CHAPTER 2

History of the Naga National Movement

The hill tracks of sub-Himalayan region in northeast India are inhabited by a number of ethnic groups belonging to the Mongoloid racial stock. These groups put under the category of ‘tribes’, due to the prevalence of primitive socio-cultural practices and their rootedness in different stage of economic development, are believed to have migrated and settled in their present habitation through waves of migration. There is also a general agreement among the historians about these groups being the first inhabitants of the region before the advent of Indic cultural and political influence in the area during the ancient and medieval period. Their socio-cultural practices, customs and traditions and history are quite distinct from the rest of the subcontinent. Among these groups- the Nagas were the first group to push for self-determination at the end of British rule in South Asia, based on their distinct cultural, racial and religious ethos from the rest of Indian nation. The Indian state influenced by ardent efforts at nation building, could not comprehend the true nature and intensity of the sentiment which resulted in bitter confrontation with the Nagas led by the Naga National Council (NNC). The Naga resistance movement was primarily based on the question of ‘identity’, and the resolute stand of the nationalists to oppose the imposition of Indian identity on the Nagas has earned the movement a place among one of the oldest ethnic rebellions in Asia. In our following discussion, we trace the origin and evolution of the Naga national movement in the last six decades.
2.1 Geographic Setting and Distribution

The Nagas are a conglomeration of about 40 tribes that occupy the geographical landscape of north eastern India and north western Myanmar. Belonging to the Sino-Mongoloid racial group, these tribes share several common racial, social and cultural traits at the same time are different in many of their socio-political practices and linguistic orientations in relation to one another. The habitations are scattered around the states of Nagaland, Assam, Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh in India and most of the Patkai range in north western Myanmar, mainly the Somra tract bordering India which comes under two administrative units, the Kachin State and Sagaing Sub-Division. The Nagas may be divided according to the geographical distribution of the tribes in various districts of the states they inhabit. In a retrospective, the use of the generic term ‘Naga’ was popularised after the British contact with these tribes and there is no common entity that can be defined as Naga purely based on cultural, linguistic and socio-political features. Even the Indian census recognizes various tribes by their specific names like the Sema, Angami, and Tangkhul etc. The diverse character of these group of tribes is also evident by the fact that there is no common spoken or written language for the tribes and there are instances of different dialects prevalent in the villages belonging to the same tribe (Vashum 2005: 13). This diversity is evident even by the dress and attire of the tribes and also reflected in cultural variations like different tribes have different weaving patterns that is an important traditional occupation.

However, the nationalists take pride in their identity as Naga despite the many differences existing between the tribes. There are several common social, cultural and customary practices among the tribes that give strength to the nationalist assertion of
common identity. The first is centred on a community based life where the family, clan, village and the tribe were the units of social and political organization in the past and continue to play a significant role even in present times. Another common practice widespread among the tribes is the central role of ‘village’, that were almost like sovereign village states, in the past. Even in present time the village plays a central role in determining an individual’s role and place in the society and constitutes an important agent in socialization process. In addition, selecting hill tops for setting up villages is another common practice among the Naga tribes. These settlements are generally surrounded by farmlands and forests and were believed to provide natural protection against enemies, wild animals and even diseases. Another common practice among the tribes is deep sense of attachment to the native village as shifting of village due to topographic changes is an unknown practice among the tribes (Vashum 2005: 18). Erecting megaliths for commemorative and burial purposes is also a common and widespread practice among all the tribes (See Appendix XI- 3, 5, 6).

Nagaland

The Angami Nagas are concentrated in Kohima district and some parts of Dimapur, Mokokchung district is said to be the abode of the Aos. The Semas also known as Sumis are mainly concentrated in Zunheboto and Dimapur districts and the fringes of the Tuensang district. The Lotha dominate Wokha district while the Konyak are found in Mon district. Phek district is the abode of the Chakasangs and Pochuris. Tuensang district is dominated by the Yimchunger, Khiamnungan, Phom and Sangtam also found in Phek district. The main population of Zelianrong are concentrated in Peren and Dimapur district. There are also a significant number of Maos and Tangkhuls (tribes of Manipur) among others settled in Dimapur and Kohima.
Manipur

In Manipur, the Nagas dominate in four hill districts, namely, Ukhrul is home to the Tangkhus. Tamenlong is dominated by the Zeliangrongs and also home to the Kharam Nagas. The Maos, Poumis, Marams and Tangals are concentrated in Senapati district. Chandel district is dominated by the Maring, Anal, Lamkang, Moyan, Monsang, Chote, Chiru and Tarao. The Senapati district is also inhabited by the Koreng, Chiru and Chote tribes.

Arunachal Pradesh

The Tirap and Changlang districts of Arunachal Pradesh are inhabited by the Tangsha, Wancho and Nocte tribes.

Assam

In Assam two Naga tribes are found, namely, Zeliangrong (Zeme, Rongmei) and Rengma.

Myanmar

The main Naga tribes in Myanmar are Konyak, Tangkhul, Phom, Yimchunger, Moyon, Pangsha, Hemi, Hkalak, Tsaplo, Htangan, Lainung, Shangpuri, Pangaw, Pyangoo and Rangpan (Vashum 2005: 10, 11).

In addition to above major tribes, there are also sub-groups attached to the major groups. Strikingly, some of these sub-groups in course of time attain an independent status and assume the position of a full-fledged tribe. For example, the Chakesang (a combination of Chakru, Kheza and Sangtam, including Pochuri) has now disintegrated into three different tribes, namely the Chakesang, Sangtam (parted in 1960s), and Pochuri (parted in 1994). There is also a system of smaller tribes coming
together to form a bigger tribe, such as the Zeliangrongs- conglomeration of Zeme, Liangmei, Rongmei and Puimei tribes. At the inception of the Naga national movement under the NNC, the exact identity of all the tribes was not clear, however it was recognized that a greater number of tribes inhabit the territories belonging to the greater Naga family and the organization gave the call for the unification of all the tribes in 1946. This fact can also be discerned from the memorandum submitted to the Simon Commission by the Naga Club in 1929, the first attempt at organized political organization in the Naga Hills-

“Our country within the administered area consists of eight tribes, quite different from one another with quite different languages which cannot be understood by each other and there are more tribes outside the administered area which are not known at present. We have no unity among us it is only the British Government that is holding us together” (Alemchiba 1970, 163)³.

Thus, in the decades of the evolution of the Naga movement under nationalists, new tribes have been identified over the years. The nationalist opinion still upholds the unification of the territories inhabited by the tribes into a single political and administrative unit and given the right for self-determination. As already discussed, the assertion of the nationalists has been strengthened by the fact that the tribes that have been identified over the years occupy a geographically contiguous area of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur including the state of Nagaland, that served as a cradle of Naga national movement.
2.2 Social and Political Organization

The tribes have their own unique social and political systems inherited in almost uncorrupted shape from the past ranging from various forms of autocracy and democracy. For instance, the Konyak tribe practiced a benevolent form of autocracy where the word of the chief (Angh) commands extensive respect and reverence and the commoners may not even stand before his/her chief. Similarly, though slightly lower in scale, in the chiefship of the Sumi tribe, the Chief’s word is still considered law. Among the Aos, Lothas and Sangtams republican form of government is prevalent while among the Angamis, extreme form of democracy is practiced where consensus was the norm and village fellows were considered equals. The Mao, Tangkhul and Zeliangrongs, are characterized by different forms of monarchical systems. These political formations have considerable presence in guiding the social and political relations even today and cast an imprint on the political culture of different tribes.

Despite these differences in social, political and administrative systems, the Naga village was thought to be a model self-sufficient and maintained its sovereignty with a principle of socialism and varying degrees of democracy that was a common feature among all tribes. Any trespassing was considered as a violation of sovereignty and often resulted in wars that involved head-hunting. All the Naga village states were generally located on hill tops to have strategic vantage points and protection against wild animals and mosquitoes. There is a strong sense of psychological emotional sense of attachment to one’s ancestral village even in present times and a person’s identity is largely shaped by his rootedness to his or her village of forefathers. This is reflected by the fact that people rarely shift a village site even if the natural resources in the vicinity gets exhausted and walk for miles to get the resources. Attachment to village is
complemented with strong sense of attachment to one’s native soil and mother earth that finds reflection in various festivals of different tribes. There is also a tradition of erecting megaliths as commemorative monuments or ritualistic events and burials among all the tribes. Other cultural commonalities include customs like feasts of merit and honouring warriors through such traditions. The practice of head hunting was also widely prevalent among all the Naga tribes. To collect heads of enemies brought respect and honour for the warrior and was thought to bring good harvest for the village. There is also striking similarity with slight variations in the head gears worn by the warriors in all the tribes. Another cultural similarity is the martial or warrior culture that is an integral element in the political and cultural orientation of all the tribes and finds reflection in the warrior dances performed on cultural occasions reflecting strength and vigour. One striking commonality among all the tribes is the Morung (youth dormitory) that is a very important socio-cultural and political institution of the Nagas. In this institution, the youth who attain puberty are given training in the art of warfare and code of conduct, traditional values, etc and occasionally deployed in various assignment by the village authorities according to need and situation. The Morung is also used as a place for guarding the village against enemies and village guards, usually boys are in guard keeping alert round the clock (Vashum 2005: 15). Some of these cultural features have been considerably diluted and a result of modernization. However, the strong and perceptible remnants of these cultural elements in the face of modernization have been playing a crucial role in shaping the nature of Naga nationalism since its inception in 1928. For instance, the long tradition of the Nagas of relative self-sufficiency, freedom, isolation, passion for independence, and their sovereignty over their respective homelands shaped to a great
extent the psychological consciousness of what they were/are and should and made them strongly resistant to any outside interference in their territories (Vashum 2005: 61).

In order to have a proper idea of the history of the Naga Political Movement we can examine the significant events and landmarks that have characterized the movement in three phases:

2.3 Ancient and Medieval Period to the Advent of British Imperialism and Colonialism

For centuries, these people lived in self sufficient village states with their own individual social and customary laws and traditions and practicing rudimentary form of agriculture and hunting for centuries. Mention of these tribes inhabiting their present historical homeland stretches to the ancient period as they find mention in Claudius Ptolemy’s (c. AD 90- c. AD 168) Natura Geographica (VII, 11, 18) and later in the Chinese traveller’s Huang Tsang’s writings who visited Assam during Bhaskarvarman’s reign (600-650 AD). In addition, these groups of tribes lived in near seclusion from the historical and political changes occurring in Indian sub-continent until the advent of the British towards the middle of the 19th century that had far reaching consequences in determining the shape and future of history of the people. The history of the Naga tribes in the pre-British period is shrouded in obscurity as no written records were compiled by the various tribes. The myths and folk tales of different tribes point out that these groups reached their present habitation in waves of migration at different phases of history. Three eastern routes are suggested: one from south-east and south to the north, one from straight across the Irrawaddy-Salween-
Chindwin region and possible third from the northeast (Chasie 2000: 24). In the succeeding centuries, these tribes settled and lived in isolated sovereign village states mostly on hilltops separated by geographical barriers of hills, streams and forests. Occasional contacts with each other was mainly through violent warfare and the famous practice of head hunting that was relevant in several tribal societies across the globe.

The first contact of these tribes with an outside force was in the 13th century, when the Ahoms under Chief Sukapha entered Assam valley through the Naga Hills who were fiercely resisted by the tribes inhabiting the Patkai hills. Even after the successful conquest of some of the tribes and villages by the Ahom army under Sukapha and several expeditions under subsequent Ahom rulers, the Ahoms had no plans to establish any permanent control over the tribes and limited their control to the extraction of occasional tributes. Thus, the tribes continued to be independent of any political or economic influence of the outside world throughout much of the medieval period in the subcontinent that was marked by several political and cultural changes. The prolonged isolation of the tribes implied that their cultures, traditions, and customs continued to be the basis of determining political, social and economic affairs of the respective tribes. These customs and traditions also contributed towards the consolidation of powerful institutions like the importance of village, clan, tribe and region that still bear considerable influence in determining the course of the collective history of various tribes.

The arrival of British colonialism in south Asia proved a watershed moment for the history of these tribes as with other colonised people around the world. The first British contact happened in 1832 when Captain Jenkins and his men marched through
the Angami territory on their way to the Assam plains from Manipur. In keeping with the tradition of resisting any trespassing through their territories, the Nagas offered fierce resistance to the British. This was followed by series of expeditions to the Naga Hills whose main aim was to discourage raids to the plantations of the British Indian territory. Economic interests of the colonial power had discovered the potential of harnessing the rich soils at the foothills for tea plantations.

On subsequent expeditions to the Naga Hills, the main aim of the British was concentrated on preventing the Nagas from launching raids on the British subjects by launching punitive expeditions. Initially, the British had no intention of conquering the Naga territories as it was not economically profitable for them. Nevertheless, the British had to alter their policy later on as the Naga raids continued despite the punitive expeditions by the British. Thus, the British sought to establish direct administrative control and the Naga Hills District was established in Kohima in 1878 after a fierce fighting with a confederacy of Angami villages. However, the new rulers did not attempt to interfere and alter the long established customary laws and traditions of the people, and the tribes were left free to be governed by their own customary laws and conventions. The colonial authorities extended various measures such as excluded area provisions to the Nagas that guaranteed the power and influence of the traditional institutions of village and tribe over the political, social and customary matters and there was minimal interference from the British in the internal affairs of the Nagas. However, the British took steps to stop inter-village wars and the practice of head hunting. In addition, the British also introduced the Inner Line Regulation of 1873 that reinforced the autonomy guaranteed to the tribes, and restricted the people of the plains to settle in the Naga Hills. The reason given by the British to introduce the Inner Line
Regulation was to protect the tribes from exploitation from more advanced people of the plains. The autonomy provisions to the Nagas were further extended by the Regulation of 1880 under which the Nagas were excluded from coming under such laws that would be unsuitable and complex to them. Notably, the Nagas had traditional laws to guide their conduct and village courts to deal with crimes both civil and criminal. The provision of excluded areas was further upheld, under the Government of India Act 1919 and Government of India Act 1935, under which the Governor General of India could declare any part of India to be backward areas or excluded areas (Vashum 2005: 64). In a way, these provisions of the British administration prevented the winds of the national movement of the Indian mainland to have any influence in the Naga Hills (Misra 2000: 22). In addition, the excluded areas provisions preserved and consolidated the Naga sense of distinct identity and freedom from external forces in their internal affairs. In other respects, the most significant development was the introduction of Western education that helped in the spread of new ideas and the emergence of a small salaried bureaucracy from the newly education section of the population. Thus, teachers, government officials and small business class that was to play an important role in the politics in the Naga Hills (Misra 2000: 22). This was the emergence of a small middle class that went on to initiate the design for the development of a common platform and a unified Naga society a homeland towards the second decade of the 20th century. The middle class acted as a catalyst in putting forward the demand for autonomy and independence (Misra 2000: 26). In spite of the British penetration into the Naga Hills, the British could conquer only about 30 per cent of Naga territories where they established some amount of direct administration, especially the areas around present Kohima and Mokukchung district. The remaining
70 percent was never conquered and constituted what came to be known as, ‘free Nagas’ or un-administered areas. The coming together of the diverse Naga tribes under single administration gave a sense of solidarity to the tribes who had for centuries lived in virtual isolation from one another and harboured hostile relations of enmity characterized by different social and political customs. However, the British policy of setting up administrative divisions on the basis of linguistic and cultural specifications—such as grouping together of villages on the basis of cultural and linguistic similarities—aided in the evolution and consolidation of tribal councils and enhancement of their power and influence that was to prove a decisive factor in determining the course of the Naga national movement as we shall see in our subsequent discussion. This also created avenues for penetration of tribal centric politics into Naga society which was essentially village centric. The partial control of the British was also responsible for sowing the seeds of tribalism in the Naga society, which scholars like Atai Shimray contend was the result of colonization as the primary attachment of individual was towards his village and not to the tribe and that the headhunting was mainly between villages and not between one tribe and the other tribe. As he writes,

“The Nagas by tradition did not experience tribalism; it emerged only after modernization stepped in. For instance, a Naga’s first attachment is his village and not the tribe. The practice of ‘headhunting’ was between villages and not between one tribe versus another tribe. Therefore, it was inherently the colonial administrative system which demarcated different tribes into different administrative set-ups. Not surprisingly, important administration Headquarters sprang up- Kohima (Angami), Mokokchung (Ao), Ukhrul (Tangkhul), Wokha (Lotha), etc.”


The major factor, which acted as a metaphor in bringing all the Naga tribes under one umbrella, was the advent of Christianity in the Naga Hills. The American Baptist Missionaries carried the gospel of Jesus Christ of universal brotherhood which spread across various tribes. Christian values substituted Pagan standards as far as practices of inter-tribal warfare and headhunting were concerned. There was also an interesting assimilation of Christian ethics and earlier animistic ideals of indigenous religions of various tribes. It was mainly through the efforts of the American Baptist Missionaries that most of the tribes were proselyted in the first few decades after the British established their contact with the Nagas. The second wave of missionary activity took place in among the eastern areas under the proselytising mission of the NSCN as late as in the 1980. The conversion of various tribes into Christianity also contributed towards ending head hunting practices and as in various parts of the world was instrumental in consolidating the Naga national movement as we shall see in the subsequent chapters of our research. It has been estimated that about 90 percent of the Nagas are Christians, and the nationalist group, the NSCN puts the number at 95 percent. The Naga Conflict further cemented the hold of Christianity as a part and parcel of the Naga identity give the Nagas a distinct identity apart from mostly Hindu and Muslim population of the Indian heartland (Baruah 2010: 249).

Thus, the planting of seeds of modernization through western education and missionary activities in Naga society during the relatively partial and brief colonial rule was crucial in giving birth to nationalist consciousness. However, the rebellion against Indian nation building efforts at the withdrawal of the British was primarily motivated and conditioned by a sentiment nourished by the long tradition of independent political existence and unique social and cultural practices of various tribes. The coming
together of these various tribes for a common purpose was to preserve and protect these
traditional institutions and practices that defined the distinct identity of these tribes
from the rest of sub-continent. The incredible joining of forces by a group of diverse
tribes that were historically often hostile to one another against a common adversary
was perhaps a classic instance in lines of the Native American tribes (also known as
Indian nations) who came together to resist the British in the 17th century at first and
the American colonialists later in 18th and 19th century the best known instances are the
Six Nations of the Iroquois and the Five Civilized Tribes of the Southeast. The British
colonial appetite for land culminated in numerous wars of resistance against English
expansion. These were mostly waged by coming together of small Indian groups into
larger nations and confederacies. Strikingly, some of these Indian tribes have been
appropriately treated as analogous to pre-modern Old World nations. This
identification of societies basically rooted and defined by tribal socio-political
structures shall have important bearing on our research as we shall see during the
course of our subsequent discussions.

2.4 1928-1975 Formation of Naga Nationality, the Naga Club and Naga National
Movement under the Naga National Council (NNC):

The emergence of Nagas as a collective identity began to take shape during the
First World War when a Labour Crops of about 4000 Nagas were sent to France where
they came into contact with the people of European nations fighting for their ends and
interests and got enlightened of the idea of nations and nationalism that were the main
ideas unleashed by the First Great War. A few Nagas returning from the First World
War formed the Naga Club in 1918 with the joint efforts of government officials and
village headmen. The Club was first organization with political and social orientation
and its membership was drawn from various tribes. The Naga Club submitted a memorandum to the Simon Commission in 1929- a commission set up by the British government to recommend reforms for their possessions in India. In the memorandum, the Naga Club asked the Naga territories to be kept outside any proposed constitutional changes as they feared the imposition of alien rule by non-Nagas who could have never subjugated them themselves if the British had not intervened (refer). It was one of the reasons why the Naga Hills was kept under excluded areas provisions under the Government of India Act, 1935.

The Second World War broke out in 1939 and the Naga Hills became one of the main theatres of the Great War in 1945. The Empire of Japan invaded British possessions in India after overrunning Burma and the effect of the Second World War had deep impact on the Naga Hills. Pitched battles were fought around Kohima and finally the Japanese advance was halted. The intense battle fought around Kohima earned it the title of “Stalingrad of the east”, where the Allied army under the British could thwart the Japanese advance after a bitter confrontation. Many Nagas became guides to both the British and Japanese troops and learned their battle tactics. This became very handy to the Nagas who formed the NNC and participated in guerrilla warfare against the Indian army and paramilitary forces a few years later. Another political body called the Naga Hills District Council came into being in 1945 at the initiative of the Deputy Commissioner, CR Pawsey. The main aim of this organization was to repair the damage done to the Naga territories during the Second World War (Vashum). This Naga Hills Tribal Council was renamed the Naga National Council (NNC) in 1946 and it called upon the Nagas to prepare for self-determination. Meanwhile, a plan for a crown colony comprising the ethnic groups inhabiting the hills
of Burma and Assam known as Coupland Plan was rejected by the NNC in 1946 as the Naga leadership was determined to resist any attempt at extending colonial rule in their land. The prevailing political scenario with the departure of British eminent and the prospect of passing under a perceived alien rule under future independent India, and the ambivalent stand adopted by the Congress leadership caused fear and anxiety among the Naga elite- significantly the tribal chiefs and the new middle class came together on the issue of autonomy and independence with the latter effectively utilizing the former’s power and influence and contributing towards the mobilization of traditional power structures in the tribal councils (Misra 2000: 27). Accustomed to the life of fierce independence and aversion for any outside interference in their internal affairs, the individual tribes feared the loss of their land, culture and historical identity. The importance of tribal councils in the uprising under the NNC can also be gauged from the fact that representation in the Federal Government was made on tribal basis (Shimray 2005: 152).

The NNC however was not aiming for outright independence and the main objective was some sort of autonomy with the plan of unification of all Naga tribes and their self-determination. The secretary of the NNC, Mayang Nokcha declared in Kohima in 1946 that the NNC stands for the unification of all the Naga tribes and their freedom……” At this stage the NNC was defining the future relationship of the Nagas with India and there was some ambiguity in the pattern of this relationship. Some interpreted that initially the NNC would settle for regional autonomy within the province of Assam and train the people for self-government (Vashum 2005: 68). Nevertheless, these initiatives proved that the Naga leadership was not psychologically prepared for a union with India. Thus, the Naga National Council emerged as the sole
organized political force in the Naga Hills which had the representation of various tribes among the Nagas. The Naga National Council had 29 members representing the various tribes on the principle of proportional representation. Thus for the first time in their history, the Naga people organized themselves under a single political body. The formation of the Naga National Council was a landmark in the consolidation of the nationalist forces. The NNC successfully utilized various instruments of ethnic mobilization such as customs, traditions, village level self-governing institutions, religion, and a definite set of territoriality to cement the argument that the Nagas are culturally distinct from the Indians and therefore cannot be made a part of India (Mahanta, Neelsen, Malik (2007): 310-311). In the meantime Angami Zaphu Phizo emerged as a commanding leader of the NNC that was instrumental in giving the organization a more radical orientation and a militant twist that resulted in the NNC putting forward the demand for complete independence. In addition, the NNC carried on the work of the consolidation of idea of Naga Nationalism. The charismatic leader of the NNC, AZ Phizo declared,

“*The Naga People belong to the Mongolian stock, and for the 52 generations of their remembered history they have lived according to their own proud, simple and utterly independent way of life. The Nagas have maintained a society founded on the co-operation of extended families, a society as old, as democratic and as real as of any country in the world. Historically Nagaland had no connection with India, and even the part of Nagaland which for a time came under British administration was kept separate from British India.*”

The NNC under the leadership of Angami Zapu Phizo met Lord Mountbatten, the Viceroy, with the proposition that the new Indian government should act as the
guardian power for 10 years after which the Nagas would be free to determine their political future. This was followed by a memorandum on the Ten Year Interim Government Scheme presented to the Advisory Committee on Aboriginal tribes which visited Kohima in 1947. The main provisions were

1. The interim govt of the Naga people will be a government by the Naga people, having full powers in respect of legislation, the executive and judiciary.
2. Nagaland belongs to the Naga people and will be inalienable.
3. The interim government of the Naga people will have full powers in the matter of revenue and expenditure
4. For defence and for aiding civil power in case of emergency, a force considered necessary by the NNC will be maintained in Naga areas by the guardian power. The force will be responsible to the NNC who in turn will be responsible to the guardian power.

The Advisory Committee did not accept the terms and refused to include them in the Constituent Assembly. On this denial, the NNC declared that the Nagas had their own constitution and would not accept any other constitutional arrangement imposed upon them. This stalemate was attempted to broken by the Hydari Agreement or the Nine Point Agreement. The Agreement recognized NNC’s right to control all spheres of Naga life ranging from prevalent tribal laws to the ownership of land and taxation (Misra 2000: 32). A major controversy and source of contestation arose over the interpretation of Clause Nine of the Agreement that provided the Governor of Assam would have special responsibility for the Naga Hills as an agent of the Indian Union for ten years after which the NNC would be asked whether they require the Agreement to be extended or a new agreement regarding the future of the Naga people needs to be
arrived at. The NNC interpreted that this Article gave the Nagas right to independence on the expiry of 10 year period (Misra 2000: 33). On the other hand the Govt of India gave it a totally different interpretation and refused to implement the agreement. The NNC then led by AZ Phizo met Mahatma Gandhi in July 1947 and held discussion on the Naga’s resolve to stay out of the Indian Union. Mahatma Gandhi assured them that the Nagas can remain independent and no force would be used against any such decision. Nehru was strictly opposed about the viability of independent Naga state in the crossroads of three big states- China, India and Myanmar. In a letter to the NNC, Nehru expressed his apprehensions about such a state will not be economically and politically viable. As no side was prepared to make any concessions, the NNC declared Naga Independence on 14th August 1947. Under the leadership of Phizo the movement of the Naga people for self-determination became more consolidated, defined and stringent. The charismatic leadership of Phizo and his overwhelming appeal could be discerned from the huge gathering of people from different parts of the Naga Hills representing various tribes at Kohima on May 14 and 15 to deliberate on their political future before the historic plebiscite was conducted. The Nagas from Manipur and Tuensang were present as observers. This was a historic moment as there was remarkable unanimity among the tribes on deciding the collective future of the Nagas who were bitter enemies of one another. The conference passed a resolution to hold a plebiscite on the question of whether the Naga Hills District should ask for independence or remain within the Indian union.

Accordingly, the plebiscite conducted by the NNC between May and August 1951, where it was claimed that 99 percent of the Nagas had voted for independence. The support by village chiefs and tribal councils was crucial, when NNC volunteers
visited the remotest villages and signatures and thumb impressions and administered oaths in tribal fashion for the fight for independence. Kaka D Iralu cites about the ritualistic and symbolic significance of these oaths as it was taken ‘pronouncing many curses on the clan should they fail to keep up their oath.’ Moreover, these oaths were taken one elder from each Khel of every village that is one more representation of traditional institutions and structures in the Naga national movement.

The results of this plebiscite were also dispatched to the President of India, the President of the All India Congress Party (AICC) and the Secretary General of the United Nations. The plebiscite proved to be an extraordinary turning point in the history of the Nagas as for the first time the various tribes jointly expressed their wishes and aspirations about a common future breaking the traditional feelings of enmity, language differences and diverse tribal social set up. It has to be noted that tribes from the Naga Hills district participated directly in the plebiscite conducted by the NNC. The tribes from the Tuensang area did not participate in the plebiscite as the district was under different administrative arrangement which was not even colonized by the British and functioned as an excluded area. The Nagas of Manipur also maintained an ambivalent stand regarding participating in the plebiscite probably due to historical reasons. However, when the Indian army moved in to free Naga territory in 1956, it was the tribes from Tuensang area who offered fierce resistance and suffered massive casualties. It has also been asserted that the eastern Naga tribes or the “free Nagas”, functioned under different political organizations to protect themselves against external and internal aggression like the Naga National Convention founded in 1946 later renamed as Eastern Naga Revolutionary Council (ENRC) and the Eastern Naga National Council respectively that later merged with the NNC faction led by
Thuingaleng Muivah more popularly known as Th. Muivah\textsuperscript{10} and Isak Chishi Swu to form the NSCN.\textsuperscript{11}

On the other hand, the first seeds of Naga integration movement were laid in the Naga inhabited areas of Manipur in 1948, when the tribes expressed a desire to merge with the Naga Hills district of Assam under the Naga National League (NNL). The NNL had organized a political movement to consolidate the Nagas separated by boundaries drawn by colonial power. The NNL also asserted that the Naga territory in Manipur never belonged to the Maharaja of Manipur, as it was gifted to the royal kings of Manipur by the British without the consent of the Nagas. Moreover, it would not be possible for the Nagas to protect and preserve their culture, traditions, customary and political practices being under the suzerainty of the Manipuri Maharaja.\textsuperscript{12} To give further substance to its demand, the NNL launched a no house tax campaign under which it was decided to pay taxes to the Deputy Commissioner of Naga Hills District instead of the Manipur King. The Naga integration movement further gained momentum when the matter was taken by the Naga Peoples’ Convention in 1957, when the moderates in the Naga national movement started negotiating proposals for the establishment of a separate state for the Nagas. Thus, the Naga national movement at its incipient stage witnessed three significant instances of political mobilization for a joint Naga cause for tribes divided across political boundaries—first by the Naga National League in the hills of Manipur and later by the Naga National Council in the Naga Hills district of Assam and the Naga National Convention in Eastern Naga area. However, the NNC took a more radical and firm stand on sovereignty that was exemplified by the plebiscite held at its initiative in 1951. Thus, historically the eastern Naga tribes formally got involved in the movement initiated by the NNC after 1956 and
proved significant in playing a pivotal role in the Naga self-determination movement in the later years as their territory became the hub of armed nationalists in the Indo-Myanmar frontier especially under the NSCN. On the other hand, tribes of Manipur entered the movement as active participants in the Naga self-determination movement only after 1960, when the NNC expanded its influence over the Naga inhabited territories of Manipur.

To harden its opposition to the Indian administration, the NNC also organized a successful total boycott of the General Elections of 1952 where not even nominations were filed. These strides were followed by a civil disobedience movement resulting in the mass resignation of school teachers, boycott of all government of India functions. The spectacular success of all these moves proved the strength and legitimacy of the NNC as the main representative for the Naga cause.

“Through these moves each more successful than the other, the NNC proved beyond any shadow of doubt that it was the main spokesman of all the Naga tribes and that verdict of the people was in favour of home rule”. 13

Unable to stem the tide of national movement led by the NNC, the Government of India sent in police and armed forces in 1953. The entire NNC leadership went underground. Police action against Naga civilians to flush out underground leadership led to bitter confrontation and armed hostilities. Thousands of young Nagas joined the Naga Home Guards and took up arms. The NNC announced the formation of Federal Government of Nagaland in March 1956 and a new constitution- Yehzabo was drawn up. The political wing of the NNC the Federal Government of Nagaland (FGN) - as the name suggests was decentralized in orientation giving representation to every tribe
Thus, the concept of ‘Naga nation’ with the membership of every tribe and village was conceived built around the ideas of democracy, justice, liberty, equality and fraternity, among the people composing it (See Appendix II).

The primary objective behind the formation of the NNC was to unite all the tribes under one political umbrella. It was first formed with twenty nine members representing the various tribes on proportional representation of one member from every ten thousand people (Iralu 2009: 48). Another notable feature of the first authentic political organization of the Nagas was that every Naga was deemed to be member of the NNC by virtue of his/her birth. In addition, The Naga Federal govt was planned and modelled on Naga village institutions and soon established itself as a shadow government challenging Indian government’s legitimacy in the Naga Hills. The fact that the NNC received extensive legitimacy and support from the villages and tribes is that generous contribution was made in the form of money and materials- paddy, pumpkins, cows and Mithun (a form of wild bison), besides a membership fee of Rs 2/-. The NNC was closely knitted together through the Central Council, Tribal Councils, Regional Councils and Village Councils.

The Indian armed forces armed with extraordinary laws like the Assam Maintenance of Public Order Act of 1953, Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA), 1958, cracked down hard on the rebellion that led to numerous sufferings for the common civilians. Experts recount ten years 1956 to 1964, as the height of brutal crackdown on Naga rebellion and went to the extent of comparing it to the political repression by the Nazis during World War II. The Assam Police and paramilitary forces began mass arrests and even the wives and children of NNC leaders were detained in jails. The noted Naga intellectual Kaka D Iralu mentioned that he was
himself a political prisoner in his childhood. Naga scholars give a vivid and detailed picture of army atrocities in Nagaland that has estimated the number of deaths numbering 200,000 to 300,000, of the population that died as a result of direct or indirect warfare.¹⁵ One of the tactics of the army that became infamous was the village grouping system when people from the villages were confined into one single place surrounded by barbed wires and armed guards. Some have described this form of confinement similar to Nazi Concentration Camps barring the gas chambers.¹⁶

It has to be noted that the period of 1956 to 1960, saw one of the most intense fighting between the Naga nationalists and the Indian security forces with enormous hardships for the common populace. The NNC resistance was more inclined to the form of a rebellion rather than an insurgency that caught the Indian state by surprise by its scale and intensity. There are many references of the army burning villages, raping and pillaging, imposing collective fines on villages and forced labour on civilians.¹⁷ The exact number of deaths cannot be verified accurately because of unavailability of reliable records. However, one can take a verified view that the war with the Nagas was extremely violent which is evident by the use of heavy armoury by the Indian army such as tanks and aircrafts. Many deaths were due to starvation caused due to burning of granaries storing food grains. In order to have a peek into the serious situation, Kaka D Iralu mentions about a cable that the Vice President was sending to the UN with copies to the Government of India and all foreign ambassadors in New Delhi,

“Reports reaching Kohima say that more than ten thousand men, women and children of Free Nagas believed to have been already killed by the Indian troops within the last few days of wholesale massacre. Stop. People are being butchered
systematically from village to village in Free Nagaland. Stop. Urgently appeal to you in the name of humanity to intervene and stop killings.”

The army excesses in counterinsurgency operations continued till the 1970s with minor interregnums in years of ceasefire and peace. The estimates of casualties from the nationalist sources are staggering as the India state has never officially recognized these claims by the nationalists. Moreover, the Naga ethno-political conflict is classified as the least known in relation to the more renowned similar conflicts around the world. In addition to information from nationalist writings, many neutral researchers like AR Desai who has mentioned about atrocities like desecration of places of worship like churches, summary executions of villagers and mass rapes that were used as means of intimidation by the army (Desai 1986: 574). Most of these operations were carried out in villages suspected to be sympathetic to the rebel cause; however there are instances when these atrocities were carried out as means of retribution. The extent of army excesses can also be discerned from the appeals and memorandums made by the NNC to the United Nations and important political leaders of the world (See Appendix IV- 1, 2, 3, 4). Kaka D Iralu contends that, in spite of the UN acknowledging receipts of these memorandums and appeals, no serious efforts was made by the latter in taking any concrete action. Other counterinsurgency measures adopted by the government shall be dealt with in the subsequent discussion. It has also been asserted that the Naga cause had attracted the attention of outside world after the Indian state’s reaction to the rebellion by the NNC. The efforts of Phizo and his coterie also worked tirelessly for propagating the cause of the Nagas abroad as a ‘nation’. There were also several publications on Naga issue brought by the different foreign human rights bodies (Misra 2000: 39).
In the meantime, some leaders of the NNC like Sakhrie, Jasokie and TN Angami who disapproved of Phizo’s confrontational attitude and violent methods resigned from the NNC and began to look for more pacifying means to deal with the Government of India. The moderate approach by this group did not go well with the radical nationalists and leaders like Sakrie had to pay with their life who was assassinated. Meanwhile, AZ Phizo managed to escape into East Pakistan in December 1956 from where he ultimately reached London to lobby for the cause of Naga independence. The assassination was the first sign of division of Naga movement into overground and underground. In the mean time, the Manipur Naga Council, which was formed in 1957 merged with the NNC (Vashum 2005: 83). This was a significant development as the tribes in Manipur formally entered the Naga self-determination movement as full-fledged members of the NNC. In order to counter the growing strength of the NNC, New Delhi encouraged a section of the Naga elite, led by Imkongliba Ao, who were opposed to Phizo’s policy of confrontation, to bring the Naga Hills directly under the control of the centre. Thus, the Naga People’s Convention (NPC) came into being which proposed that pending solution to the conflict, the Naga Hills-Tuensang Area to be brought under the ministry of external affairs as a single administrative unit. This led to the Sixteen Point Agreement with the Naga People’s Convention (NPC) in 1960 under which the ‘Naga Hills district of Assam and the Tuensang Division of the NEFA were placed under the ministry of external affairs of the Government of India (See Appendix III). These areas were integrated into a single political unit and the state of Nagaland was created on 1st December 1963 under measurable degree of autonomy. The new state govt was given many special powers and traditional village institutions were given wide range of autonomy. The Thirteenth
Amendment to the Constitution of India inserted Clause 371 A containing such special provisions for the state of Nagaland regarding culture, land and customary laws (See Appendix V- 1, 2). The moderate nationalists however could not get some of their other claims such as the unification of all Naga inhabited areas and the retrieval of reserved forests transferred to Assam which were left to be implemented in future in a time bound manner. The Federal Government strongly resented the move, interpreted it as an ominous design of the central government to divide the Nagas, and pledged to continue the struggle. The acceptance of a separate state by the moderates was taken to betrayal to the nationalist cause and the overground leadership was vehemently criticised by the radical nationalists who strongly insisted in continuing the underground movement. Even those who accepted the statehood took it as an interim arrangement pending final settlement. The creation of Nagaland state also saw the increase in internal strife as the radical nationalists or the underground came down heavily on the moderates or the overground leadership. Some instances examples were the assassinations of Imkongmeren and Imkongliba Ao, the chief architects of the Nagaland state. The Federal Govt was also not ready to give away its main demand for sovereignty and interpreted it as a sell-out. The creation of Nagaland state dividing the political leadership was the first instance of ‘carrot and stick policy’ towards the process of engaging Naga nationalism. This approach had several flaws as it could not bring all interested parties to the negotiating table leaving the disgruntled section continue the armed resistance. It has been pointed out that the idea of statehood was the work of Indian Intelligence Bureau (IB) who played an important role in organizing the Naga People’s Convention (NPC) to divide the nationalist leadership. This marked
the beginning of active role of an elaborate intelligence network that was to play a crucial role in containing many more insurgency movements in the country.

It has to be added that the first ceasefire agreement between the GOI and the Federal Government of Nagaland took place on September 6, 1964. This was largely due to the efforts of a peace mission formed at the initiative of the Nagaland Baptist Church Council and led by Jaiprakash Narayan, Rev. Michael Scott and BP Chaliha. The peace mission first realized that the Naga Rebellion was not merely a law and order problem as looked by the Indian state. The former clearly stated that the rebellion was a genuine expression of Naga national sentiment. The peace mission also added that the Naga Federal Government should decide to participate in the Union of India on its own choice. The ceasefire agreement saw the expansion of the activities of the Federal Government of Nagaland (FGN) to the areas of Manipur, especially the Ukhrul sub-division and saw the entry of activists like Thuingaleng Muivah who was to play an instrumental role directing the course of the movement in the future years. Although, there were efforts to reach an agreement with the NNC, the talks were deadlocked as the sides were not ready for any compromise. The possibility of a special autonomy for the Nagas much more than the then provision of statehood and Article 371 A were also offered by the Prime Minister Indira Gandhi but it was rejected by the representatives of the NNC. The stalemate between Indira Gandhi’s government and the FGN under NNC has been put forth in the following words, “I shall give you everything except sovereignty”, the response by the NNC was, and “We would take nothing except sovereignty”. This period also saw the beginnings of entry of tribalism in Naga national movement when Sema leadership under General Kaito revolted against the alleged Angami domination of the NNC and declared the formation of the Revolutionary
Government of Nagaland that led to the subsequent assassination of the latter at Kohima by suspected NNC members. The new outfit however could not make much headway surrendered en masse in Zuhneboto later. The leaders of the new outfit were absorbed into the BSF and nominated in the Indian Parliament.

Another significant step was the unilateral transfer of the transfer of Nagaland from the ministry of external affairs to the ministry of home affairs sometime in 1972 that was extensively criticized by moderates in the Nagaland state legislative assembly which argued that one of the points of the 16 Point Agreement ensured Nagaland to be kept under the ministry of external affairs. The response from the radical nationalists came in the form of assassination attempt on the life of Hokishe Sema, the Chief Minister. In the meantime, the central government realized the futility of peace talks due to the extreme position of the NNC and abrogated the ceasefire sometime in 1972 and hostilities resumed. The central government under Indira Gandhi declared state emergency in Nagaland that was followed by the declaration of national emergency that gave the government free hand in cracking down hard on the Naga nationalists. The NNC was banned in 1972 under the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act of 1967 and massive counter-insurgency operations started once again. In the face of intolerable repressive measures that could have been employed by the army, a section of the NNC capitulated and signed the Shillong Accord in November 1975, where they agreed to submit to the Indian constitution and surrender their arms with reasonable time before a final settlement. The NNC is also said to be have imposed a martial law to silence those who had disagreed to the signing of Shillong Accord and adopted measures that prevented the NNC in western Myanmar to penetrate into Nagaland. The prominent leaders of this faction, Thuingaleng Muivah and Isak Chishi Swu who had established
their base in eastern Nagaland in Myanmar denounced the Accord and asked Phizo who was in London in a self-imposed exile for his opinion on the accord and advice. However due to lack of satisfactory response from the veteran leader, the new leadership declared the Shillong Accord as a sell out and broke away to form a new nationalist organization- the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN) on January 31, 1981. The Government of People’s Republic of Nagaland (GPRN) replaced the Federal Government of Nagaland (FGN) as a political wing of the new organization. Henceforth, the new organization was to play a dominant role in directing the course and path of the Naga national movement.

The fact that the Indian government was unable to comprehend or realize the true nature of Naga rebellion in the initial years of its inception added to the intensity and degree of the revolt and the determination of the Nagas to resist the Indian state. The policy makers initially treated the revolt as a mere law and order problem led by few western educated Nagas and backed by the western missionaries. It was mainly due to ignorance of the political and historic events in the Naga Hills as well as certain in-built prejudices among the Indian leadership. As Charles Chasie writes,

“The government of India’s allegation of someone else pulling the strings from behind the scene was taken by the Naga people as a direct and intolerable insult to Naga intelligence and ability. It hurt where it mattered the most- Naga sense of pride and dignity. And in the Naga cultural context, this not only failed to deter or dishearten the Naga, it made him more determined “to teach India a lesson”!”

The violent confrontation that followed could have been avoided if the government of India had exercised some restraint and showed maturity in
understanding the concerns of the Nagas regarding their association with India in the post-British period. At a time when the armed forces were engaged in intolerable and inhuman atrocities in the Naga Hills, such apathetic and indifferent attitude was taken as a grave insult to the pride and dignity by majority of Nagas which saw swelling in support for the nationalists. It was not until the constitution of peace mission in 1964 that stalwarts of Indian politics like Jayprakash Narayan realized the true nature of the rebellion and suggested a more comprehensive and thoughtful approach to deal with the Naga imbroglio. Unfortunately, the rigid stand of the Indian government and unyielding stand of the NNC continued that led to the unilateral withdrawal from the ceasefire by the GOI and trying to subdue the NNC by intimidation and under extreme duress during the operation of internal emergency (25 June, 1975 to 21st March, 1977), failed to bring an end to the conflict. The Naga national movement began with a new force and intent under a more organized group and party- the National Socialist Council of Nagalim (NSCN) that earned the distinction of mother of all insurgencies and proved to be a formidable opponent in the war of attrition with the Indian state. The political and military manoeuvres by the organization exerted substantial pressure on the Indian government to sit for negotiations with the former to seek a permanent solution to the Indo-Naga political issue. Our subsequent chapters would try to explore the politics of NSCN and its interaction with the dynamics of Naga nationalism.

The greatest legacy of NNC to the Naga political movement is the initiation of the sentiment of Naga nationalism and heralding the concept of ‘Naga nation’. Despite the fact that it was an endeavour of only few advanced tribes, the professed belief in the existence of large number of known and unknown tribes sharing a large number of social-cultural traditions was a significant step towards the consolidation of a diverse
set of tribes into a collective entity or what AD Smith termed as ‘ethno-genesis’ and beginning of transformation of large number of tribes into an ‘ethnie’ or ethnic community (Smith 2009: 54). The emergence of an “all Naga consciousness,” under the NNC, also termed loosely as Naga way of life was a monumental stride to galvanize different tribes who possessed different languages and were in different stages of economic development (Misra 2000: 30). Thus, the ethnic mobilization of various tribes under the NNC contributed immensely at unleashing social and symbolic processes that would form as catalysts in the future evolution of Naga nationalism. The impact of these social and symbolic processes in the shaping of Naga nationalism is discussed in details in the subsequent chapters of our research. The coming together of different tribes under the leadership of a single organization was a classic example of the impact of socio-cultural and historical factors in the politicization of these closely related tribes and taking a united stand to protect their distinctive socio-cultural pattern of life as we shall see in our subsequent discussions. In addition the coming together of isolated tribes confined to village states without a common language was a positive step towards the formation of a collective entity on the basis of common descent and territory (Misra 2000: 30). Finally, as with any national movement, the emergence of AZ Phizo as the towering spokesperson of Naga nationalism provided the Nagas with a national leader who could gain support across tribal affiliations and inspire the people to contribute towards a common cause. This was the first time in Naga history that the tribes across the board came together under a united leadership under Phizo and launched a determined struggle against a common adversary. The fact that Phizo’s personality continued to inspire the people even after the NNC relegated to the background can be discerned by the huge crowds his funeral attracted when his body
was brought to Kohima from London in 1991. It was a momentous event as people broke all tribe and clan divisions to pay homage to a single leader. His contributions towards the Naga self-determination earned him to be called ‘the father of the Naga nation’, that finds wide resonance all across the Naga country (Misra 2000: 45, 46). The term ‘Naga country’, shall be used to describe the areas inhabited by the respective tribes that are identified as ‘Naga’, by the nationalists, in addition to the tribes inhabiting in present Nagaland state. Naga intellectuals sometimes describe the entire Naga inhabited areas as Nagaland and the present political unit for the Nagas as Nagaland state. However, we shall concentrate on a broader term ‘country’, to define the areas inhabited by the Nagas.

3.4 1975-1997 Birth of the National Socialist Council of Nagalim:

The Naga political movement was in total shambles after the signing of the Shillong Accord in 1975 by a faction of the NNC. Most of the fighters in different regions surrendered one after another to the Indian government. There are claims that the surrender was made under tremendous pressure of c. There have been claims that the surrender was made under tremendous pressure of c. The top leadership was confused as to what the direction the NNC would take for the future course. Phizo’s failure to condemn the accord added to the confusion and chaos. The Federal Government of Nagaland (FGN) in Eastern Nagaland was suffering from a leadership vacuum when and a group of NNC cadres who had returned from China took over the leadership by staging a coup. This new group led by Thuingaleng Muivah and Isak Chisi Swu branded the Shillong Accord as historic blunder and treachery of the NNC leadership. It denounced the NNC and the leadership of Phizo that was no longer in a position to carry forward the struggle for Naga self-determination. It also criticized the politics of the NNC as responsible for promoting tribalism and
personality cult that would lead to a ruin of Naga national movement. Therefore it was necessary to form a new organization that would work towards the future of Naga cause. Thus the National Socialist Council of Nagaland was born in 31st January 1980 that reorganized the FGN and renamed it as Government of People’s Republic of Nagaland (GPRN) that would function as the political wing of the new organization. Notably, the NSCN was formed after the merger of the Eastern Naga National Council (ENNNC) headed by SS Khaplang and the splinter group of the NNC led by Isak Chishi Swu and Thuingaleng Muivah. Till that moment the NNC and the ENRC had been functioning parallel to each other though in joint effort against the Indian state. The merger was a significant event in the history of the Naga national movement as for the first time two premier organizations on either side of the international border (India and Burma) came together (Shimray 2005: 123). The aftermath of the formation of the NSCN was characterized by intense feud among the nationalists.

There was also intense military confrontation between the two outfits that claimed the lives of not only armed cadres but also unarmed sympathisers on both sides. Strikingly, there are different versions from both sides on what really transpired between the NSCN and its parent organization following the split. While the NNC claimed that the NSCN ruthlessly silenced anyone who objected to the formation of the NSCN (Chasie: 49), the latter claimed that the NNC together with the Indian and Burmese forces made every effort to kill and intimidate those who supported the NSCN (Shimray 2005: 124). These rival and conflicting versions of history had far reaching effect in determining the course of the Naga national movement and impacted the unity and solidarity of the tribes regarding their support and goodwill towards the leadership
of movement. The fact that the events transpired in relatively remote and inaccessible region of eastern Nagaland; there is virtually no independent source to verify the truth.

The NSCN claimed to be modelled and founded on the age old socio-cultural and economic structure of the Naga society based on socialism with a tinge of Marxism, Leninism and Maoism. The main strategy of NSCN since its foundation has been to counter the Indian state both militarily and politically. On the military front the guerrilla warfare increased in the form of ambushes on Indian security forces inflicting many casualties. On its side, the NSCN was remarkably successful in limiting casualties and achieving considerable success against a superior adversary by employing strategies that were instrumental in the success of the Chinese Communist Party in the Chinese Civil War. It also embarked on the policy of devising a strategy of united front by which it propped up new ethnic insurgent movements to fight the Indian state by aiding and abetting these organizations in terms of training and logistical facilities thereby creating problems for the Indian state in the north eastern region that earned it the status of “mother of all insurgencies”. It also established contacts with the Maoists in central India and the Sikh separatists. In addition, the organization also established contacts with other insurgencies in the broader region of south and South East Asia like the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam (LTTE) and Kachin Independence Army (Shimray 2005: 299). On the political front, it tried to give a more organized and centralized orientation to the Naga political movement under its leadership. In keeping with its ideology, the NSCN declared a Christian socialist state to be established under the guidance and leadership of Christian socialist revolutionaries and cracked down hard on other nationalist organizations particularly on the pro-Accord NNC sympathisers whom it declared to be reactionary forces.
Through its efforts and tactics, the NSCN was able to gain the trust and support of a substantial section of the population and establish itself firmly in the national scent by the end of 1980s when the organization witnessed a vertical split. In the early hours of April 30, 1988, the NSCN Council Headquarters at Hangsen (eastern Nagaland, Myanmar) was attacked by Khaplang men, followed by a coup in collaboration of Burmese armies killing over 200 persons that included men, women and children. This incident was a great disaster for the Naga national movement (Vashum 2005: 96). The immediate cause of the incident was an apparent rumour that Isak and Muivah were about to reach a deal with the government of India and were planning to snatch all arms from the Konyak and Pangmei cadres and surrender to India. However, experts have commented on the saturated mistrust between SS Khaplang on one side and Isak and Muivah on the other regarding the running of the organization. This split resulted in the Konyak leadership taking a different route from the organization under the Tangkhul-Sema leadership that came to be known as NSCN (Isak-Muivah or IM). From then on, both the organizations have been striving hard to expand their support base among the masses and accuse one another being reactionary forces. The split in the leadership also led to mistrust and division among the tribes that considerably sapped the strength of the NSCN to counter the Indian state.

After the split, the faction led by Isak Chisi Swu and Thuingaleng Muivah came to be known as NSCN (IM) and became the most dominant player in Naga national politics. On the other hand, the main aim of the group led by SS Khaplang has been to enhance its influence among the Naga tribes by entering into an internal struggle for establishing its dominance in the Naga nationalist scene. In spite, of its best efforts, most of its influence has been confined to the eastern areas of Nagaland state.
However, it has a dominant presence in the Naga inhabited areas of Myanmar. The NSCN (IM) on the other hand claims to be the sole custodian of the Naga nation and disapproves of the Khaplang group of connivance with the Indian state and being a reactionary force. In the subsequent years, the faction led by Swu and Muivah successfully carried its political and military struggle against the Indian state by a strategy of guerrilla warfare and the policy of united front - a programme to aid and abet insurgent movements in the north-eastern region of India. Another notable achievement of the organization is taking the Naga issue to international forums like the Unrepresented Nations People’s Organization and the United Nations Commission of Human Rights. Many experts like Atai Shimray have contended that it is mainly due to the persistent political and military resistance by the NSCN (IM), the Indian government finally agreed that the Naga issue is not a military but a political problem and needs a political solution. One of the appalling aspects of the Naga movement after the split in 1988 is the increased flurry of factional warfare between the IM group and the Khaplang group over the control of territory and influence. Each group claims to be the true representative of the Naga nation and accuses the other of being reactionary force and factional killings have claimed many lives not only of armed cadres but also of unarmed civilians. From then on, the leaders of the NSCN (IM) mostly directed the activities of the organization from abroad. The persistence of the NSCN (IM) in confronting the Indian government through military and political means led the government under PV Narshima Rao to take the first initiative to hold consultations with the NSCN (IM) during the 1990 and the leaders of the Naga nationalist group met the Prime Minister PV Narshima Rao on 12 June, 1995, where the proposals for bringing an end to the six decades old conflict were discussed. The overtures from the
Indian government continued under the following United Front Government under HD Devegowda and IK Gujral which culminated in a meeting with the Naga leaders in Bangkok in 1996 and Zurich in 1997 where both the sides agreed to hold unconditional talks at the Prime Ministerial level. Thus, the ceasefire with the NSCN (IM) was declared on 1st August, 1997 that was subsequently extended and terms and conditions laid down for the peace talks. In a goodwill gesture, the GOI also extended proposals of ceasefire with other Naga nationalist groups like the NSCN (Khaplang) that was formalised in 2002.

The 1980’s also saw the beginnings of civil society activism as far as raising the issues of human rights violations in Naga inhabited area in the face of counter-insurgency operations. Pan Naga organizations like the Naga People’s Movement for Human Rights (NPMHR), Naga Students Federation (NSF) played an active role in this regard. This phase also saw the entry of criminal elements in the insurgent groups that became more pronounced after the 1990s and the underground movement began to be hijacked by immoral elements (Chasie 2000:50). Extortion, kidnappings, intimidation and killings became quite common occurrences that later degenerated into insatiable lust for personal gratification by the cadres of underground organizations that was to take a more serious form in the coming decades.

3.5 1997- Present: Beginning of Ceasefire, Surge in Intra-factional Intransigence and the Efforts of the Civil Society in Countering Centrifugal Tendencies

A historic moment in the Naga political movement after the beginning of ceasefire was the Indian government’s declaration of the acceptance of ‘uniqueness of Naga history” by the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government under Atal
Bihari Vajpayee in 2001. This had raised high hopes among the nationalists that there is a genuine commitment on the part of the Government of India (GOI) who finally recognized that the Nagas have a history of their own distinct from the history of India and requires special consideration and attention while reaching any final settlement. On the other hand the NSCN (IM) sent positive signs of agreeing to some sort of special federal relationship and Naga integration with India in lieu of complete independence or sovereignty considering the present global political scenario. However, opposition to the integration demand from the neighbouring states has created hurdles in carrying the peace talks to a logical conclusion. The sharpest reactions came from the state of Manipur which has the prospect of losing more than two thirds of its territory if the integration demand stands to be implemented. The situation became more complex with not only opposition coming from government side but also from various valley based organizations and even groups like the United National Liberation Front (UNLF) that advocate Meiti ethno-nationalism. When the central government declared the extension of ceasefire into all Naga inhabited areas in June 2001, violent protests broke out in the streets of Imphal that saw the burning down of the State Legislative Assembly building, the Chief Minister’s office and the official residences of several ministers and offices of political parties including the Congress, the BJP and the CPI. The 18 people who died in the clashes with the police were hailed as martyrs who laid down their lives to protect the territorial integrity of Manipur. Organizations like the All Manipur Students Union (AMSU) and United Committee Manipur (UCM) have been the most vocal in resisting the Nagalim project.

Thus, the issue of Naga integration has got embroiled in the atmosphere of ethnocentric politics that has created many new hurdles towards its resolution (Misra
The Naga nationalist organizations both underground and over ground have been persisting with the demand as it had historical sanction because the NNC in 1946 had already called for the integration. The present political boundaries between the Naga tribes are purely a colonial creation when huge swathes of their ancestral territory were gifted to the King of Manipur by the British. This strong irredentist stand also finds strength from Clause 13 of the 16 Points Agreement that had provided for such arrangement in the future (See Appendix- III). Notably, Article 3 and 4 of the Indian Constitution empowers the central government to change the boundaries of constituent states. On the other hand, in the past several decades many organizations have emerged in Manipur that have been stressing on the consolidation of anti-NSCN forces in Manipur. The strong determination of Manipuri society in resisting any proposed territorial changes to its territorial integrity can be seen in the yearly observance of ‘Unity Day’, or Great June uprising on 13th of June uprising honouring the dead who died in clashes with the police in the violent protests in 2001. The united and firm opposition to the Naga integration demand also came from the Congress government in Manipur and the resounding win for Chief Minister Okram Ibobi Singh in 2012 has been attributed to the Congress party’s massive mobilization on the issue of preserving the territorial integrity of Manipur. Notably, the Meiti nationalist opinion that has been active in recent years among the Meitis considers the tribes living in Manipur as a part of larger Meiti identity. One such instance is the folk narrative of the Tangkhuls and Meities being brothers that still finds reflection in the festival of Mera Haochongba highlighting the similarity in language, culture and ethnicity that has been losing ground under the politics of NSCN (IM) and the dominant irredentist narrative of certain Naga intellectuals. The Meiti society is also undergoing certain social and
intellectual currents that have been emphasising on Manipur’s pre-Hindu past and some degree of cultural purification such as advocacy of Meiti script in place of Bengali script to write the Meitilion language, significant voices that regard the spread of Vaishnavite Hinduism the cause for the gulf created between Valley people and the hill tribes. On the other hand the Naga nationalist groups point out the long discrimination and apathy towards the hills by the ruling elite that is dominated by interests of the larger population inhabiting the Manipur valley. This has led the Naga organizations like United Naga Council (UNC), Manipur, which many contend is the frontal body of the NSCN (IM) to organize several strikes and demonstrations for “alternative arrangement”, for the Nagas in Manipur, pending a final settlement to the Indo-Naga conflict.

In addition, the NSCN (IM) project for ‘Nagalim’ Naga integration or has strained its relations with other ultranationalist organizations like the United Liberation Front (ULFA) that lodged strong protest against the circulation of map by NSCN (IM) showing large chunks of Assam as part of Nagalim or Greater Nagaland. Similar reactions came from Manipuri insurgent groups who organized massive public demonstrations in Manipur against any move by the Centre to appease the NSCN (IM) by conceding the latter’s claim to Manipur’s territory (Misra 2000: 57). Thus, the irredentist stand of the NSCN (IM) caused ruptures in the strategy of united front. At this juncture, the Kukis living in Manipur and adjoining areas of Nagaland raised their own claim of Kukiland. The alienation of these ultranationalist insurgent groups from the NSCN (IM) resulted in their drifting away from ‘the mother of all insurgencies’ and joining hands with the former’s rival, the NSCN (Khaplang) (Misra 2000: 57-59). It is now well known fact that groups like the United National Liberation Front (UNLF) of
Manipur and the United Liberation Front of Asom (Swadhin) have established their base in the Khaplang camp in Eastern Nagaland in Myanmar. It has to be noted that the ceasefire agreement Khaplang group signed with the Government of Myanmar in 2012, has greatly enhanced its control over the Naga inhabited areas in the county. The Khaplang group has declared its unconditional support to all the revolutionary organizations of the north east and by its recent moves it appears that it seeks to replace the role of its rival in aiding and abetting these insurgent groups.

On the other hand there have been marked shifts in the political scenario in neighbouring state of Nagaland that has been the centre of nationalist politics of the factions of the NSCN. The ceasefire with the NSCN (IM) in 1997 and the NSCN (K) in 2001 has created a free ground for the groups to engage in power-struggle to establish their dominance. The situation took a dramatic turn when the Khaplang group split and senior leaders- Kholi Konyak and Kitovi Zhimomi formed another faction in June 2011. The main reason given by the two leaders for the split was the reluctance of SS Khaplang in showing adequate interest in Naga reconciliation efforts. Another interesting fact about this split is that the influence of SS Khaplang in Naga national politics received a major jolt within the territories under Indian jurisdiction as the former is Myanmar’s citizen. Earlier, the NSCN (IM) on the other hand got a major jolt in Zeliangrong area (Tamenlong District, Manipur) when the Zeliangrong United Front (ZUF) came into being as a result of a split in the organization in February, 2011. Since these splits there have been several violent clashes between the splinter groups and their mother organizations for territorial domination. This Khole-Kitovi faction too signed a ceasefire agreement with the GOI and established itself as another de facto government in the political scene. Since, its foundation, the new group is known to
have reaching a settlement within the present political boundaries of Nagaland state and
giving up the demand for Naga integration. As we have already discussed that one of
the formidable challenges towards the building of a unified stand on the Naga issue has
been factionalism due to tribal and political differences among the nationalist ranks that
has been on the rise in recent years and has been an integral element of the Naga
movement since the 1960s. Another issue facing the NPGs is increasing trend of
defection or threat of defection. These devices are often applied effectively by the
middle and lower level cadres, who effectively control the organizations, to silence the
top leadership if the latter thinks of clamping down on former and make them mend
their ways. It has also been pointed out that the factional warfare is the sinister
attempt by each group to protect their respective revenue turf. Khaplang group has
signed a ceasefire agreement and secured substantial autonomy for the areas under its
control in 2012. The agreement has also provided for the withdrawal of Myanmar’s
army from the Naga districts which would be policed and administered by Khaplang.
Thus, the ceasefire arrangement has enhanced the control of Khaplang group in the
Naga inhabited areas of Myanmar- also known as Naga Self-Administered Zone- that
includes Nanyun and Lahe townships, with a liason office ar Khampti town in Sagaing
region of the country. This autonomy secured by the group has also enabled the
Khaplang group to host other insurgent groups active in northeast India like the ULFA
and UNLF. This has led some senior leaders of the outfit claim the international
significance of the ceasefire agreement as it would be crucial to the security situation
and peace and stability in the region. The Naga issue therefore cannot be settled
without the involvement of SS Khaplang who holds undisputed de-facto control over
this virtually unexplored region and India’s northeast political problem and look east
policy is largely dependent on meaningful dialogue with the group.\textsuperscript{33} However, since the split in Khaplang group in 2011, the Kholi-Kitovi has been striving hard expand its base in Nagaland state and securing a solution within the present boundaries of Nagaland state.\textsuperscript{34} The group has also been supporting the cause of Alternative Arrangement for the Nagas in Manipur in lieu of political and administrative integration of Naga inhabited areas. The group has asserted that, under the present political scenario, political integration of Naga inhabited areas appears to be difficult; efforts should be made towards emotional and cultural integration. On the other hand, SS Khaplang has seemingly shifted his focus solely into Myanmar, making him irrelevant to Indo-Naga talks.\textsuperscript{35} At this juncture another group arose in the political scene at the behest of few leaders of the Isak-Muivah faction and the Khaplang group that declared its commitment to bring Naga unification. In 2007, few cadres from both the parent organization, came together and declared the formation of NSCN (Unification), at the behest of some Sema leaders of both the organization. It was also an indication towards the power struggle among the leaders especially the Sema resentment against too much domination of the Tangkhuls in the NSCN (IM), that could be discerned by the statements issued by the group in the aftermath of its foundation that hinted at the unification of Nagas without the Tangkhuls (Lotha 2013: 28).

During this period, the NPGs have effectively erected parallel govt structures collecting elaborate taxes from the people in the name of Naga nationalism. Till 2013, there emerged six de-facto governments- the NSCN (IM), NSCN (Khaplang), NSCN (Unification), NSCN (Khole-Kitovi), NNC/FGN (Accordist) and NNC (Non-Accordist). The Unification and the NNC factions are however less significant in power
and territorial influence in relation to the other groups. The structure and composition of these groups demonstrate unmistakable traits of tribal allegiance and often display traits of functioning more like criminal cartels instead of insurgent movements for a nationalist cause. According to many local commentators, recent trends reflect lack of sincerity of these groups towards the national cause and the cause of sovereignty and independence has been overshadowed as these groups are more interested for personal gratification and greed by involvement in collecting huge funds from the ‘revolutionary’ taxes and even engaging in factional warfare to control their respective revenue turfs. It has been estimated that about 1,800 Nagas have been killed in some 3,000 fratricidal clashes since beginning of the ceasefire. Besides, the crisis in moral and behavioural character of the underground cadres and the entry of criminal elements has also posed questions regarding the capability of the underground groups in working towards the cause Naga nationalism. The primary interest in lucrative financial gains from this taxation structure can be gauged in intense struggle between the factions in controlling Dimapur, the commercial capital of Nagaland. The situation has been delicately put by a noted Naga intellectual in the following words,

“The different factions are too full of themselves; they suffer from opportunism and one-upmanship. No results delivered of course. All the underground factions want to control Dimapur, the land of milk and honey, garbage and clogged drains. Meanwhile, extortions go on rampant; they all take money that belongs to the people. The ultimate political objective is either forgotten or used to justify the criminal and parasitic deeds.”
The groups run their respective parallel governments with the power of gun and people are generally scared to speak about their high-handedness and autocratic behaviour in the name of Naga nationalism as a retired Naga IAS officer writes,

“Define the present reality carefully....how do you read into a situation where the total populace lives in fear of our own freedom fighters? Just think....We fear our own more than our adversary! It is obvious that something somewhere has terribly gone wrong. No matter what the constraints, the people ought to be standing behind our national workers if their efforts were transparent and honourable.”

The growing discontent of the general masses against the uncontrolled arrogance of underground groups especially in case of revolutionary taxation which many distinguished citizens have termed as extortion and intimidation is adding to the chaos among the underground leadership. As with most armed insurgent groups, collection of revolutionary taxes is considered necessary to continue any movement for self-determination and is collected from the people in whose name the insurgent group claims to be fighting. The people more or less voluntarily paid the taxes when the nationalists were united under one organization. Even after the split in NSCN in 1988, not much was heard about ‘revolutionary taxation’ in the public sphere mostly done in a clandestine manner by the respective factions. In fact, even after the beginning of the ceasefire, the insurgent groups continued to fill their coffers by the unabated collection of ‘revolutionary’ taxes. The rates of taxes is also fixed for government employees and business community- 25 per cent of gross salary twice a year has been fixed by the IM group as tax and the has fixed 20 per cent of its share from government employee and the business community depending upon their salary and income. According to an estimate, the NSCN (IM) is thought to have been passing an annual budget running to
the figures of Rs. 200 to 250 million each year. It is also reported that, the leaders of the organizations have increased their wealth immensely and acquired properties both in India and abroad. The increasing trend of monetary benefits accumulated by the insurgent factions is also corroborated by the tax collected from the transporters operating in the areas dominated by one faction or the other.

Public resentment against multiple taxation is also corroborated in a huge rally in Dimapur, the commercial capital of Nagaland. People organized under the banner of the Action Committee Against Unabated Taxation (ACAUT) on October 31, 2013. In this rally, the possibilities about the prospect to unify all the NPGs were discussed. The proposal for “one government, one tax” received overwhelming endorsement from the ACAUT. The NSCN (IM) initially tried to ban the rally on the plea that it was anti-national. However the people lead by noted intellectuals and speakers overwhelmingly defied the ban and went ahead with the rally. The ACAUT also took extensive tours of rural Nagaland and took the opinion of the rural masses on one government, one tax. Serious concerns have also been expressed over the entry of criminal and self-seeking elements among the ranks of the insurgent factions that can be best exemplified in the following words of a commentator,

“Is any Naga youngster prepared to walk a thousand miles for 3-4 months, in the name of Naga nationalism? The profiles of cadres who currently continue to join the underground factions are predictable: from village chicken thieves to losers in life, with the exception of a handful.”

One remarkable development in the Naga political scene in the last few years especially in the post ceasefire years is the small but significant development of a
vibrant civil society taking increasing and active interest in the Naga political movement. The administrative and political association of the Nagas with the Indian liberal system has made the ground fertile for the emergence of such vibrant civil society structures. Moreover, in the post ceasefire years the Naga political issue has increasingly come to the public forum from being the monopoly of the NPGs (Naga Political Groups). The opinion of intellectuals, non-governmental organizations, as well as enlightened citizens are getting wide circulations in the leading newspapers of the Naga country and large number of public gatherings have been held to debate and discuss the role of national workers and the Indo-Naga political conflict especially during the post-ceasefire years. This has in turn created and nurtured a healthy public opinion on the Indo-Naga political conflict. This small but significant growth in civil society activism has been put by the noted journalist Subir Bhaumik in the following words,

“In the years since the NSCN started its negotiations with the Indian government, the democratic space has widened in the Naga society. The pen and microphone have somewhat, if not fully replaced the gun as instrument of political discourse and there is greater freedom of debates in Naga society on crucial issues than was the case during the long years of conflict.”

There has been a greater realization among the people about the destabilizing effects of tribalism and that is being reflected in joint efforts of civil society to bring the political factions together have been through the Forum for Naga Reconciliation (FNR). Its main objective is to secure reconciliation between the factions on the basis of political and historical rights of the Nagas as factional killings has been creating fissures in the relationship between tribes. The FNR seems to have realized that the
Naga national question cannot be taken to a logical conclusion unless there is unity among the tribes and factions. The FNR has called upon the NPGs to take strength and inspiration from the positive steps that have sustained the Naga movement since its inception. The main objective is to build one Naga House founded on Naga historical and political rights and it can be achieved only when the NPGs reconcile in the spirit of forgiveness and mutual respect in achieving the Naga political aspiration.\textsuperscript{44} The factional killings led to the feeling of mistrust and had an adverse affect on inter-tribe relations. The NPGs have accused one another of mass killings of national workers and unarmed civilians during the course of the movement. In addition concerns are expressed from all concerned civil society has been trying hard to curtail violence and bring about reconciliation.\textsuperscript{45} These sort of repeated incidents have created deep wounds that are difficult to heal. As Charles Chasie writes,

\begin{quote}
“No Naga opposes Naga nationalism or the high ideals that launched the Naga movement. But today all Nagas want the violence to stop and the Naga future to be insured, enabling at the same time, our younger generations an equal opportunity to take their place among other peoples. Violence and fratricidal killings make no sense of Naga nationalism or patriotism. Indeed, these defeat the very purpose and objectives of Naga nationalism. For the sake of the future of Naga children, Naga leaders cannot fail.”\textsuperscript{46}
\end{quote}

These developments could be regarded as significant moment in the history of the Naga national movement where the pressure from the various quarters of civil society has forced the underground factions who have agreed to consider on a proposal for a national government encompassing one government, one tax system. The representatives of GPRN/NSCN (NSCN-IM), NSCN/GPRN (NSCN-KK), and
NNC/FGN signed the Lenten Agreement on March 28, 2014 under the aegis of the FNR. Under this agreement, these groups agreed to reconciliation on the basis of historical and political rights of the Nagas and unite on common purpose towards achieving the Naga political aspiration. Another noteworthy aspect of this agreement is that under it, the NPGs pledged to move forward together in the Naga reconciliation process by condemning the past historical mistakes committed at various stages of Naga history and also taking inspiration from the positive political steps that have sustained the movement.47 Earlier in 13th June 2009, the representatives of NSCN (IM), NSCN (K), and the Federal Government of Nagaland-Naga National Council (FGN/NNC) that could bring down the number of fatalities from inter-factional warfare, but did not achieve anything substantial in the long run. In addition, with the assertive step taken by the concerned and apprehensive civil society about the future of the Nagas under the present leadership divided into rival factions, competition for social legitimization has forced the factions to take initiatives to come under a common political roof. Earlier, the FNR had earlier initiated similar steps through the Joint Forum of Gaonburahs (Village headman) and Dobhasis (village elders) (JFGB) to appeal for a ceasefire between the NSCN (IM) and NSCN (Khaplang) as a precondition for reconciliation process that had considerably succeeded in bringing down violence between the two factions.48

Thus, from being a monopoly of insurgent groups, the issue of Naga nationalism has entered the public forum that has given a new disposition to the nature and course of Naga nationalism. A noted Naga intellectual, Abraham Lotha has emphasised the need for a common forum like an all Naga Convention that is an independent representative of all sections of the Naga society including the tribal Hohos, civil
societies, intellectuals, Nagaland government and the undergrounds that takes the initiative of bringing a settlement to the six decades old conflict. In his opinion, this forum can also undertake and reinforce the political education of the Nagas for nation building and consolidating the Naga history (Lotha 2013: 56). There is an overall realization that there can be no amicable solution to the six decades old conflict without the participation of the people. Recently, many Naga intellectuals and civil organizations have questioned the motives and conduct of the NPGs regarding their ways as far as their contribution to the general lawlessness, the factional fights and unabated taxations. The recklessness and arrogance of the NPGs has also caused anger and frustration among the younger generation who are clearly suffering from conflict fatigue to look at Naga national cause with relative pessimism (Bhaumik 2009: 101).

In addition, the nationalist opinion has been finding fine articulation in the opinions and views of number of intellectuals and commentators who are extensively writing on the issue. Moreover, there is increasing debate and discussion on the form and direction the Naga political movement should take in the coming years. The social media and newspapers act as the forum of such discussion and debates with both the layman and expert can express their views. The efforts of civil societies and the Forum for Naga Reconciliation (FNR) initiated in 2007 by church bodies and adequately backed by civil organizations like the Naga Students Federation (NSF), the Naga Mothers’ Association, the Naga HoHo (Naga Apex Social Body) and the Joint Forum of Gaonburhas and Dobashis (village elders) in bringing the factions together and work towards forming a united Naga House has been able to create effective pressure on the political factions to work towards reconciliation to work towards common future of the people under the FNR. There is also an increased realization of the ill effects of
tribalism on the Naga political movement especially from some intellectuals and the emphasis is not only to bring the factions together but also to restore unity, trust and confidence among the tribes to work towards a common future. Voices from the civil society have been also expressing their opinions and concerns about current political situation and the need to create common platforms to give emphasis on the views and opinions of the masses because Naga movement is a people’s movement.

The civil society has been striving hard to achieve peace between the factions and any hurried solution with one faction may defeat the cause of peace (Bhaumik 2009: 100). Intellectuals are making earnest appeal to build a united Naga house for the sustenance of the national movement that has been nurtured by enormous sacrifices in the past. This view has also found wide support from the civil society and the need of a common platform is also felt because people are fearful of speaking in individual terms. Keeping in perspective, the complex and protracted nature of the conflict, there is also a discourse on looking at nation and sovereignty from new perspectives other than the traditional, viewpoint of Westphalian sovereignty, that stress on close association with India if not complete merger or to maintain the current status quo that has been the root cause of conflict. This view also finds some support among the intellectuals and noted commentators such as Abraham Lotha has stressed the need to relook at sovereignty and nation beyond the 19th century definition, and view the examples of Purto Rico’s relation with the United States, Lichtenstein’s relationship with Switzerland and between France and Monaco (Lotha 2013: 55-60). Notably, the general secretary of the biggest political group, the NSCN (IM), TH Muivah also pointed towards some sort of special federal relationship with India and understanding
India’s concerns at the interview he gave to BBC Hardtalk in 2005 that could bring an end to the decades old conflict.49

The spread of internet and social networking sides are playing a huge role in the circulation of opinions, arguments and new developments in Naga nationalism. Thus from being a monopoly of insurgent groups, the subject of nationalism has entered the public forum that has given a new character to the course of Naga nationalism. There is also a visible surge of intellectual activities in discussing collective claims of the Nagas irrespective of territorial boundaries that we shall discuss in details in our following chapter. The intellectuals many of those who disapprove the ways and means of the NPG’s, also accept and recognize the existence and Naga national movement. In my interactions with some noted intellectuals in the Naga country during my field work, I got the sense that all of them agree to the popular character of the movement and the Naga struggle for self-determination started with the presentation of historic memorandum to the Simon Commission in 1929. Moreover, all of them agreed that the Indo-Naga is an ethno-political conflict and there is an earnest urge among the masses to see an amicable settlement to the conflict. We shall discuss in details the prevalence of this sentiment in the subsequent chapters of our research.

It was only a matter of time that people’s frustration and resentment against the arrogance and high-handedness against the atmosphere of fear perpetrated by the unruly cadres to reach a saturating point. One such incident occurred on December 13, 2013, when some cadres of the NSCN (IM), waylaid a cab travelling to Zhuneboto, the district headquarters of the Sema area. It was reported that the cadres misbehaved and molested women belonging to some missioners and beat up the male passengers on the pretext of frisking. This incident invited the collective wrath of Sumi Public which first
presented the NSCN (IM) with an ultimatum to handover the culprits to the district administration. However, the failure of the latter to comply it’s with its assurance to handover the culprits resulted in a bloody confrontation with the local people launching armed assault on the Mulakimi designated camp armed on the New Years Eve with traditional weapons like spears, daos (a type of machete) and simple firearms. People were killed on both sides but the NSCN (IM) was forced to vacate the designated camp. In the aftermath of this incident the Sumi community through the Sumi Hoho severed all links with the NSCN (IM) and called upon the end to revolutionary taxation in the Sumi areas. Notably, the Semas who constitute a significant portion of the NSCN (IM) fighting force including the veteran leader Isak Chishi Swu had not been keeping well with the organization that was evident from the ban imposed on the Sumi Hoho by the NSCN (IM) because the former had excommunicated chairman Swu and some other leaders.

Thus, the massive rally by the ACAUT in October in 2014 and later the incident at Mukalimi are clear indications of shifting public mood in Nagaland. The Mukalimi incident jolt to the NSCN (IM) claim of having the popular mandate of the Naga people and raises serious question marks on the ability of the latter to arbitrate in the peace talks with the government of India to find an acceptable settlement for all sides. Some experts pointed out the simmering discontent of the masses in the face of parallel government structure and while some others viewed it as yet another instance of tribal power politics where Tangkhul domination was challenged by the Semas who felt increasingly sidelined in the organization.

The post ceasefire years is thus characterized by an increase in inter-factional intransigence and proliferation of centrifugal tendencies in the Naga political
movement. The situation has been made further unsustainable due to the predominance of self-aggrandizement among the political factions. Moreover, the inability and unwillingness of the government to take all stakeholders on board has created frustration among sections who are opposed to the NSCN (IM). There also have been significant opinions expressed that any unilateral settlement with the Isak-Muivah faction won’t be accepted as a final settlement to the Naga imbroglio. The centre has entered into a ceasefire agreement with the Khaplang group in 2001 as well as with its splinter group of - the Khole-Kitovi group and declared that it would enter into political negotiations with the two groups once the political negotiations with the Isak-Muivah group is over.\textsuperscript{54} However, this strategy has created the ground fertile for the groups to enter into power struggle to establish dominance often resulting in factional killings.

The emergence of multiple political factions with their parallel government structures, there has been virtual withdrawal of the state from vital avenues of governance with the armed political factions filling up the void and contributing to general lawlessness. This situation has been described as RN Ravi in the following words,

\textit{“The ‘ceasefire’ with the NSCN (I-M) has resulted in the retreat of the state from the crucial areas of governance and subversion of democratic politics. It is undoing the political and social gains achieved since the creation of the Nagaland State that has been rendered tentative in its aftermath. The absence of a credible state has created a power vacuum that is being filled in by chaotic sub-nationalist forces often at war with one another. The powerful traditional tribal bodies are alienated and, in their eagerness to flout New Delhi’s dalliance with the NSCN (I-M), are fostering the other Naga militias. The secessionist politics that was profoundly circumscribed by the politics of expanded democracy is seeking to regain centre stage.”}\textsuperscript{55}
Nevertheless, this phase has also seen a small surge of civic activism in the form of opinion of intellectuals, and civil society groups in resisting centrifugal tendencies by upholding the cause of collective historical and political claims of the Nagas and creating adequate pressure on the armed political factions to come together for a common cause. In spite of these efforts, there are serious hurdles to overcome like rise of tribalism due to factional killings and inability to bring all political factions in reconciliation efforts. Another serious problem is splintering of nationalist factions in the lines of tribal allegiances that give further strength to centrifugal tendencies. Finally, criminal activities associated with the groups raise serious questions regarding the future of the Naga political movement with these groups at the helm. There have been many occasions when local politicians use these political factions to serve their political ends that add to confusion and disorder. Thus, it remains to be seen how far these initiatives from the civil society work in the long run in countering the centrifugal forces that have come to characterize the Naga movement in recent years. Finally, the counter-insurgency strategy of the government has undergone remarkable change in comparison to earlier years from authoritarian approach to more subtle ways and means like entering into ceasefire deals with the political factions and take advantage of the internal divisions in the Naga society especially the existence of fragmented identities. This approach by the GOI has yielded suitable results like substantial weakening of striking power of the armed nationalist factions and contributing to power struggle between the later. Only time will tell how long these tactics continue to yield suitable results for the Indian state in engaging Naga nationalism.
2.7 Impact of Counter-Insurgency Measures on Naga National Movement:

The response of the Indian state to quell the Naga rebellion during the years of its inception was mainly concentrated on striking down hard at the rebels and their supporters among the population. The main goal was to quell the rebellion within a short span of time as it was taken a serious threat to the unity and integrity of the nascent Indian nation and a serious challenge to the nation building efforts of the Indian government. This resulted in disproportionate use of force by the security forces that can be effectively described as scorched earth policy. The inability of the Indian government to realise the true nature of the rebellion under NNC also aggravated the bitter confrontation that saw the use of heavy armoury like tanks and air power to subdue the rebellion.\textsuperscript{56}

It had a significant impact in strengthening the resolve of the nationalists and further alienating the local populace thus leading to many neutral public to shift to the nationalist side. This trend was especially followed during the initial years of the Naga movement when the armed forces carried out operations against the nationalist resistance with utmost brutality. The tactics of army and security forces were relatively reasonable after the creation of Nagaland State. However the persistence of insurgency movement after the signing of Shillong Accord in 1975 provided favourable ground for human rights abuses under the garb of laws like the AFSPA and the Disturbed Areas Act. Some of the excesses before the signing of Sixteen Points Agreement and creation of Nagaland state were indiscriminate burning of villages, desecration of churches, torture of civilians and rape and molestation of women. There were many instances when women were gang raped by the soldiers on the pretext of looking for rebels and others who were beaten and molested. Many Commentators and intellectuals have
given vivid representation of these acts in various works on the history of Naga national movement. Members of various civil society groups recounted these incidents during my interaction with them. Another tactic was the grouping system under which several villages were confined at one place surrounded by barbed fences and armed guards to restrict the movement of the people. This was done to cut off the insurgents from local populace and restrict the former’s supplies. Army atrocities have also found adequate reference in the writings of many Naga intellectuals who compared the brutality to that of the Nazis during the Second World War. 57 Many people lost their lives as a result of army operations and most of them perished as a result of lack of basic amenities of life that was deprived due to the burning down of granaries and dwellings as people were forced to take shelter in the forest. During my field study, I heard many accounts from people in the Naga country whom I personally interacted with revealed gory details of army atrocities and sufferings endured by the common people during the height of insurgency. Laws like the Armed Forces Special Powers Act, 1958 and the Nagaland Security Act, 1962, Disturbed Areas Act and the repeated imposition of Section 144 of the CRPC gave extra leverage to the army and police to act with impunity in carrying out their operations. Another tactic of the government that became infamous was the Village Guard system under the payrolls of the Indian security establishment to counter the nationalists. These Village guards are alleged to be involved in many atrocities against common populace. There are tales of people who joined this village guards going mad and committing suicide at the later stages of life due to sense of guilt.

An examination of the behaviour of armed forces in the Indo-Naga conflict brings to light that all the basic principles of international humanitarian laws were
grossly violated and the army failed to demonstrate basic principles of morality, discipline and high standards of professionalism. This reckless demeanour of the armed forces was also explained by Atai Shimray as the difficult conditions under which they had to conduct their counter-insurgency operations. Baffled by the nature of terrain and frustrated by the elusive guerrillas, the Indian army clamped down hard on innocent villagers. The highhandedness of armed forces is brought out by an article in India Today Magazine that reported,

“Nowhere has the experience of insurgency been longer than and greater than in Nagaland, and nowhere else in the North-East human suffering have been more painful and protracted. Nagaland was the laboratory in which the Indian Army, new to counter-insurgency, committed its biggest errors”.

The extreme tactics adopted by the government may also be seen in the light of authoritarian approach towards insurgency movements that is concentrated in destroying the insurgents and punishing the population who support them. The main aim is to strike terror and fear in the hearts and minds of the pro-insurgent population to withdraw all sympathy and support to the insurgent cause. This strategy to quell the Naga rebellion is not an exception and this device has been extensively used by many regimes in the past around the world. In fact, some commentators have opined the capitulation by the NNC leading to the signing of the Shillong Accord in 1975, was due to fear of the prospect extreme duress and intolerable oppression on the masses as was the case before the beginning of first ceasefire (Chaise 2000: 55). The first historical record of the use of this method to quell a rebellion was perhaps the Roman reaction to the rebellion by the Zealots in 66 AD. In modern times dictatorial regimes have extensively used this tactic like the Nazis during the Second World War to suppress
resistance movements in occupied territories, Pakistan’s crack down on Bengali resistance in East Bengal during the 1971 liberation war, etc. However, many democratic regimes have also resorted to this tactic in varying degrees based on need of the hour. The government strategy to deal with the rebellion by NNC also found harsh critics from the Indian political circles like Jayaprakash Narayan and the issue was raised in the Lok Sabha,

“Nagaland has seen the worst horrible form of state terrorism—women are raped, men and children tortured, and people moved into concentration camps. The Nagas have no recourse to civic justice. All this persecution is to force the Naga people to surrender to India and to accept the Indian rulers as their masters. The Nagas never will”.

A critical study of counter-insurgency operations in the Naga Hills could adequately justify the charge of large scale human rights violations by the Indian armed forces especially during the rebellion under the NNC. However, the outside world was largely uninformed and ignorant of the situation because of the remoteness of the region and deliberate effort by the Indian government to hide the facts on the ground. Nevertheless, the situation began to change in the 1980s when civil society groups like Naga Peoples Movement for Human Rights (NPMHR) and the Naga Students Federation (NSF) assumed active role in highlighting human rights abuses by the army. The NSCN (IM) was also remarkably successful in highlighting human rights abuses in the Naga country at the international stage and the Chairman of the organization was granted permission to attend the 51st Session of the United Nations Commission of Human Rights where the former spoke about the flagrant human rights violations in Nagaland (Shimray2005: 296).
The authoritarian approach by the state was counterproductive in the long run as it further alienated the common Naga population and hardened their resolve not to submit to any dictated peace by the Indian state. During the course of my field study I heard many stories of army brutality especially from the generation that endured the dark days of army atrocities in their villages and the image of the army still remains as brutal occupiers and oppressors instead of protectors and liberators of common people. As is the case with highhandedness in any insurgency movement, the authoritarian approach, aimed at destroying the insurgents and punishing the population, the insurgent cause found more and more supporters from the local populace and many men and women joined the armed insurgent groups to avenge the humiliation and torture by the army. As M. Horam writes,

“It is ironic but true that the very same army which was in the Naga Hills to prevent insurgency drove so many Nagas to insurgency and rebellion, hitherto an embryonic concept, now became the obsession of almost every Naga”.

In my interaction with the General Secretary of the Naga Hoho, he cited his conversation with seasoned Indian political leaders like George Fernandez who were also critical of the Indian government approach to address the Naga rebellion under the NNC. As a student activist, the latter had got the idea of Indian army atrocities in Nagaland through newspaper reports of the day and there was great concern among a large section of the youths regarding the human rights situation in Nagaland. In my interaction with common people and several prominent members from the civil society, I got the general sense of fear from Indian military and paramilitary forces among the people and a large section of people are not comfortable with the militarization of their homeland and view it as an occupation. There were many tales of torture, harassment
and even rapes and molestation of women. In interaction with selected groups of College Students in Dimapur, Kohima and Nagaland University, these were repeated mention of excesses endured by the common civilians at the hands of security forces who feel threatened by the large contingent of armed forces amongst them. Notably, the existence of laws like the Armed Forces Special Powers Acts (AFSPA) makes the civil administration non-relevant and non-functional on an event of counter-insurgency operation. In other cases, many such operations were varied with a view of vengeance rather than acting on credible information and professional discipline. The ambush on army convoy or a paramilitary camp was usually followed by a brutal crackdown on unarmed civilians. One such infamous incident occurred in Oinam in Senapati District of Manipur in July 9 1987, when the NSCN attacked an Assam Rifles Camp in which 9 soldiers were killed. In my interaction with the Speaker of NSF and a representative of Naga Mothers Association, I was told about the extent of harassment common people face in such operations by the security forces. In the aftermath of the incident, the army rounded up the villages of Oinam and nearby areas, in which 15 people were killed, about 100 women were tortured and 4 were raped in two weeks of detention and interrogation by the armed forces. People were forced to dig up graves to look for weapons and carry rations and tents for building camps for the armed forces. Even the Deputy Commissioner and Superintendent of Police of Senapati district were prevented entry into the area. The operation was codenamed as, “Operation Bluebird”. July 9 is still celebrated is still commemorated in memory of the ‘martyrs’ as the great battle of Oinam every year by the people. There are references of many such incidents in different parts of the Naga country. The Naga People’s Movement of Human Rights (NPMHR) filed a case of torture, harassment, rape and extrajudicial execution and
other forms of human rights abuses in the Gauhati High Court that still awaits judgement.

The other counter-insurgency devices of the Indian government were concentrated on more subtle tactics like taking advantage of tribal and clannish loyalties to break the insurgent groups from within. The fissures within the Naga movement enabled the former to suitably turn the centrifugal forces within the latter on the former’s advantage. It was mainly due to the differences and dissentions within the Naga political movement due to powerful role played by politics of tribalism and clannish divisions and loyalties that the united movement fall prey to the machinations of the Indian state. Many experts are of the opinion that Government of India has made active use of its intelligence agencies like the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), Intelligence Bureau (IB), Subsidiary Intelligence Bureau (SIB), Central Intelligence Department (CID) and Military Intelligence (MI) to weaken the Naga national movement. One of the prominent tactics have been to spread disinformation campaigns by planting news items in the media the most controversial was the news through PIB (Press Information Bureau) that was published in the national papers with the caption, “Secret talks with NSCN in Delhi”, that led to the bloody split in the NSCN in 1988 (Shimray 2005: 262-264). There have been several other perceptible and hidden signs of the active role of intelligence agencies. Some recent cases are accusations of army support to the Zeliangrong United Front (ZUF) that split from the NSCN (IM) in 2011, to checkmate the latter especially in Manipur in the areas inhabited by Zeliangrong tribe. The new organization declared its aim to protect the land and resources of Zeliangrong people. The NSCN (IM) on the other hand declared the activities of the ZUF as anti-national and has been fighting its spread in the territories inhabited by
Zeliangrong people.\textsuperscript{64} Over the years the ZUF has challenged the pan-Naga identity by their own historical narrative supported by certain sections from the community. There have been several violent confrontations between the NSCN (IM) and the ZUF since its foundation. In fact the recent split in NSCN (K) and the demand for eastern Nagaland has also been attributed to machinations by Indian intelligence agencies by NSCN (IM).\textsuperscript{65}

Moreover, the intelligence agencies are also known to have actively supported and encouraged rival ethno-nationalist forces in the Naga country to counter the threat posed by the NSCN (IM). Thus, in addition to break the movement from within the government has propped up a third force to challenge the pan-Naga project from without that has resulted in further complicating the situation and on occasions has led to worst forms of ethnic violence often in the form of ethnic cleansing. The GOI’s support towards the Kuki National Army (KNA) to hoodwink the NSCN (IM) in Manipur is a classic instance. Notably, the Naga tribes and the Kukis have shared an uncomfortable relationship with a history of ethnic conflict in the past that had resulted in many deaths on both the sides. Since the 1980s, the Kukis have been paying nominal taxes to Naga chiefs and the NSCN as acknowledgement of the ownership of the Nagas over the lands they settle. However, by mid 1992, the Kukis refused to pay the traditional tax to the Nagas, supposedly on the instigation and diktat of the Kuki National Organization (KNO) and its armed wing, the Kuki National Army (KNA), the Kuki militant outfit formed sometime in the 1980s with the objective of creating a ‘Kuki homeland’ by carving pars of Myanmar, Mizoram, Assam, Nagaland and a big potions of Naga inhabited lands in Manipur and Nagaland. Such moves could not be tolerated by NSCN that had been struggling for a Naga homeland as the Kuki project
encompassed huge swathes of territory recognized as traditional homeland of the Nagas by the former. The result was a bloody outbreak of violence between the Naga and Kuki groups claiming many lives (Vashum 2005:150). This is perhaps one of the few cases in which the NSCN was directly accused to have participated in terrorist tactics in the form of several incidents of ethnic cleansing of Kukis in Manipur. The worst atrocity took place on September, 13, 1993, when about hundred people of Zoupi village were killed in cold blood by Nagalim Guard, a vigilante organization believed to be the proxy of the NSCN (IM).  

We had already discussed in our theoretical background about the involvement of ethnic insurgent groups in ethnic cleansing of unarmed civilians to win over the census. The most well known precedent is the Deir Yassin massacre of Palestinian villagers by Zionist ultra nationalist groups like Irgun and Stern Gang in April 1948 during the formation of Israel.

We have also examined the efforts towards smart counterinsurgency devices instead of relying on the more conventional methods. The approach has dexterously shifted towards emphasising on isolating the insurgents from the population, which is the main support base of the former, by entering into ceasefire arrangements and fragmented distribution of control. It cannot be denied that the government during the ceasefire period has effectively continued its policy of using the differences within the NPGs to the former’s advantage. In this respect we have cited the example of Zeliangrong United Front (ZUF) and the Khaplang split in 2011. These are some of the standard counter-insurgency devices when the government may try to divide the insurgent groups on clan, tribal and religious basis and may even enter the identity game and attempt to fracture the strength of ethnic group by promoting new rival identity to the one promoted by the insurgent group (Rand 1998: 150).
An extensive study of the history of Naga national movement enables us to look at some of the fundamental aspects of a protracted insurgency movement motivated by ethno-nationalism that changes its nature and form according to the needs of situation and time. The large scale armed rebellion under the NNC took a more asymmetric and protracted form of insurgency under its off-shots like the NSCN and its factions. It has to be noted that the period preceding the formation of Nagaland state in 1963 was more in the form of an armed uprising under the NNC. In the years following the creation of the state, which saw many former members joining the political and administrative functions, the splinter group consisting of the radical nationalists continued their armed struggle by means of asymmetric warfare till the Shillong Accord was signed in 1975. The insurgent movement assumed a more sophisticated form under the NSCN that was essentially concentrated in a political-military struggle with the Indian state with the political aspect overshadowing the military facet in many fronts such as intense efforts made by the organization in exerting its ideological and political control over the Naga inhabited areas.

In the subsequent phases, the insurgency movement has also seen considerable shifts in nature of goal from a more radical to more moderate forms like the NSCN (IM) proposal of a ‘special federal relationship’ and shared sovereignty from outright sovereignty. Competing motivations between the members of the insurgent group has also has caused splits that has been further utilized by the government to cause ruptures among insurgent ranks. In other cases, we have also seen that the insurgency movement under the factions of NSCN are increasingly showing signs of becoming some form of low level security threat to the government and shift their actual focus on its ultimate goal and engage in profitable benefits procured from financial gains associated with an
armed insurgency. In most cases, such activities may lead to deterioration in public sympathy and support that is usually taken as an achievement for the government’s counterinsurgency efforts. However, it has to be emphasised that most insurgency movements rise and sustain themselves in situations of political conflict and decline in power and influence of an insurgency movement does not necessarily mean the end of conflict situation. As long as the conflict situation persists, the insurgency may take a dormant form seeking right and favourable moment to once again challenge the state power. A closer look at the counterinsurgency strategy of the successive central governments reveals an overemphasis on ‘carrot and stick policy’, such as winning over the moderates through autonomy provisions and pleasing a small ruling elite drawn from the local population with lucrative financial and political benefits. This strategy could has yielded short term benefits but could not bring the conflict situation to a peaceful political settlement as in most cases, the government’s policy has been concentrated at dividing the political leadership instead of looking for ways that could bring all the interested parties to the negotiating table. From a phase when counterinsurgency devices used conventional methods in engaging Naga nationalism, the post ceasefire years with the factions of the NSCN witnessed new experiments of counterinsurgency like breaking the strength of insurgent factions through engaging them in prolonged ceasefire and political negotiations and employ elaborate intelligence network to fracture the adversaries from within. Such devices has yielded substantial results that could be discerned by further splits in NSCN file and ranks and considerable indignation among the public relating to the ways and means of these groups. Nevertheless, it has to be emphasised that the insurgent groups still retain large measure of arms and still run parallel government structures that speaks about their
relevance in the context of the Naga political problem. Moreover, recent initiatives like advocacy for “one government, one tax”, and increasing civic activism in bringing the armed political factions closer to one another are significant pointers that the Naga political issue and the insurgency have to be seen as separate issues if any permanent solution to the conflict has to be chalked out. The period spanning the years of ceasefire with the factions of the NSCN and political negotiations with the NSCN (IM) has seen a marked decrease in clashes between the security and the nationalist factions, that has also relieved the security forces to take recourse to harsh counterinsurgency operations, but has done little to reduce the common people’s fear and apprehension at the presence of huge of a huge contingent of armed forces across the Naga inhabited areas.

In addition, increasing militarization due to persistence of laws like Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA), Nagaland Security Regulations Act (NSA) and Disturbed Areas Act are pointers that the political conflict that began at the aftermath of Indian independence is far from over and there is serious and urgent need to evolve a concrete strategy to end one of Asia’s oldest ethnic rebellion.

Another significant aspect that can be deciphered from a penetrative look into the history of the Naga self-determination movement is the general impact of the long standing conflict situation on the social, psychological and political existence of the people in the Naga inhabited areas. The presence of a huge contingent of security forces in the area and various operations by the security forces to curb the insurgency have sizeably contributed to the overall indignation and alienation of the common masses. Furthermore, the inability of the government to bring all interested parties to the negotiating table in the past and provisions like Clause 12 and 13 of the 16 Points Agreement has become a potential irritant in upsetting the delicate balance of inter-
ethnic relations by consolidating the Naga irredentist cause that we have already discussed in this chapter. However, the biggest impact of the events that transpired in last six decades of Naga self-determination movement is the unleashing of certain historical forces that have been contributing substantially in the consolidation of Naga ethnic identity to which we shall return in our following chapters.

References:

1 The number of tribes identified as ‘Naga’ by the nationalists. Some Indian scholars put the number much lower to 25 tribes. This discrepancy in the number of tribes is mainly due to the Nagaization process that has set in since the inception of Naga national movement.

2 According to R Vashum, Family is the atom of Naga polity. Families form lineages to constitute clans (usually scattered in two or more villages) which are represented in the village as main constituents in every policy and decision making. Villages form tribe and tribal hohos (council) and various tribal hohos form the highest political body, the Naga Hoho whose jurisdiction extends to all the Nagas. These bodies are crucial in the Naga way of life in general and the Naga national movement in particular because of the authority binding (at least ideally) for its members, Nagas Right to Self-Determination - An Anthropological-Historical Perspective, page-75.


4 See AS Atai Shimray, Let Freedom Ring- Story of Naga Nationalism, Promilla &Co and Bibliophile South Asia, New Delhi and Chicago, 2005, page- 152.


9 Khel is an unique institution of the Naga tribes that brings together different clans of the village and membership is based on the basis of birth.

10 R Vashum highlights the pivotal role played by the leader in directing the course of Naga national politics post-Shillong Accord years in the following words, “Th. Muivah joined the NNC in 1965 as a post-graduate and was later to become the brain behind the Naga National Movement. Till today, he holds the position of General Secretary (Ato Kilonser/Prime Minister) of the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN-IM) which claims to be the successor of the NNC. The organization was formed in 1980.”Nagas’ Right to Self-Determination”, New Delhi, Mittal Publications, 2005, page-109.

The Kingdom of Manipur functioned as a princely state under the British Crown till 1947. Before India formally inaugurated its Constitution, the Kingdom of Manipur had already drafted a Constitution with a Council of Ministers. It was only in 1949, that the Maharaja of Manipur signed the instrument of accession to the Union of India.


BN Mullick’s memories cited by AS Atai Shimray in Let Freedom Ring- The Story of Naga Nationalism, Bibliophile South Asia, page- 73.


“Khalistanis Back Naga Rebel groups,” The Telegraph, April 24, 1993, a letter signed by the President of the Council of Khalistan Dr. Gurmeet Singh Aulakh urged all Sikh soldiers in the Indian army serving in Nagaland to cease oppression of the Nagas and support their freedom, as cited by AS Atai Shimray in Let Freedom Ring- The Story of Naga Nationalism, Bibliophile South Asia, Page- 212.

Muivah in BBC Hard Talk, You tube, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D4k0PgL1Kok, accessed on 31/03/2014.


Gen ‘Kholi’ installed as GPRN/NSCN President, Nagaland Post, June 16, 2011.

NSCN (K) rejects ‘partition ideology’: GPRN/NSCN slams NSCN (K), Nagaland Post April 25, 2012, page- 1.

See Joel Nillo Kath, Just War Isn’t Just Anymore, Nagaland Post, October 21, 2013.


Ibid.


See Public Resolve on Taxation, Nagaland Post, November 1, 2013.

See The Tour, Nagaland Post, April 1, 2014.


Forum for Naga Reconciliation, Reconciliation and its Possibilities, Nagaland Post, October 9, 2013.


See Charles Chasie, Death, Restoration and Life, Nagaland Post, April 24, 2011.


Muivah in BBC Hard Talk, You tube, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D4kOPgL1Kok, accessed on 31/03/2014.


Lifting ban on Sumi Hoho, Nagaland Post, June 23, 2010.


Centre extends ceasefire agreement with a Naga outfit, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Pjw2YkxmQs, accessed on 11/12/2014.
There were many in the Indian establishment of the day who branded the rebellion under the NNC as essentially a law and order problem instigated by Christian missionaries and vested foreign interests. However, it has to be emphasised that, it does not take a government to use heavy armoury and air power to confront a law and order problem. This itself justifies the rebellion was much more serious than any other law and order problem.

See Khekiye K. Sema IAS (Rtd), Wake up people, Nagaland Post, June 4, 2013, page-6.


Interaction with Kekhiye K Sema IAS (Retd), Dimapur December 2014.


Maxwell, as cited by Atai Shimray in Let Freedom Ring- The Story of Naga Nationalism, Bibliophile South Asia, page-73.

The name and address of the interviewees has been kept anonymous at their request.

NSCN (IM) reacts to Zeliangrong Baudi; bodies condemn shoot-out, Nagaland Post, November 12, 2011, page-1.

