CHAPTER SIX - NAGA ISSUE ON THE TABLE TALKS AND APPLICATION OF CEASE-FIRE

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Creation of Nagaland state fulfilled the desire of the moderate Nagas, no doubt, but at the cost of resentment of the freedom loving Nagas. They took the step of the Government of India as a policy to divide and rule and considered the moderate Naga leaders as 'puppets' in the hand of the Indian political leaders. Hence they intensified their activities to paralyse the Naga Government on the one hand, and to harass the Indian Government on the other. Though the first general election was held in the state of Nagaland and Legislative Assembly was also formed in 1964, the problem, which irritated the moderate Naga leaders, was how to bring normalcy in the state. Unless the peace was stabilised, there was no chance to work for progress and prosperity of the Naga people. The underground Naga leaders were not ready at all to drop their demand and accept the solution of the problem negotiated by the moderates with the Indian Government. They had already established close link with the Governments of China and Pakistan. After Sino-Indian war of 1962, several batches of the Naga militants had reached China and East Pakistan (Bangladesh) by crossing the international boundary line. Phizo in England was applying his best efforts to internationalise the Naga issue. The Naga army was equipped with modern sophisticated weapons like, machine-guns, sten-guns, medium machine-guns, rifles, short-range missiles, rocket launchers etc. in large quantity. They had also received military training. Thus equipped with modern arms and ammunitions and banking upon moral and material support of foreign powers the underground Naga set up continued their militant activities against both the Governments- India and Nagaland. The purpose was to let the Government of India and moderate Naga leaders know that real solution of the Naga issue was not the creation of Nagaland state under the Indian Union, but granting the Nagas sovereign independent status. Such activities of the undergrounds disrupted the communication system and totally paralysed the economic development of the state. On the other hand, The Indian security forces that had been deployed all over Nagaland on large scale became tough and stern with a view to suppressing the Naga rebellion. Under such intention the Indian Jawans began to raid upon not only the hideouts of the

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underground Nagas but also the Naga villages in doubt and suspicion. The daily life of the common people was, thus, totally disturbed and people became fed up with the existing anarchic situation. Hence there was an immediate need to control the worsening situation and restore peace and order in Nagaland.

At this very critical juncture the Baptist Church leaders of Nagaland came ahead to deal with the situation. They called a convention at Wokha from 31 January to 2 February 1964 where a resolution was adopted requesting both the Indian Government and the Government of the undergrounds to devise ways and means for the restoration of peace, normalcy and order in the strife-torn state. The Church leaders were non-political men. Moreover, they were sympathetic to the undergrounds. These leaders selected some leading and honest public leaders to act as the mediators to contact the underground Naga leaders and mediate peace-talks. Jaya Praakash Narayan, a veteran Indian freedom fighter and renowned Survodaya leader, was one who was included in the body of the Peace Mission. J.P. Narayan was a bitter critic of Pt. Nehru’s policy of handling Indo-Pak affairs. He was also heard talking on the issues related to Tibet and Nagaland. He had advised the Government to give a patient hearing to the viewpoints of the leaders of the freedom fighters with a view to solving the issue peacefully and amicably. Being a non-political man and a critic of the ruling party of India, J.P. Narayan was liked by the underground Nagas who called him “a God-damned pacifist”. Another non-political man who was included in the Peace Mission was Shankar Rao Dev. He, too, was a Survodaya leader. B.P. Chaliha, the then Chief Minister of Assam who was known for his pleasing manners and balanced judgment, was also included in the body of Peace Mission. Michael Scott, a British citizen who had been very much close to Phizo in London commanded the belief of the underground Naga leaders. Michael Scott was, in fact, the real representative of the Naga Federal Government because he had been championing the cause of the Naga freedom fighters. 

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3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
The efforts of the Baptist Church leaders to organise a Peace Mission for the solution of the Naga problem and for the restoration of peace and normalcy in Nagaland were widely welcomed by all sections of the Naga people. At that time there were two political parties in the state, namely, the Naga Nationalist Organisation and the Democratic Party. Both the parties welcomed the formation of the Peace Mission and the Government of Nagaland to provide a legal garment to the Peace Mission and passed a resolution in the Assembly.¹

The inter alia of the resolution said:

“That efforts be made to open every possible avenue to negotiate peace talks giving full opportunities to all sections of the public of Nagaland in mobilising public opinion to prepare the spade work to make the proposed talks a success with the sole object of restoration of lasting peace in Nagaland...that the underground people should take the peace talks seriously and respond readily to the call of the people to put all their efforts to create a healthy atmosphere necessary conditions for peace talks.”²

When the matter came to the Indian parliament regarding formation of Peace Mission, the controversy arose on the issue of inclusion of Michael Scott as a member of the Mission. Hem Baruah, a member of the Lok Sabha, expressed his concern at the inclusion of Scott in the Peace Mission because that British national had all along supported Phizo’s demand of an independent Nagaland.³ While removing the doubt of Hem Baruah, Lal Bahadur Shastri, a Minister without portfolio, said in the Lok Sabha that the Government had accepted the inclusion of Scott in the Peace Mission because he had agreed to the settlement of the Naga problem within the framework of the Indian constitution.⁴ It was Pt. Nehru who made it clear that the Government had agreed to include Scott in the Peace Mission at the instance of the Government of Nagaland.⁵ Thus it appears that the Nagaland Government agreed to accept Scott’s inclusion in the Peace Mission only because denial of his inclusion would have resulted in failure of the formation of the Peace Mission. Michael Scott, in fact, was the indispensable choice of the underground Naga leaders.

All the members of the Peace Mission except Shankar Deo, who was sick at the time, reached Kohima in the last week of March 1964. Michael Scott and B.P. Chaliha were the

¹ Efforts for Peace In Nagaland, op. cit., p.3.
² Ibid., p.4
⁴ Ibid.
⁵ Ibid.
Under the realisation that for progress of peace talks cessation of armed conflicts was a must, the members of the Peace Mission drafted an agreement in this regard after consultation with the underground leaders. The draft agreement proposed to suspend all forms hostilities such as sniping, ambushing, imposition of fines, kidnapping, forcible recruitment, sabotage activities and firing and raiding at security posts, towns and administrative buildings. On the other hand the Indian security forces were to suspend jungle operations, raiding of the Federal Army and their administrative camps, patrolling beyond 1000 yards of the Indian security posts, villages, aerial action, arrests

imposition of political fines and forced labour. The underground Naga Government was also asked not to import arms from abroad during the period of peace talks and would not raise the demand for the presence of a team of international observers during the period of peace talks. The draft agreement signed by five underground representatives was referred to the Tatar Hoho (the parliament of the rebel Nagas) for final ratification. The Tatar Hoho soon ratified it. The Government of India raised objection that it would not recognise the Federal Government and demanded that the Naga Government should also be included in the proposed peace talks. Another objection from the Indian Government was regarding the term 'cease-fire'. It suggested to substitute the term 'cease-fire with 'stoppage of operations' and the term 'forced labour' and 'political fines' should be deleted. The underground leaders were not ready at all to substitute the term 'cease-fire' and objected inclusion of Nagaland Government in peace talks. Thus the conflicting viewpoints of both the parties did not allow the draft agreement to take its final shape. However, it became obvious that the underground Naga leaders wanted to have peace talks at equal level with the government of India to show that the Federal Government was a sovereign government. That is why they put emphasis on the term 'cease-fire' which generally takes place between two sovereign powers. On the other hand, the Government of India considered it an affront to national dignity and a blow to the territorial integrity of India.

The worsening situation of Nagaland demanded immediate solution. There were only two ways to defuse the explosive situation- either to go for a military solution or to seek a political settlement. In the past military solution had miserably failed to achieve the desired result. So the only alternative was to go in for a political solution that had be done on the basis of give and take. Hence the Government of India preferred the acceptance of the proposals with certain modifications. A section of the underground Naga leaders also thought that both sides should refrain from-laying preconditions for starting peace talks. Peace had to achieve first and other formalities would be looked into later on. Something had to be done to restore peace and normalcy. Hence the Government of India was ready even to sacrifice the inclusion of the representative of the Nagaland Government in peace talks.

1 M. Alemchiba, A Brief Historical Account of Nagaland, op. cit., p.204.
When the conciliatory approach of the rebel Nagas came to be known, the members of the Peace Mission held further talks with the rebel leaders. At a meeting with them on July 7, 1964, Chaliha proposed that the peace talks would be held at Kohima on 20th July, 1964, and the Naga Federal Government should send four representatives who would be supplied with safe conduct passes by the Government of Nagaland. Since the underground Naga leaders were not yet ready to recognise the Nagaland Government, the offer of safe conduct passes to be given by the Nagaland Government was rejected straight way. However, they agreed to take part in the proposed peace talks on two conditions. Firstly, Shilu Ao should not be described as the Chief Minister of Nagaland, and secondly, the General Officer Commander of the Indian forces in Nagaland would issue the safe conduct pass. Thereafter, the rebel leaders agreed to sign a modified ceasefire agreement and to take part in a peace conference at Kohima. The Government of India soon seized the opportunity and instructed the Governor of Nagaland to prepare the terms of the final agreement in the light of discussions held so far and on the basis of the terms accepted by the rebel Naga leaders through the Peace Mission.¹ Thereupon, the final agreement regarding ceasefire appeared in the forms mentioned below:

1. The Government of India welcome the steps intended to bring about peace in Nagaland and with this object in view, as already stated, they will depute Representatives who will be associated with the representative of the Government of Nagaland to take part in talks with leaders of the underground. To facilitate these talks and taking note of the letter of 10th August 1964 Referred to above, it has been ordered that with effect from 6th September, 1964, and from a period thereafter of one month at present, the security forces Will not undertake:
   (a) Jungle operations;
   (b) Raiding of camps of the underground;
   (c) Searching of villages;
   (d) Patrolling beyond 1000 yards of security posts;
   (e) Aerial action;
   (f) Arrests; and
   (g) Imposition of labour by way of punishment.

¹ Y. D. Gundeva, War and Peace in Nagaland, op. cit., 121.
2. Operations will be suspended as above on the understanding that the underground Nagas had accepted that during this period they would refrain from:
   (1) Sniping and ambushing;
   (2) Imposition of Fines;
   (3) Kidnapping and recruiting;
   (4) Sabotage activities;
   (5) Raiding and firing on security posts, towns and administrative Centres; and
   (6) Moving with arms or in uniforms in towns, villages and Administrative centres, wherever there are security posts and Approaching within one thousand yards of security posts.

The ceasefire agreement that brought about the cessation of armed struggle with effect from 6th September 1964 was a commendable effort. It ceased the explosive situation and brought peace and happiness everywhere in Nagaland. People heaved a sigh of relief. Night curfew was relaxed and the underground Nagas came over ground first time. They started moving freely and obtained an opportunity to meet their friends, relatives and family members. The people were found rushing to the Churches and ringing the bells. They all prayed Almighty for everlasting peace in their land. Many people were in tears because normalcy had returned to Nagaland. Gundevia who was a witness to all these, wrote, "The signing of the hymns in that little Church in Kohima, by our Naga boys and girls in their choir, was superb; it was beautiful and brought tears to many eyes. Oh, God, our help in ages past... That September afternoon, sung by so many with uncontrolled tears running down their cheeks, was an unforgettable experience... There was streetlight in Kohima, first time in seven years. Kohima, Mokokchung and all the little towns had been under dust to dawn curfew, year after year, almost continuously. This meant that the children who were nine and ten years old did not know that electric bulbs on the street lamp-posts were meant to glow."

The first round of peace talks began at Khenisa Village in Mokokchung district on September 23, 1964 when the ceasefire became effective from the midnight of September 6, 1964. On behalf of the Government of India Y.D. Gundevia, the Secretary to the

1 Y.D. Gundevia, War and Peace in Nagaland, op. cit., p.121.
Ministry of External Affairs, Shilu Ao, the Chief Minister of Nagaland, N.C. Santok, the Deputy Secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs and U.N. Sharma, the Chief secretary to the Nagaland Government participated in the peace talks while the underground Naga Government was represented by Zashie Huire, Thinsussillie and Issac Swu. After formal talks the underground representatives objected the presence of Shilu Ao, no doubt, but his presence was lastly admitted not as the Chief Minister of Nagaland, but as a member of the Indian Government. The Naga representatives reiterated the old demand that Nagaland should be made an independent nation and the Indian armed forces must withdraw from Nagaland, which was totally rejected by the Indian representatives with the result, that a deadlock took place in the progress of peace talks.

The Peace Mission brought forward a plan of disarmament wherein the rebel Naga Army was to be disarmed and the security forces of India withdrawn from Nagaland. Had the plan of disarmament been implemented, it would have brought everlasting peace in Nagaland, but unfortunately when the plan was referred to the Tatar HoHo, it was out rightly rejected by it. The Tatar HoHo passed the resolution, which said that the Naga Army would not surrender their arms and that a political settlement based on a sovereign Nagaland state was acceptable to the Naga Federal Government. The underground Naga leaders did not like to lay down their arms and deposit them in an armoury under the supervision of the Peace Mission. The arms and ammunitions had been collected from foreign countries and they did not like to let down their supporters. It also became obvious that the underground representative in the peace talks could not take any decisive step without the consent of their superior leaders. Moreover, whenever the talks began the Naga representatives reiterated the same demand of sovereign independent Nagaland. They were not ready at all to budge in single inch from their stand.

Several rounds of talks were held between the Indian delegation and the underground representatives at Chedema since 23\textsuperscript{rd} September 1964, but the solution of the problem was not in the sight. It had become obvious that no settlement of Naga issue could be possible under such circumstance. The Peace Mission to break up the stalemate worked out along worded 16-Point Proposal, which talked the old history of the Naga people and their relations with the British. The plan appreciated the courage and tenacity displayed by the Naga people in their endeavour to achieve their goal of independence. It also
mentioned that "All subject people have the right to self-determination and that no group of people is competent to rule over another." The 16-Point Proposal wanted "some appropriate meeting point" where "the aims and ideals of the Naga Federal Government can be achieved... making it possible for the Government of India to accept (the demand) within the framework of the political settlement to be mutually agreed upon". At the end the proposal stated that it was up to the Naga Federal Government to decide whether it would "be a participant in the Union of India and would mutually settle the terms and conditions for the purpose."

The emphatic assertion of the right to self-determination in the 16-Point Proposal boosted the morale of the rebel Naga leaders and supported their viewpoints. The right to self-determination is, in fact, a noble principle which every one who champions the cause of liberty and democracy cherishes, but such right cannot be given to such group of people who lack supporting background for having an independent status. The Peace Mission having the consent of B.P. Chaliha and J.P. Narayan had included the term right to self-determination to the Naga people. But when the Indian parliament heard such voice, many members raised question related to the Naga's right to self-determination. Smt Lakshmi Menon, the Minister of State for External Affairs, while welcoming the opinion of the Peace Mission to find a peaceful solution to the Naga issue, asserted that the solution had to be found within the framework of the Indian Union. Hem Baruah, participating in the debate of the Lok Sabha on the issue also said that the Naga's right to self-determination referred two vital points. Firstly, the Proposal equated the underground Government with the Indian Government and secondly, it gave to the NFG the right to decide the question of the accession of Nagaland to the Indian Union. Swarn Singh the Foreign Minister told the members of the Lok Sabha "We have made the position clear that a solution of the Naga problem had to be thought within the Indian Union and that is the only thing that we can think of."

The Government of India in its reply to the letter of the Peace Mission explicitly stated that it did not accept the "line of reasoning and the series of postulates on which the Peace

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1 Lok Sabha Debates, 3rd series, Vol. XXXVIII, No.3, 1964, pp.636-7
2 Ibid.
4 Ibid.p.637.
Mission’s Sixteen Point Proposal were based.”¹ Thus it became very much obvious that the government of India was ready to consider autonomy of the state of Nagaland, but within the Indian constitution. On the other hand the NFG was not ready to accept any thing other than a sovereign state of Nagaland. Since both the parties adopted different viewpoints regarding the Sixteen Point Proposal, no meeting could be arranged.

Another round of peace talks began at Kheng village on 24th February 1965 where the question of right to self-determination once more came on fore front. The underground representatives also raised the issue of holding plebiscite. However, the Peace Mission members rejected both the demands of the underground leaders and suggested them to join the Indian Union voluntarily and discuss the terms of mutual relationship. But Zashei Huire expressed his inability to do so without the consent of the Tatar HoHo with the result that first round talks at Khensa ended without any progress. Next day when the question was raised related to violation of cease-fire from both sides, the members of the Peace Mission suggested for forming a body of neutral observers to ensure the effective implementation of ceasefire. The body was constituted under the chairmanship of Dr A.Aram, a survodaya worker from Coimbatore to serve the purpose. After the failure of Khensa talks the members of the Peace Mission personally participated in the meeting of the Tatar HoHo to persuade the members, but they could not succeed in changing their mind.

The facts came to the light that the NFG had agreed to begin peace talks with two objectives. Firstly, the rebel leaders wanted to strengthen their military position by sending their men for military training in the neighbouring countries and also by importing arms and ammunitions from various sources. Secondly, they intended to equate themselves with the government of India. Their purpose was served because the term ‘cease fire’ was accepted and the right to self-determination came on the table of negotiation.

The Naga Federal Government expressed the view through Michael Scott to upgrade the peace talks at the level of Prime Ministers. The Indian Prime Minster, Lal Bahadur Shastri, accepted the request, but meeting could not be arranged due to his sudden demise at Tashkent. The successor of late Shastri, Mrs Indira Gandhi agreed to meet the

underground Naga delegation. Hence a five-man Naga delegation under the leadership of Kughato Sukhai, the Prime Minister of the underground Federal Government, arrived at New Delhi on 16th February 1966. Surprisingly enough, the same day the Assam Mail was derailed near Dimapur and a time bomb had been fitted in the toilet of a third class compartment which caused derailment. There was heavy loss of lives and properties. Though the underground Nagas denied their hand behind the incident, there was no denying the fact that the rebels Nagas were behind such incident. This was confirmed later on when enquiries were held. The purpose of these incidents was to put pressure upon the Government of India. However, such tactics did not hamper the meeting of the Indian Prime Minister with the underground Naga delegation. Consequently, the first round of talks between Smt. Indira Gandhi and the Naga delegation were held on 17th January 1966 in the presence of Michael Scott and B.P. Chaliha. At the very outset Mrs Gandhi drew the attention of the Naga representatives towards the unpleasant and violent activities in Nagaland and in some Naga inhabited areas of Manipur. Mr Shukhai, the leader of the Undergrounds, denied their hand in these acts of violence. Thereupon, B.P. Chaliha and Scott suggested having an inquiry by a joint committee consisting of two representatives one from the Peace Mission and another from the underground Naga Government.

During the first phase of peace talks nothing more important issue were discussed. In the opinion of the underground representatives it was nothing more than a courtesy call on the new Prime Minister of India. While going back to Nagaland, Isak Swu, a member of the underground delegation and the Foreign Minister of the Naga Federal Government, said at Calcutta airport in a press conference that, "Nothing of a sovereign Nagaland would be acceptable to the Nagas. We have always been independent and want to remain so." He further said that the Nagas would seek unknown destiny if the Government did not grant them independence. When he was asked to explain the term 'unknown destiny', Isak Swu replied, "I cannot spell out unknown destiny beyond saying that the repercussions would be very bad... We may also be forced to seek the assistance of foreign countries to achieve our objectives." On the other hand, while giving an account of her talks with the underground Naga representatives, Indira Gandhi said in the Lok Sabha on 21 February

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2 The Hindustan Times, New Delhi, February 20, 1966.
1966, "The objective of our talks was the importance of preserving peace and stopping many ugly incidents which still take place... The Government was making real efforts to change the underground rebel’s attitude on the independence question. But this needs great patience and time." When her attention was drawn towards the statement of Isak which he delivered at Calcutta airport, she told the House that that was a demand which they had been consistently repeating for several years and it was not brought to her direct notice at the last meeting by the underground delegation. Speaking in the Rajya Sabha, Mrs Gandhi said that goodwill, patience and tact were required to solve the Naga problem.

It is true that Mrs Gandhi was still hopeful of solving the Naga problem tactfully, but the underground Naga leaders were impatient. They became more active and they enhanced their militant activities. From February 1966 onwards, a series of bomb explosions took place on the northeastern frontier railways. A time bomb exploded in a train at Farkating killing 37 persons and causing injuries to more than fifty passengers. On April 20, 1966, the explosion of the time bomb in a railway coach at Lumding station killed 56 people and injured at least 127 passengers. A standing train at Diphu station was also blown up and many persons were killed. Even the Naga villages that were siding with the Nagaland Government were also attacked specially in the Ukhrul sub-division of Manipur. Thus the commencement of hostile activities of the undergrounds disturbed J.P. Narayan so much that he dissociated himself from the peace talks. J.P. Narayan, in fact, had lost the faith of the rebel Nagas. Even the Government of India was dissatisfied with the statement of Mr Narayan where he had suggested that the Naga state could have its own flag and constitution while the centre would have kept for itself such subjects as Defence, Finance and Communication. Thus in a way he lost the confidence of both sides, and he thought it wise to resign from the membership of the Peace Mission. While stating the cause of his resignation, he informed the press media on 25th February 1966, “There was no use of my continuing as a member of Peace Mission when I did not enjoy the confidence of both sides, nor do I think it would have been honourable to do so.”

By 1967, it had become obvious that the NFG leaders would not accept anything less than Naga’s complete independence that was quite untenable to the Indian leaders. Mrs Indira Gandhi, the Prime Minister, decided not to have any more negotiations with the

1 Ibid, February 22, 1966
underground representatives. Hence the underground representatives who were staying at New Delhi were asked to vacate the building. They all left New Delhi on the morning of 7th October 1967. One of the members of the underground representatives while leaving Delhi, made it clear that the NFG would accept nothing less than a sovereign Nagaland. “It is for India to treat us as friends or throw us to the other side.” The statement clearly indicated that the NFG would incline towards foreign countries for assistance.

The end of 1967, all hopes for a peaceful solution of the Naga issue was dashed to the ground. The four years of parleys between the Government of India and the underground representatives resulted in complete failure. Who should be blamed for the failure? The question is difficult to answer. It was well understood by both the parties that there could be no solution because both were predetermined to remain strictly to their viewpoints. The talks continued only because to understand the stands of each other about the Naga issue. The underground representatives wanted to popularise the case of the Nagas and they, somewhat, succeeded too. Under the shield of Michael Scott who was much more sympathetic to the cause of the underground Nagas, the underground leaders let the world know that the Nagas are a nation and they have all the rights to follow their own political course. When the activities of Michael Scott were doubted and exposed, the Government of India expelled him out from India. Informing the member of the Parliament Dinesh Singh, the Minister of state for External Affairs, said that Mr Scott instead of bringing about an understanding “indulged in prejudicial activities. In spite of the Government’s warning and regret expressed by himself, he had continued to adopt partisan attitude. In view of this, his presence was no longer considered helpful in the current talks with the underground Nagas.” The Activities of Michael Scott had remained doubtful from the beginning. It was he who had written Mrs Indira Gandhi in February 1966 to constitute an expert committee to ascertain whether India had exercised any authority over the Nagas. Again, at the request of the FGN it was he who had sent a letter to U Thant, the Secretary general; of the United Nations asking him for the inclusion of more foreign observers in the peace talks. He had also written a letter to the Chairman of the Revolutionary Council of Burma (Myanmar), General Ne Win protesting against his

1 The Times of India, New Delhi, October 9, 1967
decision to check the movement of rebel Nagas from Nagaland to East Pakistan (Bangladesh) through Burmese territories. In the words of Asoso Yonuo “These letters probably stepped up Rev. Scott to the first basic error and aroused a wave of indignation throughout India for it was blaring attempt to internationalise the Naga issue which was a purely domestic affair from the Indian point of view.” Thereafter, the talks continued, no doubt, but result was negative. During the peace talks the underground set up had enough time to strengthen its position, which they did. The underground leaders were of the view that the Government of India, perhaps, under the pressure tactics would consider their demand.

The policy of the government of India towards the Nagas in general and the underground Naga leaders in particular had been to appease the people by offering what they demanded except sovereignty. Till the Naga leaders were non-violent the Government hardly pay any attention to their real problem. When they took arms against the government and applied freedom movement, the government became more and more sympathetic to the Naga’s problem and awarded them statehood with maximum autonomies by amending the constitution. Moreover, the Central Government flooded huge amount of money in Nagaland to please the moderate Naga leaders in the name of economic development. Such easy money not only spoiled the habit of the hard working Nagas but also paved the way for mass corruption among the political leaders and bureaucrats. Such politicians began to incline towards Delhi politicians with the result that the undergrounds lost their all faith in them. The Government of India applied the same policy of appeasement towards the rebel Naga leaders. That is why the Government easily agreed to accept the term ‘ceasefire’ and allowed the underground leaders to initiate the peace talks at the level of Prime Minister, which boosted the morale of the undergrounds. In the words of B.K. Neru, the Governor of Nagaland, “Delhi had, from the very beginning, adopted an attitude of appeasement towards the Naga insurgents, trying to give them every thing they wanted., irrespective of the national interests, in an effort to get them to give up their insurgency.” It was this policy of the Government which encouraged some Naga leaders who had been sympathetic to the cause of the undergrounds to form new political parties such as the United Front and

1 Asoso Yonuo, The Rising Nagas, op. cit., p258.
2 B.K. Nehru, “Mediators of Naga Issue were pro-extremists”, in North-East Sun 1970. p. 2.
United Democratic Front which began to plead the case of the underground on the floor of the Naga Legislative Assembly developing close link with the underground leaders. Such policy of the Indian Government proved harmful. It encouraged the rebel leaders to remain strict to their viewpoints on the one hand and discouraged the moderate Naga leaders, maligned their image and damaged their morale and spirit on the other. Hokishe Sema, the then Finance Minister of Nagaland Government, rightly remarked that the Prime Minister's talks with the underground leaders yielded contrary result. In his own words "a section of the underground is flaring with China and flying to obtain arms and other assistance from that country as well as from Pakistan." Agreeing to the same view T. N. Angami, while talking to the Nagaland Governor, expressed his views that his authority was undermined by the Central Government of India because the real attention of the Government was towards the underground Naga leaders and efforts were being applied to please them even at the cost of displeasure of the democratically installed Government of Nagaland.\(^1\)

The government of India participated in the parleys even at the Prime Minister level to let the Naga people know that the Government wanted a solution, but it could not be achieved due to rigid and obstinate attitude of the undergrounds. A legally constituted and elected Government was already functioning in Nagaland giving full support to the Government of India. The underground Nagas had already lost their majority. The moderate Naga leaders who had assumed the responsibility to rule and administer Nagaland did not like at all to allow the extremists to establish their hold on Naga politics. Thus disunity among the Naga leaders could hardly allow a peaceful solution to the Naga issue or emergence of a sovereign Nagaland state. Peace talks discontinued, but ceasefire was still effective, but on paper only. Replying the question related to the fate of the ceasefire, Mrs Indira Gandhi in the Lok Sabha said that only the course of events would decide the issue. Thereafter the Naga freedom fighters once more resumed their freedom struggled at full length overlooking the provisions of the ceasefires. The ceasefire came to an end officially on 1\(^{st}\) September 1972 and the Government of India asked its personnel to control the activities of the undergrounds with the result that Naga people

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2 B.K.Nehru, "Mediators of Naga Issue were Pro-extremists", op. cit., p.2.
who had got a temporary relief, again found themselves submerged in the pool of bloodshed and ocean of measures.

**SHILLONG ACCORD**

With growing political consciousness and interest of the Naga people in politics and unchecked growth of high political ambition of the Naga politicians brought about a dynamic turn in the Naga politics from 1975 onwards. Politics had become a profession and also a means to earn money and prestige. Politics of defection took place which ultimately put the state of Nagaland under the President rule on March 22, 1975.

During the period of emergency the Shillong Accord between the Government of India and the underground Naga Federal Government was signed, which ended the Naga insurgency for ever at least on the paper. The failure of peace talks had resulted in the resumption of anti-national activities of the rebel Nagas. This caused fighting between the Naga militants and the Indian armed forces. Kughato Sukhai who had failed to achieve the desired goal for the underground Nagas through peace talks, was blamed for having a secret deal with the Government of India. At this very time Kaito Sema, a rebel Naga General and brother of Kughato, revolted against the Angami’s hegemony over the Naga Federal Government. With the help of his close associates he ransacked the underground Naga army headquarters at Gaziphema and looted the arms, ammunitions and money that were kept there. Such unexpected incident undermined the authority of Kughato Sukhai as he was accused of assisting his fiery brother, Kaito. This forced Kughato Sukhai to resign from the Prime Minister ship of the Federal Government enabling Mhiasu, a close associate of Phizo, to occupy the supreme position of the underground Federal Government. All these activities set the stage free for internal feuds and conflicts among the undergounds. The unity of the underground Nagas was further put to strain when another section of the undergounds in Tuensang area came out with a resolution that the solution of the Naga problem had to be found “within the framework of the Indian Union.”

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Kaito Serna who deserted from the Federal Government became a constant threat to the Phizoists. Under such circumstance he was murdered in the main market of Kohima on 3rd November 1968. Since the murders could not be arrested, two possibilities behind his murder were developed. It was said that he was murdered either by the men of Mahiaseiu or by the personnel of the Indian army. However, both the parties denied their hands behind the murder of General Kaito. Thereafter, the acts of revenge appeared and both sections of the undergrounds led by the men of Kaito and Mahiaseiu were face to face which ultimately resulted in abduction, fighting, and assassination dividing the underground Naga Government. Anti-Phizo groups combined together under the leadership of Semas and formed the Revolutionary Government in November 1968. A political wing known as the Council of Naga People was also created. These bodies were parallel to the Federal Government. Thus the underground Nagas were splinted into three rival groups by 1968, which weakened the strength of the rebels to fight against the Government of India.

Weakness of the underground Nagas, thus, enabled the Indian armed troops to control the activities of the Naga militants. The Indian Jawans captured a number of underground Nagas along with Chinese made arms and ammunitions. Veteran underground leader, Mowu Aangami, the Commander-in-Chief of the rebels, was arrested which caused a severe blow to the freedom movement of Nagaland. His arrest along with his other associates was a definite blow to the Phizoists who were struggling not only against the Government of India but also against the men of Kughato Sukhai. Thereafter, the process of surrendering of the underground Nagas started. The surrender of some of the prominent underground leaders encouraged others to follow the process. For instance, Saniba Ao, the Major General in the Federal Naga Government, along with Mepyangdang, the Vice President of the Naga National Council, and his Secretary, Tajen Ao, surrendered in the middle of 1975. Saniba Ao not only surrendered himself but also induced his associates to do the same. He issued a statement that said, “I have been watching the situation in Nagaland and have reached the conclusion that at no stage our movement had any hope of achieving useful results. Actually things have been going from bad to worse. All that we have

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1 Assam Tribune, Guwahati, March 13, 1969.
2 Naga News, Published by the Directorate of Information, Publicity and Tourism, Government of Nagaland, September, 1975
achieved over the years of our struggle in Nagaland is untold miseries for our own kith and kin.1

Giving the account of surrendered Nagas, L. P. Singh, the Governor, informed the people on 15th August 1975, that "during the last four or five months there has been a marked improvement. About a thousand of persons who were underground have either been arrested, captured or voluntarily coming out or they are being captured by the security forces."2 The Government of India adopted the policy to rehabilitate those who surrendered voluntarily with the objective to induce other to come under the mainstream of the nation.3

The large scale of surrender of the undergrounds in 1975, though weakened the strength of the underground organisations, but it does not mean that the state was free from such elements. There were still hard-core militants who were yet determined to fight for Naga’s independence, which caused worry in the mind of the Indian Government. These elements still continued their struggle. This is evident from the fact that in 1975 only there were nearly 83 incidents of shootings by the undergrounds.4 There were some cases of ambush of army conveys. That is another fact that the Naga militants suffered a lot due to strict patrolling of the security forces and they became the victims of disunity among themselves. Due to strict vigilance of the army and also due to surrender on large scale most of the areas of Nagaland except Kohima and Phek areas, were cleared of the underground activities.5

Declining strength of the freedom fighters and increasing interest of the Naga people towards democratic processes enabled the Government of India to conduct a final deal for solution of the Naga issue. Longri Ao, the chairman of the Peace Council, became instrumental in contacting the underground leaders and brings them to the table of negotiation. Mr Yallay, the brother of Phizo, who was given the safe conduct served as a link between the underground Naga leaders and the recently constituted Liaison

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1 Ibid.
2 The Warrior, Vol. V, No. 12, March 1976, Published by the Government of Nagaland, Department of Publicity, p.2.
3 Ibid.
5 Ibid.
Committee.\textsuperscript{1} Zashei Huire, the underground President, selected Kevy Yallay, Z. Ramyo, Sanyi Darhu, Temjenba and Venyiyi to represent the case of the Nagas and conduct a deal with the government of India. P. Singh, the then Governor of Nagaland took initiative to talk with the leaders of the underground Government on behalf of the Indian government. Temjenba, on behalf of the underground Government assured that “we are competent authority to take decisions and whatever decisions we take will be honoured by the Federal Government.”\textsuperscript{2} Meetings with the Governor of Nagaland and the representatives of the NFG were held at Shillong on 10\textsuperscript{th} and 11\textsuperscript{th} November, 1975. Since both the parties were predetermined to have some sort of solution, a three-point agreement was concluded which came to be known as the Shillong accord and these points are mentioned below:

1. The representatives of the underground organisations conveyed their decisions of their own volition, to accept without condition, the Constitution of India.

2. It was agreed that the arms, now underground, would be brought out and deposited at appointed places. Details for giving effect to this agreement will be worked out between the representatives of the government, the security forces and members of the Liaison Committee.

3. It was agreed that the representatives of the underground organisations should have reasonable time to formulate other issues for discussions for the final agreement.\textsuperscript{3}

The Shillong Accord, which was accepted by the underground organisations on 5 December 1975, was a historical event, as it opened a new chapter in the political history of Nagaland. It ushered an era of understanding, peace and tranquillity in this strife-torn state. The constitutional issue of the basic political problem and the insurgency were brought to an end by this agreement. The underground organisations and their movements thereafter ceased to exist, as all had agreed to be peaceful citizens of India and to function in accordance with the Indian constitution. The general mass heaved a sigh of relief.

\textsuperscript{1} Dawn of Peace in Nagaland, a booklet published by the Directorate of Information, Publicity and Tourism, Govt. of Nagaland, Kohima, 1975, p.1

\textsuperscript{2} The Letter of Temjenba addressed to Longri Ao, quoted in the Dawn of Peace in Nagaland, op. cit., p.2.

\textsuperscript{3} Dawn of Peace in Nagaland, op. cit. p.3.
because the prolonged struggle and armed conflicts had come to an end.\textsuperscript{1} The Government assured the undergrounds of their rehabilitation after their surrender. The Accord also provided the opportunity to those undergrounds that were across the border to come back to their land and to join the rest of their colleagues.

Thereafter, the five-point supplementary agreement was made for collection of arms and ammunitions deposited by the men of the FGN. Arms deposited were kept under the safe custody provided by the Peace Council. With the completion of such process the Naga freedom fighters were first time disarmed. The Governor of Assam suspended all operations and actions under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967\textsuperscript{2} Thus the surrender of arms and ammunitions of the Naga freedom fighters and suspension of operations against them by the Government of India, in fact, created cordial atmosphere in Nagaland. The Governor, L. P. Singh, on the Republic Day of 1976 at Kohima declared that he would release all persons who had accepted the Shillong Accord and would refund to the villagers all collective fines imposed after September, 1972.\textsuperscript{3} Sentences of those who had already been convicted were remitted. The cases against the under trial prisoners were withdrawn and cases pending in investigation were closed.

It is true that advent of the Shillong Accord eased the tense situation in Nagaland to a great extent. It is also a fact that the Accord ended the armed conflicts between the Indian security forces and the Naga freedom fighters. People got relief. But it does not mean that the Naga issue had been solved forever. A good number of Naga armed soldiers surrendered with arms, no doubt, but there were still many of them who had neither accepted the Shillong Accord nor they had any intention to surrender. They were yet in foreign countries. The appeal of the Indian Home Ministers to those people to accept the Shillong Accord and accept the Indian citizenship made no effect upon them. These elements who were still committed to the cause of Naga nationalism, though remained inactive for a certain period of time, they became active by 1980, reviving freedom movement.

\textsuperscript{1}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{2}Ibid. pp. 4-
\textsuperscript{3}Speech of L.P. Singh, the Governor of Nagaland, delivered on 26\textsuperscript{th} January 1976.