12, 1997 by the representatives of the Government of India led by Shri K. Padmanabhaiah and Mr. V.S. Atem, the representative of the NSCN (I-M). Both the parties agreed for "monitoring the ceasefire process by drawing members from both sides including some NGOs." The ceasefire, thereafter, was extended after every three months till 31st July 1998. From 1st August 1998 it was extended on annual basis, which is still being continued.

¹ Nagaland Post, (Dimapur), April 227, 1996. Edditorial page.

² The times of India, (New Delhi), July 26, 1997.

The resumption of ceasefire and peace talks brought enormous happiness to the people of Nagaland on the side, and gave mental and physical relief to the freedom fighters and the Jawans of India on the other. The Naga people welcomed the offer with high spirit and jubilation. However, the issue, which was irritating the people's mind, was not inclusion of another factions of the NSCN led by Khaplang in the ceasefire and peace talks provisions. Hence the Baptist Peace fellow ship of North America initiated a peace meet among leaders of various Naga national groups which was held in Atlanta (Georgia) from July 28 to August 3, 1997. Various Naga leaders from different sections attended the meeting, however, the representatives from the NSCN (K) was not seen in the meeting. The meeting welcomed the peace process in Nagaland and declaration of ceasefire between the government of India and the NSCN (I-M).

The Government of India with a view to including other underground sections of Nagaland in the process of ceasefire unilaterally announced ceasefire against the NSCN (K), NNC and FGN for a month beginning from August 1997. It was unilaterally extended by another two months with the expectation that the NSCN (K) would join the process of ceasefire. However, the NSCN (K) did not join the ceasefire with the result that its struggle specially against the NSCN (I-M) continued where several Naga belonging to both the sections have been killed.

On the other hand, the Baptist Fellowship of North America on the occasion of 125 years of advent of Christianity in Nagaland organised eight day Atlanta Peace Meet from 28th July to 4th August 1997 with the purpose to "thrash out a solution to the 50-year old Naga insurgency problem." Though the NSCN (K) faction attended it, the NSCN (IM) group boycotted it. Those important Naga leaders who attended the Peace Meet were Vamuzo, Yonkong on behalf of the FGN, Lok Sabha member from Nagaland, Mr Imchalemba Ao, Church Leader Rev. V.K. Nuh, Naga Hoho leader Mr Wati Aier, former Naga M.P. M. Vero and Mr Apong Pongera.¹ The Conference called upon all the Naga people "irrespective of affiliations to relinquish old antagonism, give up old grudges and build up the best of Naga heritage."² It also appealed all the factions to work for peace and unity among the Naga brothers. It regretted that for fifty years some of the "indignity and

¹ The Telegraph (5, 1997).

² Ibid. A August 5, 1997.

violence" the Naga had suffered were "self-inflicted, with the Naga aligned against the Naga in a vicious circle of internal struggle"¹

Thus these two events- the declaration of cease fire between the Indian government and the Government of the NSCN (IM) and a appeal of the Atlanta Meet, in fact, created favourable circumstance in Nagaland for bringing about normalcy and setting the stage for peace talks for solution of the Naga issue. But these two rival groups did not think of resolving their differences with the result that factional fighting could not be stopped despite heartiest appeals to both of them from the people belonging to all sections. Rather the NSCN (K) denounced the cease-fire agreement between the Government of India and the NSCN (IM) as 'treachery' to divide the Nagas. On the other hand, the leaders of the NSCN (IM) expressing the cause of their boycott of the Atlanta Peace Meet said, "they would not team up with its rival faction led by S. Khaplang and the 'puppet' Chief Minister, S C. Jamir."² Iask Swu in an interview said that "He (Jamir) was trying to form HOHO, GB Federation, Mothers' Association and Church leaders ... paying money to everyone" and he "is still insisting that these people must be included in the talks."³ Denouncing V.K. Nuh, the Church leader, it was said that it was he who had justified the Shillong Accord and "they all are Jamir's supporters and so "why should there be unity between patriots and traitors?"⁴ Thus despite all the efforts to bring these two dominant factions together, no success has been achieved so far. Both the groups are yet bitter enemy to each other. The editor of the *Daily Review* has rightly remarked that "It is all the more tragic that both NSCN factions are unable to come to terms with each other, much to the detriment of the Naga people."⁵

For the last five decades the freedom struggle in Nagaland has been continuing despite various splits and divisions among the leaders of the freedom fighters nor for any ideological differences, but for personality clashes and tribalism. No one knows for how long the people of Nagaland have to face the pangs of factional fighting. The Naga issue

¹ Ibid.

² The Telegraph (Kolkata), August 9, 1997.

³ North-East Sun, Vol.3, September 14, 1997, pp.8-9.

⁴ Ibid. p.9.

⁵ V.K. Nuh, *Crusade on Naga Nationality*, Kohima, 1996, p.109.

has become very much complex today due to involvement of various factors in Naga politics where the ethnic issue is the foremost. It has made deep dent in the underground organisations. All the factors are active in the name of freedom movement, but freedom is not at sight. Today no faction is true to its ideological frame, nor they have clear picture of independent Nagaland. The factor that has become more dominant is a bitter and inimical attitude among the freedom fighters in the name of ethnicity and tribalism. That is why no effort, which is applied to resolve the Naga issue, yields desired result. All the efforts applied by the public leaders, Church leaders, and various non-Governmental Organisations to unite the different factions of the Naga militants have remained futile due to their obstinacy. Mass rally, demonstrations fasting and prayers adopted by the public in protest against the factional killings of the Nagas have failed to change the mind of the rival Naga leaders.

The ceasefire and peace talks are going on in Nagaland since 1st August 1997 and some positive results have come out though the solution to the problem has yet to be solved. The armed tussle between the Indian security forces and the Naga militants has been reduced to a great extent. However, the factional fighting and conflicts between two rival underground groups- the NSCN (I-M) and the NSCN (K) ,have not yet stopped. The then Chief Minister of Nagaland, S.C. Jamir declared some areas of Nagaland as 'peace zone', but peace is frequently disturbed due to direct-armed clashes between these two rival groups. In 1997, the 125 years of Christianity in Nagaland was celebrated in an unprecedented manner with a record of gathering of more than one lakh crowd at local ground Kohima. In this gathering it was declared, "the crying need of the land was peace, understanding and reconciliation in Christ." Appeal was also made to all the national workers "to stop fighting against one another."¹ The Naga Church leaders are in support of a nation of the Nagas, but they condemn the violence as a means to achieve the goal.² Rev. Nuh frankly admitted "Our freedom fighters are also violating human rights by killing innocent civilians and meddling with village internal affairs, rather than struggling for the national cause. They are creating sense of confusion, fear and despair among fellow Nagas

¹ The North East sun, December 15-31, 1997., p.13.

² V.K. Nuh, Crusade on Naga Morlaity, Kohima, 1996, p.109.

everywhere.”¹ Stating the excessiveness committed by the Indian security forces in Nagaland, he stated that The Indian armed forces for inflicting on civilians and thereby violating Human rights “have left the irreparable psychological scars upon our people... The Indian army and other paramilitary units have done their share of killings, torturing and raping innocent Nagas.”²

It is true that the personnel of the Indian security forces while suppressing the freedom movement of the rebel Nagas from the beginning of the struggle committed a number of inhuman acts. In the words of Shishak, “The Naga freedom fighters, under the banner of ‘Nagaland for Christ’, have for the most part forsaken the leadership of Jesus Christ in their freedom struggle. In stead, they seem to be relying on human power, reliance on AK-47 rifles, and not on God. It will lead the Nagas to self-destruction.”³ He further said, “I am persuaded that all the Naga freedom fighting groups at one time or another have indulged in shedding innocent blood .It is only a question of which group has shed more blood.”⁴ Expressing his grave concern over the present scenario of violence created by different factions of the underground Nagas, Mr Shishak further said:

“Naga freedom movement is genuine, it is political, not economic. But if a treaty were signed today between the Nagas and the government unifying all the contiguous Naga territories in Indo-Burma into a sovereign Nagaland, I still feel constrained to ask will we build the new nation? Are you prepared for a new sovereign Nagaland? Answer is no.”⁵ He further said, “The Nagas only know how to suck the blood of others.”⁶ Thus it is very much obvious that the Naga freedom movement, which began with the hard determination to emancipate the Nagas from the ‘Indian occupationist forces’ and form an independent sovereign Naga Nation has been jeopardised. The movement is still on, no doubt, but it has deviated from its right course of action. The general Naga mass are gradually losing their faith the commitment of the Naga freedom fighters and doubting their broken strength to fight against the might Indian forces.

¹ Ibid., p.107.

² Ibid. p.108.

³ Quoted in R. Vashum, Nagas’ Right to self-determination, op. cit., p. 141.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ A. Shishak, “Sign of Readiness to Welcome the New Naga Nation”, Nagaland Post, January 9,1999.

⁶ Ibid.

CHAPTER-- EIGHT

C O N C L U S I O N

The Naga freedom movement, which began fifty years back with the marked objective to achieve sovereign and independent Nagaland, has passed through chequered history witnessing numerous ups and downs. The people have seen emergence of the Naga National Council, its activities for obtaining separate political identity of the Nagas, its bifurcation into extremist and moderate factions and formation of various revolutionary Governments and also their disappearance without achieving the desired goal. There was a time when the Naga freedom movement had united strength and undivided zeal to fight for the cause of the Nagas. The efforts, which the Naga intellectuals applied to convince the British authorities and the Indian political leaders that the Naga people having their own earmarked territories had never been a part of India, and they deserved all the rights to become a sovereign independent Nation, had broadened the political concept of the Naga people on the one hand, and created hope and aspirations among them about an independent status, on the other. Since the days of India's independence the Naga freedom lovers have been talking a lot about Naga's sovereignty indulging themselves in various sorts of freedom movement. Right from the movement of boycott and non-cooperation to armed fighting the Naga freedom fighters have never given up the claim of independent Nagaland. During peace-talks and cease-fire, though they agreed to suspend the freedom struggle for a while, they never accepted to accept the Indian citizenship and the Indian constitution even with special autonomies. That is why the constitutional provisions which were made for the Naga people by the Constituent Assembly of India could not be given trial in Nagaland till the Naga leaders were united. All the efforts of the Indian leaders to convince the Naga leaders that ^{the} future of the Nagas would be safe and secured under the Indian political system could not change the mind of the Naga intellectuals. They remained firm like rock to their viewpoints and applied all possible efforts to achieve the goal. But scenario changed when the Naga leaders differed in their approach and method to achieve independence. The NNC got splintered and the leaders fell victim to the India's policy of divide and rule. The leaders who had taken oath to work together, fight together and die together in the name of Naga nationalism could hardly remain together when

political situation in Nagaland began to take dynamic turn. The moderate decided to be within the framework of Indian nationalism and accepted the new Naga political unit within the Indian Republic while the extremists took up arms to fight against the Indian armed forces till the Naga were liberated from the Indian rule. As a result Nagaland became a strife-torn state where peace has never been stable.

Before entry of Phizo, the father of Naga nationalism, in Naga political affairs the Naga leaders lacked determination to go for independent Nagaland, though they reiterated that the Nagas were not Indians and they had a history of their own which had no any concern with the people of India. They persistently demanded a separate political status for the Nagas after the departure of the British from India. It was Mr Phizo and his close associates who made the point clear that what the Naga people needed was to return back to their earlier political status which they maintained before the occupation of the Naga territories by the British. It meant the Nagas were independent and after the departure of the British they must be independent. However, it does not mean that Phizo created national feeling among the Naga people and he was first to talk of Naga nationalism. The leaders of the Naga Club and the founders of the Naga National Council had already sharpened political consciousness of the Naga people. It were these leaders who did a lot to unit and, organise the Nagas, and prepare their mind to stand unwieldy and think for future political status of the Naga people. Credit goes to phizo for summering the views and ideas expressed by different Naga leaders in regard to future political status of the Nagas which were reflected through various memorandums and petitions placed before the British authorities and the Indian political leaders. By consolidating such ideas in a concrete form came ahead with a clear demand that what the Nagas wanted was not a political unit or political autonomies within the Indian Union, but to regain their past political status maintained by their ancestors. Through the NNC he expressed the view that the Nagas would accept nothing less than a sovereign and independent Nagaland. After the departure of the British from India the Nagas had full right to become independence. On the other hand, the Indian political leaders who claimed to be the legal inheritors of the British rule argued that since the Nagas were under the British rule and India inherited Naga territories from the British, India had the legal authority to rule over the Nagas. Thus

such divergent viewpoints become the bone of contention since the day of India's independence paving the way for direct-armed clashes between the Naga freedom fighters and the Indian armed forces.

In the beginning the leaders of the NNC under the guidance of Phizo applied peaceful methods and propaganda tactics to liberate Nagaland from India's occupation. When unilateral plebiscite, movement of non-cooperation and boycott tactics failed to achieve the desired goal armed struggle was resorted. The Government of India with a view to nib the trouble in bud deployed security forces all over the hills of Nagaland, but such tactics of the Government of India could hardly deter the firm determination of the Naga freedom fighters. Rather they became more firm and obstinate. They faced the Indian armed personnel with zeal and courage. They fought the battles not for weeks and months, but for years.

The Naga freedom fighters formed a Government of their own, namely, the Naga Federal government (NFG) with its own constitution, legislative Body and executive., national flag and national song. They hoisted the Naga national flag compressing horizontal stripes of red, yellow and green with a red star on the right hand corner, on 14th august, 1947 to observe the Naga Independence Day. Many of them, for want of flags, "hoisted the traditional Naga showls."¹ They installed Naga army and set up battalions under four commands- Northern, Eastern, Western and Southern. They provided different rank and file in the battalions. There was provision for a Commander-in-Chief. By 1956, there were not less than 15000 soldiers in the Naga army equipped with modern and sophisticated arms, which were collected from different sources. The recruits were given military training. The Naga leaders also established link with Political leaders of China and Pakistan to obtain material and moral support. All efforts were applied to internationalise the Naga issue.

A direct battle line was drawn between the soldiers of the Naga army and the Indian jawans where both the sides faced loss of several lives and properties. Despite the Government's (Indian) counter measures under Major-General Kochar, "the Naga "proved

¹ Nirmal Nibedon, Nagaland: The Night of the Guerrillas, Delhi, 1973, p.73.

powerful enough to storm police posts. The daring of the hostile men reached its peak in June 1956 in the assault on Kohima itself, the Headquarters of the district and of Major-General) Kochar.”¹

The Government of India was under the impression that the Naga freedom movement was the product of the minds of a few misguided Naga leaders. Since it lacked amass public support, it would come to an end very soon. The Indian leaders were under illusion. The Naga freedom movement had wide public support. The morale of the Naga fighters was high. In the words of Mallick, the Indian military officer, “The security forces exerted the maximum of pressure, but this was not enough to force the rebel Nagas into surrender.”² It was the collective expression of the general Naga mass that preferred independence. Had it would been the product of the mind of a few Naga leaders, its strength and intensity would have either decreased or disappeared. The continuous fight of the Naga jawans with the Indian armed personnel right from 1953 to 1956 clearly indicates that these enthusiastic Naga freedom fighters were ready to sacrifice their life for the cause of independence. Though they were few in number and less armed in comparison to the Indian security personnel, their courage, zeal morale etc were higher. They harmed the Indian security forces a lot and forced them to realise truth that the Nagas could not be suppressed and occupied forcibly. It was all because the Naga National movement was based on the national feeling. They were fighting and sacrificing for the liberation of their own nation

So long as Phizo was taking active part in Naga politics living on the Naga soil every thing was manageable and commendable despite the fact that some of the Naga leaders disliked his way of thinking and action both. It was all because his personality was like a great ‘banyan tree’ under whose shadow nothing could grow.³ The leaders like Mhassieu and Chubema Murry came on forefront of the Naga politics only after disappearance of Phizo from Naga political-scene. So long as Phizo was active politician no one could dare to supersede him. Those who came on his way opposing his viewpoints were either exterminated or separated from his organisation. He could not compromise even with his

¹ Punyapriya Dasgupta, “Troubled Nagaland”, *Illustrated Weekly*, August 4, 1957, p.12.

² B.N Mallick, *My Years with Nehru (1948-64)* Dekhi, 1973, p.60

³ V.K. Anand, *Conflict in Nagaland: a Study of Insurgency and Counter-Insurgency*, Delhi, 1980, p.77.

closest associates at the cost of Naga nationalism. For instance, T. Sakhrie, the General Secretary of the NNC, who had inducted Phizo personally into the realm of Naga politics by incorporating him in the NNC, and who was 'lips and mind' of Phizo, was assassinated when he began to differ with him. The only fault of Mr Sakhrie was that he wanted to withdraw himself from the line of bloody revolution. Phizo could not tolerate another closest associate of Phizo who was nonetheless but Kughato Sukhai Sema, only because Kughato had begun to realise the futility of armed struggle against the Government of India. His brother, Kaito Sema, the General of the Naga army, lost his life in a broad day light after his disassociation from the ~~line~~ of Phizoistes.

The history of Naga freedom movement bears the testimony that several of Naga leaders like Scato Sema, Isak Swu, Khrisania *Angamin*, Kevichusa etc., who were fighting soldier to soldier for the Naga Federal Government, installed by Phizo leadership separated their way from the FGN and followed different course of line. But Phizo could hardly mind the revolt of his own colleagues. He, being "desperate to attain his goal" applied tactics like "appeals, agreements, negotiations, plebiscite, mass agitation, civil disobedience movements, boycotts, subversion, terrorism, uprisings and finally guerrilla warfare."¹ He was not ready to listen to and consider the viewpoints of other provided that differed from his line of thinking. That is why his associates withdrew themselves from the line of Phizo with the result that the NNC became a divided house by 1956.

Mysterious assassination of T. Sakhrie and exist of Phizo from India in 1956 affected the unity of the NNC and questioned the usefulness and viability of bloody revolution for achieving Naga's independence. Murder of Skharie, in fact was a turning point in political history of Nagaland. His murder was a sort of warning to those Naga leaders who wanted to deviate from the line of Phizo and follow a moderate policy. However, it did not dampen the spirit of the moderates. Rather they became more determined to avoid the path of militancy. Exist of Phizo enabled them to regain their lost position and establish their hold on Naga politics. By separating their way from ^{the} line of Phizoistes the moderates began to convince the Naga people that armed struggle with the Government of India was not

¹ Ibid.

only futile but also harmful to the Naga people and the Naga issue must be resolved through peaceful negotiations with the Indian political leaders. Thus by mid of 1956 the freedom struggle continued, no doubt, but its strength had declined. On the other hand, the Government of India had also got convinced that the policy of armed twisting in Nagaland would not solve the problem, but would complicate it more and more. Under such realisation the Government of India soon agreed to grant the Nagas a separate political unit, namely the Naga Hills Tuensang area (NHTA) to please the moderates. It was creation of the NHTA, which ultimately culminated in a full-fledged state of Nagaland under the Union Republic of India with certain marked internal autonomies on the basis of Sixteen-Point Proposal. It was sixteen Point Proposal approved by the Naga People's Convention, which clearly divided the Naga political leaders into two separate groups- the Extremists and the Moderate. The formers continued their struggle against both the Indian Government and the Moderate Naga leaders while the latter indulged themselves in democratic processes under the Indian constitution declaring themselves as Indian citizens despite direct threat and troubles exerted to them by the extremists. Even the merciless killing of Imkongliba Ao, the leader of the Moderate did not deviate them from the path of non-violence and peaceful solution to the Naga problem. The Government of India provided extended all moral and material assistance to the Moderate Naga leaders on the one hand, and adopted all suppressive measures to crush down the freedom movement carried on by the extremists.¹

Creation of Nagaland state under the Indian Union and working of democratic processes in Nagaland involved the people in active participation of party politics on hand, and diverted attention of people from national movement to democratic politics, on the other. Political Parties with party's principles and objectives began to emerge inviting Naga leaders to take part in Naga politics. All these served as a severe blow to the Naga national movement. People being fade up with anarchic and chaotic situation began to demand for preservation of peace and policy of progresses in their state. Under such circumstance with the efforts of the Baptist Church leaders of Nagaland Peace Mission was formed which managed for cease-fire and peace-talks between the Underground Naga

¹ M. Horam, Naga Insurgency, New Delhi, 1983, p.97.

government and the Government of India. Despite hard efforts and several rounds of peace-talks even at the level of Prime Minister the Naga issue could not be resolved. The leaders of the Naga freedom fighters remained firm to their demand of sovereign Nagaland while the government of India was not ready at all to grant them independent status. The peace talks failed and cease-fire remained inactive. On the other hand, the interest of the Naga people developed more and more in democratic processes under the constitution of India. Whenever peace-talks failed in Nagaland, the Government of India fully devoted its efforts to work for progress and prosperity of the Naga people with a view to proving that the Government of India was their well wisher and friend, not enemy. On the other hand, the failure of peace-talks caused division in the rank and file of underground organisations creating bitter enmity and developing tribal politics among them.

Despite the continuance of freedom struggle democratically installed Naga Government with the financial support of the Central government did a lot for economic development of the state. Growth in administrative infrastructure and installation of new Ministries and Departments opened wide scope for people's employment and development in various aspects of life. New avenue for new life was on which attracted maximum people. The habits and style of the Naga people began to change. Their wants increased and life became sophisticated which needed money. Thus all these factors attracted more and more Naga people towards active participation in party politics and also in various kinds of jobs and professions, which were available at their door now. Thus the changing pattern of Naga society enchanted not only the general Nagas but also created its impact on the freedom fighters. As a result the Naga freedom began to loose its strength and spirit both. That is why Most of them availing the opportunity of surrender and rehabilitation under the provisions of the Shillong Accord (1975), came over ground by depositing their arms to the Peace Camp and accepting the Indian citizenship on 'their own volition.' This was the severest blow to Naga freedom movement.

Differences of opinions and clashes for dominance of personality have remained a permanent feature among the Naga leaders either over ground or underground. Such trend has badly affected Naga freedom struggle from the beginning. Disunity among the leaders of the Naga freedom fighters has been found not for ideological differences, but for

dominance of personality. First dissention among them took place with the revolt of moderates and formation of a separate group of their own, namely Reforming Committee, which, in due course of time, emerged as political party called the Naga National Organisation (NNO). It was the NNO, which organised the Naga people for peaceful solution of the Naga issue and persuaded the Indian Government for Creation of Nagaland state. The Naga Federal Government was once more shattered when its prime Minister, Kughato Sukhai was expelled out on the allegation that he had accepted bribe from the government of India. Revolt of General Kaito, the brother of Kughato against the NFG and his mysterious murder brought more troubles for the NFG. Thereafter, "Sema hegemony in Naga politics (underground) was destroyed and power passed on to the Angami tribe." Tribalism appeared as a hard rock on the way of Naga freedom movement. The Angami leaders were under the impression that Kaito "had sold out the Indians and had accepted the huge sum of money from the Government of India" while the Sema group doubted the hands of Angamis in the murder of Kaito. Such conflicts between Semas and Angamis divided them forever. The underground Naga leaders in the name of the people they "frequently expected, even demanded that the people should follow wherever they lead, right or wrong, " Once some one oppose their leadership they are either expelled or finished. The rivalry among the Naga leaders never allowed the followers of the freedom struggle to remain united.

U, Misra has rightly observed that the long struggle of the Naga freedom fighters despite their disunity on various accounts "has given the Nagas a cohesiveness and sense of national unity to which very few nationalities of the Indian sub-continent can lay claim." ¹ No one can deny that the Nagas have sacrificed a lot for achievement of their freedom. Their courage and spirit must be appreciated to fight for Naga freedom. Their devotion to their *goal* of independence cannot be questioned. The survey of Naga's freedom struggle reveals the truth that there was a time when freedom to the Naga people was dearer to any other things. That is why their leaders refused to accept any office from the government of India other than sovereign independent status. But such spirit and cohesiveness of the Naga people began to decline when personality clash among the Naga leaders appeared and

¹ Udoyn Misra, Question for Naga Identity, Omsons Publications, New Delhi, 1988, pp.2-3.

tribalism began to play divisive role. Freedom struggle continued even after signing of the Shillong Accord, but personality clash among the leaders of the freedom fighters once more weakened the strength of freedom struggle.

It were T. Muivah, Isak Swu and Khaplang who revived freedom struggle in 1980 by forming a new organisation, namely, the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN) with firm determination to liberate the Nagas from the Indian rule. Though most of the underground Nagas had surrendered following the Shillong Accord, these leaders were not yet ready to forgo the claim of Naga's independence. They took the Shillong Accord as a trick of the Indian leaders to strangle the Naga freedom struggle. The NSCN stood for Naga's independence and also for a Naga society based on egalitarian trend where there could not be any place for capitalism. The newly set up underground Government adopted the method of guerrilla warfare to achieve the goal. These leaders left no stone-untuned to strengthen the strength and position of the NSCN and to make the Naga people aware of their right to self-determination which was sold out by the leaders of the NNC to the government of India by accepting the Shillong Accord. They took swore on to "drive out Buddhism and Hinduism from Nagaland " and to enable Nagaland to "stand for Christ." Their fight against the Government of India and also against the Government of Nagaland continued. Thus the Naga freedom movement once more came on fore front creating hope and aspiration among the general Naga mass that they would be a free nation. The Nagas extended their support to these forces directly or indirectly because the desire of the Naga people to be independent had not yet died. But such unity and strength of freedom struggle could not prolong and all enthusiasm and hope of the Naga people were shattered and dashed down when the leaders of the NSCN began to quarrel among themselves, which ultimately resulted in division of the NSCN in 1984.

Personality clash among the underground Naga leaders never allowed the Naga freedom movement to be effective and meaningful. Vashum has rightly observed, "The Nagas have been badly divided on factional political parties cutting across tribal solidarities and allegiances." Unlimited aspirations of the Naga leaders have also remain a viable factor to ruin of their unity. Generally they are power mongers. Rivalry and squirreling among the

militant Naga leaders began for power. In the words of Charles Challsie "Naga history has only too frequently been reduced to personal clash of leaders, whether the underground or over ground." The basic reason of the rift in the NSCN in April 1988 was the personality clash between Muivah and Khaplang. Khaplang *separating* his way from Muivah and Isak formed a new group called the NSCN (K) while the group led by Muivah and Isak was called the NSCN (IM) None of them is ready to follow a compromise formula at the cost of their superiority. T. Mivah, Isak Swu and Khaplang were the leaders who had revived freedom movement in Nagaland after signing of the Shillong Accord. These leaders could hardly remain united even for a decade. The leaders, who were fighting soldier to soldier for the cause of the Nagas, became bitter enemies to each other when personality clash took place appeared before them. Allegations and counter-allegations began in bitter as well as provocative language. Their quarrelling brought tribalism on the forefront. Factional killings created mass terror and fear among the people. Once the enmity took place between these two rival groups, it continued despite the requests of the people to stop it. Freedom fighting became secondary while factional clashes got prominence everywhere in Nagaland. The underground factions totally ignored the voice of the people by killing their own brothers and sisters. The Naga Hoho, the Naga Mothers' Association, the Students' Federation and all other NGO's protest against such factional killings and request to stop it immediately could not be paid any heed causing utmost resentment, utter disappointment, frustration and mass fear in the mind of the common Nagas.

The Naga freedom fighters and their leaders both became more interested in money and material gains. Extortion drives at the gunpoint became common affairs of the Naga freedom fighters. Terrorist tactics became a common means to terrorise the people and collect money from them. No section of the people remained untouched from such affairs. All these activities not only sidetracked the main objectives of freedom fighting but also maligned the prestige of freedom fighters. People began to express doubt and suspicion in the sanctity and sagacity of freedom movement.

Today, questions are raised as to "How and why the Naga struggle has become so fearful, terrible, destructive and complex?" Voices appeared from the people that "The Naga nation is torn by internal dissention into several factions, anti-social elements, angry factional killings, undue demands, formidable extortion, illegal taxes, rapacious

intimidations, tribalism, heartless corruption, ..." People began to ask "Are these the signs of struggling for sovereignty and do Naga believe that through these means we can achieve our goal."¹ Observing the anti-social and unlawful activities of the Naga freedom fighters Kaka Iralu, a popular Naga thinker, raised the question "Is the Naga army uniform a licence for its bears to abduct us, extort us, terrorise us and even beat us to death or shoot us to death?"² He observed that the undergrounds are "interested only in the survival of their own group or tribe". They are "ignoring the sacrifices of others who had also given their all for national cause."³ The then Chief Minister of Nagaland, S.C. Jamir expressed the view "They are fighting for the same cause, but they are killing each other". Mr Zale-O, a leader of the NFG, expressing his views about ongoing peace talks, says, "This is not an Indo- Naga talk, but an Indo-NSCN (IM) talk. A Splinter group of our people who lack the mandate of the people can in no way represent the Nagas on national affairs."⁴ Mr Khaplang, the leader of the NSCN has expressed the view that "no settlement can be durable unless supported by all Nagas." Another leader of NSCN (K) Zeluolie Angami is also of the view that talks may go on, but nothing will come out of talks till talks continues with "only a particular faction."⁵

The investigator conducted a sampling survey selecting some chosen people from Nagaland belonging to different sections and tribes to obtain their views about the position of the current freedom movement and its future perspective. Some important questions related to Naga freedom struggle and its future perspective were served to them. The answers received from them in percentage are mentioned below which illustrate the viewpoints of the Naga people in this regard.

¹ Kezhlesa, "The Naga Struggle Today: Incredible", published in annual magazine of the Nagaland University published by the Post Graduate Students' Union, Lumami Headquarters, 2001, p.26.

² Daily Review, November 4, 1997 Kohima, p.3.

³ Kaka D. Iralu, "For Peace Yes, But not for Piece", Nagaland Post, October 22, 2002,

⁴ Nagaland Post, October 19, 2002, p.4.

⁵ Nagaland Post, January 7, 2003.

TABALE – THREE
VIEWPOINTS OF THE NALGA PEOPLE
ABOUT CURRENT POLITICAL PERSPECTIVE

S/L No.	Questions referred to the people	Answers Yes in %	Answers No in %
1.	Nagas must be given right to Self-Determination	94%	6%
2.	Militancy is the appropriate way to achieve Naga freedom	12%	88%
3.	The Naga people like peace, not violence	100	0%
4.	Among the freedom fighters money extortion drive has become primary	85%	15%
5.	Freedom struggle has become secondary due to involvement of the freedom fighters in factional fighting and money collection	79%	21%
6.	Militancy has weakened the strength of Naga freedom movement	58%	42%
7.	Militancy has strengthened the national feeling among the Nagas.	39%	61%
8.	The Nagas' first priority should be a sovereign and independent Nagaland, not economic development	33%	67%
9.	For the Nagas first priority should be economic development, not independent Nagaland	61%	39%
10.	Division among the leaders of the freedom fighters is one of the major factors for declining the strength of freedom movement	82%	18%

The answers collected from selected Naga people, which have been mentioned above clearly illustrate that the Naga people have developed apathy towards the method of militancy to achieve the goal of independence, though most of them are desirous of having independent Nagaland. hundred per cent of the Nagas prefer peace, not violence because they have suffered a lot due to violent struggle. They are also of the view that the trend of money collection drive, which has recently emerged among the different factions of the underground Naga government has pushed back the main objective of the Naga people that is independent and sovereign state while it has brought involvement of the freedom fighters in money making affairs on the forefront. Moreover majority of the Naga people prefer economic development. To them economically backward independent Naga state would hardly serve the interest of the people. 82% of the respondents have expressed their view that the division among the leaders of the freedom fighters is the major factor

which, in fact, has damaged their prestige on the one hand, and jeopardised the spirit and strength of freedom movement, on the other. At the moment what the Naga people need urgently is economic development of the state and people's economic prosperity. People want the right to Self-determination, no doubt, but not through violent method, but through table talks and peaceful negotiations with the Government of India. That is why they all are hopeful about the on going peace talks between the NSCN and the Government of India.

With the appearance of the NSCN, the NNC, the oldest political organisation led by Phizo lost its strength and after ^{his} death of Phizo in London on April 30, 1990 it was divided into two factions because of the question of new leadership. The faction led by Phizo's daughter, Adeno, claimed the real inheritor of the NNC while the dissatisfied leaders formed a new group under the leadership of Khodao Yanthan who had been the Vice President of the NNC till the split occurred. Thus the Naga freedom movement became a subject of division and internal feuds and quarrelling.

At this very juncture people got confused, and remained divided. The question once more became prominent whether the Naga people should go for independence where several factions and groups are quarrelling among themselves claiming their superiority and dominance. The Naga people became vocal for peace. The walls of each town witnessed posters with slogans that what the Nagas first is peace. People witnessed demonstration, conferences, mass prayer rally etc. which all unequivocally began to demand peace, not war and fighting. Under such circumstance peace talks and ceasefire occurred between the representatives of the Indian government and the NSCN (IM), which provided relief, though temporary to the people. The peace talks and ceasefire both are in action from 1997, no doubt, but solution of the Naga problem has not yet been achieved.

A Joint meeting of the NSCN (IM) and the Naga NGOs held on 5th December 1997 was held with the marked objective to prepare the ground for peace in Nagaland by obtaining people's support. Various delegates from various sections confirmed the spirit of Naga nation and resolved, "All the Hohos and the NGOs extend the fullest support and cooperation to the on-going political dialogue between the Government of India and the

NSCN.”¹ Almost all the representatives of the NGOs expressed their will freely and frankly to preserve peace in Nagaland. Rev. V.K. Nuh, a veteran religious Naga leader appealed to all the delegates for a “united effort through reconciliation and forgive and forget.” Mr M. Vero, Convenor Naga Hoho Summit, stressed on the “unity of the Nagas and recognising one another”. He said, “Killing and extortion has brought us nothing.”² Mr Huskha, the President of the Sumi Hoho, appealed for a total commitment among the leaders”. Mr Vihuto, the secretary of the Naga Hoho expressing deep concern over factional clashed appealed that the “Nagas have to reconcile among themselves and with God if they want to liberate ourselves.”³ Neingulo Krome, the Convenor, Naga People Movement for Human Rights also asked the Naga freedom fighters “to shun from killing each other and to stop extortion which will only bring defeat before the enemies.”⁴ Miss Dr Jina, the President of the Naga Women Association, Manipur put emphasis on wiping away the idea of tribalism and factionalism among the Nagas. The President of the Naga Students’ Federation, Mr Chuba, demanded extension of present ceasefire to all Naga inhabited areas and to boycott all elections till peace talks were going on. Mrs Neidonuo, the chairperson of the Naga Mothers’ Association, asked people to “shed no more blood”.

The Naga Consultation Meeting with a view to strengthening the peace strategy was called at Bangkok in January 2002 and also in May 2002 where a number of Naga delegations attended the Meet. They all appreciated the peace process taken by the leaders of the NSCN (IM). The Consultation reaffirmed fullest support of the present ceasefire and the talks between the Government of India and the NSCN under the leadership of Isak Chishi Swu, Khodao Yanthan and Th. Muivah recognising them “as significant achievements for all Nagas.”⁵ The Consultation also expressed appreciation of the Indian Government for “trying to understand the uniqueness of the Naga Political Issue.” The Consultation Meet urged to peruse the policy “to facilitate a reconciliation based on the

¹ Report of the Joint Meeting between the NSCN and the NGOs, a Booklet published by Ministry of Information & Publicity, GPRN, Nagaland. P.22.

² Ibid. P.24.

³ Ibid,

⁴ Ibid. p.25.

⁵ Naga Consultation Meeting: strengthening the Peace Process, a Booklet published from Bangkok, 2002, p.2.

true spirit of national principles “ and to avoid “past historical blunders so that the Naga society may emerge renewed for the challenges of growth with other peoples and nations in the modern world.”¹

The aforesaid statements of various Naga leaders belonging to different associations and unions clearly indicate that they are fed up with blood shed and factional killings. Peace talks are on. The question is who is the final authority to negotiate the Naga issue with the Government of India. The solution of the Naga issue, if comes out of the present talks being held between the leaders of the NSCN (IM) and the Government of India, would be acceptable to other factions who have not yet been included in peace talks? Mr S.C. Jamir, the ex-chief Minister of Nagaland is of the view that “Any agreement must be acceptable to all sections of the Naga society, if it is to be final and successful.”² He further said, that a dialogue confined to only “idealism” or “emotions” could not resolve the issue, “A war of words or paper war maligning and criticising others is not going to help us.”³

Mr S.C. Jamir has been following a different trend relating to the Naga problem. He and his followers put much more emphasis on economic development of the state and increase in economic prosperity of the Naga people keeping in view the changes , which have taken place in the world in different directions. In the words of Jamir “The world is no longer concerned about political sovereignty military factor... Determining factor today is the economic strength of a nation... Without economic muscle, no country or state can run smoothly. Beggars cannot be choosers.”⁴ Mr Jamir is of the view that the Nags’ prosperity is directly related to India. By citing the examples of various agreements such as Nine-Point Agreement 1947 (Hydari Agreement), Sixteen Point Agreement of 1960, Ceasefire agreement 1964, Political talks between the Government of India and the Naga Federal government till 1968, Shillong Agreement 1975, Ceasefire agreement between Government of India and the NSCN (IM) in 1997 and ceasefire Agreement between the Government of India and the NSCN (K), Mr Jamir indicates that for last fifty years Nagas

¹ Ibid. p.3.

² Realities of the Naga Political Problem, a Booklet, Issued by Press Secretary to the Chief Minister, Government of Nagaland, Kohima, June 2002, p. 5.

³ Ibid.p.6.

⁴ Ibid.

are directly related to India,. According to him "We have to reconcile to the political reality of all these facts."¹

The Sixteen-Point Agreement of 1960 was the result of the views of the moderate Naga leaders who unanimously resolved to constitute the Nagaland state under the Union Republic of India. Now opinion is being expressed that the emergence of this agreement was the result of the armed pressure of the Indian government and the Sixteen -Point Proposal is called as 'unscruplus'. The booklet, namely, the 'Bed-rock of the Naga society', issued by the Nagaland Congress Office under the direction of Mr S.C. Jamir raises the question whether the Nagas had an independent nation before the arrival of the British. The booklet reads "The stark and inescapable truth is that neither did we have a definite and unified political structure and nor did we exist as a nation." According to the Booklet the Nagas were actually "a group of heterogeneous, primitive and diverse tribes living in far-flung villages that had very little in common and negligible contact with each other."² On the other hand, the leaders of the freedom fighters has the Booklet, the Bedrock of the Naga society as 'sell-out the Sixteen Point Agreement and Mr Jamir's attempt to disintegrate Naga history and ingratiate himself to his bosses at Delhi in a last ditch effort to perpetuate his rule."³ This view is being reflected by the leaders of the NSCN (IM) who maintain that "a section of Naga intellectuals have fallen for the enemy's propaganda and have been calling for peace and unity at any cost." Expressing their views about Indo-Naga accords and agreements they say, "Each time the Indian state was able to get a section of the Nagas to fall into their trap. And yet the past accord did not succeed in bringing peace."⁴ No doubt, the statements mentioned above carry the element of truth because whenever an accord or an agreement was signed by the Naga leaders with the government of India related to the Naga issue, it was done either under pressure from the Indian Government or to avoid anarchic and aquatic situation and preserve peace in Nagaland. This is also a fact that while accepting such accords and agreements the negotiators lacked unanimous will ^{of} the Nagas. It all happened because of division of the Naga's opinions and views regarding final settlement of the Naga issue

¹ Ibid, pp.7-8.

² Bedrock of Naga society, published by the Naga Pradesh Congress committee (I), Heraald Publications , Kohima,2002, p.6

³ Nagaland Post July 21, 2000, p.6.

⁴ Ibid.

from the beginning. The moderates whenever conducted deals with the Indian government, agreed to live under the Indian constitution while the extremists while dealing with the Indian government to find out solution of the Naga problem never accepted any thing other than the Naga's right to self-determination. That is why neither peace talks nor ceasefire made by the underground Naga leaders with the Indian government remained effective. The moderate Naga leaders prefer Nagas' peace and prosperity first and the leaders of the freedom fighters want independence first. This divergent viewpoint has always been a hurdle to solve the Naga issue forever. So far the concern of the Government of India is concerned, it has been getting undue benefits of division of the Nagas' opinions.

Denying the allegation that the moderate Naga leaders sold out Naga's right to Self-determination to the Indians, J.B. Jasokie, the previous Chief Minister of Nagaland maintains that the Sixteen-Point Proposal was prepared with the consent of the Naga people who attended the Naga People's Conventions and permitted the leaders to create the Nagaland state "as to set the records straight." Hence in his opinion the Sixteen-Point Agreement is a historical document and "historical facts never be distorted because once facts are distorted, they become non-facts."¹ According to Mr Jasokie the distortion of such historical facts would be 'most unfortunate' and it is unjustified to "brand the founding fathers of the state of Nagaland as 'unscrupulous'.² The Nagaland state under the Union Republic of India emerged with the efforts of the Naga leaders as a device to protect the Naga people from abduction, torture, killing, harassment, rape and burning of their villages and granaries. According to the view of moderate Naga leaders acceptance of statehood for the Nagas was a hard choice to choose between the merger of the Naga hills with Assam for ever or to have a state of their own with special autonomies.³ The decision to accept the statehood was taken not by a handful of the Naga leaders in haste, but "they consulted and discussed all these issues in minute details with all the different tribes and even with those living outside Nagaland" *White* doing this "Their sole intention was to ameliorate and alleviate the sufferings of the people" and "their efforts would be better appreciated..."⁴

¹ Nagaland Post, February 8, 2000, p.5.

² Ibid.

³ The Bedrock of Naga society, op. cit., p.12.

⁴ Ibid.

The uniqueness of the Naga politics has been the differences of opinions among the leaders and levelling allegations against each other without any effort to bring unanimous viewpoint. The non-political Naga leaders have been trying their best to bring the various factions together for better and lasting result, but success has not yet been achieved. Converging viewpoints of the Naga leaders and their confusing statements have put every common Naga in dilemma today. In the words of Chasie "No one is sure about who stands where. They cannot deny sympathy towards the undergrounds and at the same time they are not ready to break up their link with the over ground Naga leaders. They are fed up with the unbearable extortion drive followed by the Naga freedom fighters, but they have no courage to deny it and condemn it openly. Chasie has rightly observed that the Nagas are "fed up with the extortions and high-handed ways of the various underground factions...This is the melting-point that Naga society is today and all sides have become mutual props in keeping the 'militant' situation alive and going without any path-breaking initiatives that would change the situation."¹

Time has come for retrospection and self-analysis of the Naga society, roles of the Naga leaders and attitude of the Naga people without any fear and prejudice. They shall have to rise above the confinement of tribalism, parochialism and chauvinism. All factions must join their hands together for Naga nation forgetting their past differences. They must be ready to forget and forgive. Before they go for an independent Nagaland, they shall have to be ready for a broader national view and sincere to the national interests. Experience reveals the truth that piece-milling solution of the Naga issue has complicated the problem more and more. Chasie has rightly observed that "provocative statements and actions, on all sides, specially among various Naga factions, must stop at all costs."² Freedom movement needs unity, strength, sacrifices and broadened outlook.

It is good that the leaders of both the factions of the NSCN and also the conscious and intellectual Nagas have begun to realise the significance of unity of the Nagas and of peace. They all feel that unless unity of the Nagas is maintained and a collective viewpoint is developed, there may not be permanent solution to the complex Naga issue. A consensus is perhaps, emerging in this regard. This is evident from the statement of Mr

¹ Charles Chasie, *The Naga Imbroglia*, op. cit. p.71.

² *Ibid.* p. 82.

Isak, the prominent leader of the NSCN. While expressing his view in the 3rd Naga Consultative Meeting in May 2002 at Bangkok told the Naga delegates "Past mistakes have sufficiently taught us that no political settlement can be reached without the will and consent of the Naga people" He assured the delegates that "We will enter into political settlement with the Indian State only after seeking the expressed opinion and consent of the people." Regarding the Naga unity he further stated, "The present division among us is only a temporary phenomenon. Unification of all Nagas is an inevitable and natural necessity."¹

It is encouraging to note that despite failure of efforts hitherto applied for resolving the Naga issue through various rounds of peace talks and ceasefire, the efforts are still on. The continuation of ceasefire with both the Factions of the NSCN and the Government of India have given the Naga people mental relief and lifting of the ban on the NSCN and allow their leaders to come to New Delhi and have a meaningful dialogues with the Indian political leaders have made the people hopeful. Such moves have widely been accepted and appreciated from all sections of the Naga people. The immediate need is to realise the significance of ceasefire and peace talks on the one hand, and put an end to the ongoing ethnic clashes between the two factions. The different sections of the people must form a common platform forgetting their past rivalries and differences in the general and broader interest of the Naga people. In the fast changing world the belief is emerging that solution of a problem however and complicated is, must be found on table talks, not in a battlefield. The question whether the Nagas should go for complete independence should be decided by the Nagas' consensus, not by any alien forces. Once a consensus emerged, the people belonging to all sections and groups must stand united to achieve the goal remembering that 'united we stand and divided we fall.' If the Nagas continue fighting among themselves, "There would be no question of Naga nation within or outside India."² Every Naga must understand that "The cry for peace in Nagaland is quite laud...Unity of the Naga people, over ground and under ground, must... precede a permanent settlement out of the imbroglio that has caused enough sufferings and miseries"³ Nationalism is not

¹ 3rd Naga Consultative Meeting: Strengthening the Peace Strategy, a Booklet, published by Naga International support Centre, Amsterdam Netherland, 2002, pp. 2-3.

² Charles Chasie, The Naga Imbroglio, op. cit., pp. 137-38.

³ Ibid. p.140.

the monopoly of one or two groups, but it is the property of all. The success of any national movement is based on unity, strength, brotherhood for all and broadmindedness where there is no place for factional clashes, personality rivalry and terrorist acts against the people in whose name the movement is initiated and for which the movement continues. Within a nation every one has a share, every one has to contribute and every one has to sacrifice. A nation may have different sections and groups of the people, no doubt, but they are all in the name of nationalism because the national sentiment and feeling has no place for any groupism and factionalism. Again a nation without a right to freedom of expression is dumb and deaf. Terrorism and that also against the own people can hardly allow the freedom movement to be a success specially where people are democratic by character and spirit. The worst phase of Naga national movement has been the use of force by the Nagas against the Nagas to force the opponents to follow the course once decided even by a few. There is no denying the fact that the Naga freedom fighters have suffered the most and have shed enough blood for the cause of Naga freedom struggle, but very little efforts have been applied to prepare national background, create national feeling and preserve Naga unity. The fifty years of Naga freedom movement reveals the truth that the Naga people are very much conscious of their independence and they have enough courage to fight for it, no doubt, but their efforts and strength have remained victim of disunity and disintegration. That is why so prolonged struggles have not yet produced desired result. Question is not whether the Nagas are able for having a free nation or not, but the most prominent question has emerged whether the disunited Nagas would hold free nation if it is given to them under such circumstance. Hence every one who is in fact, conscious and desirous of Naga freedom must work hard for Naga unity and fraternity. If they are united; there is no force, which may deprive them of their aspirations and historical position.

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