CHAPTER ONE:

INTRODUCTION

MEANING OF AGEING

The scientific term for the study of ageing is called gerontology (Sahu 1998:1), which has derived from Greek words ‘geronto’ or ‘geron’ meaning ‘old man’ and ‘logy’ meaning ‘science’. The science of gerontology is concerned with situations and changes inherent in increment of time, with particular reference to stages. It is also related to the problems of the aged male and female in social group, with changes in the circumstances or situations of the individual as a member of the family, community, and society.

According to N. K. Behura and R. P. Mohanty (2005:1), “becoming old is a biological process and it occurs naturally to all living organisms. Man is not an exception to it. When a human baby is born, it grows, attains its childhood, adult and finally becomes old and ultimately passes away. This is inevitable, but although the process of ageing is a biological phenomenon it is very much conditional to or associated with various social factors, cultural values, norms, and regulations to a great extent.” The Ageing and development report (1999) opines, the ageing process is of course a biological reality which (despite medical intervention) has its own dynamic, largely beyond human control. However, it is also subject to the construction by which each society makes sense of old age. The concept of old age is not the same throughout the world.
Maulik (2004) asserts that, ageing is basically a biophysical and neutral phenomenon, characterized by gradual decline in the efficiency of reflexes, and decrease in physical and mental abilities over the time. In the initial stages, most studies on ageing concentrated only on physical ageing as well as independent variables, and tried to study the social and psychological consequences of ageing process. Recently, it is understood that physical ageing is not a uniform process for all individuals rather it is related only to the number of years a person can live. A person’s life span is subject to modification depending on social, environment, and psychological factors. Thus, in order to understand life conditions of elderly, one has to perceive both physical and socio-psychological aspects of life of the aged.

According to Tibbitts (1960), “Ageing is the Survival of a growing number of people who have completed the traditional adult roles of making a living and child rearing and the years following the completion of these tasks represented as extension of life”. John Bond (1990) quoted Comfort stating that, ageing is ‘an increasing liability to die, or an increasing loss of vigour, with increasing chronological age, or with the passage of life cycle’. N. K. Behura and R. P. Mohanty (2005:5) quoted Hess, as he defines ageing as “an inevitable and irreversible biological process of life”. Further Ramnath Rajalakhmi (1989:125) quotes Stieglitz, and argues that “ageing is the part of living. It begins with conception and terminates with death”.

Unruh David. R (1983) in the study of “Invisible in social worlds” examines what he has termed as problematic populations are the aged in the modern society. Bliezner and Rosemary et. al. (1987) in their study “Rural-urban Differences in Service Use by
Older Adults” points out that, older adults represent not only the fastest growing Age group in U.S. population, but also high users of health care and social services.

According to the HelpAge International (2001) in many parts of the developing world, chronological time has little or no importance in the meaning of old age. Other socially constructed meanings of old age are more significant such as the role assigned to old people. In some cases it is the loss of roles accompanying physical decline which is significant in defining old age. Thus, in contrast to the chronological milestones which mark life stages in the developed world (school age, working age and retirement age), old age in many developing countries is seen to begin at the point when active contribution is no longer possible. In the developed world chronological time (the age of education, working age, and retirement age) plays a paramount role. The age of 60 or 65, roughly equivalent to retirement age in most developed Countries is said to be the beginning of old age.

Atchley (1978:4) argues, the concept of old age is based on chronological age but its social definition varies from region to region and from country to country, based on political ideologies, the rate of development, and the population explosion. Traditionally in India, old age began at sixty, a tradition prevailing since the Vedic period. However, political changes in the states in India made artificial differences in definition of the retirement age of the employed population. Accordingly, the minimum age of the retirement age is 55 years and it goes up to 65 years for certain categories of jobs in certain states. Atchley continues to argue that in other countries, particularly in the United States of America 65 has been perceived and legally
considered as the age of retirement. In modern Industrial societies, the problem of what to do with the elderly has assumed critical importance. Because of recent advances in public health and medicine, life expectancy has greatly increased. Never before has any human society had so many aged people, because never before have so many people lived so long. In this sense, the problems of ageing are recent problems.

CONCEPT OF SOCIAL EXCLUSION

Odile Jacob (1995) defines Social Exclusion as, “a social phenomenon of alienation and distance from society. Exclusion is the fact of perverting, even temporarily, someone from participating in social relationships and the construction of the society”.

According to Madanipour (1998: 22), “Social exclusion is defined as a multi-dimensional process, in which various forms of exclusion are combined: participation in decision making and political processes, access to employment and material resources, and integration into common cultural processes. When combined they create acute forms of exclusion that find a spatial manifestation in particular neighbourhood.” The term ‘social exclusion’ is of relative recent origin. It has made substantial inroads into discussions and writings on poverty and deprivation. There is a large and rapidly growing literature on the subject. The concept’s advantage is that it focuses attention on central aspects of deprivation, equally relevant to analysis and policies: deprivation is a multidimensional phenomenon, and deprivation is part and parcel of social relations. Haan (1999: 1) argues, the concept of social exclusion can
help to ground the understanding of deprivation firmly in traditions of social science analyses. The concept has made a rapid ascent onto the stages of debates on deprivation and policies that combat deprivation.

Haan (1999:1) further quotes Silver and opines that it is common to attribute the invention of the term social exclusion to Rene Lenoir in 1974. Lenoir’s excluded included a wide variety of people, not only the poor, but also handicapped, suicidal people, aged, abused children, substance abusers, etc. Silver points out clearly that the term social exclusion gained popularity in France because of at least two reasons. First, the (British) concept of ‘poverty’ had never been popular in France. It was discredited because of its association with Christian charity, the ancient regime, and utilitarian liberalism. French Republicans have rejected both liberal individualism and socialism in favor of the idea of ‘solidarity’, and the welfare state was justified as a means of furthering social integration. Correspondingly, social exclusion was defined as a rupture of the social fabric, and attributed to a failure of the state. Second, the 1980s was a period of economic crisis and restructuring, crisis of the welfare state, and various social and political crises. Cannan (1997) also comments, the term exclusion was used to refer to various types of social disadvantage, related to the new social problems that arose: unemployment, ghettoisation, fundamental changes in family life. Old welfare state provisions were thought incapable of dealing with these problems and a new set of social policies was developed.

Haan (ibid) further quotes Silver and argues on the concept which has gained popularity in other countries, partly through EU channels. The EU has been
committed to fighting social exclusion throughout this decade. The Maastricht and Amsterdam Treaties and the Structural Funds included a commitment to combat social exclusion. Silver mentioned that it disseminated funding for social insertion via the European Social Fund, the European Anti-poverty Network, and Anti-poverty Programmes. Significant was the change in terminology in the Anti-Poverty programmes: while ‘poverty’ was central concern in the 1st Programme, in the 3rd Programme this had become ‘social exclusion’. The EU induced new thinking on the nature of urban poverty and integrated, participatory strategies of regeneration.

In Indian context, Louis (2007) defines two types of excluded persons in Indian society, namely: social groups and sectoral groups. Social groups include dalits, untouchables, lower castes, tribals, adivasis, indigenous peoples, religious and linguistic minorities and women and children of social groups. On the other hand, it is the agricultural laborers, domestic workers, unorganized sector workers, fishing communities, manual scavengers, forest-based communities, vernacular speaking social groups and people with social disability constitutes the sectoral groups. Nayak (1995) argues the central importance of social exclusion in India has to do with exclusion on the basis of caste. As social exclusion in some sense is the most potent form of exclusion because the sociological characteristic is fixed at birth and is hence completely inflexible. Though daunting in themselves, the problem of poverty, unemployment, illiteracy and poor access to health care may still be addressed by concerted public action by government as well as non-governmental organisations. Eradication of caste-based exclusion is, however, a much slower and a yet more daunting task.
Haan (ibid) further quotes, Silver, who has stressed varieties of definitions given to social exclusion and integration, depending on contexts, and that the definitions come with “theoretical and ideological baggage”. The French Republican tradition, drawing on Rousseau and with an emphasis on solidarity, and an idea of the state as the embodiment of the general will of the nation, has given the notion a specific meaning. Exclusion is primarily defined as the rupture of a social bond, which is cultural and moral between the individual and society. National solidarity implies political right and duties. The poor, unemployed, and ethnic minorities are defined as outsiders.

Tsolo (2008) argues, the caste system is based on the premises of a rigid social hierarchy. The traditional formulation of the fourfold division of the population into (i) Brahmins (ii) Kshatriyas (iii) Vaishyas and (iv) Shudras has mutated over centuries into a system of literally thousands of sub-castes, but what has remain intact has been a system whereby it is the upper castes, comprising mainly Brahmins but also on occasion the other two castes (i.e. Kshatriyas and Vaishyas), that have invariably been the dominant players in social and economic interaction while the Shudras have constituted the depressed classes of society. Tsolo further quotes Ghurye, who gave outstanding features of the Indian Hindu society. They are (i) segmental division of society, (ii) hierarchy, (iii) restrictions on food habits and social intercourse, (iv) civil are religious disabilities and privileges of the different sections, (v) lack of unrestricted choice of occupation and (vi) restrictions on marriage, i.e. insistence on the practice of endogamy. Thus, the structural basis of Hindu society is fundamentally based on the idea of exclusion. Caste is not merely a principle of social division but a comprehensive system of life dealing with economy, education, marriage, food, association and worship.
In the Indian context, the institutionalized attempts to exclude, to segregate or to cast out a segment of population from the social order plays a crucial role. This is not a situation where a particular individual ill-treats another, instead, the social process itself is discriminatory in its principles and practice. According to the *Poorest Areas Civil Society Programmed (2001-2008)*, Social exclusion is also about domination, discrimination and deprivation, those who benefit from it do not want to introduce any change, while those who are discriminated against, who are supposed to be inferior, incapable, less meritorious and lower and are not in a position to mobilize and organize to alter the existing system. Here, they do not want to remain in the dehumanizing social order but fear that they may be subjected to repression if they resist exclusion and discrimination.

Nayar (ibid) argues that caste may be considered broadly as a proxy for socio-economic status and poverty. The poor, scheduled caste and scheduled tribes and in some cases the other backward castes are considered as socially disadvantaged groups and such groups have a higher probability of living under adverse conditions and poverty.

According to the *Poorest Areas Civil Society programmed (ibid)* women are the most excluded and discriminated segment of the Indian population. Patriarchy is at the core of the structural element discriminating women. Patriarchy limits women’s ownership and control property and other economic resources, including the products of their own labor. Women’s mobility is constrained, and their access to education and information hindered. Over the years, it has been observed that the experiences of majority of women are grounded in both poverty and patriarchy. Both these feed into each other and subject women to exclusion and exploitation.
The programmed further argues that, the Muslim community is another excluded group in India. There are more Muslims who live below the poverty line than any other group. Further it argues that that neither at the policy level nor in programme interventions do Muslims get their due share as citizens of this country.

Social exclusion in Indian context can be understood through two perspectives i.e. caste and poverty. Exclusion and discrimination on the basis of untouchability and caste is essentially structural in nature. It is also comprehensive and multiple in coverage and denies equal opportunities particularly in the excluded groups like former untouchables. In the Indian context, however, poverty must be acknowledged as one of the most determinant of social exclusion.

**DEFINITION OF NON GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS (NGOs)**

Terry Alliband (1983) argues that, the origin of voluntary work in India, as elsewhere, can be traced back to social service with its antecedents in charity. B. T. Lawani (1999) on the other hand, argues that organisation is as old as society itself. For him, organizations today, whether voluntary or government, are an accepted fact of life. And, individuals are surrounded by organisations from the day they are born to the day that they die. The term organisation is used in its true institutions as hospitals, schools, factories, offices, the armed forces and so on. In fact in modern society it is impossible to escape from the influence of organisations of one type or another.

B. T. Lawani (ibid) is of the view that, voluntary agencies and non-official organisations are treated as one and the same. This may not be so. All non-official
organisations are not necessarily voluntary. He opines that voluntary organizations are spontaneous in their origin where as non-official agencies may also be government sponsored. It may be useful to draw distinction between voluntary agencies and non-governmental organisations, whereas voluntary organizations are spontaneous in their origin, non-governmental agencies may be sponsored by government. He further argues that, although agencies like All India Women’s Conference, Indian Council of Child Welfare, etc. are voluntary, yet projects and committees for running after care homes appointed by the state governments though constituted primarily of voluntary workers are not voluntary agencies but are known as non-official agencies, since these agencies do not come into existence voluntarily but are sponsored and substantially funded by the government. These organizations may not be able to arouse community’s popular support, since they are not based on democratic foundations and should, therefore, not be equated with voluntary agencies.

A unique feature of voluntary agency is that it stimulates voluntary action among the served community and progressively involves enlightened individuals belonging to the served community in the higher echelons of its decision-making machinery. According to Joe C.B. Leung (1994), it is exceedingly difficult to have a precise definition of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). Unlike governmental agencies they imply voluntary membership, where they enjoy a certain degree of autonomy in terms of financing and control, and are not principally profit seeking. World Bank (2001) on the UN defines NGOs as “…any international organization, which is not established by a governmental entity or intergovernmental agreement”. Where as the World Bank defines NGOs as “…any private organisation that pursues activities to relieve suffering, promote the interests of the poor, protect the
environment, provide basic social services, or undertake community development”. Anup Shah (2000) also defines Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) as those possessing the following features: a) non-governmental, b) non-profit-making, c) voluntary, d) of a solid and continuing form, e) altruistic, and f) philanthropic. The World Bank Key Document defines NGOs as “… any non-profit organisation, which is independent from government. They are typically value-based organisations which depend, in whole or in part, on charitable donations and voluntary services”.

Voluntary organisation has been defined by different writers. Following are the definitions through which we can understand the meaning and concept of voluntary organisation. Lord Beveridge (1948) wrote about the voluntary action and voluntary organisation that a generation ago a voluntary worker was someone who gave unpaid service to a good cause, and the group which was formed for working for that good cause came to be known as a voluntary organisation. The group took its name in fact from the outstanding characteristic of the workers upon whom it depended. Further, he defines the voluntary organisation, more precisely, as “A voluntary organisation, properly speaking, is an organisation which, whether its workers are paid or unpaid, is initiated and governed by its own members without external control.” Further he examines the definitions given by Mary Morris and Modeline Rooff and argues that they are similar. The only addition that Modeline Rooff makes is that these voluntary organizations should depend in part at least, upon finding support from voluntary resources.
Beveridge (ibid) further argues that, a voluntary agency is a group of persons who have organized themselves as a legal corporate to render social services or rural development through organized programmes. It is accountable to the community that it serves and from which it has supported. It is controlled and administered by an association of citizens, rather than by the government, although primarily financed by contribution from the community. He further quotes Smith and Freedman who defined voluntary organisation as: ‘structured, formally organized, relatively permanent, secondary groupings as opposed to less structured, informal, ephemeral or primary groupings, identified by the presence of offices filled through some established procedure; periodic, scheduled meetings; qualifying criteria for membership; and some formalized division and specialization of labor.’

B. T. Lawani (ibid) quoted David Sills (a sociologist), who writes that definitions of the term “voluntary association” differ widely but that they generally contain three elements: a voluntary association is an organized group of persons.

i. That is formed in order to further some common interest of its members;

ii. In which membership is voluntary in the sense that it is neither mandatory nor acquired through birth; and

iii. That exists independently of the state.

Sills defines voluntary organisation as “a group of persons organized on the basis of voluntary membership without state control, for the furtherance of some common interests of its members.”
Sills excluded three types of similar associations:

i. Making a living association (like business firms, trade associations, etc.);

ii. Religious organizations; and

iii. Political parties.

K. D. Gangrade (1987) opines voluntary organizations and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) have certain features and characteristics which distinguish them. Firstly, it is registered under an appropriate Act to give a corporate status to a group of individuals, so that they get a legal personality, and an individual liability may give place to group liability. Secondly, it has an administrative structure, and a duly constituted managing/executive committee. Thirdly, it has definite aims and objects, and programmes in fulfillment of these. And lastly, it is an organization initiated and governed by its own members on democratic principles without any external control.

**RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

a) To study the Old Age Home at Kohima, Nagaland.

b) To understand the traditional status of the aged people in the Naga society.

c) To understand the participation of the aged people in socio-economic affairs.

d) To study the changes in the traditional statuses, rights and duties of the aged people in the contemporary Naga society.
STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The status of the aged people in modern Naga society has been a crucial issue in the recent past. The exclusion of aged people would mean the effective distancing of older people from their societies, which goes beyond income and wealth into poor housing, ill health, personal insecurity and the like.

METHODOLOGY

Quantitative and qualitative methods have been used. Primary and secondary sources were implemented. Primary sources include interview, group discussion, and observation. References to articles, documents, pamphlets, websites, newspaper clippings, and journals published in relation to the topic constitute the secondary data. The stratified random sampling technique is used for selecting the Respondents. Case studies have been conducted for illustration of issues spelt out in the interview.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Many older people who could have given me relevant information were not in a position to do so as most of them have grown deaf and blind. Interviews of the Aged people could not be done at that time fully as most of them left for their native places to celebrate Christmas. Majority of the respondents were illiterate. Communication gapes due to diverse dialects was a major restraint. Lastly, time constraint was a major limitation.
BENEFIT OF THE STUDY

The study will benefit all the scholars who are interested in studying about the ‘aged people’ in the Naga society. It will also benefit researchers and people interested in studying the changes in the traditional Naga societies.

STRUCTURES OF CHAPTERISATION

The dissertation is divided into five chapters. The First chapter deals with the meanings and concepts of Ageing, Social Exclusion and NGOs, the statement of the problem, research objectives, methodology, benefit, limitations of the study and the like.

Review of the available literature on problems face by the elderly, National policies, Old Age schemes, its implementation, and review on constitutional safeguards for the Ageing and senior citizens constitutes the second chapter. This chapter also covers reviews of literature on NGOs dealing with Old Age Homes.

The third chapter deals with the profile of Nagaland by discussing the background of the Nagas, its various features- geographical, climate, culture and tradition, family pattern, social changes and the status of women in Naga society.
The fourth chapter examines the field studies, the Old Age Home in Kohima, Nagaland and the method of analysis and interpretation of the fieldwork data. Tradition and modernity in Nagaland is further discussed in the Chapter.

The fifth Chapter summarizes the findings of the study and draws conclusion, followed by criticisms and suggestions and policy recommendations.