CHAPTER TWO:

PROFILE OF NAGALAND

This 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.

Map- 2.1 Map of India and Nagaland:
BACKGROUND OF THE NAGAS

Nagaland, India’s Sixteenth State and the home of the Nagas, was inaugurated on the 1st of December (Sunday) 1963 at Kohima by the then President of India, Dr. S. Radhakrishnan (Aye: 2004) through the 13th Constitutional Amendment. Formerly, it was known as the Naga Hills Tuensang Area. It was made centrally-administered by the Governor of Assam. In 1961, this was renamed as Nagaland and given the status of State of the Indian Union. It is a border state in the North-East of the country. Bounded by Myanmar (Burma) on the east, it has three Indian states, Arunachal Pradesh (north), Assam (west) and Manipur (south) on its three sides (Jamir 2003: 1) with a geographical area of 16,579 square kilometres.

According to the Nagaland State Human Development Report (2004), at the time of its creation, there were only three districts namely- Kohima, Mokokchung, and Tuensang. The state consists of eleven administrative districts namely- 1) Kohima 2) Mokokchung 3) Tuensang 4) Zunheboto 5) Wokha 6) Phek 7) Mon 8) Dimapur 9) Longleng 10) Kiphire and 11) Peren. The state is classified into 52 blocks, with 9 census towns and 1286 inhabited villages. Nagaland is known for its myriad tribes, inhabited by 16 major different tribes along with their sub-tribes with their rich culture and traditions. Aye (ibid) states that, a special constitutional protection for the Nagas has been provided under the 13th Amendment Act, 1962. Prominent among them was the amended Article 371(A) of the Indian Constitution to safeguard the culture, traditions, and way of lives of the Nagas. It also made provision for the protection of ownership of land and its resources.
The state capital Kohima is a fairly big town, and (Arenba 2009: 16) Dimapur is another major town which has the only airport and railway station. All other towns like Mokokchung, Phek, Tuensang, Wokha, and Zunheboto are small indeed. The population of Nagaland according to 2001 census is 19, 88, 636 persons (Male-10, 41,686 and Female-9, 46,950 approximately). The density of population is 120 per Sq. Km. which constitute 0.2% of the country’s total population. The literacy rate of the state is 11, 46,523 (67.11%), Male- 6, 45,807 (71.77) and Female-5, 00,716 (61.91). The sex ratio stands at 909 females per 1000 males. The decadal growth rate according to 2001 census is the highest in India from the period 1991-2001 which is absolutely 7, 79,090 with the percentage of 64.41. There are 1317 Villages in Nagaland, out of which 1286 villages are inhabited (ibid. 15). According to Nagaland State Human Development Report (2004), the state of Nagaland lies between 25° 60’ and 27° 47’ latitude north of equator and between the longitudinal lines 93° 20’E 95° 15’E. According to Arenba (2009: 15) the highest populated district is Dimapur, after district re-organisation. The State grabbed world attention during the Second World War in the battle of Kohima, where the British forces halted the advance of the Japanese forces.

B. B. Kumar (2005: 23-25) states that the nomenclature, ‘Naga’ was given by the Assamese. They pronounce it ‘Noga’. He opines that the word ‘Naga’ is a generic term used for about thirty tribes of the eastern hill frontier in the states of Nagaland, Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh, and Assam. He further argues that the Nagas do not have common legends of origin and migration. They differ in their social structure, village polity, physical features, temperament, dress, hair style, tattooing, settings of villages, housing pattern, mode of agriculture, etc. The traditions of the origin of the
Naga tribes cannot be reconciled with a homogeneous origin. Even different clans of a single tribe may not have traditions of homogeneous origin. Migration has taken place almost from all directions. There are legends of origin from stones, caves, lakes and the sky. The mode of the disposal of the dead, belief in life after death and the like vary from tribe to tribe. It is by this fact, that in the past, a Naga used to identify himself by giving the name of his village. Sometimes, specific names were given to a group of villages. It is to be noted that the Nagas do not possess any written history of their own, but it was through legends and mythological stories which deals with their origin and their religious faith passed down through generations.

Vashum (1996) quotes W.C. Smith, a Christian Missionary as well as a Sociologist from America, who in his ‘The Ao Naga tribes of Assam’ has given thirteen outstanding characteristics of the Tibeto-Burman tribes. These are:

i. Head Hunting: The custom of Head Hunting is a very special factor in the social life of the Nagas. The fame of the Nagas rests more in the head hunting practice.

ii. Dormitory: common sleeping house for the unmarried girls and boys.

iii. Dwelling house built on post or piles.

iv. Disposal of dead on the raised platform.

v. Betel chewing.

vi. Trial Marriage system.

vii. Aversion to milk as an article of diet.

viii. Tattooing by pricking.

ix. Absence of any powerful political organisation.
x. The double cylinder vertical forge.

xi. The loom for weaving cloth.

xii. A large quadrangular or hexagonal shield.

xiii. Residence in his region and crude form of agriculture.

M. Alemchiba (1970) further quotes Dr. Chatterjee, who argues all these traits are of course not found among all the Indo-Mongoloids (whether of Bengal and Assam or of Nepal) of today, but there is evidence to show that these were at one time spread or current among most or all of their tribes. Some of these traits would appear to be of genuine Mongoloid origin. Others like the common club and sleeping house for bachelors, and betel-chewing, would seem in all likelihood to have been adopted from the Austric predecessors of the Mongoloids in their present habitat in Burma and Assam.

Amar Krishna Paul (2009: 104) states that, Nagaland is predominantly a tribal State, blessed with great valleys, meandering streams, high mountains, lushy grassy plains, deep gorges and a rich variety of flora and fauna. It is only in Nagaland, that one can see the multi-colour spears, ceremonial daos, bracelets worn by as many as 15 groups of the Tibeto-Burman family of the Mongoloid race. Aye (ibid: 41) opines that agriculture is the main occupation of 90% of the population of the state. Nagaland has rich deposits of lignite. It has also deposits of coal and limestone. Oil has been located by the Geological Survey of India in Mokokchung and Wokha districts. Besides these mineral deposits, Nagaland has a rich variety of flora and fauna. Aye (ibid: 74-75), says that the Fakim Sanctuary close to the Myanmar border receives high rainfall and
is inhabited by tigers and hillock gibbons. Other sanctuaries are the Intangki Sanctuary, the Rangapahar Wildlife Sanctuary, and the Pulie Badze Wildlife Sanctuary. He further states that, Saramati the highest peak in Nagaland is 3,840 meters above sea level.

Kamei (1996: 10-11) in his studies of the ‘origin of the Nagas’ in the book ‘Nagas at Work’ opines that, the Nagas are concentrated in the States of Nagaland, Manipur, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh of India and Somra Tract of Upper Burma. He identified the Naga tribes and location as follows:

Nagaland: Ao, Angami, Sema, Lotha, Rengma, Chakhesang, Yimchunger, Kalya Kongnyu, Konyak, Chang, Sangtam, Phom, Zeme, Liangmei, Rongmei (Zeliangrong), and Khiemungan.


Arunachal Pradesh: Tangsha, Wancho, and Nocte.

Burma: Konyak, Tangkhul, Phom, and Yimchunger.

Assam: Zeme, Rongmei, and Rengma.

Aye (ibid) opines that Nagaland has a Unicameral Legislature with 60 members in the Nagaland Legislative Assembly. The state sends one member to the Rajya Sabha (Upper House of the Indian Parliament) and one member to the Lok Sabha (Lower
House of the parliament). The local government is based on the administration of the 8 districts and their sub-divisions. The State has Village Development Board (VDB) i.e. Panchayat Raj System. The state is within the jurisdiction of the Guwahati High Court.

**KOHIMA DISTRICT**

**Table No. 2.1: Kohima District Statistical Profile (2001 census)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sq. kms</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Rural</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Literacy rate</th>
<th>Sub-Divisions</th>
<th>No of villages</th>
<th>EAC* Circle</th>
<th>Assembly Constituencies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3114</td>
<td>314366</td>
<td>235782</td>
<td>78584</td>
<td>74.28%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Aye (ibid: 97) argues that, the term Kohima is derived from KEW-HI-MIA meaning THE MEN OF KEWHI a plant grown on the mountain side. The present name was coined by the Britishers, according to some senior citizens of the capital town. It was chosen as the Headquarter of the Naga Hills since 1878. It became a district in 1957. Chaya (2008) opines that, Kohima is the first seat of modern administration as the Headquarter of the Naga Hills District (then under Assam) with the appointment of G.H. Damant as Political Officer in 1879. When Nagaland became a full fledged state on 1st December 1963, Kohima was christened as the state capital. Kohima included the districts of present Kohima, Phek, Dimapur and Peren which over the years have come to be bifurcated as separate districts. Kohima district has three Sub-Divisions and two Extra Assistance Commissioner (EAC) circles namely: Tsemiinyu/Chiephoboizou/ Jakhama and Sechu, Kezocha.
According to Nagaland State Human Development Report (ibid: 241), the total area of the district is 3114 Sq.kms with a total population of 314366, out of which 161,701 (Male) and 152,665 (Female). It also shows that an estimated population of 235,782 live in rural areas while 78,584 live in urban areas. There are 202 villages, out of which 180 are inhabited and 22 are uninhabited. The sex ratio stands at 944 females per 1000 male. The literacy rate of the district is 74.28%, out of which male literacy is of 81.44% while female literacy is 66.64%. The density of population is 120 per sq. km. The District is the home of the Angamis, Rengmas, Zeliangs, and a small group of Kukis, Semas and some other minor group. The State capital and hill station is situated in the south at an altitude of 1444.12 m above sea level. Amar Krishna Paul (2009:112) states that, while entering kohima village, one can see a number of traditional wooden gates with the scimitar of horns of mithun. These motifs indicate bravely and valour of the Angami-Nagas. Jamir (2003:70) states that, Kohima Village is the largest Village in Nagaland with about 1750 households. He further states that (ibid. 69) Kohima is known as the “Switzerland of the East”.

CLIMATE (TOPOGRAPHY)

Nagaland's mountainous terrain also has a profound effect on the state's climate. Aye (ibid: 5) opines, during the winter months (October - February), temperatures range from about 39°F to 75°F (4°C - 24°C); summer months (March - June) bring temperatures up into the 60°F - 90°F (16°C - 31°C) range. Filling the gap between those months, the monsoon season sees heavy rains and temperatures slightly cooler than the summer. That majority of the states annual 98 inches (250 cm) of rain fall during this time.
Further, he affirms that, the topography is full of hilly ranges which divide into a wide chaos of spurs and ridges. The altitude varies between 194 mts height and it is very typical of the Nagas to build their houses on the hilltop and at higher elevation. The state is largely a hilly region and people prefer to build their houses on the hills and mountain tops rather than in the valleys or the terraced region of the hills. The highest mountain of the state with 9,890 feet and most of its 1,112 villages are located in the lower hills with some of them being located at much higher hilly areas. The Naga Hills run through the state (Jamir ibid: 52) with Saramati as its highest peak which has 3,840 meters above sea level. There are also rarest varieties of flora and fauna. The north western half has a highly dissected terrain which is mountainous and cut by deep river valleys.

The state of Nagaland records heavy rainfall. The average rainfall (Aye ibid: 4-5) in Nagaland varies between 2000mm to 2500mm (approx). The heavy monsoon rain normally occurs from May to August with occasional dry-spells during September to October. Dry season begins from November and continues till April. The principal rivers (ibid. 4-5) of Nagaland are Dhansari, Dikhu, Doyang, Milak, Tizu and Zungki, of which Doyang is the biggest river and the longest is Dhansari. The Doyang River rises from the barial Range near Mao. The principal tributaries of this river are Dzulu, Tsuarng, and Sidju. As the river turns west, it is joined by its largest tributary, Renmapani, in the Wokha District. The Dhansari River rises in the South-West of the state. Important tributaries of this river, inside the state are Intanki, Taham, Jarnapani, and Barimongla. Some of the other rivers of the state are Tsumok, Menung, Diphu, Manglu, Langlong, Langye, and Dzuza.
Nagas belong to the Mongolian stock, consisting of 16 major tribes- the Angami, Lotha, Ao, Rengma, Sangtam, Yimchunger, Pochury, Zeliang, Chakesang, Konyak, Tankhul, Phom, Konyak, Sema and many other who inhabit the different parts of the state as well as beyond the boundaries. Over time, the tribes remained relatively isolated from each other, and even today do not view themselves as one unified people. Despite this, the many tribes do share common cultural characteristics that help to create the loose, generic "Nagaland culture". Naga craftsmanship has been perfected in the creation of utility pieces and tools. People all around India know Nagaland as the producer of fine shawls, complicated bamboo and cane furniture, powerful machetes, beads, and woodcarvings. Tribal outfits take this craftsmanship to higher levels with the use of colorful cloths, bearskin-covered bamboo shields, and decorated spears. Making use of mainly the drum and the flute, Naga music plays a major role in daily life and helps pass on legends and traditions to younger generations. Occasionally accompanied with slow, rhythmic dancing, the music helps in the celebrations of Nagaland's colorful festivals. The Angami tribe's 10-day Sekrenyi marks the end of the agricultural cycle. April sees the celebration of Konyak Aoling, which celebrates the New Year. In celebrating such events, the Nagas dine on their typical spicy, non-vegetarian food. Raw chilly is a standard ingredient of Naga cuisine, and pork with bamboo shoot is common dish.

In the context of the past, Naga Individuals know no other life except that of ‘Community life’. A Naga’s obligation and loyalty was to his family and village and this required a total submission to the village community. The village community
looked after the individual needs which were common to the entire community and for the satisfaction of such needs, the entire village was responsible. Every individual was given equal opportunities and rights and there was absolutely no room for discrimination of any kind based on birth, wealth, or rank. There was no difference between the rich and poor and no caste system and class system. All things are done in groups and in the full presence of the entire community. They work in groups, eat in groups and sleep in groups. There is no individual cultivation or harvest, no individual house-building, no ‘feast of merit’ by individuals alone and no wooing of girls individually. It is in this context that R.R Shimray puts forth ‘The philosophy of individualism did not have much importance in Naga society. The individual has no existence apart from the community’. In every work, there was competition between men and men, women and women. The weak and the strong worked together in a line, the weaker ones in the corner, and the stronger ones in the middle so that the stronger ones may cover the portions of the weaker ones. Every one tried to show his or her best in each field everyday till the cultivation and harvest were over. The sense of pride and charm of belonging and devotion to one’s group is noteworthy’. In Angami society, anybody could convene a public meeting to decide any case of public importance. In Naga society, customary laws that reign supreme in all aspects of life. Any violation of these laws brought forth the punishment of exile into distant hills where all one could do was wailing and counting the days of remission.

The colourful people of Nagaland have a rich cultural heritage and tradition. The state is unparalleled for the diversity of tribal culture it contains. Nagaland is home to at least 16 major and many more minor tribes. Most of these communities are ethically similar, having derived from an original common stock but their geographical
isolation from each other has brought amongst them certain distinctive characteristics in language, dress, and customs.

i. **Settlement Pattern:** Visielie (2005) mentioned that most of the villages were built on the summit of a hill or on a ridge for strategic reasons. The houses are dotted all over the hill slope. Most of the villages are built on the hilltop as it was a defensible position from where the approaching enemy could be easily visible. The names given to the villages connote some local features.

ii. **Housing:** The houses have heavy wooden doors, usually decorated by conventional designs of Mithun heads, heads of men, etc. the house of the man who has given ‘feast of merit’ is adorned by Mithun heads. The side and back walls are generally of bamboo matting while partition is made of bamboo cane. The interior of the house is divided into three compartments. The front room meant for storage, contains a large paddy basket. It also contains the rice pounding bench and other mats. The second compartment is the kitchen. The third compartment serves as the place to sleep. These types of houses are common in the Angami region of Nagaland.

iii. **Religion:** Aye (ibid) said that till early nineteenth century, the Nagas were followers of animism and did not believe in any organized religion. The beliefs of these Naga tribes were expressed through their worship of nature and natural phenomenon and through their faith of the magic and omens. Some of the Nagas came in touch with Vaishnavism as they came in contact with the Ahoms (a kingdom in Assam) but largely they were converted to
Christianity during the later part of nineteenth century. Initially, Christianity was bitterly opposed. Christian preachers, like the pastors, evangelists, and clergies were driven away from their villages and even those who remained were denied many facilities in the villages as pressure tactics on them not to preach Christianity. As far as Christian religion is concerned, every Naga believes today that the Christian religion is a religion from uncertainty to certainty, from darkness to light, from death to eternal life and from damnation to salvation. At present at least 90% profess Christianity, some follow the tenants of Hinduism, Vaishnavism and still some 1% of the population believes in tribal religion.

iv. **Birth:** The Nagas receive a new born child with great zeal and enthusiasm. Usually the selection of the name is done by the grand parents, parents or by the relatives in their own dialects. Naming of the child takes place after few days of birth with the blessing of local Church members and usually on Sunday the given name is announced in the Church.

v. **Death/ Funeral:** The Nagas generally bury dead body in a graveyard or near their house. A funeral service is solemnized by the Pastor/Priest of the local Church in the presence of the loved ones, relatives, friends who pay their tribute and convey their condolence message. A gravestone is usually built at the same place where the dead body was buried along with a script in memory of the dead person. Any person who dies of unnatural death is not buried in the village but at a distant place and rituals are performed.
vi. **Graves:** Visielie (2005) opines that another feature of the Naga villages is its graves. This are normally built of stones and are either circular or rectangular and are to be found in the village itself, or by the side of one of the village paths in the immediate vicinity of the village. The outskirts of the villages also have similar constructed memorials built to commemorate deceased warriors. Village gates are important feature of an Angami village. These are strong thick wooden doors made out of one piece of solid wood. They are engraved with motifs, symbolizing an increased in the population and of the Mithuns. Every gate has a name, derived from its position or from the one who took charge of its construction in the past.

vii. **Marriage:** The Naga boys and girls enjoy total freedom in choosing their life partners but marriage within the same clan and cousin-marriage is strictly forbidden by some tribe/clans. The culture of marriage, by paying the dowry, is practice by several tribes in Nagaland. The dowry is given by the parents of the boy to the girl in the form of cash, ornaments, paddy field, animals, etc.

viii. **Ethnic and Linguistic features:** In the racial mosaic of India, the Mongoloid segment dominated the North East India and ethnically the Nagas are the Tibeto Burmans of the Sino Tibetan Groups of Mongoloid who have been described by Indian philologists led by Dr S.K Chatterjee (1950) as the Indo-Mongoloid because of their historical connection with India, specially in north east and the Himalaya region. Dr. S.K. Chatterjee and following him many Indian scholars have interpreted the Kiratas of the Sanskrit literature with the Indo Mongoloid. It has been established that the Mongoloid had contributed
to the enrichment of Indian Cultures as whole. According to S.K. Chatterjee, the Kiratas include “all these Sino- Tibataan speaking tribes, Mongoloid of cultural entity that is India, the Himalayan tribes (the Nepal tribes and north Assam tribes), the Indian Tibetans, the Khasis, and earlier tribes (of unknown affiliation within the Tibeto Burman Branch of the Sino Tibetan family) who have now become absorbed in the population of the place of northern and north eastern India.”

Table 2.2 Nagaland districts by tribes and the dialectes spoken by them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Tribe</th>
<th>Dialect / dialects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kohima</td>
<td>Angamis</td>
<td>Angami</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dimapur</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mokokchung</td>
<td>Ao</td>
<td>Chungli and Mongsen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wokha</td>
<td>Lotha</td>
<td>Lotha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zunheboto</td>
<td>Sumi.</td>
<td>Sumi.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phek</td>
<td>Chakhesang, Pochury</td>
<td>Khezha, Pochuri and Chokri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuensang</td>
<td>Yimchunger, Sangtam, Chang</td>
<td>Chang.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiphire</td>
<td>Sangtam, Yimchunger, Sema</td>
<td>Sangtam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longlen</td>
<td>Phom</td>
<td>Phom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peren</td>
<td>Zeliangrong</td>
<td>Zeliang and Rongmei</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon</td>
<td>Konyak</td>
<td>Konyak</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: “Inspiring Nagaland G.K” by Paul 2007, pp. 23)
B.S. Guha (1949) gave the classification of the Indian population into six groups. The Mongoloid, which is one of the groups divided into sub-groups lie (1) The Long headed Paleo-Mongoloid and (2) The broad headed Mongoloid and (3) Tibeto Burman, the Nagas are included.

The Linguistic Survey of India, conducted by G.A. Grierson in the early twentieth century established the linguistic family of the Nagas as Tibeto Burman. Grierson divides the group into Naga family and Naga-Bodo sub-family. Now with the entry of a few more tribes of Manipur into constellation, a few Kuki-Chin speakers are among the Naga tribes.

Haragovind Joshi (2001) opines that, the indigenous people of Nagaland have their own languages or dialects. In actual practice, even within one tribal area, the language even within one area varies from village to village. According to Nagaland State Human Development Report (2004), Grierson classified the Naga languages into Tibeto-Burman family and divided them into three groups; the Western sub-group, the Central sub-group and the eastern sub-group. The Western sub-group comprises Angami, Sema, Rengma, and Chakhesang languages; the Central sub-group includes Ao, Lotha and Phom languages; while the Eastern sub-group is made up of, among others, Chang and Konyak languages. It is in this context that one tribe cannot understand the dialect of another tribe. The tribal groups, who do not understand one another’s language, converse in Nagamese, a mixture of Assamese and Naga language. There are sixteen major languages in the state representing about 90% of the population. The State Assembly, in a resolution adopted on 18th September 1967,
recommended that English be used for all official purposes within the state of Nagaland indefinitely, and that English be included as one of the languages in the VIII Schedule of the Constitution. The English language is the official language of the state.

ix. **Dresses:** The dress of the Naga tribes varies from place to place suiting the climate of a particular area. The most prominent item of Naga dress is the shawl and every tribe has its own colourful traditional shawl. Apart from the shawl, the normal working dress of a tribal man is a *kilt*, which is generally black in colour and a *lengta* at the waist, tied by a belt and looping with a flap in front.

The women folk of Nagaland wear skirts wrapped round the waist covering the knee, a sheet of cloth to cover the upper part of the body and an apron to fasten the edges of the cloth on both the sides of the collar bones or one end is fastened along one side and the other is suspended below an armpit.

x. **Ornaments:** Aye (ibid) the main ornament of the men folk of Nagaland are strings of beads, boar tusks, horns, shells, cornelian stones which are mostly made of bones, cane, leather, metals, shell and orchids. The women folk wear ornaments like bracelets, earrings, necklaces, and wristlets which are made of brass, copper, lead, silver, and orchids.
‘Dormitory’ or ‘Morung’: Chaya (2008) states, a very interesting note within the societal parameters of society is the existence as ‘Morung’ or ‘Dormitory’ is the name used by several writers to mean the quarter of the youth- wherein the individual learnt many things about life. Strictness in discipline was maintained in this quarter. Shishak (1996) says that the morung was located at the village entrance or on a spot from where the village could be guarded most effectively. Among the Aos and the Konyaks, boys’ morungs are separate buildings, whereas among the Tangkhuls and Angamis they are housed in buildings built and occupied by males. Upon reaching the age of puberty, boys and girls are admitted to their respective dormitories. Members have to take part in many morung activities, if the morung is housed in someone’s building, members would help the owners in collecting firewood, drawing water, etc. Here communal solidarity, cohesion among the members of a community and disciplinary influence of parents and young minds were imparted. The inmates developed sense of reliance, loyalty, and service to the community. It was a cultural centre where folksongs, folkdances, and folklores passed from one generation to the other through spoken words.

The morung was an important educational institution for the boys. There were regular ranks through which boys passed until they attained adulthood and were admitted to full membership. Each order had to perform some distinctive form of service for the men who belonged in the morung. Normal activities at the morung were never organized, they were spontaneous, and members responded naturally.
xii. **Kitchen:** Visielie (2005) states that, the utensils are either made of wood or clay, but with the result of contact with the Britishers and Assamese aluminum, iron or tin-cooking vessels are also found in the Angami kitchen.

xiii. **Cuisines:** The principal or staple food of all the Naga tribes is rice and meat. Beef, pork, and chicken are part of daily menu. Other wild animals and birds are also eaten. The Naga people are very fond of chillies. The method of cooking the food is simple boiling with some spices mixed to taste. Dried Pork mixed with Axone is considered the best dish for all Nagas and Chicken is consumed with relish. The favourite drink of the Naga people is the rice-beer, which is generally of three kinds, Ruhi, Dzutse and Zutho.

xiv. **‘Tehuba’ or ‘Sitting out place’:** ‘Tehuba’ or ‘sitting out place’ is peculiar among the Angami, Naga community. Chaya (ibid) states that ‘Tehuba’ is built of atone and arranged in tier to form a more or less circular platform. They vary in height from three or four to twenty feet or more. They are mostly built on higher points of the villages. They occupy a central position in the village. In the past it might have been a place from where one could look out for the approach of enemies. However, such places have come to serve as mainly a sitting place where a meeting could be convened or from where an elderly man could watch children play. The most notable feature of this place is that after early meal – preferably in the evening; young and old men gather and sit around the fire chatting, joking or listening to one another’s story. Women, however never join them as it is unethical for them to sit on the ‘Tehuba’, when men are engrossed in one discussion or the other. This gossip
session, involving a constant intermingling of the villagers give them a sense of unity and solidarity. The young and old mingle freely – this friendly and cooperative spirit reinforces the idea of democracy among the Nagas.

**PATTERN OF FAMILY**

Horam (1988) in his book ‘Nagas Old Ways and New Trends’ states that in Naga society, the family is the basic social institution; a Naga family is ‘nuclear’. The ‘encyclopaedic profile of Indian Tribes’ further states, a Naga family generally consists of the husband and wife and their unmarried children. The husband is the head of the family. ‘Angamis prefer nuclear families and authority of the eldest male is recognized by other members of the household’. Among the Tangkhuls and the Aos’, he gets parental house, but among the Angamis he forfeits this to the youngest brother. Naga families are usually very closely knit with bonds of affection and respect. The parents expect from their children support, care and comfort in their old age; this obligatory at least in Naga traditional society. The wife and husband respect each other and their mutual respect is the secret of domestic harmony in a Naga family. Every male child believes that it is his moral obligation to look after his parents in their old age, perform the death rituals and to give feast on their death. Elder’s blessings are always sought as they are supposed to have super natural powers. It is the older people who know and pass on the younger generation the ways of the society to which they are expected to conform. It is because of this reason; Age among the Nagas has both prestige and power.
SOCIAL CHANGES

Change as we know it the only permanent phenomenon which is beyond man’s control. Time has always been changing but the one that we are living in seem to be changing at a pace never experience before. Even by the end of last century, we have witnessed new excitements and hope with the fall of USSR and the Berlin wall. Economic liberalization has come to be the order of the day even in a totalitarian state like China. Computer revolution is all set to sweep us into a new age where everything can be done with the press of a button. A revolution of such magnitude, if not more, started among the Nagas over a century with the advent of Christianity into the world of the Nagas, taking them from darkness to light.

Alem (1997) opines, Nagas lived in a world of their own, separated from the rest of the world for many generations. Like any other tribal communities they held a world view that is entirely different from the western world view. They more or less lived a self-contented life and cared less about the rest of the people around them. The only contact they had was with the Ahoms. Many Naga chiefs were in friendly relationship with the Ahom kings. The Nagas heard the word “East India Company” from the Assamese friends. “The Treaty of Yangdaboo” was signed with the king of Ava by the East India Company in 1826. This news spread all over Assam and the neighbouring Naga villages. Since then all “white” people were known to the Nagas as “company men”. A strong suspicion was in the hearts of the Nagas against the “white” men.
It is important to consider certain factors that have directly or indirectly helped the introduction of Christianity among the Nagas for a better understanding of “the Nagas turning from the darkness to light”. Alem (ibid) states that, it was a period, marked by emerging changes that were taking place among the Nagas in general which helped them awaken to a better life.

Religiously, the Nagas were going through a crisis of faith. People were beginning to question the effectiveness of their age-old religious beliefs and practices. The expensive ceremonials, especially in the case of sickness, were becoming unbearably burdensome to many. Silently they were looking forward to one who would provide answers to the mystery of suffering, a deliverer from the bondage of the spirits and the judgement of God. In the absence of the message of the forgiveness of God, they were living in fear of the judgement of God.

Economically, though the Nagas were a hardworking people, poor food habits caused tremendous effect on their health leading to high mortality rate in the country. As sickness was believed to be caused by the angry spirits, to heal a sickness was to appease the angry spirits. Often a family would go poor as offering recommended by the witch doctors were expensive. Calamities and constant waging of war contributed to the economic hardship of the people.

Socially, head hunting, a license for social status, was largely responsible for the social evils such as, slavery, hatred, disunity, poverty, and widowhood. Excessive
wine-drinking habit, socializing in religious festivals and leisure times had tremendous effect on the moral life of the people.

Politically, in the absence of a unified nation, each village was held as an independent unit. Fear of attack from the stronger village or tribe had a dominating effect on the political life of the Nagas. Hence there were very suspicious of the emergence of any new movement. By this time they were aware and sensitive to the colonizing attitude of the “white” people. They looked upon East India Company and any “white” people as a threat to their independent life.

This event was of great significance to the Nagas as they encounter with the British directly since 1832. The British established some authority over one-third of the Nagas and bifurcated them under Burma (Myanmar) and India, the consequences of which are felt more today. In the process it has to some extent contributed to the unity of the Nagas and the growth of the Naga national struggle for sovereignty. The Nagas’ desire for independence after the British leave the Indian sub-continent resulted in need for sending of the Simon Commission to Kohima. The Naga club, a representative body of all the Naga tribes, submitted a memorandum to the commission in January, 1929. With the departure of the British from Indian sub-continent, the Nagas declared themselves independent on 14 August, 1947 and have been continuing their movement for sovereignty of Naga Land.
The Nagas have been brought to the International limelight by their political struggle, their unique past and their colourful traditions and culture. The Naga society was once characterized by its own commonality, sense of justice, equality, integrity, honesty, and religiosity. In such a society one finds a sense of belonging because all the important activities affecting individual and the community are done together, keeping in mind the welfare of the village community as a whole. In such a society there is mutual trust, respect for eldest, obedience to parents, absence of juvenile delinquency, sharing of worldly goods, sacrifice in service, and a feeling of oneness and unity. Since they came in contact with Westerners many changes took place in indigenous Naga practices. Old customs and traditions were rapidly forsaken or modified beyond recognition, and old beliefs which for ages have been firmly held wee quietly dropped, partly because they met with contempt and ridicule from missionaries, and partly because the young men soon learned that they were not worthy of credence. The Christian population grew steadily, and the spirit of change invaded and pervaded every aspect of village life. Mills identified some of the agencies that brought change to the Naga areas during the Pax Britannica: “officials engaged in administration, the battalion of Assam Rifles stationed in the district, foreign traders (non-Nagas), missionaries of the American Baptist Mission, and servants, retired sepoys and other foreigners living in the district.”

With the Westerners, came improved methods of travel and communication and development of commerce. Village traders, previously cut off from the plains and more distant villages by hostile neighbours, were able to journey in safety.
Free access of the marketplaces and contact with the Europeans led to the introduction of the metallic currency of India as the medium of exchange, displacing the barter system. Unfortunately, the introduction of coin into Nagas areas has been a rise in money lenders who today charge as high as 50 to 100% interest per annum. As a result more and more Nagas become heavily indebted each year.

British control of the areas also led to the introduction of manufactures goods into the region, replacing goods made by hand, such as earthen pots, wooden plated, etc. Today Naga Basket and mat weaving, wood carving, and other indigenous handicrafts and artistic works have almost been abandoned due to the availability of manufactures counterparts on the market at a cheaper rate than they could produce.

Shishak (1973) argues that, the presence of foreigners, whether European or Indian, influenced the behavior of the Nagas. Missionaries and Officials lived in great splendor compared with the Nagas. This gave the impression that they had unlimited wealth at their disposal. Opportunities to earn money in the service of Europeans made many Nagas less industrious. They began to demand higher pay from foreigners than from their own people, at the same time they were prepared to work less.

The presence of a body of government officials and a battalion of Assam Rifles caused a small town to grow up at Kohima. Nagas began migrating to newly established towns for easy living, away from village discipline and communal life. Establishment of civil courts in government headquarters has also downgraded the
village and tribal authorities. Today Nagas are inclined to rush to court with quarrel instead of first laying their case before the village elders.

Today a great number of Nagas are neither truly Nagas nor are they absorbed in the dominant culture. They seem to have picked up the worst of both. Corruption is rampant among the educated Nagas, many of whom profess to be Christians. Today, bribery is a thriving commodity in Naga society where the percentage of Christians is very high. Contrary to the traditional way of life, today sexual immorality is thriving, partly as a result of being exposed to western way of life through movies, pictures, and books. Drunkards and drug addicts are on the increase. The moral backbone of the Nagas seems to be breaking down. Unless there is moral and spiritual awakening, the Nagas will soon be a bunch of moral and spiritual invalids, as well as political and economic parasites.

Non-Nagas who have come as traders, merchants, and government officials have usurped the land. They have extracted the natural resources through mining and drilling, and have even denuded the forest. Some Nagas in their greed and selfishness have collaborated with the outsiders in getting rid of the timber from the forests. Where, the flora and fauna of the forest have become almost extinct.
STATUS OF WOMEN IN NAGA SOCIETY:

We have different opinions with regards to the position of women in the ‘tribal societies’. Some would say that tribal societies generally assigned a high status to women while others opine that in ‘primitive’ societies women were no better than a mere sex object or a second sex women or otherwise of an inferior sex.

Zenol (1998) quotes Verrier Elwin remarks, who states “… tribal women is in herself exactly the same as any other women, with the same position, love and fears, the same devotion to the home, to husband and children, the same faults and the same virtues’. She further quotes Haimendorf who notes, ‘… many women in more civilized parts of India may well envy the women of the Naga Hills, their high status and their free and happy life and if you measure the cultural level of the people by the social position and personal freedom of its women you will think twice before looking down on the Nagas as savages’.

Early ethnographic materials suggest that studies have always been dominated by the male bias. This is perhaps because administrators turned scholars and the scholars have basically been males and therefore could find easy access to the domains of women. Almost every society in the present day northeast India is patriarchal\(^1\). Zehol (1998) is of the view that Patriarchal society, at any given historical time, its institutions and traditions are inspired by the belief in male dominance and female inferiority. The traditional social, political, and religious institutions have put the status of women under the dominance of men. Patriarchy affects the status of women

\(^1\) Expect the Khasis and Garos who follow the Matriarchal system.
in every society however, the existence of patriarchy differs from one tribe to another tribe even in the traditional Naga society. Traditionally, Naga society was patriarchal where man dominates woman and the family as a whole. Being a patriarchal society women are by nature seen secondary in every sphere. The treatment given to women is different from that of men. And also the treatment of women differs from one tribe to the other.

In traditional Naga society, women are not only place in the family but are assigned with little or no place in social, political, and religious institutions though women were assigned enormous role in economic activities. In the Naga society women were confined to household and food gathering duties within the confined of the village state. Commonly applauded as a daughter, sister, wife, and mother, the traditional Naga society consider women as an equal partner to men in word but the word ‘equal’ could not be considered because women were not considered as equal with men in practice. Among the different tribes of the Nagas the status and role of women in the traditional society differs a lot even though Nagas were situated in one region.

If we take a brief look at how women were perceived in Naga society, which to certain extent continues to exist, it provides us with certain valuable insights. Zehol (ibid) said that, among the Tangkhul² Naga tribe, women were not supposed to create any trouble or alarm in the traditional society. She further argues that the women had

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² The Tangkhul are one of the Naga tribes residing in the territory of both present Nagaland and Manipur.
equal role in a family like the husband. The womenfolk of the Tangkhul also had the full independence in the agriculture work though there were restrictions against her.

Tungoe (1998) writes that, among the Lotha Naga tribe, women were considered as the weaker sex where male were supposed to possess six strength and the women only five. The spinsters had low status in the Lotha society and divorce was not uncommon. Dice game was popular among the Lotha Nagas which men could not bet on with all his property and later even with his wife.

Neumai (1998) opines that, the Zeliangrong Nagas enjoyed both authority and inheritance. Though the Zeliangrong women were protected they were not given equal treatment not even by their own parents. During the warfare and raiding period, killing of women and children was considered to be an act of cowardice. He opines that, the women are always well protected thus, when the village warriors were about to attack their enemies they always gave a warning yell to avoid harming the women and the children.

Zhimomi (1998) states that, the status of Sema women comparing with the other tribes of the women seemed to be given more respect. But though the status of women was significant, they were always under the men’s control. The Sema Naga society

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3 The Lothas are one of the Major tribes of the Nagas and they are mostly under the District of Wokha.
4 The Zeliangrong are one of the major tribes of the Nagas and they both dual in Nagaland and Manipur.
5 Another major tribe of the Nagas, who inhabits in Districts of Zunheboto and parts of Dimapur.
always had been patriarchal where women have no say over the inheritance of property, headship, and decision making.

Unlike many tribes the Chakhesang women were allowed to go out and fetch water early in the morning during the festival time. The marriage of a girl is usually ‘pick and choose’ but there was also a wide prevalent of arrange marriage too. A Chakhesang woman plays important role in the religious practices also and she enjoys a comfortable place in the society.

Zehol and Zehol (1998) are of the view that, the status of Konyak women was very low as she was considered a mere being for pleasure and for reproduction. A Konyak woman was restricted in such a way that she was not allowed to go to any village meeting and she was forbidden to touch the weapon of the men folk. She was not allowed to go inside the men’s morung too.

J. P. Mills (1837) states that, in the Rengma society a woman was not looked down as a ‘social handicap or ridiculed’ except in the inheritance and property ownership. Women like any other Nagas could not inherit any immovable property. A widow had the right over lands and properties till marriage could not sell anything.

6 The Chakhesangs inhabit under the Phek District. They were also in ‘Tinyimia’ family.
7 The Konyak Nagas are known for their tattoos and they inhabit under the Mon District
8 The Rengma Nagas were also ‘Tenyimia’ and they inhabit under the Sub-Division of Tsemenyu.
J. P. Mills (1924) states that an Ao\(^9\) women enjoys an equal partners to their men folk in many ways unlike many other Naga women though of course she was inferior to men as, ‘An Ao women was very far from being a slave or a drudge…’. The position of an Ao women was such that ‘…until she bears a child to her husband so until such a time, she must be somewhat be careful as to her personal appearance’.

J. H. Hutton (1969) argues that, the Angamis\(^{10}\) followed a very strong Patriarchal society. Warfare was an important aspect in the traditional Angami culture. Traditionally the Angami woman in decision making was confined to the four walls of the house. Though the status of Angami women by tradition was always placed under men, yet it is believed that in all the domestic matters the Angami women is equal partner to the husband. Hutton remarks, the position of Angami women in the household and elsewhere in the Nagas Hills that ‘women are a strong folk’.

In conclusion, The Nagas have a completely different way of life, its social setting being different from the rest of the communities even among the tribes in India. The culture and tradition, and family pattern and the status of women in Naga society have undergone several changes. The past 2 decades have brought many changes, but prior to that it was the advent of the Ahoms and the Britishers that made and added new meaning to the culture and traditions of the Nagas. Now factors such as Modernization, Westernization, Urbanization and Globalization are into play, making

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\(^9\) The Aos’ inhabit under the district of Mokokchung.

\(^{10}\) The Angamis inhabit under the district of Kohima.
the lives of the Nagas get new meanings but no the other hand it is the traditions and cultures losing its values.