CHAPTER THREE

BORDERLAND GOVERNANCE

3.1. Introduction

The issue of governance in the borderland is an important aspect that needs to be studied in any borderland study. Unlike the centre of the nation-states where there is a relatively strong and visible structure of governance, there is blurred and overlapping of governing structure(s) and distribution of powers among the various institutions in the borderland. These institutions may be traditional and modern, formal and informal and legal and illegal. As a result there is overlapping of these governing actors which often leads to frictions and conflicts among the various power holders.

In a rural borderland such as the Indo-Myanmar borderland in Nagaland, we see the presence of multiple power structures working through various institutions and actors, contesting and negotiating for power. Here we find the parallel working of both the traditional system of governance along with the modern democratic system. Border being a sacred symbol for the nation-states, the Indian and Myanmarese governments have employed various tools for controlling the border which in turn become prominent actors in the governance of the border village. On the other hand, the indigenous traditional institutions necessitate the continuity of borderland practices which defy the recent border demarcation with the modern institutions. Besides these, we have seen the emergence of new power holders in the form of insurgent groups and other organizations. In order to understand these multi-webs of governance in the borderland, we need to study the historical background of such institutions and analyze their relevance in the present context.
The Naga society presents a myriad of traditional politico-juridical institutions which co-exist with the modern democratic polity. While commenting on this, Verrier Elwin (1961:67) in his book *Nagaland* rightly states that the Naga tribes present a varied pattern of village administration, ranging from near dictatorship to liberal democracy. According to him, there is a system of hereditary chieftainship among the Semas (Sumi) and Changs. The Konyaks have very powerful chiefs or *Ahngs* who are mostly autocratic. The Aos are administered by a body of elders based on clans. Tribes such as the Angamis, Lothas and Rengmas are reasonably democratic in their governance based on consensus. This diversity of governance practices among the Nagas was also reiterated by Ramuny Murkot (1988:3) in the *The World of Nagas* and Yonuo (1974:10) in *The Rising Nagas*.

Along the Indo-Myanmar border in the state of Nagaland, we find various Naga tribes and sub-tribes such as Chirr, Konyak, Khiamnungan, Longphurr, Makhory, Pochury, Tikhir, Yimchungrii, etc., straddling on both sides of the border. All these Naga tribes have their own traditional system of governance through the village chiefs and councils who still govern the borderlanders. On the other hand, the modern institutions introduced by the British and sustained and executed by the Indian government go along with these institutions simultaneously. Therefore, we may say that there is co-existence of both the traditional and modern institutions in this borderland, though the importance of these traditional institutions has somehow diminished due to overarching presence of the modern institutional apparatuses.

Since the present area of study in question is a Konyak village, we shall discuss the borderland governance in the context of the Konyak traditional system of

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55 *Ahngs* are traditional Konyak chiefs or kings.
governance found in the border village, Longwa. The Ahng can be considered as the oldest actor in the governance of the borderland because of the fact that his jurisdiction transcends and precedes the present nation-state boundary. The Konyak kings, chiefs or Ahngs are considered as the most powerful person within their jurisdiction, which extends over a large number of villages. According to Metjen (2003:7), the term Ahng refers to the king in common Wakching dialect.56 However, the rest of the Konyak Naga villages use the term Wang while referring to the king. The term Wang means ‘beginning’ and Wangpa means ‘the beginner or the one who begins everything’, such as in decision making, cultivation, eating and so on. Metjen also opines that the term Ahng means something like ‘keeping in place’ and Ahngpa means ‘the keeper of things’. Many writers used the terms Ahng, Ang, Angh and Wang interchangeably. But for the present study, the term Ahng is used. The usage of the term ‘chief or great Ahng’ is a colonial construct following the writings of J. P. Mills, J. H. Hutton and Fürer-Haimendorf.

The Ahngs are the chieftains of the Konyak villages. Each village has its own Ahng. However, powerful Ahngs could have as many villages under his jurisdiction as he could conquer or subdue. The Ahngs of these defeated or conquered villages became the subordinates and subjects of the great Ahng. The Ahng is the supreme head of the community and is considered sacred, pure and, therefore, next to God (Kahwang). As such his will becomes law. He is considered to be from a royal family or a family of pure blood. The lineage of succession among the Konyak Ahng is hereditary. According to this, only the eldest son of a Wang/Ahng born of an Anghya/Wangya (Queen) can inherit the ‘Wangship’ or become a Wang (Metjen 2003:64). The children of ‘secondary
wives' or wives of commoner clans cannot become the Ahng as their blood is not considered pure due to the combination of royal blood with that of a commoner. The Ahngs follow polygyny, thus they have a number of wives. Apart the queen, the Ahng can marry many other wives as he wishes. For instance, it is told that the Longwa Ahng, Phawang had 60 wives which include the queen and the other wives of commoner clan (Chingang 2008:18).

3.2. Origin of the Ahng

The origin of the Konyak Ahng is full of contestations and debates. There are three popular views among the Konyaks regarding the origin of the Ahng. These views are based on oral traditions rather than written history basically due to the lack of a written script. Chingang (2008:13) discusses two opinions on the origin of the Ahng. The first belief claimed that as the Konyaks migrated from Longphong Veenyu57, they led a nomadic life for a long time in search of a suitable place having abundant water and fertile land. As they wandered from place to place, they were pierced by thorns and bitten by leeches which resulted into profuse bleeding. Among them, some could not control their thirst and ended up sucking their own blood. However, some other people could control their thirst and offered sacrifices to the Kahwang (God) asking for his help. Soon they were blessed with a stream of water. With abundant water, the group decided to settle down in that place. One day as they sat down to eat, the group that did not suck their blood hesitated to eat with the rest who sucked their own blood, considering them to be unclean. As they considered themselves clean, they claimed that they were superior. In the long run, this group became the Ahng clan. Even to this day,

57 A certain place in the east of the present Konyak area.
the Ahngs do not eat together with the commoner on the same plate and drink from the same cup. As for an instance in Longwa village, each household keeps aside a plate and a cup for the Ahng, whenever he visits their house.

The second belief on the origin of the Ahng has its root in the agricultural life of the people. As the nomadic people learnt the art of cultivation, among them there was one person who was extraordinarily blessed. His crops, animals and property flourished within a short span of time. Whatever he did, he prospered, be it in agriculture, fishing or hunting. Gradually people began to revere him and asked him how he received such gifts. In replied to the queries of his fellow villagers, the person asked them to do certain things for him and promised to tell them, once they fulfilled all he asked of them. Accordingly, he asked them to bring the first basket of crops, animals’ legs during feasting and festivals, head of animals killed while hunting and also to help him in construction of his house. Thus, people willing to know his secrets, obeyed him by paying him whatever he asked for and rendered free services annually. Gradually, he began to feel superior and powerful and called himself the king. As per this view, this was how the Ahng emerged among the Konyaks. The practice of paying tributes and rendering of services to the Ahng is still evident even today. The Longwa Ahng, being a great or Pongyin Ahng receives tributes from different villages under his suzerainty. He also gets the services of the people in the construction of his house as well as in cultivation of his fields.

Besides the above two beliefs mentioned by Chingang, the third belief claimed by the Wangs/Ahngs has been pointed by Metjen (2003:8). According to this belief, in the beginning God created the universe and all the living beings, trees and plants. Finally, God created a human being. However, the other creations laughed at the human
being. On hearing this, God warned them that one day the human being would rule over them. So according to this belief, the Wangs/Ahngs clan originated. The beliefs on the origin of the Ahng among the Konyaks are purely based on myths and oral history. Therefore, scientific explanation and evidence cannot be ascertained due to lack of written documents. However, these beliefs have close association with the life-culture of the Konyaks. Most of the practices associated with the origin of the Ahng still continue among the Konyaks today.

3.3. Types of Ahngs among the Konyaks

Among the Konyaks, one can find both the autocratic and 'democratic' form of government (Chingang 2008:14). The autocratic and corenited Ahng is called Pongyin Ahng. This is common among the Thendu Konyaks. There are seven Pongyin Ahngs or chief Ahngs among the Konyaks. On the other hand, the democratic form is found among the Thenkoh. Though they have the Ahng, he is not as powerful as the Pongyin Ahngs. Moreover, the Ahng rules his kingdom along with a council of elders. The divisions of Ahngs among the Konyaks can be also distinguished by the pattern of tattoos. The Thendu group has tattoo marks on their face, with lines running down from the forehead to the nose. Whereas the Thenkoh group does not have tattoos on their face, rather they have only on their chests and arms. Women of both the group have tattoos on their legs, but only the Thendu women have tattoos on their faces (Yanang 1986:7)58. Furer-Haimendorf (1968:63) while talking about the monarchic and democratic rule among the Konyaks mentions that the apparent distinction between the democratic tendencies of most of the Thenkoh villages and monarchic rule of Thendu

58 For details on the origin of tattoos among the Konyaks, refer to Chingang (2008:8-10).
group is very fluid. He also says the power of the Ahngs largely depends on the personality of the chief and the continuation or extinction of a chiefly lineage.

3.4. The Longwa Ahng

The Longwa Ahng is one among the seven Pongyn Ahngs or chief Ahngs among the Konyaks. This means that the Longwa Ahng is a coroneted Ahng and has other smaller Ahngs in different villages who accept his suzerainty. As stated earlier, the Longwa Ahng has its jurisdiction over villages in Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh and Myanmar. These villages were either conquered during the inter-village wars or surrendered due to the fear of the great Longwa 'kingdom'. Thus, the Longwa ‘kingdom’ crosses over the modern political boundary of India and Myanmar. In fact, this traditional kingdom does not recognize the existence of the modern border as people still pay allegiance to the Ahng. According to the village historian, so far nine Ahngs had ruled over this village since the establishment of the village during the 16th-17th centuries A.D. However, this is difficult to accept without any evidence to substantiate the claims of the villagers. The present Ahng is the ninth Ahng. However, due to lack of documented accounts, the exact date and year of their reign and coronation cannot be given. Based on the oral traditions, the genealogy of the Longwa Ahng is discussed below.

59 The term chief Ahng or great Ahng is the creation of colonial administrators and anthropologists which is used even today by the villagers while referring to the Ahng.

60 Scientific archeological excavation would help in determining the exact dates of village establishment.
### Table 3.1

**Genealogy of the Longwa Ahngs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl.No</th>
<th>Name of the chief Ahngs</th>
<th>Year&lt;sup&gt;61&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Taiwang</td>
<td>16&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; to 17&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; century</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Lemwang</td>
<td>DNA&lt;sup&gt;62&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Ngowang Meishah</td>
<td>DNA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Phawang Yonyai</td>
<td>DNA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Ngowang Mongshi</td>
<td>DNA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Phawang Mekhe</td>
<td>DNA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Ngowang Tokok</td>
<td>DNA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Phawang</td>
<td>DNA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Ngowang Luingam(Kanya)</td>
<td>1970s- till date</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Interview with Penjun, the village historian on 24/10/11*

From the genealogy stated above we may ascertain that the names of the chiefs or kings are given according to their character, physical description or based on incident(s) occurred during their reign. For instance, during the reign of the third Ahng, Ngowang, the village was burnt down by the enemies especially from the neighbouring villages. Therefore, his name has been suffixed by Meishah which means fire. The fifth Ahng, Ngowang Mongshi was a very brave and a short tempered person. During his reign, there was absolute dictatorial monarchy. He was very ferocious towards his people. If anyone violated any social norm or breached the traditional customs, they

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<sup>61</sup> The year cannot be ascertained due to dearth of written documents.

<sup>62</sup> DNA (Data Not Available).
were severely punished. Based on his cruelty and ferocity, he was given the name Mongshi. The next Ahng had red eyes and therefore he was called Phawang Mekhe. The seventh Ahng Ngowang was a hunch back and therefore he was given the name Ngowang Tokok. The next Ahng, Ahng Phawang married 6 queens and 22 ‘secondary’ wives or ‘concubines’ and people remembered him for his polygamous nature. The present Ahng is Ngowang popularly known as Luingam. But he is also known as Ngowang Kanya because of his opium or Kani addiction. The Longwa prince, the next heir on line is Phawang Laipa. His name is suffixed by the word Laipa which means reading or studying. This is because among the Ahngs, he was the first to go to school and studied till eight standards.

The above mentioned genealogy also tells that the prefix names such as Ngowang and Phawang have been used consecutively by all the Ahngs from the fourth Ahng till the present Ahng. This helps them to trace their genealogy and preserve their history through oral traditions from generation to generation. The present chief Ahng, Ngowang, popularly known as Luingam is about 53 years old and he belongs to Ponyu morung. He married the princess of Sheangha Chingnyu, a neighbouring Konyak village. Apart from the queen, he also married six women from the commoner clan. Out of the seven, only one wife is alive today. He has twenty (20) children from these wives. However, the eldest son begotten by his queen is the heir to his throne. Theoretically, the chief Ahng still reigns but in reality his son Phawang Laipa governs his kingdom. This is basically due to old age, illiteracy and opium addiction of the senior Ahng. The Ahng has two younger brothers and three sisters who are married to the Ahng family of Mon, Sheangha Chingnyu and Nyahsha.

63 Based on personal interview with the chief Ahng of Longwa on 25th October, 2011.
The chief Ahng himself is the symbolic confluence of tradition and modernity. He wears a t-shirt and half pant along with a pair of sandals. He sports a typical Konyak hair cut with short hair in the front and pig tail at the back tied with a bamboo clip. He adorns himself with three strings of blue beads (Likhoi) below his knee which is the symbol or identification mark of the Ahng. This serves as a mark by which the villagers recognise the Ahng. They are expected not to walk ahead of the Ahng or address him by another name. In the past, such offences were taken very seriously and violaters were severely punished.

The Ahng along with other members of the royal family lives in a palace on which the Indo-Myanmar international boundary runs through. This invisible line places the royal bedroom under the Myanmar territory and the kitchen in India’s jurisdiction. The Ahng’s palace is located at a hillock in the middle of the village overlooking both the Indian and Myanmar side and surrounded by the various morungs. This is strategically located in the middle as compelled by security reasons, especially during the headhunting days. The palace is a huge house made of palm leaves, timber and bamboo mats. This is the biggest house in the village which symbolises the status of the king. The huge wooden pillars are beautifully carved with motifs of animals, especially of tiger, birds and human figures. The human figures depict mostly a Konyak man in full traditional attire for warfare and reflect the culture of the Konyaks.

The Ahng’s palace is constructed by his subjects not only from this village but from all the villages under his suzerainty. Providing free labour or service to the Ahng especially for the construction of his palace and cultivating his field are considered as one of the most important obligations of the subjects which continue even to this day. The palace is divided into different compartments such as the meeting hall, kitchen,
bedrooms and store room. These compartments are partitioned with thin bamboo mats. The first room is the meeting hall which is used as *Ahng Gho* or *Ahng*’s court where all disputes are settled, and meetings including the Village Council meetings are held. The palace not only serves as the meeting hall but also as the treasury of the kingdom. Treasures such as gongs, animal horns, tusks and other valuable gifts received in the form of tributes, taxes and gifts from other villages are kept in the palace. It was told that human skulls were kept in the past. But these were discarded with the advent of Christianity. All these treasures do not belong to the royal family alone but to the whole kingdom. Today these treasures have become a laboratory for the anthropologists, historians, researchers and general tourists.

Few metres from the palace we also find the relic of the village altar. The altar is usually made of stone pillars specifically chosen for religious purposes. The altar was considered to be a sacred and holy place among the Konyaks in the past. All the important rituals and rites were observed on the altar. For instance, the skull of a slained enemy is put before the altar and thoroughly cleaned after which it is hung on the *morung*. Today, the altar remains as a testimony of the past rich history. As one walks northwards, the *Ahng morung* called the Ponyu *morung* stands in the most pathetic and abandoned situation (This has been discussed in Chapter Two).

As stated earlier about the confluence of tradition and modernity, the traditional palace of the *Ahng* is surrounded by symbols of modernity in the village such as the Government Primary School, the tourist guest house, and the National Agricultural Innovation Project (NAIP) tailoring centre. Besides these, they also have access to running water through pipe and also solar light planted in front of the palace. Thus we may say that the present *Ahng* epitomises the merged of tradition and modernity.
3.5. Structure of Traditional Governance among the Konyaks

The traditional governance among the Konyaks has a well organized hierarchical structure. Depending on the types of Ahngs, the Ahng is assisted by smaller Ahngs, Niengba (courtiers), Ngengpa (priest) and Hipa (prophet/seer). They assist him in decision making as well as in implementation of the decisions. This shows that despite the enormous power enjoyed by the Ahng, the councilors also play a very significant role in the governance of the village.

In Longwa village, the chief Ahng is assisted by a deputy Ahng and the seven Ahngs of the seven morungs. The present chief Ahng is Luingam from Ponyu morung and the deputy Ahng, Khaomo from Jesa morung. The seven morung Ahngs are Khaomo from Kano morung, Wangbu from Youngen morung, Tolei from Poren morung, Khaopa from Ponyu morung, Aching from Jesa morung, Luhwang from Chingsa morung and Tongam from Posa morung. All the morung Ahngs are male which shows the patriarchal system that exists among the Konyaks. It is pertinent to mention that with the introduction of the modern political institutions, the members of the Village Council and Village Development Board work together with the Ahng and his councilors.

Figure 3.1

Structure of the Ahng system in Longwa
3.6. Powers and Functions of the Wang/Ahng

The Konyak Ahng enjoys enormous powers and performs different functions as discussed by Metjen (2003:17-28) in his book *The Socio-Cultural and Political Significance of the Monarchical System of the Konyak Naga*. His powers include the domestic i.e. within his village or jurisdiction and foreign relations with other Konyak Naga Wangs and others. The powers and functions of the Wang/Ahng are discussed below:

1. The Ahng plays a very important role in choosing or selecting a site for establishing a new village. This has close connection with the Konyaks history when they first migrated from one place to another in search of a suitable site for settlement. According to oral history of Longwa village, this village was founded under the initiatives of two Ahngs namely Taiwang and Nanwang who migrated to the present habitat from the parent village Pongchau in Arunachal Pradesh.

2. The Ahng also convenes all the meetings of the village and gives final decision regarding the governance of the village.

3. The chief Ahng has the power to appoint Ahngs and smaller Ahngs in the villages under his jurisdiction. Among the Konyaks, there was a practice of bringing an Ahng from other village, if the Ahng lineage in that particular village gets extinct. In the words of Führer-Haimendorf, the Konyaks ‘called’ their Angs from other villages just as the Balkan countries received their dynasties from the other royal houses of Europe (1939: 45).

4. The Ahng settles disputes among his villagers or between villages under his jurisdiction. These disputes may involve cases like theft, quarrel, marriage,
divorce, land disputes or inter-village conflict or war. Initially, the Ahng sends his representatives to settle disputes and establish peace among the conflicting parties. If this process fails, the cases would be brought to the Ahng’s court or Ahng Gho. In this court, the Ahng, the priest and other members of the court would hear and decide the case. If the case cannot be solved by dialogue, the final decision is made by asking the parties involved to bite the soil and take an oath in the presence of the Ahng and the priest. This is called kahtok nahpui ngohnang in Konyak (Metjen 2003:20). It is believed that the guilty person would die within the stipulated time decided on that meeting. This ordeal is even common among the other Naga tribes such as the Angami and Sumi and is considered as the ultimate form of customary settlement of cases.

5. The Ahng receives tributes or poon and taxes from the people of his kingdom (Metjen 2003:20). Paying of tribute was very significant in the past as it acted as a channel of peacemaking (Chingang 2008:73). This still continues in some Konyak villages. Poon is paid as a tribute or gratitude for protection from the attack of the enemies. This was also paid to the Ahng who defeated or conquered other villages in recognition of his suzerainty. Tributes can be in the form of paddy, meat, fish, gong, etc. Besides the tributes, the subjects also render services in constructing his house as well as in his field annually.

Similar to other ‘great’ Ahngs, the Longwa Ahng also rules over several villages. These are Longwa, Longwa Wasa, Nyahnyu, Khanmoi, Longkhu and Longsha. Besides these, there are other several villages both within the Indian side and in Myanmar paying him tributes (Metjen 2003:25). As per the chief Ahng of Longwa, there are around 50 villages that pay tributes to him, some
villages pay tributes once a year while other villages pay him twice a year. Villages paying annual tributes to the Longwa Ahng are Longshun, Longshun Chingrang, Longshun Chingren, Chuichui, Chuinyak, Longi Yanchon, Lonkai, Langmah, Tamkhu, Henphen, Khamlao, Longren, etc. These are Konyak Naga villages in Myanmar. In Nagaland, Wetting village of Mon district pays tributes to Chief Ahng of Longwa once in year. Villages that pay tributes twice a year include Nyahnyu and Longwa Wasa in Nagaland and Lankho and Khanmoi in Myanmar. The tributes include feathers, gongs, machetes, animal teeth, tusks and heads, rice, mithuns, pigs, etc. The villages which pay tributes twice a year to the Ahng also render their services in constructing the house of the Ahng as well as in cultivation of his field.

6. The Ahng declares war and concludes peace. Though the security of his subjects and their property are his top most priorities, he declares wars if situation demands. In this context Metjen (2003:21) writes: 'Even during the head hunting with another kingdom or neighbouring villages, the Wang always tries to make peace, but if this fails then in such a case war will be declared by the Ahng's court'.

7. The king makes alliances with other kingdoms so as to maintain peace and security of his kingdom (Chingang 2008:17). In Longwa, the chief Ahng maintains relationship with the Konyak Ahngs of Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and Myanmar. This is done through marital relationship, kinship and friendship.

8. He also upholds justice and punishes the wrong doers and criminals. In case of stealing or violations of rules and laws, the Ahng has the power to punish the violators. Even capital punishment is given by the Ahng's order. This may be in
form of throwing of a wrongdoer into a river or pushing him/her over a cliff. There are places for this purpose popularly called “suicide deep valley” (Metjen 2003:21).

9. The Konyak Ahng also acts as the refuge for the poor and needy in the community. If anyone seeks his refuge and help, the Ahng always offers help and protection. For instance, when a person accidentally gunned down a person while hunting, he would go directly to Ahng for his safety. Once he gets the refuge from the Ahng, he is secured and would not be killed.

10. The Ahng also receives dignitaries from other villages visiting the village. He takes care of the dignitaries and guests.

Though the Ahng enjoys enormous power, his powers are also restraint by law of the land, his duties and obligations towards the people. He has duties such as protection and security of the villagers from the attack of enemies, good governance in the kingdom, providing food in case of crop failure or natural calamities, helping the poor and needy. All these duties are sanctioned by the religious and customary laws, and only on performing his duties well, his kingdom stands secured. On the other hand, the villagers have different duties and obligations toward the Ahng. These are:

1. Villagers are expected to render free labour or services in building his house and in cultivating his field;

2. They are expected to bring the first basket of crops to him after the harvest;

3. When an animal is killed in hunting, the head should be brought to the Ahng; and

4. Each household must keep a separate plate and cup for the Ahng in case he visits their house.
3.7. Relevance of the Konyak Ahng

From the above mentioned powers and functions of the Ahng, we may argue that though the Ahng still retains his status as the chief Ahng, his powers and functions have somehow been diminished. This is due to the changing nature of the society amidst modernization and Christianity. By the early 20\textsuperscript{th} century, Nagas have been witnessing a lot of change in all aspects of life. With the advent of the British in the Naga Hills, the traditional institutions have been altered and replaced by the modern political institutions. Along with this, Christianity and western education have made a huge impact on the Nagas. Instead of the Ahng, who in most cases is illiterate, now the village is governed by the new elite class through the Village Council, Village Development Board and other committees established under the communitisation process. The Government of Nagaland, fully aware of the status of the Ahngs and village chiefs had recognized them as the ex-officio members of the Village Council and incorporated them into the modern system of governance (Angami 2008:2).

At present, in Longwa village, the chief Ahng does not play a very active role in the governance of the village, though he is an ex-officio member of the Village Council. All the important governing functions are performed by the members of the Village Council, Village Development Board and several other committees under the communitisation process. But when it comes to customary law and practices, the Ahng has the final authority. He is the custodian of customary laws and practices. In fact, there is clear demarcation of duties between the traditional and modern system of governance.

\footnote{The village chiefs and elders are given the position of the ex-officio members of the Village Council by the Nagaland Village, Area and Regional Councils Act 1970. This Act was amended in 1973 and finally repealed in 1978 and replaced with a new legislation called Nagaland Village and Area Council Act 1978. Again, the Area Council has been eliminated in 1990 by amending the 1978 Act.}
governance. In the past, it was reported that there were frictions due to conflict of interests and dilemma between status quo and legitimacy. But in the recent years, the Ahng has accepted to accommodate the new pattern of government.

During the field work, the respondents were asked about their opinion on the continuity of the Ahng in the modern era which majority of them responded affirmatively. A respondent replied: 'The Ahng system must continue because it is hereditary and is the custodian of customary laws.' Another respondent reaffirmed this by saying 'The Ahng is the land owner and therefore he must protect the territory. Moreover, he binds the community together. He unites the people living under different modern states.' In the opinion of an educated respondent, the Ahng should continue to provide good leadership and should be educated since most of the Ahngs are illiterate. When a section of the people feels the need to preserve and continue the Ahng system, there are still some people who feel that there is diminishing of loyalty and allegiance to the Ahng among the common people. Several factors such as western education, Christianity, modern system of governance with welfare schemes and programmes, abandonment of headhunting raids resulting in better security of the villagers, etc., are responsible for the erosion of allegiance among the people. However, some denied this by saying that though the fear of the Ahng has reduced but people still respect him like before which would continue till his death or coronation of his son.

3.8. Modern Democratic Institutions

Along with the traditional system of Ahng, we found the existence and active role played by various modern institutions such as the Goanbura, Dobashi and the Village Council in Longwa village. Before discussing these institutions and their roles in the
governance of this village, it is pertinent to study the historical background of these institutions.

Prior to the advent of the British administration in the Naga Hills, the Naga traditional villages were self-dependent and self-sufficient for centuries. Every Naga village enjoyed complete autonomy and was a true republic in itself. Every village had an independent village chief and his counselors to govern the village according to the tribal customary laws. However, during the mid 19th century, this was disrupted with the occupation of the Naga Hills by the British East India Company (Nshoga 2009:252). The first Anglo-Naga contact took place on 23rd January, 1832 when Captain Jenkins and Pemberton along with a party of 700 soldiers and 800 porters met the Angamis on their march from Manipur to Assam. The Angamis resisted them and the first Anglo-Naga clash took place in this encounter. Following this encounter, there was a series of surveys and expeditions in the Naga Hills amidst the constant raids on the plains of Assam by the Naga raiders.

The British in their effort to maintain peace and security in their settled districts shifted its policies time and again towards the Nagas. The British policy towards the Nagas has been classified into three phases by Murkot (1988:6-7) as:

1. Period of Military Expeditions (1832-1850)
2. Period of Non-Interference (1851-1865)
3. Period of Administrative Control (1866-1947)

However, we may argue that British policies towards the Nagas cannot be simply divided into phases as given by Murkot and other scholars since these policies worked simultaneously with one another. We may also argue that the policy of non-
interference is partially true because by then the life patterns of the Nagas had been changed irreversibly as a result of the contact with the British as opined by Borgohain (2011:65).

The British tactfully passed a series of Acts and Regulations concerning the Nagas. One of the earliest Regulations was the Inner Line Regulation of 1873. This was passed so as to prevent the Naga raids on the British subjects and also to protect the Nagas from exploitation of the plain people. According to this regulation, outsiders (non-Nagas) were restricted to enter the inner line areas without the permission of the Deputy Commissioner. The next prominent Act was the Assam Scheduled Districts Act of 1874, which transferred the Naga Hills District from the jurisdiction of Lieutenant Governor of Bengal to the Chief Commissioner of Assam. In 1884, the Assam Frontier Tract Regulation was amended and extended to the Naga Hills District. This regulation paved the way for simple administration of the Naga Hills under the local chiefs and headmen. The Government of India Act, 1919 categorized the Naga Hills District as ‘Backward Tracts’ and was administered by the Governor of Assam through the Deputy Commissioner, his assistants and other local functionaries such as Goanburas and Dobashis. By the Government of India Act, 1935, the Naga Hills District was classified as ‘Excluded Areas’ and was directly placed under the charge of the Governor of Assam through the Deputy Commissioner of Kohima. This constitutional arrangement continued till the 26th January, 1950 (Sema 1992:26).

Though these Acts and Regulations were passed to regulate and govern the Naga Hills, at large the Nagas were left to administer themselves through their local chiefs and elders who were accommodated by the British through the office of Goanbura and Dobashi. The British recognized the traditional leaders and elders as ‘Chiefs and
Gaonburas’ who assisted and helped them in the administration of the Nagas. In this way the British utilized the two layers of native administrative agencies, namely the village chiefs/elders and Dobashi, which continued as the basic institutions of colonial administration. In fact, the British did not alter the administration altogether. Rather, the Nagas were mostly left to administer their villages according to respective tribal customs and traditions with only loose control by the government as mentioned by Piketo (Sema 1992:27).

3.8.1. The Gaonbura Institution

The British established the institution of Gaonbura in the Naga Hills in the year 1882 for the sake of administrative expediency. The term ‘Gaonbura’ is derived from Assamese words ‘Gaon’ meaning village and ‘Bura’ meaning elders. Thus literally it means village elders. The British, being fully aware of the predominant position occupied by the village chiefs or elders in tribal communities, tried to make use of these native elites for political and administrative conveniences. The village elders and chiefs played a very important role as the leaders of the local people as well as the agents of the British government. The main functions of the Gaonburas were to collect the annual house tax from their respective villages for the British government, settlement of civil and criminal cases according to their respective tribal customs and established usages, and maintenance of law and order in their respective village jurisdiction (Sema 1992:32).

The Gaonburas were appointed by the British government, and their powers and functions were determined by the government. They acted as the link between the people and the government. The Gaonburas did not take part in the formulation of
policy; rather they carried out the directions of the government. Reciprocating their services to the government, they were allowed to retain the old position of village elders and were given red blankets.

In Longwa, the Gaonbura (GB) institution was introduced in the year 1955 which was much later in comparison to other Naga villages in the erstwhile Naga Hills District. The first five Gaonburas of the village were Noknyei (Head GB), Ching-o, Penjang, Khamching and Hongchah. Initially there were only five GBs but with the increase in population and the number of morungs, the number of GBs increased to seven.

At present, there are seven GBs representing the seven morungs in the village. They are as follows:

1. Yomao Wangnao from Ponyu morung (Head GB)
2. Khongnak (Posa morung)
3. Ngampang (Chingsha morung)
4. Hongrem (Jesa morung)
5. Shenwang (Poren morung)
6. Thonkai (Youngan morung)
7. Chingkap (Kano morung)

The main functions of the GBs include the collection of house tax for the government, settlement of disputes in the village, to pass on the information from the government to the people, etc. In Longwa village, each household pays annual house tax of Rs.100 to the government and also to the National Socialist Council of Nagaland-

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65 Interview conducted with Penjun Shakam, the village historian on 23rd October, 2011.
Khaplang (NSCN-K). The Goanburas also take part in the Ahng Gho\textsuperscript{66} or the village council court where all disputes are heard and settled. The GBs along with the chief Ahng, deputy Ahng, morung Ahngs and members of Village Council settle cases based on customary laws and norms. These cases may range from theft, quarrel, land disputes, rape, divorce, homicide, etc. However, a person can appeal the case to the higher court i.e. the Dobashi court, if he/she is not satisfied with the verdict of the village court.

3.8.2. The Dobashi

The Dobashi institution was introduced in the Naga Hills by the British in the early 1840s as a part of an effort to create good relations with the Naga tribes. However, this was discontinued in the 1850s which was later reintroduced and made permanent in 1880s. This institution served as an integral part of the British administration and continues even today. The Dobashis were appointed and paid by the government. They acted as a channel of communication between the native population and the colonial masters.

The term ‘Dobashi’ is derived from ‘Dobhasia’ which means two languages. Literally it means a man of two languages, especially in local Naga dialect and broken Assamese (Sema 1992:32) which later became Nagamese. This post is held by anyone who is well converse in two languages mostly Assamese and a local language, and thus he plays the role of an interpreter.

The institution of Dobashi served as the instrument of conciliation among the Nagas as well as a link between the Nagas and the British. They were selected by the District Commissioner representing various principal villages and tribes. Having been

\textsuperscript{66} Ahng Gho refers to the king’s court among the Konyaks.
accredited by the government, they were respected and held in high esteem by the villagers. The *Dobashis* played the role of spokesmen and interpreters. They were given the task of interpreting local language into Assamese, through which the British communicated with the Nagas. Being well versed in customary laws and traditions, they also acted as the native or local judges by settling petty cases. In certain occasions, they also advised the British officers in settlement of cases according to their tribal customs and usages. They escorted the tours of the British officers and supplied rations as well as ensured their security. Besides these, they also intervened and pacified cases involving inter-Naga tribal conflicts. Initially they formed the ad-hoc courts, but with the passing of time, the *Dobashi* courts evolved to settle cases according to the customary laws of the Nagas. Thus in this way, the *Dobashis* played a very significant role in the British administration of the Naga Hills which is still retained today amidst the establishment of modern courts.

Keeping in mind the diversity of Naga tribes and their customary laws, every tribe has its own tribal court today. These tribal courts are recognised by the Article 371(A) of the Indian Constitution which guarantees the provisions for safeguarding the social and religious practices, customary justice and landed property of the Nagas. Article 371A (1) states that notwithstanding anything in this Constitution, no Act of Parliament in respect of –

1. Religious or social practices of the Nagas;
2. Naga customary law and procedure;
3. Administration of civil and criminal justice involving decisions according to Naga customary law; and
4. Ownership and transfer of land and its resources, shall apply to the state of Nagaland unless the Legislative Assembly of Nagaland by a resolution so decides.

Till today, no amendment of this Act has been promulgated, so it may be taken as being accepted by all sections of the Naga society. Thus it is recognised as legal and binding (Longkumer 2009:17).

**Box 3.1**

**Structure of Judiciary in Nagaland**

- Village Council Court
  - Tribal Customary Court
    - EAC/SDO(C)/ ADC Court
      - Deputy Commissioner or Representatives of DC Court
        - High Court

*Source: Nagaland State Human Development Report 2004, p.44*
The first Dobashi in Longwa was Manphong. He was appointed during the 1960s and was posted at the district headquarters Mon. However, it is not possible to ascertain the date and year of his appointment and tenure due to lack of written documents. So far this village had four Dobashis. The second Dobashi was Konwang who was also stationed at Mon. The third Dobashi, Tawang was posted at Phonlong. The present Dobashi, Khongyam is posted at Phomching, the sub-division headquarters. All these Dobashis are well versed in Assamese and Nagamese. Their main functions include the interpretation of customary laws and settlement of disputes and cases. Whenever cases are brought before the Dobashi court, the Dobashis acted as judges and settled the case according to their customary laws. In fact, they are reservoirs of age-old wisdom and judgement. This court usually deals with such cases that come in the form of appeals. Cases may include land disputes between individuals or villages, adultery, rape, homicide, divorce, etc. These are settled either by imposition of fines, banishment or ordeal of oaths. In return of their services, they received salary from the government. They also received the red cloak or jackets from the government.

From the above discussion, we may conclude that the institutions of Gaonbura and Dobashi were recognised, legitimised and institutionalised by the British in the Naga Hills for the sake of administrative expediency. These institutions still play a very dominant role in the Naga society, particularly in villages. They act as politico-juridical institutions in the Naga villages. They are incorporated into the modern democratic polity through the Village Council. They have been recognised as the ex-officio members of the Village Council by the Nagaland Village, Area and Regional Councils Act, 1970 (Angami 2008:2).
3.8.3. The Village Council

Based on the traditional village administrative set up, the Village Council in Nagaland was recognised by the State Government and promulgated through the Nagaland Village, Area and Regional Councils Act, 1970. This Act was amended in 1973 and finally repealed in 1978 and replaced with a new legislation called Nagaland Village and Area Council Act, 1978. Again the Area Council was eliminated in 1990 by amending the 1978 Act. At the initial stage, this Act was applied in Kohima and Mokokchung districts and the Naga Hills Tuensang Area (NHTA). In 1973, there was division of these three districts into seven districts. Again in 2003, four more districts were added. At present this Act is applicable to all the eleven districts of Nagaland (Longkumer 2009:177).

Every recognised village shall have a Village Council. Here a village means and includes an area recognised as a village as such by the Government of Nagaland. An area in order to be a village under the Act shall fulfil the following conditions (Angami 2008:3-8):

1. The land in the area belongs to the population of that area or given to them by the Government of Nagaland, if the land in question is a Government land or is given to them by lawful of the land; and

2. The Village is established according to the usage and customary practice of the population of that area.

A Village Council shall consists of members chosen by villagers in accordance with the prevailing customary practices and usages, the same being approved by the

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State government, provided that the hereditary village chiefs, *gaonburas* and *Angs* shall be ex-officio members of such Council and shall have voting rights. Among these members, there will be a Chairman and a Secretary, who would be selected by the members of the Village Council. All the members must be bona fide citizens of India and they must be above 25 years of age. The tenure of the Village Council is 5 years unless otherwise dissolved by the State Government. This is extendable to one year by the State Government by notification in the gazette. In case of any vacancy, another member may be appointed provided he remains in the office for the remaining period till the dissolution of the Village Council on completion of its tenure.

The Constitution of the Nagaland Village, Area and Regional-Council Act states that it is mandatory for every recognised Naga Village to have a Village Council. This is a part of decentralisation process whereby the village administration is based on the traditional system of the village but will be accountable to the civil administration. This makes them responsible as well as accountable to the Government. This Act also provides that the traditional institutions would continue to function as Village Council according to respective tribal customs and usages. The Village Council enjoys enormous power at the village level as enumerated as follows (Angami 2008: 6):

1. to formulate village developmental schemes, to supervise proper maintenance of water supply, roads, forest, sanitation, education and other welfare activities;

2. to carry out developmental works on its own initiative or on the request of the Government; and also to help the Governmental agencies in carrying out the developmental works in the village;
3. to apply for and receive grant-in-aid, donations, subsidies and also to borrow money from the Government, banks or financial institutions for the development of the village;

4. to realise registration fees for litigation within its jurisdiction;

5. to constitute the Village Development Board;

6. to take all preventive measures to combat epidemic or infectious diseases;

7. the Village Council shall administer justice within the village jurisdiction in accordance with the customary laws and usages as accepted by the canons of justice established in Nagaland; and

8. in case of disputes between villages falling in different areas or districts, two or more Village Councils may settle the dispute in a joint session or refer it to the appropriate authority.

Besides these, the Village Council shall be auxiliary to the administration and shall have full powers to deal with internal administration of the Village. This includes:

1. maintenance of law and order in the village;

2. to arrest serious offenders and handling them to the nearest Administrative Officer or Police Station;

3. to report the occurrence of unnatural deaths, epidemics, presence of strangers, vagabonds or suspects in the village to the nearest Administrative Officer and Police station;

4. to enforce orders from the competent authority on the village; and no transfer of immovable property shall be effected without the consent of the VC.
Thus these are the powers and duties of the Village Council. The Village Council is under the supervision and control of the Deputy Commissioner/Additional Deputy Commissioner or Sub-Divisional Officer (Civil) in-charge of the Sub-Division, Extra Assistant Commissioner or Circle Officer within his/her jurisdiction.

3.8.4. Longwa Village Council

Along with the institution of the Ahng, there exists a modern system of local governance through the Village Council in Longwa village. The Village Council was first established in Longwa village in the early 1980s. Prior to this, the Ahng Gho (king’s court) was the sole platform where all the important discussions were held and decisions taken. However, at present, the Village Council has emerged as an agent of government and therefore become the powerhouse in the village. The list of the Village Council Chairmen in Longwa and their tenure is given below:

Table 3.2
List of Longwa Village Council Chairman

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SL.No</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Morung/Po</th>
<th>Tenure</th>
<th>Mode of Appointment/Election</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Mr. Wangyei</td>
<td>Ponyu Po</td>
<td>1983-2001</td>
<td>Nominated by the villagers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Mr. Khaopa</td>
<td>Ponyu Po</td>
<td>2001-2010</td>
<td>Nominated by villagers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Mr. Longkhum</td>
<td>Ponyu Po</td>
<td>2010-till date</td>
<td>Nominated by villagers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Work Data
The first Village Council chairman in Longwa was Wangyei who retained this post chairman for 18 years, i.e. from 1983-2001. In 2001, Khaopa was nominated as the Village Council chairman and he served till 2010. The present chairman of Longwa Village Council is Longkhum. Though the tenure for Village Council is five years as per the government rules, the first two Chairmen served for more than ten years. It is also observed that all three chairmen are from Ponyu po which is the morung of the chief Ahng. Moreover, the second chairman, Khaopa, is the younger brother of the chief Ahng. This shows that even in the modern political institutions such as the Village Council, primordial values such as clan ties and kinship play important role in the village. In fact, the Village Council along with the Ahng and his council form the coterie or elite class whereby politics is being played in the village.

The Longwa Village Council comprises of the chairman, secretary, finance secretary, tax collector and other members. They are nominated by the villagers from among persons of credibility representing the different morungs. The Village Council Members (VCM) in turn nominate the chairman from among themselves. At present, the total number of Village Council Members (VCM) is 49. However, there is no female representative, making the village governance a male domain wherein women have no say. The Village Council holds its general meeting twice in a year. But as and when required, they hold meetings called by the chairman. In Longwa village, they do not have panchayat hall or village council hall for meetings. Rather they still meet at the Ahng’s court. This shows the mutual existence of both the traditional and modern system. Some of the important functions of the Longwa Village Council include:

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68 Interview with Mr. Longkum, the Village Council Chairman of Longwa on Oct. 26, 2011.
1. formulation of village developmental schemes and implementation of such developmental works;
2. administration of justice within the village jurisdiction in accordance with the customary laws and usages;
3. maintenance of law and order in the village;
4. constitution of the Village Development Board (VDB);
5. enforcement of governmental policies and orders in the village; and
6. The village council members also meet the security forces of both India and Myanmar to foster better relationship.

During the field work, most of the respondents expressed their satisfaction with the functioning of the village council. However, they also expressed their desire and wish for improvement. It was found that in the recent years, the Village Council along with the Village Development Board (VDB) could bring many changes in the village though there are still many things left to be done.

3.8.5. Village Development Board

The Village Development Board (VDB) is another important institution in rural Nagaland. It is a statutory body functioning under the Village Council. The Village Development Board is the brainchild of the former Chief Secretary of Nagaland, Mr. A.M.Gokhale, based on a theory that had been conceptualised by his father, Late Madhav Gokhale in Phek district (Longkumer 2009:204). This decentralised system was first introduced in Ketsapomi village in Phek district in 1976. On seeing the success of this system at Ketsapomi VDB, there was a mass campaign for VDB in the other parts of the state. Finally, this was institutionalised through the Village Development
Board Rules and Regulations, passed by the Nagaland State Assembly in 1980. However, this was revised in 1989. These rules are called Village Development Model Rules 1989 (Revised) and these shall be extended to the whole of Nagaland (Angami 2008:23).

3.8.5.1. Composition of Village Development Board (VDB)

All the permanent residents of the village constitute the general body of the VDB. Besides the general body, there shall be a Management Committee (MC) of the VDB elected by the Village Council for a period of three (3) years unless dissolved by the concerned Village Council. The minimum numbers of MC shall not be less than 5 and shall not exceed 25 members. The VDB may include both the members and non-members of the Village Council. It must have women members not less than ¼ of the total number of members of Management Committee of the VDB. The Deputy Commissioner/Additional Deputy Commissioner shall be the ex-officio chairman of the VDB in their respective districts and sub-divisions (Angami 2008:25). The Management Committee shall select a secretary among themselves who shall act as the main functionary of the VDB.

Functions

The main function of the VDB is to assist the Village Council in formulating and implementation of developmental schemes and programmes in the village.

Funds

The VDB operates its funds under Grant-In-Aid (GIA), Matching Cash Grant, Jawahar Rozgar Yojana and other programmes provided by the government. The yearly
allocation, when received by the Village Council chairman, is announced in a general public meeting of all the citizens of the village. The infrastructure needs of the village are shortlisted. At least one scheme must be compulsorily an income generating scheme. It is mandatory for all VBDs to hold monthly public meetings for review and monitoring of ongoing projects. The minutes of such meetings are submitted to District/Deputy Commissioner (DC) or to Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) regularly who is the Chairman of VDB in the district.

Every VDB has a bank account in which the DC and the VDB Secretary are the joint signatories. Any withdrawal is to be authorised by the Village Council in the form of resolution signed by all the VCMs and VDB members. Besides this, each VDB is required to have a Fixed Deposit (FD) account under the Matching Cash Grant scheme. The government matches all deposits in the FD with a like amount credited into the same account, up to a limit of rupees two lakhs. This account functions as an effective contingency fund in times of emergency or shortfall.

In Longwa village, the Village Development Board was introduced in 1981 with Mr. Konngam (the former MLA) as the first secretary. The VDB functions along the Village Council and looks after the developmental activities of the village. The Management Committee of Village Development Board of Longwa comprises of 13 members including the chairman, secretary and other 11 members including three women representatives. These members are selected by the Village Council. The present secretary is Mr. Yanlang Shakkam. Based on the government guidelines, there is gender budgeting in Longwa VDB funds which allocate 25% for women, 20% for youth and 55% for the general welfare of the village. As per the allotment of funds,
various groups use the money for the needs of its members. The main functions of the VDB include:

1. Development of the village which covers housing, construction of road and culverts, construction of *pucca* latrine, providing safe drinking water, etc;

2. Implementation of various governmental schemes such as *Indira Awaas Yojna*, *Mahatma Gandhi* National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, Backward Development Areas Fund, etc; and

3. Providing micro finance to the villagers and organising Self Help Groups (SHGs).

From the interview conducted with the VDB secretary, Mr. Yanlang Shakkam, it is learnt that the VDB has targeted the completion of Corrugated Galvanised Iron (CGI) roofing in the village within three years. It is important to mention that around 95% of the house in this village is made of palm leaves with bamboo walls. Since the last few years, the villagers are receiving CGI sheets under the VDB scheme and *Indira Awaas Yojna* (IAY). With this scheme, even the poor villagers could construct CGI roof house. In order to procure the CGI sheets under this scheme, the villagers have to complete the ground work for construction except the roofing. Based on the request of the villagers, the VDB members would inspect the house and accordingly grant the CGI for that household. Thus VDB is helping in development of housing in rural areas.

Along with housing, the VDB also looks into the sanitation of the village. It has helped in the construction of a good number of *pucca* latrines in this village. Yet many villagers are still left to enjoy these benefits. Besides these schemes, the VDB has plans to regularise water supply, and electricity as well as proper maintenance of roads. While
inquiring on the issue of mismanagement of fund and corruption at the village level, the members expressed their opinion that whatever grant they received from the government was being put to maximise use. However, they also complained of corruption and siphoning of developmental funds at the higher level. This is being confirmed by majority of the respondents who expressed that the present VDB is performing well unlike the former ones who siphoned off some amount of funds for themselves.

Thus we may conclude that Village Development Board in this village is contributing towards the development of the village in areas like housing, sanitation, water, construction of roads, etc. The works of VDB are complemented and strengthened by the different committees which are set up under the communitisation scheme.

3.8.6. Communitisation Process

Communitization process was introduced in Nagaland in the year 2001. This community-based scheme is the brainchild of the then Chief Secretary of Nagaland, Shri R.S. Pandey. This was enacted in 2002 as the Nagaland Communitisation of Public Services and Institutions Act, 2002 (Angami 2008:31). This Act provides a legal framework for the empowerment of the community, and delegation of the powers and functions of the State Government to the local authorities by way of participation of the community in matters relating to management of public utilities and services such as education, water supply, roads, forests, power, sanitation, health and other welfare and developmental schemes. Communitisation is a unique and strong partnership between

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the government of Nagaland and the community in delivering the best service for the
people.

The concept of communitization is based on the triple “T” approach- Trust, Train and Transfer. Trust the user community, train them to discharge their newfound responsibilities and transfer the government powers and resources in respect of management (Pandey 2010:16). This unique scheme came as a measure to revitalise the service delivery system in the state and is designed to capitalise the nature of Naga society with its rich social capital. This brings home the message that people are the ultimate power holder, decision maker as well as the implementer of the same in democracy. Communitisation, therefore, involves the transfer of government assets to the community, empowerment of community through delegation of governmental powers of management and supervision of day-to-day functioning of employees to village committees. It also demands ensuring accountability of government employees posted at the service delivery level to local communities and control of government assets by village committees including the responsibility for maintenance, amelioration and augmentation of assets. The ultimate aim of this scheme is to improve the service delivery system in the state. The salient features of the Act are as follows (Angami 2008:33-38):

1. The State Government may constitute Boards or Committees with the representatives of the user community in a village or town wards. Powers and management functions of government are to be delegated to the committees or boards with respect to the management and operation of any public utilities or services such as education, health, power, water supply, sanitation, forests, roads and other welfare and development schemes;
2. Assets of the government are to be transferred to the committee;

3. A fund is to be created, where salaries along with other Government grants and community contributions are to be credited for running and developing the utilities; and

4. The State Government may authorise a government officer to inspect the administration of any committees, and if found incompetent in its function, the Government has the power to dissolve such committee and order fresh constitution of another committee.

Basically, there are three committees working under this scheme. These are Village Education Committee (VEC), Village Electricity Management Board (VEMB) and Village Health Committee (VHC) to look after education, electricity and health respectively in the villages.

In Longwa village, Communitisation scheme was introduced in 2007. Consequently all the three committees have been established. However, the performances of these committees vary. The Village Education Committee (VEC) comprises of 13 members including a chairman, a secretary who is the head teacher of the Government Primary School (GPS), one women representative, parents/guardian representatives and others. They are appointed by the Village Council for a period of three years. The list of VEC members in Longwa village is given in Table.3.3.
Table 3.3

Longwa Village Education Committee Members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Designation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Mr. Aching</td>
<td>Chairman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Mr. Leinyei</td>
<td>Secretary/Teacher in-charge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Mrs. Ngaptan</td>
<td>Women representative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Mr. Nahlak</td>
<td>Students’ Union President</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Mr. Honngo</td>
<td>Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Mr. Hongjah</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Mr. Wangnyei</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Mr. Jamjai</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Mr. Khampei</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Mr. Noklem</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Mr. Yanlang</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Mr. Langtoh</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Work Data

This committee looks after the Government Primary School and Government Middle School in the village. They also check the regularity of the teachers and other staff; supervise the development of infrastructural facilities in the school, management of the school property, disbursement of teachers’ salary, implementation of various schemes such as Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Mid-Day Meal Programme, etc. The committee receives grants from the government and maintains proper accounts of income and expenditure. They have a separate bank account where all the grants and
salaries are maintained. Funds for key purposes such as purchase of text books, furniture, construction and repair of buildings, etc., are deposited by the government in VEC account. During the field work visit to the school premises, it is noticed that both the schools have received teaching aids, free text books, note books, pencils, instrument box, school uniforms, etc. The GMS has received 2 sets of computers. However, these are lying unused as there is no computer operator.

However, this committee has made good progress especially in increasing the enrolment of students, controlling the dropout rate and enhanced retention among the students. Earlier, most parents did not encourage their children to attend school and instead made them to look after their younger siblings and work in the field. But with free and compulsory education and Mid-Day Meal scheme, the enrolment and attendance of the students have improved. The committee also managed to check the irregularity of the teachers and staff in the school. Earlier most of the teachers come just to collect their salaries. But now with “No Pay, No Work” policy, the teachers are made to be compulsory stationed and attend their work regularly. However, these schools still face inadequate number of trained teachers. In order to ensure smooth functioning of the school, the VEC has appointed a private Hindi teacher for Rs. 3000 per month. This is a regular feature in most of the government primary schools in Nagaland despite having claimed to have implemented the Right to Education in toto.

The Village Electricity Management Board (VEMB) in Longwa manages electricity in the village as per the Nagaland Communitisation of Public Institutions and Services Act, 2002. The village has been electrified under the Rajiv Gandhi Grameen Vidyutikaran Yojana and is managed by the VEMB. The VEMB has a chairman, a
secretary and other members nominated by the Village Council for three years. Some of the important functions are:

1. To monitor the availability of power supply in the village and other equipments such as transformer, electric poles, conductors, etc;

2. To assist the clearing of trees and objects touching the electrical wires within the village jurisdiction so as to prevent accidents and interruption of power supply;

3. To check theft of electricity and other electrical equipments in the village;

4. To report the absence, misconduct or negligence of field staff;

5. To collect electric bills from each household in the village and pay the bills to the electric department; and

6. To maintain consumer register containing the monthly details of every individual household. This includes the monthly electric bill, amount paid or dues if any.

Besides these, one member of the VEMB goes to district headquarters and pays the bills every month. Those failing to pay are not allowed to use electricity and hence their power line is disconnected. Though there is gradual progress in the implementation of the Act, many expressed their dissatisfaction since many households do not have electricity till date. Moreover, power supply is irregular.

Comparing to VEC and VEMB, the work of the Village Health Committee (VHC) in Longwa is not progressive. The VHC consists of a chairman and other members such as seniormost employees of the Health Centre, Chief Medical Officer (CMO) of the district. The present chairman of the VHC is Mr.Yuchang. The most important function of the VHC is to assess the overall health status of the village and to
procure the annual requirement of medicines for the health centre. However, during the field work, this committee was found not functioning properly. The village has one health centre but the nurse and doctor do not attend their duties regularly. This has caused health insecurity among the villagers. During the course of the research, the researcher also witnessed the demise of a pregnant woman due to medical negligence. Thus there are cases of maternal and infant deaths due to lack of health care facilities.

Thus, in conclusion, we may say that the communitisation process has made some progress in delivering good services in Longwa village especially in education and electricity. But as for health care service, there is still much left to be done. If this innovative programme is implemented effectively, this would bring about overall development of the villagers since education, electricity and health constitute integral parts of basic daily lives of the people.

Apart from these grassroot institutions, this village also comes under the Block Development Officer and the Sub-Division Officer of Phomching sub-division. Further, it also falls under the jurisdiction of the Deputy Commissioner of Mon who is the administrative head of the district. Moreover, they have a representative in the Nagaland Legislative Assembly. The present MLA of this Phomching constituency is Mr. Paihwang Konyak, who is the Parliamentary Secretary of Transport to the Government of Nagaland.

3.9. National Security or Borderlanders' Insecurity?
Along with the above mentioned actors of governance, the security forces employed by the Indian and Myanmar government also play a big role in the governance of this border village and Indo-Myanmar borderland in general. Unlike the highly fenced and
policed Indo-Pak or Indo-Bangladesh boundary, the Indo-Myanmar boundary along the state of Nagaland remains largely porous though the Assam Rifles are stationed along this border. There is free movement of local populace without visa or passport up to 40 km or 25 miles in the jurisdiction of Myanmar and vice-versa. In order to secure its border along the Indo-Myanmar border, the Government of India has employed the Assam Rifles (AR) and the Special Intelligence Bureau (SIB) at Longwa. The 6th AR ‘C’ company has shifted to the present location from Phomching in 1987. Prior to this, there was the Rajput Rifles manning the border. On the other hand, the Myanmarese Army is based at Yenjong in Myanmar across the border. The Indo-Myanmar border is man and patrol by the AR and Myanmarese Army at regular intervals. They also conduct combined survey, meetings and discussions.70 Besides securing the Indian territory, the Assam Rifles helps the villagers by providing medicines, commodities in the canteen, water, logistic support and in times of emergency situations like accident or fire in the village. They also conduct health camps and awareness programmes in the village. Like any remote villages of Nagaland, the health security of the village is almost absent. In such a situation, the AR comes to the rescue of these poor villagers.

It is also found that due to the presence of the AR, the forceful killing of domestic animals such as pigs and cows by the Myanmarese Army has stopped. The general perception about the security under the Assam Rifles is good but some respondents expressed their desire for the AR to be shifted to another location not very close to the village. Moreover, the present location of the boundary pillar number 155 within the premise of AR creates misunderstanding and problems between the AR personnel and the Myanmarese Army. It is also learnt that the Indian government is on

70 Based on the interaction with the C.O of the AR on 20th October, 2011.
the move to replace the AR with the Border Security Force (BSF) along this international boundary (PTI, Feb 15, 2011). This may be a plan to securitise its border with Myanmar like the Indo-Pakistan, Indo-Bangladesh and Indo-China border. If the government follows this policy of stationing the BSF along the Indo-Myanmar border, many poor villagers and ethnic groups will be detached from their aged-old ties and relationships.

Along with the AR, the Special Intelligence Bureau (SIB) personnel are stationed in this border village since 2007. Prior to this, they were stationed at the Phomching sub-division. At present, there are four SIB personnel stationed at the ex-chairman's residence near the chief Ahng's palace. The main functions of the SIB include the security of the border area and the villagers, monitoring of cross border movement, verification of the tourists' visas and papers. During the field work, they were found having proper coordination and liaison with the AR as well the villagers.

The Longwa village also has the Village Guards (VG). The Village Guards are the indigenous Naga village security force which was established in 1957 in Tuensang Area to check the growth of insurgency in the frontier region of the state (Manual for Village Guards Organisation, 2007:1-14). At present it is being operationalised in border districts of Mon, Tuensang, Kiphire, Longleng and Phek in Nagaland. The Village Guards institution has its strong-base in the traditional Naga village settings where young men watched and protected their villages through the institution of morung. In Nagaland, the VG is organised into the following hierarchy. It is headed by the Commissioner of Nagaland who is the Commandant General of Village Guards. At the district level, there are the following controlling authorities such as Commandant,

71 Based on the interaction with the SIB personnel on 20th October, 2011.
Ex-officio Commandants, Dy. Commandant, Assistant Commandant, JCOs and NCOs, etc. The main functions of the VGs in Nagaland include security and protection of their villages, routine duties like road opening programmes, dissemination of information, acting as guides, interpreters, escorts, performing election duties, Independence Day and Republic Day, celebrations, festivals etc.

Being a border village in Mon district, Longwa also has its VGs as mentioned by Bertil Lintner in his book *Land of Jade: A Journey from North East India through Northern Burma to China* (2011:90). The Village Guard organisation was established in this village in the year 1968. At present, there are 7 Village Guards representing the different *morungs* of the village. They are appointed by the government on the approval given by the Village Council and Longwa Students’ Union. The camp of the VGs is located near the chief *Ahng*’s residence. They have one day and two nights’ duty per week based on rotation. Mr. Ngomcha narrates the experience of being a VG. He is about 35 years old from the Chingsa *morung*. According to him, the Village Guards receive a set of *khaki* uniform, bag and rifles. Though the VGs perform their roles to the best capacity, they are paid only 500 rupees a month despite the fact that the government of Nagaland has enhanced it to 1500 rupees. He also laments about the inadequate salary, pension scheme, want of service book and other related problems faced by the VGs. From the above discussion, we may surmise that the VGs in this village as well as in other border villages in Nagaland play a very significant role in guarding and protecting the border villages and hence they are rightly referred to as

72 Based on the interview with Ngomcha on 23rd October, 2011 at the residence of Nahlak, the President of Longwa Students’ Union.
‘guardian of the frontier villages’. However, they are not adequately paid and remunerated.

The present security arrangement on both sides of the border continues with the routine inspection and patrolling along the Indo-Myanmar border in this village. Though both India and Myanmar deploy their security forces to hold the sacrosanct of the territorial border, the presence of the Indian state is more dominant as compared to Myanmar’s. Yet despite the political and legal international boundary dividing these borderlanders, kinship and tribal networks continue. The pertinent question here is whether these security arrangements are able to give security to the borderlanders. The security paradigm adopted here in this border is largely based on state-centric approach neglecting human security. Despite the presence of security forces of both India and Myanmar, these villagers continue to pay taxes to insurgents and act as porters in carrying the load of these insurgents. Besides these, they are often squeezed between the security dilemma of the Indian and Myanmarese security forces.

In borderland societies, there is relatively less control of state machinery and as such provides power vacuum for other actors to enter this arena. Similarly, even in this borderland, we see the presence of the Naga insurgent groups, especially the National Socialist Council of Nagaland-Khaplang (NSCN-K). The NSCN-K was formed in 1988 under the leadership of S.S. Khaplang after the split of National Socialist Council of Nagaland. The leader S.S. Khaplang belongs to Hemi Naga tribe from the northern Myanmar which has close affinity with the Konyaks. As such, the NSCN-K has a strong base among the Konyaks both in India and Myanmar. This gives the evidence of kinship relationship playing the role of cementing force binding people inhabiting different modern nation-states.
As stated earlier, this insurgent group represents another structure of governance. Though not officially and legally accepted, they have strong dominant force in this area. The villagers are required to pay compulsory house tax annually. The government servants also pay some amount of their salary to the insurgent group(s) like the rest of the Nagas. Moreover, they are made to carry their ration regularly across the border. Each household sends a member each to carry the commodities for the insurgents manually since there is no proper road connectivity on the Myanmar side. Thus we may say that in some ways, the NSCN-K also can be regarded as an actor of governance in this border village.

3.10. Summary

This chapter on borderland governance discusses the multiple structure of governance in the border village of Longwa. One of the oldest structures of governance is the Konyak traditional system of governance based on Ahngship. Being a Pongyin Ahng, the Longwa Ahng and his council play a very important role in the governance of the village and his kingdom, especially in terms of administration of customary laws and tradition. Other modern structures of governance such as the Goanbura, Dobashi and the Village Council have been comprehensively discussed, and their role in the governance of this border village has been analysed in this chapter. We may say that the Goanbura and Dobashi institutions along with the Village Council play the most important role so far as the village governance is concerned. The Village Council headed by the Village Council chairman and other Village Council Members (VCM) are responsible for the day-to-day administration and governance of the village. We have also found that the Village Development Board (VDB) and Communitisation
Process under the Village Council have been partially successful in delivering good governance and services such as education, electricity and development to the villagers. However, there are several lapse areas which need to recover.

Besides the civil administrative structure, we have also examined the various military set up such as the Assam Rifles, Special Intelligence Bureau and the Village Guards safeguarding the India’s territorial integrity in this borderland. These governing actors not only provide security to the border but also somehow contribute towards the welfare and development of this village. However, we cannot rule out the fact that the Naga insurgent groups especially the NSCN-K have strong presence. Moreover, there are instances of frictions and conflicts among these multiple structures of governance where the civilians are caught in between the cross fire. Thus the question remains here is whether these security arrangements have been successful in ensuring security to the people at the border? Is it national security or borderlanders’ security dominating India’s policy in its far northeast? Can there be convergence of both? These are some questions that need immediate attention from the policy makers of the country.

Besides these problems of traditional security, there is poverty and illiteracy in the village that leave rooms for manipulation of power and corrupt practices. In a primordial society as of this, the primordial values and loyalty obstruct the realisation of democracy in its truest meaning. These act as impediments in the development of the village and over all good governance of the village. Once these hurdles are overcome, it is hopeful to deliver good governance and services to the people and thereby establish a substantial democracy.