Chapter VIII

CONCLUSION

A Sum Up

The present thesis entitled *Oral Narratives of Ao-Nagas: Constructing Identity* broadly proposes to study the oral traditions of the Ao-Naga community, especially the oral narratives (personal and folk) told by men and women in different cultural contexts on different issues of their social world to show how the community constructed their identity, their ‘self’ in their renditions through the ages. Like any other oral society, the Ao-Nagas sustain upon their lore, the verbal and non verbal expressive behaviour accumulated in their mnemonic traditions. The people learnt and transmitted these traditions orally through the generations. The lore encompasses the knowledge, beliefs and the institutions that steered the people and communities to retain their identities, their ‘selves’ from attrition and assault despite changes in time and space. The Naga folk (oral) lore is a very rich source for reconstructing their histories for it contains a wide variety of genres- folk narratives, songs, proverbs, riddles, performing arts like music, dances, drama, painting, arts and an extensive material culture- which establish their identity among the other tribal communities in Nagaland. Further the study brings forth the change and continuity of Ao-Naga cultural life as depicted in their folklore.

The thesis pursues what constitutes identity for the Nagas in general and the Ao-Nagas in particular. Further the research envisages whether the Ao-Nagas ‘what they think of their identity’ is really lost or still continues as ‘core’ of their life-style patterns in the contemporary times. The issues of related to these aspects are proposed to discuss in the light of latest theoretical discourses on identity and methodological implications of narrative inquiry. The study further proposes to substantiate how, syntagmatic and paradigmatic patterns in narrative structures and folktale motifs reflect the patterning of relationships of human beings in different realms of the Ao-Naga society.
The thesis analyses and interprets the socio-religious and politico-economic nuisances of Ao-Naga folk life as reflected in their ritual processes and practices in pre and post Christian times to understand changes and continuity in their new identity formations. The study proposes to develop Indigenous models of ritual process in tribal societies to demonstrate how the rites performed on different ritual contexts and the material culture associated with them would mark the identity of these communities in the changed contexts. This research also sheds light on social organisation and politico-economic life of the community in the pre and post Christian contexts to show structural continuities and variations in identity formations.

The geographical distribution of the Ao region is bounded by the Tzula River; Sangtam, Chang and Phom tribes on the East; the Lotha tribes, the Assam plains on the west; Konyak tribe in the north and the Sema tribe in the south. The scope of the field work is limited to the regions Longkhum village, Ungma village, Mopongchuket village, Changtongya village and in around Mokokchung and Dimapur districts. All these settlements are populated by Ao-Nagas wherein the other Naga tribes also share the environment.

An exhaustive survey of literature is made in three broad areas. They are: (i) research works on Folk Narrative Research and identity (ii) Status of knowledge on Ao-Naga community (iii) Field methodology and data processing. It enabled the researcher to identify the lacunae in the research works conducted on Nagas and Ao-nagas with regard to methodology and deployment of oral literature, the folklore in the interpretation of cultures, especially the communities that sustain their continuities on oracy.

Certain gaps are found in the researches conducted on the identity constructions in the oral societies, like the Ao-nagas. Though several scholars are aware that the Nagas have rich cultural heritage preserved in their oral traditions, different genres of their folklore are not methodically collected, analysed and interpreted from the perspective of the people who had produced them. The researches depended on the Administrative records, field reports of the anthropologists and other such sources which did not reveal the soul of the community- how it struggled through the ages to carve its own niche i.e., the cultural identity ever since the historical formations. Though some works focused on rituals,
folk narratives and songs they are highly descriptive and interpreted more from the researcher’s viewpoint. The content of the lore is given importance rather than the cultural context of their renditions. Some works are compilation of folklore genres meant for archival purpose. The rituals are though graphically described, they are not analysed in the light of latest discourses on cultural semiotics and ritual theories. Almost all works express the fear that the literacy, Christianity and globalization are threats to the personal and community identities of people and social groups respectively and suggest that one must save their culture from erosion and oblivion. They warn the younger generation that they should protect their rich heritage by preserving in audio-visual forms and print media. The research works are not suggesting measures to save the heterogeneity of community from homogeneity caused by the above three factors.

The methodology used by the colonial writers was primarily based on exploration and fieldwork and secondly the methods that they used were survey methods, observation and participant observation methods with the objective of trying to show how it really was. Therefore this literature has only description. Their writings became the sources for post-colonial writers on the Nagas. However their writings were more or less a descriptive affair or information on the Naga culture, traditions and the life of the people. So folklore of the Nagas was not explored and is not taken into consideration for the study about the Nagas. Writings were not perceived from oral tradition or from the folk perspective.

Now the survey of literature emerges the following questions: what are the historical and cultural reasons for the development of identity crisis among the Nagas? The Nagas, especially the Ao-Nagas really lost their identity during the course of their dispersal? Whether literacy erased their oracy? Whether Christianity could completely wipe off the animistic thinking, ritual practices, social organization, and gender construction of Ao-Nagas? Whether the British and Indian administrations could replace native village organization, customary law and traditional economy? Could the globalization erode Ao-identities or find new context for the continuity of cultures, especially the societies that sustained since generations on orality?

In order to address these issues the main aim and objective is formulated in this thesis as;
To study different walks of the lives like social organizations, religion and rituals, agriculture, economy, administration etc. and their ethnic cultural practices that mark their identity as reflected in their oral narratives.

To study the rituals both life cycle ceremonies and communal rites from the community’s view point to show how the ritual processes construct their personal and community identity.

To develop indigenous ritual models which are quite distinct from the ritual theories put forwarded by veteran scholars like victor turner and Van Gennep.

To establish the changes and continuities of Ao-Naga identities in pre and post Christian era in the wake of globalisation and to suggest the measures for retaining the cultural identities of the Ao-Nagas in the changing scenario.

Both qualitative and quantitative methods are used in the thesis. The dialogical method is used in procuring collection of thick corpus of data and narrative method of inquiry is used to analyse and interpret the data in the light of new hermeneutical discourse.

The Ao-Naga culture is a holistic and well articulated entity having its unique identity in different realms of its life. It has neither fragmented nor segmented into existential or locational or artefactual identities. All these merge to situate the core of Aos’ identity amongst the other groups of the Nagas. Nagaland is a hilly state with interspersed ridges, slopes and valleys. There is no regular river system in Nagaland that flow directly into the sea. Rain is the natural resource to feed the ditches, ponds and springs in the hills and forests. The State of Nagaland is rich in flora and fauna. About one-sixth of Nagaland is under the cover of tropical and sub-tropical evergreen forests. Its vegetation types range from alpine to moist tropical types. The extensive bamboo production in the forests emerged unique bamboo culture–cane houses, house-hold furniture, implements, and musical instruments–of the AO-Nagas. The forests are rich in medicinal plants. The oral narratives reveal several remedies prevalent in tradition. The rich animal resources not only sustained their food but also enriched their mythical lore. A variety of wild fruits birds and animals that are available in the thick forest endured their hunting and gathering economy.

The hilly tracts, slopes and terraces and vagaries of monsoon, taught them jhum (shifting) cultivation and terrace cultivation as alternate source of livelihood.
Rain waters collected in the foothills, ditches, ponds etc, in the undulating lands gave scope for fishing. The climatic changes and environmental moulded their economy. Owing to the nature of the geography, the highest political life of the Aos centres round the village. A person’s identity was inseparable with that of his family, clan, \textit{khel} and village. Duties and responsibilities to family, clan, \textit{khel} and village were stressed almost to the exclusion of individual rights, indicating group solidarity. Intervillage feuds were very common as there was always threat of raids from the neighbouring tribes for land encroachment. The bonds of kinship are usually very strong in the village. The sense of justice was highly honoured. Care was taken to see that the self-respect and honour of the guilty person was not injured.

For Nagas family is the basic unit of society, constructed on the basis of the institutions of marriage and kinship. The Aos still strictly follow the rules of exogamy and endogamy to preserve their racial purity and social integrity. Patriarchy governs organisation of the family. The institution of \textit{Morung} called Dormitory constructed the masculinity and femininity of boys and girls before marriage. The entire Folk life of the Ao-Naga gets regulated by the customary law of the community. They are animistic in religious behaviour. They believe that life is controlled by spiritual powers. Their mythology reflects harmony of human beings with the forces and spirits of power. They deify the elements of nature and worship them to realize their wishes. They are highly ritualistic in socio-religious behaviour.

The heterogeneity of the Nagas gets reflected in a variety of culture specific seasonal rituals performed by them as markers of their existence and distinction amongst themselves. The life cycle rituals-child-birth, puberty, marriage and death-and the rituals that demand communal participation like house warming ceremonies, agricultural rituals (\textit{Tsungrem Mong}), and political rituals like, \textit{Putu Menden}, headhunting. The triumphant warrior cuts and brings the head of the enemy to their village to show his community as a token of victory over them.

The Ao-Nagas’ have a rich folklore with a variety of genres both verbal and non verbal. Their affluent narrative tradition contains myths, folktales and legends, proverbs, word games, jokes, beliefs, rituals and other related practices. The performance tradition is significant for their folk songs, and folk dances performed
and musical instruments are played as pastime activities or on the context of ritual festivals.

Their material culture is exhaustive. Like any other tribal groups, the Naga tribes have high territorial integrity. The Nagas, throughout the historical formations struggled hard to retain their lands from the threat of adjacent settlements which were geographical isolated from one another. Nagas claim that their forefathers got migrated from Mongolia in BC 2617 and after migrating across Turkistan, Tibet and Mongolia, they finally arrived in Eastern Yunan Province of China in BC 1385 From China they entered Southeast Asia and thence to their present habitat in BC 1225. Their continuous resistance against the raids from the Burma, China, Tripuri, Dimasha, Cachars from 6th to 18th centuries and finally Britishers from 1843 to 1957 created ambiguity, confusion, conflict and revenge in the minds of the Nagas which created apprehension with regard to their existence in their newly migrated lands. Such anxiety got culminated into identity crisis. In this context, they needed authenticity and legitimacy to hold the territories in their grip. Hence the Nagas developed mythical lore around the origin and thus creation myths were constructed with regard to their origin and dispersal to various domains.

Like any other social group, for Aos, continuity is an important constituent of identity formation. The mythical lore of Nagas is very rich and provides information on their origin and dispersal to different part of Asia. They assert that they had a long cherished history. Nagas claim that their forefathers got migrated from Mongolia in BC 2617, travelled south to North-eastern Frontiers of India through Myanmar region. They claim that they have long cherished tradition which got disturbed throughout their course of dispersal to different geographical regions from ancient to the recent times. The lands occupied by the Nagas were hilly terrains and geographically isolated having threat from the neighbouring groups which lead them into to mutual distrust and conflict. The frequent inter-tribal conflict and migrations could not develop brotherhood and fraternity among different Naga tribes. Instead each migrated group needed an identity for continuing their line of succession. Thus the seventeen Naga groups constructed separate myths of their origin to distinguish themselves from the others. Being the animist in their belief, the Nagas created their mythologies and traced their origins to animate and inanimate beings of terrestrial and
celestial realms of the world. When the origins are in obscure, it is natural to the social groups to develop their genesis to mythical beings or directly to god. Thus the Nagas claimed their origin in myth of Tiger, Spirit and man to the human being born of the union between the woman and sky spirits and associated them with the place Mikhel in Manipur region. All most all Nagas claim their origin to this mythical place. The myth of Myth of flat stone and Three brothers attributes the migration of Nagas from Mikhel to Khezakonoma. The three brothers who dispersed to different regions became the progenitors of the clans Angami, Lotha, and Sema Naga tribes. They later on developed their new origin myths with different socio-cultural practices. In the same way the Ao-Nagas of Mokkukchung developed their creation myths from Longterok, tracing their origin to six stones. Aos also accept the myth of Tiger, human, spirit myth for their origination but have different world view with regard to the creation of their land and people. With regard to their origin they hold that (i) the god Lijaba created the geography and environment of their Ao-Naga land (ii) different AO-naga clans are originated from inanimate matters, the stones (Longterok-six stones); and (iii) the clans also originated from celestial beings, birds, animals and their remains like feathers and celestial bodies like sky, clouds, wind waters (the story of Longkongla Ozukumer Ao-clan (sub-clan of Longkumer of Longterok). Thus the Naga creation myths fall under the categories of parthenogenesis and autogenesis. Parthenogenesis is the creation due to the union between the humans and spirits or divine elements. The tiger, human, spirit creation myth of Nagas upholds this theory. Autogenesis involves the ‘emanation’ or ‘creation’ from ‘ownself’. That is the object itself gets transforms into different forms to achieve a final appearance. The creation myth of Longterok traces Ao origin from six stones. Thus the Aos still continue to believe their origin as discussed in the chapter and celebrate the respective rituals of Lijaba, hornbill and other spirits with pomp and glory to establish their identity as Nagas on one hand Aos on the other. The belief in the animism and claiming of parthenogenetic and autogenetic origins could easily transcend them into the Christianity, but the nature of their political institutions and geography made Aos emotionally war-prone and revengeful which get reflected in the folk narratives. It is also observed that the women occupy lead role in origin myths as the sustainers of the line of clan though the social institutions claim patriarchy. It seems that after they consolidated as distinct group, since protection of the clan was prime duty of men, the institution of patriarchy would have been
established but supported by the women in the family. Thus the folklore, especially
the text of the narratives of the Aos reveals the process of construction of how they
came into existence into the world. The creation myths also reflect the state of
confusion of the Nagas in the construction of their identities and linkages among
different tribes of Nagas with the main branch. It is interesting to note that even the
structure of the narratives, that is the pattern of arrangement of different events in a
narrative also reveal the process of construction of Ao Naga identity in changing
times.

The Ao-Naga folk narrative tradition mirrors the structure and cultural values
of the society in which they are told and experienced. The narrative structure
remained identical with the pattering of the mind of the narrators and the social
functions served by the narratives also reiterated their accepted cultural values and
rules. Hence the structure, function and interpretation of the folk narratives converged
in constructing the identity of the tellers, the Aos, both from their personal and
community perspectives. It is substantiated in the chapters that the oral narratives of
the Ao-Nagas (both in personal and folk) endure their core strands of identity in their
narrative motifs and the themes. The study reveals that in general the tales are very
simple having a single motif but there are also tales that contains more than one motif.
The tale types/motifs prevalent in the Ao-Naga oral narratives such as exogamy-
endogamy, marriage, patriarchy, headhunting, life after death and agricultural
practices like Jhum cultivation stand as the icons of their identity. Revenge motif
predominate the other types. The tribal societies survive and endure on internecine
warfare among clans or groups. In order to keep-up the fervour of militancy, a
requisite to win the battles, ‘revenge’ has to be developed as an instinct among the
men and women to save their ‘community selves’ from the threat of others’
incursions. The ‘revenge motifs’ of Ao-Naga narrative tradition reiterates their tribal
law and order in the society. Through the study of the tale types/motifs it is also
observed that there are certain areas which are not prevalent: in-laws conflict,
domestic violence and incest which shows that all cultures are not the same.

The structural analyses of Proppian and Levistrassian reveal a syntagmatic
and paradigmatic dimensions of the identity formations in the narrative structure. The
Levistrassian method of analysing the creation myths reveals that the myths are in
conformity with motif analysis. The transformation motif is the most prevalent motif
in Ao-Naga mythology. The non-living gets transformed into living and *vice versa*. This shows their animistic features that were prevalent among the Aos. The birth of the clans by parthenogenesis (origination due to the union between human beings and spirits) and autogenesis (self transformation into several forms before reaching a final shape or form) find expression in their narrative structures. The structural analyses in the light of Derridian deconstruction gave a holistic picture when interpreted from the perspective of narrative inquiry. The analysis of the oral narrative motifs and structures reveal the patterning of relationships of genders in different cultural contexts – the structuring of social groups, organisation of social institutions like marriage, kinship, religion, rituals, polity, and economy.

The Ao-Naga society rests on functioning of its various institutions like family, kinship, marriage and gender relationships. The narrative tradition of the Aos reveals how these institutions standardize their personal as well as the community lives and ensure the continuity of their identities in changing times. Family (*kibong*) is the basic social institution established through the custom of legitimate marriage (*Kiyimba*) and function on the norms of patriarchy. Marriage rests on the stringent rules of exogamy and endogamy. The norms of kinship are strictly followed in terms of marriage and related behaviour. The trespassers are punished by the customary law. Polygamy and adultery in conjugal life are prohibited for Aos where as Lotha-Nagas observe it. Aos have no bride price where as the Konyak and Zeliangrong Nagas hold this practice. Remarriage of men and women are permitted. The stepmother problem is highlighted in some narratives. The wicked stepmothers are expelled from the families in the narrative tradition. The stepfather episodes are not found. Though divorces are in vogue, the Ao custom emphasizes on the need for a healthy and unbroken family for men and women. The narrative tradition suggests the women (wives) not to compete with men (husbands) in family life as both are complementary in their role behaviour. The society warns the women that they receive more bites from men than privilege. The women has vital role to play in bringing up the children as per the norms of the Ao society if the father dies in tribal warfare, hunting or in protecting their community or away from home. The society expects that the men should always be ready with his *dao* to die for the cause of his community. Every woman wishes that her husband or son should emerge as a head-hunter and prove his virility and prowess as a member of Ao-Naga society. Though the nature of the family is nuclear, parental care is mandatory as per their custom. The
children are eligible for inheriting property as well as debts of their parents. The family functions on division of labour. The gender roles and functions are determined by custom. The obligatory and customary relationships between parents, parents vs. children, in-laws, between siblings (brothers vs. brothers, brothers vs. sisters and sisters vs. sisters) bounded by tradition. The children are socialized by dormitory system. Thus the social organization of Aos speaks about their identity as a distinct group among the other Nagas. Though Christianity brought changes in their way of life, norms and values that an Ao-Naga family maintained through the ages still peep into their contemporary personal narrative tradition and construction of gender identities of present day context.

In order to regulate and reiterate the values and norms of the society the Aos observe several customary and obligatory rituals both in personal (familial) as well as at community (social) realms and thereby protect their core identities in changing times.

It is observed that the well-knitted social organization of the Aos sustains on the performance of the ritual observances that require individual as well as the communal participation not only to socialize its members, but also to bind them with the community to which they belong. The life cycle ceremonies are the rituals that are celebrated to demarcate one’s transition from one stage to that of the other in the course of life. The rituals performed on these contexts are the markers of identity of the individual’s entry into the next stage of their lives. The major rituals of celebration are, birth, puberty, marriage and death. Each ritual has a course during which several rites that depict transition of the ‘ritual passenger’ have to be performed. Van Gennep, Victor, Turner and Mary Douglas worked upon the life cycle ceremonies in the name of rites of passage and advocated models on ritual process of life cycle stages. They framed the entire ritual course of these rites of passages, for that matter any ritual into three stages separation, liminality and incorporation in which different rites sequentially leads one another.

When the life cycle ceremonies of Aos are analysed in terms of the western and African models, a quite distinct picture emerges in the ritual structure. The ceremonies emphasise more on the observance ritual purity genna. In the child birth ritual (nusomong), the three stages; pre-birth (from the day one knows that she is pregnant), delivery and post delivery are observed. These three corresponds to period
of separation, liminality and incorporation. The pre-birth ritual behaviour is long and the period of liminality unlike in other cultural groups is significant. It is because all marks of Ao identity are conferred upon the baby like first feeding, ear-lobe piercing and naming. Later on a ritual bath i.e., a simple dip of the entire family in the village spring and a sacrifice of chicken completes the incorporation ritual. It is observed here that the period of liminality as explained by Victor Turner that the ‘liminiod’ has no identity and he/she is between and betwixt position cannot be applied here. Thus the childbirth ritual put forth a distinct model of its own that speaks out the Ao identity.

The celebration of puberty ritual is unique since the puberty rites do not start from the day of appearance of the first blood but starts when the girl attains primary sexual characters. Interestingly, among the Ao-Nagas, rites of puberty are communally celebrated. The girls of the village who are more or less of same age group who appear to be reaching puberty stage are grouped and begin the communal celebration of the ritual. The Ao-Naga society validates maturity more as a cultural construct than exclusively as a biological indicator. It is not completed in few days but takes at least four to five years in five sittings; each demarcated by tattooing in different designs one for each. Tattooing is prime marker of female attainment of marriageable age. Each tattooing has one separation, liminality and incorporation wherein simple genna is followed and are not ritualistic. The other markers are ritual of hair growing on the head Ku ayur, ritual clothing (Sobusolemtsu), piercing upper ear lobe, Norangto and entering the girl’s dormitory, Tsuiki for getting trained in gender roles of the community to undergo marriage. It completes incorporation.

Regarding the puberty rites of the boys’, separation and liminality takes place for four times. When the ritual passenger enters into the dormitory for the first time he is in separation period. He is separated from his house, bed and parents to another. For three years he is liminal period because the passenger is in the process of entering into a new status. After three years is over he is separated again from his old status to another one i.e., from his old age group to another new age group. During this period many of the boys’ members get married and leave the dormitory physically. The one who gets married is incorporated into the society. After that he is again separated from the dormitory but promoted to the last age group. Those remains unmarried is again separated and remains in liminal period when he is in the last age group.

The marriage ritual process of the traditional Aos is very significant which
takes place in four stages. They are: (1) *Kiyimla, Kiyimsang*, selection of bride and groom; (2) *kibongmakem mong*, engagement. These two rituals are pre-marriage rituals (separation rites). (3) *Keyir Benjong*, Marriage rite and (4) *Keyir Benjong sulen*, Post-Marriage are liminal rituals. The liminality ends with ritual cooking in the new house. The ritual of marriage is significant because, the couple get furnished with every need before they live together by marriage bond and get training in their dormitories to start their new lives independently with mutual understanding and comfort.

It is observed that the death rituals of Ao-nagas metaphorically reflect their belief in spirits and life after death. They trust in appeasement of spirits of the dead as they construe their births based on their deeds on the earth. The death ritual is elaborate and *genna* being observed for six days for males and five for females. Here the separation and incorporation rites are simple where as the liminal period is long.

Thus the ritual course, behaviour and material culture associated with all these rites mark the identity of the people. The life cycle rituals construct the gender identity of men and women in different social contexts during the course of their personal lives and make them fit to be the successful members of their respective cultural communities in which they were born and brought up.

It is observed that Ao society culture sustains on the rituals that require communal participation not only to socialize its members, but to bind them with their community to which they belong. The communal rites through participation in the respective community rituals enable its participants, to develop in them the group solidarity and consciousness amongst the Aos. In this context society, religion and state form a matrix in the communal ritual life of the Ao-Nagas. It is observed that the Ao-Naga pantheon consists (i) major gods ilikeLijaba, (Creator of the earth), *Longtitsungba* (Lord of Heaven), *TiarlTiaba* (Pre-destiner) and *Meyutsung* (Lord of death ) (ii) *Tsungrems*, the gods associated with the nature and environment of the Aos (minor pantheon) and (iii) sprits and souls in Ao Nagas belief system. The Aos venerate these gods ritualistically in different seasons. *Lijaba mong* is a religious communal ritual for worshipping the god Lijaba, their creator to have blessings and forgiveness from sins. There are many other gods (*tsungrems*) who have been associated with the environments of the Aos and there are various minor or lesser deities and spirits/souls. The deities on the earth are regarded as lesser to *Lijaba* and
their respective domains on earth are prescribed by him. This lesser deities like Kini tsüngrrem (house site deity), Tekong tsüngrrem (mountain deity), Tzüba tsüngrrem (wells and springs deity), Along tsüngrrem (stone deity). The hierarchy of gods depict the social hierarchies in the tribal life. Putu menden is performed as a political consecration ritual which combines social, religious and cultural aspects of the society. It is observed that the line of demarcation among different ritual is fading since all these elements are found in every ritual upto certain extent. But the seasons are different. In almost all rituals, the rites of separation and incorporation are simple and less time consuming where as the rites of liminality are more and elaborate. It may be because, the community finds the liminality as a period of relaxation from routine than the period of confusion as defined by Victor Turner. They perceive the period of liminality as a site of preparation and training for proceeding to the next stage. That is why even in the life cycle rituals and communal rituals period of liminality is designed as citadel of primary identity formations at the family as well as at the society. Even after their conversion into Christianity the core rituals like hornbill ritual, Lijaba and some other local rituals are being performed and people still wear traditional dresses on these occasions.

Findings

- Nagas had a long cherished history and culture hoarded in their oral traditions. Their frequent involvement in inter and intra-tribal conflicts and displacement of their political/geographical domains by Britishers and Indian Government could not disturb the functioning of their traditional village councils. The customary law still prevails. The agricultural practices are still tribal but follow some technological advancement.

- Though most of the Ao-Nagas took to the Christianity, their animistic belief system still gets reflected in their symbolic ritual practices observed during several socio-religious celebration in the contemporary times.

- The creation myths of the Nagas and the Aos both reveal the origination of the primordial being of their clan through parthenogenesis and autogenesis. With such animistic belief system they could easily get transcended into Christianity which believes in parthenogenesis. Instead of love and
compassion, the Nagas are embodied by revenge and mutual offence/defence between the tribes.

- Their worldview carries conflict through out their expressive behaviour. Christianity teaches ideology of love and compassion. Even after the Nagas accepted to Christianity their oral tradition still memorises the histories of the valour, conflict, revenge and episodes of head-hunting during tribal warfare. The core strand of their identity crises still carried out in their oral traditions. The geographical isolation of different tribes and frequent tribal warfare demanded revengeful mentality among the tribes. With this trait they think that they can retain their geographical integrity. The headhunting is a paradigm of such heroism for males.

- The structure of the myths and other oral narratives reveal the patterning of the Ao-Naga society, religion, polity, economy and other aspects of Folk life.

- The syntagmatic structures in narratives and folktale motifs reflect the patterning of relationships of human beings in different realms of the Ao-Naga society.

- Revenge motif predominate the other types. The tribal societies survive and endure on internecine warfare among clans or groups. In order to keep-up the fervour of militancy, a requisite to win the battles, ‘revenge’ has to be developed as an instinct among the men and women to save their ‘community selves’ from the threat of others’ incursions. The ‘revenge motifs’ of Ao-Naga narrative tradition reiterates their tribal law and order in the society.

- Through the study of the tale types/motifs it is also observed that there are certain areas which are not prevalent: in-laws conflict, domestic violence and incest which shows that all cultures are not the same.

- The stepmother problem is highlighted in some narratives. The wicked stepmothers are expelled from the families in the narrative tradition. The stepfather episodes are not found.

- Though divorces are in vogue, the Ao custom emphasizes on the need for a healthy and unbroken family for men and women. The narrative tradition
suggests the women (wives) not to compete with men (husbands) in family life as both are complementary in their role behaviour.

- The Naga creation myths fall under the categories of parthenogenesis and autogenesis. Parthenogenesis is the creation due to the union between the humans and spirits or divine elements. The tiger, human, spirit creation myth of Nagas upholds this theory. Autogenesis involves the ‘emanation’ or ‘creation’ from ‘ownself’. That is the object itself gets transforms into different forms to achieve a final appearance. The creation myth of Longterok traces Ao origin from six stones.

- The paradigmatic structures of the Naga myths reveal their worldview which is based on binary oppositions wherein they address the issue of life and death and resolve that the existing phenomenon of the community’s non-autogenesis origin and patriarchy is socially validated.

- The social institutions like family, marriage, kinship etc, are systematised by the ritual celebrations, the life cycle and communal rites. They stand as the icons of AO identity at personal and community levels. In the ritual course there is a long phase of liminality where in almost all rites of identity construction gets completed where as in other communities and models developed by the scholars, it is a period of confusion that depicts no identity to the ritual passenger. A simple sacred dip in waters or a sacrifice of small chicken or egg completes the phase or ritual of incorporation. For Nagas the incorporation registers new identity to the persons who had undergone the rituals.

- In general, in the Ao Naga rites of passage, the separation and incorporation rites are simple where as the liminal period is long.

- The prolonged liminality only suggests that it is in tune with their worldview and the structural feature of narrative tradition. The narrative structure reveals the conflict and violence which is resolved only through the elimination or subordination of the ‘other’ as reflected in the practice of headhunting. In other words, identities of the tribes of Nagas are established only by negating the other and preparation for negation is a prolonged process therefore, liminality also remains as a prolonged course.
• The introduction of literacy and advent of Christianity though condemned some democratic ways with regard to spousal selections (*Morung* system-dormitory), the rest of the patriarchal social organisation related to the institutions of marriage, kinship, law, customs etc, are being continued with some changes coming up in the passage of time.

• Globalisation did not erased or eroded the Naga identity for their cultural traits but continued in changed contexts.

To surmise from the above discussion, the Ao-Nagas as a distinct folklore community draw their strength by wilful play of verbal and non-verbal genres of folklore in every day life through which they construct their identity despite the onslaught of modernity and globalisation.