CHAPTER TWO

SOCIAL ORGANISATION IN THE BORDER SETTING

2.1. Introduction

Longwa is a Konyak Naga village located at the tri-junction between Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh on the Indian side and Myanmar on the other. It falls under Phomching sub-division of Mon district in Nagaland. Mon district is the northern-most district in Nagaland and the home of the Konyak Nagas. It is bounded by Arunachal Pradesh in the northeast, Assam in the northwest, Longleng district of Nagaland in the southwest, Tuensang district of Nagaland in the south and Myanmar in the east.

Nagaland is situated in the northeastern part of India and lies between 25° 60’ N and 27° 40’ N latitudes and between 95° 20’E and 95° 15’E longitudes. It is surrounded by Assam in the northwest, Arunachal Pradesh in the northeast, Manipur in the south and Myanmar in the east. Nagaland has a total land area of 16,579 sq. km (Statistical Handbook of Nagaland 2003:2). At present there are eleven districts in the state, viz. Dimapur, Kiphire, Kohima, Longleng, Mokokchung, Mon, Peren, Phek, Tuensang, Wokha, and Zunheboto. There are 24 sub-divisional headquarters (SDO) and 60 Extra Assistant Commissioners’ (EAC) headquarters. There are 17 tribes recognized by the state government of Nagaland. These are Angami, Ao, Chakhesang, Chang, Kachari, Khiamniungan, Konyak, Kuki, Lotha, Phom, Pochury, Rengma, Rongmei, Sangtam, Sumi, Yimchungrü, and Zeliang. Besides these, there are many minor tribes and sub-tribes such as Makhury, Tikhir, Chirr, Longphurr, etc (Naga Hoho 2002: 69).

Despite the fact that all the Naga tribes are Mongoloids and speak Tibeto-Burmese language, each tribe is distinguished by its distinct language, physical traits, traditions and customs. A tribe normally consists of different villages divided into
different exogamous clans, wards or morungs and families. In the same way, an individual has multilayered identities which starts from his/her clan, morung, village, tribe and the larger pan Naga identity. Each of these Naga tribes occupies distinct and well demarcated geographical areas. For instance, Kohima district is inhabited by the Angamis and the Rengmas. Mokokchung district is inhabited by the Aos and Wokha district by the Lothas. The Changs, the Khiamnuingans, the Yimchungrü, the Sangtams and some sub-tribes are found in Tuensang and Kiphire districts. Zunheboto district is the home of the Sumis, while the Phoms inhabit the Longleng district. The Zeliangs and the Kukis inhabit the Peren district, whereas the Chakesangs and the Pochurys inhabit Phek district. Dimapur is a cosmopolitan city inhabited by many Naga tribes and non-Nagas. Similarly, the Konyaks inhabit Mon district (Longkumer 2009:31).

The Konyaks are one of the largest Naga tribes. They inhabit Mon district of Nagaland, Tirap and Changlang districts of Arunachal Pradesh, in upper Assam and in north west Myanmar (Mon District Human Development Report 2011:5). As such they are surrounded by different Naga tribes such as the Aos, Phoms, Khiamnuingans, and Changs.

2.2. Who are the Konyaks?

**Origin of the term ‘Konyak’:**
Different scholars have held different opinions about the etymological meaning of the term ‘Konyak’. According to Furer-Haimendorf (1969:5), “the name Konyak, applied by the British administrators to a large and by no means homogeneous ethnic group, is derived from the word *keniak*, which in the language of a small number of villages means ‘man’. It was first heard in the village of Tamlu.” While writing notes on non-
Angami tribes of the Naga Hills, J.H. Hutton used the word Konyak to refer to the tribes living in the north-east of the Aos and Changs, lying between the Dikhu and the Disang rivers and north of the Patkai Range. According to him, “the names Konyak and Haha are applied by the people of Tamlu to themselves and to the very closely related tribes to the east of them, whose clothes, nakedness, method of hair-dressing and tattooing present great similarities.” As pointed by Hutton (1921:384) both these names referred to the method of hair-dressing. According to Saha (Singh 1994:104), “the etymological meaning of the word Konyak derived from two root words- Khau meaning head and Nyak which means black”. Thus, he supposes that this name has connection with the habit of blackening of teeth and tattoos on the faces amongst the Konyaks. Walim, a Konyak scholar, opines that the term Konyak is derived from the word Khaoyak which means ‘head-black’ or Khuzak meaning ‘hair-black’. He asserts that the two similar words may mean ‘human being’. He further states that the terms Khaoyak and Khuzak may also be connected with the habit of using black color on their faces (sic) tattoos (Walim 2005:3-4).

During the Ahom period in Assam (roughly from 1228-1826 A.D), the Konyaks were known by different names such as the Tablungias, Jaktoongias, Moolongs, Changnois, Jabokas, Benferas, Mutonias, Namchangias, etc. These names were given by the Ahoms after the duars or passes through which these tribe(s) descended into the plains of Assam (Devi 1968:21). The Konyaks were called as Taprongumi or Minyumo–Nagami by the Semas, Mirirr by the Aos and Chagk by the Changs (Hutton 1921:383). Despite the different contestations regarding the origin of the term Konyak, one cannot deny the fact that the term Konyak was used and popularized only after the advent of
British in the Naga Hills. Today the term Konyak is applied simultaneously to a Naga tribe and to the dialect the members of this tribe speak.

The Konyak Naga tribe can be divided into two groups based on cultural and linguistic features. The bifurcation of the Konyaks into two groups was first recognized by J.H. Hutton and J.P. Mills, the then British administrators in the Naga Hills. They described the two sub-groups of this tribe as Thenkoh and Thendu (Führer-Haimendorf 1969:9). The Thenkoh group inhabits the outer ranges of the Konyak area, adjoining the plains of Assam, whereas the Thendu group occupies the northeast region bordering Myanmar. The Thendu had tattoo on their faces, while the Thenkoh did not. These two groups also had different hair styles. The Thenkoh men had short hair, but the Thendu men had long hair, tied up in a knot at the back of the head. Furthermore, the Thendu had Pongyin or autocratic Ahngs whereas the Thenkoh had democratic Ahngs as compared to the Thendu. However at present, such a strict bifurcation has become insignificant due to the discontinuity of tattooing as well as the adoption of modern hair-do. Rather, at present the lands of the Konyaks in the state of Nagaland can be divided into two regions such as the upper and the lower (Walim 2005:1). Based on this geographical division of the Konyaks, those villages falling under the category of upper region are known as the upper Konyaks and the villages under the lower region are known as the lower Konyaks. Today the Konyaks in India call themselves as western Konyaks and call the Konyaks in Myanmar as eastern Konyaks.

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29 For details on the origin of tattoos among the Konyaks, refer the works of Chingang (2008:8).
2.3. The Origin and Migration of the Konyaks

Similar to other Naga tribes, the Konyak Nagas do not have a written script.\textsuperscript{30} As a result, very little of their history has been documented. Due to scanty literature on the Konyaks, most of the earliest history of the Konyaks is known through oral traditions and folklores. According to one tradition, the ancestors of the majority of the Konyaks came from a mountain called \textit{Yengyudang}, situated to the south of the present Konyak territory (Fürer-Haimendorf 1969:5). This mountain is believed to be located in the present Phom area under Longleng district of Nagaland.

Another tradition tells that the Konyaks sprang up from a stone called \textit{Longphenghong}\textsuperscript{31}. According to Chingang (2008:1), “the Konyak Nagas originated from a place called \textit{Longphang Veenyu}, which he assumes to be the Tower of Babel mentioned in the Bible”. Both the traditions claimed that the Konyaks have passed through a gate called \textit{Alamkaphen}. \textit{Alam} means the Sun and \textit{Kaphen} means gate, thus, literally it means “the gate of the Sun” (Yanang 1989:2). Based on these oral traditions, the Konyaks are believed to have migrated to the present site from the east. The migration of the Konyaks from the east has been substantiated by the fact that they belong to the Mongoloid race like the other Nagas. They have light to medium brown skin with slanting eyes of dark brown or black. However, they have darker complexion as compared to other Naga tribes which could be due to environmental factors. According to Hutton (1921:447), “the average cephalic and nasal indices of the Konyaks are 77 and 89 respectively”. They speak Tibeto-Burmese language. However, each Konyak village has its own dialect which in some cases is unintelligible to other

\textsuperscript{30} Tradition says that Konyaks had a written script in the ancient days. Words were inscribed on the animal skin. In one incident, a dog ate up the animal skin on which the early Konyaks wrote their scripts. This led to the permanent lost of the script.
\textsuperscript{31} See the works of Yanang (1986:2).
villages. Speaking about the diversity of the Konyak villages, Furer-Haimendorf (1969:9) says: "In the Konyak country it was possible to transverse in a single day several linguistic areas." However, the dialect of Wakching village has been adopted as the common dialect of the Konyaks since Wakching was an important centre for the British administration, and more importantly a mission centre where western education was introduced among the Konyaks.

Besides the spoken language, the Konyaks also use sign language to convey several expressions and meanings. These signs are mostly conveyed through objects like leaves, grass or marks on the trees. For example, if a fresh bunch of leaves is hung at the top of the door, it indicates that the household is observing taboo or *genna* and the visitors are not supposed to enter the house. Another way of conveying message is to put fresh leaves or grass at the junction of a road indicating that the person has gone ahead to the appointed place of meeting. The marking or smudging of trees or bamboo indicates that it has been occupied or booked (Walim 2005:4).

The Konyaks are considered as one of the bravest warrior tribes among the Nagas. They are well known for the head hunting raids. Headhunting was a common practice among the Konyaks in olden days. Though this has been banned with the establishment of the British administration in the Naga Hills, headhunting continued unabated in the unadministered areas. Even in the post-colonial era, few cases of headhunting occurred till the 1950s (This is discussed in detail in Chapter Five).

The Konyak Nagas are primarily agrarian in nature. Majority of them depend on agriculture for their livelihood. They practice slash and burn or *Jhum* cultivation. Unlike

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32 The word *genna* is used in the Naga Hills District which denotes a taboo, forbidden or non working day. Refer to Hutton's *The Angami Nagas* (1921).

33 For details on head hunting, refer the work of Fürer-Haimendorf (*The Naked Nagas* 1939).
the wet or terrace cultivation of the Angamis, Rengmas and Zeliangs, the Konyaks follow the Jhum or shift cultivation, where a particular area is cultivated continually for a period of two to three years. After that, the cultivated land would be left to fallow for eight to ten years so as to regain its fertility. This is called by the Konyaks as Ko-Kah (Chingang 2008:49). They also practice multi-crop pattern of cultivation where varieties of crops such as paddy, millet, maize, yam, beans, chillies, tapioca, ginger, etc., are grown (This will be discussed in detail in Chapter Four entitled Border Economy: The Livelihood Question).

Similar to all other Naga tribes, the Konyaks have a very rich and vibrant culture. This is reflected in their rich traditional dances, songs, lore, poems, festivals, dress and ornaments. Most of the dances and songs of the Konyaks are associated with agriculture, festivals and headhunting. They have different songs and dances for different occasions. Some of the prominent Konyak festivals are Aoleng, Lenghamo and Aonye. Among these, Aoleng is the most important festival which is celebrated at the end of March till the beginning of April. This festival lasts for a week and marks the beginning of a new year (Chingang 2008:40).

The Konyaks were the most scantily dressed among the Nagas in the past. Even during the early part of the twentieth century, the Konyak men and women seldom wore anything more than a tight belt and a small apron or a short skirt just to cover the private parts. Instead of clothes, they adorn their bodies with ornaments such as beads, shells, necklaces, cane and ivory armlets, cane leggings, ear lobes, earrings, head-dresses, etc.34 Tattooing was also another marker which bestows dignity on a person. This is because a person can have tattoos only after acquiring a head or attaining certain stage of life

34 For details on the dress and ornaments of the Konyaks, refer to (Fürer-Haimendorf 1969:10-14) and (Walim 2005:7).
(Yanang 1986:6). However, today tattoos are found only among the old folks. Nowadays, the Konyaks are mostly seen in western and Indian clothes except during the festivals and traditional occasions. With the aid of modern technology, the Konyaks have developed beautiful shawls, coats, wrappers, bags, etc., for different occasions. Basing on the social hierarchy of the Konyak society, even the shawls and wrappers are used differently by different clans or classes.

2.4. Historical Background of the Konyaks under British Administration

Prior to the advent of the British in the Naga Hills, the Konyaks lived as free and independent people like the rest of the Naga tribes. However, they also engaged in headhunting raids amongst themselves as well as with the other tribes. The Konyak Nagas came under the British administration very late as compared to the other Naga tribes. In fact, most of the Konyak villages remained outside the control of the British administration in ‘unadministered areas’ as ‘Free Nagas’, enjoying complete independence (Führer-Haimendorf 1938:349). The early part of the British administration in the Naga Hills and Sibsagar district of Assam was frequently disturbed, not only by raids in the plains by the Nagas but also by feuds among different tribes or different villages of the same tribe. This compelled some villages to seek protection from the British. At the pretext of securing the villages under its administration and to secure the border areas, the British administrators conducted surveys and expeditions in which the guilty villages were punished (Mokokchung District Gazette 1979:43).

In 1888, some Konyak and Phom villages raided the Ao villages of Unger and Akhoia, where many people were killed and wounded. Consequently, Tamlu and Kangstung villages were punished by the British. Subsequently, the British attacked and
burnt down Tamlu, a Konyak village. This can be considered as the first Anglo-Konyak encounter. Consequently, the British administrator annexed Tamlu village and established an outpost in this village. This was a popular colonial tactic for expanding its zone of control. Following this development, the Wakching area was surveyed and included within the British administration in 1899. Subsequently, Tamlu and Wakching areas were kept under the jurisdiction of Mokokchung sub-division of the Naga Hills district in Assam (Mon Town Souvenir 2001:39-41).

In 1912, the British established an administrative unit at Wakching. The British also established the opium Mahal at Wakching. According to the some Konyaks, this was done with the aim to retard and tame the intelligent yet stubborn Konyak tribe. However, the researcher opines that besides these reasons, this was done mainly to enhance the revenue of the British. Consequently, villages surrounding Wakching such as Wanching, Chingnoi, Chingdang, Shiyong, Tanhai, Longkei, Longjin, Ponkong, Oting and Kongan were brought under the British administration and administered from Mokokchung Sub-division. These villages paid Rs. 2 per house as house tax to the British (Mon Town Souvenir 2001:37).

By the year 1914, the Foreign and Political Department of the Government of India extended the Assam Frontier Tract Regulation of 1880 to the hills, which were either inhabited or frequented by Abors, Mishmis, Singphos, Nagas, Khamptis, Bhutias, Akas and Daflas. It is by the extension of this Regulation, the Government of India brought the area under some administration in 1914 and the area was named as the North East Frontier Tract. This arrangement continued for some years.

In the post independence era, several administrative changes took place among the Konyaks. In 1948, a separate administrative circle of Tuensang was constituted as
an outpost of Mokokchung sub-division, which later became a district in 1951 and merged with the North East Frontier Agency (NEFA). In 1950, the North East Frontier Tract comprising of Balipara Frontier Tract, Tirap Frontier Tract, the Abor Hills District, the Mishmi Hills along with the Naga Tribal Area were included in Part B of the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India (Elwin: 1969: 28-29). In 1951, the plain portion of Balipara Frontier Tract, Tirap Frontier Tract, Abor Hills District and Mishmi Hills were transferred to the administrative jurisdiction of the Government of Assam. Thereafter, the remaining areas of the said North East Frontier Tract together with the Naga Tribal Area of Tuensang including the present Mon district were rechristened as the North East Frontier Agency in 1954.

Mon sub-division under the Tuensang Frontier Division was created with Mr. W.H. Rynjah as the first Assistant Political Officer (Mon Town Souvenir 2001:38). In the mean time, Naga Hills District and Naga Tribal Area of Tuensang were merged and given the status of statehood in 1963. In order to fulfil the aspirations of the Konyaks to have their own district headquarters, Mon district was carved out of the then Tuensang district (Nagaland) on 21st December 1973. Mon district was expanded in 1991 by transferring some villages from Tuensang district and creating some new administrative circle headquarters at Tobu (headed by the Additional Deputy Commissioner), Mopong and Muknyakshu (headed by an Extra Assistant Commissioner each). At present, Mon district has 14 administrative units including the district headquarters; ADC’s office, SDO(C) office and EAC Headquarters (Basic Facts Nagaland 2011:15).
Box 2.1

**Mon District at a Glance: Statistical Figures of Mon District in Nagaland**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Geographical Area</td>
<td>1786 sq.km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Headquarters</td>
<td>Mon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boundaries</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E/NE</td>
<td>Myanmar/Arunachal Pradesh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NW</td>
<td>Assam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SW</td>
<td>Longleng district</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>Tuensang district</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Population</td>
<td>250,671 (2011 census)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>132062</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>118609</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Density</td>
<td>140 per sq.km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex Ratio</td>
<td>898 Females per 1000 males</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy Rate</td>
<td>56.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common Language(s)</td>
<td>Konyak and Nagamese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Rainfall</td>
<td>2000-3000 mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major Festival</td>
<td>Aoleangmonyu</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Sources: Mon District Human Development Report 2011 and Nagaland Basic Facts 2011*
2.5. Longwa: Historical Background of the Border Village

Longwa is a cross-border village located at the Indo-Myanmar border in Mon district of Nagaland. This border village is roughly divided into two by the Indo-Myanmar international boundary. For a detailed study and better understanding of the border village in question, it is pertinent to go back to its history, which starts with migration to the present habitat and formation of the village. However, due to the dearth of historical records and documents, oral history remains the only source of history for this village. This is common with most of the Naga villages as asserted by a Naga historian Visier Sanyü in his book *A History of Nagas and Nagaland (Dynamics of Oral Traditions in Village Formation)* (1996). According to him (1996:8), “the lack of written or recorded sources makes it exceedingly difficult to analyse the history of the Nagas particularly for the pre-British period. However, the indigenous societies had their own ways of recording events from generation to generation through professional story teller.” In the same way this village has a story teller-cum-village historian by the name Penjun, from Chingsa *morung*.

According to the oral tradition of this village, the founders of the village migrated from the parent village called Pongchau in Arunachal Pradesh during the 16th-17th centuries. However, even the historian of the village could not give the exact year of migration due to lack of any written records. In order to verify the claims of the villagers regarding the establishment of the village, scientific archaeological excavation and carbon dating is required. Such excavation would be helpful in determining the exact year of village settlement. However, it is not possible to conduct such activities within the purview of this research due to dearth of resources. More importantly,

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35 Based on oral history interview with the village historian, Penjun (70 yrs) on 24th October, 2011.
because of multiple or circular migrations, wars and raids, somehow the historical events could not be traced in a systematic way. Another critical issue of concern is whether or not the oral traditions are based on myth or reality. Though it is difficult to determine the authenticity of the source due to lack of scientific evidence, however, we may surmise that these are indeed rich sources of history when other sources are not available. Moreover, the present parent-children relationship shared by the two villages -Pongchau and Longwa attests to this migration history.

As per the oral history of this village, the migrant group was led by two Ahngs, namely Taiwang and Nanwang. The migrant group of 53 members included the two Ahngs and 51 other members (Table 2.1).
Table 2.1

Names of the First Settlers in Longwa Village

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Taiwang (Chief Ahng)</td>
<td>28. Ganngo am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Nanwang (Deputy Ahng)</td>
<td>29. Lempha am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Chingchong Wangsa am</td>
<td>30. Shonphongshuam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Lemphang Wangshu am</td>
<td>31. Choapa am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Lemtok Wangshu am</td>
<td>32. Wang ong am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Shan shu Wangshu am</td>
<td>33. Pothen am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. O am</td>
<td>34. Pukha am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Yutai shu am</td>
<td>35. Chonglongshum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Meitong am</td>
<td>36. Mamle Shu am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Ginyu am</td>
<td>37. Man Tongshu am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. She Shakam</td>
<td>38. Chingkho Shaknyam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Wan pha am</td>
<td>40. Win pha am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Chelan am</td>
<td>41. Yah am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Gem pa am</td>
<td>42. Winkong am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Yungin Roekam</td>
<td>43. Tonwei am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Melging am</td>
<td>44. Posa Shakam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Longmong am</td>
<td>45. Gisa am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Kon Wang</td>
<td>46. Ato Shu am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Ponyu Wangnaoam</td>
<td>47. Ngo am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Rocknyu am</td>
<td>48. Gimpa shu am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Rock sa am</td>
<td>49. Langtoh am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Nanyu am</td>
<td>50. Khon phongshu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Tomkhu Khunyu am</td>
<td>51. Chingkhu Wangnao am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Tomkhu Khusa am</td>
<td>52. Phemong yungui am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Lam nyei</td>
<td>53. Khanka am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. Hon rem</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Though the names of the first migrant group are still remembered, the actual reason(s) for their migration could not be ascertained. We may, however, assume that this could be due to expansion of population leading to scarcity of agricultural land. Another reason may be the rivalry among the villagers or within the royal family or may be due to the adventurous nature of the people. Based on the wars and raids between the two villages, Pongchau and Longwa, the researcher assumes that rivalry within the royal family could be the reason for migration. Since the establishment of a new village could be done only through the initiation of the Ahng, Taiwang led his people and became the first Ahng of the newly established village at a place called Anok.

Traditionally, all the Naga villages are customarily named after the founder of the village, nature of the chosen village site, name of a river, peak, rocks, incident, etc. (Nshoga 2009:62). Similarly, the nomenclature of Longwa was adopted based on one incident. According to the oral history of this village, when the first settlers came to the present site, they had to cut down big trees which were possible only with sharp stones tied to the wooden handle and used as axes. Thus, they named this village Long Wa, which literally means 'stone axe'. This is how the nomenclature of Longwa was adopted.

The oral tradition says that when the founders of this village migrated to this present site, they were called to return back to the parent village. But when the later refused, Pongchau village attacked them and burnt down the first village site at Anok. As a result of this, the migrating group went to Konyu village and reported the matter. Konyu is a big village in Arunachal Pradesh and considered as the mother of Pongchau village and the grandmother of Longwa village. As the group approached Konyu village with their grievances, they also asked for another site so that they could establish their
village again. In return, they were given a site called Chamching which is presently located at the Arunachal Pradesh border. After staying there for some time they went back to the former place called Anok for the second time. Later on, they shifted to Ato which is presently occupied by the Assam Rifles. From Ato they shifted to the present village site which is called Tainyai and from Tainyai they shifted to Loknout which is the present helipad. Within a short span of time, they migrated to a place called Hungnyu. From Hungnyu, they came back to Loknout and finally settled down at the present site which is called as Tainyai. Thus, these villagers migrated from one place to the other in short intervals, even though these sites are not very far from one another. In some cases, they shifted from one place and returned to the former site. But due to the dearth of evidence, the exact year or century cannot be ascertained. The recurrence of migration from one place to another could be because of Jhum cultivation which compelled the people to move from one place to another in search of fertile lands. Another reason could be their enmity with the neighbouring villages which resulted into headhunting raids and wars with these villages. As a result, people must have become insecured and therefore kept moving from one place to another. Whenever there was war with the neighbouring village(s) on one side, they shifted to the other end. Whenever the situation normalised, they went back again to the former village site. Amidst wars and raids with other villages, the whole villagers must have moved together for their safety and security.

It was told that this village had a good number of warriors in the past who are still remembered today. Some prominent warriors or naomei from this village were Tonpha Tawang, Manlei Nyeiwang, Chowang, Manngo, Honjong, Panglem, Jenyei, Ngampang, Yonang, Wanhim, Gamjon, Shahgan, Noknyei, Yankap, etc. As per the oral
traditions, Longwa kingdom had wars with numerous villages approximately more than 30 villages at one point of time or the other. Some of these were Pongchau, Longyang, Tangnyu, Shahnyu, Sheanghah, Chenyu, Gonyah, Lankho, Langshum, etc. They did not only fight with the Konyak villages but also with some Phom villages and other villages located in present Myanmar. As a result of these wars and feuds, they also burnt down many villages, conquered many kingdoms and annexed huge territories. At present, most of the villages falling under its jurisdiction were conquered during the wars and raids. As a result of the defeat, many villages surrendered and obliged to pay tributes and tax to the Longwa Ahng which is still practiced today.

Even at the time when the British took control over the Naga Hills including some Konyak villages neighbouring Assam and Mokokchung, Longwa village remained outside the administrative control of the British as an ‘unadministered’ area. Thus, this village continued with the headhunting practices and raids on both the Konyak villages and non-Konyak villages. With successive successful wars and raids, the territory of the village also expanded along with fame and name. Here the researcher contested the oral history of the village which claims the Longwa Ahng to be an original Pongyin Ahng. This is because though Taiwang was an Ahng yet he migrated from his parent village along with his followers. A Pongyin Ahng may not leave his kingdom under normal circumstances unless banished. The researcher opines that the Longwa Ahng must have assumed the title of a Pongyin Ahng later after conquering and subdueing other numerous villages. Being a Pongyin Ahng\textsuperscript{36}, Longwa ruled over many small Ahngs of other villages who paid tributes and taxes.

\textsuperscript{36} Pongyin Ahng is an Ahng who belongs to chiefly house and is been coronated. There are seven Pongyin Ahng among the Konyaks. Among them, Longwa Ahng is one.
As India fought against the mighty British, located in the extreme corner, Longwa continued to live in oblivion of the world happenings. Even after the independence of India, this area remained aloof from the mainland India both geographically and psychologically. Being located at the extreme end of the Indian map, Longwa continued to remain self-governed and independent. It was only in the 1950s, the government could penetrate in this area through the institutions of Goanbura\textsuperscript{37} and Dobashi.\textsuperscript{38} These institutions served as the agents of the government in the village and acted as channels of communication between the village and the government. This was followed by several attempts to introduce Christianity in the village by both individuals as well as by the Konyak Baptist Bumeinok Banjum (KBBB). (This will be discussed in detail in Chapter Five). These developments took place along with the demarcation of the Indo-Myanmar boundary.

2.6. The Imposed Border

The history of the imposed border demarcation is the saddest chapter in the history of this ancient ‘kingdom’ because this boundary line has divided the Longwa ‘kingdom’ and placed it under two sovereign nation-states. This is so because this boundary line has divided homes and families, clansmen and villagers. Clansmen were officially made alien to one another through the imposition of Indian and Burmese (Myanmar) citizenship. It created artificial border among people who shared closely knitted relationship for centuries. This was not only an arbitrary but also an imposed

\textsuperscript{37} Goanbura is an Assamese term which means ‘village elders’.

\textsuperscript{38} Dobashi literally means ‘men of two languages’ in most case the local dialect and Assamese or Nagamese.
demarcation since the Ahng and the villagers were neither consulted nor informed about the boundary demarcation. In this connection, the chief Ahng of Longwa said:

_I was not informed nor consulted. My house is divided into India and Burma (Myanmar), kitchen in India and bedroom in Burma. But my kingdom extends over many villages in Burma and India. There are about 50 villages in Burma who pay me tributes in terms of meat, gong, rice and service. Being the father of many villages, I don't want any division but wish to keep them together as was in the past._

Without any intimation from the governments of India and Burma (Myanmar), the villagers found an international border straddling in their backyards along the village, placing some villagers as Indians and others as Myanmarese. Their abodes fall under the territory of the Indian state, whereas major portion of their fields and forests were placed under the territorial jurisdiction of Myanmar. This has affected their livelihood security as most of them are agriculturalists.

The arbitrary division of this village was done as per the bilateral agreement between India and Burma in 1967 based on the watershed of the Brahmaputra river in India and Chindwin river in Myanmar. Here the question that arises is: Is the watershed more important to the Government of India and Burma than the people who have been living in this area for centuries? For the sake of water shed, the real land owners are indiscriminately divided from their own people and alienated from their land. From 6th to 10th April 1968, the joint India-Burma Boundary Commission held its first meeting in India and formulated tentative plans for actual demarcation from November 1968 to April 1969 (Government of India, Ministry of External Affairs, Report 1968-69).
However, as in other boundary demarcations across the world, the local populace who are the real owner of the land were not taken into confidence. The boundary lines between two countries were drawn on the chopper as one of the respondents said or on the desk of high bureaucrats and officers, and kept under the highly classified files which later shattered and altered the destiny of these illiterate and innocent lives along this border.

The construction and planting of boundary pillars started in 1970 was completed in 1971. The boundary pillars numbering 154, 155 and 156 were planted in the heart of the village’s jurisdiction. These pillars are 3.5ft tall and 25-30cm width (approximately) and made of cement, sand and pebble stones. On these pillars are inscriptions written in Hindi (Devanagiri) and Burmese scripts which the villagers neither read nor understand. The boundary pillar number 154 is planted on the hillock right above the village near Longwa Wasa, a new settlement under Longwa village. The boundary pillar number 155 is located within the Assam Rifles’ camp and pillar number 156 is planted near the Nagaland-Arunachal Pradesh border. These boundary pillars are the startling reminders of the arbitrary and inhuman demarcation as these pillars are planted very close to human habitation. One observation deduced from this is that the boundary survey team or pillar constructors dared not move into the jungle, apparently for fear of headhunting which was a common practice then. This blunder has sealed the fate of these borderlanders. Barring the three boundary pillars, there are no fences or walls demarcating the border between India and Myanmar. Nevertheless, there is a watch tower in the Assam Rifles’ camp where regular surveillance is made on this border. However, there is free movement of locals across this international boundary without a
During the field work, the respondents were asked about their perception on the arbitrary division of this village into two countries. Most of them expressed their desire to stay together as one since they belong to one community. One respondent says, ‘inspite of the division, we are one and therefore accessibility should be given to both sides’. On the other hand, some villagers viewed that the present situation is better for them. Once united with the Konyaks in Myanmar, they may have to face the consequences of Myanmarese government’s policy towards the ethnic minorities. Moreover, the problem of opium supply and addiction will disturb the entire social fabric of the society. This is because of the fact that opium is being imported from Myanmar villages across the border. Besides these two categories of people, there are others both the Konyaks and Nagas in general who do not recognise the border. A respondent angrily retorts:

_We do not recognise the Indo-Myanmar international border running in the middle of our village, since it was an imposed border. The Indian and Burmese governments did not take the consultation of the villagers who are the real owners. In fact, our fathers were not informed. We realised this imposition lately. It is wrong ethically and legally to divide someone’s backyard without the permission of the land owner. Inspite of the three boundary pillars planted in the heart of the village, we move freely since it’s our birthright._

Such is the views of these borderlanders who have to live with the reality of an imposed border. Despite this division, the Longwa villagers still have socio-economic,
political and cultural alliances with the people on the Myanmar side. Marital and kinship relations still continue, overriding the political boundaries. With such strong ties across the border, the Indo-Myanmar border in this village with its pillars seems to be imaginary or blurred. Thus following Sammadar’s discussion (1999:52), we may call this border as a border on papers or maps without any significant marks on the ground. However, we cannot overlook the fact that this border has created a kind of division or a border in the hearts of these borderlanders through various governmental schemes which privileged the citizens over the aliens or foreigners in terms of entitlement rights.

2.7. Topography
Like every typical Naga village, Longwa is located on a hillock stretching around 4 (four) kilometers long. The founders of the village must have considered the security of the villagers while establishing the village. The strategic location of a Naga village in the past was the direct consequence of headhunting culture. For the Nagas, being on the hill top gives an advantage as it is difficult for the enemies to climb the ridges and attack the village and if at all attacked, the enemies can be seen from the village. Other considerations for the selection of the village site are the availability of spring water, cultivable land and forests which are necessary for sustenance of the villagers. Likewise, Longwa village has a huge territory both in India and Myanmar. Though they still have fields in the jurisdiction of Myanmar, legally these lands no longer belong to them as was in the past.

This border village is situated at a very high altitude about 1200 ft above the sea level (approx). Due to its high altitude, the climatic condition of the village remains
cold throughout the year. Moreover, the village gets wind from Myanmar during the month of October to March and from the Indian side during April to September. This keeps the village pleasantly cold. The village shares boundaries with Konyak Naga villages of Khanmoi and Wanyah in Myanmar. On the Indian side, it shares boundaries with Pongchao and Konyu village of Arunachal Pradesh and Longyan, Wetting, Tangnyu and Sheanghah Chingyu under the state of Nagaland. All these neighboring villages are Konyak Naga villages, though they fall under the jurisdiction of two different countries. Some major mountain peaks in the village are Gangmao, Patoi and Shashum. All these peaks come under the Patkai Range. From these peaks, one can have a clear glimpse of villages both in India and Myanmar.

The village is bounded by rivers such as Tegak and Shumnyu in Myanmar and Tapi and Tege in India. These rivers housed diverse aquatic lives such as fish, crab, prawn, snail, turtle, etc. The village is endowed with thick tropical virgin forest. Some important forests under the jurisdiction of this village are as follows: Gangmao, Kaivao, Hungnyu, Longmen (Indian side) and Kaiko (Myanmar). These have rich natural resources such as trees, bamboos, rocks, stones and grasses. Moreover, these forests are rich in flora and fauna. Most of these are known by local names. These trees are used as timber for construction of house, morung, ghüm, furniture, rice pounding tables and pestles, wooden plates and spoons, scabbard, and also used as firewood. Besides trees, there are different types of bamboo species. They are named after their size and the purpose they served. These are popularly used for weaving bamboo mats for walls and for husking paddy, ropes, baskets of all size, bamboo cups, vessels for carrying water and brewing red tea, fire pipe and smoking pipes, etc.
Animals such as tiger, *mithun*\(^{39}\), deer, bear, monkey, fox, boar, squirrel, snakes, guinea pig, etc., are found in the forest. Most of these animals, except snakes are delicacies for the people.\(^{40}\) Besides the wild animals in forest, the villagers keep domestic animals such as pig, cow, *mithun*, chicken, cat, dog, etc. Being endowed with huge virgin forests, there are varieties of birds.

The village is connected to the district headquarters Mon town by a narrow metalled road, which was constructed by the Border Roads Organization (BRO) in 2007. There are two buses, one private and another Nagaland State Transport (NST), plying from Mon to Longwa daily. Inspite of the transportation facility, landline telephone connections are not available. Mobile phones are used but have poor network connectivity. One can buy newspapers from Mon; however, it reaches the village only after two days of publication.

### 2.8. The Borderlanders

The people of Longwa belong to the Mongoloid race and as such exhibit some Mongoloid features such as round face, medium height, and broad nose with slanting eyes. However, they have darker complexion as compared to the other Nagas. Akin to other Konyak Nagas, the old men-folk of Longwa bear rich lines of deep blue tattoos on their faces with long antelope horns in their ear lopes. Few among them use headgear made of bear fur. However, these are not found among the youngsters. This could be the result of Christianity and forbiddance of headhunting practice, as the culture of tattooing has strong association with headhunting. The people are endowed with strong and muscular physique which helps them to endure physical labour. Their big houses, wood

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\(^{39}\) *Bos frontalis*

\(^{40}\) The Konyaks do not eat snakes, though some Naga tribes relish it.
carvings and broad footpath bear witness of their hard working nature. The villagers are
simple, hospitable and have a very good sense of humor. They speak Longwa dialect
which is different from the common Wakching dialect\(^41\). This testifies the diversity of
Konyak dialects where every Konyak Naga village has its own village dialect, which in
some cases is unintelligible even to its immediate neighboring villages. Therefore, most
of them use \textit{Nagamese} \(^42\) as a means of communication. Barring the old folks, almost all
the Longwa villagers speak \textit{Nagamese} but they have the tendency of using the letter \(L\)
in place of \(R\). This shows the influence of their mother tongue while speaking
\textit{Nagamese}. Moreover, few villagers speak Burmese while communicating with the
Myanmarese army. It was reported that two boys from this village were sent to
mainland Myanmar to study Burmese language since it is necessary for them to
communicate with their counter parts.

The staple foods of the villagers are rice and maize. The villagers grind rice and
maize from the wooden rice pounding tables and clean with the winnowing fan in their
respective houses. This shows the self-reliant and self-sufficient nature of the people.
This may be also because there is only one rice mill in the village to be shared by so
many households. Along with rice and maize, they also eat millets, yam, tapioca and
other vegetable. Almost all of them are non-vegetarians and they eat both domestic and
wild animals. However, pork and \textit{mithun} are considered as delicacies. They are also
very fond of black tea stewed in bamboo vessels. Most of them chew betel nuts with
\textit{pan} leaves which discolor their teeth. There are some people in the village who gulp
\textit{Kani} (opium) and have fallen victim to its vices.

\(^{41}\) Wakching dialect is the common Konyak language.
\(^{42}\) \textit{Nagamese} is a pidgin language which is a mixture of Naga, Assamese and Bengali.
According to 2011 (Provisional Census of India), the village has 458 households with the total population of 4917. Out of these 4917 persons, there are 2589 male and 2328 female. Among these, there are some villagers staying outside the village for work, business and education. It was also found that some children from this village stay with others as helpers and servants especially in towns like Mon, Kohima and Dimapur. However, majority of the villagers live within the village. Besides the Longwa villagers, there are outsiders, both Konyaks and non-Konyaks who reside here in the village. Some of them are school teachers, project fellows, church workers, businessmen and security persons.

Table 2.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2589</td>
<td>2328</td>
<td>4917</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Provisional Census 2011*

2.8.1. Educational Status

Being located at the extreme corner of the country, this border village lags behind many other Naga villages in almost every aspect of development. This is mostly evident in its depressing status of education. As Nagaland takes pride in having achieved 80.11% of literacy rate as per the 2011 (Provisional Census), this border village has only 8.37% literacy rate. Out of the total population of 4917; there are only 412 literates in the
village comprising 222 males and 190 females. This makes Longwa one of the least literate villages in Nagaland. This is shown in Table numbers 2.3 and 2.4.

Table 2.3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Education</th>
<th>Number of Literates</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary and High School (A-9)</td>
<td>367</td>
<td>89.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HSLC and HSSLC</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate B.A/B.Sc/B.Com</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Graduate(Any Stream)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>412</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field work data collected from the President, Longwa Students' Union.

Table 2.4

Comparative Literacy Rate of Nagaland, Mon District and Longwa village

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl.No</th>
<th>State/District/ Village</th>
<th>Total Literacy Rate (%)</th>
<th>Female Literacy Rate (%)</th>
<th>Male Literacy Rate (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Nagaland</td>
<td>80.11</td>
<td>76.69</td>
<td>83.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Mon District</td>
<td>56.60</td>
<td>52.39</td>
<td>60.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Longwa</td>
<td>8.37</td>
<td>46.11</td>
<td>53.89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census 2011(Provisional) and Field Work Data.

43 Data collected from Mr. Nahlak, the Longwa Students' Union President.
Notwithstanding the functioning of three schools- two government schools run by the Indian government and one private school, educational status of this village is very gloomy. (There was a Burmese school in this village but had closed down, and therefore, the researcher chooses not to deal on the Burmese School). This startled reality questions the efficiency and accountability of the government, the teachers and the villagers in pursuit of Free and Compulsory Education as per as the Right to Education Act, 2005. Established in 1971, the Government Primary School (GPS) has been upgraded to Government Middle School (GMS) in 2002, and since then, both the GPS and GMS are run separately by different teachers though managed by one Village Education Committee (VEC). These government schools cater mostly the village students. There are five teachers in GPS and four in GMS who along with the Village Education Committee (VEC) members look after the schools. Most of the teachers are the natives of this village except few from neighboring Konyak villages and one Assamese teacher from Assam. These schools follow both English and Longwa dialect as the mediums of instruction.

As per the field work study, both the schools have been receiving books, study materials, pencils, teaching aids, bags, uniform, etc., under the Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA). The Mid-Day Meal programme is being successfully implemented in both the schools. But it was learnt that due to non-availability of cooks, the teachers sometimes distribute uncooked rice, *dal*, noodles and beans to the students as against the government rule. However, the programme has been successful in increasing the student’s enrollment, attendance and containing dropout rate. Besides these, the GMS also received games and sports facilities as well as a few sets of computers. But the computers are lying unused since the computer operator did not attend his duty due to
irregular and inadequate salary. Moreover, there is no electricity in the school, and there is no computer literate in the village which worsens the situation. This shows the lacunae in government policies and implementation as well as the structural problems at the grass root level.

From the interaction with the teachers and students of both the schools, it is found that though there is progress in education especially after the Communitisation Act, there are many challenges hindering education in this village. The most important problem faced by these schools is inadequacy of teachers. The villagers especially the Village Council and the Students’ Union have appealed before the state government to appoint more teachers, but these appeals have gone unheard and unaddressed. The villagers grieved that though the schools in towns and nearby villages are overstaffed; a village like Longwa lacks adequate teachers. In order to help the students and also to ensure the smooth functioning of the schools, the Village Development Board (VDB) has hired temporary teachers by paying Rupees 3000 per month. But due to low salary, no one is interested to help the villagers except some committed youth from this village.

Another problem noticed by the researcher in these schools is the lack of qualified teachers. No doubt, these teachers are committed to their work but most are under-qualified as majority of them are mere undergraduates or P.U. Moreover, they have not attended any training necessary for teachers. Another serious problem faced by the GMS in this village is the inadequate infrastructural facilities specially classrooms. In order to accommodate the students, the GMS has attached Class 5 students under the GPS.

Besides these, there are several impediments which are deeply rooted in the societal formation, economy and social milieu. Poverty has kept many students away
from the classrooms albeit implementation of the Universalisation of Primary Education. This forced many of them to work in the fields, to help their parents in the household chores and tending their younger siblings and also to work as babysitters, helpers or servants in others’ house. The illiterate parents did not bother to send their children to schools; rather they sent their children to work as helpers in towns. This way they get some money to manage the household needs. There are children who had become victims of social vices such as alcohol addiction, opium addiction and other illegal activities. Thus, these are some of the factors responsible for low literacy rate in this village.

When the government suffers from poor policy formulation and implementation, there are non-governmental organisations (NGOs) who give hope for these helpless borderlanders. One such NGO is the Nehemiah India, a Christian organisation working for the imparting education, especially to the people near the international border where no such other school exists. Nehemiah India has established Shalom school in this border village in 2008 with six teachers and four non-teaching staff under the leadership of Mr. Nungsang Imchen. The school is constructed on the plot of land that belongs to Mr. Khaopa, the younger brother of the Longwa chief Ahng. Since 2008, this school has been providing free education to 105 students from nursery to standard two. Most of the students are from Konyak Naga, Leinung Naga and Panmi Naga villages in Myanmar. Apart from these Nagas from Myanmar, there are few students from Longwa village. The school is run on the contribution made by the local churches and overseas sponsors. So far the school has been successful in imparting primary education to these underprivileged children. Having received positive response from the parents and students, the school administrator plans to upgrade to higher classes annually.
With such a proactive role taken by a non-governmental organisation, the government, especially the education department, VEC, teachers, students and parents need to seriously take up the cause of imparting and promotion of education. With the entire stakeholder involved in this mission, it is hopeful to improve the status of education in this border village.

2.9. Social Organizations

Every society or community comprises of a well structured and closely knitted organizations or units. For a tribal society, organizations such as family, kinship, clanship and village play a very significant role. In fact, these are the bases on which the society functions and exists. An individual’s life, his/her identity, roles and obligations as a social entity and his/her relationship with other fellow beings are determined by the social control exercised through these units and organizations. In the following discussion, we shall deal with the social organizations in the study area.

2.9.1. Family

Family is the first and primary social unit of an individual. It is the foremost social context which an individual exposes to and experiences right from the time of birth. Generally, a family comprises of persons of both sexes, related by marriage, blood or adoption and have roles and obligations based on age, sex and relationship. They are also socially distinguished as living in a single house-hold or sub-household.

In order to study and understand a particular society or community, it is pertinent to study about the nature, structure and system of family prevalent in that society. Different writers have given their own definitions on the nature and structure
of family. According to Ross (1961:3), "family is a group of people usually related as some particular type of kindred, who may live in one household, and whose unity resides in a patterning of rights and duties, sentiments and authority." She pointed out four sub-structures of family which are:

1. Ecological or spatial substructure i.e. the size of the household and type of the family;
2. Sub-structure of rights and duties as seen in the division of labour;
3. Sub-structure of power and authority as who controls the actions of the members; and
4. Sub-structure of sentiments that is the psychological or emotional relations among its members.

2.9.1.1. Forms or Types of Family

Family can be classified into different types such as nuclear family or joint family, conjugal or consanguine families determined by various socio-economic factors. Anthropologists and sociologists have their own definitions and views on the category of family. A sociologist, Chattophadhyay (1961:75), defines three types of family as follows:

1. Simple family comprises of one husband, one wife and their unmarried children;
2. Compound family comprises of one husband and one wife who have remarried with their two sets of children; and
3. Composite family comprises of husband and wife who have married more than twice and their children from previous marriage.
However, the most common division of family can be the single or nuclear family and the joint family. A nuclear family refers to a family consisting of the spouses and their dependent children and is characterised by a separate residence and functions of the members. A joint family is a single homestead occupied by two or more lineally related members, their spouses and their offspring subject to the same authority. Joint family may be based on common residence, common hearth, common property, common family worship, common kinship relationship and sharing of labour. According to Ram Ahuja (1999:25) a joint family may include:

1. A man, his wife, unmarried children and his parents;
2. A man, his wife, his parents, his married children with their children, and his unmarried children;
3. Several brothers living together, each with his wife and children; and
4. Several brothers living together, each with his wife, children and their parents.

Coming to the present study area, a typical Konyak family is a single or a nuclear family, but in Longwa village joint family system prevails in most of the households. The definite reason for this system of family could not be ascertain from the villagers. The most common answer was that joint family system has been an aged old practice in this village. Most probably, the joint family system is still retained since it is suitable for agrarian economy involving huge labour force. Moreover, the prevalence of compulsory service or forced labour offered to the Ahng and insurgent groups by at least a member from each household, rotation of guarding the morung among men of different households, collection of house tax for the Ahng, government and insurgent groups necessitate such a system. During the field work, the researcher

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witnessed such forced labour borne by the villagers. Thus, the joint family system is sustained because it is suitable for the social system prevalent in this border village.

In Longwa village, a family normally comprises of grandparents, parents, children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren with an average of 15 to 20 members. In most households, extended kith and kin also stay with the family. During the field work it is observed that some young girls stay with their relatives to help them in the household chores. However, they are not treated as servants but as members of the same family. Normally a family is headed by the eldest male member who controls and directs the activities of the other members along with his brothers and sons. He occupies the highest position in the family. Being the head, he maintains order in the house, provides the family needs and also protects his family. In case of an aged father, the eldest son plays the role of the provider as well as the protector. Being a patriarchal society, the position of women is secondary to men. A woman is confined mostly to the household chores and denied of right to make decision, inheritance and property. Apart from these, polygyny also degrades the status of women in this village.

In this village, a family normally lives in a big house which looks like a hall. Most of the houses are made of palm leaves, timber and bamboo, though there are few Corrugated Galvanized Iron (CGI) sheets roofing and concrete buildings. The roof is covered with thick palm leaves which last for more than ten years and walls are made of bamboo woven mats. A typical Longwa house normally has two doors, one main door in the front and another at the back. These houses do not have windows, and therefore, are very dark inside. Moreover, most houses have mud floors which are neither properly leveled nor smooth. Yet few are mopped smoothly by using a mixture of cow dung and red soil. A house has different rooms partitioned with bamboo mats. The first room is
the sitting room which is followed by the kitchen, bedrooms and the store room. The kitchen and the sitting room are the most spacious, whereas the bedrooms are very small. In fact, these bedrooms are big enough just to keep a bed or two. It is found that some people still use the wooden bed carved out of a single tree.

Every kitchen has a traditional hearth in the middle of the house with stones and two iron bars supporting the pots from falling. Above the hearth, there are different layers of mats meant for drying paddy, meat and vegetable. Kitchen is mostly a women domain where the grandmother, mother and daughters engage themselves with the chores of cooking, cleaning and washing. Normally, the male members except the young ones do not come to the kitchen. Rather they sit in the sitting room busying themselves with bamboo or wooden works and relish black tea brewed in the bamboo vessels. Unlike the sitting rooms of the modern Nagas, sitting rooms in this village have hearths. However, this hearth is not used for cooking except under extraordinary circumstances. The rationale for having two hearths in a single house is justified by the cold weather of the village as well as the life style of the villagers. Nonetheless, this consumes a lot of fire woods resulting into environment degradation and increases the workload for womenfolk as they are mostly involved in chopping and collecting firewood from the fields and jungles. The above family setting depicts the existing traditional mode of living as well as gender inequality between the two sexes in this village.

In addition to the main house, each family has an extended platform/podium or two called Machang. These are made of bamboo splits and wooden posts, and constructed mostly in rugged location. These are meant for sitting, washing as well as

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44 These are platforms made of bamboo and wood and found in almost all the Konyak villages.
for drying clothes, paddy and vegetable. Most of the toilets and latrines are located in the backyard of the house, few meters away from the main house. These are mostly made of bamboo and palm leaves. With the initiative from the *Indira Awaas Yojna* and Grant-in-Aid (GIA), few *pucca* latrines have been constructed (This will be discussed in detail in Chapter 4). But most of the villagers are yet to have access to this facility. 

Apart from these, the villagers also construct separate sty for pigs and chicken coops. Along with the main house, each house has a separate granary where they store their grains like paddy, maize, yam, pumpkin, etc. The main reason for constructing a separate granary is to protect it from fire in case of outbreak of fire in the main house. This shows the simple yet wise nature of these villagers who are well aware of the circumstances of fire gutting the palm leaves and bamboo wall house.

The village on the Indian side is fully electrified under the *Rajiv Gandhi Grameen Vidyutikaran Yojna* and is managed by the Village Electricity Management Board (VEMB). But erratic power cut is the normal routine. Houses under the jurisdiction of Myanmar do not have electricity till now even when solar lights have been installed in the village especially near the residence of the chief *Ahng*. This shows the persisting inequality among these villagers- the royal versus the commoner, the rich versus the poor and the Indian Longwains and Myanmar Longwains. The villagers get water supply through pipelines since 2001. However, one interesting observation is that they still carry water in bamboo vessels and not in steel water jars and galloons. This shows the confluence between tradition and modernity.

45 The author uses the term Longwains to refer the natives of Longwa.
2.9.2. Marriage

Marriage is a socially accepted union between a man and a woman found in all human societies. Among the tribal societies, marriage is not just a union between two individuals but is also between two families, kin groups, clans and even villages. Marriage is motivated by various factors such as sexual gratification, procreation, companionship, social prestige, economic security, etc.

Marriage as an institution occupies a central position in the Naga society. However, marriage rules, bride price, types of marriage and field of mate selection differ from one tribe to another. Moreover, the traditional marriage system has been going through a tremendous change due to the impact of Christianity, modern education and western culture. Among the Konyak Nagas, there exists arranged marriage as well as marriage by mutual consent. Many writers (both the outsiders and insiders) are of the opinion that the Konyaks followed polygamy. However, it is important to clarify that the Konyaks do not follow polygamy as a whole but rather they practiced polygyny. Polygamy refers to a type of marriage where a person marries more than one spouse and thus it is the opposite of monogamy. There are two types of polygamy—polygyny and polyandry. Polygyny is a type of marriage where one male marries more than one female, whereas polyandry is where one woman marries more than one male. In the case of the Konyaks, polygyny was practiced since the Konyak males were found to marry more than one wife. The Ahng and members of royal family married several wives besides the queen. A Longwa Ahng, Phawang, was said to have 60 wives of commoner clans (many used the term ‘concubines’ and secondary wives) besides the queen (Metjen 2003:14). Polygyny was very popular among the Ahngs who marry

\[46 \text{ For details on traditional Konyak marriage, refer to Füer-von Haimendorf's } \textit{The Konyak Nagas} (1939).\]
several wives. However, the number of wives has reduced over the period of time. Similar to all other Naga tribes, polyandry is not practiced by the Konyaks. Therefore, it is wrong to say that the Konyaks practice polygamy altogether since they practiced only polygyny and not polyandry.

Another important feature of marriage among the Konyaks is the relevance of clan exogamy which still regulates the institution of marriage. Persons belonging to the same clan cannot marry one another as they are considered as brothers and sisters, and therefore, their union is understood to be incestuous. Those who breached such exogamous rules are punished by ex-communicating them from the community and are imposed huge fines.

Bride price was another important aspect of marriage among the Konyaks in the past though it varies from village to village (Yanang 1986:22). But now, the significance of bride price has somehow decreased with Christianity. Generally, the bride price includes several articles such as dao, brass plate, spear, basket, pigs, mithun, etc. Rich people paid more bride price as compared to the poor people. Moreover, for the wives of chiefly clans, a higher bride price was paid. For instance as pointed out by Fürer-Haimendorf, the Ahng of Longkai paid 20 dao, 60 spears, 2 pigs, 2 baskets of betel leaves, one large basket of salt, seven chickens, and one goat as the bride price for the daughter of the Ahng of Chi (1939: 81). Today, the bride price depends mostly on the educational qualification of a girl, her behavior and her family position in the society.

In Longwa village, there exist different types of marriage, though in some cases these marriages go simultaneously. These include arranged marriage, marriage by mutual consent, home marriage and church marriage, intra-tribal and inter-tribal
marriage as well as cross border marriage. Apart from these, the marriage rules for the
commoner clans and the ruling clans differ greatly. For instance, polygyny is very
common among the ruling clans but very few among the commoner clans practiced this.
Marriageable age is considerably young as compared to other Naga villages. Most girls
get married once they reached puberty and thus majority is found to be in wedlock
before adulthood. For men, the marriageable age is relatively higher than women. The
probable reasons of early marriage could be illiteracy, poverty and livelihood
subsistence based on agriculture.

In the present context, normally when a man and a woman intend to marry, they
would inform their decision to their parents, mostly the boy’s parents. The boy’s parents
would send a mediator or go-between who would go and talk to the girl’s parents or
another mediator from the girl’s family. The mediator would take along gifts such as
chicken, rice, etc., for the girls’ family. Having reached the agreement between the two
families, the decision for marriage is conveyed to the pastor of the church.
Consequently, the pastor along with the deacon board would examine the character of
the intended couple. If they are found to be of good moral behavior and conduct, the
church gives the permission to go ahead with the holy marriage or church marriage and
fix the date with the concerned families. However, if any of the intended couple has bad
moral character or breached the moral code of conduct,\(^{47}\) then the church normally does
not give permission to have the wedding inside the church building. In such cases, some
people have home marriage where their marriage is solemnized in either the bride’s or
groom’s residence.

\(^{47}\) This is mostly in cases when either of them has begot a child out of wedlock.
In most church marriages, the bride and the groom wear either traditional attires or western clothes such as gowns and suits or combination of both. In the recent years, the western attires have become very popular even among the villagers. The wedding feast includes both ethnic and other cuisine. This shows the impact of western culture on Naga culture and tradition. However, there are also traces of traditional practices in marriage such as exchange of gifts between the families of the bride and groom, services and contributions provided during the wedding by the relatives and clan fellows. Thus, we may say that both traditional customs and modern practices are found in all these marriages.

Among the royal family, the marriage of the prince or the king is worth mentioning because of the fact that continuity of traditional practices is more visible in such marriages. The marriage of the Ahng is not just an individual affair but involves the whole kingdom (villages under Ahng’s suzerainty) as mentioned by Chingang (2008:17-18). The king would send gifts along with his servants or representatives to another village to propose the daughter of the Ahng for marriage. This is mainly because as per the Konyak traditional practice, a king marries a princess of another kingdom so as to keep the royal blood line intact. Once the proposal is accepted (which is done in most cases), the girl’s family would keep the gifts sent by the Ahng. Following this, the bride would visit the groom’s village along with her friends and servants and stay for a week. After this, the date for marriage would be fixed by both the villages. As per the date fixed for the marriage, both the parties would meet near the village boundary and the bride would be brought to the groom’s village. The bride is accompanied by an old woman, preferably a commoner wife of her father, to act as her mother and also her maids who later become the commoner wives of her husband. To commemorate the
union of great villages, there would be feast and celebration for the whole village or kingdom. Thus, this is how the marriage between a prince and princess takes place.

Besides the *Wangha* (queen) and her maids from other village, the *Ahng* marries some women from his own village who cook for the king and the queen and later on become the secondary wives of the *Ahng*. These women are chosen by the villagers. In some cases, the *Ahng* also takes secondary wives from other villages who failed to pay him tributes. It is also found that some villages give women to the *Ahng* in order to pacify the wrath of the *Ahng*. Thus, a very peculiar form of polygyny exists among the royal family of the Konyaks. All the children born of such unions are recognized but only the eldest son of the *Ahng* and *Wangha* can become the heir. However, with the coming of Christianity, such types of union are discouraged and therefore minimized to some extent.

Here is a case study of the marriage of Phawang Laipa popularly known as Tonyai. He is the prince of Longwa and the eldest son of the chief *Ahng*, Ngowang Luingam. He is one among the twenty children of the chief *Ahng* but being the eldest son of the *Ahng* and *Wangha*, he acquires the right to become the *Ahng* of Longwa. Phawang Laipha is about 35 years old and has two wives. His queen is the princess of Konyu village from Arunachal Pradesh. Apart from the queen, he also married a Longwa woman from Chingsa *morung* who is a commoner. He has eight children, five from his wife of commoner clan and three from the queen.

On inquiry into the contradiction between Christian principle based on monogamy and polygyny as practiced by the royal family, the chief *Ahng* defensively stated that polygyny is practiced because of its utility. He also pointed how he could

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48 The queen is known as *Wangha* in Konyak dialect.
convince his confused son to marry a commoner from his village as the queen will not perform the duties of the commoner, such as going to field, collecting fire wood and carrying baskets during festivals, etc. Therefore, there was a necessity of a wife from a commoner clan who could do all these chores. Whatever the justification may be, we cannot deny the fact that polygyny as practiced in this village among the royal family is against human dignity and equality since the commoner wives are kept as servants. The wife or wives from commoner clans and their children are not treated equally and denied of their rights and identity, though they live in the Ahng’s palace.

In the recent years, the church has been playing an effective role in discouraging this practice. As such people are becoming aware of the negative aspects of polygyny and willing to protest and fight against this system. For instance, the wife of the Ahng’s younger brother did not approve of her husband marrying another woman who was much younger than him. It was told that because of her husband’s second nuptial she ran away from her village and married to a non-Konyak based in Dimapur. This illustrates the growing protest against such practices among women.

Apart from these marriages, there are also cases of intra-tribal and inter-tribal marriages in this village. However, there are very few cases of marriage with non-tribals. This may be due to the isolation as well as the closed nature of society where such unions are not approved. Cross border marriages have been there since a very long time in this village. In fact, this cross border marriage is as old as the village. This is because of the very fact that border demarcation was a recent development. Moreover, despite the border demarcation, in reality kinship and tribal relationship still remain strong. Many Longwa men have married women from Konyak villages in Arunachal Pradesh and Myanmar. For example, Maopha Taiwangshu married a lady from
Khanmoi village in Myanmar. Khanmoi is the nearest Konyak village in Myanmar which is located just opposite to Longwa village. Besides Maopha, there are many others who had married women from villages in Myanmar and women from this village have been married to men from both Arunachal Pradesh and Myanmar.

2.9.3. Divorce

Divorce was prevalent among the Konyaks even in the past as found in various literature. The most common reasons for divorce were adultery, barrenness and impotency. If a husband divorces his wife on the ground of adultery, he has to pay fines and compensation to his wife’s father (Fürer-Haimendorf 1939:81). The divorcee is free to remarry and settle. In Longwa village, though divorce is generally discouraged, it was and is prevalent among the people. Cases of divorce are settled between the families, clans and morungs. However, if such settlement is not possible, then it is brought before the village court which gives the final verdict on the case as well as the fines or compensations. Though they can take cases to the higher courts, no such case was found in practice. This is mostly because people obey and respect the judgements pronounced by the village court and also because of the lack of awareness about the modern justice delivery system.

2.9.4. Kinship System

The next important social organisation of the Longwa villagers is the kinship network. Kinship may be defined as a social relationship based on family affiliation which may be either consanguine i.e. based on blood ties or affine i.e. based on marriage. Therefore, a person’s kin are those persons whom he/she is connected genetically through his/her parents. In a tribal society such as the Nagas, this kinship system governs the behaviour, roles and status as well as rights and obligations of the
individuals. Every individual is expected to behave according to his/her relationship with the other members. The nature of relationship in the kinship system can be primary kin, secondary kin, tertiary kin or distant kin. The lineages of this kinship network further leads to formation of clans.

The Longwa society follows unilineal principle based on patrilineal descent. Similar to all the other Naga tribes, the Longwa villagers also follow patriarchal system, where descent is counted through the bloodline of the male members. The oldest male member among the kin group occupies the highest position, commands respect and plays a vital role in decision making, planning as well as gets the biggest and best share of meat on several occasions. He is revered for his sagacity and experience. He represents his kin group in marriage ceremony, funeral, disputes, etc.

Kinship networks manifest in everyday life situations of the villagers. This is evident in terminology of addressing and referring to one another, duties and obligations towards one another, joking relationship, in marriage, death, funeral, etc. It is found that the Konyaks strictly follow the kinship network even in conversations. The male members of the same kin group cannot have joking relationship with their cousin sisters. In fact, they cannot share anything personal. This is considered as shameful and disrespectful. Marriage among the members of a kin group is considered as taboo or incestuous and such people are ostracised from the village. The kinship networks prevail even in economic life such as working and helping one another in the fields. Members of the nearest kin group would help one another by giving free labour or would form a working group based on rotation. Even in times of sickness, death or crop failure, the kin and kith extend help to one another.
Being a border village, it is found that the people share kinship networks with the people across the border in Myanmar and in Arunachal Pradesh. During the course of field work, the researcher came across some people from nearby Konyak villages in Myanmar who visited their kith and kin in Longwa. Most of these kinship ties are affinal as there is a large number of cross-border marriages in the village. For instance, the prince of this village, Laipa married a princess from Konyu village in Arunachal Pradesh. At the time of their marriage, she was accompanied by other women who helped her in her domestic chores. Thus, kinship relationship exists among people of the same village as well as different villages. There is exchange of visits from both the families, especially during festivals, marriage, funeral as well as during the peak season of agricultural operation.

2.9.5. Kinship Terminology in Longwa

Kinship terminology refers to the terms by which each member of a kin group addresses each other. Basically, there are two categories of kinship terms or terminology (Sharma 2007:133). These are terms of address and terms of reference. The term of address is used when speaking directly to a person or persons, while the term of reference is used while referring to the third person. Some of the kinship terminologies used in Longwa village and common Konyak dialect are given below. However, it is pertinent to mention once again the linguistic diversity among the Konyaks which is responsible for different terms used in different villages.

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These are based on the translation collected during the field work.
Table 2.5
Kinship Terminology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Longwa</th>
<th>Konyak</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>1. Apa</td>
<td>1. Opa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>2. Anyu</td>
<td>2. Onyu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grandfather (Both paternal and maternal)</td>
<td>3. Apu</td>
<td>3. Opu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grandmother (Both paternal and maternal)</td>
<td>4. Api</td>
<td>4. Opi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elder sister</td>
<td>5. Nyalong</td>
<td>5. Onyayong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elder brother</td>
<td>7. Cheilong</td>
<td>7. Ojaiyong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Younger brother</td>
<td>8. Cheihi</td>
<td>8. Ojaijoi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father's younger brother</td>
<td>10. Pahi</td>
<td>10. Opajoi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother's elder brother</td>
<td>11. Hulong</td>
<td>11. Okaoyong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother's younger brother</td>
<td>12. Huhi</td>
<td>12. Okajoji</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother's elder sister</td>
<td>15. Nyulong</td>
<td>15. Onyeiyong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father-in-law</td>
<td>17. Ahu</td>
<td>17. Okao</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother-in-law</td>
<td>18. Anye</td>
<td>18. Onyei</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

50 Data provided by Angshem Konyak of Wakching Village, Mon.
From the above given Table, we can deduce that these terminologies used by the people in Longwa village differ from those of the other Konyak villages. It is observed that these terms are used to address the relatives belonging to the same clan even though they may not be their immediate kith and kin. Both the paternal and maternal grandfathers are addressed as *Apu* and paternal and maternal grandmothers are addressed as *Api*. A man/woman addresses all his/her clansmen who are of his/her father’s age as *Apa* which means father. Those who are senior to his/her father’s age grade are called *Palong* and those who are younger than his/her father are called *Pahi*. This applies to his/her mother’s clanswomen whom he/she calls *Anyu* if of the same age with his/her mother, *Nyulong* if senior to his/her mother and *Nyuhi* if younger than his/her mother. If a person is older or younger, he or she is addressed in the same manner. Thus seniority or age plays a very important role in the kin group, clan as well as in the functioning of the village.

2.9.6. Clan

The clan system is the further extension of the kinship system in Konyak society. Among the Nagas, the clan system plays a very dominant role. Every Naga village is comprised of several clans whose members maintain strict clan exogamy. Clansmen and women cannot marry one another as they considered themselves as brothers and sisters. Those who breached this norm are disowned by their clansmen, fined, punished and ex-communicated from the village. Clan membership determines identity, rights and obligations of an individual in the village. Normally, a clan is headed by the oldest male member
who settled first in the village. Under no circumstances, a woman can become the head of a clan because the Nagas follow patriarchal system where the principle of primogeniture is counted through males (Horam 1992:50-51).

Longwa is a multi-clan village. There are 16 clans or gehong in the village. These are Konsakam, Sheosakam, Tojong Wangu, Longkho Wangu, Chonglongshu, Jesa Wangu, Jesa Wangnao, Tai Wangsu, Ponyu Pensà, Ponyu Chingloi, Youngan Pensa, Youngan Wangsa, Chingchung Chingloishu, Anongshu, Wangsu and Kano Pensa. Out of these, eight clans belong to ruling class and eight clans fall under the commoners’ status. Amongst these clans, Tai Wangsu is the largest clan having more than 60 households, whereas Chonglongshu is the smallest clan with only 17 households. It is also found that most of the clans in the village bear the names of the first settlers in the village mentioned in Table 2.1.

Today, most of the villagers used their clan’s name as their surname and thus clan identity becomes their identity. This is true even in the case of morung membership, where the villagers say that such and such person belongs to that morung and we belong to that morung. But morung membership is limited only to their identity in the village, whereas their clan identity goes along with their names outside the village. In fact, the clan name is being personalized along with their personal names. In this village, people derived their identity and citizenship along with their rights and obligations from their clans. Clan ties are not the only basis of social life but also of political, economic and cultural life. For instance, various clans hold lands collectively and therefore a person belonging to a particular clan has the right to have
access to the clan’s land and its resources such as wood, bamboo, palm leaves, etc. Thus land holding system is closely knitted with the clan system. It is also found that Konyaks of other villages in Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh and even in Myanmar share similar clan names and therefore surnames with the people Longwa. Through this identity, they maintain kinship and clan relationship with the people of other Konyak villages. Though settled and belonged to different villages, they still consider one another as kith and kin with a strong sense of affinity.

In this village, different clans or gehong constitute different morungs or po. Different po51 or morungs constitute the village. It is evident that the sixteen clans are divided into different pos.

Table 2.6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Morung(Po)</th>
<th>Clans (Gehong)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Ponyu Po</td>
<td>Tai Wangsu, Wangshu, Ponyu Pensa, Ponyu Chingloi,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Kanu Po</td>
<td>Kano Pensa,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Poren Po</td>
<td>Tojong Wangu, Longkho Wangu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Youngan Po</td>
<td>Youngan Pensa, Youngan Wangsa,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Chingsa Po</td>
<td>Konsakam, Sheosakam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Jesa Po</td>
<td>Jesa Wangu, Jesa Wangnao,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Posha Po</td>
<td>Chonglongshu, Chingchung Chingloishu, Anongshu</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Work Data

51 In Longwa dialect a morung is known as po.
2.9.7. Morungs/ Bachelors' Dormitory

The dormitory system is one of the most important social institutions among the tribal communities. The dormitory halls for boys and girls exist among many tribes in India albeit with a lot of variations. This is true even among the myriad Naga tribes. The term *morung* is commonly used among the tribals of Northeast India to refer to the bachelors' dormitory halls. However, it is known by different names among different Naga tribes. For instance, *Kichiiki* among the Angamis, *Ariju* among the Aos, *Chumpo* for the Lothas and *Baan* for the Konyaks.

Though commonly used as *morungs* among the Nagas, the origin of the term is obscured and therefore can be contested. Various anthropologists and sociologists have given their own opinion on this. For example, a well known anthropologist, Führer-Haimendorf opines that *morung* is an Assamese term which was generally used in the area (Führer-Haimendorf 1938:350-352). On the same note, Horam (1975:65), a Naga writer also assumes that *morung* is an Assamese word. Nevertheless, both of them failed to provide the origin or etymological meaning of this tribal dormitory.

Yamyap, a Konyak Naga scholar, contested the Assamese origin of *morung* by saying that the term *morung* is not found in Assamese dictionary. The author further opines that *morung* must have been derived from an Ahom word (Yamyap 2002: 21).

This is further expounded by Chingang who opines that the term *morung* must have connections with the Ahom ‘*Rang ghar*’ which literally means game or play house. It is believed that the Ahom kings had *rang ghar* in Sibsagar which shares boundary with the Konyaks. He assumes that the term *morung* must have come from *Rang ghar* and used in corrupted form like *marrang, morang* or *morung* (Yamyap 2002: 21). This was explained on the basis of Ahom-Konyak relationship, which the author suggested that the Konyaks must have adopted from the Ahoms. However, the present researcher questions this notion because the bachelor's dormitory is found
even among other Naga tribes who were not in contact with the Ahoms. Thus, inspite of the different views and contestations on the origin of the term *morung*, we failed to arrive at a general conclusion and thus the etymological meaning of *morung* remains obscured. No matter the obscurity of the origin and meaning of *morung*, it is an undeniable fact that *morung* was the nerve center of social life in the Naga villages.

*Morungs/Baans or Pos*\(^{52}\) are bachelors’ house or boys’ dormitory where unmarried male members of the village spent time and sleep. In the past, womenfolk and children were not allowed to enter the *morung* except during festivals. But now this restriction has been relaxed.\(^{53}\) Usually, a boy attaining the age of 14-15 years would be inducted into a *po*, where he should spend at least 3 to 4 years or till his marriage. It is not an individual induction but group or age grades induction. There are several age grades called *ei-sha* in the village and the members of one *ei-sha* enter the *po* together. When these young boys are inducted into the *po*, festivity and merry making filled the village. The newly inducted members are given their share of meat as a sign of *po* membership. From this day onwards, they no longer sleep in their parental house but in the *po* along with their fellow bachelors which continues till their marriage.

In the *po*, each age grade is assigned with specific work such as collecting fire wood, cleaning, fetching water, guarding the village, passing on the information and beating the log drum, etc. The older *ei-sha* has strong control over the younger ones in manner of discipline and work. They are trained in various vocations such as basketry, wood carving, gun making, black smithy, etc. They are also inculcated the virtues of hard work, discipline, comradeship and respecting the elders. It is in the *po*, the old men folk passed on the oral history of the tribe or village through folk tales,

\(^{52}\) For further discussion, the term *po* will be used.

\(^{53}\) Among the Konyak villages, there are girls dormitory called *Ywo*. But this was not found in the field area.
songs, dances, legends, poetry, etc., to the young boys. They also learn the art of warfare, raids and headhunting. Various games and sports were conducted so as to test the physical as well as the mental ability of the inmates. They are imbued in the old age wisdom and lore of the tribe. Here developed the sense of 'we' feeling amongst the people which binds them together as one. The young boys are trained by the old menfolk who no longer possess the physical strength to work in the paddy field and yet who are the reservoirs of vast knowledge and experience. The po also serves as the centre of defense and protection of its people from all dangers. Every day there would be 4 to 5 men guarding the po as sentries or guards as the villagers leave for their works. They keep watch for any impending dangers that may occur in the village such as outbreak of fire, enemy's attack, robbery or death (Chingang 2008:33). Thus, po was the hub of all activities as well as an institution of learning and socialization.

Similar to all the Konyak Naga villages, Longwa also has its morung/haan which they call po. According to the villagers, the etymological meaning of po is 'hearing or listening.' This is based on the main function of morung which acts as the centre of information in the village in the event of war, raids, fire, deaths or festivals. In this village, po refers to the dormitory hall for boys as well as the ward, block or area in the village. Longwa village has seven pos (morungs). These are Ponyu po, Poren po, Youngan po, Kanu po, Jesa po, Chingsa po and Posha po. As per the oral history of this village, there were only two pos or morungs in the initial years of village formation namely Chingsa and Kanu po. Since an Ahng morung was vital for the village, Ponyu po was formed. Later on, with the increased of population, the other morungs came into existence. Amongst these seven pos, the Ponyu po is the biggest in terms of population and household. The chief Ahng of the village belongs to this po. The second largest po is the Kanu po where the deputy Ahng belongs to. Out of the seven pos, Posha po is the smallest.
These *pos* are strategically located in different locations of the village keeping in mind the security and defense of the village. As we approach the village from Mon town via Phomching, we come across Chingsa *morung* just above the main road. Above the Chingsa *morung*, there is Posha *morung* located at the higher elevation on the way to boundary pillars in the hillock. Jesa *morung* is located below the road as we approach the Burma junction and Ponyu *morung* is located just behind the *Alung*’s palace on the hillock in the middle of the village. Poren *morung* is located just opposite the church building facing the Konyak villages in the west, while Youngan *morung* is located near the road facing the east. Kanu *morung* is located above the road on the way to the Assam Rifles’ camp. Thus these *morungs* are strategically located at small hillocks where all the village approach roads can be seen. These have surrounded the village from the enemies’ attacks from all sides which was vital especially during the headhunting days. Kanu, Youngan and Poren *morungs* guard the village from Arunachal Pradesh, Jesa in the west, Ponyu and Chingsa in the middle and Posha in the north.

Though *po* played a very influential role in the lives of an individual, these are mostly the thing of the past. Most of the respondents during the field work in Longwa village opined that the importance of *po* has somehow diminished as compared to the past. Factors such as modernization, Christianity, modern education, urbanization, individualism, etc., are responsible for the diminishing importance of *po* in the social life of the villagers. Today, *po* no longer remains the centre of social life. Rather, this has been replaced and taken over by the Church, schools and various other organizations such as Students’ Union, Village Youth Association, etc. However, this does not mean that the *pos* in this village are not relevant at all. Though their roles have diminished to some extent, they still form an important part of individual identity. Each villager is known by his/her *po* membership and his/her relationship,
marriage, social obligations and rights are still determined by the po membership. Unlike in the past, young boys are not inducted into po regularly but young village boys sleep and guard their respective pos. They also pass on the information and also beat the log drum in events of death, fire and festivals. Members of a particular po help one another in the construction of houses, cultivation of fields, marriage, funeral, etc. Moreover, each Po maintains separate burial place or cemetery for their members.

2.9.7.1. Structure of Pos

Typically, there are two types of baan/morung among the Konyaks as described by Furer-Haimendorf (1938:350-352). Among some Konyak villages, morungs have open front with long protruding gabled roof made of palm leaves. Whereas in some villages, the morungs have closed front with roof hung low over the front porch. The po is usually a very big house made of thick bundles of palm leaves (tocca patta), timber, wooden posts and bamboos. However, the descriptions given by Furer-Haimendorf do not hold true in this village anymore as the palm leaves have been replaced by Corrugated Galvanized Iron (CGI) sheets. The po is constructed by the members of a particular po collectively. A po has big wooden posts and beams which are decorated with the carvings and motifs of human beings and animals such as tiger, elephant, snake and hornbill. These cravings reflect the live worlds of the Konyaks.

The po also has a huge hollow log which is used as a drum or gong. In common Konyak dialect it is called ghûm. The ghûm is basically beat for passing on the information or messages to the people. Different types of sound are produced for different seasons and occasions, such as death, war, sickness, fire, festivals and social work. The beatings of the log drum can be heard even from faraway places like fields and jungles.

During the field work, it is observed that most of the pos in this village (except Chingsa po) are in pitiable condition without any maintenance. When asked
on the renewal of the *po*, most respondents felt the need to restore the glorious past of the *pos* in the village. It is also interesting to observe that the Ponyu *po* or *Ahng morung* is in the most deplorable condition. This contradicts the status and position the chief *Ahng* enjoys. When inquired on this, the researcher was informed about the future plans of rebuilding the *Ahng po* since it is the epitome of the village prestige. However, the members of this *po* decided to construct a concrete building so that they don’t need to rebuild or repair the *po* time and again as it was done in the past. Thus we may say that there have been both structural as well as functional changes in the *morungs*. Nevertheless, these *pos* still have symbolic importance among the people of this village.

2.10. Social Hierarchy

The Konyak society is stratified into different hierarchy or classes. However, these classes are different from the Marxist concept of class which is based on the capitalist and the proletariat class. On the other hand, the social stratification among the Konyaks is hereditary in nature and has social, economic, political and religious significance. Various writers have discussed about the social class among the Konyaks. Furer-Haimendorf (1969:52) classifies the Konyak society into three classes. These may be mentioned as follows:

1. Aristocratic class comprises of the chief *Ahng* and small *Ahngs*

2. Intermediate clans; and

3. Commoner clans

In addition to these, he also mentions about the division of some *Thendu* Konyak Naga villages into four distinct classes such as:

1. *Wangham* (Great or chief *Ang*)

2. *Wangsa* (Small *Angs*)
3. *Wangsu* (Intermediate); and
4. *Wangpeng* (Commoner)

The *Wangham* or the great *Ahng* class consists of those members of chief’s lineage who are born of the marital union between the men of great *Ahng* class and women of the same status from other villages. The *Wangsa* or small *Ahngs* are the children of men of great *Ahng* and women of commoner class or *Wangpeng*, who are married as ‘secondary wives’ or ‘concubines’\(^{54}\). Thus they are the offspring of hypergamous marriage. Whereas the *Wangsu* are the intermediate class and are the offsprings of the union of either *Wangsu* men with commoner wives of the same village or with *Wangsu* women of other village as they cannot marry their own clan women of the same village. Fourthly, the *Wangpeng* are the commoner class. They cannot marry the members of their own status in the same village. Therefore, they marry either commoners of other village or people of *Wangsu* class within the village.

Another classification of Konyak society is given by an Indian writer, Saha (Singh 1994:104). Saha mentions that there are four classes of people in Konyak Society. These are as follows:

1. *Angs*
2. Descendants of *Angs*
3. Commoners-Sanskritised class
4. Commoners-Village people

Saha must have distinguished the social stratification of the Konyaks keeping in mind the changes in the society. He has classified the Konyak society into four dominant classes comprising of the *Ahngs*, descendants of *Ahngs*, Sanskritised

\(^{54}\) The wives of the chief *Ahng* excluding the queen are from the commoner clans. They are referred to as concubines or secondary wives by some writers. The author prefers to use the term wives from commoner class.
commoner class and common villagers. When he uses the term ‘Sanskritised’
commoner class, he must have discussed this in line with the Hindu caste system
where Sanskritisation is evident. The term Sanskritisation is popularized by M.N
Srinivas and is referred to the process of upward mobility in caste hierarchy by the
lower castes who try to follow the lifestyle of the high caste people. However, in the
context of the Konyaks, Sanskritisation is not at all relevant because they do not
follow the Hindu caste system. Rather they are modernised and westernised to a large
extent. As a result of modern education and Christianity, there is an emergence of a
new educated and economically well-to-do class, who though originally belonged to
the commoner class, has gained prominence due to their economic and intellectual
power in the society. In fact, they have become the elite class in the Konyak society.

In the context of Longwa village, the whole village is classified into two
categories- the ruling and the commoners, known as the Ahng and Ben (common
Konyak dialect) or Wangzin and Penzin (Longwa dialect) respectively. The royal
family of the chief Ahng and other small Ahng form the ruling class, whereas the rest
of the populace falls under the category of commoners. Among the sixteen clans of the
village, there are eight wangzin and eight penzin (See Table 2.7). Members of one
penzin cannot marry the members of another penzin but have to marry the members of
wangzin in the village or members of penzin from other village. On the other hand, the
members of wangzin have to either marry their same clan from other village or marry
the penzin. However, the chief Ahng must marry a daughter of a wangzin from other
village or else his heir losses the eligibility to inherit the throne. For instance, the chief
Ahng married the princess from Sheangha Chingnyu, a Konyak village under Mon
district. Apart from the main queen, he also married six wives of commoner clan.
Table 2.7
Social Hierarchy in Longwa

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wangzin (Royal)</th>
<th>Penzin (Commoner)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Taiwangsu</td>
<td>1. Konsakam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Tojong Wangu</td>
<td>2. Sheosakam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Ponyu Chingloi</td>
<td>5. Youngan Pensa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Youngan Wangsa</td>
<td>6. Anongshu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Chingchung Chingloishu</td>
<td>7. Wangshu</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Data collected from the VDB Secretary, Yanlang Shakkam

The division of two classes in this village was very strong in the past. The commoners gave free labour in the construction of the Ahng's house, cultivation of his fields, etc. They also offered the best portion of meat killed while hunting. Moreover, members of the two classes did not dine together. It was also found that the commoners did not dare to look straight at the ruling class, especially the Ahng. However, with the establishment of modern system of government, modern education and Christianity, the gap between the two classes has been bridged to a considerable extent. In fact, as pointed out by Saha, even in this village, we see the emergence of a new middle class who originally belonged to commoners.
This can be better explained with an excerpt from the interview. In this connection, one of the respondents says:

*In the past, the commoners were badly treated by the ruling class. The ruling class people were rich but very proud and ferocious. When education was introduced in our village, the commoners took full advantage of modern education. Since they were hard working people, they sincerely worked hard to receive education. But the ruling class people did not bother to attend schools and therefore they remained illiterate for generations. They continued smoking Kani (opium) and practiced polygyny. The present Prince was the first Ahng to go to school.*

From the above statement, we may arrive at a general understanding that despite the division of people into commoner and ruling class, some among them could get education and thus could go ahead of others with their intellectual and economic power. Thus we may say that the Konyak Naga society was a class-ridden society in the past. However, with modernity, Christianity and western education, the rigidity of inter-class relationship and marriages of the olden days has been reduced to a considerable extent. Though the chiefly class still maintains its purity of blood through endogamous marriage with people of same status, the other classes have entered into inter-class as well as inter-tribal marriages with other Naga tribes as well as non-Nagas.
2.11. Summary

In this chapter, an attempt has been made to provide the historical, sociological and ethnographic setting of this border village, Longwa. While doing so, the historical analysis of the Konyak tribe including the origin, migration and village formation has been discussed comprehensively. As per the oral tradition of this village, Longwa was established during the period between 16th to 17th centuries by a group of migrants from Pongchau village, which is presently found in Arunachal Pradesh. Though the history of migration and village formation has been gathered through oral narratives, the exact year of the village formation could not be ascertain due to dearth of documented records. This chapter also analyses the history of demarcation of the Indo-Myanmar border and its impact on the Nagas in general and Longwa in particular. The Indo-Myanmar boundary which runs through the village, dividing families and clans remains an imaginary and blurred border since the human ties overpowered the imposed political boundary crossing over the other side of the border. In fact, kinship and ethnic ties transcend over the political boundary. While studying the border village, the various social units such as family, kinship, clans, social hierarchy and *morungs*, and their respective functions have been examined thoroughly. This also covered the relationship between various clans, their reciprocal obligations towards one another, and the kinship terminologies used in the field area. From the above discussions, we may deduce that the first hypothesis of the study i.e., the fluidity of 'ethnic boundaries' transcend over political and state boundaries which are fixed and static has been proved true.